



Thursday, February 26, 2009

Democratic Senator Byrd Warns of Obama Power Grab - Following In Bush's Footsteps

Hat tip to Mike V.

From Politico:

Byrd: Obama in power grab

By JOHN BRESNAHAN

Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), the longest-serving Democratic senator, is criticizing President Obama's appointment of White House "czars" to oversee federal policy, saying these executive positions amount to a power grab by the executive branch.

In a letter to Obama on Wednesday, Byrd complained about Obama's decision to create White House offices on health reform, urban affairs policy, and energy and climate change. Byrd said **such positions "can threaten the Constitutional system of checks and balances.** At the worst, White House staff have taken direction and control of programmatic areas that are the statutory responsibility of Senate-confirmed officials."

While it's rare for Byrd to criticize a president in his own party, Byrd is a stern constitutional scholar who has always stood up for the legislative branch in its role in checking the power of the White House. Byrd no longer holds the powerful Appropriations chairmanship, so his criticism does not carry as much weight these days. **Byrd repeatedly clashed with the Bush administration over executive power, and it appears that he's not limiting his criticism to Republican administrations**

Well, good for Byrd! Nice to see some resistance somewhere in the Senate.

So much for "change." Obama is merely continuing the nearly unbroken pattern of presidents gathering more power to the Executive branch under one guise or another that has been going on for many decades, regardless of which party controls the White House.

Obama faces a decision as early as next week on whether to support a claim of executive privilege made by former President Bush in refusing to allow Karl Rove, the former deputy White House chief of staff, to be deposed by the House Judiciary Committee on the White House's role in the 2006 firing of nine U.S. attorneys.

Bush claimed "absolute immunity" for top advisers in resisting such subpoenas, but Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), chairman of the Judiciary Committee, filed a lawsuit over the issue. The case is on appeal, and the Obama administration is scheduled to file a motion next week laying out its stance on the issue.

Read the whole thing here:

And watch this video:

How much do you want to bet that Obama criticizes Bush's particular use of that claimed executive immunity, but supports that power as being valid, necessary, and "constitutional" for a president to be able to carry out his duties?

Of course, we know Obama's application of all that power will be "special" and "for the children" and to "help people." And thus, most Democrats will be as cozy, warm, and fuzzy about it as Republicans were when it was *their* man wiping his ass with the Constitution. Just a bunch of nice sleeping frogs in the ever-heating pot. Byrd is a rare exception - a man who will challenge and criticize his own party's president.

Notice how Obama is not satisfied with the fact that his party now controls Congress - he doesn't want to even have to *bother* with Congress. He wants his internal White House staff to rule everything by decree, under his direct supervision. His exalted Great Vision for Our Lives will flow straight from the mind of "the One," right into the hands of Rahm Emanuel (known as "the enforcer"), pure, undiluted, and unsullied by the foul hands of mere congress-critters, to be *immediately* implemented by absolutely obedient staff members who consider their only loyalty to be to Obama. "Stroke of a pen, law of the land, kinda cool!" has returned.

Sound familiar? It should, because the Bush Administration was the same, of course. Even when the Republicans controlled both houses of Congress, the Bush Administration consistently asserted that the President has an independent "unitary executive" power and does not need Congress for much of anything, except perhaps appropriations (and that is now no longer really even respected).

The claims of independent executive power by the Bush Administration were absurd - amounting to nothing less than the claim that the President, once elected, under his constitutional Article II powers, is absolutely unrestrained and unhindered by any other branch of government, any provision in the main body of the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. Basically, the argument was that the President is an elected dictator. Remember what James Madison warned:

The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands ... may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny." - James Madison, Federalist No. 47

Just for the record, I warned about this back in 2006. See my article [Government Supremacists: Neocons, the National Security New Dealers](#). But of course, few Republicans listened because it was their guy doing it.

Well, now the totalitarian boot is on the other foot - the left foot.

The goal of executive supremacists in both parties is to make Congress an irrelevant

debating society, such that it really doesn't matter which party holds a majority in Congress.


And that is yet another reason why the threat of a repeat of 1994 has no teeth as a check on what Obama does - even if Republicans retake Congress (and presuming the GOP quislings don't just go along) Obama will simply ignore them and do what he wants by executive order and decree through these special White House offices and through all of the other mechanisms of vastly expanded Executive Power he inherited from Bush.

We are now in the age of elected dictatorship, with the only election that really matters being for the presidency - and once elected, any President can do pretty much as he pleases.

He will be not just "The One" but also "The Law" since his every spoken word will have the force of law, and all the might of the Executive branch, behind it. He truly will be "the Decider."

The one great difference is that Obama will very likely turn the "war on terror" inward on gun owners and a resurgent militia movement. And that may be the spark that sets off the powder keg that is America.

Stewart Rhodes

Posted by Stewart Rhodes at 3:14 PM 

Labels: Brady Center, elected dictatorship, executive offices, obama power grab, Obama's czars, Rahm Emanuel, Senator Byrd warns of Obama power grab

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

[Subscribe to: Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)