

LaRouche Turns Up The Heat on Cheney

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On Nov. 12, Democratic Party Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche began airing radio advertisements on Washington's all-news station WTOP, calling for Vice President Dick Cheney's removal from office, for his role in the Iraq war "for which there was no need. A war we're trying to get out of now."

LaRouche further scored Cheney for orchestrating a vicious dirty-tricks campaign to shut down the work of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which has attempted—despite persistent Administration obstruction—to get to the bottom of the bogus intelligence used to foist the Iraq war on the President, the Congress, and the American people.

The LaRouche radio ad is also circulating, with added documentation, as a million-run LaRouche in 2004 nationwide campaign leaflet, under the headline "LaRouche: Dump Cheney Now!"

LaRouche has been placed on the ballot for the Washington, D.C. Democratic Presidential primary election on Jan. 13, 2004, the first in the country. On Nov. 15, scores of members of the LaRouche Youth Movement invaded the halls of Congress, to circulate the "Dump Cheney" statement and lobby for a full probe into the crimes of the Vice President and his underlings—including the Cheney-led shutdown of the Senate investigation of the Iraq intelligence fraud.

Cheney's Plumbers?

For the second time in five months, Vice President Cheney has been caught staging an intervention to shut down the probe into the pre-war Iraq intelligence—at the moment that bipartisan momentum was building in the Senate to repair a badly damaged Bush Presidency, by exposing the authors of the Iraq war hoax.

On Oct. 30, Senators Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) and Jay Rocke-

feller (D-W.Va.), the chair and co-chair of the Senate intelligence panel, sent strongly worded letters to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Colin Powell, giving them a 24-hour deadline to produce documents and witnesses sought by the committee since July.

The two panel leaders told Rice: "We have made numerous requests for documents which we have not yet been provided, and we have sought to interview a member of your staff without success. Some of these requests have gone unanswered since July. You must expedite our access to the outstanding documents and immediately make available the individual identified. You also must lift your objection to the Central Intelligence Agency providing the Committee with certain documents and allowing us to interview individuals involved in briefing senior Administration officials."

The letter to Rumsfeld made specific reference to Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, and demanded information on the super-secret Office of Special Plans (OSP), the rogue intelligence and covert-action unit inside the Pentagon, at the center of the faked intelligence scandal. Roberts and Rockefeller complained to Rumsfeld, "The committee is yet to receive responses to all the questions-for-the-record submitted by Committee members to Undersecretary Douglas Feith after his July 10 appearance before the committee."

Appearing together on "Meet the Press" on Nov. 2, Roberts told Rockefeller and host Tim Russert that, while the White House and the Pentagon had failed to meet the Oct. 31 deadline to produce the material and witnesses, he had received assurances from both Executive agencies that they would comply. Rockefeller voiced skepticism, and, within days, his skepticism proved accurate.

On Nov. 4, Fox network commentator and syndicated

radio host Sean Hannity went public with a stolen Democratic staff memo from the Senate intelligence committee, which spelled out plans to assure that there was no coverup of the role of senior Bush policymakers—i.e., Dick Cheney—in foisting the Iraq war on the basis of false allegations of Iraqi possession of nuclear weapons and links to the 9/11 terrorists. These are both claims that Cheney persists in peddling to this day.

Instantly, a chorus of hard-core right-wing Republican Senators—all allies of the Vice President—launched into a self-serving tirade against the Democrats, for playing “partisan politics” with the intelligence panel probe. Senators John Kyl (R-Ariz.) and Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) led the charge, and were eventually joined by Roberts himself, after the panel chairman came under intense pressure. A Knight-Ridder story confirmed that Roberts had come under pressure from Vice President Cheney himself, to break the bipartisan cooperation on the Senate panel.

On Nov. 7, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) announced that he was taking the unprecedented and unconstitutional action of shutting down the Senate intelligence panel probe altogether. Frist is Cheney’s chief hatchet-man in the Senate. Congressional sources confirm that the two men confer “constantly,” and that Cheney is a regular attendee at the weekly Senate Republican policy sessions. Cheney was at the Senate on Nov. 4—the day Hannity leaked the staff memo; and on Nov. 6—the day before Frist shut down the committee.

Continuing Coverup and Obstruction

The actions of Cheney and Frist represented a continuation of White House obstruction of the work of the Senate intelligence panel, dating back to July, when the committee first attempted to probe the Administration’s abuse of the intelligence system to justify the Iraq war. Back on July 17,

LaRouche on ‘Cheney-Gate’

The Presidential candidate’s political committee, LaRouche in 2004, released this actuality to the news media on Nov. 10; campaign radio ads based on it aired in Washington, D.C. beginning Nov. 13. LaRouche is on the ballot in the District’s Jan. 13 Presidential primary.

This is Democratic Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche speaking. Also, of course, a Presidential candidate in the current Washington, D.C. Presidential primary selection.

There are several matters which have broken out, which are of specific relevance to us in the Washington area, as well as in Washington, D.C., itself. One, of course, is what has broken out on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

If you go back to Oct. 22, at the time that I made a public statement, saying that the time had come, to proceed rapidly on cleaning up the Cheney case, if we wished to have any government, or any decent election process. The following day, the Senate Select Committee heard, on the Valerie Plame case, testimony on that subject.

Since that time, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has been a central point of much of the debate about getting discovery on matters pertaining to the way in which Cheney and others faked up the reports, to get the United States into a war, for which there was no need—a war we’re trying to get out of now.

Recently, on or about Nov. 4, Fox-TV responded to the announcement of an agreement between the Republi-

can head of the committee, and Senator Rockefeller, on sending letters to relevant parts of the government, to get discovery of the way in which some of the decisions were made, which might have affected the way fake intelligence was conduited through the government, to get us into a war. A perfectly legitimate question.

During that period, of course, people were trying to push things onto the CIA, as opposed to what we know is the problem—which is various agencies associated, particularly, with Vice President Cheney.

Then, on that date, on Nov. 4, Fox-TV sprang this leak, alleging it had a document from inside the committee, which was immediately used by the Republican faction, to try to jam up the entire investigation—really as a way of trying to save Cheney’s neck. This is typical of the kind of problem.

The problem here, otherwise, is that the Democratic National Committee, and leading candidates for the Presidential nomination, have so far refused to deal with this thing in a straightforward manner. If they had, then you wouldn’t have this jam-up in the Senate. And therefore, you should examine the qualifications of people for President, on the basis on which they are responding to this kind of important issue.

The D.C. Health-Care Issue

Of course, also, as you all know, I am insisting on restoring the D.C. General Hospital, as a full-service public hospital, in its former form. And at the same time, of course, reversing the present HMO health policy, back into a Hill-Burton-type policy—an issue on which I have a fundamental difference with Dr. Dean, who is for, in his own terms, the HMO policy.

panel member Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) had gone on “Good Morning America” to chastize CIA Director George Tenet for his “taking full responsibility,” for allowing the reference to alleged Iraqi uranium procurement in Africa to appear in President Bush’s State of the Union address. A similar reference had been removed from a Bush speech in Cincinnati in October 2002—at the urging of the CIA, which had investigated the allegations and concluded they were false. Durbin reported that Tenet had told the intelligence panel “who the person was” who insisted “on putting in this language about the uranium shipment from Africa.” Durbin refused to reveal the name of the individual, but said that “the CIA knew [the information] was incredible.”

The initial White House response was to denounce Senator Durbin for “rewriting history.” Several days later, when the *Washington Post* identified the author of the infamous “sixteen words” in the State of the Union address as National Security Council staffer Dr. Robert Joseph, a protégé of neo-conservative ideologue Richard Perle, the White House launched a campaign against Durbin, accusing him of being the source of the leak to the press. Rumors began circulating that a Federal grand jury had been convened to probe the Joseph leak, and some right-wing Republican Senators demanded that Durbin be fired from the intelligence panel.

The Durbin flap in July did stall the work of the intelligence committee, by creating a partisan ruckus. It also diverted attention from the White House leak to syndicated columnist Robert Novak of the identity of CIA “non-official cover” operative Valerie Plame, the wife of Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who had been sent by the CIA to Niger in February 2002, at the behest of Vice President Cheney. Wilson had reported back that it was “highly doubtful” that Niger had ever sold uranium to Iraq—not what the Vice President wanted to hear.

Numerous intelligence community sources have said that all the available evidence points to the Office of Vice President Cheney as the source of the Plame leak. According to one well-placed intelligence source, the targetting of Ambassador Wilson by Cheney and staff began in March 2003—within days of the testimony of Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at the UN Security Council. Dr. ElBaradei revealed that the so-called Niger government documents purporting to show Iraq’s efforts to purchase large quantities of uranium, were crass forgeries.

Backlash From Moderate Republicans

Cheney’s bullish efforts did not go unchallenged, and there is now a growing chorus demanding his ouster.

The Nov. 17 issues of both *Newsweek* and *Time* magazine ran stinging exposés of Cheney, with *Newsweek* accusing him of running a “parallel government” out of his vast national security staff, which bullies NSC Advisor Rice and under-

mines the efforts of Secretary of State Powell. The *Newsweek* story documented the links between the Pentagon secret intelligence unit, dubbed “Team B,” which was the antecedent to the Office of Special Plans, and the Vice President’s chief of staff and top national security aide, I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby. Libby met with “Team B” on a number of occasions, and one of the first members of the “off the reservation” intelligence team, David Wurmser, is now in Cheney’s office as a Mideast aide. Libby was also involved in tasking the OSP, headed by another former Cheney staffer, William Luti.

Time reported that the shutdown of the Senate panel probe came just days before scheduled testimony from a “current intelligence official who is expected to allege that senior Bush officials ignored or sidelined analysts who didn’t back their hard-line views.”

The *Los Angeles Times* published a Nov. 6 commentary by Mary Lynn Jones and Thomas Schaller, headlined, “Has Cheney Turned Into a Liability? Iraq and Domestic Failures Might Cost Him a Place on the 2004 Ticket.” The authors cited Cheney’s role as the Administration’s leading Iraq war-hawk, but also catalogued his failures to get key legislation through the Congress.

A widely respected Republican Party-linked newsletter, *The Big Picture*, featured a Nov. 10 lead story, detailing the behind-the-scenes faction fight inside the White House over Cheney’s fate, and that of the entire neo-con apparatus that he runs inside the Bush Administration. According to the account, the senior George Bush, and even White House political director Karl Rove, have concluded that Cheney has become a serious liability to G.W.’s re-election, and are looking for a way to dump him. The report warned that Cheney and his longtime collaborator Rumsfeld will not leave without a big fight, which could bring Bush down with them.

On Nov. 13, *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd also uncorked against Cheney, accusing him of “creating a parallel universe inside the White House that is shaping the real universe.” While praising Rep. Charles Rangel’s (D-N.Y.) recent call for the firing of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, Dowd recommended, “But maybe Mr. Rangel should aim higher. If the Pentagon is responsible for mismanaging the occupation in Iraq, it is the vice president’s office that is responsible for the paranoid vision, the ‘with us or against us’ biceps flex against the world that got us into this long, hard slog.”

The same day, ABC-TV’s “Nightline” aired a half-hour tear against Cheney, identifying him as a radical right-winger and the most powerful Vice President in American history—and the architect of the Iraq war disaster.

The picture that emerges is that, beyond the Byzantine struggles inside a now deeply divided Team Bush, the crimes of Cheney—from the intelligence hoaxes, to the ongoing fiasco inside Iraq, to the corrupt doling out of contracts to his former employer, Halliburton—are becoming too big to bury.

On Nov. 13, all eight Democratic Party members of the Senate intelligence panel wrote to Chairman Roberts, demanding that the committee's work resume, and reiterating that the panel must "explore fully the role of policymakers in the intelligence process, including the use or potential misuse of intelligence" prior to the Iraq war. Senators Rockefeller, Carl Levin (D-Mich.), and Harry Reid (D-Nev.) have all charged that the real crime surrounding the Democratic staff memo, was not the content of the document, but its theft. Watergate began with a break-in to the Democratic National Committee headquarters. Cheney-gate may prove to be a replay.

Time-Line

Moves To Shut Down the SSCI Cheney-Gate Probe

This chronology of events in the weeks following Lyndon LaRouche's Oct. 22 "Preparing the Post-Cheney Era" webcast from Washington, builds up to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist's shocking move to shut down the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 7.

Wednesday, Oct. 22: Democratic Presidential candidate LaRouche told international webcast audience: "If you want to get through to next year, to the next election, *get rid of Cheney now!* Tell that man to go!"

Thursday, Oct. 23: At the request of former CIA officers Larry Johnson and Jim Marcinkowski, SSCI holds special, closed-door session on the Valerie Plame Wilson leak.

Friday, Oct. 24: The *Washington Post* ran a planted lead article, claiming that the SSCI was preparing a "blistering report" blaming the intelligence community, and the CIA in particular, for "overstating" the case on Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, and his alleged links to al-Qaeda terrorists. The chairman of the Committee, Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), said, "The Executive was ill-served by the intelligence community" and its "sloppy" intelligence, but that the investigation is "95% complete."

A special briefing was held by the Senate Democratic Policy committee, featuring three retired CIA officials: Vincent Cannistraro, Larry Johnson, and Jim Marcinkowski, highlighting the severe damage to U.S. national security resulting from the Wilson leak, and attacking the overall faking of intelligence to justify the Iraq war. They stressed that cur-

rent CIA analysts were under heavy pressure from Cheney and others to produce intelligence that supported the Administration's push for war, noting the "unprecedented" visits to Langley by Cheney and Libby. They disclosed that analysts interviewed by the SSCI had "minders" from their agency with them when they were interviewed by Roberts SSCI staff.

Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), the senior Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, held a press conference to denounce Roberts for trying to rule out the "matter of use" of intelligence by the White House, when this aspect is specifically part of the jurisdiction of the Committee. Rockefeller made it clear he was prepared to utilize a special SSCI rule to conduct his own investigation of how top Administration officials such as Bush, Cheney, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, used or exaggerated Iraq intelligence. "All I have to do is to get five signatures that we want to investigate a subject—the use of, for example, of intelligence, the shaping of intelligence, the manipulation of intelligence, or whatever," Rockefeller states. "And there's no way that the Chairman can say that we cannot do that."

Reports of pressure: By Friday afternoon, it was reported that Vice President Dick Cheney himself had pressed Roberts to put the blame on the CIA. "A senior administration official, who agreed to speak only on the condition of anonymity, said Roberts' CIA comments were issued with Cheney's encouragement," reported the Knight-Ridder news service. "The official said Cheney is trying to shift the blame for the lack of progress on Iraq, which is becoming an issue in next year's Presidential and Congressional elections, from the White House to the CIA."

Later in the day, Senator Roberts backed off the statements attributed to him by the *Washington Post*, saying they had been "mischaracterized." The CIA also held an unusual press conference, with four senior CIA officials speaking on background, refuting the claims of CIA failure made by Roberts.

Saturday, Oct. 25: Senator Roberts, speaking in Kansas, said that Congress would have voted against the Iraq war authorization, if they had known at that time, what they know now.

Sunday, Oct. 26: Senators Rockefeller and Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), also a member of the SSCI, appeared together on "Meet the Press." Both expressed anger at the Administration's failure to produce documents to the SSCI. Rockefeller indicated the Committee would focus attention on the Pentagon units that provided intelligence, outside of normal channels, to justify the war.

Monday, Oct. 27: A senior retired CIA official told *EIR* that Rockefeller had broken with Roberts, over Roberts' efforts, under immense White House pressure, to stall and obstruct the investigation into the Wilson leak, and into the Pentagon's disinformation leading into the war. Cheney is leading the effort to get Roberts to scapegoat the CIA and the