

1-23-2001

## **Dems target Bush, Cabinet war of words**

David R. Bowen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/db-columns>

---

### **Preferred Citation**

[Title], David Bowen Collection. Congressional and Political Research Center, Mississippi State University Libraries.

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the David Bowen Digital Collections at Scholars Junction. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Columns by an authorized administrator of Scholars Junction. For more information, please contact [scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com](mailto:scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com).

# Dems target Bush, Cabinet in war of words



Columnist

The electoral war is over, President Bush is in the White House and the war of the words has begun.

In modern politics, if you don't want to argue your case, just apply the right labels and watch the opposition squirm.

The current crusade by President Bush's critics is to move him and his Cabinet to the left, usually under the verbal rubric of "healing" and "uniting" the nation.

What they really mean is that Bush should name people and policies his opponents would have had they won the election. If he does not do so, he is "extreme," "mean-spirited," "divisive" or "insensitive."

## Ashcroft 'insensitive'

One of the final charges against Attorney General-nominee John Ashcroft is that while he may not be as "extreme" as some people originally thought, he is "insensitive" to the demands of certain Americans to whom we are all supposed to be sensitive, such as Bill Clinton's spiritual adviser, Jesse Jackson.

Just why President Bush should be "sensitive" to demands that are diametrically opposed to his own principles and commitments is never explained.

Another favorite term of the left-wing political lexicon is "legitimacy," as in, since Bush did not win a majority of the popular votes, and the Florida electoral vote is, in their opinion, tainted, his presence in the White House is actually "illegitimate," a word they are not usually fond of in other contexts.

A final charge, if all else fails to move Bush to the left, is that he and his Cabinet members are not "in the mainstream" (where everybody is supposed to be).

George W. Bush's father served only one term because he tried to be in the mainstream.

Ronald Reagan served two terms because he did not care a fig about the "mainstream," "sensitivity" or "uniting the nation."

Reagan just said and did what he believed and built a successful conservative coalition around that position.

Political blocs on the far left of the Democratic Party (militant feminists, tree-huggers, gay activists, many blacks) usually attack the Republicans with these loaded words.

The Republicans, strangely enough, like Charlie Brown trying to kick the famous football, always seem to hope they'll win lots of votes there if they just meet demands to be more "sensitive."

A black national columnist in this newspaper recently said Bush was "about to embark upon a useless effort to bridge the yawning gap between the GOP and African Americans," under a headline which read: "GOP courtship of black votes a joke."

## GOP never gets message

The Republicans never quite get the message. They insist on pursuing relatively small blocs of voters they'll never reach, abandoning millions more seeking a leader who doesn't pander.

Bush doesn't need to bridge any gaps except the terminology gap.

He could use a favorite term of the right and remind Americans that we are locked in a culture war, and he is determined to win it.

He could also say the so-called mainstream has become a sewer of crime, corrupt popular media, sexual excess, indiscipline, illegitimacy, broken homes, bad schools and moral degradation.

He and his vice president and Cabinet might perceive that somebody needs to provide the leadership to help the nation climb out of this slough of despondency and onto the high ground.



David Bowen of Jackson is a former member of Congress who represented Mississippi's 2nd District. Bowen, a writer and consultant, is a regular contributing columnist to *The Clarion-Ledger*.