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OP-ED: A President Who Opts For Threats Instead of Negotiations Probably Doesn't Deserve a Cabinet

by Sen. Charles Barnes (D-SP)



George Washington didn't have any difficulty putting together a cabinet. But if he had, how would he have handled it? If certain Senators expressed disapproval of his nominees and he felt compelled to secure their support, would he have reached out to the Senators in question and arranged a sit-down meeting to discuss a way forward? Or would he have written an op-ed complete with a threatening headline and had it published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*?

Though we may never know for sure, I think I can say with confidence that President Washington would have chosen the former. In fact, with few exceptions, I think almost all 47 U.S. Presidents would have opted for the more peaceful, less deranged option.

President Adith, however, chose to diverge from precedent and publicly threaten the opposition in the most recent issue of the ironically-named *Rational Southerner*. Although there is some debate as to how this speaks to the new President and his unique approach to the office, I think we can all agree that the piece was very effective in illustrating exactly why cabinet discussions are proceeding so sloppily.

The President seems to be under the impression that cabinet proceedings have, until lately, always occurred immediately and with zero hesitation, even when the Senate is held by a different party than the White House. This is simply not true. Although Majority Leaders of Senates past have often opted for a no-fuss approach to nominee confirmations, examples from the early 20th century are only about as useful as those from the late 18th century.

In the modern era, it is not uncommon for the Senate to take its time with cabinet nominees, particularly when the White House is held by a member of the opposite party. After all, what purpose would the Senate have in our model of government if it was meant to exist solely as a rubber stamp for the President's every wish?

As eloquently conveyed by my colleague, Senator Goog Mann, it is absolutely true that the American people elected a Democratic Senate alongside the Republican House and White House. This is not some electoral fluke, but a plain indication of what the American people wanted to see this term

And what did they want to see, exactly? To put it simply, deliberation. They wanted to see a government divided between blue, red, and green, so that their representatives could work together based on each other's needs in order to achieve bipartisan (or even tripartisan) goals. They wanted a government in which no one party could achieve whatever they wanted, but one in which each party relied on the other.

I know that my Democratic colleagues and I are fully aware that we will need to work with our Republican colleagues in the Senate and beyond to accomplish our goals this term, and we're fully prepared to do so. But it seems that President Adith and Speaker Flam do not see this as an indication of the will of the people, but as a wrench in their plan to unilaterally run the nation. At the end of the day, they simply want us in the Senate to serve as the red-blooded yes-men they tried to elect.

As a Democrat who won a Senate election in a state that went decidedly for President Adith in the last election, I know all too well that I was not sent here to serve as the President's

yes-man, and I'm sure that Senators Roberts and Alpal of Douglass, my fellow Superian, Senator Entrapta, and Senator Abrimax of Fremont know that as well.

And although President Adith approaches the truth by citing the op-ed written by my colleague, Senator Mann, earlier this month, I think it would do him well to remember that he is not negotiating the future of his administration with Senator Goog. Nor, for that matter, is he negotiating with me as of late.

As I said in my open letter to my colleagues earlier today: At the end of the day, President Adith can have his cabinet as soon as he desires. But the process will not be accelerated by publicly threatening servants of the U.S. Government.