

The Great Divide

Anger can be a terrific motivating force, and we are seeing that in the run-up to next year's presidential campaign. The far-left literally hates President Bush, and is putting its money where its loathing is.

I believe Howard Dean is the most shocked man in America. He's leading the Democratic pack, despite being a guy who supports gun ownership.

The simple fact that he is vehemently against the Iraq war has caused the Bush haters to pour millions of dollars into this campaign. Do they know the NRA loves this guy?

They might, but they don't care. So intense is the displeasure with anything Bush that some committed liberals will support the person who attacks the President the hardest, which Dean has done.

But anger is a funny thing. Used sparingly, it can lead to positive change. But used constantly, it is destructive, and far-left anger may, indeed, destroy the Democratic party's chances of capturing the White House next year.

Even The New York Times, generally friendly to the left, realizes this and in the last few weeks a few of its columnists have hinted that liberal angst should be tamped down.

Americans are getting annoyed with defamation and over the top accusations. Even when there is some validity to charges, such as the Schwarzenegger-women exposition, Americans do not want a witch hunt or smear campaign. The California recall vote proves that.

President Bush also realizes that the more the bomb-throwers bellow, the easier it will be for him to stake out "the voice of reason" territory.

Thus, Mr. Bush is adopting the Muhammed Ali technique of rope-a-dope. He is laying back, letting the frenzied opposition flail away, knowing it will eventually exhaust itself and collapse in a heap. Most Americans are not ideologues and will soon find the fanatics tiresome.

The far-left is also allowing the Bush administration to dismiss legitimate criticism over the tottering Iraq situation. By accusing Mr. Bush of intentionally lying about WMD's, and Vice President Cheney of promoting war to help his business buddies, the accusers marginalize themselves.

Unless there is direct proof of intentional deceit and wrongdoing, the charges become vicious propaganda and many Americans tune out.

There are certainly legitimate questions about how the Bush administration could apparently be so wrong about WMD's and the violent aftermath of the formal war. But the President can avoid addressing those questions if they are lost among irrational harangues by his opponents, many of whom are still seething over the last election.

The far-left also has another enormous problem. Even though it is driving the Democratic agenda now, its positions on a number of social issues are extremely offensive to much of the country.

All the polls say the vast majority of Americans oppose partial-birth abortion and want parent notification when their daughters become pregnant. Americans overwhelmingly want the Pledge of Allegiance to contain the words "under God." They do not want legalized narcotics, or higher taxes on anybody.

The far-left is on the wrong side of all of those issues, and therefore anyone associated with them has no chance to win the Presidency.

If Dean is nominated, he will lose even if Iraq falls apart.

If Hillary Clinton or Al Gore jump in, they have no chance if they partner up with the ACLU.

So here's a tip for all you "progressives" out there. The country may not like what is happening in Iraq, the groping of women, or a huge federal deficit.

But what Americans like even less are fanatics that scorn America's traditions and mock any sense of fair play. And if you left-wingers are angry now, wait until you see what happens if you don't cool off. Four more years.