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Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [David Mark](#)

Is a liberal primary challenge to Obama a fantasy?



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What the president's liberal supporters should be upset about is his continuation of Bush's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This from a man who campaigned on "I will bring this war to an end in 2009. It is time to bring our troops home." And Bush's policies on executive power and surveillance - and his going beyond Bush's policies in such areas as the assassination of American citizens and going to war without congressional authorization (this from the man who said, "The president does not have power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to the nation.").

But we're learning that "progressives" don't care much about illegal wars and civil liberties abuses from a Democratic president.

As for economic issues, liberals have gotten the biggest "stimulus" bill in history, a government/union takeover of two auto companies, a big step toward national health insurance in defiance of rising national opposition, and lots of regulatory action to boost unions, regulate greenhouse gases without congressional authorization, and impose costly new rules on business hiring. In the light of all that, a few promised but unspecified spending cuts somewhere in the future are not really going to drive anybody away.

And thus there's not going to be a serious liberal opponent to a president who has delivered so much government spending and control, and remains personally popular - 81 percent approval among liberal Democrats in the latest Gallup Poll (compared to 73 percent among moderate Democrats; it would seem that a moderate challenger would find slightly more fertile soil).