

Angry Left Obama's bête noir? Will Republicans win a Senate majority?

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Would the president help himself by making a clearer ideological declaration -- as many on the "professional left" are asking him to do? Hardly. POLITICO tells us this morning that those "professionals" lament "the president's reluctance to be a Democratic version of Ronald Reagan, who spoke without apology about his vaulting ideological ambitions." One of those professionals, Robert Reich, urges Obama to present "a clear and convincing narrative into which all the various initiatives neatly fit, so that the public can make sense of everything that's done."

The public is quite capable of making sense of everything that's been done. It's doing it, and it doesn't like what it sees. Reagan spoke boldly about his vision because it arose directly from fundamental American principles -- individual liberty, free markets, and limited constitutional government. Obama avoids presenting "a clear and convincing narrative" because if he stated his vision more clearly it would be even less convincing than it already is.

Thus, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs was right to complain about the criticism's coming from members of the professional left, who spend their lives cloistered in academia, the mainstream media, and other such redoubts, talking to each other. But Gibbs's problem is deeper: It's the product, not the pitch.