

BUSH'S CHENEY'S LEGACY

I couldn't help but think of Dick when I read this story on Bush's legacy. First, because there's this story of Bush's show of hands vote on whether Rummy should be ousted.

Mr. Draper said Mr. Bush took issue with him for unearthing details of a meeting in April 2006 at which he took a show-of-hands vote on the future of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, who was among his closest advisers. Mr. Bush told Mr. Draper he had no recollection of it, but he said he disagreed with the implication that he regularly governed by staff vote. (According to Mr. Draper's book, the vote was 7 to 4 for Mr. Rumsfeld's ouster, with Mr. Bush being one of the no votes. Mr. Rumsfeld stayed on months longer.)

Cheney was almost certainly another of the votes against canning Rummy. And voila, Bush kept Rummy, though he claims he doesn't remember ignoring the public support for Rummy's ouster seven months before the Republicans got creamed in midterm elections. (In fact, I suspect the story got liberated by one of those seven who is still pissed that Bush asked their opinion, then ignored it, when it could have saved control of the Senate.)

And then there's the story of how Bush forgot that Paul Bremer, who reported directly to Bush, ordered the Iraqi military be disbanded.

Mr. Bush acknowledged one major failing of the early occupation of Iraq when he said of disbanding the Saddam Hussein-era military, "The policy was to keep the army intact; didn't happen."

But when Mr. Draper pointed out that Mr. Bush's former Iraq administrator, L.

Paul Bremer III, had gone ahead and forced the army's dissolution and then asked Mr. Bush how he reacted to that, Mr. Bush said, "Yeah, I can't remember, I'm sure I said, "This is the policy, what happened?" But, he added, "Again, Hadley's got notes on all of this stuff," referring to Stephen J. Hadley, his national security adviser.

This is particularly telling, given the many stories of Cheney's agents overriding a Bush policy, not to mention the suggestions that Stephen Hadley was sharing information with Cheney.

In other words, it's possible that Bush doesn't remember these issues. Because it's possible he didn't make the decisions in question.