

Four. Conservatives have two new champions, with the demotic touch the Republican party always needs: Sarah Palin and Joe Wurzelbacher. The 2012 ticket? Four years ago, Barack Obama was a state senator. ❁

Michael Barone is a senior writer for U.S. News & World Report and principal co-author of The Almanac of American Politics.

Jim Burnley

HAVING GROWN UP IN THE SOUTH during the last years of segregation, I believe that Senator Obama's election is a remarkable, and positive, commentary on how far we have come as a nation over the last 50 years. Unfortunately, the first African American president may also turn out to be our most radical president.

Although he skillfully portrayed himself as a tax cutter during the campaign, even getting to Senator McCain's right on health care-related taxes, he also signaled his belief that the tax code should be an instrument to redistribute wealth. From his opposition to any restrictions on abortion, to his declared intention to use a cap-and-trade system to outlaw new coal plants, to his support for changes in labor laws to expedite the rapid reunification of the private sector work force, he underscored his standing as the most liberal member of the Senate.

An early indication of whether he intends to pursue a comprehensive radical agenda will be his key personnel appointments. Obviously, Cabinet secretaries and agency heads are extremely important, both substantively and symbolically. But the workhorses of any presidency are senior White House staff, deputy secretaries and deputy administrators, and assistant secretaries and assistant administrators. If President-elect Obama fills these positions with members of the professoriate, union activists,

environmental extremists and the like, then the country will be in for a very rough ride. ❁

Jim Burnley served as secretary of transportation in the Reagan administration.

John H. Fund

AMERICAN POLITICS HAS SHIFTED slightly but clearly to the left in the wake of Bush administration failures. But exit polls showed only 51 percent of Americans want government to do more for them. One of the most striking successes of Barack Obama's campaign is that he was able to convince 19 percent of conservatives that he was going to cut their taxes, while only 12 percent of conservatives thought John McCain would do the same. Thus, even some conservatives could find a reason to vote for change in the person of Barack Obama.

As Democratic pollster Doug Schoen, who helped Bill Clinton win reelection in 1996, puts it: "This election is not a mandate for Democratic policies. Rather, it is a wholesale rejection of the policies of George W. Bush, Republicans, and to a lesser extent John McCain."

If the Democrats govern as if there is no Republican Party, they are likely headed to the kind of reaction that Bill Clinton faced when he made the same misjudgment after the 1992 election victory, following a meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas, with then Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell and House Speaker Tom Foley. At that point, Clinton decided to defer to Congress on key elements of his legislative agenda, and the subsequent lurch to the left did incalculable damage to his presidency.

That may be one reason why Barack Obama has chosen Rahm Emanuel, a respected member of the congressional leadership, to become his new White House chief of staff. Someone will have to tell Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid that the first two years of Democratic dominance of Congress after their 2006 sweep has left them with a Congress that has an approval rating even below that of President Bush.

To the extent that Barack Obama is a successful president, it will be in direct proportion to how much he remains his own man and trusts the political instincts that have gotten him this far, this fast. ❁

John H. Fund is a columnist for the Wall Street Journal and The American Spectator's Politics columnist.

Subscribe to
The American Spectator
 for just \$39 a year!
 Visit us online at
www.spectator.org
 or call **800-524-3469**.

Quin Hillyer

THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT has been hobbled, badly, for quite some time. Despite all of its influence, the Movement (I'll capitalize from here on for clarity) has not had one of its own at the top of a presidential ticket since 1984. Worse, the Movement now claims only a minority of elected officials at virtually every level of government. Worse still, even some officials who are considered Movement types are seriously lacking in their ability to combine principle with practical politics. They just don't know how to meld the two. They don't understand how practical politics and principle are mutually reinforcing.

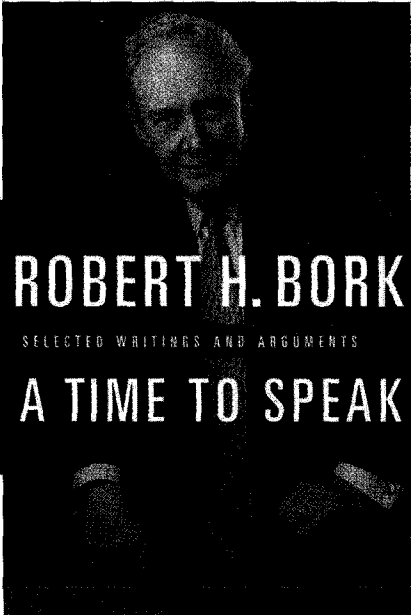
The central mission for the Movement, therefore, is to convince candidates and officeholders alike of the enduring truth that good principles (and good policies) are good politics. Here's how the Movement should pursue that mission: A grand coalition of conservative leaders ought to combine forces for a Candidate Recruitment Political Action Committee—with great fanfare. It should use all its savvy and muscle to make its imprimatur essential for any candidate

right of center, and should make crystal clear to voters nationwide why its candidates merit support.

It should do so by promulgating a clear statement of principles. (One model, perhaps too lengthy, can be found in the mission statement at www.conservativecompact.com.) It should then require every candidate who wants its endorsement to attend a weekend-long training session, perhaps modeled after those at the Leadership Institute, that would include an advance assignment to read every word of the Declaration, the Constitution, and the Federalist Papers, plus at least one popular-literature account of the 1787 Constitutional Convention. (Three good ones are *Miracle at Philadelphia*, by Catherine Drinker Bowen; *Decision in Philadelphia* by Christopher and James Collier; and *A Brilliant Solution*, by Carol Berkin.)

It would not be a wasted exercise. No better example can be cited for public servants trying to combine practical politics with principle, under pressure, for posterity, than can the Constitutional Convention.

Put that together with practical, hands-on training in modern political technology, and with an acclaimed CRPAC panel at the end of the training/selection process to make an endorsement in every



Never-before collected articles, oral arguments, and essays by one of America's foremost legal minds and cultural critics

With new commentary and foreword by the author

ISI BOOKS THE IMPRINT OF THE INTERCOLLEGIATE STUDIES INSTITUTE
 AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOK STORES
www.isibooks.org • (800) 621-2736 • sales@isibooks.org