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**“An Orator He’s Not”**

by

Tom Holbrook

For sure... John McCain is not an orator. Anyone who has ever watched and heard him speak from behind a lectern, trying to interpret what someone else has written for him as it appears on a teleprompter, knows that the man has no sense of timing, syntax, or humor. Those who plan his speaking engagements know better than to put McCain’s supporters behind him on the dais as he’s making a speech because the TV camera would probably catch too many of them nodding off during his speech. There would probably be no applause at all if the Senator didn’t give his weak, ineffectual, timid smile at carefully timed intervals as a signal for those in the audience to show approval.

If the Presidential Election is going to be decided on the basis of oratorical skills then let’s go ahead and declare Obama the winner. Let’s save the Parties and the country all the millions of dollars that will be spent promoting and covering the campaign and get right to the inauguration. Of course, all those delegates who were looking for the free party at the Conventions in Colorado and Minnesota will have to get together at Myrtle Beach or Catalina and party hard for a week and then get back to work doing whatever they do in their real life.

Seriously, if we are to determine our country’s leader based on how he or she can stand in front of a crowd and stir them up to frenzy there is no contest. However, if we are going to elect the person who looks you in the eye, one on one, and gives you the true scoop on what needs to be done in Washington to get rid of tried and not-so- true methods of doing things; if we’re going to elect someone who has several decades at working the halls of Congress and the aisles of the Senate floor to get legislation passed that will benefit our country and not a favored few; if we’re going to elect someone who actually recognizes our enemies, and has put his life on the line and suffered torture because he was fighting the enemies of our country; if we’re going to elect a man who has a passion for the country and not just the office of the Presidency and will give us substance and not just rhetoric... then I believe that John McCain should be given a close look as someone who deserves to be our next President.

All we need do is watch and see a different John McCain as he talks to reporters and average citizens in impromptu, non-scripted press conferences or town-hall meetings and hear him tell it like it is in a no-nonsense fashion. In these venues we see a man who knows who he is and what the country needs to go forward. We see a battle hardened, yet respectful person, who indeed has a warm sense of humor that comes across in an informal setting.

We need to watch John McCain as he truly reaches across the aisles of the Senate floor and enters into agreements with those of the Democratic Party that result in legislation that is bold and daring, and designed to “Change” the norm of Washington, DC. Frankly, I have not agreed with every piece of legislation that he and his unlikely cohorts have passed or introduced, but some I have. The Kennedy/McCain Immigration legislation that was defeated probably was the correct direction in which to go at the time, with some modifications. It was, if one had read it carefully and removed Party biases from one’s thinking, a fairly practical way of taking care of the immediate problem we were and are having with immigration. I realize many will disagree vehemently with that statement. The important thing is he has reached across the aisle and attempted to do something to solve the problems our country faces.

Sometimes it seems, at least to me, that he intentionally goes to the top of the Conservative “enemy list”, i.e., Kennedy and Feingold to mention a couple... with which to make his bargains with the “devil.” However, McCain is not someone who can be button-holed or labeled as a “Bush Republican” or a “closet democrat.” He refuses to be consistent enough in his actions to allow any banner to be attached to him. Other than his perpetual pro-life stance and his tirade against pork projects sought by his Congressional colleagues, McCain goes where the action is most needed to keep our country strong and it’s governmental machinery working smoothly. The “Gang of 14” initiative several years ago, designed to end the Democratic filibustering of judicial candidates and to forestall the implementation of the “nuclear option” by Republicans to achieve the same end, is a good example of his independent thinking and the guts to do what he thinks is best for the country, regardless of either Party’s ideology.

He claims to be more of a Reagan Republican than any of the others and I don’t think he’s that far off the mark. Ronald Reagan, thought of by many as one of the greatest Presidents our country has had for many decades, was a President not afraid to reach across the aisle and compromise with those of the other Party... if that action resulted in progress toward his ultimate goal of prosperity and security for the nation. Once, when criticized about his working with those of the Democratic Party to get some needed legislation passed... but with some critical ingredients missing, Reagan replied, “If I can get  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a loaf, (instead of the entire loaf), I’m going to take it, stick with my principles and move on.” I would have to say McCain is, in many ways, a man of the same make-up. He is his own man... and a man I believe could truly bring much needed change to our nation’s capitol.

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