

Spin Cycle

LIA: Bi-partisan kudos before Dick Cheney touts Mitt Romney

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As if setting the table for tonight's Alfred E. Smith Dinner — the annual New York Archdiocese charity event where presidential candidates exchange jokes and light cross-partisan banter — the overall atmosphere proved palpably warm and nonconfrontational at the Long Island Association's fall luncheon featuring former VP Dick Cheney.

Which is not to say that Cheney wasn't taking his partisan political shots, pushing the Mitt Romney agenda by whacking President Barack Obama over the Mideast, energy, or other

issues, while interviewed by the LIA's leader Kevin Law.

Law at one point asked Cheney if he had anything positive to say about Obama other than his having lauded the killing of Osama bin Laden. "Probably not two weeks before the election," Cheney said. At different points Cheney said the administration seems to be "turning its back on the Mideast," was failing to develop new fuel sources, that it's his "firm belief" that the Iraq occupation was worth the sacrifices, and that Romney and President George W. Bush (who left office with low approval ratings) are different in part because the circumstances and tests and personalities involved in each presidency will vary.

"You could find differences between George W. Bush and George H.W. Bush," Cheney said.

Before all that, U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, Democrat, showed up and gave a brief greeting, which included how well Cheney looked after his heart transplant and thanking Cheney for his "leadership" on security matters, particularly expanded surveillance on the likes of al-Qaida. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Democrat seeking re-election against GOP challenger Wendy Long, also thanked Cheney for his leadership and service to the country and said the major parties can find political common ground in "broken" Washington, D.C. She noted she worked with Rep. Peter King (R-Seaford), who was at a front table, on the Zadroga 9/11 bill.

Other politicians on hand included North Hempstead Supervisor Jon Kaiman, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos (R-Rockville Centre), Suffolk Comptroller Joseph Sawicki, Suffolk GOP chairman John Jay LaValle, and Islip supervisor Tom Croci.

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