

The Coming Resurrection of the GOP

By PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

"GOP Makes Sweeping Gains in Senate, House/Clinton Seen as Vulnerable in 1996."

That such a headline will grace the front pages in November 1994 is almost assured. Off-year elections are traditionally harsh on incumbents; 1994 should be especially so for Democrats. As in 1966 and 1978, they control all the corridors of power and have no one else to blame. Of 34 Senate seats at risk in 1994, 22 are held by Democrats. (Recall: 1966 led to Mr. Nixon's New Majority and 1978 pointed to the Reagan landslides of the 1980s.)

The GOP base is rock solid. Despite the smallest turnout for a party nominee since Alf Landon, the party held its ground in the Senate and gained 10 seats in the House. The future is now! — as George Allen used to say. Facing a 43% president who is already canceling promises and capitulating to special interests, Republicans should be preparing for battle. Instead, many Republican leaders can be found lined up to go to confession in the Washington Post. ("Bless me, Father, for I have sinned; I was 'noninclusive' and 'divisive' three times.") Accepting a false media analysis of why they lost, Republicans are already indulging in the politics of appeasement.

Hence, Ron Brown, rain-maker for Baby Doc, lawyer-lobbyist for the Empire of the Sun, is given a pass. Warren Rudman's Republican Majority Coalition wants all "moral" issues off the table, now. Jack Kemp's Empower America is "reaching out" to pro-abortion and gayrights Republicans with one hand, stiff-arming the Christian right with the other. Irving Kristol, who first raised the white flag in the struggle against the Great Society, now wants it raised in the culture wars. "I regret to inform [Pat Buchanan] that those wars are over," said Professor Kristol on this page. "The left has won."

This is the counsel of defeatism and the politics of despair. Pursued, it will lead to irrelevancy and death for the GOP. Who will follow a party that abandons its principles, platform and most loyal followers after a single stinging defeat? Who should? We cannot raise a white flag in the cultural war, for that war is about who we are. Nor can conservatives become consci-

entious objectors—because culture shapes politics, culture is the Ho Chi Minh trail to power. Surrender this province, and we lose America.

Republicans are misreading the election returns. It was not the Traditionalists who lost the Bush presidency; they were in the last ditch; they gave Mr. Bush his margin of victory in the states he won. To walk away from them is to abandon many of the best and bravest of our people. For what? To get in with an establishment that cannot contain its joy at Republican defeat?

Even our new president knows the tug of traditional values. In the South, he emphasized welfare reform and the death penalty, and today he is wary of his own pledge to open up West Point and the Marine barracks to gay liberation.

If Republicans abandon traditional values, it is not the values that will be abandoned but the party — for a new party with the will to fight. Gay rights activists seek to substitute, for laws rooted in Judeo-Christian morality, laws rooted in the secular humanist belief that all consensual sexual acts are morally equal. That belief is anti-biblical and amoral; to write it into law is to codify a lie.

All citizens are equal in their constitutional rights, but not all ideas, or lifestyles, are equal. Some are wrong and some are right. We cannot permit the acolytes of gay rights to impose their values on our children. We have to resist, as we have to fight on for the right to life of the unborn, even if defeats lie ahead. For it is in struggle that we define ourselves, that we call forth, by our conviction and courage, the converts and recruits who will one day win the battles that we could not.

The governing coalition of the 21st century can yet be a center-conservative coalition—if only we will keep the faith.

In November, the Bush-Perot vote hit 57%; before the media repair work began on Bill and Hillary in the late spring, the Bush-Perot vote was bumping up against 70%. If the GOP can recapture the Perot vote, it can determine the future. And the essence of the Perot appeal is anti-Washington, anti-Big Government, populist and patriotic, all the things we used to be.

What must be done?

After 12 years, the GOP must not only claim its successes—longest peacetime expansion in history, winning the Cold War—but concede its failures. The bureaucracy is larger, the deficit greater, the quota mind-set more embedded and the national debt four times what it was in 1981.

The Clean Air Act, the tax hike, the civil rights bill, all came down with crushing weight on an economy in which the GOP fortune was wholly invested. We imposed on small businesses the taxes and regulations that ate up their profit margins, and

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shut down the great American Jobs Machine of the 1980s. Republicans helped kill the goose that laid their golden eggs.

Ben Hooks and the NAACP to whom we gave the quota bill, the Sierra Club for whom we saved the owls, where were they when we needed them in November '92?

Republicans need to forget about the lost limousines, to go back to their roots, become again the Party of the Outsiders. It is time the Prodigal Son came home to his father's house. What America needs is not a new third party but a fighting second party that will confront the left—not just on capital gains, but all along a thousand-mile front.

The move into GOP leadership ranks of Rep. Dick Armey (R., Texas) and Rep. Tom DeLay (R., Tex.) is a first sign of the recovery of a fighting spirit; a second would be the election of an outside marshal as party chair, to ride into town with his gunbelt on. Surely the GOP can now find common ground in ending World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans to foreign competitors, in cutting tax rates on interest income and capital gains, in advocating JFK-style credits for plant and equipment, in picking up the middle-class tax cut Mr. Clinton has so lately put down.

Instead of a level playing field, why not tilt the field in favor of U.S. business and industry, by making America the most rewarding earning and investment climate in the Western industrial world? What is wrong with using access to America's immense market to force adversary traders to open up to our goods? What is wrong with putting America first?

Ronald Reagan, who negotiated the free trade agreement with Canada, imposed the import quotas on Japanese cars that bought Ford the time to build a Taurus that outsells the Honda. Before reading out of the GOP everyone who wants to defend Boeing against the four-nation EC-socialist cartel that subsidizes Airbus, recall: The only two Republicans on Mount Rushmore, Uncle Abe and the Rough Rider, disbelieved in the free trade ideology.

And the party must stand up to the modern money-changers in the temple—the lobbyists, foreign and domestic—buying and selling public policy in the corridors of power.

More Than Enterprise Zones

As the "only remaining superpower," our national security is nowhere imperiled, but domestic security is everywhere

at risk. Not since 1863 has there been a riot as bloody and destructive as the one in Los Angeles. Our cities are no-walk zones. In New York, 2,000 are murdered each year, while Washington retains the title of Murder Capital of the Western World. Ours has become the land of the drive-by shooting and the serial killer. Our answer to the brutalized people of Korea Town and Crown Heights has got to be more than enterprise zones.

Before we launch crusades for democracy in Myanmar and the Mahgreb, let us first secure for all Americans their constitutional rights. Why do we need 150,000 troops in Bavaria to defend a border that no longer exists, when our own borders are witness to the greatest overland invasion in history? Even President Clinton, who is barricading Haiti, seems to realize that this nation needs a "time out" to assimilate and Americanize the tens of millions who have poured in in recent decades. Else Balkanization of the Republic is assured.

Republicans need to ask themselves: Who are we? For whom do we speak? We used to be the party of small business and the middle class, not of "Big Government Conservatism"; of merit and ability, not affirmative action and quotas; of Reaganite courage, not Kristolian surrender. Once we believed that freedom "empowered" people—not the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Sitting in the East Room as President Bush conferred the Medal of Freedom on Ronald Reagan, I found it was impossible not to feel a touch of sadness.

George Bush is the last leader of the Great Generation, the young lions who crushed fascism and persevered in the 50 Years War with the empire of Lenin and Stalin. The Gipper was the only president in a third of a century to complete two terms, at the end of which U.S. might and morale were restored; and America coasted to victory in the Cold War. The 1980s gave us some of the best times and greatest victories we will ever know.

But there are new victories to be won, just over the next hill.

Sursum corda, fellow Republicans, lift up your hearts.

Mr. Buchanan, who challenged President Bush in the primaries, is completing a new book, "America First: The War for the Soul of the GOP," and returning to journalism.