

## *Give 'em Enough Rope*

A Blog Entry in GordonTalk

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Is it just me, or does it seem to you too that the Republicans are their own worst enemies these days? I can't imagine how we Democrats could be doing a better job of sabotaging the GOP agenda.

Just take a look at what they've been up to ...

The president put at the top of his domestic agenda the "reform" of Social Security, promoting private retirement accounts, at the tender mercies of the stock market, while guaranteeing fewer benefits for most retirees—all of which, despite the president "spending his political capital" like he's spending the Social Security surplus, has [gone over like a lead balloon with most of the public](#), including a majority of not only Democrats but also independents (most of whom, apparently, hope to one day grow old).

The superstar of the Republican convention, the Great White Hope of the Grand Old Party, for whom there was even talk of a constitutional amendment to allow him to run for president, the "Governator" of California, [Arnold Schwarzenegger, is seeing his popularity plummet](#) like his most recent box-office takes as it becomes apparent that the "special interests" he's been attacking are actually firefighters, police officers, nurses, and teachers, who are

fighting back with devastating TV commercials. Somehow the public identifies with and has more respect for these heroic everyday working people than a mega-millionaire, make-believe "action hero."

The Religious Right is pushing the Senate Republicans to exercise [the "nuclear option"](#)—to take away the right of the minority party to block Senate actions by means of a filibuster, thus throwing out centuries of precedent—in the hopes of getting a handful of ultra-conservative Bush nominees appointed to the federal bench and in the face of a threat by Senate Democrats to then use every parliamentary trick in the book to slow Senate business down to a virtual standstill—a prospect that perturbs the Economic Right to no end, as they salivate over enacting still more budget-busting tax-cut legislation, benefiting primarily their well-heeled ranks.

Exposing this [great schism in the Republican Party](#), when the Religious Right held a nationally televised revival meeting to oppose "activist liberal judges" (most of whom are actually conservative Republican appointees), the endorsement of one political agenda as God's own agenda was so blatant and contrary to majority popular opinion as to force even the Senate majority leader and the president to

publicly distance themselves from such sentiments, vehemently advanced by some of their heretofore most ardent and active supporters.

The majority leader in the House, [Rep. Tom DeLay, is so embroiled in scandals](#) that when his extreme Right Wing supporters held a [much-publicized rally](#) for him, most of his Republican colleagues in Congress were conspicuous by their absence.

The president's choice for U.N. ambassador, John Bolton, is so offensive, untrustworthy, and undiplomatic that senators from his own party had to [hold their collective noses](#) and take the almost unprecedented step of sending him to the Senate floor for a final vote without approving him in committee.

The nation's capital is still so vulnerable to attack that a flight-school Cessna, traveling at just a fraction of the speed of a jet hijacked by terrorists, got halfway into the No Fly Zone—just a couple miles from the White House, the Capitol, and other prime targets—before it was intercepted by Air Force jets, scrambled at the last minute (that is, not on constant patrol overhead). Tens of thousands of Americans were sent running for their lives out of federal buildings and into the streets—although the mayor of D.C. was not alerted, because some phone was off the hook (or some such lame excuse), and the president was not alerted (although his wife and Dick Cheney were whisked away by the Secret Service), [because he was off riding his bike](#) (at least we were spared another *My Pet Goat* deer-in-the-headlights

kinda Kodak<sup>®</sup> moment). *So who's minding the store?!* Isn't the Department of Homeland Security supposed to be doing something other than just color-coding our confusion, something like coordinating things? (By all accounts, the evacuations etc. were spotty and anything but well organized) Aren't we supposed to be putting up with Bush's domestic and foreign policies and his equally atrocious grammar because he at least keeps us safe? While it's true nobody was hurt in the Cessna incident (Thank God), there was widespread, palpable panic in the streets of our nation's capital, shown live and endlessly on tape on TV worldwide: Score one more for the *terrorists*, who didn't even have to buy a box cutter.

[Probably the biggest per-capita hit in the new round of military base closures](#) proposed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld will be in South Dakota, the very state where, prodded by millions of national GOP campaign dollars, the voters turned out Tom Daschle, leader of the Senate Democrats, in favor of John Thune, who promised his would-be constituents in the campaign that if elected he would use his friendly connections with the White House to prevent this very thing from happening! Evidently, those connections weren't as close as those that Bush has with his home state of Texas: Dyess Air Force Base, in the Lone Star State, now hosts one half of the B-1 bomber fleet; it will host the other half too, after Ellsworth A.F. Base is closed in South Dakota—eliminating almost 4,000 jobs out of a total state population of just 760,000. George, don't count on being carved into Mount Rushmore anytime soon.

As recently reported worldwide, our interrogators in Guantánamo tried to flush information out of Muslim detainees (many if not most of whom we are learning are anything but terrorist masterminds) by [allegedly flushing the Islamic Holy Book, the Koran, down the toilet](#)—which would not come as too big a surprise to anyone, given that our new attorney general was infamous for having advised the president that various methods of interrogation that the rest of the world and our own traditions have branded as torture aren't technically illegal. Now, angry mobs are taking to the streets in Afghanistan, our still unruly protectorate, and Pakistan, our sometime ally in the war on terror, and are burning down international aid agencies and burning up American flags.

And of course, countless human beings continue to be blown to bits by terrorist attacks as the violence in Iraq has increased, not decreased (after a brief lull), following the national elections. Most ominously, most of the victims are now Shiites, who control the government; and most of the violent offenders are now Sunnis, the vast majority of whom boycotted the elections: Just as cooler heads in the Pentagon had warned before our going into Iraq in the first place, the worst-case scenario would be for [the country to descend into civil war](#), with American forces—our sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, giving their all to do the duty with which we have tasked them—caught in the middle, with no good way out.

And the list of self-inflicted GOP wounds—for which we all bleed—goes on and on.

Admittedly, the Republicans have gained control over the White House, the Congress, and most of the judicial branch primarily by being more tenacious, ferocious, well-organized fighters than we Democrats. To hear the Right Wing tell it, the Democrats have been as vanquished as the Evil Empire of the Soviet Union and the backbone of the Al Qaeda terrorist network—which means that the most powerful, organized enemies the Republicans have left to fight are ... **themselves!**

And of course, the moderate majority of Americans.

Godspeed, Geo. & Co. Fight the good fight (Right against Right)! And don't come back till it's over over there!