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Bolten: White House Must Regain Its 'Mojo'



AP Photo: President Bush and first lady Laura Bush, left, leave St. John's church after attending services...

By NEDRA PICKLER, Associated Press Writer

23 minutes ago

WASHINGTON - It's time for the White House to go on offense and "get our mojo back." Josh Bolten said Sunday in his first interview since taking over as the president's chief of staff.

Bolten made no p
President Bush
approval ratings,
Bush have decide
more open with th
public.

"We've taken adv
that we ought to p
more in ways that
can see what he's
said on "Fox New

But he said that d
president's policie
overhaul. "I don't think we need to
change, but we do need to refresh and
re-energize," Bolten said.

For example, he said the White House is "thinking actively" about immigration and putting the president out front on an issue that has split him off from some in his own party. Bolten added that it is vital that the White House communicate effectively about the importance of the fight against terrorism so Americans will support the mission.

Bolten, Bush's former budget director, took over for longtime chief of staff Andy Card on April 14, amid administration tensions with Congress, waning public support for the president and calls for fresh ideas in the White House.

"What the change does provide is an opportunity for the White House to step back, refresh, re-energize at a time when we're 5 1/2 years into an administration — normally a slow point, a low point, in many administrations — and a chance for us to get our mojo back, to go back more on the offensive and to get people within the White House to look at our operations, re-energize them for the next six months up through the election, the next 1,000 days through the end of this president's term," Bolten said.

As part of his goal of changing the communications strategy, Bolten has replaced press secretary Scott McClellan with Fox News commentator Tony Snow. The move means that an experienced conservative television personality, who at times has been critical of the



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president, is the public face of the White House.

Bolten said it may be worth considering whether to end the daily televised press briefings where reporters and the press secretary frequently air disputes in front of the cameras, but he will leave that decision up to Snow.

"I think that will be Tony Snow's first test — to see what kind of power player he really is and whether he's able to establish the right kind of relationship with the press that we need going forward," Bolten said, appearing on the same show that Snow hosted for seven years.

On other staff changes, Bolten said Bush political aide Karl Rove remains an important voice on White House policy even though Bolten reassigned day-to-day oversight of policy to a new West Wing hire.

Bolten said Rove was not getting his wings clipped and that he is as engaged as ever despite his recent fifth appearance before a grand jury investigating the leak of classified material.

Bolten did not directly answer questions about whether Bush will replace Treasury Secretary [John Snow](#).

"We're all serving at the pleasure of the president, and the president has full confidence in every member of his cabinet, including John Snow," Bolten said.

Bolten, who said Bush calls him "Yosh" and several other unrepeatable nicknames, said he has the benefit of experience with Bush and is prepared to deliver Bush bad news he may not want to hear sometimes.

"He doesn't necessarily change his mind, but there's no penalty internally for disagreeing with the group or with the president," Bolten said. "But I say internally, because he's very much a CEO, and when he makes a decision, then everybody within the White House should salute and get in line, at least publicly, with that decision."

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