

Opinion

Bush, DeLay and the GOP sociopathocracy

By Jack Hughes

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October 6, 2005—The Bush administration's lack of an effective response to the disasters along the Gulf Coast should come as no surprise at this late date. After five years of undivided Republican rule in the United States, only the most uninformed and credulous can actually still believe that Republican leaders consider government's prime responsibility to be the welfare of American citizens.

To those that have been wiped out by the one-two punch of hurricanes Katrina and Rita: sorry folks, your misery and despair isn't even worthy of consideration by our august Republican leaders—except when they are forced to utter empty words of consolation and deceptive promises of imminent aid when the television cameras are rolling.

Of course, they're lying. They know they're lying. They don't care about the suffering of the thousands of newly displaced, homeless and unemployed Americans. There's a psychological term for those who can lie without hesitation and have no empathy for the pain and suffering of others: sociopathy (or anti-social personality disorder). The Republican Party—and through them our country—has been hijacked by sociopaths.

If there's any doubt about that fact, just look at the GOP's first political responses to the catastrophe: voiding the long-established Davis- Bacon "prevailing-wage" law, which would have guaranteed that workers in the stricken areas would be paid at least \$9 per hour on Halliburton's sweetheart no-bid reconstruction contracts; and the gutting of environmental regulations allowing more pollution from refineries. These were the Bush administration's first priorities. Permanent shelter, medical care, jobs and education—the stuff that will actually help people? Those will have to wait for commissions and task-force recommendations until sometime after the mid-term elections (i.e., never).

If our government exists to "promote the general welfare," an administration that has engaged in an unnecessary war, and whose policies increase poverty, decrease healthcare availability and allow increased pollution levels can be described as sociopathic—and these have been the indisputable, quantifiable results of the policies of the Bush administration and the Republican Party.

Psychologists and historians will argue for years about the real reason Mr. Bush had for his war in Iraq (Oil? Imperial conquest? Domestic politics? Oedipal rivalry?). The only undeniable truth that we have about Iraq at this point is that our invasion and occupation, the tens of thousands of needless deaths and the policy of torture for those merely *suspected* of terrorist affiliation, were not due to the reasons we were originally told. The sociopaths in the Bush administration knowingly and skillfully lied to get us into that bloody quagmire.

Consider the depths of sociopathy that is required for a "leader" to eagerly shift the levers of history to maneuver our country into an unnecessary war, with all the unnecessary deaths and maiming of our brave young soldiers as well as of innocent civilians. Only a truly conscienceless sociopath could perpetrate a crime of such magnitude.

If it were only George W. Bush's sociopathy at issue, our country could deal with it through established constitutional mechanisms. Unfortunately, the political sociopathy runs much deeper—infecting the entire leadership and a broad majority of the GOP. Does anybody on either end of the political spectrum seriously believe that Vice President Cheney possesses anything approximating human empathy or conscience?

For evidence of the sociopathic cancer eating away at the Republican Party, one need look no further than the architect of today's corrosive, utterly polarized political climate: former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. It may seem like ancient history now, but it was Gingrich who first began the rhetorical "total war" we see today. Political opponents (Democrats) weren't to be described as "mistaken" on issues, but rather "sick," "pathetic," "treasonous," and so on. This strategy sprang forth from the mind of a man so lacking in empathy and conscience that he served his wife divorce papers as she lay recovering from cancer surgery in a hospital bed.

That tradition of sociopathic Republican leadership continues today with House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX). Known as the "Hammer," DeLay rules the US House of Representatives as a personal fiefdom (it was DeLay that installed the pliable Dennis Hastert as the putative Speaker). How did DeLay achieve this unprecedented control over half the Congress? In a word, cash. His fundraising machine amounts to an extortion racket that would put the Mafia to shame. Corporate lobbyists can draft their own legislation for tax cuts, direct federal subsidies, relaxing pollution and worker-safety regulations, etc., and see them enacted into law—and all they have to do is make generous donations to DeLay's PACs.

DeLay is so flush with cash that he will finance primary challenges to any Republican congressman daring to resist his dictatorial control. Conversely, he rewards compliant Republicans with generous campaign donations. As can be seen by the rigid "party discipline" DeLay imposes in the House, only very popular incumbent Republicans from the safest possible districts can dare to resist his diktats.

Bush has no better ally in the Congress than DeLay. The president's policies can be dependably jammed through the House with no fear of meddling oversight, and DeLay need not fear any investigations from the Justice Department for his corrupt fundraising schemes.

The point here is that for Bush, DeLay and a controlling majority of Republicans, the function of government is not about improving the quality of life for Americans, but power—power for its own sake. Based on the last five years of undivided, unchallenged Republican governance, that power has been used to do harm to the interests of the vast majority of Americans in order to serve the interests of a very few. Can that be described as anything other than sociopathic?

The Republicans' apologists would argue that they do indeed serve a large, powerless constituency: unplanned fetuses. The GOP's demagoguery on abortion has given them a huge electoral payoff among the religious right with the expenditure of virtually no political capital. However, Republican devotion to the interests of children can't be considered more than shameless pandering since their concern for child welfare ends at the moment of birth.

As we at [evilGOPbastards](#) have opined before, the Republican Party has been a repository for America's sociopaths since the New Deal—pandering to and harboring an assortment of racists, fascists, religious absolutists and "drown-the-beast" anti-tax radicals. While the racists now know better than to espouse their noxious beliefs in polite company (William Bennett notwithstanding), the other radical tenets of the sociopathic right are now considered mainstream Republican ideology.

The long-term effects of sociopathic governance (war, deficits, the environment, poverty and unemployment, etc.) would normally be expected to take its toll on Republican power—if American democracy still functioned. After the suspicious 2004 presidential election results, this assumption cannot be taken for granted.

This is waaaaay beyond normal political hardball, but one wouldn't be able to recognize that by the timid response by the Democrats, who seem paralyzed by the brazenness of GOP corruption and blind to the enormity of the danger to our democracy.

Are there still enough Republicans, not just of integrity and honor but of *sanity*, willing to challenge the sociopaths for control of the party of Lincoln in order to save our nation from self-inflicted ruin?

Sadly, apparently not.

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