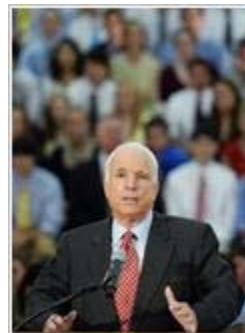


10 Debate Questions John McCain Will Never Be Asked

By Jon Perr
April 17, 2008

While the liberal blogosphere and media critics alike are fuming over the deplorable gotcha-fest that was the [ABC Democratic debate](#) yesterday in Philadelphia, conservative talking heads are positively ecstatic. In the New York Times, [David Brooks](#) called the questions on lapel pins and the Weather Underground "excellent." The excreable [Michelle Malkin](#) snarked, "How dare they explore questions of character, truthfulness, and judgment?" And over at Hot Air, [Ed Morrissey](#) offered "kudos to ABC News" while noting "John McCain has to feel grateful not to be included."



Which is exactly right. The [so-called "maverick" John McCain](#) has never been subjected to the inquisitorial equivalent of the rectal probes Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton received last night. And given the media's on-going love affair with Mr. Straight Talk, he no doubt never will be.

But since the right-wing amen corner asked for an exploration of John McCain's "character, truthfulness, and judgment," the following represents a subset what an American media actually doing its job might ask of the Republican presidential nominee.

Here, then, are 10 debate questions John McCain will never be asked:

1. Do you agree with Pastor John Hagee that war with Iran is the fulfillment of biblical prophecy?

In February, you shared a stage with [Pastor John Hagee](#) and said you were "very proud" to have his endorsement. You also called the [Reverend Rod Parsley](#), a man who said of Islam "America was founded, in part, with the intention of seeing this false religion destroyed", your "spiritual guide." *Do you believe America's mission is to destroy Islam? Do you join Pastor Hagee in believing the United States must attack Iran to fulfill the biblical prophecy of Armageddon in Israel in which 144,000 Jews will be converted to Christianity and the rest killed? Is that why you joked about "bomb bomb Iran?" If not, why will you not renounce the support of Hagee and Parsley?*

2. Doesn't your legendary temper make you too dangerous to be trusted with the presidency of the United States?

Your anger, even toward friends and allies, is legendary. You purportedly [dropped the F-Bomb](#) on your own GOP colleagues John Cornyn and Chuck Grassley. In the book, [The Real McCain](#), author Cliff Schechter claims you got into a fist-fight with your fellow Arizona Republican Rick Renzi. Allegedly, you even publicly used a crude term, one which decorum and the FCC prohibit us from even saying on the air, to [describe your own wife](#). *Which if any of these episodes is untrue? Don't your anger management problems make you too dangerously unstable to be president of the United States?*

3. Doesn't your confusion regarding basic facts about the war in Iraq, including repeatedly citing a nonexistent Al Qaeda-Iran alliance, make you unfit for command?

On [four occasions in one month](#), you confused friend and foe in Iraq by describing Sunni Al Qaeda as being backed by Shiite Iran. Then you showed a [misunderstanding of the U.S. chain of command](#) when you claimed you would not back shifting forces from Iraq to Afghanistan "unless Gen. [David] Petraeus said that he felt that the situation called for that," a decision which Petraeus himself told you and your Senate colleagues only the week before rests not with him but with his superiors. *Doesn't your lack of understanding and judgment when it comes to basic facts of America's national security disqualify you as commander-in-chief?*

4. Given your past adultery, should Americans consider you a moral exemplar of family values?

You are the nominee of a Republican Party which claims to support so-called "family values." Yet you commenced an adulterous relationship with your current wife Cindy [months before the dissolution](#) of your previous marriage to your first wife Carol. *Should Americans consider you to be a moral exemplar of family values?*

5. Doesn't your flip-flop on Jerry Falwell being an "agent of intolerance" show your opportunistic pandering to the religious right?

In 2000, you famously called the late [Jerry Falwell](#) "an agent of intolerance," a statement which may have cost you the decisive South Carolina primary. But as you ramped up your next presidential run in 2006, you embraced Falwell and gave the commencement address at his Liberty University. When Tim Russert asked that spring if you still considered him an agent of intolerance, you said, "no, I don't." *Why shouldn't the American people consider you a flip-flopping opportunist who cynically courted the religious right to further your 2008 presidential ambitions?*

6. Given your wealth and privileged upbringing, aren't you - and not Barack Obama - the elitist?

You have called Barack Obama an elitist. Yet you recently returned to your [exclusive private high school](#), one which now costs over \$38,000 a year to attend. Your wife is the heiress to a beer distribution company, reputedly [owns 8 homes](#) and has a net worth well over \$100 million. Your children all attended private schools, academies which also happened to be the primary beneficiaries of funds from your [supposed charitable foundation](#). *Shouldn't the American people in fact view you as the elitist, and a hypocritical one at that?*

7. What is your religion, really? And has the answer in the past changed as the South Carolina primary approached?

I want to ask about your seemingly [ever-changing religious beliefs](#). In [June 2007](#), McClatchy reported, "McCain still calls himself an Episcopalian." In [August 2007](#), as ABC reported, your campaign staff identified you as "Episcopalian" in a questionnaire prepared for ABC News' August 5 debate. But as the primary in evangelical-rich South Carolina neared, in September 2007 you said of your religious faith, "It plays a role in my life. By the way, I'm not Episcopalian. I'm Baptist." But in March 2008, [Pastor Dan Yeary](#) of your North Phoenix Baptist Church refused to comment on why you have refused to finally undergo a baptism ceremony. Congressional directories still list you as an Episcopalian. In the past, you've said, "When I'm asked about it, I'll be glad to discuss it." *So what is your religion? And couldn't Americans be forgiven for assuming your changing faith is tied to your changing political needs?*

8. Didn't President Bush betray you with his signing statement on the Detainee Treatment Act? You claim to be against torture, but aren't you a hypocrite for voting "no" on the Senate waterboarding ban?

[You've said](#) that "we can't torture or treat inhumanely suspected terrorists we have captured". And in December 2005, you famously reached a compromise with President Bush on the Detainee Torture Act banning cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detainees. But just two weeks later, [President Bush issued a signing statement](#) making it clear he would ignore the compromise you just reached. Then in February 2007, you voted "no" on a Senate bill banning waterboarding. *Isn't it fair to say President Bush betrayed you with his December 30, 2005 signing statement? And isn't it fair to say you caved to the right-wing of your party on the issue in order to win the Republican nomination?*

9. Why did you flip-flop on the Bush tax cuts you twice opposed? Why do you now support making them permanent for the wealthiest Americans who need them least?

You twice voted against the Bush tax cuts. Now you [support making them permanent](#). In 2001, you said, "I cannot in good conscience support a tax cut in which so many of the benefits go to the most fortunate among us at the expense of middle-class Americans who need tax relief." Now, according to the [Center for American Progress](#), your tax plan would cost more than \$2 trillion over the next decade and "would predominantly benefit the most fortunate taxpayers, offering two new massive tax cuts for corporations and delivering 58 percent of its benefits to the top 1 percent of taxpayers." *Isn't it true that you flip-flopped on the Bush tax cuts? Isn't it fair to say that you now favor a massive expansion of the federal budget deficit in order to fund a tax giveaway to the wealthiest Americans who need it least?*

10. With the economy tanking, shouldn't Americans be concerned over your past statements that "the issue of economics is not something I've understood as well as I should?"

Americans consistently report that the economy is the issue that concerns them most. Yet [more than once](#), you proclaimed your ignorance when it comes to the economy. In November 2005, you told the Wall Street Journal, "I'm going to be honest: I know a lot less about economics than I do about military and foreign policy issues. I still need to be educated." Then in December 2007, you admitted, "The issue of economics is not something I've understood as well as I should." *Shouldn't the American be worried about President McCain's ability to lead the United States out of recession? Given your past statements, shouldn't the American reject out of hand your [claim](#) that "I know the economy better than Senator Clinton and Senator Obama do?"*

Also available online at:

<http://www.perrsppectives.com/blog/archives/001028.htm>