

Take Charge by Dan Jacoby

Americans love leaders who lead.

Support (if that's the word) for George W. Bush is at an all-time low, recently dropping below 30%. His criminal actions are legion. He:

- Invaded a country that was no threat to us, killing, to date, over 3,000 Americans and half a million Iraqis;
- Imprisoned American citizens in virtual dungeons, without charges and without access to a lawyer;
- Ordered the NSA to spy on Americans without a warrant and without probable cause;
- Made up hundreds of "signing statements" under which he ignores the will of Congress – a Congress that was controlled by his own party;
- Let hundreds of poor people die in New Orleans so he could continue his vacation;
- Stole hundreds of billions of dollars of our tax money and gave it to companies like Halliburton and Blackwater in no-bid contracts;

The list goes on and on – and keeps growing almost daily. The latest news item is Attorney General Gonzales's firing of eight federal prosecutors for completely (I won't say "purely") political reasons. His claim that they were fired for poor performance is a bald-faced lie, and everyone knows it. Coming on the heels of his claim that there is no Constitutional right to habeas corpus, this really shouldn't be a surprise.

It turns out that the Republicans in Congress are no better. Four have been forced out by their own crookedness – Tom DeLay, Randy "Duke" Cunningham, Bob Ney and Mark Foley are already gone. Now we learn that House members Heather Wilson and Doc Hastings, and Senator Pete Domenici, may have played a part in the prosecutors' firing.

But that's not the problem.

The problem is that the new Democratic "leadership" refuses to lead. Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid are in positions of power; they must use that power, and use it now. They must:

- Force George W. Bush to get us out of Iraq this year (passing H.R. 455 would do it);
- Expand Medicare to cover all Americans and end the insurance industry's power over our health care (H.R. 676 is available);
- Create an energy bill that is not a boondoggle for Exxon and corn growers, but combines increased clean, renewable energy sources, higher efficiency measures, and greatly expanded mass transit while ending the subsidies for oil use;
- Pass election reform to prevent anyone from stealing future elections (H.R. 811, with modifications, is a great start);
- Get rid of Alberto Gonzales; and
- Investigate to impeach George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

Anyone who thinks this is impossible may be right, but not because it is actually impossible. It may be impossible only because there are currently no real Democratic leaders. Neither Nancy Pelosi nor Harry Reid seems willing to do any of the above, or take any action that could truly be called leadership. And so far, nobody else is stepping up. There is a power vacuum, and Americans, like nature, abhor a vacuum.

Democrats didn't win the 2006 election; Republicans lost it. Republicans like DeLay, Cunningham, Ney, Foley, and especially Bush seemed to be doing everything they could to lose, and they succeeded. But the remaining Republicans won't make those mistakes again. If Democrats don't start acting like leaders, America won't allow them to lead.

And if Pelosi, Reid, et. al., think George W. Bush and Dick Cheney are arrogant, uncaring and narrow-minded, they should take a look at Rudy Giuliani.

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