

White House briefed diplomats on elections

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Documents obtained by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reveal the White House briefed top administration diplomats on Republican electoral prospects. The documents detail the Bush administration's efforts to keep appointees involved in foreign policy in the loop when it came to Republican election goals for congressional and gubernatorial races, The Washington Post reported Tuesday. The briefings included a meeting prior to the 2002 midterm elections that highlighted 55 critical House races and critical media markets in battleground states for President George Bush's 2004 reelection campaign, a "general political briefing" at the Peace Corps headquarters after the 2002 vote and a PowerPoint presentation held for ambassadors by senior Bush adviser Karl Rove that identified Democratic incumbents targeted for defeat in 2008. Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., asked Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in a letter whether the briefings inappropriately politicized diplomatic agencies. "I do not understand why ambassadors, in Washington on official duty, would be briefed by White House officials on which Democratic House members are considered top targets by the Republican party for defeat in 2008. Nor do I understand why department employees would need to be briefed on 'key media markets' in states that are 'competitive' for the president," Biden wrote.

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