



The national debate grows ever more frustrating. Fueled by a media-gone-wild (they ought to have a show; oh, wait, they already do...24 tiresome hours a day) we become more polarized each day. And, it begs the question: How can we extricate ourselves from the doctrinaire doublespeak of the invested ideologues and bring some sanity back to our polity.

As to whether or not we are in the ultimate battle for the soul of America, perhaps only the history books a hundred years hence will confirm or deny, but, at the least, we are in the midst of a significant test of the nature of our nation and of its direction.

Those who expected the brilliant, shining and past-shattering moment of the election to the Presidency of a bright and charismatic young African American to last and to bring us Camelot redux have been largely disappointed. The expectation was that his election, despite his politics, would move him to the center...as it had done for almost all his predecessors. But, it did not. His key advisers should have been the key to our understanding. David Axelrod, Valerie Jarrett, David Plouffe and Rahm Emmanuel are not the essence of compromise. They are, in this one writer's opinion, the single most manipulative collection of ideologues ever to be assembled and, in addition to being the architects of a stunningly successful election campaign, they are the builders of a powerful alliance of the intellectual left, the labor unions and the vast number of Americans who do believe that Government is the way to take care of the needs of the people. This is what they will work to strengthen through the 2010 and 2012 elections.

Their methods have been transparent and clear throughout the difficult healthcare debate. Enhance the polarization; point the finger at the powerful; cite the greed of the free market; muddy the waters on the costs. Pass it now. Worry about the debt it's creating later. And, in all events, blame all of today's ills on those who preceded you.

The counterbalance to all this falls on the shoulders of a leaderless Republican Party and on the

growing Tea Party movement. The good news is that within the Tea Party there are plenty of disillusioned democrats and plenty of terrific, normal, ordinary Americans who believe that our fundamental values risk being lost in an Obamian quest for a new, socialistic Europe in America. But, it's what they do with these feelings that will matter. The lines are being drawn and the risk is that in fighting at the extremes, the middle will be lost and, it may be, that it is only somewhere in that middle that we can regain our focus.

The polls tell the truth every day. The American people do not like the direction this administration is taking. The President's approval rating is slipping and remaining under 50%; the support for the healthcare law is even lower and, dear friends, the only thing this means in that the "silent majority" – the center – must be both the target and the trophy.

If the Tea Party and the Republicans end up at odds over who the 2010 Republican candidates should be and they let ideology overrule common sense and end up with a third candidate in enough places, they will hand the election, the legislative agenda and the makeup of the courts to the current czars in the West Wing.

The ideologues of the right, Limbaugh principal among them, insist that an abandonment of pure conservative principle is tantamount to surrender. Trouble is that there is no more realism to that position and its possibilities than there is to the Denis Kucinich notion that all we need to do is provide a failsafe social welfare safety net to everyone.

It's "be careful what you wish for" time.

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