

## Reid: 'Abuse of Power Will Not Be Tolerated'

*Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) held this press conference on May 23, following the announcement by 14 Senators that they had reached an agreement to avert the "nuclear option." Reid was joined by Senators Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), and Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.)*

**Reid:** This is really good news for every American tonight. This so-called nuclear option is off the table. This is a significant victory for our country, for our democracy, and for every American.

Checks and balances have been protected. The integrity of the Supreme Court has been protected from the undue influence of the vocal, radical right wing.

Tonight the Senate has worked its will on behalf of reason and on behalf of responsibility. We have sent President George Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and the radical arm of the Republican base an undeniable message: Abuse of power will not be tolerated, will not be tolerated by Democrats or Republicans. And your attempt—I say to the Vice President and to the President—to trample the Constitution and grab absolute control is over.

I offered Senator Frist several options, similar to this compromise, over many months. And while he was not able to agree, I'm pleased that some responsible Republicans and my colleagues were able to put aside their differences and work from the center.

I don't support several of these judges that have been agreed to, that are outside the mainstream of American jurisprudence and basic common sense. But we have had to move forward and, as Senator Byrd said, we have a republic tonight that's been protected.

I'm happy that my colleagues are here with me.

Each one of these men and women, in addition to Senator Leahy, have been kept apprised of all that has been going on for many, many months now.

I'm grateful for their support. As you know, these two men behind me serve on the Judiciary Committee. And they knew the individuals better than any of the rest of us to begin with. We all know them quite well now.

We would be happy to take a few questions.

**Q:** Senator Reid, the Michigan judges that—

**Reid:** Michigan judges will be approved, except for Saad, of course.

**Q:** How confident are you that this doesn't blow up over a Supreme Court nominee?



*Sen. Harry Reid: "The integrity of the Supreme Court has been protected from the undue influence of the vocal, radical right wing."*

**Reid:** The Senate is going to act its will. Now there are rumors that there will be vacancies on the Supreme Court. And if there is, we believe that the President should do just as President Clinton did. And as President Clinton dealt with Chairman Hatch: Have a little consultation, advise and consent.

And I have seen a number of lists of Supreme Court nominees that have been suggested in the White House. These are people that we're happy to take a look at.

These two men: Senator Schumer, that's his subcommittee; Senator Durbin is on the committee. We'll look at them.

This should be the Senate as it has always worked for 200-plus years.

We're not out looking to pick fights with President Bush. He shouldn't be out looking to pick a fight with us. This is a very important night for the American people.

**Q:** Senator Reid, do you think that this is going to force President Bush to consult more closely with the Senate before sending up nominations or legislation?

**Reid:** I don't think it should force him to do anything. It just is common sense. We're here to do the people's business. We have important issues to deal with, important issues.

The Senate working at its best was designed by the Founding Fathers to go very slowly. That's what has been the preservation of our republic.

So at best we move slowly. And if the President has an agenda, we're willing to work on his agenda. But he should have a little more humility, I guess is the word I would like to pronounce

**Q:** Will you all continue to filibuster on Myers?

**Reid:** Yes.

**Q:** And Saad?

**Reid:** Yes.

**Q:** Will you hold a filibuster on Myers?

**Reid:** Yes.

**Q:** And Saad?

**Reid:** Yes.

**Q:** [off-mike]

**Reid:** The nuclear option is off the table. The Senate can work as the Senate. How much better could it be, not for Democrats, not for Republicans, but the American people? This is a wonderful time in the experience of this country, that with the nuclear option off the table, we can all start being Senators and really legislate, and stop spending so much time on things that in the past have taken very little time.

Thank you all very much.