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## Editorial: Mirror image

You have to wonder just how long conservative pundits are going to get away with describing President Obama as an ultra-liberal who seeks to undo everything his predecessor did.

On several issues, Obama has done little to change policies set by President George W. Bush. Just ask members of Alaska's environmental community, who have been trying to get Obama's administration to back off Bush-era plans to drill for oil.

The Alaska Wilderness League recently sent out alerts that noted five recent oil spills in that state, the latest involving roughly 126,000 gallons of diesel oil spilled a week ago from an underground storage tank as a ship was off-loading the fuel on Adak Island.

Another spill occurred Dec. 23, when a tugboat struck Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound and breached two of its fuel tanks, carrying 33,500 gallons of diesel. Bligh Reef, you might recall, was what the oil tanker Exxon Valdez hit in 1989, spilling 11 million gallons of oil.

Environmental and Native American groups have accused the Obama administration's Interior Department of following the same weak permitting process they saw with Bush. Interior's Mineral Management Service has approved drilling in the Arctic Ocean's Beaufort Sea. Foes say that's too close to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 20 miles away. They have filed a suit to stop it.

Noting the potential harm if there is a spill, Rebecca Noblin of the Center for Biological Diversity in Anchorage said: "If polar bears are to survive into the coming century, we must reject this kind of rushed, poorly planned oil drilling in favor of a more precautionary approach."

Wonder if the polar bears think Obama's different from Bush.

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