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Oct. 21, 2009

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Roger Pilon, Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute:

Obama is losing it. His increasing moves to marginalize his critics, richly detailed this morning at Politico, mark him as an amateur. America is not Chicago. Nor are those who oppose his agenda synonymous with the Republican Party. They're far more numerous than that, and their numbers are growing.

Politics is one thing: "It ain't beanbag," Mr. Dooley noted. But scorched-earth politics is something else. It's over the edge, like Nixon's enemies list. It has no place in America, except in political backwaters like Chicago. (Personal note: In 1972 my wife and I served as Republican election judges in the first Mayor Daley's Chicago. On election day, when we walked into the Hyde Park polling station at 5:30 a.m., the three Democratic judges looked at us in astonishment: "Are you real Republicans?" How else are you going to control the election?! Hamid Karzai has nothing on Chicago.)

As a practical matter, in our two-party system the Republican Party is the organizational antidote to this kind of abuse. But as the Wall Street Journal editorializes this morning, the party's going to have to get its act together before that happens. It's claim to be a party of principle has been seriously undermined in recent years by Republican officials at all levels of government. That leaves it to private individuals and organizations to call Congress and the administration on what they're up to. And that's why we too are in Obama's cross-hairs. It won't work -- unless we let it happen. Thank you, Politico, for drawing these sad facts together in one place.

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