ANDY SLAMS 'LOST' DEMS OVER 9/11

By FREDRIC U. DICKER

October 22, 2003 -- ALBANY - In a scathing rebuke to his own party, Andrew Cuomo is charging that Democrats are "lost in time," often appear "bloodless, soulless and clueless," and have "fumbled" their role in the post-9/11 world.

What's more, Cuomo is praising President Bush "for recognizing the challenge of 9/11 and rising to it."


"Democrats lost elections in 2000 and 2002 because we were lost in time," wrote Cuomo, son of former Gov. Mario Cuomo, in a 24-page essay.

"We expressed no clear vision for the future.

"We had become the party of fear instead of the party of hope - spending more time warning what Republicans would take away rather than we did on what Democrats had to offer," he continued.

As a result, "To voters, we seemed bloodless, soulless and clueless . . . We fooled ourselves into a political strategy of timidity."

Andrew Cuomo, who is weighing another bid for elective office in New York, also said Democrats have "deluded and diluted" themselves into thinking the party's core base - labor, women, and minorities - was strong enough to allow them to recapture control of Congress.

Cuomo's most serious charge was that Democrats "fumbled the seminal moment of our lives - the terrorist attacks of 9/11."

Democrats, he said, "have failed to approach the problem with the urgency or comprehensiveness that it demands."

Cuomo, of course, had something of his own tin ear when it came to 9/11 - which helped force him out of the governor's race last year.

That's when he claimed - to widespread scorn - that Gov. Pataki merely "held the coat" of then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks.

In his essay, Cuomo said Bush "exemplified leadership at a time when America was desperate for a leader."

"He deserves credit, as do congressional Republicans, for recognizing the challenge of 9/11 and rising to it."

"Meanwhile, on the Democratic side, there was chaos," continued Cuomo, noting, "We handled 9/11 like it was a debate over a highway bill instead of a matter of people's lives."

Cuomo's essay is short on specifics on how the Democratic Party can address its problems, although he urges it to aggressively join the war on terror and back "new solutions and increased accountability."