

“HOLED UP”

As many people have pointed out, the McCain campaign are sending Sarah Palin back to Alaska to hide out until the journalists forget about her.

CHUCK TODD: Well Ron, We've been able to see that there are a few folks who are saying [Palin is] actually going to hole up in Alaska for a little, she's got to see her son off who's going to be deployed to Iraq, so we may not see her on the campaign trail for a little while.

RON ALLEN: Yes she hasn't been home for a long time, and she's obviously got some business to deal with there.

Obviously, part of the reason the campaign is sending Palin away to the woods is because the media has made it clear they're not satisfied with only scripted interactions with her—the McCain campaign needs to get Palin away from the media at least until they do some real vetting of her. (Though, as Mudflats points out, there are journalists in AK, too.)

But I think there are several things contributing to their last minute change of plans.

- They intend to shield her from the media, as everyone has mentioned.
- McCain campaign staffers have been in AK for several days, trying to bury all the dirt on Palin; I'm certain they need her personal involvement to bury some of it, not least on TrooperGate, in which her

promised cooperation has disappeared in the last several days.

- She's a quick study, no doubt, but she still has a great deal of cramming to do before she can answer any real questions about McCain's policy or foreign policy in general.
- If the MI Independents quoted in this focus group are even remotely representative, then I suspect the McCain camp has internal polling showing that Palin helps immensely in some places, but drags down the ticket in others. Sterling Heights is adjacent to Oakland County, where all those Independent voters were panning the Palin pick. I think the campaign realized they better get a better sense of where Palin helps them before they roll her out and offend voters in swing states.
- After last night's underwhelming speech, McCain is being overshadowed by his Veep candidate. He needs to reassert himself as the dominant player on the ticket, before Palin comes out of her hibernation and

wows the crowds again.

She'll be back, probably in heavily vetted appearances and fundraisers. But for now, McCain's campaign have to figure out what they've got on their hands, and figure out how to manage it to get the wrinkly white dude elected.