

Bush political aide Karl Rove resigns

Jerry White
14 August 2007

Karl Rove, President Bush's closest political advisor and chief Republican electoral strategist, announced Monday that he will leave his posts as White House deputy chief of staff and senior advisor at the end of August. Rove first made known the decision in an interview published in Monday's *Wall Street Journal*, in which he said he was retiring from politics to spend time with his family in Texas.

According to the interview with *Journal* editorial page editor Paul Gigot, Rove had been considering leaving the White House for a year, but delayed the move after the Democrats won control of Congress and decided to stay on further to help shepherd the administration's immigration bill through Congress—an effort that failed due mainly to opposition from congressional Republicans.

Rove personifies the ruthlessness of the US ruling elite in pursuing its interests against the broad masses of people both internationally and within the US. Utterly contemptuous of democratic processes, avid in the use of conspiratorial and legally dubious means, he exemplifies the Bush administration as a whole and, increasingly, the outlook of the dominant factions of the corporate-financial establishment.

Rove joined Bush on the South Lawn of the White House Monday morning for the official announcement. Bush referred to the long years of political collaboration between Rove and the Bush family, which began when Rove, then the head of the College Republicans, first established connections to the elder Bush in 1973.

Rove called the president a “man of far-sighted courage” and reiterated the reactionary themes he had helped make the mainstay of the Bush presidency. He praised Bush for putting “America on a war footing [to] protect us against a brutal enemy in a dangerous conflict that will shape this new century.”

Hailing Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy, he said, “I've seen a leader respond to an economy weakened by recession, corporate scandal and terrorist attacks by taking decisive action to strengthen the economy and create jobs.” Finally, referring to the unprecedented

consolidation of executive power, domestic spying and the trampling of Constitutional norms, Rove praised Bush as a “reformer” who had “challenged the Congress and the country to make bold changes to important institutions in great need of repair.”

The resignation of Rove is bound up with the crisis of the Bush administration and the Republican Party as a whole. Once hailed as the brilliant architect of the 2000, 2002 and 2004 electoral victories, Rove is now blamed by many leading Republicans for the defeat in the 2006 midterm election and the prospect of an electoral rout in 2008.

Rove played a major role in linking up the Republicans' traditional base of support in corporate America and conservative layers in the middle class and working class with the Christian fundamentalist right, and using demagogic appeals to anti-abortion and anti-gay sentiment to win electoral majorities. This was combined with disinformation and lies to justify the war in Iraq and the deliberate sowing of fear of terrorist attacks to push through police state measures within the US.

Popular hostility to the war in Iraq and the increasing economic instability facing tens of millions of working people weakened the effectiveness of such tactics, as the 2006 elections demonstrated.

Rove's departure may also be intended to distract attention from the swirling legal problems facing the administration. Although he leaves un-indicted, Rove was at the center of the CIA leak case and the purge of US attorneys. He has been subpoenaed by Congress to testify about his involvement in the latter scandal, but has refused to comply, citing the White House's assertion of executive privilege in denying congressional access to current and former White House aides as well as requested documents.

There is ample evidence that Rove was at the center of a conspiracy to stack the US attorney system with Bush loyalists in order to use federal prosecutions as a means of manipulating elections—by laying trumped-up voter fraud charges against Democratic candidates and pro-

Democratic Party voter registration organizations, and suppressing voter turnout of likely Democratic voters, especially minority and working class citizens. Such methods were employed in the 2004 and 2006 elections, and Rove was working to utilize them in key battleground states in 2008.

Asked by the *Wall Street Journal* about those who say he is leaving to avoid Congressional scrutiny, Rove gave vent to his anti-democratic views, replying, “I know they’ll say that. But I’m not going to stay or leave based on whether it pleases the mob.”

To a great extent, Rove’s abilities as a political tactician were based on his having taken the measure of the nominal political opposition—the Democratic Party. He repeatedly and successfully exploited the organic cowardice and duplicity of the Democrats to win elections and push through the administration’s agenda. At some level, he grasped the basic contradiction of the Democratic Party—between its class nature as a party of the US ruling elite and its need, by virtue of its history and its particular function in American capitalist politics, to posture as a party “of the working man.”

Thus, Rove secured his White House post by helping Bush and the Republican Party steal the 2000 presidential election from Democratic candidate Al Gore, who won the popular vote but meekly complied when the Supreme Court completed the electoral larceny by ordering a halt to vote-counting in Florida.

Rove’s tactic of attacking the Democrats for being “soft” on terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11 secured an election victory for the Republicans in 2002, largely due to the decision of the Democrats not to make the impending war in Iraq an issue.

In 2004, Bush won a second term thanks to the Democrats’ decision to run a right-wing, pro-war campaign behind Senator John Kerry. There is also evidence that electoral fraud and voter suppression in Ohio may have played a significant role.

By the time of the 2006 congressional election, however, the disaster in Iraq, growing divisions within the Republican Party, and rising popular sentiment against the war and the Bush administration found expression in a Republican defeat that resulted in Democratic control of both houses of Congress. It was a result the Democrats neither expected nor particularly desired, and the subsequent eight months have made clear that voters’ hopes a Democratic Congress would end the war and oppose Bush’s attacks on democratic rights were misplaced.

It is significant that Rove waited to announce his resignation until he had helped engineer yet another capitulation by the Democratic Party to the Bush administration. Earlier this month, the Democrats supplied the votes to pass a bill demanded by Bush that effectively repudiates the Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution. In defiance of that amendment’s proscription on “unreasonable searches and seizures,” the Democrats handed the White House and the National Security Agency the power to eavesdrop on the phone calls and emails of Americans without a court warrant or any genuine judicial oversight.

Bush, Rove and company—despite being hated and despised by a large majority of the American people—were confident they would secure the compliance of the Democrats in this unprecedented attack on democratic rights. They knew that the Democrats fear above all else being seen by the US ruling elite as insufficiently ruthless in attacking its enemies both abroad and at home.

In his *Wall Street Journal* interview, Rove alluded to the domestic spying bill, saying that come the autumn, “we’ll see in the battle over FISA [the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act] a fissure in the Democratic Party.”

The *Journal* article continued, “On foreign affairs, [Rove] predicts that at least two parts of the Bush Doctrine will live on: The policy that if you harbor a terrorist, you are as culpable as the terrorist; and pre-emption. ‘There may be a debate about degree,’ he says, ‘but it’s going to be hard for any president to reverse that.’”

Rove knows whereof he speaks. All of the leading Democratic candidates are committed to retaining the policy of preventive war—a crime by the standards of the Nuremberg trials—and, in the name of the “war on terror,” continuing the slaughter in Iraq and preparing new and even bloodier wars in the Middle East, Central Asia and elsewhere.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact