PS1 for 3/30/89 # Laundered Liberalism Won't Wash

In an attempt to look positive after their weeks of negative Tower-bashing, Senate Democrats have come forth with an agenda of their own. This is Phase II of their drive to assert power and prestige for an Imperial Congress which they hope will dominate governmental decision-making for the next four years.

The smart Democrats realize that they have no realistic chance of electing a Democratic president in the foreseeable future because their party is hopelessly checkmated at the top by wild liberals outside the American mainstream. The Democrats also know that the judicial branch has slipped out of their grasp; after 12 years of Reagan-Bush appointments, the majority of judges will no longer be liberal activists.

So, what's left? The Democrats are trying to run the country from Congress, using leverage from the liberal media elite. Phase I was the John Tower confirmation battle – a partisan/ideological power play to try to take over the running of the Department of Defense and thus carve a vital section out of George Bush's presidential prerogatives.

That was the same type of power play we saw when the Democratic Congress used the Iran-Contra hearings to try to take over the running of foreign policy, and used the Robert Bork hearings to try to take over judicial appointments. Mitchell now says Democrats are not going "to sit and wait for the President to make a proposal" but are seizing the initiative with their own domestic agenda.

Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell's newly-released 10-page document is the product of 150 meetings among the Senate's 55 Democrats over many months. One wonders how many of those 150 meetings had John Tower as the number-one item of discussion.

Despite the obvious lessons that ought to be learned from the Reagan-Bush victories in 1980, 1984 and 1988, the Democrats are not willing to accept the reality that conservatism is now the majority American ideology. In choosing their Senate Leader and their National Party Chairman, George Mitchell and Ron Brown, the Democrats selected the most liberal of the several candidates for those positions.

George Mitchell's new policy agenda is nothing but laundered liberalism. Make that laundered northeastern liberalism, the same Dukakis-style liberalism that the voters rejected last November.

Mitchell's agenda calls for a comprehensive new housing program. The fact is that federal housing is a fraud which has filled our inner cities with unlivable, crime-ridden expensive buildings where it is more dangerous to live than Beirut or Kabul. Only limousine liberals living in safe and guarded enclaves could demand more of such housing for the poor.

Mitchell's agenda includes a higher minimum wage, something that would throw 300,000 people out of work and onto unemployment compensation, perpetuate the 16.4 percent unemployment among our youth, and trigger billions of dollars in federal expenditure through other social programs. A far better way to address the problems of low-income employed families is to

expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, which would target increases for those at a minimum wage level who really need help: families with children.

Mitchell is concerned about the quality of American schools. Indeed, so are we all. But if one thing is crystal clear, it is that spending more money isn't the solution; it's usually the problem.

Mitchell's agenda calls for "affordable, quality child care." This is another manifestation of the liberal "I'm from the government and I'm here to help you" mindset. The same liberals who have made public schools and public housing unsafe at any price now want to persuade us to drop off our infants and preschool children in public warehouses.

The chief liberal baby-sitting bill is co-sponsored by those two northeastern liberal accomplices, Senators Chris Dodd and Ted Kennedy, who were most recently in the news as among the handful who voted FOR the 50 percent pay raise.

There is one piece of good news in the Mitchell agenda: it doesn't call for any new taxes. Hallelujah! The Democrats have finally read George Bush's lips.

Do you remember how the TV media hammered away at us night after night, telling us that George Bush's no-tax-increase promise was a phony and he simply must raise taxes? The liberals and the Congressional Democrats continued to believe they could make George Bush renege on his pledge UNTIL the Washington establishment got whammed a second time by the voters over the pay raise issue.

It's been a hard lesson to learn, but it seems that the liberal Democrats finally understand that the voters will not stand for any tax increase. As a fall-back position, the liberals are pressing forward for laundered liberalism in the hope that oublic demand for government handouts will force a tax increase next tear.

But laundered liberalism won't was with the voters any more than aggressive ACLU-style liberalism.