

**IN MY OPINION****Caroline Porter****If I were on "Meet the Press"**

We voters get pretty much what we deserve. We don't like the hemming and hawing of candidates and public officeholders when asked about issues, but get nervous when direct answers are given. Consider Howard Dean's candidacy. He lost support because he was too direct and too honest.

Just once I would like to be a Congressman or presidential candidate interviewed by Tim Russert on "Meet the Press." He asks simple questions. It is so frustrating to hear the mish-mash that comes out of the mouths of our elected officials who are afraid to say what they really think.

Okay – here I am as a candidate or member of Congress.

**R. Regarding the war in Iraq. Has it been worth it?**

P. No. Five hundred and seventy American soldiers have been killed and 3,500 wounded. Over 10,000 Iraqis and Afghans have been killed. Why would we lose one life over the likes of that slime-ball Saddam Hussein? He had nothing to do with 9/11 and was no threat to the United States.

**R. Who do you think opposes this war?**

P. Veterans, because they know its horrors.

**R. Do you mean we shouldn't have invaded Iraq?**

P. Of course not. The United States broke international law by invading a country that was no threat to us and whose population didn't want us there.

**R. Do you think our troops are dying in vain?**

P. No one wants to believe his loved one has died in vain. Every man in my immediate family is a veteran and my son is in the Army. Members of the military must prepare physically and mentally for orders they may receive. At the same time, I am heartsick that we haven't learned to solve problems without war and I believe this one could have been avoided.

**R. Do you think the world is a safer place without Saddam Hussein?**

P. Are you kidding? Where have you been for the last three months? Terrorism has intensified — American soldiers, Iraqis, Spaniards, Italians and Afghans are being killed daily. In the meantime, Saddam is alive and well, being fed, clothed and kept safe by the Bush administration while the rest of the world burns. There is no guarantee he won't get free and he, or someone worse than he, will come to power again.

**R. Won't the world be better off without Osama bin Laden?**

P. No. There are plenty of terrorists to take his place. Anyway, the rumor is that the Republicans are hiding him in a Motel 6 somewhere until about mid-October.

**R. Are you saying you don't believe what the Bush administration tells us about the war on terrorism?**

P. Why should we? By this time, their credibility is zilch.

**R. Don't you think we should wage a**

**war on terror?**

P. Absolutely, we should. But terrorism is all over the world and obviously right here in our country. We should be concentrating on tighter control of immigration and enforcement of immigration rules, beefing up our local police force and keeping our National Guard troops at home to protect us instead of citizens of foreign countries.

It's clear that invading a country, resulting in increasing terrorist danger and the killing of thousands of innocent citizens and soldiers does not eliminate terrorism.

**R. Do you think the Bush administration could have prevented 9/11?**

P. I don't know. It will be interesting to see what the 9/11 Commission report says, but there are some pretty important people in past and current administrations who say that warnings were given and ignored.

I'm also convinced that president Bush has used that tragedy to distract us from the issues of the tanking economy, loss of jobs, inaction on healthcare and the hugest budget deficit in our history. To dish out tax cuts at the same time we are fighting a war costing billions of dollars is irresponsible and putting our economy and our country at great risk.

**R. Do you think John Kerry will be a good presidential candidate?**

P. Yes, because he's not afraid to speak his mind and will answer the opposition's charges quickly and forcefully.

**R. Do you worry about his defending his 25-year record as a U.S. Senator including some contradictory votes?**

P. No. Twenty-five years is a long time. Current events and new information change opinions and policies.

**R. Do you worry that John Kerry's wealth and comfortable upbringing make him out of touch with the rest of the electorate?**

P. That's baloney. Middle class and poor people can be as snobbish and patronizing as anyone. The Kennedys, Roosevelts and Churchills were compassionate leaders and empathized with the common man. They used their wealth and privilege for the good of all. Why should anyone apologize for being rich?

**R. Who do you think should be Kerry's running mate?**

P. Bill Richardson, Governor of New Mexico. His personality would compliment Kerry's and he's from another part of the country. He's an expert in foreign affairs, having been ambassador to the United Nations and involved in several successful hostage negotiations. He's sharp and popular.

**R. Well, Mrs. Porter, thank you for appearing on "Meet the Press."**

P. Thank you Tim. This has been an extraordinary opportunity for me.

Hey, who says we can't dream?

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