BUSH'S COVER-UP

Murray Waas argues that George Bush—and the Republican party—will regret Bush's efforts to claim absolute immunity to prevent Congress from getting testimony and documents pertaining to the US Attorney purge.

> The continuous claims of executive privilege— whatever the motive for them being invoked— are going to appear more and more to the pub[l]ic part and parcel of a cover up. That is inevitable as the U.S. attorney report becomes public, and the report on the politicization of the Civil Rights Division is made public, as well as whatever else the public learns about these issues through leaks from the federal grand jury, the House Judiciary Committee's ongoing probe, and sleuthing by folks like Josh Marshall.
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> Even though the President might think otherwise, and he is being advised to stay his course, his best hope in assisting Republican congressional candidates in the fall would be to have Karl Rove and Harriett Miers testify before Congress— and the sooner the better. As for the public welfare, the testimony would help resolve many unknowns about the firings of the U.S. attorneys and other allegations of White House misuse of the Justice Department.

He bases that argument on the following logic:

- Per Evan Perez of the WSJ, the two remaining DOJ IG reports on politicization will be released before the election.
- The Civil Rights division IG

report—that investigating Shorter Schloz and Hans von Spakovsky—may include criminal referrals.

- The larger US Attorney purge IG report will show that the Kyle Sampson and Rove lackey Chris Oprision deliberately hid Rove's role in the firings on at least two occasions.
- As the Administration continues to stall on Miers and Rove testimony at the same time as these reports come out, it will be increasingly clear to the public that Bush is stalling precisely because he is trying to cover up the real White House involvement in the US Attorney purge.

I'd be happy if all this came to pass—but I'm a little skeptical, based on three things.

First, when asked by the Senate Judiciary Committee when his reports on the Civil Rights and US Attorney purge would be done, Glenn Fine said he didn't know—he had to follow whereever the evidence led, and therefore couldn't know how long it would take to finish up the reports. He specifically said he couldn't guarantee they'd be done before the election. Now, maybe Fine was just being coy, or just trying to avoid promising he would finish the reports before the election in case he failed to do so. But he's a straight up guy, so I think we may, in fact, not get one or both of those reports before the election—and certainly not before September.

More importantly, I just don't think the DOJ IG

reports will cause Republicans the embarrassment Murray suggests they will. The Republicans are shameless, and there's no sign that any of them save Arlen Specter seems to care that Bush is clearly engaged in a cover-up. Furthermore, none of the Republicans directly tied to aiding and abetting Bush's contempt for Congress—John Boehner, Roy Blunt, Lamar Smith, and Chris Cannon—are going to be any more electorally exposed as these IG reports break than they are now. It's unlikely the party leaders will be ousted, unlikely Smith will face a challenge, and Cannon is **already** on his way out. And in the Senate Judiciary Committee, only John Cornyn and (less likely) Jeff Sessions has any exposure for their attempts to help Bush stonewall. In other words, even assuming the US Attorney purge flares back into a front-burner issue, it's not going to be directly tied to any of the most vulnerable Republicans.

And that all depends on the unlikely possibility that the media would make a big deal about this issue. That, from a media that can't seem to connect Monica Goodling's loyalty oaths with inadequate judicial review following immigration raids or that sees one investigation of County-level Democrats as a threat to Obama's candidacy without considering whether numerous national level investigations might hurt McCain's bid.

Mind you, I would be thrilled if all this blew up on the Bush Administration and the Republican party this fall. Consider me skeptical, though.