

GOP lives in a place called denial

The Republican Convention's divisive tone left me feeling dispirited. In contrast, the Democratic Convention's message of unity filled me with a sense of hope and pride. I was bursting with pride as I watched the Democratic Party embrace Barack Obama, the first African-American presidential nominee. Obama's historic nomination took on more significance, because his acceptance speech occurred on the 45th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic "I Have a Dream" speech. Some say this was a remarkable coincidence. I am inclined to believe it was fate.

When African Americans did not even have the right to vote, Dr. King told the nation before a massive gathering in Washington, D.C., 45 years ago about his dream of an America where all people were treated equally, and where his children would "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Obama is the embodiment of Dr. King's dream.

Not to be outdone, John McCain decided to shake things up and make history as well by selecting Sarah Palin as the first female vice presidential nominee of the Republican Party. Ordinarily, this nomination would be commendable, but given the fact that Palin is woefully inexperienced, this nomination is irresponsible.

Obviously, McCain selected the conservative Palin in a transparent attempt to win over Hillary Clinton voters and to breathe life into an otherwise lackluster campaign. This seems to defeat McCain's convention theme of putting "country first." Although Palin's accomplishments to date are admirable, she is no Hillary Clinton.

At the Democratic Convention, Obama appealed to his Republican rivals to elevate the political discourse and stop making "a big election about small things." Unfortunately, the Republicans ignored Obama and con-



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tinued in their small-minded politics of character assassination and playing on people's fears.

The Republicans spent much of their convention making disparaging remarks about Obama and espousing the importance of patriotism while transmitting subliminal messages intended to scare people and imply that Obama is unpatriotic. They talked about protecting America against another terrorist attack and achieving victory in Iraq. McCain continues to vehemently support the unpopular war in Iraq despite its human and economic costs, and incontrovertible evidence that Iraq did not attack America on Sept. 11, 2001. The Republicans failed to mention that the administration of President George Bush launched the war based on a false premise. They also failed to mention that the real perpetrator of the Sept. 11 attack, Osama bin Laden, is still running around free seven years later under the watch of a Republican president.

Even though McCain gave a heart-wrenching recount of his experience as a hostage in the Vietnam War, his nomination speech, like the convention, was a disappointment. After months of accusing Obama of delivering speeches replete with rhetoric, in the most important speech of his life, McCain provided hardly any specific information about how he plans to accomplish the changes that he now says he wants. Although he tried to present himself as a unifier, that message was overshadowed by the convention's divisive tone.

Despite American's ailing economy, McCain did not address the multitude of domestic problems that are threatening the American way of life and economic stability. Recent statistics show that America is experiencing a 6.1 percent unemployment rate, the highest in five years. In August alone, 84,000 Americans lost their jobs. Countless others have difficulty finding a job. Food and gas prices are also at an all-time high. Thousands of Americans have lost their homes. About 47 million Americans do not have health insurance. Women and minorities still struggle for equal opportunities. A college education is becoming more unattainable due to escalating tuitions. America has the highest prison population rate in the world, and America's reputation around the world has been severely damaged under the Bush administration, which by the way has threatened our national security.

The American dream is slipping away everyday, and the Republicans don't seem to have a clue. Any psychologist will tell you that you first have to acknowledge that you have a problem in order to solve the problem. The Republicans are intent on making this election about character and patriotism, because they don't have a clear vision for the future and they lack creative ideas. While character matters, this election is too important to hinge on personality.

McCain's seemingly close-minded, militaristic mentality worries me. Everything appears to be cut and dry with him. You are either going to win the Iraq war or lose it, no matter the cost. You are good or evil, weak or strong. Life is not that simple.

I hope Americans will heed Obama's call for a more mature, intelligent debate. We simply cannot afford to get sucked into frivolous debates about inconsequential issues.

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