



Memo to Republicans: Don't Cuddle the Counsel of Competitors

"A general dissolution of principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy." --Samuel Adams

In Mario Puzo's 1969 novel, "The Godfather," mobster Don Michael Corleone offers advice about survival: "Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer."

That's a contemporary paraphrase from the most influential military philosopher in history, Sun-tzu Changqing, the Chinese general credited with authoring "The Art of War" (c. 400 BC). Indeed, Sun's chapter on "Intelligence and Espionage" advises that the best way to defeat your enemy is to know him well.

Unfortunately, a few high-profile "Republicans" have embraced the knowledge of their opponents in order to concur, rather than conquer.

Chief among these turncoats is Colin Powell, whose political doctrine is guided by prevailing currents, like the rest of those who self-identify with the GOP but have no mooring to conservative principles.

Demonstrating the political resolve of a piece of driftwood, Powell says he voted for Kennedy, Johnson and Carter, then Reagan, Bush(41) and Bush(43). In the most recent election and with great fanfare, Powell announced his support for the most liberal presidential candidate in history, Barack Hussein Obama, and now speaks of his vote for BHO with great pride. Surely there is some type of therapy for such a schizoid voting record.

In recent weeks, Powell has been on a Leftmedia celebrity tour, offering up lots of advice for Republicans. He warns, "The Republican Party needs to stop being controlled by the 'right wing' if it is going to expand and become a viable national party again. ... If Republicans don't reach out more, the party is going to be sitting on a very, very narrow base."

Powell says Republicans have moved "too far to the right," and they should be running moderate candidates, like, say, John McCain.

Oh, wait. Republicans did run McCain, and Powell shamelessly still endorsed his old friend's opponent.

In fact, Powell and his fellow ideological androgynes have it exactly wrong. They have so embraced the policies of their opponents so as to render them indistinguishable.

In March 2007, 18 months prior to the '08 election, I wrote an essay entitled "For a real victory in '08, nominate a real conservative," which drew on political assumptions and conclusions from what I fondly refer to as my "keen sense of the obvious" file.

That essay offered this observation about the upcoming presidential and congressional elections: "The political rout in 2006 was the direct result of the failure of President Bush and his Republican congressional majorities to fulfill the fundamental tenets of the 2000 and the 2004 Republican Platforms on which they were elected."

Those conservative principles are embodied in two essential speeches delivered by President Ronald Wilson Reagan.

In 1962, Reagan announced that he was joining the Republican Party, famously saying, "I didn't leave the Democratic Party. The party left me."

Two years later, he delivered a timeless challenge to conservatives entitled, "A Time for Choosing." "You and I are told we must choose between a left or right," Reagan said, "but I suggest there is no such thing as a left or right. There is only an up or down. Up to man's age-old dream -- the maximum of individual freedom consistent with order -- or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism."

In 1977, Reagan outlined a plan for "The New Republican Party," stating, "The principles of conservatism are sound because they are based on what

men and women have discovered through experience in not just one generation or a dozen, but in all the combined experience of mankind. When we conservatives say that we know something about political affairs, and that we know can be stated as principles, we are saying that the principles we hold dear are those that have been found, through experience, to be ultimately beneficial for individuals, for families, for communities and for nations -- found through the often bitter testing of pain, or sacrifice and sorrow."

Reagan said that those principles were enumerated in the 1976 Republican Platform. In 1980, he rode those principles to victory and after four years of implementation, the success of his vision was verified by his landslide re-election in 1984, when he won re-election by historic margins, receiving almost 60 percent of the popular vote and a record 525 of a possible 538 electoral votes. (His liberal opponent, Walter Mondale, carried only DC and his home state of Minnesota.)

In the third chapter of "The Art of War," "Strategic Attack," Sun-tzu wrote, "It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know your enemies but do know yourself, you will win one and lose one; if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle."

At present, too many Republicans know neither themselves nor their opponents, and have suffered the political consequences -- at great hazard for our entire nation.

For those wayward Republicans who are adrift, having lost sight of their party's North Star, should they want to regain the high ground and return our nation to economic and moral prosperity, I recommend they start with President Reagan's advice. Addition-

ally, the principles outlined in his 1984 Republican Platform provide an ideal template for political success. Of course, Republicans will have to actually adhere to those principles, rather than merely rendering lip service.

Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis!

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