

MCCAIN'S PIT BULL IS WAGING CULTURAL WARFARE

By Nick Gier

John Edwards has an affair and his political career is finished, but John McCain sleeps with Cindy and his political career takes off with a bang. Former Senator John Tower tells of carousing with McCain while he was still married to his first wife, describing him as "turning forty and wanting to be twenty-five again."

Edwards is criticized for running a campaign on the huge gap between the rich and poor, but Teflon McCain unleashes his "pit bull with lipstick" (Palin's own words) to wage cultural warfare in America. Palin is telling her audiences that she is tired of effete urban elites and their community organizers instilling a culture of dependence in our people. For Palin true American values are found in independent, God-fearing, gun toting, rugged individuals such as herself.

A social worker tells the story about meeting a Palin man in the backwoods of Idaho. She notices that his children have rotten teeth, and she offers to get them fixed. The father declines, saying he would never take any government money for any purpose.

There are a lot of these types in Alaska, and some of them belong to the Alaska Independence Party (AIP), whose main plank is secession from the U.S. AIP founder Joe Vogler once said: "The fires of hell are frozen glaciers compared to my hatred for the American government." As one commentator said: "The Rev. Jeremiah Wright could learn from this man."

Palin's husband Todd was a AIP member from 1995-2002, and Palin attended the party convention in 2000. At the 2006 and 2008 conventions she spoke and encouraged the delegates to "keep up the good work." AIP spokesman Dexter Clark claims that Palin was party member until she became mayor of Wasilla in 1996.

The people Palin and McCain are now claiming as their own rail against Congress and especially Washington lobbyists. McCain and Palin, however, are great buddies with these lobbyists. McCain's campaign was loaded with former lobbyists until he was forced to fire some of them. Mayor Palin hired a lobbyist for \$38,000 a year and, over six years, brought in a whopping \$27 million in federal funds to her town of 6,000 people.

The Economist magazine reports that "between 1996 and 2006 per capita federal spending in Alaska rose from 38 percent above the national average to 71 percent above." Since 2006 Governor Palin has garnered \$750 million in federal funds, \$200 million already in 2008. When McCain says that Palin never asked for "earmarks," which he has criticized for years, he is obviously not telling the truth.

Palin didn't say "No" to the Bridge to Nowhere as she claimed in her convention speech. A video from 2006 shows her defending the Alaskan congressional delegation's request. The bridge was not built, but the money was used elsewhere and not returned to Washington as Palin would like us to believe. The backwoods Idahoan would have said "No Thanks" to all this money, but Palin wants her state to eat more than its fair share at the federal trough.

One would think that Palin's people would better protect their daughters from unwanted pregnancies. I don't like to overdo the Red/Blue dichotomy, but McCain/Palin asked for it, so let's look at some statistics. Using Center for Disease Control data from 2006, the average teen pregnancy rate in the Red States was 49.3 per thousand, but it was only 30.5 in the Blue States.

Japan and European countries have teen birth rates as low as 10 per thousand, and they achieve this goal by solid sex education and contraceptive programs. Both McCain and Palin have pushed abstinence only programs, which have proved to be ineffective, and they have opposed teen pregnancy programs that have been successful in the U.S. and abroad.

Using data from John Sperling's book *The Great Divide: Retro vs. Metro*, I ask you to tell me who is living in a culture of dependence.

- The Red States have 35 percent of the population, while the Blue States have 65 percent.
- Subsidized industries (agriculture, oil, and gas) dominate in the Red States and nonsubsidized manufacturing, financial and information services dominate in the Blue States.
- The Metros pay 71 percent of federal tax while the Retros pay only 29 percent.
- From 1991 to 2001 the Reds received \$800 billion more in goods, services, and cash from the feds than they paid in taxes, while the Blues paid the feds a net \$1.4 trillion. For example, for every dollar that goes from Idaho to Washington, \$1.40 comes back.

Sperling, founder of the University of Phoenix, sums up his research as follows: "Retro America is made up of 25 states where low wages, subsidies, religious zealotry and social rigidity trump diversity, innovation and educational and scientific achievement," which dominate in the Blue States. The Retros have produced only 23 Nobel Laureates in science and economics, while the Metros have given us 235.

Conservatives gleefully point out that if you paint the U.S. by counties, the red will totally overwhelm the isolated blue urban areas. But if we color the states by the ratio of Republican and Democrat votes, most states will come out as shades of purple. This confirms polls that show that Americans prefer moderate candidates, not those on the Blue Left or the Red Right.

Sarah Palin is not a moderate and both she and a once moderate McCain are running one of the most vicious and divisive campaigns in recent history. (Even Karl Rove objects to their tactics!) On every major issue—foreign policy, the

economy, energy, abortion, and the environment— McCain/Palin choose pure ideology without regard for the future of our nation.

Nick Gier taught religion and philosophy at the University of Idaho for 31 years. Read all of his columns on the 2008 election at www.home.roadrunner.com/~nickgier/Election08.htm.