

By Pem McNerney

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Karl Rove, speaking at an event Tuesday night at UConn in Storrs, says it was the right decision to remove Saddam Huseein from power when asked about his role as the "architect" of the Iraq War.

Ryan Henowitz says he was 20 years old and a medic with the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Infantry Regiment when he saw his friends "torn apart and Iraqi children screaming for their parents as indiscriminate shrapnel scarred them and us in ways that we will never know," he told Karl Rove Tuesday at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. "Take responsibility and apologize for your decision in sending a generation to lose their humanity" and "apologize to the millions of fathers and mothers who lost their children on both sides" of the war, Henowitz demanded.

Rove, former deputy chief of staff and senior adviser to President George W. Bush, who was in Storrs at the invitation of UConn College Republicans, thanked Henowitz for his service and said he was sorry for "what you went through," but said he would not apologize for the war.

"It was right to remove Saddam Hussein from power. ... We should be proud of what we were able to do in Iraq and we should be sorry that we left them alone, because when we left them, things deteriorated," Rove said.

Henowitz said he heard about Rove's appearance at UConn several days ago and he decided to ask his question because "the individuals involved with the planning of the Iraq War have not addressed a lot of the problems they have created."

"I volunteer helping out with veterans, and it is very disheartening seeing how their problems are never really addressed, and which Karl Rove did not address in his answer, and the problems that are still being talked about in Iraq and among the citizens there," Henowitz said

Thursday. “I have to say that I did finalize my decision to speak out against Karl Rove when I heard our governor talk about standing up to bigotry with Indiana.”

Also during his address to the audience at UConn, Rove commented on the 2016 presidential campaign, saying he hoped Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts would enter the race. “We should be so lucky,” he said, calling her “Pocahontas,” a reference to her claims of Native American ancestry.

Rove was not available for comment Thursday, but Kristin Davison, chief of staff for Karl Rove & Company, said the comment about Warren was “simply making light of the fact that Sen. Warren continuously over-embellished her heritage for political benefit during the course of her 2012 campaign.”

Davison added that Rove “enjoyed his visit to the University of Connecticut.”

“As he said to the audience, he greatly appreciates the service of the men and women in our military. The world is a safer place because of their heroic efforts.”

A post on the UConn College Republicans’ Facebook page says it hosted the event, along with Young America’s Foundation. A spokesman for the UConn College Republicans confirmed that the group hosted the event, but declined to say how much it cost to bring Rove to the campus. According to online accounts, Rove commands \$25,000 to more than \$50,000 per event.