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THEY SAID IT

In his dotage, Carter is proving once again that he is as malicious and mean-spirited a public figure as he is historically ignorant. And for all his sanctimonious Christian veneer, and fly-fishing, 'aw shucks blue-jeans image, he can't hide an essentially ungracious and unkind soul. . . . Carter's Waterloo, of course was the Iranian hostage crisis. It was not just that his gutting of the military helped to explain the rescue disaster. Far more importantly, we can chart the rise of radical political Islam with the storming of the American embassy in Teheran and the impotent response of Jimmy Carter.

--Military historian and classicist Victor Davis Hanson,
victordavishanson.pajamajmedia.com, September 29, 2006.

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THE CONSEQUENCES OF PIQUE.

One sure sign that campaign momentum has shifted away from the Republicans and back to the Democrats is the recent rash of articles from right-leaning journalists, commentators, and prognosticators warning loyal readers to expect that one or both houses of Congress will be in Democratic hands after November 7. For nearly two years now, most cogent conservatives have remained cautiously optimistic, while their left-leaning colleagues have gleefully rubbed their hands together and daydreamed about Speaker Pelosi. Not so anymore.

A few of these conservative pre-mortems, such as that offered by the inimitable Michael Barone, have been calm, lucid explanations of the factors that suggest a switch in control of Congress is possible, and how the loss of one or both houses will affect the Republican Party, the President, and, ultimately, the nation. Most of the rest have been bills of indictment against the GOP; long, detailed depictions of the Republican shortcomings and accounts of the party's mistakes, essentially charging Republicans with "bringing this on themselves."

A tiny but nonetheless prominent handful have been markedly less sober, accusing the GOP of all sorts of nefariousness and declaring that the nation would be better off with the GOP out of power, despite the Democrats' manifest weaknesses with regard to matters of national security. The message is that the Republican Party is so corrupt or so traitorous to its core values that it needs to be punished, no matter how unappealing the opposition may be.

One such piece was penned by the former Army Colonel, unwavering supporter of the war, and current *New York Post* columnist Ralph Peters, who this weekend declared that the GOP would lose at least one house and that he, for one, was thrilled at the prospect. Specifically, he wrote:

It's time to get a grip. And to be honest with ourselves. The fear-mongering and juvenile nastiness we, the people, endure from both political parties would have us believe that disaster looms in November. It doesn't . . .

The Republicans are going to get a dose of castor oil. They need it. If we, the people, are lucky, the Dems will take the House, while the Republicans will hold on to a majority in the Senate. That split-decision would be good news for America.

Why? Despite the predictions of doom from both sides if we don't vote for the candidates selected by their party hacks (who think you and I are just chumps), our government functions best when one party controls the House and the other holds the Senate.

Why? Power corrupts. Fast. When either party - it doesn't matter which one - controls both houses of Congress, we get two very bad results.

Now, despite the tone of his piece, we're willing to cut Colonel Peters a little slack here for a couple of reasons. First, we're sympathetic to his argument that those who are predicting utter and complete collapse of the political system if the "the other side" wins are manipulative hysterics. The nation has survived rule by both parties, and it will survive again, no matter which party holds the levers of power in Congress after November.

However, it is *not* true, as Peters implies, that there are no real differences between the parties. There are. And they are important. Yet his basic point has some merit.

Second, Peters is a military affairs analyst who gets paid primarily to write about matters relating to national defense and national security. He is clearly not a political scientist (or even a particularly adept political observer) or an historian (or even a particularly keen student of history).

This second point is, in our opinion, crucial, because it explains why Peters fails to grasp the importance of this election and why his point about partisan control of government needs to be tempered and qualified. At least the guy has a defense for his ignorance, unlike most of the other purported conservatives who have called for the GOP to be "punished" and who have no similar excuse. These people actually profess to be political analysts of some sort, yet fail to understand that punishing the GOP thusly will neither cure what ails Congress nor make the prosecution of the war on terror any more effective. Indeed, if anything it is likely to have precisely the opposite effect in both cases.

The problems with conservatives openly championing the idea of using the election to punish the GOP are, we think, twofold. For starters, the presumption that the political culture in Washington can be changed by simply altering the balance of power is false. Unhappy conservatives argue that the GOP has grown fat, corrupt, and detached from its principles while in the majority. And while that may be true, it is not, as most critics would argue, a function merely of holding power for just over a decade.

The problem is a systemic one. The corruption in Washington stems from the power of the federal government, not the power of the majority. This has been amply demonstrated by such figures as the Senate *Minority Leader*, who is currently embroiled in his own host of shady real estate and influence peddling scams that rival anything perpetrated by his Republican counterparts. The majority party may take the brunt of the public blame for perceived corruption, but their majority position is not the cause of the corruption. As such, changing the majority party just for the sake of change won't help aid the fight against corruption one whit. As Jules Crittenden, the city editor of *The Boston Herald* put it this weekend, "Any suggestion that

immoral behavior is limited to one party is absurd. Any suggestion that it is an issue upon which national policy and elections should hinge is beyond absurd.”

This is not to say that corruption can or should be ignored. Regular readers know that we have spent the better part of the last decade harping on the issue of corruption in government and business. But simply swapping one corrupt party for the another corrupt party is unlikely to make a difference in the broader fight against corruption, particularly when the out-of-power party is considerably more dedicated, in practice and in principle, to the very institutions (i.e. big government and multinational bodies) that tend to foster such corruption.

On the whole, American voters seem to understand this intuitively, and have proven generally unresponsive to campaign appeals alleging collective partisan guilt for individual corruption. Historically, voters have been unwilling to punish incumbents who are not directly tied to scandal at the ballot box. Those who are directly implicated are almost always defeated, but those who are not are usually unaffected. Decades of empirical data confirm that voters nearly always assign guilt at an individual candidate level rather than the collective partisan level.

If you take a look at the great partisan shifts over the last century, none was motivated principally by scandal. In 1930 and 1932, Democrats wrested control of Congress from the Republicans (the House and Senate respectively), who had dominated both houses for most (though not all) of the previous six decades. That realignment in partisan affiliation was due to gross Republican economic misfeasance, not malfeasance. In 1954, when the Democrats once again reasserted control and held for the next four decades, the partisan shift reflected shifting voter ideology and an affinity for post-bellum liberalism. Similarly, the shift in control of Congress in 1994 was premised on ideological evolution, rather than scandal.

Though Democrats console themselves with the pretense that the overblown House banking scandal doomed them in 1994, the fact of the matter is that the GOP under Newt Gingrich struck a chord that resonated with the American people, proposing

ideas and promising policies that reflected a growing public leering with the Democrats’ ongoing leftward migration, particularly on social matters. And thus has it almost always been in American politics. Scandal may sell papers, but ideology and policy win elections.

Watergate was the one notable exception to this rule. Granted, Democrats already controlled Congress in 1974. But in that midterm, which took place only three months after President Nixon’s resignation, they nonetheless picked up an additional 50 seats, which was a staggering gain for the majority party. Two years later, a Democrat was elected president, despite the fact that his party’s previous nominee had lost 49 of 50 states. And since the results of both elections cut across broad historical trends, it is relatively clear that almost all of this was directly or indirectly attributable to Watergate.

What this means, in essence, is that Colonel Peters and others who have suggested that the GOP be punished for its corruption want the electorate to repeat its paroxysm of the post-Watergate elections in 1974-’76. Only this time, they want the tantrum without the cause, without any serious, constitution-threatening scandal, or even, for that matter, any real scandal at all. And they want it simply because they are, for some reason or another, unhappy.

We think these critics would do well to remember the net effect of the post-Watergate elections on Congress, on the military, on the various intelligence agencies, on foreign policy, and on the world. Indeed, many of the problems these very same conservatives have spent the better part of the last two decades complaining about – from the humiliating manner in which American forces were finally driven from Vietnam to campaign finance regulations to the evisceration of military and intelligence capabilities and the erection of artificial walls between domestic and foreign intelligence services – all had their genesis in the post-Watergate Reform Congress.

And then came Carter. Even leaving aside the double-digit inflation, double-digit interest rates, and the rest of his disastrous domestic agenda, there can be little argument that the presidency of Jimmy Carter was a national tragedy. Ignored in the current debate over

who was more to blame for the rise of al Qaeda, Bill Clinton or George W. Bush, is the fact that both of the strains of radical Islam that threaten the world today had their origins during the Carter presidency and are traceable directly to the fecklessness and feebleness of the Carter foreign policy.

What follows is a lengthy though important rundown of the national security disasters perpetrated against the American people by the Carter administration. It was published a couple of weeks ago by *Investor's Business Daily*. The numbers appearing in the text are "Reasons Democrats Are Weak On Defense And Can't Be Trusted To Govern In Wartime," of which there are 97 total. To wit:

Jimmy Carter, elected during the Cold War with the Soviet Union, and (1) believing Americans had an inordinate fear of communism, (2) lifted U.S. citizens' travel bans to Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia and (3) pardoned draft evaders.

President Carter (4) also stopped B-1 bomber production, (5) gave away our strategically located Panama Canal and (6) made human rights the central focus of his foreign policy.

That led Carter, a Democrat, (7) to make a monumental miscalculation and withdraw U.S. support for our long-standing Mideast military ally, the Shah of Iran. (8) Carter simply didn't like the Shah's alleged mistreatment of imprisoned Soviet spies.

The Soviets, (9) with close military ties to Iraq, a 1,500-mile border with Iran and eyes on Afghanistan, aggressively tried to encircle, infiltrate, subvert and overthrow Iran's government for its oil deposits and warm-water ports several times after Russian troops attempted to stay there at the end of WWII. These were all communist threats to Iran that Carter never understood.

Carter (10) thought Ayatollah Khomeini, a Muslim exile in Paris, would make a fairer Iranian leader than the Shah because he was a religious man. (11) With U.S. support withdrawn, the Shah was overthrown, and (12) the ayatollah returned and promptly proclaimed Iran an Islamic nation. (13) Executions followed. Palestinian hit men were hired to secretly eliminate the opposition so the religious mullahs couldn't be blamed.

Iran's ayatollah (14) then introduces the idea of suicide bombers to the Palestine Liberation Organization and paid \$35,000 to PLO families whose young people were brainwashed to attack and kill as many Israeli citizens as possible by blowing themselves up. This inhumane menace has grown unchallenged.

The ayatollah (15) next created and financed with Iran's oil wealth Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that later bombed our barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Marines and sailors. With Iran's encouragement this summer, (16) Hezbollah attacked Israel and started a war that damaged Lebanon and (17) diverted the world's attention from Iran's nuclear bomb program.

In November 1979, Iranians, including (18) Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, their current puppet president who was elected in an unfree, rigged election in which opponents were intimidated into not running, (19) stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 U.S. personnel hostage for 444 days.

Carter, after nearly six months, (20) belatedly attempted a poorly executed rescue with only six Navy helicopters (three were lost or disabled in sandstorms) and Air Force planes with Delta Force commandos. The mission was aborted, but foul-ups on the

ground resulted in a loss of eight aircraft, five airman and three Marines. The bungled plan was never put down on paper for the Joint Chiefs to evaluate. There were practice sessions, but no full dress rehearsal, and pilots weren't allowed to meet with their weather forecasters because someone in authority worried about security.

America (21) can thank the well-meaning but naive and inexperienced Democrat, Jimmy Carter, for a foreign policy that lost a strong military ally, Iran, and (22) put the U.S. at odds with a gangster regime that was determined to build nuclear bombs to wipe Israel off the map and threaten the U.S. and other nations. Iran also has a working relationship with al-Qaida, which also wants nukes. Care to connect the dots?

Shortly after a meeting at which Carter kissed Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev on each cheek, (23) the USSR invaded Afghanistan. Carter the appeaser was shocked. "I can't believe the Russians lied to me," he said.

During the Carter Democrat period, (24) communism was on a rampage worldwide. In an unrestrained country-capturing spree, communists took over (25) Ethiopia, (26) South Yemen ((27) located at the mouth of the Red Sea where they could block Mideast oil shipments and access to the Suez Canal), (28) Afghanistan, (29) Angola, (30) Cambodia, (31) Mozambique, (32) Grenada and (33) Nicaragua.

Compared to the pre-Vietnam War defense budget in 1964, Carter requested in fiscal 1982's defense budget (34) a 45% reduction in fighter aircraft, (35) a 75% reduction in ships, (36) an 83% reduction in attack submarines and (37) a 90% reduction in helicopters.

Early last week, it was reported that liberal diva Barbra Streisand had verbally abused a fan who objected to her in-concert political sermonizing by telling him

to "shut the f*** up!" That's hardly surprising, of course, given modern liberalism's rather perverted understanding of free speech. But if Babs and the rest of the liberal agi-tainers really want to do themselves and their party a favor, they will save their vitriol and admonitions to keep quiet for their own has-beens and wannabes, since they do far more damage to the Democrats' cause than any conservative dissenter could do, simply by reminding voters who they are, what they've done, and what they will do.

When, for example, the North Koreans detonated their nuclear bomb last week, the aforementioned Jimmy Carter took it upon himself to take to the editorial pages of *The New York Times*, penning one of the most intellectually dishonest and borderline delusional opinion pieces that paper has seen in a long time (which for the *Times* is *really* saying something). In so doing, he not only alerted voters that the Democratic Party can be expected to use its anticipated majority to attack President Bush rather than to participate seriously in foreign policy discussions, but also reminded them of the consequences that followed the last time they chose their elected officials based purely on pique and in contravention of their ideological and policy preferences.

Jimmy Carter may or may not have been the worst president in American history, but he is almost certainly the worst ex-president. The only decent thing we can think to say about Carter and the post-Watergate Congress is that the country survived both. It was painful, humiliating, and dangerous, but the country survived. And that, of course, is why we know that it will survive again, even if the Democrats take back Congress, even if they use their new majority to do nothing but obstruct, attack, and embarrass President Bush.

Of course, none of this would be an issue right now if the Republicans in Congress had taken their responsibilities a little more seriously and had better understood the gravity of the times. Their failure to behave by any standard of decency, their failure to embrace the values of their constituents, their failure to keep the promises they made has put them in a position where they might lose their majority to a party that is itself in ideological breakdown. Just as Nixon

bore the ultimate responsibility for the disasters that flowed from his corruption, so the current GOP will bear the responsibility if the Democrats are returned to power and permitted to disrupt the remainder of the Bush presidency with their vengeance-taking. But that doesn't mean Republicans should cheer GOP losses. That's just nuts. This is serious business, not a playground dispute.

There is no guarantee, of course, that voters will turn the GOP out. And we remain more optimistic of Republicans' chances than do most analysts and prognosticators, though at this point, that's not really saying much. If there is any consolation for the GOP, voters do not, as a rule, hold political parties accountable for the misdeeds of its individual members, meaning that scandal rarely becomes the central theme in a nationalized election. The GOP may, indeed, deserve to be punished, but the electorate rarely indulges in such reproof. Whether they will make this election another once-in-three-decades exception remains to be seen.

A PARTY WITHOUT A CAUSE.

If Democrats win the control of the House next month, as they well could, there will be considerable talk among the political classes about a resurgence of the left in America. We will happily join in this discussion, if and when it becomes appropriate. But this week, before the firestorm hits -- if it does -- we thought we would make a few observations about the Democratic Party as it stands today, and where it might be headed, whether or not it wins a prize in next month's elections.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis. Our aim is simply to put forth a few ideas that have been kicking around in our heads for the past several years as we have watched the Democrats grapple with minority status.

We will begin by noting that one of the unique aspects of American democracy is that the party out of power has no formal leader. That is, there is no position in the United States akin to England's "shadow PM" or "leader of the loyal opposition," at least until a few months before each quadrennial presidential election when, at a highly celebrated, nationally

televised convention, the out-of-power party selects an individual to carry its banner into the fray. During the subsequent few months, the anointed candidate is King of the Carnival, Supreme Party Leader. If he wins, he becomes President of the United States and his party's Big Enchilada for the next four years. If he loses, his party returns to being leaderless until it gets another shot at grabbing the gold ring four years later.

Of course, the opposition party does have a "chairperson" and a large bureaucratic infrastructure in place during these times of trouble. But this apparatus concentrates on fundraising and administrative chores. It has no significant role in determining the party's ideology or positions on the issues. In this sense, the chairperson is just another big shot among the many who are always competing for power within the minority.

In some cases, the press and the pundit community will anoint an individual as the "titular head" of a minority party. Newt Gingrich was so regarded for a short time after he led Republicans to an exciting victory over House Democrats in the 1994 off-year elections. Currently, Hillary Clinton is viewed by some as titular head of the Democratic Party by virtue of being a Senator from a big state, the wife of a former president, the frontrunner in the pack of Democratic presidential hopefuls, and the party's top fundraiser. But the position is notoriously ephemeral and provides the possessor with no more real authority over party matters than any other politician has.

Needless to say, a party without a formal leader is at a distinct disadvantage, having no one to speak authoritatively on behalf of the party on the issues of the day, as a president does for his. This always leads to some confusion in the public mind as to "what the party stands for," which is inevitably aggravated by extremists within the party purporting to speak for it on all sorts of issues.

This was a problem for Republicans when Bill Clinton was in the White House. But it was not nearly as troubling for them as it is for Democrats today. You see, there were then, and still are, some vestiges of a broad, conservative governing philosophy that virtually all Republicans endorse, despite wide differences of

opinion among them on a variety of specific issues. These views, which include a predilection for smaller government, lower taxes, a strong military, and respect for traditional moral and ethical values, helped to keep the party's various, disparate elements somewhat united during the Clinton years.

The Democrats have no similar, widely accepted set of core principles to keep them focused when there is no individual leader around to perform that function. In theory, liberalism should serve this purpose. But the fact is that it no longer defines a true governing philosophy as it did during the days of the New Deal and the Great Society.

Indeed, for the most part, today's liberals are united by little more than a hatred for President Bush, nostalgia for the heady days of the 1960s, a reactionary determination to defend the old liberal programs, a libertine attitude toward sexual morality, an antagonism toward religion, and an alternative belief system that revolves around an assortment of faddish and randomly enforced "politically correct" "isms" (racism, sexism, ageism, etc.) and "phobias" (homophobia, Islamophobia, etc.).

This catalogue of opinions and beliefs provides a basis for inter-party commiseration and shoptalk, and may even be enough to provide it with some electoral victories. But, as anyone who has carefully watched the Democratic Party for the past few years realizes, most of the party's senior politicians and advisors are painfully aware that liberalism falls far short of providing the Party with the kind of ideological foundation upon which it can build a comprehensive, uniform, logical, and predictable approach to dealing with the problems of the world, both domestic and international.

Needless to say, this circumstance has attracted an astonishing array of individuals and groups of individuals who have taken it upon themselves to provide the Party with a new and improved *raison d'être*. Leading participants in this enterprise include scores of liberal bloggers, an endless stream of media pundits, a parade of celebrities from all fields of the entertainment community, dozens of glib political

advisors, community activists from all over the nation, an endless stream of left wing kooks and crazies, and, most importantly, a very large number of the wealthiest citizens in the nation.

This latter category is not only fascinating but very probably holds the key to the future of the Democratic Party. One of the most interesting of the groups that has been established in recent years to represent liberal moneyed interests is the Democracy Alliance.

This organization was formed in the aftermath of John Kerry's defeat and is made up exclusively of the billionaires and multi-multi-millionaires that are the Party's wealthiest donors. The group maintains an aura of secrecy, but according to an article by Ari Berman in the October 16 issue of *The Nation* its members include billionaires George Soros, Peter Lewis, and Herb and Marion Sandler; major Clinton fundraisers Mark and Susie Buell and Bernard Schwartz; New York venture capitalist and longtime Clinton supporter Alan Patricof; Hollywood celebrities Rob Reiner and Norman Lear; wealthy high-tech Californians, such as Working Assets founder Michael Kieschnick; and the AFL-CIO and the SEIU [the Service Employees International Union]. An earlier article in *The Washington Post* includes Tim Gill, a Colorado software entrepreneur, in this group, as well as Chris Gabrieli, an investment banker who ran for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in Massachusetts earlier this year.

By all accounts, members of this "high-priced club," as Berman calls it, are required to pay a \$25,000 entry fee, \$30,000 in annual dues and a minimum of \$200,000 per year to organizations recommended by the Alliance. *The Post* says that the Alliance has close to 100 "partners" and that in the nine months through July of 2006, it "lavished" more than \$50 million on liberal groups that "have been willing to submit to its extensive screening process and its demands for secrecy." According to Berman, the long-term goal is to be able to direct \$500 million in annual grants.

Now the stated goal of this group is to put the Democratic Party back on top of the political heap by

investing in organizations that could be influential in building what activists call “political infrastructure.” These include those liberal think tanks and advocacy groups that the Alliance hopes will provide “long-term impact and sustainability.” A recent article in *Human Events*, described the Alliance’s origins as follows:

Its creation is a product of frustration among wealthy liberal donors who believe their financial contributions have had little impact on the direction of national policy in recent years. Envious of the effectiveness of such major conservative institutions as the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Leadership Institute and Young America’s Foundation, these liberals are eager to build an equally effective body of institutions that can wage intellectual and ideological battles for their side.

It remains to be seen what will come of this endeavor. But it is worth noting that it is occurring at a time when the Democratic Party has no official political leader and when its foundational belief system no longer provides a good political framework from which to address some of the most important issues of the day, such as combating terrorism, dealing with nuclear proliferation, managing the new globalized economy, and confronting the demographic problems that are closing in on the nation, ranging from unchecked immigration to the pending bankruptcy of Social Security and Medicare.

This makes the Party a natural target for a takeover bid by a group of wealthy individuals who are willing to invest a great deal of money to restore it to its prior, dominant position in the marketplace in exchange for a certain degree of control over its operations. As we see it, however, this strategy is based on a typical liberal error, namely that large amounts of money will solve all problems.

What these wealthy liberals fail to understand is that the organizations on the right that they wish to replicate did not generate the ideas that helped propel the Republicans into the majority. Certainly,

these groups help a great deal to defend conservative ideals and ideas in the political marketplace. But the ideological roots of the conservative movement reach back much further than those of the organizations that provide public support for them today. We made this point as follows in an article we wrote just over a year ago on this same subject entitled “The Democrats’ Dilemma.”

It is important to understand that the beliefs that formed the basis for conservatism’s slow rebound from virtual extinction during the Roosevelt years did not arise out of think tanks and advocacy groups established during the past three decades.

In fact, they began to enter the public consciousness over a half century ago, in the mid 1940s and early 1950s, via numerous books written by a handful of intellectuals who were attempting to call attention to the perniciousness of certain social, economic, and political trends that seemed destined to occupy a central role in the post-World War II world.

These works included F.A. Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949), Richard Weaver’s *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948), Peter Viereck’s *Conservatism Revisited* (1949), William Buckley’s *God and Man at Yale* (1951), Whittaker Chambers’ *Witness* (1952), Russell Kirk’s *The Conservative Mind* (1953), and Robert Nisbet’s *The Quest for Community* (1953).

Together, these and other similar works provided an historical, philosophical, economic, sociological, governmental, and practical catechism upon which to build a political movement. Each author took a different tack, but the common thread among them was alarm at the growing influence of leftist thought in America and a desire to describe the consequences that would result if Americans sacrificed the customs, mores,

morals, and governing principles that had formed the basis of their society on the altar of the collectivist ideology of communism and socialism.

With this in mind, it is our belief that pouring tens of millions of dollars into liberal think tanks and advocacy groups is not likely to rejuvenate the Democratic Party to the satisfaction of a large group of extremely wealthy liberals who are used to seeing their money produce real returns. The fact is that if large, well funded, and highly effective organizations dedicated to the defense of the beliefs of the liberal establishment were the principal requirement for political success, the Democratic Party would never have lost its majority status in the first place.

Indeed, the reason the Republicans established the organizations that the liberals now envy was because liberals exercise effective control over the networks, the Hollywood entertainment industry, the humanities departments of virtually all of the major universities and colleges in the nation, most of the country's major newspapers, and the federal bureaucracy.

What these wealthy liberals need is something that money cannot buy and that they wouldn't purchase if it could, namely, a cadre of brilliant, clear-minded experts on government and the human condition, like those mentioned in the above quote from our prior newsletter article, not for the purpose of developing

a new governing philosophy for the Democratic Party but to convince liberals that their fundamental notions about government are wrong headed.

In the absence of this unlikely acquisition, it seems to us that the Democratic Party is about to be significantly transformed by the influx of a great deal of money and a lot of free advice from some of the largest egos in America, all of whom are likely to take offense if their views are ignored.

Only time will tell what the end result of the Democracy Alliance will be. But one of two outcomes seems probable. The first would be that the Alliance "partners" become dissatisfied with the return on the tens of millions of dollars they are spending on this venture and begin cutting back on their contributions, leaving the organizations they befriended with badly inflated budgets and leaving the Democratic Party in worse shape than it was before they entered the scene with their bulging checkbooks and big ideas.

Alternatively, the Alliance could gain enormous power over the Democratic Party by virtue of its de facto chokehold on the outside organizations that provide it with intellectual support. Then the real fun will begin. But that's another story for another time. Either way, it is safe to say that the Democratic Party is in for some very big changes, regardless of its near term successes or failures at the polls. Big money will do that.

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