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## THEY SAID IT

There once was a hen who was called Chicken Little. One day an acorn fell on her head. "Oh my goodness!" She cried, "The sky must be falling. Someone must tell the king!" She ran down the path intending to find the king and tell him. On her way she ran into Ducky Lucky. "Where are you going in such a hurry?" asked Ducky Lucky. "The sky is falling," said Chicken Little, "And someone must tell the king." "How do you know the sky is falling?" asked Ducky Lucky. "Because I felt it with my own head," answered Chicken Little. "Then I will go with you to tell the king," said Ducky Lucky. They ran and ran, until they met up with Goosey Loosey. "Where are you going in such a hurry?" asked Goosey Loosey. "The sky is falling," said Chicken Little, "And someone must tell the king." "How do you know the sky is falling?" asked Goosey Loosey. "Because I felt it with my own head," answered Chicken Little. "Then I will go with you to tell the king," said Goosey Loosey. The three friends continued on until they met up with Henny Penny. "Where are you going in such a hurry?" asked Henny Penny. "The sky is falling," said Chicken Little, "And someone must tell the king." "How do you know the sky is falling?" asked Henny Penny. "Because I felt it with my own head," answered Chicken Little. "Then I will go with you to tell the king," said Henny Penny. They continued on the path until they came across Foxy Loxy. "Where are you going in such a hurry?" asked Ducky Lucky. "The sky is falling," said Chicken Little, "And someone must tell the king." "How do you know the sky is falling?" asked Ducky Lucky. "Because I felt it with my own head," answered Chicken Little. Foxy Loxy thought about this for a few minutes, and then he said, "I know a shortcut to get to the king, if you follow me, I will show you a faster way to get there." Ducky Lucky, Henny Penny, Goosey Loosey and Chicken Little thought this was a fine idea. They followed Foxy Loxy. He brought them to the entrance of a cave. "Are you sure this is the way to the king?" asked Henny Penny doubtfully. "Trust me," said Foxy Loxy, and they did. But the cave was not a shortcut, it was Foxy Loxy's den, and Henny Penny, Ducky Lucky, Goosey Loosey, and Chicken Little were never seen again.

## THOUGHTS ON THE POLITICS OF THE TWIN DEFICITS.

I rarely find the *New York Times* op-ed section to be useful in my work. This is not because it is tiresomely liberal, since it is necessary for me to understand the liberal side of issues. The problem is that it seems to reflect the views of liberal *philosophes*, people who are not directly involved in the political battles that I find interesting, but are instead attempting to influence these battles from afar by the strength of their ideas.

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If they were offering up exciting new ideas and new twists on old ones, it would be different. But they don't do that, largely, I believe, because the liberal ideology they embrace has pretty much run out of steam, and also because most are not intellectually up to task. I think of them not as liberal descendents of J.S. Mill but of the shallow, flashy Henry Brougham, of whom Mill once remarked, "Lord Brougham has fought, both frequently and effectively, on the people's side; but few will assert that he often was much in advance of them, or fought any up-hill battle in their behalf."

In contrast, the op-ed columnists for *The Washington Post* are closer to the thick of the battle itself. They buy the idea that the pen is mightier than the sword, but they understand that when dealing with politics, the pen is more effective if it is wielded by someone who is comfortable in the trenches where the pen's output is put to the test. Not only do they interact with the political players in town, but many of them are political players themselves, sometimes carrying the message and sometimes helping to formulate it. They live and breathe retail politics in their daily lives because they live in a company town where the company is the government.

For example, I have always found David Broder's columns to be worthwhile. Now in semi-retirement, he has for many years been known as Washington's "Dean of Political Writers." He knows and is respected by everyone in town. And so far as I can tell, he has never had an original thought in his life. Thus, his columns always perfectly reflect the consensus view of the liberal Washington establishment at the time. They do not spring from some ideological notion or smug prejudice of his, which he has set down on paper in hopes of influencing the policy makers in Washington. His columns are instead a distillation of the views of the policy makers, which he has written down as a means of spreading the word among those who have not yet heard it.

I thought about this distinction last week while reading a column by the *Post's* Associate Editor David Ignatius. Ignatius has been with the *Post* for 19 years. He is smart. He is a pro. And he is a player. He isn't writing from an ivory tower. He is writing from a command post on the front line of liberalism. So I became interested last week when he wrote a column entitled "Flirting With Deficit Disasters," in which he strongly suggested that President Bush immediately stop pushing for reform of the Social Security program and instead do something right now about the fiscal and trade deficits.

Ignatius put it this way. "It's time to step up, Mr. President," and stop focusing on what he called the "risky and unpopular scheme for addressing the problems of 2040" and "pay more attention to the crises that could unfold during the next few years," which in another place he described as threats that "loom just over the horizon," and in another he referred to as "the economic crises that are here and now," and finally which he depicted as the problems that could cause "real trouble" "unless the United States puts its financial house in order."

Of course, says I. President Bush should stop pushing that pesky Social Security reform, which may make voters feel insecure about the centerpiece program of American liberalism. He should focus instead on raising public fears of a pending economic disaster. One wonders why the political gurus at the White House didn't come up with that idea themselves.

Needless to say, Ignatius' counsel was not sincerely offered. It was instead a rallying cry for Democrats to use the trade and fiscal deficits as a means of combating President Bush's efforts to remake the Social Security program. This is interesting because it indicates concern on the part of liberals in Washington that the Social Security initiative may not be as "unpopular" as Ignatius claims it is, or at least may not remain so in the face of White House efforts to sell it to the American people. It also indicates that Democrats are not confident that they can defeat

this program in a straight up battle, but must use a diversionary tactic. It's the "You may be big and tough, but your sister is ugly" approach to political discourse, which can sometimes be effective but is always a defensive strategy.

And this is where Ignatius' story becomes interesting. He recognizes that the problem with trying to substitute public concern over the twin deficits for public concern over the long-term viability of Social Security is that people like Alan Greenspan don't share the view that the twin deficits are necessarily "economic crises that are here and now." The Democrats are screaming "FIRE," while the town fire chief is calmly pointing out that there is no blaze at this time, that it is not even certain that one is likely, and that the best approach would be to take standard precautionary measures.

So what to do? Calling Greenspan a "political hack," as Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid did recently is hardly the solution, given that the Fed Chairman was reappointed in 2000 for another four-year term by Bill Clinton and approved by an overwhelming majority of Democratic Senators, including Harry Reid.

So Ignatius proposes that the Party tout the views of the "expert" who is the principal source of the alarmism that is the centerpiece of his column, namely the venerable and avuncular Oracle of Omaha, investor extraordinaire Warren Buffett. This is, of course, a little like comparing the opinions on the dangers of smoking of the Mayo Clinic's leading respiratory disease specialist with those of the cigarette girl at Bally's Casino. But as Defense Secretary Rumsfeld famously remarked, "You go to war with the Army you have," and when it comes to finding an expert as qualified and as highly respected as Greenspan, Buffett is probably the best the Democrats can do.

The problem they have is that Greenspan is a man of exemplary reputation who has no axe to grind when it comes to this subject, and everyone, including Ignatius and Harry Reid, certainly know this. Greenspan

may be right. Or he may be wrong. But his views that the fiscal deficits are a big problem, but not an immediately explosive one, and that the trade deficit is likely to level off and possibly shrink in months and years to come without causing a major economic crisis are the honest opinions of an honest man.

On the other hand, there are many good reasons to question whether the same could be said about Warren Buffett. He was and may still be a highly skilled investor who offers sage advice on this subject of buying and selling stocks. But as his interests have slowly expanded from finding undervalued companies to launching bold initiatives designed to influence public policy in Washington, he has added an entirely different persona to his *curriculum vitae*, namely that of an ethically conflicted old humbug, who has a bad habit of hyping political views and legislative initiatives that are so integrally related to his personal financial interests that there is simply no way to tell if any thought or analysis went into them at all.

For example, Buffett routinely portrays his energetic advocacy of keeping the federal death tax on the books as a noble gesture from a patriotic man who wishes to share his good fortune with the government upon his death, never noting that one of his most profitable ventures is buying up family businesses on the cheap that have been forced into a fire sale because there is no other way to pay the federal tax collector upon the death of the founder.

Of course, Buffett may be correct that "without policy changes, currency markets could even become disorderly and generate spillover effects, both political and financial." And Ignatius may be correct in describing this statement by Buffett as his "careful" way of saying that "America is risking a financial crash – a bursting bubble—if political leaders don't do something about the trade deficit."

But there is no way of knowing whether either really believes what he is saying or is simply hoping it will happen for selfish reasons. In Ignatius' case, a drastic collapse in the dollar and a resultant financial

crisis could put his liberal friends back in leadership positions. As for Buffett, at the end of last year, his company, Berkshire Hathaway, had \$21.4 billion worth of outstanding bets against the dollar in the form of foreign exchange contracts in 12 currencies.

The interesting thing about all of this is that even if President Bush decided to make the problem of the twin deficits a priority in place of Social Security reform, there are overwhelming reasons why he almost certainly could not succeed in doing much to alleviate the situation at this time.

From the political standpoint, even if a financial crisis were actually upon us “here and now” instead of looming “just over the horizon,” the Democrats in Congress would be highly unlikely to join in support of a grand, bi-partisan legislative solution, since they would have much more to gain politically if the crises worsened than they would if they helped avert it. It seems even more unlikely that they would participate in a politically difficult solution to these problems in anticipation of a crisis, which may or may not materialize, thus handing the president and the Republican Party another legislative achievement about which to crow.

And then there is the fact that the American public seems to like the practical benefits of large trade and fiscal deficits much more than they fear the long-term consequences associated with them. While they may not be as smart as Warren Buffett, they are familiar with the old saw “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it,” especially if the fixing would usher out the good times and usher in pain.

So we are left with an effort by the Democrats to instill fear into the public about the future in hopes of either lowering the public’s approval of President Bush enough to help the Democrats electorally or, in the best case, of actually touching off a global crisis of confidence, which would destroy the economy and the Republicans with it.

My guess is they won’t succeed. But I have no doubt that they will be trying very hard in the next few months to do so. Not surprisingly, for example, the cover story in the latest issue of *Newsweek*, which is owned by the Washington Post Company, is an article written by *Washington Post* columnist and *Newsweek* Contributing Editor Robert Samuelson entitled “The Incredible Shrinking Dollar, What It Means For American’s Future – And Yours.”

The piece begins on a cheery note, discussing what he describes as “plenty of good news of late about the U.S. economy.” But the gloom descends quickly after that. And we find the article replete with phrases like “private investors could also desert the dollar. Indeed, it’s vulnerable to almost any unpleasant surprise.” Or, “The world economy can’t get along without our massive trade deficits – and perhaps can’t get along with them, either. America’s consumption binge is propping up global trade and employment, but it’s also threatening a financial upheaval that could hurt global trade and employment.”

Samuelson acknowledges that Alan Greenspan, whom he mysteriously describes as “perhaps the most prominent straddler,” is not overly pessimistic, noting that he “has suggested that the present massive trade and current-account deficits can’t continue indefinitely –but that their reduction can be ‘orderly.’” And he even acknowledges that this view of Greenspan’s “is certainly plausible.” But he nevertheless insists that the big question facing the world today is whether “the present pattern of global economic growth is inherently unstable – and whether it can be easily corrected.” In a gloomy metaphor, he says that America’s twin deficits “have served as a narcotic for the rest of the world” and “as with all narcotics” the “resultant highs have been artificial and, to some extent, delusional to both the dealer and the addicts.”

The question now, he ominously states, is whether “everyone can go straight before the addiction becomes self-destructive.”

Meanwhile, as he says in the opening paragraph to his story, “employment is expanding (2.4 million new payroll jobs in the last year); inflation remains low (less than a 2 percent rate in the past quarter); the stock market is higher (up 11 percent on the Dow from its November low), and business investment is impressive (rising at a 14% rate in the late 2004).” Surely Bush should do something to break this nasty habit.

## **TACTICAL MANEUVERS.**

There has been much talk in the nearly five months since the election about why precisely the Democrats lost. Most of this discussion has, understandably, focused on the ideological and temperamental shortcomings of the party, including, but not limited to: its inability to connect with “values voters” in the Midwestern and southern states; its inability to convince the vast majority of voters that a Democratic administration could adequately defend the nation in a time of war; and its inability to find a presidential candidate who was even remotely likable.

Far be it from me to quibble with such explanations, all of which contain at least a kernel of truth, and many of which have, at various points, been advanced on these very pages by both Mark and me. That said, it has occurred to me over the past couple of weeks that while all of the ideological and temperamental stuff is, indeed, important, many of the Democrats’ problems are nothing more than just plain old incompetence when it comes to retail politics.

Now I’ll concede that one may persuasively argue that this incompetence is, ultimately, the upshot of ideological aloofness and temperamental arrogance. But that’s a story for another day. Today, I’d simply like to address the Democrats’ failures at the tactical level, the ongoing nature of these failures, and the potential long-term impact of the failures with regard both to policy and politics.

It should, of course, have surprised no one that the Republicans were better situated to win the tactical political battles last fall. All one needed to know was who the respective chief strategists were to know that the Democrats were hopelessly overmatched.

On the Bush side, there was Karl Rove, a man whose political acumen is legendary and whose very name sends Democrats into fits of paranoia and conspiracy mongering. And while I am not entirely convinced that Rove is the greatest political strategist of all time, he certainly overwhelmed his counterpart in the Kerry campaign, Bob Shrum, a man whose presidential campaign record is now 0-8, and whose ineptitude is so notorious that even President Bush felt comfortable joking at last weekend’s Gridiron Dinner that the path to peace and regime change on the Korean Peninsula involves convincing North Korean strongman Kim Jong Il to hold a presidential election and to employ Shrum as his strategist.

Today, in the early stages of the 2006 election cycle, when the respective parties are launching their strategies, the mismatch is equally dramatic. The Republicans have chosen to turn over the responsibility for crafting the message and strategy for the next campaign to Ken Mehlman, who was the Bush-Cheney ’04 campaign chairman and, as such, was probably as responsible for the party’s tactical victories last fall as anyone, even Rove. Michael Barone, whose judgment in such matters is impeccable, has called Mehlman “the structural engineer who turned the plans into reality.”

His counterpart in the Democratic camp is Howard “I Have a Scream” Dean, a man whose political incompetence is surpassed only by his aggressive obnoxiousness, and whose sole claim to fame as a national-level politician is that he made John Kerry look good by comparison. Despite building a seemingly insurmountable lead in both the polls and fundraising, Dean managed to crash and burn spectacularly, ultimately losing his party’s nomination to Kerry and dropping out of the race before either Al Sharpton or Dennis Kucinich.

It would be easy to discount the need for tactically sound leadership this far away from an actual election. But a close look at what is happening at this moment in Washington reveals that while the Republicans are very subtly scoring significant legislative victories, and thus setting the stage for the long-awaited semi-permanent political realignment, the Democrats are concentrating their efforts on political ticky-tacky.

In the Senate, for example, Democrats are focusing almost exclusively on wiping out the “advise and consent” function. In the House, they’ve decided to concentrate wholly on “getting” Majority Leader Tom DeLay. And all the while, the Republicans in both houses have been passing legislation and generally taking advantage of the Democrats’ self-indulgent distraction. Last week, our good friend Rich Galen ([www.mullings.com](http://www.mullings.com)) summarized this phenomenon thusly:

One of the most senior observers of the US Congress is David Espo who holds the title of “Special Correspondent” for the Associated Press. He has been covering the House and Senate since about 1980 which means he has seen pretty much all of the good, the bad, and the ugly which has occurred over that quarter-century.

Over the past few days Espo has published a couple of pieces regarding the status of the Congress which, taken together, are a pretty complete overview of the current state of play . . .

Espo’s piece on the status of big legislative initiatives was captured in his quote of Oklahoma Congressman, Tom Cole, “‘The amount of legislation that’s passing is pretty big,’ said Rep. Cole, a deputy whip. In addition to the class action lawsuit bill and bankruptcy measure, he said, ‘I think we’ll get an energy bill, a highway bill and maybe’ legislation to resolve asbestos claims.’”

The Congress has sent to the President a bill significantly limiting class-action lawsuits and is about to send along the bankruptcy bill . . .

And just over the next snowdrift, the Senate Republicans have constructed an attachment to the budget allowing drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. That is a concept which failed, according to Espo, in 2003 on a 52-48 vote, when the GOP held a two-vote margin not the 10-vote bulge they now enjoy following the 2004 elections. [Note: the Senate approved drilling in ANWR Wednesday, after Rich published this column, by a 51-49 vote.]

While the national press, the Sunday shows, and the Democratic National Committee are focused like the Hubble telescope on Social Security and Tom DeLay; Congressional Republicans are pretty much having their way with everything else.

It is not for nothing, of course, that the Democrats are, as Galen put it “focused like the Hubble telescope on Social Security.” Democrats understand that after last fall’s election, the GOP is poised to solidify its position as the nation’s majority party and to complete the “political realignment” about which pundits and political scientists have jabbered for several years.

They also understand that a Social Security reform plan that includes private investment accounts may well be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel’s back in this regard, expanding the “investor class” and thereby enlarging the base of voters partial to Republican policies. In short, they agree with pollster John Zogby, who wrote last week in the *Wall Street Journal* that the President’s “ownership society,” of which Social Security reform is the cornerstone, “is a compelling new vision and veritable redefinition of a society less dependent on government largess, of a middle class more independent and more capable of securing financial security on its own” that could presage a “stunning realignment.”

There is nothing wrong with this analysis; Zogby's poll numbers appear to show a strong correlation between investment behavior and voting behavior. And there is certainly nothing wrong with Democrats heeding the warnings about the "investor class" and thus expending considerable effort to prevent its expansion. The problem for Democrats is that expanding the investor class is not the only means by which the GOP can affect the final stage of a realignment. And while the Democrats have become preoccupied with Social Security reform to the exclusion of just about everything else, Republicans are employing some of those other means to strengthen their majority.

One of their principal tactics in this effort is reaching out to traditional Democratic constituencies – most notably African-Americans – in an attempt to break their heretofore unbreakable bond with the party of Roosevelt.

For years, the GOP has struggled with the tactical aspects of minority outreach. Some in the party have argued that attempting to woo black voters is unproductive because, as a whole, black voters comprise a small and shrinking percentage of the total electorate. There is, they argue, much greater upside potential in focusing outreach efforts on the rapidly expanding Latino community instead. Others have complained that any outreach to black voters at all is a waste of time since they will, regardless of the level of outreach, always spurn GOP efforts and, in the end, vote for the Democrats. The current batch of Republicans, led by President Bush, rejects both arguments.

For starters, today's Republican tacticians know that outreach to black voters holds the potential to produce immense rewards, despite the fact that the collective importance of the black vote has declined relative to that of other minorities. While the African-American vote is relatively small and shrinking, it is also nearly exclusively Democratic and very active. Note that President Bush won a meager 11% of the black vote last November, and that was an increase of nearly 50% over his performance four years prior.

Note as well that most Democrats are just barely competitive in national-level contests, despite this overwhelming advantage among black voters, which means that any headway Republicans make will push Democrats further and further from the majority. Should the GOP pickup even a small following among black voters – say an additional 10% or 15% – the Democratic Party would struggle mightily.

The Republican tacticians have also rejected the idea that the only way to attract black voters is to pander to them. Not only is such an approach patently condescending, but it is, in fact, doomed to fail as well, for no matter how well the Republicans pander, Democrats will always be able to do it better.

Beginning with this administration, many Republicans have decided that the way to connect with black voters is not to promise them government goodies, but to look for and to emphasize areas of common interest. With this in mind, President Bush and RNC Chairman Mehlman have, over the last several weeks, begun to court black voters aggressively, using religion, social conservatism, opposition to gay marriage, Social Security, and "life" issues as common points of reference.

Most Republicans concede that such efforts, which have targeted black church leaders in particular, will take some time to bear fruit. But even some Democrats are worried that the strategy is well thought out and may prove effective. As Gore 2000 campaign manger Donna Brazile put it recently "among Democrats, Mehlman's efforts [to woo black voters] should be cause for alarm."

It doesn't hurt in the outreach effort that the GOP is blessed with a growing number of savvy conservative black politicians who are ready to take the national stage and, in so doing, to take on the decades old falsehood that the conservatism is inimical to black America's interests. Rest assured that the Republican tacticians will, over the next 18 months or so, showcase those candidates in particularly high-profile races.

One such race is likely to feature Maryland Lieutenant Governor Michael Steele, a conservative Catholic who appears poised to run for the Senate seat to be vacated at the end of this Congress by Democrat Paul Sarbanes. Steele is an exceptionally talented politician who captivated the audience during his speech at last year's Republican National Convention and who would be perfectly suited to take on likely Democratic nominee, former Congressman and NAACP Chairman Kweisi Mfume. One would be hard-pressed to find a more stunning contrast between new black leadership and old black leadership, and Republican tacticians can therefore be expected to throw their support wholeheartedly behind Steele.

A second such race appears likely in Ohio, where Secretary of State Ken Blackwell, also a conservative Catholic, will be running for Governor. Blackwell, like Steele is an exceptionally talented politician. He will face at least two opponents in what is expected to be a knock-down brawl of a primary, and both of them will have an advantage over him in that they have close ties to the state's Taft political machine, which has dominated GOP politics in Ohio for well over a century. That said, neither of Blackwell's likely opponents can claim the label "conservative" (whereas Ken most certainly can) and neither polls anywhere near as well as he does.

If the Republican strategists are wise, they will join the likes of the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* and get behind Blackwell, who has repeatedly demonstrated his conservative courage on tax matters, has shown that he can drive the liberal black leadership crazy, and can, in the estimation of many analysts, help the GOP sew up Ohio and its all-important 21 electoral votes for at least the next two presidential elections.

One final high-profile race that may feature a strong, black conservative is that for the governorship of Pennsylvania. Until recently, it was assumed that incumbent Governor and former Democratic National Committee Chairman Ed Rendell would skate to easy re-election next year. Over the last couple of weeks,

though, conservative activist and former NFL All-Pro receiver Lynn Swan has expressed serious interest in seeking the GOP nomination to take on Rendell.

Though a political novice, Swan, like Steele, made an excellent impression on delegates with his speech at last year's Republican convention and, as the current Governor of California did with the first Bush White House, Swan has earned the respect and thanks of the current Bush White House while serving as the chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness. Swan was also co-chairman of African-Americans for Bush, and, unlike any of his prospective primary opponents, should have no problems with name recognition.

All things considered, I would hardly be surprised to see President Bush take a personal interest in this race and to take an active role in supporting Swan's fledgling candidacy. This President more than any other in recent memory rewards those who show him loyalty, and if that reward can serve a tactical purpose as well – as it would with Swan – all the better.

This same principle of rewarding loyalty and simultaneously making a tactical calculation is, I believe, also at work in President Bush's recent decision to nominate Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz to head the World Bank.

Now, there should be little doubt that President Bush believes that Wolfowitz will do a good job. He also almost certainly agrees with the sentiment expressed by former federal prosecutor Andy McCarthy who last week gushed that Wolfowitz "is not just a courageous visionary, he happens to be one of the best men it has ever been my honor to know." And finally, there is no question that having the world's most articulate and persistent advocate of "spreading democracy" at the head of the Bank will make the President's global effort at least modestly less difficult and thus more likely to succeed. The World Bank has a well-earned reputation for dispensing its funds indiscriminately, and denying tyrants access to Bank funds will certainly prove helpful to the President's mission.

That said, there should also be little doubt that the Wolfowitz nomination serves a tactical political purpose as well. For starters, it is virtually guaranteed to bring howls from nearly all corners of the globe, since the vast majority of those who opposed the war – be they domestic opponents like John Kerry and Ted Kennedy, or foreign antagonists like Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder – also view Wolfowitz as the very personification of evil in the world. These critics will be forced either to acquiesce on the Wolfowitz nomination, thereby signaling their unwillingness to challenge Bush on even matters they consider vital, or they will be forced to ramp up their attacks on the Deputy Defense Secretary and thereby run the risk of completely discrediting themselves and their positions.

While they deny it publicly, it is largely irrefutable that many of Wolfowitz's critics dislike him not simply because he is widely viewed as the architect of the war, but also because he is a dastardly "neocon," which for many of these critics is code for "Jew." As columnist Mark Steyn put it last week, to the anti-warriors on the left, Wolfowitz "is the most sinister of all the neocons, the big bad Wolfowitz, the man whose name started with a scary animal and ended Jewishly."

And it's these people – the anti-Semitic conspiracy mongers of the world – with whom the luminaries of the Democratic Party will once again make common cause.

President Bush could hardly have been unaware of the firestorm Wolfowitz's nomination would unleash, and he could, therefore, hardly have been unaware that the nomination would also inflame the anti-Semitism that undergirds much of the anti-American, anti-war sentiment throughout the world. In nominating Wolfowitz to the World Bank, the President will not only install an ally in a potentially vital position, but will further expose the moral bankruptcy that underlies much of the opposition to his foreign policy. And, in so doing, he will also further focus attention on the types of people with whom his domestic opponents ally themselves in their opposition to his international agenda. And this, in turn, will only help his cause.

As the leaders of a party that has at times fully earned the moniker "the stupid party," Republican tacticians have not always proven themselves particularly clever or effective. That said, the current crop is acquitting itself rather nicely, successfully pushing the party's legislative and broader political agendas. As long as the Democrats remain hopelessly distracted by hatred and moral indignation, these Republican tactical victories can be expected to continue. And this, in turn, means that the electoral victories can be expected to continue as well.

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