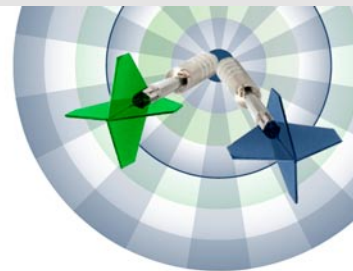


Rush and Rath



Two Democratic strategists and CNN commentators, James Carville and Paul Begala, are suspected of helping the White House to devise and implement a strategy to portray talk-show host Rush Limbaugh as the de facto leader of the Republican Party. The Republicans are rudderless under Party Chairman Michael Steele, and singling out Limbaugh as the heart and soul of the party is an effective ploy. He's disliked by an overwhelming majority of voters, including many Republicans. A similar strategy seems to be taking shape in the CR, but on the opposite side of the aisle. There's an effort to portray controversial Central Bohemian Gov. David Rath as the rotting soul of the Social Democrats. Jiří Paroubek is the real leader of ČSSD (and is more effective in his job than Steele), but Rath is increasingly becoming the lightning rod that attracts the criticism. Whether ODS is orchestrating this assault isn't yet clear, but Mirek Topolánek is the clear beneficiary. Next to Rath's ČSSD, ODS looks increasingly electable.



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