

On Palin

Daniel Mathews

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Are you in support of or against Sarah Palin?

I find it difficult to take Sarah Palin seriously. It makes a mockery of democracy to even ask whether one is in support of or against her. One is not against jokes or in support of them – one laughs at them, more or less heartily, depending on how funny they are. However ridiculous as Palin’s candidacy is, the joke is not at all funny, in fact it is extremely dangerous.

The standard criticism that she is ignorant and inexperienced seems valid to me — although it is true that, with congress regularly voting to support government actions that amount to war crimes and breaches of international law, experience as a politician in Washington in some respects roughly equates to criminality. Indeed, one could well argue that Palin has the least blood on her hands of all the major party Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates.

Nonetheless, her stated positions are alarming. She has standard “conservative” (meaning, in standard US doublespeak, radically regressive) positions in opposing reproductive rights (advocating that abortion be illegal even in case of incest or rape!), proper sex education, progressive taxation, and gay marriage. She has extreme religious views that the present times are “end times” — which potentially leads one to doubt not only her judgment, but also her commitment to the preservation of the human species.

Horrendous as those positions are to any non-“conservative” or non-evangelical, her positions are even worse on some matters that ought to be uncontroversial. She takes it upon herself to oppose the consensus of the entire global scientific community on global warming and denies it is anthropogenic. She opposed protections to polar bears against the advice of her own Alaskan state scientists — and denied independent researchers access to the reports of those scientists, an outrageous cover-up. She supports drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and even went so far as to say in regard to a new natural gas pipeline: “I think God’s will has to be done in unifying people and companies to get that gas line built, so pray for that.” She approached a librarian as mayor of Wasilla about potentially banning books — in a country where freedom of speech and the press is enshrined in the constitution.

Furthermore, she takes the Bush-Cheney view of executive constitutional power, whereby the Vice President takes vastly more power than the constitution intends, including as part of the legislative branch — a blatant violation of separation of powers. I already mentioned the outrageous secrecy of her governorship, with respect to environmental science — and it extended even to using personal email accounts for government business, in the manner of Bush-Cheney White House extreme secrecy.

And, of course, along with McCain, she supports continued war and occupation in Iraq, escalation in Afghanistan, escalation of the US military budget — already approximately half of Earth's military budget — bombing of Pakistan, threats to Iran, aggressive expansion of NATO threatening Russia, and unquestioning support for Israel, presumably including the usual approximate \$3 billion in aid per year regardless of human rights abuses and brutal occupation policies in occupied Palestine.

She is an embarrassment to the nation, and a laughing stock in much of the world already.

I should add that many of these criticisms apply equally to Obama and Biden — especially in regard to foreign policy — so that the election quite arguably becomes a choice between the greater or lesser war criminal. That is not a choice that the citizens of a democratic society should have to make, and it is not a set of choices that, in my view, one ought to accept. Regardless of who wins, activist groups like Stanford Says No to War (of which I am a member) will need to oppose the shocking militarism and aggression that has become bipartisan US policy.

I would say that it is the task of all concerned citizens, including the media — not only as a professional duty, but as a moral obligation — to expose charlatans like Palin for what they are, and to expose the true nature of the choices (or lack thereof) available at this election. Of course, this applies not only for Palin, but for all other crooks and charlatans too.