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**Winning Obama
The African World
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With the end of the Republican Convention one could almost hear the voice, drawing from Shakespeare, announce: "*Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war!*" In other words, it's on.

Senator Obama will need to win the November election based on much more than the excitement that he garnered in the primaries. Even his stunning acceptance speech in Denver is not enough, nor even his dismantling of the disingenuous Republican attack on him for being, ironically, elitist.

Senator Obama must recognize that his candidacy succeeds or fails thematically on the basis of whether he is able to present himself as the candidate for a "new world," a candidate for "economic justice," and a candidate who will continue to break down doors. In those realms there is no room for equivocation or nuance. The voters must not only see him as a person of integrity, youth and vitality, but someone who has concretized CHANGE particularly in these three spheres.

What do we mean by the candidate for a "new world?" Quite simply, that Senator Obama must be the candidate that billions are hoping will introduce a different approach to US foreign policy. He has given hints of this, yet seems willing to back down when the political Right questions his defense credentials. The warm reception he received overseas had little to do with Obama being a "celebrity," but rather that he represented for so many a repudiation of the outrages of US foreign policy under George Bush.

Candidate Obama must more clearly enunciate his views on global warming and environmental catastrophe, not to mention upgrading his emphasis on diplomacy over militarism. This will represent recognition that we are in a very different world, but would also represent recognition that the world is systematically rejecting US bullying.

Masses of people in the USA are looking for a way out from under the cloud that has existed where the country is increasingly hated and feared. This attracted many supporters to Obama during the primaries. At the same time, when Senator Obama makes statements regarding attacking targets in Pakistan; moving troops into Afghanistan; or threatening Iran - suggesting that Iran is a threat - it moves the discussion entirely on to McCain's terms. When the discussion is on McCain's terms, McCain wins.

This is not enough, however. Candidate Obama must be the candidate for economic justice. This is not about trying to get spin doctors to help him with white workers. This involves one of the most difficult tasks for Democratic Party candidates: openly align themselves with those in the bottom 80% of the population who are being crushed by corporate America. This is more than acknowledging that people are suffering; they know that and so does everyone else. It is about projecting tax relief (which he is, and must continue) but also positioning himself with workers in struggle (such as the Boeing workers who are on strike, or the Smithfield workers in North Carolina organizing under horrendous conditions). He must, along with other representatives of his campaign, situate himself among the impoverished working people that he knew as a community organizer in years past. He must give voice to their anger and fury. In this light, he must not back down from his statements about the bitterness felt by so many white workers who turn to religion and guns, but point out that the bitterness is self-evident: any number of community-based or workplace-based organizations can provide countless examples. The question is not whether there is bitterness, but how that bitterness will be channeled.

Finally, Candidate Obama must be the person who will continue to knock down doors. Among other things, he must be an open and unapologetic ally of women who want that glass ceiling shattered. This voice must be in his speeches, and not just because the charlatan Governor from the great state of Alaska is now in the race. This voice must be central to his campaign because it is the right stand.

Despite the fact that it is assumed that Obama will receive significant support from African Americans, Latinos and Asians, his voice regarding knocking down doors applies to these groups as well. The error made by his campaign in not paying sufficient attention to Puerto Rico during the primaries must be rectified in these last two months with a clear recognition that all these groups, among others, must not be taken for granted but must see themselves in his campaign and hear their voices in his remarks.

There is no question but that Barack Obama can win. The energy that exists to support him, along with a brilliantly organized campaign, creates exceptional conditions for victory. Will he win, however, will depend as much on the voters understanding, not necessarily the detail of each proposal, but that CHANGE will represent a sharp break from a condition that has been strangling them.

The choice ultimately rests with Senator/Candidate Obama.

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