

## Brad DeLong's Semi-Daily Journal (2004)

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### February 25, 2004

#### Republican Corruption

From *Roll Call*, via [Atrios](#): Because former House Majority Leader Richard Armey has not been sufficiently *complaisant*, his former colleagues are angry. One "House Republican leadership aide" says that "we have started looking very hard at all of Piper Rudnick's earmarks." "Earmarks" are directions in legislation that money flow to very specific groups in very specific places for very specific purposes: big presents from Congress to favored constituents, in other words.

What is most interesting is that these "earmarks" are now described as the property of firms like Piper Rudnick--a Republican-oriented lobbying business for which Richard Armey now works part time. The message the Republican House leadership is sending to the senior decision makers of Piper Rudnick is clear: muzzle Armey, or stop paying him, or watch your business vanish.

There has long been a theory that a major reason for the relative silence of the grownup Republicans in the face of the mammoth policy incompetence of the past three years is that many of them have been told that their ability to earn a more-than-comfortable income will be at risk if they publicly oppose the Bush administration or the Republican Congressional leadership.

It looks like this theory has just been confirmed.

Posted by DeLong at February 25, 2004 07:49 AM | [TrackBack](#) | | [Other weblogs commenting on this post](#)  
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That would make sense. And, considering the published reports of how the republicans are pressuring the lobbying groups to hire senior republicans and not democrats, it would appear their ability to assert that kind of power is even stronger.

Perhaps we need a democratic president just to regain the political balance within lobbying firms. Not that we didn't have enough reasons already.

Posted by: [carsick](#) on February 25, 2004 08:27 AM

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I also suspect that the remarkable control over the House Repulicans has only been acheived through massive pork. Usually, a small majority like this one would not be as united as it is. It would be hard for the Majority Leader to keep everyone in line. However, when you throw all concern about debt out the window, it's really easy to keep everyone in line by pumping money into their districts.

Posted by: [MDtoMN](#) on February 25, 2004 08:36 AM

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Not only by pork but by threat of having an insurgent challenger in the primary. Look at the PA Senate race. The message to moderates is, "Vote with the conservatives or get a well funded challenge in your primary from the right wing." These are very hardball tactics.

Posted by: [bakho](#) on February 25, 2004 08:50 AM

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It makes sense. That's why only O'Neil, with his independent fortune, could thumb his nose back at them.

Posted by: [ch2](#) on February 25, 2004 09:02 AM

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This makes too much damn sense. Another case of right-wing relativism where the only ideology that is operational is greed. This is the sort of thing that makes me gag everytime I hear a pundit go on about how Bush just does what he thinks is "right" and doesn't worry about politics.

Posted by: [heet](#) on February 25, 2004 09:35 AM

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Who exactly is calling the shots here? If Piper Rudnick corporate lobbyists are being explicitly threatened

with retribution for Armev's comments, it begs the question of which other lobbyists or players really control the agenda. Based on O'Neill/Suskind's book, it's clearly not Bush. Which corp/lobbying entities are really setting the priorities and agenda for this administration?

Posted by: [raidman](#) on February 25, 2004 09:37 AM

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Silly Republicans can't even get corruption right. Lobbyists are supposed to bribe Congresspeople--but here's the Republican leadership bribing the lobbyists . . .

Posted by: [rea](#) on February 25, 2004 09:47 AM

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Yes, it is hardball. And your problem is...?

Posted by: [Dan](#) on February 25, 2004 09:49 AM

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Possibly related, the Financial Times (via the NYTimes) has a story saying that Senators' stock portfolios beat the market by an average of 12% over five years.

<http://nytimes.com/financialtimes/business/FT1075982783472.html>

"A separate study in 2000, covering 66,465 US households from 1991 to 1996 showed that the average household's portfolio underperformed the market by 1.44 per cent a year, on average. Corporate insiders (defined as senior executives) usually outperform by about 5 per cent."

However, the story says there's no difference in performance between Dems and Republicans.

Posted by: [Jon H](#) on February 25, 2004 10:26 AM

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Wait a minute- are you guys trying to intimate that politics has something to do with individual financial ambition? Who would ever have imagined that?

Posted by: [non economist](#) on February 25, 2004 10:38 AM

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Dan wrote:

"Yes, it is hardball. And your problem is...?"

And I retorted:

Hardball? Hardly. Hardball is a SPORT. Sports honor sportsmanship--and collegiality. Winning really isn't (and never was) "everything", you know.

What's more hardball has rules. And umpires. What we're talking about here is "modern" American politics--neoWashington style. If THAT business is analagous to ANY "sport"--it would have to be one more akin to liars poker. Or cockfighting...

"...when Dean was finally quashed, what did the victors do? Here's how Frederick Foer described it in the New Republic:

"Officially, the Kerry campaign pledges to bring the party together and move past [the] gloating. But some establishment Democrats both inside and outside the Kerry campaign still intend to punish the Dean heretics. And, while well-known politicians, such as [Al] Gore, Harkin, and Moseley-Braun, may endure the most public abuse, the people who may ultimately suffer explicit retribution for their Dean-boosting are cogs in the Democratic machine . . . As one former high-ranking Clinton administration official put it, 'Will they work again in this town again? I hope not.'"

Thus, not only are Greens and Naderites persona non gratis among those in control of the Democratic Party but also Howard Dean, Tom Harkin, Al Gore, Carol Mosely Braun and any cog who didn't pick the right candidate. Is this politics or just another version of "Survivor?" Perhaps the losers should immolate themselves as well.

With such attitudes, the Democrats don't need Nader to do them in. They're doing a fine job all by themselves, and giving plenty of voters reason to stay home on election day...."

"THE DEMOCRATS: OPEN UP OR SHUT UP": Sam Smith; Progressive Review, today

<http://www.prorev.com/>

Posted by: [Mike](#) on February 25, 2004 11:22 AM

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This is only a small example of use of taxpayer funds to enrich or promote Republicans. Haliburton - what do I need to say? Koch Oil - founder and funder of Cato and other far-right activities - got the contract to supply oil to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Far-right Christian groups are getting all kinds of lucrative contracts. Even the Medicare drug bill is now being used to fund Bush ads that support Bush & the

Republicans - funneled through the same agency that is doing ads for the Bush campaign.

Flat-out illegal activity and they feel completely free to act with impunity. (Did I mention committing acxts of aggressive war against countries that have not attacked or even threatened us?)

There is currently NO oversight or accountability. Even the Pentagon's Inspector job has been handed to L. Jean Lewis. Don't know the name? Look her up and be shocked.

Posted by: [Dave Johnson](#) on February 25, 2004 11:40 AM

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This also works on cabinet officers and other minor functionaries and it tells us why few of them have resigned and why none will publicly resign on principle (despite Brad's desire to see them do so). The same pressures are clearly at work.

Evidently, when cabinet newbies sign an undated letter of resignation (the same day they get sworn in), they're informed, in effect, that they will be told when it's time for them to resign. They will have no choice in the matter. It's made clear to them that resigning out of turn means that neither they, nor their spouses, nor their kids, nor their cousins twice removed, nor the horse they rode in on, will ever get decent work again.

Paul O'Neill is a rich old guy, like he said, and he can thumb his nose at this. Others, like Mankiw, can't afford to.

Remember that one of the goals of their legal hounding of Clinton was to break him financially.

Hardball? This is hardball like the mafia is hardball.

Posted by: [Altoid](#) on February 25, 2004 08:41 PM

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It sounds to me that earmarks are now akin to property and seem to represent a form of property similar to agriculture or water subsidies. As such, I am wondering if there is a new avenue of research here looking at earmarks as a new rent? I would be interested to hear any views on this.

Posted by: [Bubb Rubb](#) on February 25, 2004 09:37 PM

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Omnium rerum principia parva sunt - Everything has a small beginning. (Cicero)

Posted by: [free teen incest pics](#) on July 10, 2004 03:01 PM

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Gaudeamus igitur (iuvenes dum sumus) - Therefore, let us rejoice (while we are young)

Posted by: [web cam chat software](#) on July 18, 2004 08:32 AM

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Interfice errorem, diligere errantem - Kill the sin, love the sinner. (St. Augustine)

Posted by: [cum shots](#) on July 18, 2004 07:24 PM

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Ne quid nimis - Nothing in excess. (Terence)

Posted by: [shemale central](#) on July 24, 2004 05:08 AM

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Un idea perplexi na - The idea is strange to us

Posted by: [rapes](#) on July 24, 2004 08:27 AM

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Multum in parvo - Much in little

Posted by: [drunk college chicks](#) on August 9, 2004 07:27 PM

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