

## GOP Newsletter Assails 'Bush's Party of Power'

In its lead story Sept. 6, *The Big Picture*, a prestigious newsletter that circulates widely among Republican Party movers and shakers, blasted the Cheney-Bush crowd for its scripted Republican Convention, and the Party's intolerance and dedication only to preserving the President's power.

Under the headline "Bush's Party of Power," newsletter publisher Richard Whalen wrote: "The traditional Grand Old Party of Taft, Eisenhower, Goldwater, Nixon, and Reagan is gone. Vanished without a trace is the old GOP's 'Big Tent' philosophy, where the party's distinct liberal and conservative 'wings' fought out their differences on issues and ideology. . . . President George W. Bush's party is shaped like a church, and not a very big one. . . . Although the entire federal government establishment is in Republican hands, the party is insecure, narrow, doctrinaire, and intolerant. The Bush party is entirely dedicated to perpetuating the President's power."

Whalen also blasted the Bush Administration's Iraq

war, which he described as a "tragic detour" from the war on terrorism, and he zeroed in on Dick Cheney for having plotted an invasion of Iraq for years, in league with the neo-cons.

Whalen assailed both Sen. Zell Miller (Ga.) and Dick Cheney for delivering "stunningly mean-spirited speeches," which set the tone for Bush's own acceptance speech, "exploiting the memory of 9/11 and the public confusion between 'the war on terror' and the war in Iraq." Whalen's prognosis: "If the November election turns on Iraq and the war on terrorism, Bush will win. If the election turns on the disappointing economy, which remains more than a million jobs short in the third year of 'recovery,' Kerry will win."

Whalen also railed against Bush and his "brain," Karl Rove, for devising an election strategy targeted almost exclusively at the Religious Right, dividing and polarizing America.

Whalen's conclusion: "The Republican Party urgently needs a long overdue post-Cold War updating and redefinition, especially the rejection of an unwanted empire and the hopeless doctrine of permanent war. . . . America must regain domestic purpose and international respect through re-dedication to principles of freedom, nationalism and non-interference in the affairs of others."

Cheney said, it seems, would be off the record for reporters—and the American people.

### Traditional Republicans Alienated

Those Republicans who still hold to the belief that government that "governs least, governs best," have either migrated to other pastures, sorely disappointed by the way the Bush Administration has created the biggest government boondoggle—and government deficit—in history. The Republican "deficit hawks" have been left licking their wounds by the Bush policy of launching preemptive wars on several different fronts, and creating a veritable "Fortress America," with the new Department of Homeland Security and its adjuncts.

And what about those within the Republican Party who have traditionally been the stalwart defenders of "freedom of the individual"? With the draconian "Patriot Act" of Ashcroft & Company up for renewal, to which even tougher restrictions may be imposed, the rights of individuals in the United States, especially those of Arab heritage, are being rapidly curtailed.

This was the key issue at event sponsored by the Arab American Institute on Sept. 1, in parallel with the Republican Convention. Former Republican Congressman Robert Barr stated there that "the Administration will not tolerate or consider any limitations whatsoever on the Patriot Act," and has

instead proposed enhancements. They have "ignored complaints from groups and Congressmen," of the violation of the civil rights of individuals targeted by the Act. Asked if he regretted voting for the Patriot Act, Rep. Barr said he did.

Most severely handicapped in the new direction given by Bush to the Republican Party are those—people like Senators Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), and Richard Lugar (R-Ind.)—who rejected the knee-jerk unilateralism and chauvinistic arrogance of the neo-conservative ideologues under Cheney, who had choreographed that bloody "cakewalk" into Iraq. Although they are still conducting a fight within the Republican Party in an attempt to return it to a more traditional orientation, they realize that this is an uphill battle. "The Republican Party has come loose of its moorings," Hagel told the *Washington Post*. "I think you've got a party that is in a state of uncertainty." That's putting the case too mildly.

While the well-orchestrated Republican "Nuremberg Rally on the Hudson" seemed to give the impression that the disparate elements of the Republican Party are all shouting "Four more years," a goodly number of them are beginning to view such a contingency with a great deal of trepidation. Many traditional Republicans, who have not wholly gone over to supporting John Kerry, perhaps feel in their heart of hearts, that the best thing to happen to the Grand Ole Party, might be a good solid defeat in November.