

Washington Post Hits Dems on Social Security

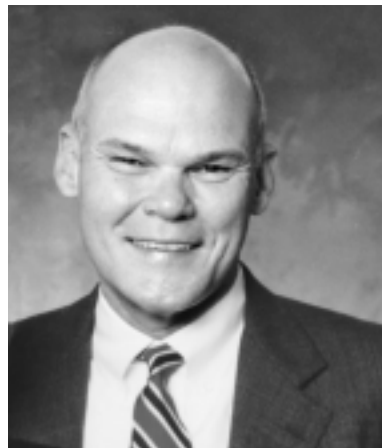
The March 8 *Washington Post* ran a front-page featured lie—one of a number it has uttered in a sly, weeks-long promotion of Social Security privatization under a “Democratic” cover—against the Democracy Corps group of James Carville and pollster Stanley Greenberg. The *Post* claimed that a report issued by Democracy Corps chided the Democrats for not putting forward their own compromise “solution” for Social Security, and warned them they would lose the battle unless they did. *Post* writer Don Balz quoted Democratic consultant Harold Ickes, somewhat incoherently, to the same claimed effect—the policy the *Post* wants to recommend to Congressional Democrats.

On the face of it, the report seemed a bit odd. Carville, it will be remembered, silenced Buckleyite Robert Novak on CNN’s “Crossfire” on Jan. 27, by demanding that Novak and the audience choose between FDR and Pinochet on Social Security; the highest-profile and most effective use of that principled issue by anyone outside Lyndon LaRouche’s movement.

Thus it is no surprise that the Carville-Greenberg report, “Social Security: A Time for Democratic Purpose and Renewal,” released March 2, does not at all say what the *Post* lyingly claimed. Though suffering from the “poll-itis” virus, the report says Democrats need to “elevate” the Social Security debate, and its first recommendation is, “The Democrats say America is only strong when we are strong at home. . . . We must invest in our own people and build our own economy. Promoting American jobs, industry, and technology is our starting point and mission.” As for the Social Security fight right now, Carville and Greenberg say, “The Democrats are surely right to wage nuclear war on Bush’s proposal.”

Carville Versus the Post

The *Washington Post* story was headlined “Social Security Stance Risky, Democrats Told,” and sported a picture of well-known consultant Carville, alongside a photo of the Democratic Senate leadership posing around a statue of Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the FDR Memorial. After accurately quoting the recent Democracy Corps report’s chief question—“Why has the public not taken out their anger [about Social Security privatization] on the congressional Republicans and the president?”, the *Post* turns the rest of the report on its head in order to try to undermine confidence in



Contrary to what the Washington Post reported, Carville said the Democrats couldn’t win the battle on Social Security by “constraining” their attack on the Bush-Cheney regime.

the Democratic attack strategy.

On the contrary, Carville and Greenberg write:

“We appreciate that the Democrats had to win this first battle in order to keep the worst from happening, to be united, and to put the Republicans deep on the defensive. It is because of those successes that the Republicans are struggling to keep their first legislative priority alive, which will ultimately impact the mood about this Congress. The strongest attacks on their plan include the 40% cut in Social Security benefits, the 2 trillion dollar increase in the deficit whose cost is borne by the younger generation, the freezing of Social Security benefit levels, covering a smaller portion of retirement, and that the plan actually does not make Social Security more secure.”

“But the Democrats limit the damage to the Republicans and limit their opportunities for gain by *constraining* the attack. Total war means more than attacking the worst features of the Bush plan. It means viewing this battle as an opportunity to show what we believe.” (emphasis added)

In other words, contrary to what the *Post* says, Carville and Greenberg propose *expanding* the attack, not compromising with the President. After reviewing the “issues” of whether there’s a problem with Social Security, and whether the Democrats need their own plan, the report concludes that *principles* are likely the most important matter to be stressed. They say:

“The Democrats should elevate the battle by stating the principles that divide Republicans and Democrats on this issue. As a debate of principles, the Democrats slaughter their opponents, with 51% strongly aligning with the Democrats. Republicans confidently give voice to ideas of choice and ownership, but Democrats should speak with even greater confidence that people, after a life time of work, should be able to depend on a guaranteed level of benefits. After all, this is a battle about values and convictions. It should be joined in those terms.”