

**Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy
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Election Reform

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Thanks a lot Steve. I am delighted to be here at the annual dinner of the Weidenbaum Center. In fact, I am more delighted than some of you all may know.

Of course, I am quite familiar with Murray Weidenbaum and his role in Washington early in the Reagan years in crafting an economic policy that wound up producing one of the great economic booms in American history — in world history for that matter. I hope you will send me his Reagan memoir. It sounds like it is going to be great.

The other thing is my father was from St. Louis. He grew up here and he spent two years at Washington University. When he got out of high school and ran out of money, he joined the National Guard and wound up getting an appointment to West Point — where he was the oldest person in his class. Now at West Point in those days — and I think this is still the case — you had to be 21 or younger. He showed up in June of 1930 and would have been 22 in August. So he just barely made it into West Point. Which, of course, they pay you to go to. It is free, and of course, his nickname when he was there was Pops. He was the oldest guy in his class. He rarely came back to St. Louis. Actually he was a huge baseball fan —of the Browns, not the Cardinals. His father had left home when he was two, never to be seen again. He was raised by his mother. His mother died, I believe in 1937. His sister lived here. She was an

illustrator for one of the St. Louis newspapers back when there were many more. I forget which one. She and her husband, a photographer for that newspaper, moved to California in 1946 so the link to St. Louis and my family was severed forever.

That is really an American story because so often people wind up there lives in some place quite different from where they started, although that has not happened to me yet. I grew up in Washington and inside the Beltway before there was a Beltway and I'm still there. I am always delighted to leave Washington for a bit.

President Bush has set a record for leaving Washington — for staying away from Washington on foreign trips. He just finished one. He speaks around the country, but he has spent more than a third of his time in his first term at either Camp David or Crawford where his ranch is in Texas. It is easily a record for a president staying away that much.

I happen to be writing a book about President Bush — now, which I will actually have to finish in a couple of weeks. I do have a bit to go. Actually, I have already written this chapter on Bush and Washington and what he feels about Washington. He loathes Washington.

One of the things I have checked out was humor about Washington and other cities. All of the humor about Washington is negative. I could not find any story, funny story, or joke or anything that was positive about Washington. I think it does tell you something about a city.

The most famous descriptions of Washington were the ones by J. F. K., John F. Kennedy back when I think he was a senator. He described it as a city of northern charm and southern efficiency. I see Murray nodding. He remembers. Remember

what Ronald Reagan called Washington, he called it an island surrounded on all sides by reality, which was pretty good.

Even Jon Stewart on the comedy channel says that in Washington you have to get through the partisan gridlock just to get to the bureaucratic log jam. There's some truth in that as well.

Before I go on and talk about the two subjects, more serious subjects, I will tell you my favorite George Bush story. And, this is true. It was in August of 2001, you know. It was in the lighter days of the Bush Administration, obviously prior to September 11th — which really did change a great deal in Washington and certainly in the Bush White House. The President was giving a speech to some group in Washington. Why they were meeting in Washington in August, I do not know. But, they were there and the President was there. The President in this speech said at the beginning that he would tell this audience his political strategy for winning office. It was assumed then that — even though he had just gotten in the White House — in a few months that he would probably run for reelection unless horrible things happened. He hinted that he would say that he would run, at the end of his speech. He said here is what my political strategy is. He said it is very simple. You can fool some of the people all the time, and I concentrate on those people. He really did say that. So my friends — more liberal friends — you would think it was a stolen moment. A candor by President Bush but actually he was joking.

Now here is what I want to talk about. In this new political era in Washington — and I do think we have a new one — where we are politically and why we are there, and

then what is important in Washington today. Obviously the nuclear option, social security, and the President's foreign policy are the three things that are most important.

Before I do that there are a couple of stories I will tell you from the campaign last year. Stories that are left over from the presidential campaign year. I like them. One of the stories involves the President and the Greek Ambassador to the United States who came to visit the President just about a year ago. So the story goes, the Greek Ambassador came to tell the President about Greece. He wanted to tell the President about Greece because obviously Greece was going to be the scene of the Olympics last August and indeed it was the site of the Olympics. Knowing that the President had not been a great foreign traveler over the years — until he became President anyway — the Greek Ambassador wanted to tell him something about Greece. He brought some pictures with him when he went to the Oval Office to see President Bush. The first picture he takes out is one of the ruins of Acropolis. The President responds immediately and says do not worry we will get the scum who did this.

That story came from one of the truly great political analysts in America today, Jay Leno. Jay Leno, I think has the best political humor. He came to the White House correspondence dinner a year ago with a stack, literally a stack of jokes. There must have been fifty or sixty of them. He would just peel them off, one right after another. One of his other ones he said was if John Kerry is elected president he would be the first president who can give the state of the union address and a rebuttal, and he peels off a few more. If I could remember more I would probably tell a few, but it is just those two.

We are at a conservative era in America. Conservatives have the upper hand. Their ideas are dominant today. Certain trends have intersected and created this era. It guarantees nothing because you still have to get measures through the Senate and the House, and you still have your foreign policy. The President has much more control over it but sometimes ventures of a president overseas are not successful. There are a lot of questions there, but this era itself is a conservative era. I think that's indisputable.

Here are what I think are the elements of it: 1.) The republican ascendancy in America is something that I will bet there are some people in this room who never thought it would happen in their lifetime. But, indeed it has. It is a result or has been at least a part of a political realignment in America going back to 1994 when there was this great new election and republicans took over the House and the Senate. Now they have a majority of governors in the country, a majority of legislators in the country, which are state legislators — which is interesting and important. They've got more Senate seats than any time since 1930 and more House seats since 1946. The republicans are more powerful nationally than at any time since the 1920s. Now they aren't quite dominant in the same way democrats were for so many years.

When you think of democrats, go back to 1964 for instance, the democrats had 68 Senate seats and 292 House seats. They have a third less in both of those bodies now, but that was truly dominant. Democrats had something else that republicans don't have and that is they were divided mainly between northern liberals and southern conservatives, and from out west there were liberals and conservatives.

Republicans, particularly in the House and not as much in the Senate, are united around conservative ideas. They are conservatives. There are only about a half a

dozen non-conservatives in the House and maybe a half a dozen or maybe a few more in the Senate. It is mainly a Conservative Party that is not divided. So the first thing is this republican ascendancy in America which shows up not so much in public opinion polls but in actual voting, which is more important — which is certainly a more important poll.

The second thing is an ambitious and impatient president. That is what President Bush is. Now it is unexpected by many people, including me, that he would be so ambitious in his second term. When you think of republicans who have set up or presidents who have set up ambitious second term agendas, you cannot think of many.

Ronald Reagan had tax reform, which was actually a spill over from his first term. Bill Clinton wound up with a balanced budget agreement with republicans in 1997 which was also a spill over from his first term. But Bush has an extremely ambitious agenda to reform the entitlement programs that have been passed in recent years, particularly Social Security. To spread democracy around the world in a very aggressive way, that's pretty ambitious.

Richard Neustadt, when he wrote his famous book on presidential powers, and others have made a distinction between presidents who govern and presidents who lead. The governing, what you have to do to govern, a lot of it is described in the Constitution. To lead goes well beyond that, and of course presidents don't really run the whole federal government. They may run the White House staff, although they have a chief of staff to do that as well. But to lead is to project your ideas, to try to sell them to the country and the world. It's much more ambitious than merely governing, and Bush seems to have the temperament to do it. There are not many republican

politicians who you would call activists because usually in the press sense, when you see “activist” used in the newspapers, it usually a euphemism for a liberal but in Bush’s case he really is an activist in the sense of what that word really means.

Fifty years ago, William Buckley, the founder and editor of *National View Magazine*, said the role of conservatism was to stand up before history and yell stop. In other words, conservatism was reactionary. It had to block modern reforms and trends and so on. George Bush looks at it completely differently. He is someone who wants to make history rather than stop history, someone that is of a different temperament that is not usually associated with conservative leaders, but in Bush’s case it’s true.

Years ago a philosopher named Sidney Hook — who some of you may remember — wrote a famous essay called *The Hero In History*. I think he wrote it in the late 1930s. He made the distinction between leaders who were eventful and event making. It is a great essay. Somehow I read it years ago when I was in the army. And, I have gone back to it many, many times. Sidney Hook said the distinction is this: an eventful leader is one who may have done heroic things but they are what any leader at that time would have done.

He uses the example of the little Dutch boy who sticks his finger in the dike. It was a great thing. Holland would have been flooded if he had not done that. But, there were lots of other Dutch boys or other people who could have come along and would have done the same thing. But an event-making leader is one who pushes the envelope. One who does things and achieves things or tries things that others would not do. That is what I think President Bush wants to do and wants to be — an event making president. Though, I do not think he has read Sidney Hook’s essay on this. But

he does want to make history. And, if he succeeds in making history and reforming entitlement programs and spreading democracy effectively around the world, as Jonathan Rauch of the *National Journal* wrote over a year or so ago, he says if he succeeds he will be Franklin Delano Roosevelt. If President Bush fails, he will be Lyndon Johnson. So there is a lot at stake.

Thirdly, after a republican ascendancy and an ambitious president, thirdly is disarray among democrats — disarray but not disunity which is important. Disarray when you hear Senator Edward Kennedy go to the National Press Club as he did after about ten days after last fall's election and say well we lost the election but we represent majority opinion and he really believes that as I think many democrats do. But they really don't. I think they are in somewhat of a state of denial about whether they represent majority opinion.

We heard today John Kerry going around and bragging about how he won the battleground states in the election last fall as if that means anything. And, of course, it is not true. He did not win the battleground states.

Democrats have, and I throw this word around on television a lot applying to democrats because I think it applies to them, they have become reactionary. They are against this. They oppose things. They don't have an agenda or ideas of their own that they are pushing, which you can do as a minority party, particularly one, they're not deeply in the minority. When you look at the Senate, they could pick up six seats, which happens quite frequently in elections, and they would be in the majority of the Senate. They could win the next presidential election. After all in the last election, John Kerry wasn't defeated in a landslide. He was defeated but it was not a landslide.

As it turns out, they have been able to oppose things very effectively because they may be in disarray over ideas and positive proposals. But, they are unified against President Bush and his proposals. We see a new one coming up this week in the Central America Free Trade Agreement. The democrats used to be free traders, many of them. Now they are opposing this Free Trade Agreement which would apply to Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala and so on. And, I think they will be able to block it as a result by their unified opposition to it. In some sense they are like when you hear them talk about some of these conspiracy theories about Karl Rove, a little like republicans in the 1950s, or right-wingers in the 1950s that Richard Hofstadter, the historian, wrote about in his book, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*. We see that crop up. It's surprising to see it crop up on the Web. It certainly was a factor on the right back in the 50s and into the 60s.

The fourth factor, after republican ascendancy, an unusually ambitious president, and democratic disarray, is I think the irrelevance of liberalism today. About forty-five years ago, in the early sixties, John Kenneth Galbraith, the economist, said he knew conservatism was dead at that time because it was bookless. Conservatives didn't generate books. They were not on the best seller's list. They were not published much at all. Galbraith was right at the time. He's still alive, 92 years old. When I had a fellowship at Harvard I lived right across the street from him. I remember taking my kids over on Halloween. I had a couple of little daughters then. What a nice man. He was thrilled to see these little girls dressed up as cats come in on Halloween. He's still there at 92. He was correct back then. Conservatives were bookless.

Now they are not bookless. Publishing houses like Random House has them in print. Crown Books — I know because I'm writing a book for them and others do too. Penguin does, and Thomas Nelson, which used to just print bibles now has them. I think they are still the biggest bible publisher in the world in Nashville, now is turning out a lot of conservative books and so on. Liberals, their books are quite different, one, their aren't as many of them and two, they tend to be negative.

Like my friend, David Corn about Bush's ten great lies. Actually the book was about Bush's ten opinions that he doesn't agree with. The book got on the best seller's list at one point. Liberals have no new ideas and I think eventually you have to come up with some new ones. They've been living off the ideas of the progressive era and the New Deal and that's more than a half century ago.

Marty Peretz is the editor and owner of *The New Republic Magazine* where I used to work. It is a liberal magazine, and he's not quite as liberal as his own magazine is but he wrote something in *The New Republic* which over the years has been sort of the flagship liberal magazine. He said this about liberalism: It's no longer a coherent ideology. He said it's not really much of a guide for political action. It has become a complaint. Liberalism has become a complaint. Certainly there were many, many years where Conservatism was that and that's what is represented by William Buckley's famous statement, but Liberalism has become a complaint about Bush, about republicans, about this, about that, about the war in Iraq. Conservative Christians that they don't like and so on.

Lastly, the fifth factor — which I think is maybe more important than the others — is the decline of the mainstream media. And, it has declined over the past year or two

right in front of our eyes. We have seen it in the television ratings. We have seen it in circulation decline of big newspapers and so on. The mainstream media consists of the television network news shows, the news magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report*, and the big newspapers such as *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*. It also consists of even some of the big regional papers like the *LA Times*, *The Boston Globe* — which is actually owned by *The New York Times*. They are on a slippery slope.

It is not just because there now is an alternative media that is more conservative. I mean there is one and it is important, starting with talk radio. Now I kind of worry about people getting most of their information about the world from talk radio. But it is out there and it is very successful. Fox News came along in 1996.

The Internet now is powerful. I look at a lot of web sites everyday that have to do with politics. There are a lot of good ones. I have them earmarked across the top along with things like the University of Virginia sports so I can get right to that web site as well. But there are many of them that people look at more and more, and then there are bloggers, people that have web sites and they tend to be people of enlarged egos who think that every thought they have needs to be written down so somebody can see, whoever might come to their web site. The fact is that some of them are pretty good though. I mean there are something like four million bloggers in America, four or five million. That's a lot of big egos floating around but in any case, some of them on certain subjects are very good.

There's this guy who's a law professor at the University of Tennessee, Glenn Reynolds, who has a site called *Instapundit*. A couple of guys in Chicago, one of them

who is unemployed but his wife works and the other one is a commodity trader, started this web site called *Real Clear Politics*. It collects all kinds of columns and so on. It's a great web site. I look at it every day.

The story that I think encapsulates or maybe exaggerates the effect of bloggers is this. You remember last fall in September when CBS News on the second *60 Minutes*, the one that comes on during the week, had this report by Dan Rather that not only was there proof that George Bush had used political pull to get into the Texas Air National Guard, but that he really hadn't finished his duties, even though he had gotten his discharge. He hadn't really performed all his duties. If you didn't believe that, they had four documents which showed that that had happened from a guy who was back in the Texas Air National Guard back then. Then CBS News did something that turned out to be a huge mistake on their part. They put the four documents on their web site.

The next morning an enterprising guy who has a web site called *Little Green Footballs* from LA decided these documents are supposed to have been typed up on an Olympia typewriter back in the early 70s, a manual typewriter but I'm just going to check this out. They look a little suspicious. So he typed out on his computer one of the documents and used Microsoft Word with the type face Times New Roman and he printed it up same size as the document from the CBS web site. The computer one and the one supposedly written on a manual typewriter fit exactly. This was the next morning. He knew right then that these documents were fraudulent. They had all these little things like if you see on your computer, you know you have a lower case *f* and then an *r* afterwards and the *r* sneaks under the umbrella of the *f* and so on. Things that didn't happen with manual typewriters ever.

It turned out that these documents were totally fraudulent because of this blogger and others that came along to substantiate what he said. Dan Rather still says that he thinks these documents are merely insufficiently authenticated. That's certainly true as far as it goes. I think if they were merely insufficiently authenticated he'd still be the anchor on CBS News.

Another story that I think is very telling about the mainstream media is this. Last summer during the presidential campaign, Ken Mehlman, the campaign chairman of the Bush campaign, went to talk to the Washington Bureau of *The New York Times* which consists of about thirty or so reporters and correspondents, maybe thirty-five, and they were all there. After talking to them a while, he stopped and said I want to ask you all a couple of questions. His first question was how many of you all know an Evangelical born again Christian, and he said one hand went up. Then he said how many of you know somebody who's gay. All the hands went up. Think of that. One hand for knowing an Evangelic Christian of which there are tens of millions in America, but not that many — in the building where the *New York Times* is — not that many gay people as well. But they knew one group, which was fine but didn't know a single person from that other huge group that is also important politically. Very, very telling.

When you add these things up together, a republican ascendancy, a particular president who is extremely ambitious with a huge agenda for a second term that may or may not work, democratic disarray, the irrelevance of Liberalism for now. If you all are liberals and think I'm being mean, I am, but there are cycles in American political history and in American political thought for that matter so there's no reason to despair. It just doesn't work. Then, of course, there is the decline of the mainstream media which is

irreversible. Liberalism and democrats not only can come back, they obviously will at some point, but the mainstream media is a thing of the past.

The owner of Fox News and *The Weekly Standard*, Rupert Murdoch, who also owns half of the media in the world if you have Direct TV, and the Fox Entertainment Network as well as the News Channel and so on, says he will no longer invest in newspapers; that's a bad investment. He owns a lot of them, the *New York Post*, *The Times* in London, papers in Australia, and so on. He owns *The Sun* in England. You know, the one with the page three girl, which is a tremendously influential newspaper politically actually. He's not going to invest at all in newspapers. It's only going to be in the Internet where so many people, particularly young people, get news.

I know looking at the Internet, it is so easy to find out exactly what you want. That is the first thing I do in the morning. Well, I go out and get the newspaper. I'm an old man so I still get newspapers sent to my house, but the truth is anybody in this room can go to the *Washington Post* or the *New York Post's* web sites or the *LA Times* and get virtually everything that's in the newspaper and it's free, everything. I'm not sure why they do that but it's certainly there. The Internet is the future.

Now let me mention these three issues that I think are the most important ones. The first one is Social Security Reform.

In writing this book about George Bush, I went back and read his campaign biography — which I had never read. It is an autobiography of George Bush written by Karen Hughes. Most people write their own autobiographies. I know Charles Barkley didn't, but I thought maybe George Bush would have. But he didn't. He didn't have time. Karen Hughes wrote it, but it reflects his thinking.

I read it because I'm writing this book about Bush and it had a very interesting statement where he said, "Massive reform cannot be achieved in politics unless there is a crisis." Massive reform can't be achieved unless there's a crisis. He was talking about his effort to get a new revenue scheme for school financing in Texas which they are still dealing with in Texas. It still hasn't been solved.

That kind of reform hasn't passed yet, but it applies to Social Security. The simple fact is we don't have a crisis at the moment. The crisis will come in 2017; which is what the actuaries of Social Security say when it will actually be bringing in less money than is going out. So without a crisis, Bush has had a very difficult time selling Social Security and convincing any democrats to come with him. He just hasn't. Democrats have been unified in opposition. It's a good example of the power of the minority, and they're not using filibusters here either. They're just all sticking together with all but one Democrat in the Senate (that's 44, I'm counting Jim Jeffers as a Democrat); they are all against it.

There are a number of Republicans who don't want to have anything to do with Social Security Reform either because they don't want to be out there on just a partisan reform of Social Security. They want to be a part of bipartisan, a reform package that Democrats won't allow to happen. So you have presidential power — presidents can go around the country and speak and campaign and so on but in Bush's case on Social Security there's just no echo.

Look at Republican members of the House and Senate, they let the President go out and do this with no help from them and no echo of his words or practically no echo. For that reason, I'm afraid Social Security Reform is not going to go anywhere this year.

I suspect not next year. At some time it will happen. Some time I think we will have individual retirement accounts in Social Security but probably not in George Bush's tenure as president.

Polls have deceived the President. Polls can often be very deceiving and on this one they did because before Bush started the campaign for Social Security Reform, individual retirement accounts for Social Security polled extraordinarily well. They were popular until the President is out there proposing to actually *institute* them and then it generated tremendous opposition.

I'm reminded of this question of when you look at something in what you expect of a story, many of you remember the McLaughlin Group, at least when I was on. The guy that sat next to me was a guy named Jack Germonde, he was on my right, an older guy, retired now, knew more about politics than anybody in America including the politicians. He was the guy who actually brought me in years ago to the *Washington Star* to start covering politics. Then I covered Vice President Gerald Ford and then the Ford White House. But in any case, he always tells the story, Jack does, about a horse player because he's a horse player.

If you don't remember the McLaughlin Group it was one of these TV shows and it's still on — I'm not there any more — but it's still on, where you have this moderator who is a former Jesuit Priest. He's in his seventies and he's very overbearing and he has four people there who yap about the issues. It's still on and it's hard to be on television successfully for twenty-three years now like the McLaughlin Group. It's pretty good. Television can eat you up. It eats politicians up because people get tired of them a lot more quickly than they used to.

In any case, Jack used to tell this story about a guy who's a horse player who always hoped that the gods of the race track would look kindly on him one day and he would get some clue and go to the track, bet on it and make money. So finally one day this horse player wakes up one morning and the number five is in his mind and he realizes it's May 5, his 55th birthday. He looks at the clock and it's 5:55 a.m. and he says my day has come. This is it. But he has a job and he's a salesman and has to go to a sales stop in the morning at the Johnson Building downtown so he waits around, eats breakfast, looks at the paper, and finally calls a cab. He's riding down to the Johnson Building and he looks in the cab and you know that certificate that hangs from the seat, the registration, and it's number 5555. He's more confirmed than ever that this is going to be my day at the track. He gets down to the Johnson Building and realizes it's at 555 Fifth Avenue and his meeting is on the fifth floor. That's too much for him. He doesn't even go to his sales stop. He goes right out to the track, has the cab driver take him out there. Waits through the morning. The horses run in the afternoon, he waits around until the fifth race and bets \$5,000 on horse number five who comes in fifth.

The moral of the story is of course that you don't get what you expect, often at the track, it's true in life but it's true in politics. My way of saying it is that the future in politics is never a straight line projection of the present though we often, in writing about it, pretend like it is.

On Social Security that's certainly the way I'm projecting it. That Democrats are unified against it and that's probably not going to change, and so the President isn't going to get that passed. That is a projection of the present. Usually things intervene,

well often they do and so you can't count on that happening though I'm actually counting on it this time. When you think of it, I mentioned the polls about personal retirement accounts but you just see so often this problem with polls.

Remember when Senator Edward Kennedy decided to run for president against Jimmy Carter in 1980? Polls at the time in 1979 showed that the Chappaquiddick issue, which you'll remember, was not a factor, people weren't concerned about that at all. So Kennedy announces and newspapers and television networks start running shows reminding everybody of Chappaquiddick, and Chappaquiddick becomes enormously important. Kennedy winds up, for that and for other reasons, being blown out in Iowa caucuses and losing New Hampshire to Carter and not being nominated for president. There are many polls that will do that. As I said, Bush, I think, was fooled by the polls on individual retirement accounts.

On the nuclear option, which I'll get to next, the polls on that show that if you ask the question as the *Washington Post* did, President Bush has gotten all these judicial nominees through and now Republicans want to make it easier to get their nominees through by barring the filibuster in the case of judicial nominations. Are you in favor of that? Only thirty-five percent said yes.

Another poll asks the question: Are you in favor of all judicial nominees getting an up or down vote on the Senate floor? More than eighty percent said yes. Basically it is the same thing but the wording of the poll matters a lot.

I don't want to go off on a tangent on polls but I'll mention one other one just because it surprised me, and that is polling doesn't mention how hard or intense opinions are.

For instance, Howard Dean, remember how popular he was? He was way ahead not only in the polls for the democratic nomination but in gathering support among leaders of the party and so on. One blow up in Iowa and his poll numbers collapsed.

On the other hand, think of Bill Clinton, the poll numbers of his second term, Monica Lewinsky, impeachment, an impeachment trial in the Senate where he was not convicted and his poll numbers stayed up around sixty percent; in other words a job approval rating about sixty percent the whole time or even higher. Hard support that people were not going to abandon and I certainly didn't think that was going to be the case but it was.

The nuclear option which I normally try to avoid or try to follow the Pat Buchanan rule. That's about the only thing I agree with that Pat said. The Pat Buchanan rule is never talk to an audience about a subject they know more about than you. When it comes to a filibuster, Steve Smith knows a great deal more about it. I learned a good bit at the table just while we were eating dinner. But the nuclear option, I believe that probably this effort by moderates to avoid a vote on the nuclear option, moderates of both parties will not lead anywhere. They usually don't.

I think I said on Fox on the weekend, if I had a nickel for every time moderates of both parties were going to get together and lead on some issue, I would be a rich man today. They always talk about it. They practically never do it. I think Bill Frist and the Republicans will have a vote on the nuclear option, which if they win, if they get fifty votes, then filibusters will be out for judicial nomination and Republicans will confirm an

awful lot of conservative judges for the appeals courts who will then be in prime position to be elevated to the Supreme Court, nominated for that.

I happen to think the change is not that great in the Senate rules. This isn't a constitutional issue as Steve has pointed out to us this evening when we were talking. It's just a Senate rule that's only been around for a hundred years or a little less. The rule on the filibusters and cloture, the change that could be important anyway, is the changing the ideological kilt of the federal judiciary.

Certainly there are plenty of conservatives that the President — many, many of them — he has tried to put on the appeals court. Several of those have gotten through and that's what he's determined to do, to put them on the Supreme Court. Without a filibuster it would be harder for Democrats to block them, but remember they got 58 votes against Robert Bork in 1987. Clarence Thomas barely squeaked through with 52 votes so it's quite possible. Judges have been blocked before on an up or down vote. It's rare. It doesn't happen that often.

For the Republicans, this would be the third leg in their triangle. They have control of the legislative branch in Washington in the majority of state houses. They have control of the White House. This would give them more sway or influence in the judiciary. In other words move it to the right in terms of judicial opinion.

I think it's probably going to happen, but there haven't been fifty Republicans who stand up and say or tell reporters that I'm for the nuclear option, I'm going to vote for it. So I don't know for sure, and I don't think anybody does, including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. He's counting on people who haven't declared. In politics and in geopolitics it's always more important what people say publicly than what they say

privately. They can always wiggle out of what they say privately but publicly if they say something it's a lot harder.

Lastly, the issue of democracy. I think this is what President Bush's legacy is going to be. This campaign — they will not call it a crusade — but this campaign for democracy around the world, that is already quite remarkable in results.

We have a democratic election in Afghanistan to elect a government. We have had one in Iraq. Amazingly on January 30th, which I think will be an important day in world history, the Syrians have been driven out of Lebanon. We have had disarmament in Libya, at least nuclear disarmament. We have had tremendous progress between the Israelis and Palestinians. We have had an election in the Ukraine, overturned because of not only the United States but particularly the United States and the Europeans working together to put enough pressure on the Ukraine to have a new election and a new president elected who happens to have a wife who was in the Reagan administration who is a Ukrainian who was in the United States, moved back and married this fellow and now she's the First Lady of Ukraine, a former Reagan aide. Who would have thought it?

Then you have George Bush in Georgia on Sunday, the country of Georgia, getting this huge response, another country that's had a democratic revolution. Pressure has been put on Egypt by the United States. They're going to have an election. Unlike the prior Egyptian presidential election where there's always been Hosni Mubarak running against no opponent. He was just the only guy on the ballot. Now he's going to have opponents on the ballot. It's a little different when you have an actual opponent and of course he had put this opponent, Ayman Nour, in jail and

because of the intervention of Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State, he was released from jail.

Now two questions remain on this, on the whole democracy thing, and that is how hard will President Bush push on this? Will he cite it in speeches? Will he single out specific countries? The answer to that is yes. You have seen what Rice has done. And what are his chances of success?

Before January 30th and the election in Iraq, I wouldn't have given him much chance for success for democracy or movement in a democratic direction in Egypt or any other of these countries, particularly in the Middle East, but now I think it's quite possible particularly when you see Europe and the United States working together. It was the French and the Americans who put pressure on the Syrians to withdraw all of their military from Lebanon, which had been there for twenty-three years. So working together, a lot can happen.

Well, now we have seen the Europeans and the Bush Administration working together on Iran in trying to stop their nuclear program — not having much effect there. China, the President's China speech — not having much effect there. I don't know. The chances of success are good in some places, not as good in others, but that's going to be his legacy.

Let me finish. And, I was hoping to leave some time for questions if anybody has any. Maybe I have exhausted you all. Maybe you would rather be at the ballgame. I probably would.

One of my favorite events, actually the last event I went to with the McLaughlin Group, was John McLaughlin's bachelor party. Really, this actually happened. As I

said, John is former Jesuit Priest in his 70s who was getting married for the second time to a woman half his age. A lovely woman. And, they are still married. They have been married since 1998. At this bachelor party, we all had to get up and give toasts. You would not be surprised, if you had seen the McLaughlin Group, that John rated them instantly from one to ten. The best one was from Mort Zuckerman who was the owner of *The U.S. News and World Report*, *The New York Daily News*, and he had a huge amount of property in America and Canada. Mort Zuckerman said, "John, your words will be remembered long after Shakespeare has been forgotten, but not until then." I suspect that's true of mine. Thank you very much.