

# National Post

November 25, 2011 Friday

## **Republican field; It's huntsman time!; If this guy loses, something is wrong with America**

**BYLINE:** Jonathan Kay, National Post

It says a lot about the monkey circus that the GOP presidential race has become that Jon Huntsman isn't polling as the alpha primate. This is a guy who (a) worked for Ronald Reagan, (b) represented the United States as a leading trade negotiator, (c) proved his bipartisan bona fides (hey - remember when that meant something?) as Barack Obama's ambassador to China, (d) ran a major company, (e) governed Utah with massive approval ratings and jobgrowth, and (f) stood up for school choice.

Huntsman is also a tax cutter: A 2008 grading of state fiscal policies by the Cato Institute put him in fifth place nationally. Yet at the same time, he's not one of these Tea Party fanatics who define conservatism as letting poor people starve and uninsured people die on the street. Unlike the other GOP candidates, he understands the facts about global warming, privileges technocratic empiricism over cultish Ayn Randian mantras, and thinks that an intelligent foreign policy means more than just shrieking about America's "greatness" at every opportunity. He also doesn't accuse Barack Obama of "hating America" or of having a Kenyan birth certificate - or play footsie with those who do.

Did I neglect to mention that Jon Huntsman earned the highest rank that the Boy Scouts award - and that he once played keyboards in a "progressive rock" band (and REO Speedwagon cover outfit) called Wizard?

He did.

Many months ago, before the GOP race heated up, I heard Huntsman being interviewed on NPR. I didn't catch his name at first, having only heard the host's description of him as a Republican presidential candidate. I listened to him talk about the state of America. And as I did, I thought there must be some mistake: The guy sounded like an adult. He was using his inside voice. He didn't think every problem in America could be instantly solved by cutting taxes. Surely, this couldn't be a Republican. Not in 2011.

And yet it was. And by the time I learned the man's name, I knew whom I wanted to be president.

[jkay@nationalpost.com](mailto:jkay@nationalpost.com)