

CLINTON-GORE '08

✘ I saw someone on TV (sorry—I have no idea who it was or even what channel it was on) who argued that the Obama-Clinton appearance yesterday was more important for Bill than for Obama. Sure, the appearance was about reassuring everyone that there are no more (stated) hard feelings about the primary. But it also gave Bill an opportunity to bask in the glow of Obama's goodwill, perhaps to exorcise some of the bad feelings from South Carolina.

I would add to this insight that the timing is key. Obama didn't campaign **with** Bill until polls show him with a big lead, particularly in Electoral College Votes. That is, Obama invited Bill to campaign with him **after** it became highly probable that he will win; though Bill has campaigned for the campaign already (with Biden in PA, in VA, and in AR), if Obama wins it will be his win, on his own merits. Which is, I guess, where the room for this gesture comes from.

Don't get me wrong—Bill no doubt will help Obama build a bigger lead in FL, which is currently the closest of the big swing states (even OH shows a bigger Obama lead!). But as for the election—rather than the state—Bill has been helpful, but by no means instrumental to Obama's success thus far. (I'm particularly reminded of all the complaints that Gore didn't invite Clinton to campaign with him in 2000.) At that level, then, it seems as much symbolic as anything else.

And now we have news that Gore himself (with Tipper) will campaign for Obama in FL.

Gore will appear at "Vote for Change" rallies in West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale, according to a release just issued by the Obama campaign.

Gore returns (on Halloween, no less) to the land of butterfly ballots, hanging

chads and a 36-day national recount drama that determined Gore lost and George W. Bush won the 2000 presidential election.

Talk about symbolism! Gore, like Clinton, has campaigned for Obama before (for example, at Gore's endorsement of Obama in Detroit earlier this year, which I screwed up royally by missing). But at a time when the outcome of the race—but not Florida—seems more and more favorable to Obama, Obama has invited Gore to the scene of the 2000 crime. West Palm Beach and Broward County, no less!

Like Bill's visit, Gore's will no doubt help Obama build his lead in FL. I'm sure a lot of those elderly Jews who "voted" for Buchanan in 2000, for example, will welcome the opportunity to support Gore again. And any margin in FL will help push Obama beyond the point where shenanigans might deprive him of the state.

But above all, this is really wonderful symbolism—to have Clinton and Gore and Obama, all three, work together to put Florida in the Democratic column.