

US midterm elections: An overwhelming repudiation of the war in Iraq

The editorial board
8 November 2006

With returns from the western states still coming in, the Democratic Party has won control of the House of Representatives by a comfortable margin, having ousted more than 30 Republican incumbents.

The Democrats appear poised to gain control of the Senate as well. They have captured at least three seats previously held by Republicans—in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Ohio—and are leading, as we go to press, in the closely contested races in Virginia, Missouri and Montana.

Even if the Republicans manage to retain a one- or two-vote Senate majority, there is no questioning the fact that the election results represent an overwhelming popular repudiation of the war in Iraq. Exit polls confirmed what pre-election surveys had predicted: that the war was the issue uppermost in the minds of voters. A substantial majority of those who cast ballots favor a withdrawal of US forces from Iraq either immediately or within a few months.

While the election result is a debacle for the Bush administration and the Republicans, the Democrats are far from satisfied with the political situation that they presently confront.

The Democratic Party is the beneficiary of overwhelming antiwar sentiment that it did nothing to encourage and which stands in stark opposition to its own pro-war policy. There is a vast chasm between the massive antiwar sentiment within the electorate and the commitment of Democratic Party leaders to “victory in Iraq” and continued prosecution of the “war on terror.”

As the evening wore on and the political implications of the massive anti-Bush and antiwar vote became apparent, both leading Democrats and the cynical spinmeisters of the media sought to interpret the election results in the most conservative and innocuous terms.

New York Senator Hillary Clinton, considered to be the frontrunner to win the Democratic nomination for president in 2008, declared in her victory speech that American politics had to return to the “vital center,” and pledged her commitment to work with the Republicans in prosecuting the “war on terror.”

Needless to say, had the Republicans retained control of both houses of Congress, the media would have portrayed the election as a powerful popular endorsement of the Bush administration’s war policy.

In fact, the vote reflects the broad and deep popular opposition not only to Bush, but also to the media and the Democrats, both of which backed the administration’s war drive, promoted its lies about weapons of mass destruction and Iraq-Al Qaeda ties, and continue to support the mass slaughter being carried out by the US in the devastated country.

The outcome of the elections has revealed that the American people overwhelmingly stand to the left of the entire political establishment. It signals an intensification of the political crisis in the United States.

Those who voted for the Democratic Party in order to express their opposition to the Bush administration and the war will rapidly discover that a Democratic electoral victory will produce no significant change in US policy, either abroad or at home. Millions of working people and youth will sooner rather than later come into direct conflict with the Democrats.



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