Christopher Hitchens has reached an endorsement by process of elimination. John McCain, he writes, isn’t up to the job, while “the only public events that have so far featured his absurd choice of running mate have shown her to be a deceiving and unscrupulous woman utterly unversed in any of the needful political discourses but easily trained to utter preposterous lies and to appeal to the basest element of her audience.”

The most insulting thing that a politician can do is to compel you to ask yourself: “What does he take me for?” Precisely this question is provoked by the selection of Gov. Sarah Palin. I wrote not long ago that it was not right to condescend to her just because of her provincial roots or her piety, let alone her slight flirtatiousness, but really her conduct since then has been a national disgrace. It turns out that none of her early claims to political courage was founded in fact, and it further turns out that some of the untested rumors about her—her vindictiveness in local quarrels, her bizarre religious and political affiliations—were very well-founded, indeed. Moreover, given the nasty and lowly task of stirring up the whack-job fringe of the party’s right wing and of recycling patent falsehoods about Obama’s position on Afghanistan, she has drawn upon the only talent that she apparently possesses.

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