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ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

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June 25, 2001

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The Honorable Dan Burton
Chairman
House Committee on Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Burton:

Thank you for responding today to my June 15 letter.

Unfortunately, you began your letter by inaccurately characterizing my letter. Although you wrote that my letter "requests that the Committee conduct an investigation of Karl Rove's stock holdings," the reality is I made no such request. I merely asked whether you intended to pursue this matter consistent with your practices during the Clinton Administration. I think it's fair to conclude from your letter that you have no intention of investigating this matter at this time.

My June 15 letter regarding Mr. Rove was one in a series of letters that I have written seeking information about your plans for the Committee. On May 10, I wrote to ask whether you would be investigating allegations that the Bush White House planned to raise campaign contributions by making cabinet secretaries available to big donors. On May 21, I wrote to ask whether you would be investigating allegations that Vice President Cheney inappropriately used the Vice President's residence for fundraising purposes. And on June 5, I wrote to ask whether you would be investigating allegations that campaign contributors had special access to the Vice President's Energy Task Force.

My point in each of these letters was similar. In each case, the allegations raised in the news media closely resembled allegations that you extensively investigated when they involved the Clinton Administration. For this reason, the letters inquired whether you would be investigating the allegations involving the Bush Administration. In only one instance, the June 5 letter involving the Energy Task Force, did I actually request a Committee investigation.¹

¹I requested a Committee investigation in this instance because the White House had refused to respond to both my joint information request with Rep. John Dingell, the ranking member of the

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In your response to my June 15 letter, you observe that three senior Clinton Administration officials – Anthony Lake, Sandy Berger, and Richard Holbrooke – were required to pay civil penalties for potential conflicts of interests. This observation only underscores the potential seriousness of Mr. Rove’s conduct and the inadequacy of the Bush Administration’s response. In the case of Mr. Lake, Mr. Berger, and Mr. Holbrooke, the Clinton Justice Department conducted investigations and imposed penalties. But in Mr. Rove’s case, no similar investigation appears to be underway. Indeed, after the allegations about Mr. Rove appeared in the press, President Bush stated that “[m]y level of confidence with Karl Rove has never been higher. . . . He adheres to the ethical rules of our government. And he’s doing a great job on behalf of the American people.”²

Your response suggests that you have exercised considerable restraint in your investigations of the Clinton Administration and declined to investigate numerous allegations of wrongdoing. I have a very different view of the Committee’s actions. I never detected any reluctance to investigate the Clinton Administration for real or imagined transgressions. A report that my staff prepared documents dozens of allegations against the Clinton Administration that you and other Republicans extensively investigated. A copy of this report is enclosed.

It is worth noting again – as I have done on countless occasions – the very partisan nature of your investigations. Over 98% of the 1,033 subpoenas that you have issued since the beginning of the 105th Congress have related to allegations involving the Clinton Administration or the Democratic Party. There has been virtually no role for the minority members of this Committee to play in the investigations orchestrated by your staff. With the exception of grants of immunity to witnesses – for which we gave our approval all 13 times you asked – the minority has never been able to impede, obstruct, or stifle your investigations in any way. Even when credible allegations of wrongdoing involved Republican officials, such as Rep. Tom DeLay, you never followed our suggestions to investigate the allegations.³

Committee on Energy and Commerce, and a similar request by the General Accounting Office.

²Remarks by the President (June 18, 2001).

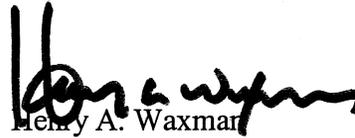
³Letter from Rep. Waxman to Chairman Burton (Oct. 26, 1998) (regarding allegations that Tom DeLay was involved in conduit contributions); see also Letter from Rep. Waxman to Chairman Burton (June 11, 1998) (regarding allegations that Newt Gingrich and several associates solicited an illegal campaign contribution from Ted Sioeng); Letter from Rep. Waxman to Chairman Burton (Jan. 13, 1998) (regarding the influence of tobacco industry campaign contributions on Republican officials, including Haley Barbour, Newt Gingrich, and Trent Lott).

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While it was helpful to receive your letter today, I would still appreciate a response to my May 10, May 21, and June 5 letters regarding other allegations involving the Bush Administration.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry A. Waxman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H".

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member

cc: Members of the Committee on Government Reform

Enclosure