

After this election, there will be change — for the worse

BY ROGER CONRAD

Congratulations are in order.

■ First, congratulations to the Democratic Party.

You managed to win control of the House and Senate from Republicans who had forgotten and abandoned their conservative principles of limited government and reduced spending. You played the Republican "corruption" card masterfully while managing to keep William Jefferson's \$90,000 freezer money and Harry Reid's questionable land deals off the front pages.

■ Congratulations to the American people.

Those of you who voted to put Democrats in charge obviously wanted a change. Well, you got it. You voted for the party of higher taxes, retreat from the war on terror, Constitutional rights for terrorists, free and open borders and amnesty for illegal immigrants.

Americans wanted a change from an all-time low 4.4 percent unemployment rate, a record high stock market and an all-time high in revenues generated by tax cuts, which is being used to pay down the deficit. Democrats have been attacking the Bush tax cuts as "tax cuts for the rich" since the day they were passed. (Didn't Ben Nelson's campaign say something about cutting taxes for working families? Well, which is it?)

So it is safe to assume that Nancy Pelosi and the rest of her party will move quickly to raise taxes. Once we retreat from Iraq, they'll be able to gut the military and intelligence communities again. The Democrats will waste little time abolishing the Patriot Act. Bin Laden should be able to get some pretty good friends and family rates for his contacts inside our country when we are no longer concerned with monitoring phone calls of suspected terrorists.

■ Congratulations to the media.

You did an outstanding job of doing the bidding of your liberal

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Democrat masters by reporting nothing but the daily body count from Iraq. Knowing that the American people are becoming increasingly gutless when they see nothing except American men

and women in uniform being killed and wounded by our enemies, you were able to turn the election into a referendum on Iraq and the president.

■ Congratulations to the terrorists.

In an audiotape released on Nov. 10, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the leader of Al-Qaida in Iraq, praised the American people and the Democratic Party.

"The American people have put their feet on the right path by ... realizing their president's betrayal in supporting Israel," the terror leader said. "So they voted for something reasonable in the last elections."

Our enemies endorse the Democrats.

Describing President Bush as "the most stupid president" in U.S. history (boy, he even sounds like a Democrat), al-Masri reached out to the Muslim world and said his group was winning the war in Iraq faster than expected because of U.S. policies.

And the Democrats have a new direction for the war on terror, surrender and retreat. It's no secret that Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., wants to leave right now. Now he will have the majority of the House and the Senate behind him when he reintroduces the plan. Murtha said Sunday on a talk show: "We're going to say here's a plan that we have, and Speaker Pelosi has signed onto the plan that I have. Stability in the Middle East, stability in Iraq comes from redeployment of our troops, and that's go-

ing to be what we'll work for."

So tell me Rep. Murtha, how does abandoning the Iraqi people to foreign fighters hellbent on creating an Islamic state in Iraq stabilize the region? How does leaving an Iraqi military and police force to fend for themselves, against the forces of terrorism, before they are fully prepared with personnel and equipment, stabilize the region?

He also said, "Winning is not a strategy. Victory is not a strategy." No, but it is a much better outcome than defeat and retreat when you are facing an enemy that routinely targets innocent and defenseless civilians.

When I was in Iraq, my unit had a translator named Abdul. Abdul was a Christian and a native Iraqi providing assistance to the U.S. military.

One day, just before the first free elections to be held in that nation in more than 50 years, I asked Abdul what he thought about us Americans being here in his country. Abdul, like most Iraqis, didn't like our presence in Iraq, but he understood our purpose and appreciated our help in removing Saddam and bringing about a sense of freedom that most Iraqis had never known. Abdul proudly voted in that first election, as did his son "Jake," who also was working with us as a translator.

Abdul was captured and killed by insurgents on his way home to Baghdad not long after the elections, either for working with us or being a Christian, or both. He never saw his dream of a free and representative Iraqi government fulfilled. Sadly, I fear his son and the rest of his family will get only the briefest of glimpses of that dream before it is replaced with an Islamic state.

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