Back to Kuwait; Fund-Raisers Need Ethics; Will Quayle Survive?

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BACK TO KUWAIT -- Nearly 2,000 Marines landed in Kuwait earlier this week, and a University of Dayton professor thinks their presence has more to do with politics than international security. President Bush's approval ratings soared to 90 percent after sending troops to the Persian Gulf, philosophy professor Joseph Kunkel said. "That's the highest any president has ever achieved," he said. The only time ratings were higher for another American president was for John F. Kennedy during (but not after) the "Bay of Pigs" invasion. "It's the nature of our political system," Kunkel said. "We are playing heavy politics in Kuwait because Bush needs to act tough. He obviously is using this to cut into Clinton's lead."

And in the context of American political history, the strategy should work, Kunkel said. In recent history, it worked for Bush with Panama and Ronald Reagan with Grenada and Libya. "It's politics, politics without ethics," Kunkel said.

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FUND-RAISERS NEED ETHICS -- Scandals such as the one that rocked the United Way earlier this year are rooted in bad decision-making, said University of Dayton philosophy professor Marilyn Fischer, who teaches a course in business ethics. "It starts with small, everyday decisions," Fischer said. "At the root of personal integrity is basic honesty, concern for the well-being of others, and seeing things from the other point of view." Fischer said all non-profit agencies can suffer because of a high-profile controversy. Decisions should take into account the organizational mission, how results will be perceived by volunteers, workers, donors and the community, and last but not least, one's own integrity.

Fischer shared her strategies with the National Society of Fund-Raising Executives this summer. She shows fund-raisers how to make small-scale decisions ethically in order to prevent major scandals from blooming in their organizations.

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WILL QUAYLE SURVIVE? -- On the eve of the Republican convention, it would be ruthless and even reckless to dump Dan Quayle from the ticket, despite strong anti-Quayle sentiment surfacing in the Bush camp, says a University of Dayton political science professor. "At this stage of the game, it would hurt Bush because it would call into question his judgment to begin with," says Gerald Kerns.

The choice of running mates has caused problems for presidential candidates before, Kerns noted. When allegations were raised about Richard Nixon's "secret political fund" during Eisenhower's 1952 run for the presidency, Nixon appeared on television to make the famous "Checkers" speech that some say saved his career. Unlike Nixon, "Quayle has done nothing to enhance his image," Kerns says. "Irrespective, Bush will keep him anyway."

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