



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 28, 2010

78th Congress a Harbinger for the 112th?

On his blog political analyst Dick Morris predicted earlier this week that Republicans would take back the House of Representatives and then backed it up during an interview on Fox News, stating flatly that the Republicans would capture control of both the House and the Senate next Tuesday.



On his blog he said,

The Cook Political Report ... lists 23 Democratic House seats as now likely of leaning Republican. We will win all of those.

And it lists 47 seats now held by Democrats as tossup.... I believe we will win virtually all of these seats. That makes 70.

My organization is targeting [another] 24 seats [which will] help us win almost all of those races [as well].

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As a result, many commentators have looked at parallels in past Congresses for clues as to what might happen in the 112th. The 1994 Congress, as well as the 1946 Congress, have been the focus of much attention. But Arthur Herman, writing for [National Review](#), considers the 78th Congress, voted in on Tuesday, November 3, 1942, seated in January of 1943, and termed the “midterm election that restored America,” to be the historical race that we should be looking at.

As summarized neatly at [www.onwar.com](#), in 1942 the news was as follows:

From Berlin... Hitler orders Rommel not to retreat despite his shortages of fuel and materiel.

In North Africa... Battle of El Alamein. Axis forces begin to retreat but are stopped when Hitler’s order is received. The Italians are already in the process of withdrawal. The British are unable to continue to pressure the beleaguered troops, much to Rommel’s surprise. They are having difficulty moving men and equipment through the minefields at a rapid pace.

In Washington... Results of the American Congressional and Gubernatorial Elections, the Republicans make gains in both the House (42 seats), the Senate (9 seats) and the elections of state governors (4 additional). President Roosevelt is a Democrat and these wins foretell difficulties in American domestic politics as well as a dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party.

Prior to that election, Democrats held 66 Senate seats to the Republicans 28, while in the House, Democrats enjoyed a 267 to 162 seat advantage over Republicans. By the time the election dust had settled, the “dissatisfaction” had been registered at the polls. The public had increasingly expressed anger and frustration at Roosevelt’s New Deal, which Henry Morgenthau, Roosevelt’s Treasury Secretary, captured so well in his diary in May, 1939:



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We have tried spending money. We are spending more than we have ever spent before and it does not work. And I have just one interest, and now if I am wrong somebody else can have my job. I want to see this country prosper. I want to see people get a job. I want to see people get enough to eat. We have never made good on our promises. I say after eight years of this administration, we have just as much unemployment as when we started. And enormous debt to boot.

In May of 1942, it appeared that the Democrats might gain an additional 38 seats in the House. By August polls estimated that gain would only be 8. By September the GOP looked to gain 21. By the 4th of November, Republicans had gained 42 seats in the House and 9 in the Senate.

And the cutting and defunding of favorite New Deal programs had already begun. In June of 1942, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was defunded, which formally ceased operations of one of the most popular New Deal programs. The Works Progress Administration (WPA — belittled widely to stand for “We Poke Along,” “We Piddle Around,” “We Putter Along,” among others) was defunded in December. The National Youth Administration had essentially disappeared by July of 1943, and the National Resources Planning Board was gone by August. Congress successfully defunded the Farm Security Administration and the Rural Electrification Administration that same year.

Remarkably all of this was done without either house of Congress under the control of the Republicans. One wonders, if Dick Morris is correct, what might be done in the 112th Congress to derail the Obama administration’s plans to complete the socialization of America, and begin to restore sanity, and limits, once again to the proper role of government. The opportunity to do precisely that appears bright.

Photo of Dick Morris: AP Images



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