GOP is becoming America's dominant party

While an increasingly angry and alienated Democratic Party spouts gloom and doom, the picture appears bright for conservatives and the GOP. Beginning with Arnold Schwarzenegger's victory in California and following last week's electoral successes in Kentucky and Mississippi, Republicans are consolidating their hold on state and national political offices.

With President Bush's signature of the partial-birth abortion ban, CBS's decision to drop its politicized hatchet job of Ronald Reagan -- one of America's most beloved presidents -- and the recovering economy spurred by Bush's hefty tax cuts, the American "right" seems to be on a roll. Meanwhile, the Democrats seem to be careening further leftward -- and backward -- toward pacifism, pessimism, irrelevance and political suicide.

These are not just short-term GOP gains. While liberal Democrats feverishly try to spin away the reality, the truth is that conservative ideals of entrepreneurship, individual responsibility, smaller government, lower taxes, strong national defense and traditional values have become increasingly mainstream during the past 20 years; the recent GOP successes simply reflect that fact.

In 1983 -- Reagan's third year as president -- Democrats controlled Congress and 23 more state legislatures than did the Republicans. Today the GOP holds both houses of Congress and five more state legislatures than do the Democrats.

That same year, there were 18 more Democrat governors than Republicans; today (after California, Kentucky and Mississippi) there will be 29 GOP governors (five more Republicans than Democrats). Also, the U.S. House had 103 more Democrats than Republicans; today Republicans lead by 24 members.

The Democratic strategy of turning the recent Southern elections into referenda on Bush also failed miserably. In Kentucky, Democrats tried to link GOP nominee Rep. Ernie Fletcher with the "Bush economy," while in Mississippi, Democratic incumbent Ronnie Musgrove tried to attack the Washington ties of former Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour. Republicans won both elections handily.

With these two wins -- which follow GOP gains in Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina -- Republicans have recaptured the growing, dynamic South.

Soon 60 percent of Americans will live in states run by Republicans. With the exception of "left" coast enclaves such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, and parts of the "granola" Northwest, the GOP continues to dominate the West as well. The only true liberal Democrat stronghold nationally appears to be the Northeast rust belt.

For those who may not have noticed -- the GOP is becoming our dominant party coast to coast.

To bring the point home, U.S. Sen. Zell Miller, D-Ga., who recently endorsed Bush's reelection, titled his new book about the Democrats, A National Party No More. Miller argues that the Democratic Party has become dominated by parochial and extreme left-wing interest groups that are pulling the party further away from the mainstream even while America has shifted rightward since Sept. 11. He adds, "It's obvious that a train wreck is about to happen with the Democratic Party."

The GOP future looks good as America's youth also seems to be increasingly conservative. Despite the predominance of left-leaning academics on college campuses, surveys reveal that freshmen are far more traditional than many of their counterculture professors or liberal baby-boomer parents. A national Harvard University poll in October found that 61 percent of college students approved of Bush's job performance.

As the economy improves, Democrats will pin their hopes for success in 2004 on a Bush failure in Iraq. But hurting Bush on Iraq is not good either for Democrats or America. Most Americans -- regardless of party -- are rooting for victory in Iraq. Cynical defeatism in time of war should backfire and hurt Democrats.

Republicans are on the move across America. Democrats need to recognize and adapt to that, or they may find themselves trampled by the stampeding elephants of the GOP.

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