Where is President Huckabee?

By Mel Lavine

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In September 2010 when Newt Gingrich was considering a run for the presidency, he ripped President Obama as a “Kenyan, anti-colonial thinker.” In an interview with the National Review, he said he believed Obama was operating from within a “Kenyan, anti-colonial” view of the world. It is a mindset, he added, which was “authentically dishonest” and “factually insane.”

Never mind that Obama hardly knew his Kenyan-born father, and was born in Hawaii, and raised by a white mother who was born in Kansas. As Robert Gibbs, the White House spokesman pointed out, Gingrich was playing the birther card – appealing to a fringe of people who don’t think the president was born in this country.

To the best of my knowledge, the onetime House speaker, who is leading the Republican pack in Iowa, has yet to take back his false, racially-tainted rhetoric.

Debra J. Saunders in the San Francisco Chronicle reminded us that his career was “capped with dazzling successes – followed by easily avoidable disasters stroked by Gingrich’s super size ego.” She cites a quote from a Republican congressman in Politico. He said that when Gingrich was speaker (1995-1999), members would have to check the morning news to see what he “had said that you have to clean up in your own district.”

Karen Tumulty, of the Washington Post, and formerly of Time, a long-time Gingrich watcher, characterized him in an interview on NPR with Terry Gross, as not structured, a loose cannon, shoots from the hip. When, as speaker, he led the move to impeach President Clinton, he was himself involved in an extra-marital affair with a female staff worker.

He was disciplined for unethical behavior in 1997 by the House of Representatives but, according to the record, a full hearing was avoided.

When Republicans lost seats after the 1998 elections, Gingrich resigned from the House under pressure from his Republican colleagues.

In the years since, he denounced Freddie Mac's lending practices in the housing crisis, yet was on the agency's payroll as an adviser, and has become a highly paid political consultant. But, as Karen Tumulty noted, "Destiny saved a seat for him on the bus" in 2012.

Polls show him surging, taking a clear lead in several early voting states, notably in Iowa ,which holds its caucuses first on January 3. The media has been focused on Iowa to a deafening degree. So much so that one might assume that Iowa is the defining hour of the election year. So what happened in Iowa the last time? An underdog won in an upset. My question is: So where is President Huckabee today?

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