



WMRC Article

08 January 2004

CONTENTS

US Elections 2004: General
Wesley Clark Invades
Presidential Campaign with
Centrist Democratic Message

United States: US Elections 2004: General Wesley Clark Invades Presidential Campaign with Centrist Democratic Message

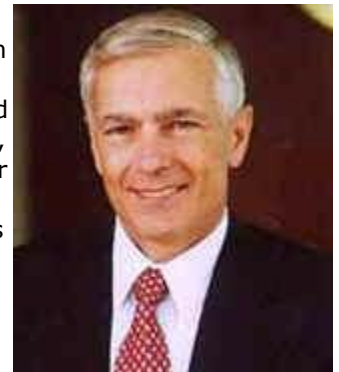
In the fifth of WMRC's US presidential candidate profiles, the remarkable late entry of former general Wesley Clark and his chances of staying the course are assessed.

WMRC Perspective	
Significance	Former four-star general Wesley Clark publicly weighed up a campaign for the presidency for months as the nine other candidates built their organisation, raised money and reached out to voters, but as soon as Clark announced his intentions to run, he immediately became a top-tier candidate and changed the dynamics of the race.
Implications	In a time of uncertainty and fear in the US, Clark's long and distinguished career in the military appeals to a wider audience of centre-left Democratic voters as well as independents and even some Republicans, making him a viable candidate against President George W. Bush - a distinction the other nine candidates have yet to prove.
Outlook	WMRC believes Clark will enjoy an extended 'honeymoon' from the press and pundits, allowing his genuine outsider appeal and military credentials to keep him in the race through the critical early primaries, but poor fundraising and lack of depth on domestic issues will keep him from winning the primary. Nevertheless, look for Clark as a potential vice-presidential candidate.



Between now and Election Day on 2 November 2004, WMRC will provide extensive coverage and in-depth analysis of the 2004 election campaigns in the US. Analyses will be divided into five different series: 1) Major candidate profiles, of which this is the fifth; 2) key US House races; 3) US Senate races; 4) and 5) domestic and foreign policy issues influencing the election.

Former general Wesley Clark redefined the Democratic primary for president when he made the very late announcement that he was to be a candidate. Despite months of open speculation - initiated by Clark - the much-anticipated announcement immediately propelled Clark to the top tier of the overcrowded field of candidates. Clark initially gained prominence for leading the successful multinational campaign against Slobodan Milosevic, as the head of NATO in 2000, and his subsequent experience as a television commentator following his retirement from the Army. After only a short time in the race, Clark has raised a respectable sum of contributions and has thus far enjoyed a strong surge in polls due to his military experience and perceived ability to present a formidable challenge to President George W. Bush.



www.clark04.com

The Warrior-Scholar: A Modern Renaissance Man

No one else in the Democratic field - nor President Bush for that matter - can even come close to Clark's status as a distinguished soldier. He rose quickly through the ranks to become one of the highest-ranking officers in the military. Beginning with a combat tour of duty in Vietnam during which he was wounded, Clark's 32-year active-duty military career has been stellar, although he has occasionally run into problems of politics. Not only has he distinguished himself on the battlefield, but Clark also graduated at the top of his class from the US Army's prestigious military school at West Point, after which he went on to obtain a master's degree at Oxford University in the UK on a Rhodes Scholarship. With Clark's résumé, especially in a time of war, he has the potential to broaden his appeal from one based merely on his military record to one that includes his leadership and analytical abilities.

Election Ambush

Curriculum Vitae	
Hometown	Little Rock, Arkansas
Personal	Age: 59
	Wife: Gertrude; Children: 1
Religion	Catholic
Education	West Point Military Academy, 1966
	Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, Master's in philosophy, politics and economics, 1968
Professional	Retired US Army four-star general
	NATO Supreme Allied Commander, 1997-2000
	Director of Strategic Plans and Policy for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1994-1996
Political	No experience in elected office
Website	www.clark04.com

Following Clark's success in Kosovo, he went on to be a popular television commentator on military affairs. After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent war on terrorism, Clark began to focus his attention on the presidency, allowing political pundits to speculate ad infinitum about what he would do. Rather than jump into the race along with the other nine candidates, and at a time when Bush was still riding the wave of post-Iraqi conflict popularity, Clark allowed the pundits to continue to ponder, neither encouraging nor dissuading them. Once the nine candidates had staked out their positions, and after Bush began to show weakness, Clark chose then to launch his bid for the presidency. The implicit support Clark has received from the Clintons left some speculating that a conspiracy was afoot - all the variations of which are bogus because they are based on the premise that a four-star general and combat veteran could be manipulated by anyone, even though they might possess such irresistible charms as the former president.

Rambo Goes to Washington?

As important as Clark's military experience is and as well received as he's been thus far, the shelter he has from intense scrutiny will not last once his fellow Democratic opponents learn how to respond to his candidacy. Some opponents have already begun to find holes in his record, such as when he met with General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian-Serb general accused of slaughtering hundreds of civilians in pursuit of ethnic cleansing, against the advice of his superiors. Clark also openly challenged the Clinton administration's reluctance to use ground troops in Kosovo. One of the seeds of doubt that has been planted is whether or not Clark's military experience can work in the rough-and-tumble of Washington politics. Opponents point to a short fuse, his tendency to micromanage, and intense competitiveness that often results in unwillingness to compromise.

Generals as Presidents

Since the election of General George Washington, eleven generals have been elected president. However, not since General Dwight Eisenhower - also known as 'Ike' - was elected in 1952, after he retired from the military following his role as Supreme Allied Commander of forces invading France in 1944, has a general been elected to lead the country. Clark is hoping to capitalise on his military career and the current state of affairs to win the presidency. Like Ike, Clark has never held office and spent the majority of his career in the Army. Also similar to Ike, Clark offers himself as a leader for uncertain times. However, there are two important differences between the conditions under which they ran: first, the campaign and election process in the US is very different now compared to what it was like in the 1950s. The media plays a very different role and is more critical than it was before, and this hurts Clark because rather than simply cash in on his military reputation, he will be forced to define clear positions on a whole set of complicated and complex issues, which is clearly not his strong suit. Second, voters do not fully appreciate Clark's role in Kosovo because the situation did not pose a direct threat to the US, as opposed to Ike's role in World War II - a war that presented a clear threat and dominated the country and the world for six years. Although the US is now living in fear of terrorism, fighting to bring stability to Iraq and Afghanistan as well as waging a global campaign against terrorists, these are primarily concerns without direct implications on daily life in America.

The Bottom Line

Without a constant clear and present danger, US voters still require any candidate for president to gain their approval on the issues that resonate closer to home, such as employment, the economy, healthcare and education - all areas where Clark is at best undefined and at worst unprepared. Americans crave a strong leader during these times and may look the other way on specifics or lack of experience on domestic issues, but political opponents won't be so forgiving and neither will the media. Clark's status will only get him so far. All of this is known to Clark, which means most likely his real goal is to position himself to be a top-tier vice-presidential candidate, since his military experience would be all that was required to round out the experience of one of the other front-runners.

Some have said that he is not one to play second fiddle to anyone, but spending time as a civilian has humbled Clark and he is too smart to think that he will be allowed to run when he has not proven he knows how to walk. Clark is one of the only candidates that has nothing to lose in this primary, so long as he doesn't make too many enemies along the way. The worst-case scenario is that he runs a good campaign, loses the nomination and is not chosen to be a VP candidate. However, it makes him a household name and a bona fide member of the Democratic party for the next election in 2008 when, if Bush is re-elected in 2004, Senator Hillary Clinton is expected to make her run, putting Clark in an ideal position to be her running mate. Either way, Clark is here to stay, although he will not become the Democratic nominee for president this time around.

Campaign Summary

<p>Standing/Poll</p> <p>How the candidate holds up against other candidates, according to the latest poll.</p>	<p>CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll, 19 September 2003:</p> <p>Clark (22%), Dean (13%), Gephardt (11%), Kerry (11%), Lieberman (10%), Sharpton (4%), Edwards (4%), Graham (4%), Braun (3%) and Kucinich (3%)</p>
<p>Fundraising</p> <p>How much the candidate has raised to date, based on quarterly reports filed with the Federal Elections Commission.</p>	<p>First Quarter 2003: none</p> <p>Second Quarter 2003: none</p> <p>Third Quarter 2003 (est.): Clark US\$2m (Of the other candidates, Dean has raised US\$15m, Kerry US\$5m, Lieberman US\$4m, Gephardt US\$4m, Edwards US\$3m, and Graham US\$2m; estimates for Kucinich, Braun and Sharpton are unavailable until official filings are released).</p>
<p>Supporters</p> <p>Who the typical backers of the candidate are.</p>	<p>Clark's military credentials attracts conservative Democrats who are particularly concerned about defence, independents who like his outsider image, and even some Republicans who believe his military experience trumps Bush. Unlike previous front-runner Dean, Clark's supporters represent a broad spectrum of voters. He even attracts hardcore Democrats because their ultimate goal is to defeat Bush - regardless of who replaces him - and many believe Clark is their best chance.</p>
<p>Domestic Agenda</p> <p>Highlights from the candidate's stated domestic policy goals (only issues that are expected to be frequently discussed during the campaign are mentioned).</p>	<p>Economy: Opposes the sections of the Bush tax cut plan that target wealthier taxpayers in favour of an economic stimulus plan that will use increased government spending to stimulate job creation: US\$40bn on homeland security, US\$40bn to state and local government projects and US\$20bn in economic incentives to small businesses.</p> <p>Gay Rights: Supports 'civil unions' - a parallel system for legal conjoining of same-sex couples, opposes a Constitutional Amendment banning gay marriage, and supports a review of the military's 'don't ask, don't tell' policy regarding gays serving in the armed forces.</p> <p>Affirmative Action: Supports the recent US Supreme Court decision upholding affirmative action programmes and would nominate justices that would uphold such programmes in the future.</p> <p>Education: Supports the 'Leave No Child Behind' programme but has called for increased funding; job-transition training for adults; increased teacher training and pay; increased funding for vocational schools; and lowering the student-teacher ratio for grade school.</p> <p>Healthcare: Opposes single-payer healthcare; supports universal health coverage, and health and nutrition promotion.</p> <p>Environment: Opposes drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; supports regulating the production of increased fuel-efficiency automobiles, and the US signing</p>

onto the Kyoto Protocol with some adjustments.

Homeland Security: Supports more training for first-responders, improving hospitals' abilities to deal with bioterror attacks, strengthening ports, tunnels and other likely infrastructure targets, and more funding for the Coast Guard and customs personnel.

Foreign Agenda

Highlights from the candidate's stated objectives for foreign policy (only issues that are expected to be frequently discussed during the campaign are mentioned).

War in Iraq: Opposes the US-led action in Iraq and initially said he would have voted for the Congressional resolution authorising the war, but later retracted that statement. Supports an independent inquiry into the Bush administration's influence over intelligence regarding Iraq's weapons programmes leading up to the war.

North Korea and Iran: Supports more aggressive multilateral and bilateral diplomacy with both countries as well as interdiction of suspected efforts to receive or export banned materials, and has issued statements on North Korea alluding to a need to be prepared for war because they have already crossed the line by continuing with efforts to develop nuclear weaponry.

Afghanistan: Supported US-led intervention and was one of the first to call for the US to compel NATO involvement.

Pre-Emptive Strikes: Supports a policy of pre-emption, stating the value of a first strike when an imminent threat exists.

War on Terrorism: Supports long-term policy of promoting democracy, human rights and economic development throughout the Muslim world, and forging strong, broad coalitions of nations.

Sustainable Development: Supports creation of a new US agency to facilitate an expanded foreign aid programme that better leverages multilateral international organisations.

Foreign Trade: Supports liberal, fairly unfettered trade policies, although he supports some of the more general principles regarding labour and environmental standards.

Campaign Strategy

The candidate's strategy for the Primary campaign.

Clark is billing himself as the ultimate outsider candidate, having never served in elective office, which trumps the outsider moniker that rival candidate former Governor Howard Dean has claimed up to this point since *he* has never served in Washington, DC. Clark is also appealing to conservative Democrats, independents and even some Republicans who want a candidate that is strong on defence and foreign policy - a trait in which Democrats have typically conceded to the Republicans. Having speculated openly for months, Clark was able to generate interest without having to declare himself a candidate, which also allowed him to observe how the field developed to give him time to find his niche and give the impression of being compelled by supporters to enter the race. His broad appeal is partly a result of his ability to tap into the fears of Americans, projecting himself as a strong leader who can guide the country through difficult times, transcending specifics on particular policies that may otherwise polarise voters. Riding an initial surge fuelled by the media and because of his former title of 'General', Clark hopes a snowball of support will follow and propel him to do well enough in early primaries, though he doesn't necessarily have to win. With respectable finishes in early primaries dominated by the more liberal party activists, he hopes to win in the more conservative states to make him truly viable as a candidate that can beat Bush.

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Best attributes of the candidate.</p>	<p>Clark's long and distinguished career as a decorated four-star general is his biggest strength because, unlike his nine fellow Democratic opponents, it not only appeals to Democrats that want a leader that is tough on defence, but it positions Clark as someone who may have the best chance to defeat Bush. American voters crave a strong leader in a time of war and uncertainty and care less about specific policies of a candidate. This benefits Clark since he has no record of votes on which he can be criticised by his opponents or a history to which he is bound. He can define himself as the race goes on, allowing his positions to be more fluid in a way that can be adapted to the concerns of voters. Clark presents a difficult profile for his opponents to target, making him much less vulnerable than the others as they try to find a way to respond to his candidacy. Opponents will also be hesitant to attack a decorated war hero, especially since many of the candidates will not want to over-aggressively criticise someone whom they may want as a running mate further down the road. With the support and expertise of aides to former President Bill Clinton, Clark is getting excellent counsel and it is a sign to Democratic party activists that Clark's candidacy is to be taken seriously.</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Potential pitfalls facing the candidate.</p>	<p>Clark is a political neophyte who has never been under fire in the same way he will be as a candidate for political office. As the newness of his candidacy wears off, he will define himself by focusing on his career in the military, but he will be hard pressed to lay out specific ideas about how to address key domestic issues such as job creation, the federal deficit, healthcare and other issues. He is presently a one-trick-pony without depth on any issues beyond defence. Although he may be seen as one of the best candidates to challenge Republican Bush, he has first to survive the Democratic primary. Clark has already taken some criticism for only having been a declared Democrat since he announced his candidacy, which is a clear shot at his loyalty to the Democratic party and its ideals. His entry to the race and initial explosion of interest comes with equally high expectations - expectations he cannot possibly meet - and as he shows his lack of experience, his infallible image will be shattered and his support will rapidly begin to wane. He is not battle-hardened on the political front, making him highly susceptible to the barbs he will take from opponents, which may also reveal his well-known short temper and hurt his early 'presidential' image.</p>

Outlook and Implications

Presidential campaigns are defined by key moments throughout the race. As the situation stands, this is how WMRC expects events to unfold for Wesley Clark at each stage of the primaries.

WMRC Predictions

<p>Iowa Caucuses 19 January 2004</p>	<p>Although Clark's 'strong on defence' image will do well in middle America, with little to no organisation on the ground and lacking Democratic credentials at best, Iowa caucus voters will shy away from Clark since they are typically the more liberal of Democratic voters and party loyalists. Clark will finish fourth behind Gephardt, Dean and Kerry.</p>
<p>New Hampshire Primary 27 January 2004</p>	<p>A late start and few resources to put up adverts to define himself as being more than just a former general will make voters hesitate just enough to keep Clark from defeating either Kerry or Dean.</p>

Overall Primary
June 2004

Although Clark will not perform well in the liberal early primaries, it will not hurt his chances as much as it will hurt the others who do not do well. Clark is not expected to do well in Iowa or New Hampshire, which will keep him alive to be competitive in the Midwestern and southern contests. However, money and organisation are required to do well in the multitude of such large primaries - neither of which he will have - leaving Clark to hint that he would be interested in a number two spot before the end of the primary season so as to leverage whatever political capital he has left before the nomination process has been concluded.

WMRC's Ongoing US Elections 2004 Analysis

United States: 8 July 2003: US Elections 2004: Liberal Howard Dean Thrives on Novelty

United States: 17 July 2003: US Elections 2004: Centrist Democrat Kerry Leading the Field as Veteran and Statesman

United States: 1 August 2003: US Elections 2004: Conservative Democrat Lieberman Leads in National Polls, But Popularity is Slipping

United States: 14 August 2003: US Elections 2004: Democrat Contender Dick Gephardt Enjoys Deep Labour Support, but Lacks Broad Appeal

WMRC Contact

David Rice (david.rice@wmrc.com)

© 2004 World Markets Research Centre. All rights reserved. **Important Notice**



part of the Global Insight group of companies