

A Ship of Fools

BY Dave Andrusko

I began composing this editorial the morning of the day in which the Senate overrode an enfeebled, last-minute pro-abortion attempt to filibuster the nomination of Judge Samuel Alito, Jr., to the Supreme Court. Led by such out-to-sea senators as John Kerry and Edward Kennedy, the party looked, at best, foolish and, at worst, the hapless handmaidens of the grossly irresponsible Left.

But as tempting as it is, never is it a good idea to feast (gloat) on a steady diet of pro-abortion mistakes. To be sure there are enough gaffes, egregious political miscalculations, and guttersnipe rhetoric coming out of the pro-abortion Senate Democrats and the chairman of the Democratic National Committee to provide the fare for an entire smorgasbord. But to just chortle at the almost mystifying string of wrongheaded decisions takes us away from a far more productive inquiry: why are pro-abortion Democrats seemingly incapable of stopping themselves from racing off the cliff?

Videotapes of the confirmation process that Judge, now Justice Alito endured are not likely to be buried soon in any time capsule. What pro-abortion Democrats such as Ted Kennedy, Charles Schumer, Dick Durbin, and Joseph Biden did was cynical and sleazy.

Only those who take their cues from the likes of groups such as Planned Parenthood and NARAL could believe the Senate Judiciary Committee Democrats' smear of this very highly respected judge. The vicious caricature bore no resemblance to the picture painted by those who knew him best, including many of his law clerks and fellow judges.

Of course this was no deterrent to Kennedy, who made his bones as a demagogue in his legendary assault on Supreme Court nominee Judge Robert Bork. And with that deftness and impeccable sense of timing that was the hallmark of his run for the presidency, Sen. John Kerry, who is not even on the Senate Judiciary Committee, tried at the last minute to reprise the strategy that worked so well for his Massachusetts colleague in 1987.

To hear them talk, Judge Alito was not only a thinly disguised racist and constitutional radical, he would be a toady for President Bush in a host of areas in which Democrats are contesting the President. With truth the first casualty, what else could Kennedy, Kerry, and xx other pro-abortion Senate Democrats do but try to filibuster?

The entire Keystone Cops-like enterprise irritated lots of pro-abortionist in the media, including Boston Globe columnist Joan Vennoch. Kennedy's embrace of the filibuster she explained as a cost-free gesture to mollify the Left and an attempt to make up for the obvious fact that Kennedy's scuzzy campaign to label Alito a bigot had backfired. As for Kerry, "a filibuster is harder to fathom, except as more of the same from a perpetually tone-deaf politician."

"Alito is conservative," she wrote. "But radical? The Democrats failed to make the case during hearings which proved only one thing beyond a reasonable doubt: their own boorishness."

That same Monday afternoon pro-life Senate Republicans brushed back the listless pro-abortion attempt

to filibuster the Alito nomination, Roll Call ran an article with this lead: “Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill are privately bristling over Howard Dean’s management of the Democratic National Committee [DNC] and have made those sentiments clear after new fundraising numbers showed he has spent nearly all the committee’s cash and has little left to support their efforts to gain seats this cycle.” But the same article had apologists for Dean hailing him as the long-term savior of the Party.

What is going on? In this particular instance, the survival instinct of Democrats who must face the electorate is at war with the realization that (no matter how poor a money manager Howard Dean may be) most of the energy and money comes from out-of-control billionaires and uber-zany organizations such as Moveon.org.

But both the battle over Judge Alito and the clash of cultures over how to dispense DNC money is representative of something far larger. Trying to simultaneously soothe a middle-of-the-road electorate and tamp down complaints by the militants that the party is not taking policy positions sufficiently far enough out of the mainstream explain why you so often hear statements that defy logic, lack credibility, and run head-on into common sense.

That’s why in a conversation last year with Chris Matthews Howard Dean could resolutely refuse to admit the self-evident: that Democrats are (to use Matthews’ words) the “pro-choice party.” Dean’s justification for running away from the description is “Because I think it’s often misused. If you’re pro-choice, it implies you’re not pro-life. That’s not true ...”

That’s why the likes of Sen. Hilary Clinton periodically trot out soothing language about both sides “working together,” and then hide the instant anyone asks if they are now less than 304% pro-abortion. Clinton didn’t mean even a single syllable.

But it gets worse and worse and worse. They make up statistics to “prove” that abortions went down under pro-abortion President Bill Clinton and up under pro-life President George W. Bush. They insist they do not approve of forced abortion in China yet drag their feet when pro-life Presidents attempt to prevent American tax dollars from underwriting organizations which work hand in glove with those who run forced abortion and compulsory sterilization programs. They wax poetic about the importance of parents not being blindsided by a teenage abortion and then scuttle every piece of legislation that would alert parents to an impending abortion by their minor daughter.

Let me offer one final thought for your consideration. It is now commonplace for scientists to say that mental functions take place largely in one side or the other of the brain’s two hemispheres. For example, the left side deals with the analytical—language and math and logic—while the right side of the brain is associated with the more intuitive—creative, abstract, non-verbal functions.

You can’t help thinking that for many panicky pro-abortion Democrats, the right hemisphere is now devoted full-time to demagoguery while the left hemisphere is busy working overtime generating willful self-delusion.

Put another way, they are trying to serve up the same old pro-abortion recipes at a time when most people no longer dine at the table of Roe v. Wade. Having wedded themselves to the status quo for so long, they are incapable of understanding that the American people have already filed for a trial separation.