

# Voice of the Left

Glenn R. Swift

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A New Vision for America

America has awakened.

Unlike most congressional elections, this past one was clearly dominated by politics at the national level. The majority of Americans were simply fed up with Republican corruption and the president's failed policy in Iraq. They wished to send a message...and that message has been heard throughout the world.

For the past six years, the Republican Congress has totally abrogated its constitutional right and duty to oversee the office of the president. Their rubber stamping of the administration's agenda has hurt our economy, damaged our environment, hurt America's image abroad, and led to a bloody quagmire in Iraq that has cost us dearly.

But some learn slowly...

Despite the obvious sentiments of the American people, in the days before the election, the president displayed just how out of touch he is by focusing on Iraq and repeating over and over his "stay the course" mantra. Of course, it was just a few months ago that the president and his lieutenants were telling us that "good things were happening in Iraq." It was that "liberal media" that was simply not giving us "a fair and balanced look." We were also repeatedly assured by the Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld (remember him?) that "the insurgency was in its last throws." Well...not even Fox News would dare to tout this line any longer.

Unfortunately, some never learn from their mistakes...

After losing control of Congress, House Republicans decided to stay the course by keeping their current leaders, John Boehner and Roy Blunt. For years now, Boehner and Blunt have carried out the president's marching orders in the finest Prussian military tradition. As for the President having learned any lessons, he clearly has not drawn the correct conclusion from another senseless and wasteful war – Vietnam. In a press conference in Hanoi last week, the president said that America's mistake in that conflict (our country's longest) was "in pulling out too soon."

So now it's our turn. The torch has been handed over. With Democrats holding the balance of legislative power, our new congressional leaders have an obligation to develop and articulate unambiguous policies so they can govern honestly and for the betterment of most citizens.

What can you expect? Serious discussion on how and when to redeploy our troops from Iraq is in the words of our new Speaker of the House, the honorable Nancy Pelosi, "our

first priority.” We must put an end to corporate welfare, such as the outrageous giveaways in the form of tax credits to the world’s largest oil companies. A new policy committed to developing clean, alternative energy sources designed to protect our environment and end our nation’s addiction to fossil fuels is long overdue. We must enact legislation that encourages companies to hire American workers and invest here in our great United States. We must remove any obstacles preventing workers from collectively bargaining; we MUST raise the minimum wage. Just as importantly, we must have national health insurance for every citizen in the land.

We must repeal the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy (especially the “Paris Hilton” estate tax cut). In a time of war and staggering federal budget deficits, high-income earners (including myself) don’t need a tax cut. I dare say that most of the conservative columnists... whose opinions appear alongside mine in publications across the country... don’t need one either.

What America needs are sound economic policies that inspire motivation, yet protect the rights of working people and promote social justice. And forget those right-wing talking points. Democrats are not socialists or communists. (Unless you include the likes of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett in that category). We have a long and proud tradition of standing up for what’s right for most Americans, but we do not have all the answers.

America needs the best minds of both parties if we are to find the right solutions to our problems. No party has ever or will ever have all the answers. In the library of my office are three books of Barry Goldwater. Yes, that’s right...they stand right alongside those of RFK, JFK, FDR, and Martin Luther King. You see, America is best when we’re all working together, regardless of race, creed, economic status, or political persuasion.

In closing, let’s not forget the first three words of our constitution – We the people. It is a simple revolutionary phrase, but it boldly proclaims that our government rests on the Will of its people.