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Double Standard on Alberto Gonzales?

Letters To the Editor
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The naked, shameless racism of Ruben Navarrette Jr.'s op-ed piece [" . . . at the Democrats' Peril," Jan. 15] on the nomination of Alberto Gonzales to be attorney general is appalling. Navarrette concedes that the administration's policy on the treatment of prisoners in Afghanistan and Iraq and at Guantanamo Bay was wrong, but he argues that it is irrelevant to Gonzales's confirmation for two reasons: first, the inane suggestion that the actions of policymakers at the highest level of government do not matter; and second and more important, that as a Latino, Mr. Gonzales is untouchable in the confirmation process. Taking glee at what he sees as the dilemma of Senate Democrats, and purporting to speak for Latinos broadly, Mr. Navarrette snarls: "Hurt him, and we'll hurt you."

I am a lifelong Democrat, in no small measure because I support the aspirations of racial and ethnic minorities and women, on whom the party of Lincoln has so cynically turned its back in the past 40 years. But I see no dilemma. The long-suppressed plea of minorities in this country to be judged, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character," is a two-way street. Gonzales's Latino heritage is surely no reason to oppose him. Neither is it a license to participate in crafting a barbarous and un-American policy that has brought our country shame and disgust around the world.

I do not have enough information at this point to judge whether Gonzales was in fact an architect of the policy that resulted in the widespread and unacceptable mistreatment of prisoners. But if he was, he should be held accountable. How ironic that The Post published Navarrette's unworthy screed on King's birthday.

-- Earl C. Dudley Jr.

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