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MSNBC's Matthews Emphasizes Liberal Questions at GOP Debate: Is Bill Clinton Good for America?

The Two Debates: MSNBC's Liberal Agenda

On Friday's *Today* show, MSNBC's Chris Matthews defended his ludicrous decision to ask the GOP candidates if it would "be good for America to have Bill Clinton back living in the White House?" Matthews explained the sociological insight: "They all sort of guffawed. Well, that's a particularly Republican response. If I offered that same question up to Democrats...they would be cheering like mad."

So Matthews proved that the ten Republican debaters are not Democrats — was there any doubt? The weird Clinton question was symptomatic of how MSNBC and debate co-sponsor ThePolitico.com spent valuable time asking the GOP candidates questions that reflected the agenda of far-left bloggers, not the concerns of GOP primary voters. A week earlier, while moderator Brian Williams did pose a few right-leaning questions to the Democratic field, most of that debate reflected issues that rate high with Democratic voters. In other words, both debates were dominated by liberal agenda questions.

■ **The Democratic Debate:** Brian Williams started off with a conservative-oriented question to Hillary Clinton about Harry Reid's statement that the Iraq war is lost: "A letter to today's *USA Today* calls his comments 'treasonous,' and says if General Patton were alive today, Patton would 'wipe his boots' with Senator Reid. Do you agree with the position of your leader in the Senate?" But by the time Williams reached Dennis Kucinich, his Iraq questions were skewing left: "Do you think one can be against the war and still fund it?"

On universal health care, Williams asked the candidates to explain how they would pay for it, not challenging them on the need for such a huge new government expansion. On gun control, Williams tried to embarrass New Mexico's Bill Richardson as too far right: "You are currently, if our research is correct, the NRA's favorite presidential candidate of either party....Did anything about the massacre at Virginia Tech make you re-think any part of your position on guns?"

Most questions posed from e-mails were ideologically neutral, such as "What is the most significant political or professional mistake you have made in the past four years?" While Mrs. Clinton was hit with a question from the right — "Would you defy the majority of American citizens and offer a form of amnesty for illegal aliens?" — John Edwards enjoyed this liberal-oriented question: "Concerning the astronomical windfall of major oil companies again in the first quarter, why is gas still on the rise?"

■ **The GOP Debate:** Matthews posed some important questions from the right, asking each candidate "to mention a tax you'd like to cut," and whether "the day that *Roe v.*

Wade is repealed [would] be a good day for America?" But much of the debate was spent posing hostile questions from the left. Matthews at one point asked Jim Gilmore about the Left's favorite whipping boy: "Is

Karl Rove your friend? Do you want to keep him in the White House if you get elected President?" He challenged Romney about "Roman Catholic bishops who would deny communion to elected officials who support abortion rights....Do you see that as interference in public life?"

Many of the e-mailed questions used liberal catch-phrases: "Will you work to protect women's rights, as in fair wages and reproductive choice?" And several e-mailers hoped to catch candidates in moments of ignorance, asking Rudy Giuliani to explain the difference between a Sunni and a Shiite, and asking Tommy Thompson to say how many Americans have been killed or wounded in Iraq.

At their debate, none of the Democrats faced questions aimed at showing their lack of knowledge. That such an approach was taken with the GOP candidates shows the liberal agenda MSNBC brought to both forums — with the priorities of GOP voters left by the wayside. — *Rich Noyes*

On MSNBC, both the Democratic and GOP debates were dominated by liberal agenda questions.

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