



Cornered Rats Fight Hard

By Grover Norquist

There are many good reasons to expect President George W. Bush to win re-election on November 2, 2004. And there is one good reason to believe a Democrat, any Democrat, will defeat him.

The list of Bush strengths begins with the economy, up an impressive 8 percent in the third quarter of 2003. Growth is expected to run 4-5 percent for the next 12 months. And unlike in 1992 when the economy was actually growing on Election Day, now the economy is growing early enough that the entire campaign will be run with a public that knows Bush's economic policies are working. The capture of Saddam Hussein and the decision by Libya to surrender its weapons of mass destruction undermine the effort by Democrats to claim Iraq had nothing to do with the war on terror. No serious primary opponent. No serious scandal. Low inflation. Employment growing. Presidential approval ratings are strong: 63 percent in December 2003, as compared with 51 percent for Clinton and 54 percent for Reagan 11 months before their re-elections. Should be a slam dunk.

The one big reason to bet against Bush is that the Republican coalition and the Democratic coalition face very different incentives this year. The marvels of modern gerrymandering and the five Senate seats in the South being vacated by Democrats ensure that, whatever happens to Bush, the Republicans will control the House and Senate on November 3, 2004. So if Bush loses, taxes will not be raised. Dean cannot enact

any new spending program or law that doesn't first run the gauntlet of Tom DeLay and Bill Frist. There will be no new gun control laws. No part of the center-right coalition will be crushed.

There is no part of the Republican coalition that lives off the state or its power. This is a tautology, as the Democrats have held united control of the government from 1932 to 1952, 1960-68, 1976-80 and 1992-94. If there was a part of the GOP dependent on state power, it was asphyxiated or co-opted long ago.

Four more years of Bush and a Republican Congress will likely bring modest tort reform that will potentially cost trial lawyers billions of dollars of lost income.

Private sector unions now extract union dues from only 9 percent of workers in the real economy. Four more years of united GOP government will lead to the expansion of NAFTA to the entire hemisphere and another Doha round of trade liberalization, leading to the unions' further decline. Teamsters will have to compete with Mexican truck drivers. Why pay union dues if you aren't being shielded from competition like this?

Public sector unions face a similar squeeze. Bush and Congress have begun the process of competitively sourcing 850,000 jobs. That's almost half of all civilian workers in the federal government. This will save taxpayers 30 percent of present cost, as the civil servants who now cut the grass for the Pentagon will have to compete for their jobs with private contractors.

Four more years of competitive

sourcing at the federal level will inevitably trickle down to the state and local levels, affecting one third of the 15 million state and local workers. For every 100 jobs contracted out, the Association of Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) loses 37 dues-paying members. If only one fifth of the 5 million jobs available to be competitively sourced are privatized, it costs AFSCME 370,000 times \$500, or \$185 million.

The coercive utopians of the Left, who rely on judges rather than lawmakers to enact an unpopular social, environmental, and aggressively secular agenda, cannot afford four years of Bush judicial appointments. Heck, just one or two Supreme Court appointments will put them at risk of losing 30 years of "progress."

If the Democrats win the Presidency, they can veto Republican advances. If they lose, they don't eat. The very sinews of their political power will decay with increasing speed. The Democratic coalition will be weaker, shorter, and poorer in 2008 than 2004. This sense of desperation explains the "hatred" and vicious attacks on Bush.

This should not surprise us. Expect the crescendo to grow through 2004. The other team isn't being unreasonable. It is reacting rationally to a real threat to its ability to function. Anything short of placing snipers on the rooftops of D.C. would be an underreaction by the Left.

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