

**Mark L. Melcher** Publisher  
melcher@thepoliticalforum.com

**Stephen R. Soukup** Editor  
soukup@thepoliticalforum.com

## THEY SAID IT

"I never was wild enough to conceive that one method would serve for the whole, that the natives of Hindostan and those of Virginia could be ordered in the same manner, or that the Cutchery court and the grand jury of Salem could be regulated on a similar plan. I was persuaded that government was a practical thing, made for the happiness of mankind, and not to furnish out a spectacle of uniformity to gratify the schemes of visionary politicians."

Edmund Burke, Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, 1777.

## In this Issue

Some Thoughts on  
Democracy in Iraq

Democrats and Race

## SOME THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRACY IN IRAQ.

Just over a year and a half ago, in an article entitled "Our Despot Instead Of Theirs," I expressed optimism about the future of American involvement in Iraq. I dutifully noted that I didn't expect this involvement to be "trouble free, or even blood free, for that matter." But even with that qualification, there is no question that I failed to foresee the severity of the troubles that the U.S. military would face there in the years ahead.

To make matters worse, another prediction I made in that article has also been blown out of the water. Specifically, I said that my optimism was supported by the belief that President Bush would "not go overboard with the idea of building a 'democratic' Iraq." If he does this, I said, "I will quickly become pessimistic" and added the following: "In my opinion, he may as well try to raise caribou over there."

This little gem of an observation took even less time than the previous one to prove wrong. In fact, just four months later, President Bush and Condoleezza Rice let loose with a barrage of speeches and interviews that were filled with enough high blown verbiage about providing Iraqis with such a plethora of freedom, democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity, and the rights of man that I fully expected them to stage an attack on a Bastille somewhere and to guillotine a few heads in honor of the loony French Jacobins, who were also taken with the glories of giving license to the masses.

Ms. Rice became so caught up with the idea that she compared those people who feel that the Iraqis are not ready for democracy to those who argued in favor of racial segregation during her childhood in Alabama. "That view was wrong in 1963 in Birmingham and it is wrong in 2003 in Baghdad and in the rest of the Middle East," she smugly proclaimed.

Subscriptions are available by contacting:

The Political Forum 8563 Senedo Road, Mt. Jackson, Virginia 22842  
Phone 540.477.9762 Fax 540.477.3359 melcher@thepoliticalforum.com www.thepoliticalforum.com

In retrospect, my reaction to this cockamamie comparison was also a bit overstated. In an article I wrote at the time entitled “Over The Edge With Condi,” I noted that a thought I had while reading Ms. Rice’s words about the administration’s ambitions for a democratic Iraq was that “these people are insane.” I now feel that I should have substituted a somewhat less inflammatory and more specific phrase, like perhaps, “lacking the virtues of wisdom and prudence.”

I bring this up this week because, in anticipation of the upcoming elections in Iraq, I want to discuss the one prediction in the previously mentioned ill-fated article “Our Despot Instead of Theirs” that is still viable, namely the one which holds that the best that President Bush can hope for in Iraq will be to “install a leader who is significantly less murderous than Saddam,” or, as I added, “one who despot (to coin a verb) for us rather than against us.”

I still believe that this is the most likely long-term outcome of America’s ongoing effort to establish a government in Iraq. In fact, I continue to think that a truly democratic Iraq that can act as a model for democracies throughout the Middle East does not even rank as the second most likely outcome. I think that honor goes to the possibility that Iraq will turn into a permanently failed state propped up by a permanent occupational American army.

I have outlined the basis for my skepticism concerning the establishment of a true democracy in Iraq in a number of previous pieces, including the above-mentioned article entitled “Over the Edge With Condi.” But I would like to return to the subject this week, beginning with an observation made over 200 years ago by an American patriot in a goodbye speech to a group of French officers who had fought with the Americans against the British in the Revolutionary War and were on their way home from Boston. He put it this way.

Do not let your hopes be inflamed by our triumphs on this virgin soil. You will carry our sentiments with you, but if you try

to plant them in a country that has been corrupt for centuries, you will encounter obstacles more formidable than ours. Our liberty has been won with blood; you will have to shed it in torrents before liberty can take root in the old world. \*

Needless to say, this man was correct. The French did indeed become inflamed with the triumph of American liberty and dutifully tried to plant the sentiments that carried the day in the American colonies in French soil. But something quite different took root.

The reason for this was, as any gardener knows, and as that American patriot also knew, the process of growing tasteful and nutritious fruit begins with wise seed selection and soil preparation. The French revolutionaries ignored both of these steps and began their liberty garden by sowing the bitter seeds of mob action onto ground that had been made sour by decades of tyranny.

As part of this process, they inflamed “the people” with a sense of their importance. They intoxicated them with extravagant rhetoric about liberty, freedom, and “natural rights,” and they promised a utopian society that was far beyond their ability to deliver based on the politics, economics and social conditions of the time. Writing in *Table Talk*, Samuel Coleridge compared this process to the “woeful case of the conjuror, who, with infinite zeal and pains, called up the devils to do something for him.”

They came at the word, thronging about him, grinning, and howling, and dancing, and whisking their long tails in diabolic glee; but when they asked him what he wanted of them, the poor wretch, frightened out of his wits, could only stammer forth, -- “I pray you, my friends, be gone down again!” At which the devils, with one voice replied -- “Yes! Yes! We’ll go down! We’ll go down! But we’ll take you with us to swim or to drown.” \*\*

When the revolutionary leaders realized they could control neither the course of the revolution nor the mob they had created, they established the delightfully named “Committee of Public Safety,” which began the process of shedding blood in torrents by instituting a policy known to history as “The Terror,” during which some 50,000 innocent people were murdered in the name of “prompt and total justice” and on behalf of a host of new, liberal ideologies that were based on noble sentiments rather than on time-honored realities and truths. To justify the slaughter, the leader of the bloodbath, Maximilien Robespierre coined a phrase that has since become a touchstone for all liberal ideologies: “One cannot expect to make an omelet without breaking eggs.”

To fill the nihilistic void left by “The Terror,” Napoleon, the man on horseback, rose to power, and proceeded to destroy most of Europe. According to the historian Paul Johnson, over two million people died as a direct consequence of his military campaigns, and many more perished from poverty, disease and undernourishment.

The Napoleonic Wars were followed by over a century of revolutions and governmental upheavals in France, both peaceful and violent, each resulting in a government that was something other than what could reasonably be called a working democracy. And today in France they have what they call the Fifth Republic (that’s *the Fifth* Republic, mind you), which, upon examination is to the concept of a pluralistic democracy what mud wrestling is to the fine arts.

An exaggeration? Well, here’s how Guy Millière, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris, described France in an article entitled “What’s Happening to France?” in the Winter 2003 issue of the British journal, *The Salisbury Review*.

France now is a country where you have alternation only between Gaullist governments and Marxist governments. If a Margaret Thatcher existed in France she would never have a chance to leave

the margins of political life. If a Margaret Thatcher existed in France she could not speak in the national media. A pluralist talk show in France now is a talk show where you have one anti-American Gaullist (the tolerable extreme right), one moderate socialist (the Middle of the road position), and four or five Marxists. Among the daily newspapers, one is Gaullist and the other ones are directed by leftists. Among the daily magazines, it is the same. Conservative papers are underground papers. France has become a semi-totalitarian country.

The point here is that while liberty and freedom may well be, as President Bush is wont to claim, “God’s gift to every man and woman who lives in the world,” the French revolution demonstrated that such “gifts” require some wisdom and prudence on the part of the recipient if they are to be properly employed. As the ancient Greeks taught the world via the story of Pandora, the first mortal woman and Zeus’ gift to mortal man, even the most beautiful and seemingly useful gift from God often comes with lingering complications.

So I respectfully wonder why the President and Ms. Rice seem so hasty to assume the role of God’s UPS driver, delivering the gift of liberty and freedom to the Iraqi people without first making certain that they are prepared to handle such magnificent yet potent tools, which history has demonstrated time and again are easily turned to evil purpose in the wrong hands, whether out of ignorance, moral weakness, or a lust for power.

If either the President or Ms. Rice is unfamiliar with the history of the French revolution, one would think that one or the other would have some knowledge of the difficulties and setbacks that America encountered during the 20<sup>th</sup> century while attempting to introduce the glories of democracy into Latin America, where conditions were arguably much more conducive to representative government than they are today in Iraq, or any other part of the Muslim world for that matter.

Now I do not doubt that the elections will be held in Iraq in January, as the President has said numerous times recently. And while I will address this issue at greater length in our annual forecast newsletter in early January, I am reasonably optimistic about American involvement in Iraq during 2005. After all, the United States will have a lot of “boots on the ground” there during the year.

Over the longer period, however, I doubt not just the success of the President’s high profile, democratization effort, but also the wisdom of it. I have always been impressed with the effort made by America’s founding fathers to create just the right government for the people they represented. Beginning with no prejudice for or against any particular form of government, they considered numerous options, from monarchy to pure democracy, after having already tried a loose confederation of states.

After considerable deliberation, they arrived at what they called a Republic, which included a host of rather complicated checks and balances built into the system and designed, in the words of Federalist No. 10 “to refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations.”

When considering Iraq, I sincerely doubt, even at the risk of being called a racist by Ms. Rice, that a similar exercise would arrive at the kind of showcase democracy that the President and Ms. Rice seem to be contemplating for that nation, given that it is rife with ancient tribal hatreds; religious intolerance; endemic corruption; millions of young, uneducated men with no prospect for meaningful employment; and a large, indigenous, well-armed insurgency movement.

And I further question whether it is wise for the President of the United States to be constantly extolling the joys and prosperity that await the Iraqi people if they embrace the democracy that he so fervently hopes to foist upon them. I fear that he is

not planting liberty in that desert land but is instead sowing the bitter seeds of mob action onto ground that had been made sour by decades of tyranny. I fear the consequences of promising a social order in Iraq that is far beyond his or anyone else’s ability to deliver based on the politics, economics and social conditions of the time.

It is important to understand that this is not a mere academic issue, for the government that the Iraqis adopt over the next year or so at the behest of the Bush administration must, if it is to honor the Americans who died to make it all possible, be able to withstand the extremely difficult times that lie ahead and emerge at the other end with some semblance of respect for the citizens it represents and consideration for the security of the United States.

Thus it would be wise in my opinion for the United States not to, in the words of Burke, “furnish out a spectacle of uniformity to gratify the schemes of visionary politicians,” but to help Iraq form a government that is suited to the cultural and immediate needs of the people it will serve, whether this government be a “democracy,” a “republic,” a “monarchy” (as has been suggested by Bernard Lewis) or a “a stable, authoritarian regime friendly to the United States” (which would be my choice.)

In any case, I will applaud with everyone else when the upcoming elections in Iraq are held next year. And I will anxiously watch as the newly elected Iraqi politicians attempt to design a “democratic” government in line with the Bush administration’s desires.

But I will, at the same time, keep in mind the following observation made by Burke in the aftermath of the French revolution, when the overwhelming majority of his fellow countrymen were cheering the French victory over tyranny.

“The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they please: We ought to see what it will please them to do, before we risque congratulations, which may be

soon turned into complaints. Prudence would dictate this in the case of separate insulated private men; but liberty, when men act in bodies, is power. Considerate people, before they declare themselves, will observe the use which is made of power; and particularly of so trying a thing as new power in new persons, of whose principles, tempers, and dispositions, they have little or no experience, and in situations where those who appear the most stirring in the scene may possibly not be the real movers.”

\* This quote can be found in the well-known *Lectures on the French Revolution* given by Lord Acton in 1889. It is attributed by him to one “Cooper, of Boston,” who I suspect, but do not know for certain, is a reference to Major Samuel Cooper, who was at Lexington on the morning of April 19, 1775 when “the shot that was heard round the world” war fired; who was with Putnam at Bunker (Breed’s) Hill on the morning of June 17 when the great General told his men “don’t one of you fire until you see the white of their eyes,” and who ended the war with Colonel Henry Knox’s famous artillery regiment.

\*\* This quote can be found – lacking a copy of Coleridge’s *Table Talk* – in the Russell Kirk classic, *The Conservative Mind*.

## DEMOCRATS AND RACE.

For the last several weeks, various members of the Democratic establishment, including the newly selected Senate Minority leader and a veteran civil rights leader, have been on the attack against black conservatives. Some of these attacks have been unabashed, while others have been more subtle, thinly veiled as concerns about “diversity of opinion” in the President’s cabinet or “electoral fairness” with regard to the final vote count in Ohio.

In all cases, though, the attacks reflect a pathology of the left that compels its denizens to lash out in anger at any and all who challenge their accepted wisdom. The Democratic Party has, since at least the Civil Rights movement and probably as far back as the New Deal, billed itself as the “party of minorities,” with all the attendant moral righteousness. But the election

results handed down some six weeks ago have firmly challenged the Democrats’ claim to that designation. And the partisans are none too happy about it.

The re-election of George W. Bush was not only accomplished with the significant help of minorities, thereby ensuring greater GOP attention to minority populations in the future, but also provided an historic opportunity – one which from all appearances will be grasped with great relish – to demonstrate to the nation that good, strong, smart, and talented minorities can also be conservatives. I suspect that Democrats fear that these prominent examples of minority conservatives will, if embraced by the American public, prove the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back, forever destroying the long outdated notion that one party can sufficiently represent the hopes, dreams, and needs of all minority groups or even all individual members of each group.

The most brazen and offensive attack on a black conservative was launched just over a week ago, when new Democratic Senate Leader Harry Reid (NV) spoke with NBC’s Tim Russert and offered his thoughts on a potential replacement for Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist. In what can only be described as a bizarre series of comments, Reid declared that he was fine with the idea of Associate Justice Antonin Scalia replacing Rehnquist, but would never stand to have Clarence Thomas, essentially a Scalia doppelganger in all characteristics but race, elevated to Chief Justice. The Russert-Reid exchange went as follows:

**Russert:** Let me turn to judicial nominations. Again, Harry Reid on National Public Radio, Nov. 19: “If they”--the Bush White House--”for example, gave us Clarence Thomas as chief justice, I personally feel that would be wrong. If they give us Antonin Scalia, that’s a little different question. I may not agree with some of his opinions, but I agree with the brilliance of his mind.”

Could you support Antonin Scalia to be chief justice of the Supreme Court?

**Reid:** If he can overcome the ethics problems that have arisen since he was selected as a justice of the Supreme Court. And those ethics problems--you've talked about them; every people talk--every reporter's talked about them in town--where he took trips that were probably not in keeping with the code of judicial ethics. So we have to get over this. I cannot dispute the fact, as I have said, that this is one smart guy. And I disagree with many of the results that he arrives at, but his reason for arriving at those results are [sic] very hard to dispute. So—

**Russert:** Why couldn't you accept Clarence Thomas?

**Reid:** I think that he has been an embarrassment to the Supreme Court. I think that his opinions are poorly written. I don't--I just don't think that he's done a good job as a Supreme Court justice.

Now, whether Reid knows it or not (and I suspect he does), his criticism of Thomas is running against the general tide of opinion. Indeed, even liberal factions of the legal community have come to acknowledge over the past several years that both the caricature of Thomas as a toady of Scalia's and the portrayal of him as a less-than-competent hack are miles away from the truth. Among other opinions, Thomas's brilliant rebuttal in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (racial preferences in college admissions) has earned him considerable plaudits from legal scholars of all ideological stripes and established him as an intellectual force on the court.

As I said, I suspect that Reid knows this and that that is a large part of the reason he has tried to discredit Thomas before a whispering campaign to have him replace Rehnquist can even begin in earnest. I can't say for sure, but it strikes me that Reid thinks that if he can either scare the administration away from nominating Thomas, or convince the media to treat him using the old stereotypes, then he can prevent

Thomas from becoming the first black Chief Justice and – gasp! – a role model to all young Americans, but particularly young blacks.

If it makes Justice Thomas feel any better, he is clearly not alone as the target in such a scheme. Just a few short weeks ago, the left began a similar campaign to discredit National Security Advisor and Secretary of State-Designate Condoleezza Rice, who like Thomas has been pilloried mercilessly for the crime of simply being a black conservative. Liberal cartoonists portray Ms. Rice as Prissy from “Gone with the Wind” and refer to her as “Brown Sugar”; left-wing talk radio hosts call her Aunt Jemima; leading liberal intellectuals mock her as being “too white”; and the Democratic Party establishment criticizes her for her “unflinching loyalty” and dedication to President Bush, traits that would be considered admirable in anyone but a black conservative; all of which suggest that there is a concerted and possibly coordinated effort to make her appear little more than a stooge whom the malevolent forces in the White House (e.g. Dick Cheney) can manipulate for their own benefit.

But as with Thomas, the left's portrayal of the Secretary-designate is as far from the truth as possible. The dim-witted sycophant they describe is little more than a racist fantasy they've created to soothe their fears of conservative blacks, fears which Ms. Rice's biography suggest are not so irrational after all. Indeed, it is quite possible that Ms. Rice is one of the most accomplished black women in the history of the world, much less the nation. The following is taken from a 1999 profile of Ms. Rice by *National Review's* Jay Nordlinger; it more than adequately explains why the left sees her as such a threat.

For the last six years, Rice has been provost of Stanford University, where she has spent her entire academic career. She stepped down in July, to take a year's leave. Provost is a powerful position at Stanford — number two, below president. Rice began the job at only 38. In fact, she has done just about everything early — the very picture of American overachievement.

She was born in Birmingham, Ala., in 1954, when Jim Crow — and that regime’s local enforcer, Bull Connor — held sway. Both parents were teachers. Condi was a schoolmate of Denise McNair, one of the girls murdered in the infamous church bombing. Later the Rice family moved to Tuscaloosa, where Condi’s father, John Rice, was a dean at Stillman College, a predominantly black school. Mother and father, says Rice, “felt strongly about pushing ahead in education”; their Wunderkind, as a result, “had lessons in everything — piano, skating, ballet, French . . .” She skipped first grade, and also the seventh.

When Condi was 13, the family moved to Colorado, so that John Rice could become a vice chancellor of the University of Denver, where he had earned an advanced degree. He was — and is — a Republican (as well as an ordained Presbyterian minister). For one thing, he abhorred the Dixiecrats who were the Democratic party in the South. For another, it was simply easier to register with the Republicans. (The Democrats, typically, had demanded that he guess the number of beans in a jar.)

Condi entered the University of Denver at 15, aiming to become a pianist. She studied one summer at the famous music camp in Aspen — “affirmative action for Colorado kids,” she says. Midway through college, however, she came to the sad realization that she would not “make it” as a pianist. She did not want to become an accompanist, and she did not want “to teach 13-year-olds to murder Beethoven.” So she left the music program and cast about for a different major. First she tried English literature and “hated it”: It was simply too “squishy.” (“That’ll get me in trouble with my humanist friends.”) Next she tried government, but

that, too, was “not very rigorous.” (“That’ll get me in trouble, too.”) Finally she met Josef Korbel, a former Czech diplomat, a refugee from Nazism and Communism, who headed Denver’s school of international relations. “I really adored him,” says Rice. “I really did. He’s the reason I’m in this field. I loved his course, and I loved him. He sort of picked me out as someone who might do this well.” From then on, it was “Soviet politics, Soviet everything.”

Korbel, of course, was Madeleine Albright’s father. (“Who would’ve thunk it?” admits Rice.) Rice knew the young Albright, as she, Rice, was a frequent guest in the Korbel home. The two women turned out differently in their thinking — with Rice arguably closer to Korbel’s consistently tough-minded views — but America may well have the unusual experience of two successive secretaries of state who learned about the world at the same knee.

Rice was graduated at 19 and went to Notre Dame, for a master’s degree. She returned to Denver for her Ph.D. and arrived at Stanford to be an assistant professor when she was 26. Eight years later, Scowcroft selected her for his NSC staff. While she was there, the new governor of California, Pete Wilson, considered appointing her to a U.S. Senate seat (which he himself had just vacated). She signaled to him, however, that she did not desire the appointment (“and I don’t think I would have received it anyway”). If she had received and accepted it, she — not Carol Moseley-Braun, elected from Illinois in 1992 — would have been the first black woman to serve in the Senate.

In the last several years, Rice has received numerous offers to become president of a university (the natural progression from provost). It is assumed that Berkeley is

among the schools that sought to lure her from Palo Alto. (Invited to confirm this, she says only, “I was offered several presidencies, put it that way.”)

We should note, of course, that President Bush’s nominees or potential nominees are not the only black conservatives to have been deemed a threat by the Democratic establishment and thus to have come under attack from various liberal factions. In Ohio, erstwhile Civil Rights leader Jesse Jackson has been waging his own war against black conservatives, one less public and even less honest than that waged against Rice and Thomas, but one that is nonetheless equally important and bitter.

As you may know, Jackson, who long ago crossed the line between activist and gadfly, has set up shop in the Buckeye state, ostensibly to challenge the election results there and to “raise awareness” about the alleged vote total peculiarities that a handful of internet and other conspiracy-addled weirdoes insist are evidence that the Bushies stole the election once again. But even the most casual observer can’t help but suspect that whining about the sad state of Ohio’s election procedures is hardly Jackson’s only motive for being in the state.

You see, it just so happens that Ohio’s Secretary of State, the man who is responsible for overseeing elections and verifying vote totals and who has therefore become the focus of Jackson’s vitriol, is Ken Blackwell, who also just happens to be a black Republican. More to the point, Blackwell is also a very serious early contender for the GOP nomination for Governor of Ohio in 2006 who has, in spite of (or maybe because of) his battles with his state’s nearly omnipotent Taft political machine, made himself a favorite of the right-leaning media and free-market wing of the Republican Party. As such, he has the potential to be a real force in Republican politics over the next decade or so.

Needless to say, this bothers both Jackson and his ideological cohorts on the left to no end. The last thing they need is a powerful and popular black

Republican making a name for himself as a tax-cutting man of the people who is proud publicly to embrace conservative values, especially when such a man comes from the important swing state of Ohio. And they will therefore do their very best to discredit him.

Fortunately for Secretary Blackwell, the last politician the left tried to discredit for failing properly to administer elections in a battleground state was former Florida Secretary of State Kathleen Harris, who, in large part because of the exposure provided her by the whining Democrats, was able to win election to the House of Representatives and who is often mentioned as a potential GOP nominee in the 2006 Senate race against Bill Nelson. If Secretary Blackwell is able to parlay his Democrat-inspired notoriety half as effectively, we will likely all be the better for it.

Before closing here, I would like to make one final, tangentially related point about the attacks on black conservatives by the left. It seems to me that one of the reasons that the current attacks appear so concerted and so aggressive is because they take place in the broader context of Democrats losing their stranglehold over minority voter loyalty. Consider:

This November, President Bush didn’t do nearly as well as he’d hoped he would with black voters. But he certainly met or exceeded expectations with other minority groups, most notably Hispanics. There is some question as to whether the exit poll numbers that showed the President taking an unexpected 44% of the Hispanic vote are entirely accurate, but there is no question that Bush did indeed improve his showing among Hispanics. More to the point, he also sent a clear notice to the Democrats that this, the fastest-growing minority community, is most definitely in play.

In his analysis of the NEP (National Election Pool) results, Richard Nadler, president of the non-profit America’s Majority noted the following:

In 2000, roughly 6 million Hispanic votes were cast. At 62-to-35 percent, this gave Gore a 1,620,000-vote victory over Bush among Latinos nationwide.

In 2004, Hispanic turnout rose by roughly 25 percent, to 7.5 million voters. Had the Democrats held their 2000 margin, their national advantage among Hispanics would have grown by 405,000, to 2,025,000. *The improved Bush percentage in 2004 nullified this gain completely, holding the Democrat advantage in the Hispanic community to the same 1,620,000 as in 2000. The impact of a massive and successful Democratic voter registration drive was nullified.* (emphasis in original).

These facts alone might be enough to give some Democrats heartburn, but they are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. In the few weeks since his re-election, President Bush has already named a Hispanic nominee to the post of Attorney General, the first in American history; named a Hispanic nominee, this one an immigrant, to the top spot at the Commerce Department; and stoked rumors that he will, when the time comes, appoint the nation's first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice.

Add to all this the possibility that the Republican Party may well, as many analysts have suggested, nominate George W. Bush's brother Jeb for President in 2008, and GOP prospects with Hispanic voters become even better. Jeb Bush, it is worth noting, is a very successful, two-term Governor of one of the nation's largest states, which also boasts one of the

country's largest and most politically active Hispanic communities. He is also a Catholic, the husband of a Mexican immigrant, the father of three children who can be classified as "Hispanic" for Census and Affirmative Action purposes, and a fluent Spanish speaker. It is not unreasonable to speculate that if the GOP does indeed nominate the younger Bush in '08, it will solidify its rising fortunes with Hispanics for at least a decade to come.

And don't think for a second that the Democrats don't know all of this. They know full well that their hopes of establishing an exclusive relationship with the Hispanic community is little more than a pipedream anymore. And this, I suspect, is why they are so agitated about the potential impact of black conservatives.

Right now, blacks are the only significant ethnic minority group whose votes the Democrats can take for granted. Democrats rightly fear that if the Republicans can break the stranglehold that they have on black votes, then the GOP will complete the long-awaited realignment and emerge as the semi-permanent majority party. No one can say for sure if the examples of successful conservative blacks in and around the Bush administration will help in breaking that stranglehold, but clearly the Democrats fear they might. Let's hope they're right.

Copyright 2004. The Political Forum. 8563 Senedo Road, Mt. Jackson, Virginia 22842, tel. 540-477-9762, fax 540-477-3359. All rights reserved.

Information contained herein is based on data obtained from recognized services, issuer reports or communications, or other sources believed to be reliable. However, such information has not been verified by us, and we do not make any representations as to its accuracy or completeness, and we are not responsible for typographical errors. Any statements nonfactual in nature constitute only current opinions which are subject to change without notice.