

THE REAL REASON

I've got a different interpretation of the news—via ThinkProgress—that Bush is advising Democrats to keep their options open to sustain the permanent war in Iraq.

Bush has "been urging candidates: "Don't get yourself too locked in where you stand right now. If you end up sitting where I sit, things could change dramatically."

Bolten said Bush wants enough continuity in his Iraq policy that "even a Democratic president would be in a position to sustain a legitimate presence there."

"Especially if it's a Democrat," the chief of staff told The Examiner in his West Wing office. "He wants to create the conditions where a Democrat not only will have the leeway, but the obligation to see it out."

Rather than some Rovian gimmick to gain advantage in the presidential election, I think this just suggests that Bush believes that when a Democrat becomes President in 2009 (and I do think this suggests he thinks it highly likely), she will review intelligence and get advice and realize that the US must stay in Iraq. Here's the logic Bush offers.