

# CHENEY'S "POLICIES"

The third installment in the WaPo's Cheney series is a bit of a hodgepodge. It includes items that appear to have been thrown into this installment as part of a generic domestic policy article. But what the article is really about is how Cheney has pushed trickle down policies that have been proven failures in the past, once again by serving as a gatekeeper for advice that gets to the President, and pressuring the President on the few occasions when he disagrees.

But let me take a step back to contextualize this one. In my Sources post, I asserted that this series is largely an attempt on the part of Chief of Staff Bolten to reel Cheney in. How telling, then, that this article includes a direct link a scan of what appears to be an original memo (note the blue ink) Bolten wrote as Director of OMB, his position immediately prior to his current one. The memo describes the intent of the board—fiscal discipline—yet is placed after a paragraph describing how Cheney used the board as yet another gatekeeping device to direct Bush to make the choices Cheney supports.

The vice president chairs a budget review board, a panel the Bush administration created to set spending priorities and serve as arbiter when Cabinet members appeal decisions by White House budget officials. The White House has portrayed the board as a device to keep Bush from wasting time on petty disagreements, but previous administrations have seldom seen Cabinet-level disputes in that light. Cheney's leadership of the panel gives him direct and indirect power over the federal budget — and over those who must live within it.

It's a curious touch, a subtle way of displaying

Bolten's attempt to maintain fiscal sanity against the background of Cheney making economic decisions that have really screwed the American economy. This stuff, I get the feeling, is personal for former OMB Director Bolten.