

Media gladly pick up left's hysteria

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It is a lawyers' adage: If you have the law on your side, argue the law; if you have the facts, argue the facts; if you have neither, pound the table. Forgive the Democrats for their current table-pounding.

They cannot run on their record, which has two pillars. One is the stimulus that did not stimulate as they said it would. The report that the recession ended in June 2009 means the feeble recovery began before stimulus spending really started.

The second pillar is the health-care legislation. It remains as unpopular as it was when the administration told Americans to pipe down and eat their broccoli.

Unable to campaign retrospectively, Democrats also cannot campaign prospectively - "Elect us and get more broccoli!" Hence the table-pounding: The tea party is a death panel for America's happiness.

As the year began, we were warned that tea partiers would not play nicely with others. It is, however, some anti-tea party "moderates" who exemplify repulsive politics this year.

Florida's Gov. Charlie Crist wanted the Republican Senate nomination. So did Marco Rubio, a tea party favorite. When Rubio went from 30 points behind Crist to 30 points ahead, Crist discovered that he is not a Republican. Promptly reversing his beliefs on various policy questions, he embarked on a run as an independent.

It is unfairly said that Crist's versatility of conviction proves that he has no convictions. He has one. It is that he should be a senator. Alaska's Sen. Lisa Murkowski is similarly a conviction politician.

Since losing her renomination bid - defeated by tea party-backed Joe Miller - she has behaved as though voters have violated her property right to her seat. She is running a write-in campaign.

When Mike Lee, supported by tea party types, defeated Utah Republican Sen. Bob Bennett's bid to be



renominated for a fourth term, Bennett contemplated a write-in campaign. In Delaware, where Christine O'Donnell defeated Rep. Mike Castle for the Republican senate nomination, Castle has not, as of Tuesday noon, ruled out a write-in candidacy.

Democrats, unable to run on their policies, will try to demonize the opponents with tea party support as unstable extremists with personality disorders. They have ridden this hobby horse before.

In 1964, the slogan of the Republican presidential nominee, Barry Goldwater, was "A choice, not an echo." Forty-six years on, the tea party is a loud echo of his attempt to reconnect American politics with the tradition of limited government.

In response to a questionnaire from a magazine, 1,189 psychiatrists, none of whom had ever met Goldwater, declared him unfit for office: "emotionally unstable," "immature," "cowardly," "grossly psychotic," "paranoid," "chronic schizophrenic" and "dangerous lunatic" were some judgments from the psychiatrists. Shortly before the election, Columbia University historian Richard Hofstadter published in *Harper's* an essay, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," that encouraged the idea that Goldwater's kind of conservatism was a mental disorder.

On the eve of the convention that nominated Goldwater, Daniel Schorr of CBS, "reporting" from Germany, said: "It looks as though Senator Goldwater, if nominated, will be starting his campaign here in Bavaria, center of Germany's right wing" and "Hitler's one-time stomping ground." Goldwater, said Schorr, would be vacationing near Hitler's villa at Berchtesgaden. Schorr further noted that Goldwater had given an interview to *Der Spiegel* "appealing to right-wing elements in Germany" and had agreed to speak to a gathering of "right-wing Germans." So, "there are signs that the American and German right wings are joining up."

But as Andrew Ferguson of *The Weekly Standard* has reported, although Goldwater had spoken vaguely about a European vacation (he did not take one), he had not mentioned Germany, and there were no plans to address any German group. *Der Spiegel* had reprinted an interview that had appeared elsewhere.

The relevance of this for 2010? There is precedent for the media being megaphones for Democratic-manufactured hysteria.

George F. Will writes for the Washington Post Writers Group.

georgewill@washpost.com





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