

BEACHED WHALE

Funny. In the entire Peter Baker article entitled, "Rove: Departure Unrelated to Investigations," Peter Baker never once quotes Rove as saying, "my departure is unrelated to the multiple investigations in my conduct." Or anything similar. Sure, Rove talks a lot about Ahab and Moby Dick.

"I realize that some of the Democrats are Captain Ahab and I'm the great white whale," he said. "I noticed the other day some Democratic staffers were quoted calling me the big fish. Well, I'm Moby Dick and they're after me."

He admits that his departure won't necessarily dissuade Democrats from investigating. But he never denies—certainly not in any of the quotes included in the article—that he's leaving because of the investigations.

Indeed, the whole thing reads like Rovian spin (and not very good spin at that) to try to suggest that Democrats will get hurt as they continue to pursue Rove's actions.

In the interview, Rove criticized the Democrats for pursuing him and said their investigations have diminished their public support. "There is a reason," he said, "why the Congress has gone from high standing after the '06 election to being less popular than the president."

Mind you, Rove doesn't provide any real data to prove his point. That's probably for the best, though, because his "math" has been a little suspicious of late. Nevertheless, Rove never entertains the more plausible notion that Congress' approval rating is declining because we've still got troops in Iraq.

Though I appreciate one thing. I noted, earlier, how the WSJ had botched the timing of the time

when Rove first considered leaving the White House, suggesting he first floated the idea a year ago, rather than the 15 months ago when it looked likely he'd be indicted on the Plame investigation. He makes no such misrepresentation to Baker.

Still, Rove said he, too, was surprised that he was leaving now. Many of his colleagues had long assumed that he would stay until the end of the Bush presidency in January 2009.

"So did I," he said. "I wanted to. But I just can't. About a year and a half ago, it became apparent talking to my family that there are things happening, that it was time to go."

So by my reading, here we've got a report that the first time Rove thought of leaving was about the time when it looked likely he'd have to leave. "There are things happening," indeed. And, in spite of the title, we have no clear denial that Rove is leaving because the investigations into his activities may soon bear fruit.