

RAHM-ORS

The AP is out with a story that Rahm Emmanuel has been offered the position of Chief of Staff in an Obama Administration.

Barack Obama's campaign has approached Illinois Rep. Rahm Emanuel about possibly serving as White House chief of staff, officials said Thursday as the marathon presidential race entered its final, frenzied stretch with a Democratic tilt.

[snip]

The Democrats who described the Obama campaign's approach to Emanuel spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they were not authorized to be quoted by name. An aide to the congressman, Sarah Feinberg, said in an e-mail that he "has not been contacted to take a job in an administration that does not yet exist. Everyone is focused on Election Day, as they should be. "

I think this is, at the very least, overblown not just for the reasons Ambinder lays out:

... but if Obama has the made decision, he wouldn't tell anyone on his campaign, **he would tell people on his transition team – and they're not speaking to the press.** People on the campaign say that Obama hasn't had a free hour to concentrate about this stuff – which they would say, of course, but the sources are genuinely reliable. Surely he has an idea or two in mind, and maybe it would make sense to give the people he's thinking about asking to serve a heads up. It's hard to say no to a president.

Emanuel has been a regular behind-the-scenes adviser to Obama, knows everyone in Washington, is one of the better

communicators in the party, and certainly is qualified for the post. But **he's ... got a very strong personality that doesn't exactly jibe with the tone Obama likes to set for his endeavors.**

(David Plouffe and Rahm Emanuel could *not* be more different in temperament.) He also has a young family, and he has not moved them to Washington, and his hours as chief of staff would be hellish.

Incidentally: **nothing would be more devastating to Emanuel's chances than a public story like this**, one that could allow Republicans to use Emanuel's brass-knuckle reputation against Obama a few days before the election. [snip]

Rahm has a practice of starting rumors about himself (he used rumors liberally in his fights with Howard Dean over money and churned them out on industrial scale to claim credit for 2006's success). But No Drama Obama, who is wrapping up 20 months of a leak-free campaign, isn't about to start leaking now. Moreover, he's not about to take kindly to someone leaking for political gain.

But I also think this is overblown because of the way that Obama appears to be looking forward—if all goes well on Tuesda—to governing. He appears to be planning to do everything he can to make sure he has tools in place to work **with** Congress.

Just look at his selection of Joe Biden. Sure, Biden has helped to campaign to white working class voters (and has stayed mostly gaffe-free, to his credit). But I think Obama picked Biden to ensure he'd have an ally within the White House with a long history of working with the Old Dogs who will run Senate Committees next year. As a relative newbie in the Senate, Obama still campaigned against Washington, but he made damn sure he'd have someone with long practice in the way Washington works to help him govern.

So why would Obama take a close ally, currently the fourth ranking and arguably second most powerful Democrat in the House, and put him in the White House, thereby neutralizing much of his power? If he wins, with Rahm in the House, he can look forward to have close ties to one of the best deal-makers in the House. As knowledgeable as Rahm is about working Washington, I think he may be more useful for Obama in the House than in the White House.

And frankly, I still suspect Rahm has designs on the Speaker's gavel.