

Carville: Dean Sabotaged Nov. 7 Democratic Landslide

by Debra Hanania Freeman

The Nov. 7 election was a very sweet victory. The American electorate voiced their emphatic disgust with the current Bush Administration by giving Democrats control of both the House and Senate. But, sweet as that victory may be, the fact is that Howard Dean's Democratic National Committee bungled a critical opportunity to make the kind of historic gains that would have provided Democrats with an overwhelming—perhaps even veto-proof—majority in the House and a more stable majority in the Senate. And, every competent professional political strategist in the nation knows it. Nevertheless, when leading Democratic strategist James Carville broke with company manners on Nov. 15, and called for Dean's ouster before a gathering of newsmakers and reporters at a *Christian Science Monitor* breakfast, it set off a storm of controversy that has yet to calm down.

Carville's appearances at the post-election *Monitor* breakfasts have become something of a Washington, D.C. tradition, ever since he masterminded Bill Clinton's stunning come-from-behind 1992 electoral victories, first for the Democratic Presidential nomination, and then for the Presidency itself. This year, Carville appeared with Democratic pollster Stan Greenberg, who, with Carville, co-founded Democracy Corps in 1999.

Greenberg explained to the gathering that although the Democrats picked up 29 seats in the House, 6 seats still remain undecided, and Republicans got 51% or less in another two dozen seats. Had the Democratic Party conducted the campaign with a far more aggressive, national "take-it-all" mindset, he said, at least some portion of those seats could have helped solidify Democratic control of Congress and paved the way for a Democrat in the White House in 2008.

Carville's remarks were more to the point: When asked by a reporter whether DNC chair Dean should be dumped for his handling of the midterm campaigns, his reply was emphatic, "In a word, 'yes'." Carville added, "I think he

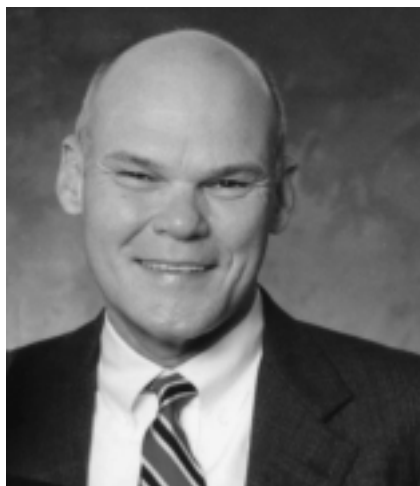
should be held accountable. I would describe his leadership as Rumsfeldian in its incompetence." Carville went on to explain that the DNC had taken out a \$10 million line of credit and used barely half of it on Democratic campaigns. Carville said Dean left \$6 million on the table, which second- and third-tier Democratic candidates could have used to pick up more seats.

"We won the Battle of Gettysburg, but we should have chased their army down. Democrats suffer from timidity, and that does not serve us well. Why not go in with everything you got? That's not the case right now. What I am saying is, you got to get money in these campaigns when you are coming down the stretch," said Carville.

Carville Likes To Win

A look at the founding statement of the non-profit group that Carville and Greenberg formed in 1999 provides some insight into where Carville is coming from: "Democracy Corps provides free public opinion research and strategic advice to those dedicated to a more responsive Congress and Presidency. The organization was born out of outrage over the impeachment of President Clinton when the leadership in Congress preferred radical partisanship to addressing the issues which really matter to American families. Following the 2000 election, Democracy Corps rededicated itself."

In short, James Carville likes to win. He was incensed when the Democratic Party and Al Gore bungled the Y2K Presidential campaign that sent George W. Bush to the White House. After the 2004 Democratic Party Convention, determined to stop Bush and Cheney from winning a second term, Carville, with the support of former President Bill Clinton, stepped in to rescue what was then a floundering Kerry campaign. With Carville at the helm, and much of what Lyndon LaRouche had insisted be included in the Democratic Platform incorporated in the campaign's message, Kerry soon



Democratic strategist James Carville accused Howard Dean of "Rumsfeldian incompetence."

surged in the polls. Unfortunately, in the end, it was too little, too late. What should have been an overwhelming Kerry victory came down to the results in one state, Ohio. Despite evidence of a massive campaign of voter fraud and suppression, a demoralized John Kerry conceded the election the next day. But, when the time came to certify the Electoral College vote, a group of Democrats in the Congress took the advice that LaRouche had offered in a series of post-election webcasts, and moved to block Bush's certification. It was a bold and unprecedented move, making Bush a lame duck before his second term even began.

Bush's approval rating fell steadily from the very beginning of his second term, as he steadfastly pursued one disastrous policy after another. Everyone knew just how critical the midterm elections were. The conflict within the Democratic Party started last Spring, ostensibly over Dean's long-term strategy to use DNC money to build Democratic organizations in 50 states, rather than focus on the critical midterm elections. It escalated in August at a meeting on Capitol Hill, when Senate Democratic Campaign Chairman Chuck Schumer (N.Y.), and his House counterpart Rahm Emanuel (Ill.), asked Dean to match the Republican National Committee's expected outlay in the Fall campaign. Dean refused to budge, claiming that it would divert money from his 50-state campaign. After a nasty public disagreement, Dean finally allotted a measly \$2.4 million to help Democrats, while spending an estimated \$30 million on his 50-state strategy.

In retrospect, however, Dean's argument that funding Democratic candidates would take money away from his effort to build up the Party's "grassroots" organization is a fraud. Nobody, including Carville, was arguing against building up the state party apparatus, nor was anyone demanding that Dean divert money from that effort into the midterm races. Carville's point was and remains a simple one: \$6 million that could have been spent to solidify Democratic control and allow for a far more productive Congressional session inexplicably remained unspent. "I have no problem with the 50-state strategy, that's fine," Carville said (somewhat dis-

missively), "but the point of a political party is *not* to hire party staffers and open offices, it is to *elect* people; to *win* races." Carville also revealed that he had tried repeatedly to meet with Dean to argue for additional spending for a group of campaigns where the Republicans had clearly become vulnerable in the final days of the campaign. Dean declined to meet, and refused to give a reason why.

Dean has retaliated by deploying his gaggle of liberal bloggers to attack Carville's motives, implying that Carville is a Washington "insider" with a Republican strategist for a wife, while Dean is a man of the grassroots, fighting the Washington insiders. An ironic argument considering that the first person to rush to Dean's defense was former DNC Chairman Don Fowler, a notorious racist whom LaRouche was forced to sue in 1996 for violations of the Voting Rights Act. Fowler sent fellow DNC members a letter saying that any talk of replacing Dean was "nonsense. The 50-state strategy is exactly what the Democratic Party needed and continues to need. Why do the Washington people think that they have a special prerogative to dictate what the Democratic Party needs?" A leading member of the Congressional Black Caucus, when asked to comment on the Fowler letter, quipped, "Oh yeah, Don *did* live outside the Beltway even when he was DNC chair. Way too many blacks in the District for a good ole boy like Don."

Fowler continued his defense of Dean in a *New York Times* interview: "Carville and Greenberg—those people are my friends [sic]—they are just dead wrong. They wanted all that money to go to Washington consultants and speechwriters and pollsters like themselves." Fowler was lying and he knew it. The services that Democracy Corps provides candidates are free of charge. Carville not only doesn't accept money or consultant contracts from U.S. candidates, he single-handedly raises more money for the Democratic Party than any other individual, with the sole exception of Bill Clinton! It is no wonder that Fowler and other DNC members—state party officials—defend Dean. The bureaucratic shrewdness of Dean's national strategy may do very little to get Democrats elected, but it very effectively lavishes millions of dollars in cash and attention on the state party officials who elect the chairman of the DNC.

Despite the nasty personal attacks against him, an undaunted Carville has kept up a steady stream of public criticism against Dean, asking, "Do we really want to go into '08 with a C-minus general at the DNC?" Carville said that Dean has built "a cult of the DNC, when what we need is a cult of candidate."

Dean, who is known as a blowhard who repeatedly says the wrong things in front of cameras, has gotten better at behaving himself, and has kept his public responses to Carville's criticisms relatively mild. Privately, however, Dean first spread rumors that Carville was secretly deployed by Bill and Hillary Clinton, claiming that they would both prefer a chairman more friendly to a future Hillary Presidential bid. That argument faltered when the aides to the Clintons said

that Carville had not cleared his attacks on Dean with them. A new whispering campaign suggests that Carville is being influenced by Lyndon LaRouche, whose longstanding criticism of Dean is well known.

The Surge in the Youth Vote

LaRouche said that he has not talked to Carville about his accurate criticism of Dean's leadership, but that he is not surprised by the accusation. In the six weeks prior to the election, LaRouche intervened into the campaign with a bold flanking campaign against Lynne Cheney's fascism, centered largely on college campuses. The initiative, which included the distribution of approximately 750,000 pamphlets by the LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM), sparked a massive increase in turnout among young voters in the 18-25 and 25-30 age brackets, turning around what, two months prior to the election, was a disorganized, failing Democratic effort. Those 10 million young voters—2 million more than voted in the last midterm election and the most in more than 20 years—are widely acknowledged to have been the decisive factor in the Democratic victory.

While some party officials have tried to take credit for the unprecedented turnout, citing new campaign tactics, like increases in computerized phone banks and Internet blogging, a study conducted by the bipartisan Young Voter Battleground Poll showed otherwise. According to Ed Goeas, who worked on the analysis of the 2006 youth vote, it was *not* new campaign tactics that brought out the vote. That analysis showed that in "youth-dense" districts in eight states, where an actual effort was made to register young voters and encourage them to come out, the turnout increased by 157% over the last election—an increase that was a full *six times higher* than the overall national increase in the youth vote. What brought them out, according to Goeas, was the oldest approach on record: They voted because somebody asked them to, either in person or by phone. A University of Maryland study upheld those findings, adding that there was no single issue that brought out young voters, but rather that the most prevalent reason given was a desire to have some voice in their own future.

And, while LaRouche agreed with Carville's assessment of Dean as incompetent, in a series of commentaries both prior to and following the election, LaRouche has suggested that Dean's sabotage may have been more witting, pointing out that the international financier interests that have presided over the destruction of the U.S. productive economy are bipartisan in their approach. On the Democratic side, that faction is represented by Felix Rohatyn, and it is no secret that Dean, contrary to his "man of the grassroots" persona, is close to the Rohatyn interests inside the Party. And, while those interests may have realized that there was no way to stop the American electorate's fervid rejection of the Bush-Cheney policies which they authored, what they could do was limit the damage by depriving the Democrats of the kind of majority that might quickly result in a total reversal of those policies. Dean's sabotage, whether or not it was witting, certainly served that end.