

Opinion

Washington Democrats: no will, no backbone

By Joshua Frank

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October 17, 2005—These are tremulous times for the Republican establishment. A poll released by Ipsos/Associated Press confirms that Bush's agenda has slid right off the table and into the trash bin. The president's popularity has plummeted to a meager 39 percent, the lowest of his tenure. At the center of Bush's nosedive is the Iraq catastrophe, about which two-thirds of those polled strongly criticized Bush's handling of the invasion and subsequent occupation. The people's voices have indeed been heard. They want light, not more tunnel and lies.

So you'd think Democrats, the alleged oppositional party in Washington, would be elated over the latest findings, quickly devising a scheme on how to capitalize on Bush's overwhelming disapproval. Well, they are devising a scheme, all right, but it's not one that will bring the troops home or provide any mortar for Bush's cracked foreign policy.

Two former staffers of the Clinton administration, William Galston and Elaine Kamarck, both Democratic Leadership Council patrons, released a report on October 6 that outlined their strategy to take back Washington.

"The groups that were supposed to constitute the new Democratic majority in 2004 simply failed to materialize in sufficient number to overcome the right-center coalition of the Republican Party," wrote Galston and Kamarck. "[On defense issues], liberals espouse views diverging not only from those of other Democrats, but from Americans as a whole."

What a load of bull. The American public, although slow to digest the truth about the Iraq war, is finally coming around. Yet the Democratic Party has nothing to offer in return. Even with nearly 2,000 U.S. soldiers and countless civilians dead, the Dems still want to stay the failing course in Iraq. It's all about winning political campaigns, not justice—never mind that the Dems can't even win a match that's been forfeited by the Republicans. The Democratic establishment is beyond inept; it's hopeless.

Anti-war crusader Cindy Sheehan recently told me that she thought the Democrats should be abandoned. "I will not support a pro-war Democrat [in the upcoming elections] . . . I regret supporting John Kerry in 2004," she said, "[t]he movement gained nothing from his candidacy." Later, in a piece, titled "War-Hawk Republicans and Anti-War Democrats: What's the Difference?" Sheehan wrote, "I think if one is not speaking out right now against the killing in Iraq, one is supporting it."

Exactly.

Virtually every leading Democrat in DC is silent. They have been from the get-go. One may wonder what the Democrats are waiting for, now that the popular tide is turning against Dubya. Do they think the Republicans will simply crumble on their own? Do they think that Karl Rove and Scotter Libby are going to be indicted over this whole Valerie Plame affair? While the stalwarts of the Democratic Party sit idly by waiting for a miraculous Bush collapse from within, more people are dying in Iraq every day. Billions more spent on a war with no end in sight.

So even though Bush is down and out, don't expect the Democrats to ever capitalize. They have neither the will nor the backbone.

Joshua Frank is the author of the new book, "Left Out! How Liberals Helped Reelect George W. Bush," published by Common Courage Press. Visit www.brickburner.org to learn more.

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