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The Democratic Party and Foreign Policy

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If George W. Bush is not to be elected to a second term practically by acclamation, the leaders of the Democratic Party—and others skeptical of the president's ability to pursue a truly sensible and realistic foreign policy—will have to do a better job than they did in the 2002 midterm elections of convincing the American public that they are capable of offering a viable alternative. Those elections will no doubt receive a lot more analysis. But one thing is already abundantly clear: the Democrats' failure to convince anxious voters of their ability to protect national security played an important role in their electoral defeat. The traditional midterm swing against the incumbent president did not materialize—the sputtering economy notwithstanding—because a central question in voters' minds was their security, and they overwhelmingly trusted Republicans more than Democrats to safeguard it.

The Democrats' strategy of conceding the foreign policy field to President Bush and trying to move the debate from the issue of national security to corporate scandals, social security, or prescription drugs was bound to fail. According to internal party polls, at least half of Americans asked say that national security and terrorism are their main preoccupations. With a Republican edge of 40 percentage points on these matters (when those polled were asked whom they trusted most to protect their security, 59 percent said the Republicans, 19 percent said the Democrats), Democrats cannot hope to make up the difference on economic and social issues. This leaves them with a huge electoral albatross that will not go away. Democrats can no longer count on a repeat of the miracle of 1992, the first post–Cold War presidential election, when the Republican polling advantage in national security affairs was rendered moot. It matters again now. If Democrats are to have any hope of returning to power in 2004, or even of running competitively and keeping the U.S. two-party system healthy and balanced in the coming decade, they will have to convince the American people that they are as capable as Republicans of protecting the United States from terrorism and other security threats.

Foreign policy and national security policy, it is often argued, are not the dominant issues in American presidential elections. But they are more important than people think, even in times of relative peace. The president, as commander in chief, has disproportionate power to make foreign policy, and to take the nation to war. A candidate's ability to talk plainly and convincingly about national security matters also helps voters take stock of a potential president in a way that arcane debates over the intricacies of providing universal health care or tax policy may not. So even if public opinion polls suggest that defense and other foreign policy issues are less important to voters than the domestic economy, social security, education, and crime, these issues cannot be neglected by someone asking the country to entrust him or her with the highest office in the land. Bill Clinton recognized this political fact of life and went to great lengths to establish his bona fides on national security

matters in 1992. George W. Bush, even less experienced on foreign policy than Clinton, did exactly the same thing in 2000.

Moreover, there are large constituencies in key swing states that are very interested in defense issues. In 2000, Democratic pollsters told Al Gore that defense ranked no higher than twelfth on a list of voter priorities. At the risk of sounding disrespectful of the professionals, that has to be hogwash. Military retirees, veterans, and the 6 million people employed today in defense-related work did not put defense low on their list of political priorities. Some 30 million voters fall into one of these categories (not counting spouses or other immediate family members). Had Gore and his running mate, Joe Lieberman, been credible enough on national security issues to convince a few thousand more of the 2 million such voters in Florida to go their way, they would have won the election. The frequently repeated Gore/Lieberman soundbite that "we have the best military in the world" did not sway many voters, since it was true but also obvious. In 2002, Democratic incumbent senators Max Cleland of Georgia and Jean Carnahan of Missouri lost their seats (and the Democratic Party lost control of the Senate) in close races where security issues may well have been decisive. Their party was depicted by Republicans as more concerned with protecting federal workers than pushing for the speedy creation of a department of homeland security.

The lack in faith in Democrats with respect to foreign policy is not just a problem for the Democratic Party: it has larger implications for the society in which we live as well as for how the United States is seen in the world. The U.S. political system is still skewed by an eighteenth-century federalism that disproportionately favors rural and conservative interests. If the system is further tilted in coming years by a structural Democratic national security handicap, we are going to see a lot more than six more years of Republican rule. The effects would be felt not just in social policy, but especially in terms of a continuing conservative agenda of tax cuts that favor the rich and are explicitly designed to starve the federal government of its future capacity to pursue progressive policies.

The Democrats are not going to start winning elections on the strength of their national security and foreign policies any time soon. But it would already be an accomplishment to avoid *losing* elections on that basis. To do so they will need to present their anxious compatriots with a compelling vision of how America can and should defend its security, protect its global interests, and promote its core values in a dangerous world. Democrats need not and should not mimic Republicans in the foreign policy realm. But they cannot succeed at the polls by ignoring serious foreign policy challenges or by using a vocabulary grounded in peace movement dogma. Instead, the Democratic challenge is to discover—or, more precisely, rediscover—and successfully articulate a distinctly nationalist liberalism.

Enlightened Nationalism

"Nationalism" is a dirty word for many liberals. It shouldn't be. For a liberal democracy like the United States, there is no inherent contradiction between enlightened nationalism and liberal internationalism. There is, however a difference of emphasis, particularly given the way that liberal internationalism has been put forward and sometimes parodied in recent decades. The principal difference is that nationalist liberals consciously accept the critical importance of power, including military power, in promoting American security, interests, and values.

Much of this road was traveled a generation ago by "neo-conservatives"—many of them former Democrats and even extreme leftists—who reacted against the indiscriminately pacifist orthodoxies of the Left in the face of Soviet tyranny and a fashionable, morally twisted "anti-Zionist" agenda. Neo-

conservatives are now influential in the Bush administration, where their ambitious vision for a democratic remake of the Middle East has earned them the title of "democratic imperialists." There is some overlap between the agenda we are proposing and the policies promoted by the neo-conservatives. But there are major differences.

First, nationalist liberalism is not neoconservative for the simple reason that it is not conservative. It is based on an explicit connection between foreign policy and progressive domestic policies. America's image abroad has been undermined by the Bush administration's entanglement with right-wing domestic interests on a range of issues including family planning, environmentalism, and the International Criminal Court.

Second, nationalist liberals, although comfortable with the exercise of American power, are also aware of how this overwhelming power is likely to be perceived —and misconstrued—abroad. They avoid triumphalist rhetoric and go out of their way to treat allies with respect, rather than alienating them by ignoring, or trivializing, their perspectives—in effect, reducing their complicated history under the catchall of "appeasement." They recognize that American power represents an opportunity to do much good for America and the world—but that it will create resistance and resentment if it is exercised arrogantly and unilaterally, making it harder for the United States to achieve its goals.

Democrats ought to be able to take advantage of two central realities: they are more in tune than Republicans with America's major allies, and also—according to the polls—on issue after issue they are more in tune with the majority of American voters. They are, in fact, a more natural bridge between the liberal internationalism of America's allies and the liberal internationalism expressed by most of the American people, who broadly support the United Nations, highly value allied support for military operations (including in Iraq), and are uncomfortable with unilateralism. Clear majorities of Americans, for example, support ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, and the International Criminal Court, all of which the Bush administration has opposed, leading to great resentment abroad. Given this reality, Democrats should be able to win widespread support for their foreign policies, but only if they can overcome an undeserved reputation for weakness that, in reality, is based only on a few years of post-Vietnam confusion.

The Democrats, to be sure, also had an older credibility problem in foreign policy. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal coalition included a fair number of crypto-Communists and other leftists who were perversely credulous about Soviet propaganda—despite abundant contemporary knowledge of Stalin's crimes. This credulity was further encouraged by wartime imperatives of solidarity with America's Russian ally. Thus, the postwar demagoguery of Joseph McCarthy, the young Richard Nixon, and other right-wing Republicans, while outrageous, did not rely on sheer invention. Still, any Democratic tendency toward appeasing the Soviets was effectively squelched when the hard-nosed Harry Truman replaced the agrarian-leftist Henry Wallace as FDR's running mate in 1944. Both a nationalist and an internationalist, Truman was also very much a liberal—as his campaign against the "Captains of Greed" made abundantly clear.

The next Democratic presidents, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, were afraid of appearing weak—both to Communists abroad and Republicans at home. It would be going too far to say that the disaster of Vietnam was the consequence of their obsession with being "tough," although that obsession probably did contribute to an inadequate scrutiny of the war's underlying assumptions. But we should not forget that Kennedy and Johnson, like Truman before them, explicitly linked their foreign policy agenda with a progressive

New Deal–inspired vision of domestic society. They understood themselves to be in competition with Soviet communism, and that they had to prove—rather than just assert—the superiority of Western democracy. Products of this understanding included the Marshall Plan, the Peace Corps, the race to the moon and, in large measure, domestic civil rights legislation—which was passed over many Republican objections and which constituted the third act (after the Revolutionary War and the American Civil War) of the American revolution.

During the 2000 presidential campaign, Al Gore and Joe Lieberman largely ignored defense policy and allowed the inexperienced Bush to be the one to propose innovative defense reforms and to argue for the need for a military buildup. They thus conceded what, as longstanding proponents of strong defense policies, should have been their natural advantage, and allowed Bush to make great headway with accusations that the Clinton administration had allowed U.S. military capabilities to erode.

Gore and Lieberman could have underscored how well the U.S. military had actually performed recently in the Balkans (zero deaths in combat, as well as in the end a decisive victory) and in the skies over Iraq since the end of the Gulf War. They could have pointed out how rigorously the armed forces were trained and prepared for battle (comparable in nearly every way to the Reagan-Bush glory days), and how experienced and educated U.S. troops were. They could have acknowledged the strains in civil-military relations during the 1990s (in part a function of such issues as gays in the military and Clinton's lack of military service) yet described the reforms that had been made. They could have reminded voters how the military had kept the peace over the previous eight years, from Korea to the Taiwan Strait to the Persian Gulf. In fact, the deep cuts in U.S. forces in the 1990s represented the most successful military retrenchment in the nation's history, and Democrats should have made political hay —or at least a good political defense—out of that fact. If the Bush administration is right that the U.S. forces that performed brilliantly in Afghanistan and are now poised for a decisive victory in Iraq are the most powerful and efficient in history, credit must be given in no small part to the policies of the Clinton administration.

A Democratic Vision

Instead of conceding the issue of national security to Republicans or offering up only jealous and reflexive criticism, Democrats need to put forward their own vision and show themselves willing and able to do whatever it takes to protect American lives and interests. Bill Clinton was absolutely right to declare that "when people are [feeling] insecure, they'd rather have somebody who is strong and wrong...than somebody who is weak and right." Of course, Americans will respond most enthusiastically to the party that promises to keep America strong *and* right.

This calls for a willingness to spend money on defense and use force when necessary. But it also means striving to live in a world where America is liked and respected, not only feared. It means that a resolute determination to fight the war on terrorism, by military means if necessary, has to be coupled with a generous vision of global society and America's role in it. September 11 revealed the security implications of global inequality, not because all the hijackers were poor—they weren't—or because poverty and inequality automatically lead to terrorism—they don't. But it is clear that the social and economic backwardness of much of the Islamic world today has something to do with the extreme version of Islam that has emerged in parts of it, and also that such backwardness provides fertile recruiting grounds for religious extremists. Moreover, terrorists often find refuge and sources of revenue in failed states, which tend to be found in those parts of the world

where health care, education, and economic development are lacking.

A more generous and compelling vision of global society is also the necessary moral glue for an effective alliance of democracies. Again, the Democrats have everything to gain—both domestically and internationally—from a progressive vision that includes humanitarian intervention against genocidal violence; family planning; effective cooperation against global warming and other environmental scourges; an active policy to combat AIDS, which will likely kill far more people than terrorism and war in the coming years; generous foreign aid and progressively freer trade in textiles, agriculture, and other goods produced by poor nations; and robust international institutions. In many cases, the United States and its allies need new ways of thinking about how to pursue these goals. For example, humanitarian intervention in Africa would be a natural mission for the European Union's planned Rapid Reaction Force; African militaries could be trained and equipped for the task as well. But the main point is that Democrats have every reason to associate themselves with a traditionally liberal pursuit of global progress.

To a considerable extent, the Bush administration has squandered the international goodwill needed to keep our alliances strong and effective. Administration hard-liners appear to favor a unilateralist approach to most foreign policy issues. To the extent that they even acknowledge that allies are necessary, they seem to work from the misguided premise that international cooperation is best achieved when the stronger power announces its intentions and weaker powers then have little choice but to follow along. Republicans have pursued a narrow ideological agenda on issues like the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol, and encouraged the president to be generally dismissive of such efforts. They have opposed the CTBT as well as the verification protocol to the biological weapons convention without proposing any alternatives. Hard-liners had argued against President Bush's decision last September to go to the United Nations for a final ultimatum to Saddam Hussein, and many now feel that the difficulties of building an international coalition in favor of war against Iraq vindicate the argument for the unilateral approach—as if the international community would simply have gone along happily had the United States not sought the backing of the Security Council.

The good news is that most of the damage in these areas can still be repaired. The bad news is that an image of America as an arrogant go-alone superpower has been reinforced, not only in Europe where the damage can perhaps be repaired, but in much of the Arab world. Some conservatives in the Bush administration may be indifferent to the sharp decline in America's standing in world opinion, but Americans—and the Democrats—should not be. A negative image of the United States weakens alliances, increases resistance to U.S. policy, and, at worst, expands the available pool of potential recruits for terrorism.

The Iraq Test

The greatest current test of a Democratic foreign policy vision is Iraq. There was always a strong case to be made that attacking Iraq would carry more costs and risks than potential gains, and Democrats should not have been afraid of making that case. But contorted attempts to establish artificial differences with President Bush's policy toward Iraq have not served Democrats well. The fact is that the administration's argument for mounting a credible threat of force to address the issue of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was strong enough to warrant support, if not as part of the war on terror then as a way to ensure the stability of the Persian Gulf and to maintain the credibility of the United Nations. By pushing the administration to take its case to the United Nations, Democrats helped achieve

a Security Council Resolution that made the disarmament of Iraq more likely than it had been for years. If Saddam Hussein's refusal to abide by that resolution makes it necessary for the United States to lead a coalition of like-minded allies to enforce it (we write this in mid-March), the Bush administration will not hesitate to do so, and Democrats should not hesitate to support it.

Liberals need to recognize that Iraq is a classic example of the way in which the serious threat to use force and a U.S. approach that verges on unilateralism can make the United Nations system more, not less, effective. They should also recognize that if their preferred outcome—Iraqi compliance and disarmament without war—proves unattainable, as it well might, the logic of this policy means using force to overthrow Saddam Hussein. There are good reasons to be concerned about the costs of such a war, but Democrats would do well to learn from the common-sense, nationalist liberalism of British prime minister Tony Blair. Stating in the House of Commons that the goal was not "regime change" but disarmament, Blair did not hesitate to add what should be an obvious point, that "regime change in Iraq would be a wonderful thing…. One thing I find odd are people who find the notion of regime change in Iraq somehow distasteful."

Democrats can support the president on using force against Saddam without applauding his diplomacy of the past year. The administration's hubris in thinking that we could simply bully the rest of the world into following us on this issue continues to haunt us. Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld should not have been dismissive of inspections, so inclined to hype the immediate threat posed by Saddam, and so gung-ho for war at the outset, leading allies to think that we were not merely threatening force to achieve disarmament but were determined to go to war no matter what. Their speeches and other public pronouncements contributed to German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's own unfortunate decision to campaign for reelection by bashing the United States and led most of the world to believe that the United States wanted war whether inspections worked or not. According to the *Washington Post*, administration representatives were telling allies at the Security Council in February that they did not, in fact, have to decide what to do about Iraq because that decision "is ours, and we have made it. It is already final. The only question now is whether the Council will go along with it or not." This was hardly a way to make our allies feel that the United States respected their opinion.

The entire Bush administration, even Secretary of State Colin Powell, has also often appeared to exaggerate the alleged links between Saddam and al-Qaeda. There have been associations between Iraq and al-Qaeda and they are worthy of close tracking. But they do not appear to amount to close material or tactical collaboration between Iraq and Osama bin Laden's followers, and as such do not constitute grounds for war. Frequent administration attempts to make more of these links than the evidence suggests has led many around the world, and within the United States, to suspect the administration would stretch the truth to sell its war policy.

Finally, after the passage of resolution 1441, the Pentagon began a major military buildup in the Persian Gulf that further suggested the Bush administration's mind was already made up about war. The accelerated deployment also created an artificial reason for prompt action based on the argument that once deployed the troops would soon have to be used. This was every bit as much an "ambush" as France's subsequent decision in January to state publicly that there was not yet a case for war against Saddam and that it might veto any attempt at a second resolution. As such, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's disparaging comments about "old Europe" and his comparison of Germany to Libya and Cuba, while perhaps

satisfying to Rumsfeld personally, were extremely counterproductive. They made even countries that support the basic U.S. approach on Iraq, like Spain, cringe; in February 2003 Prime Minister José María Anzar told President Bush that Europeans needed to hear "less from Secretary Rumsfeld and more from Secretary Powell" in the debates over Iraq.

The Bush administration is right to be resolute in making Saddam comply with 1441, and deserves credit for doing so. But it should have worked quietly with its allies to try to fashion a timeline and a series of deadlines all could accept, rather than making decisions about tactics and war timing mostly by itself. In the process, it gave Saddam hope, increased the chances of war as a result, and weakened the Western alliance through a very public and unnecessary clash with some of our closest friends and allies—friends and allies we will need to rebuild and stabilize Iraq after the war, even if we might not require their combat help on the battlefield.

Democrats can also credibly challenge the Bush administration on its neglect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Resolution of this festering problem would arguably make a greater contribution to the war on terrorism than any future use of military force. Bush came into office extremely reluctant—not without reason, after the Clinton administration's failed efforts to negotiate peace at the July 2000 Camp David summit—to get bogged down in what it feared would be endless and futile negotiations. While the Bush approach may have been politically expedient, it underestimated the cost to the United States of appearing uninterested in working toward a solution to the conflict.

President Bush was right to support Israel's right to defend itself, to denounce the Palestinian Authority's support for terrorism, and to conclude that Palestinians would only achieve their goals under new leadership. But to have done so while welcoming Ariel Sharon as the most frequent visitor to the Oval Office, failing to oppose Israeli settlement activity, calling Sharon a "man of peace" (a moniker it is not clear that Sharon himself would choose), allowing cabinet officials like Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to refer to the "so-called occupied territories," and failing to appoint an active, high-profile Middle East envoy could only lead the Arab world to conclude that the United States was not an honest broker in the conflict. Hard as it may be, any American leader committed to achieving peace in the Middle East will have to make clear that his support for a Palestinian state is more than rhetorical, that he is prepared to engage both sides and assume political risk in doing so, and that the Israeli side will also have to make painful compromises, including the dismantling of many settlements. It is possible and necessary to be "pro-Israel" without pursuing a policy that leads to deep international resentment, misunderstanding, and resistance to U.S. initiatives.

Defense Spending and National Security

Democrats also need to think hard about their ideas on U.S. defense spending. They should support necessary increases in military spending. But they should also be asking whether a Pentagon that got by on $300 billion a year under Clinton, and that now has a annual budget approaching $400 billion, really needs another $100 billion a year by the end of the decade, as the Bush administration insists. Of that jump from $300 billion to $500 billion, less than half can be explained by the combined effects of the war on terrorism and inflation. Part of the increase is due to rising research and development spending intended to hasten military "transformation," a radical change in weapons and tactics that relies heavily on information and communications technologies. Tens of billions of dollars a year are to go to military procurement for the purchase of a new generation of weapons that candidate Bush pledged to "skip," and

similar amounts will go for operations accounts, for everything from training to equipment repair to environmental cleanup to military health care. Democrats should support necessary increases without jumping on the bandwagon for a Reaganesque defense budget buildup that would exacerbate the federal deficit and deny funds for other pressing needs.

Even a $500 billion defense budget in 2009 will amount to little more than 3.3 percent of GDP, compared with 3 percent when Bush became president. Moreover, Bush and Rumsfeld are not proposing to increase the size of the armed forces; they have accepted the cuts President Clinton effected but wish to ensure that the remaining forces (one-third smaller than during the 1980s) are paid, trained, and equipped to the best possible standards. At a time of fiscal pressure, however, and after a of couple rounds of major tax cuts, this increase in defense spending could nonetheless weaken the economy—and hence our long-term security—while impeding efforts to pursue meaningful domestic initiatives. It can also deny funds for needed homeland security measures and, for example, the Nunn-Lugar cooperative threat reduction activities in Russia to reduce the stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Long-term counterterrorism efforts could also be jeopardized: the $25 million a year currently allocated for supporting democracy and improving education in Arab states is a pittance, and the $10 million budgeted to help African militaries build up their own capabilities to keep peace on their continent represents a cut from previous levels and is simply not enough to do the job.

What can Democrats do? Containing the defense budget alone will not achieve fiscal balance or fund a major new entitlement program like a generous prescription drug benefit for seniors. But Democrats can insist that fiscal sanity is a matter of national security. The Bush administration's proposed tax cuts could force our children to choose tomorrow between adequate defense spending and adequate funding of social programs. And Democrats can emphasize that, in time of war, it is only fair and patriotic that the wealthy, who are currently benefiting the most from globalization, not benefit disproportionately from tax cuts as well.

It should be possible to save several billion dollars from the defense budget, partly by keeping missile defense programs within reasonable bounds in the coming years, but mostly by doing what Rumsfeld and Bush themselves promised to do prior to 9/11. That is, to "skip a generation" of weaponry. The military does need to buy new systems to replace aging fighters, ships, helicopters, and land vehicles, so it cannot take another procurement holiday as it did in the 1990s. But the Defense Department can cancel or scale back some of the ultra-expensive new platforms—F-22 fighters, V-22 tilt-rotor planes, Comanche helicopters, Virginia class submarines—and instead buy less expensive, proven systems. In many cases, it can simply buy more of the types of weapons it already has in inventory, modernizing those platforms with the latest electronics, computers, communications systems, sensors, and munitions, and tying them into networks of unmanned aerial vehicles and other advanced reconnaissance devices. This middle "selective" course can achieve modernization while keeping the defense budget within bounds.

Democrats in Congress also need to prove their credentials as competent managers by working to reform Pentagon business practices. Much of the projected budget increases are being driven by noncombat support activities, such as health care, environmental cleanup, equipment repair, base maintenance, and the like. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld has paid lip service to privatizing these activities and making them more efficient, but he is generally failing in the effort. Congress can help him move in this direction.

Democrats have also left themselves unnecessarily vulnerable on matters of homeland defense. In the run-up to last fall's congressional elections, President Bush accused them of obstructing the creation of a new department of homeland security, which, ironically, they had proposed in the first place. While the Democrats' emphasis on the rights of unions and federal workers within the new department was understandable, it left them looking weak on national security concerns. Moreover, they failed to make the more politically resonant point that the sclerotic and rigid civil service system does need to be reformed. Had the Democrats demanded guarantees of fair treatment for employees of the new department, but worked hard and quickly to offer up a plan that provided President Bush flexibility in creating the new agency, voters might not have blamed them for the stalemate in Washington. As it was, the Republicans made political hay of the issue.

Looking Ahead

Where do Democrats go from here? They should support the president when appropriate, as in threatening force to achieve the disarmament of Iraq or selectively increasing the defense budget, but challenge him where they can present a strong critique and an alternative vision, as on homeland security and the maintenance of healthy alliance relationships. Much of the task of protecting America against terrorist and proliferation threats—probably the hardest part—is still ahead. Democrats need to keep pushing the president to address this agenda—which goes well beyond the question of Iraq.

Looking ahead on the question of homeland security, the general issue of private-sector infrastructure requires greater attention. The Bush budgets for homeland security for 2003 and 2004 focus largely on "refighting the last war"—preventing future attacks by such means as flying airplanes into buildings or putting anthrax in the mail. Certain high-visibility infrastructure, including nuclear power plants, has been safeguarded, though perhaps not adequately. But the administration needs to turn its attention to chemical facilities and trucks carrying toxic materials. Apparently, with its faith in the private sector (and perhaps too little imagination about how al-Qaeda might strike next), Washington has simply assumed that companies owning such assets will provide adequate protection on their own.

Clearly, the private sector must play a large role in protecting its own assets against terrorism; but how can the government best interact with private businesses to protect against attacks? Legislating detailed security regulations would be cumbersome, slow, and costly. A smarter approach over the medium term would combine minimal regulation (to require basic safety standards) with a reliance on insurers to encourage additional precautions, as argued by economist Peter Orszag of the Brookings Institution. That is, to require trucking and chemical companies, for example, to carry terrorism insurance, and then let insurance companies offer better rates to companies that take prudent precautions above and beyond the legal minimum. This makes for a dynamic, evolving, cost-minimizing approach that avoids the heavy hand of government regulation while harnessing the power of the private market. But the Bush administration is so wedded to traditional big business interests that it has not yet considered such ideas. This provides a natural opening for Democrats.

When the al-Qaeda terrorists attacked New York and Washington, they pushed American politics a little bit further into Republican territory. President Bush has exploited this political reality skillfully, just as he has prosecuted the first stages of the war on terrorism (in most respects) ably. It would serve neither the national interest, nor the Democrats' own political interest, to stake out positions that are confused,

evasive, or wrong just for the sake of party politics. Yet it should be possible for the opposition party to put forward its own vision for maintaining a secure America and forcefully defending American interests abroad, while challenging this administration to combine American power and American values in a way that does not isolate the United States from much of the world. That would start to move the foreign policy debate back into Democratic territory. ●

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