

Cheney Plots New Wars To Save His Hide

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Lyndon LaRouche's call for Dick Cheney's immediate ouster from the Bush Administration has resonated around the world. Leading American, Israeli, and Arab sources have told this news service that the Vice President is busy plotting military confrontations with both Syria and Iran.

As one Israeli source put it: "Cheney has told Ariel Sharon that the American people will never tolerate the removal of a President or Vice President during wartime. He is pressuring Sharon to back up U.S. war plans, targeting Syria and Iran. Cheney sees his political days numbered, and he is desperate for a war to save his political hide."

The Israeli source reported that the Vice President roused Sharon out of bed recently at 3 AM, Israeli time, to press him for support for possible military actions against Syria and Iran. Israeli military intelligence has weighed in strongly against "regime change" in Damascus, warning that any post-Bashar Assad government would be more dangerous, and could possibly involve the Muslim Brotherhood or other radical Islamists, far more hostile towards Israel.

Despite this opposition, the source indicated that Sharon is under enormous pressure from the United States to deliver. Already, Israel has accelerated delivery of high-altitude drone unmanned aircraft to the Pentagon, and has agreed to provide large numbers of Farsi interpreters, in the event of a confrontation with Iran. Some of those interpreters, according to a well-informed source inside Sharon's inner circle, are to be deployed to air bases in Great Britain, indicating that the Tony Blair government in London is once again on board for an Anglo-American military adventure in the Persian Gulf, despite the ongoing deepening quagmire in Iraq.

And Israeli tank units have been redeployed to the north of Israel, in preparation for possible near-term actions against

Syria, the source added.

The source noted that any military action against Syria would have to occur prior to the end of November, when the rainy season begins, making both ground and air operations almost impossible.

The Israeli source also reported that there are warnings coming from Washington about a possible series of major terrorist attacks on the United States around Thanksgiving.

In July, former CIA analyst Philip Giraldi had written in *The American Conservative* that Vice President Cheney had ordered the Strategic Command (STRATCOM) to prepare war plans against Iran, involving a large number of air strikes, possibly using mini-nuclear weapons to take out alleged hardened nuclear weapons research facilities. According to the Giraldi story, which was subsequently confirmed by scores of top U.S. military and Congressional sources, the trigger for a Cheney-ordered strike on Iran would be a "9/11-type" terrorist attack on the continental United States.

Cheney's Plamegate

One factor driving the Vice President to push new chaos operations in the Persian Gulf is the growing expectation that Independent Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald is close to handing down indictments in the Valerie Plame leak probe.

The Oct. 11 grand jury appearance by *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller has shifted the focus of attention to Cheney's office. Miller's hour-long testimony, according to news accounts, focussed on a third meeting that she had with Cheney's chief of staff Lewis "Scooter" Libby in June 2003—a month prior to the publication of Valerie Plame's name in a Robert Novak syndicated column. Plame, the wife of former Ambassador Joseph Wilson IV, was "outed" by Novak as a

CIA officer. Novak reported that he had been given Plame's name by two "senior administration officials," now widely believed to be Libby and President Bush's chief political counsel Karl Rove.

However, Fitzgerald's probe, from the outset, has centered on an obscure but powerful White House unit, the White House Iraq Group, which was constituted in July-August 2002, to coordinate all Bush-Cheney Administration efforts to win support for an Iraq invasion. Rove and Libby, along with White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, her deputy Stephen Hadley, White House Counsellor Karen Hughes, and a half-dozen other White House and NSC senior staffers were all part of the WHIG.

New York Times reporter Judith Miller functioned as an asset of the WHIG, publishing a series of stories, based on disinformation given by alleged Iraqi "defectors," who were provided to Miller by Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress (INC). Those stories were, in turn, promoted by Cheney, Rice, et al. as justification for going to war to unseat Saddam Hussein.

Miller spent 85 days in jail, on contempt charges, after she refused to appear before the Fitzgerald grand jury. Recently, Miller agreed to testify about her meetings with Libby, and was freed. While the media has hyped a soap opera tale about missed signals between Miller and Libby's lawyers over the issue of whether the Veep's chief of staff had given Miller a legitimate waiver of confidentiality to testify, the real issue is that Miller did not want to be interrogated on her role with the WHIG. Under the agreement reached between her attorney, Floyd Abrams, and Fitzgerald, her testimony was limited to her conversations with Libby. *The New York Times* publishers and editors, according to Washington sources, are smarting from the whole Miller-Libby affair, because the self-proclaimed "newspaper of record" appears to have served, through Miller, as an outlet for White House and Pentagon neo-con disinformation, to draw the United States into a disastrous war.

Dick In the Wringer

On Oct. 13, the online newsletter, rawstory.com, reported that "Two officials close to Fitzgerald told RAW STORY they have seen documents obtained from the White House Iraq Group which state that Cheney was present at several of the group's meetings. They say Cheney personally discussed with individuals in attendance, at least two interviews in May and June of 2003 [that Ambassador Joseph] Wilson gave to *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof and *Washington Post* reporter Walter Pincus, in which he claimed the administration 'twisted' prewar intelligence and what the response from the administration should be."

The rawstory.com piece also noted, "Sources close to the investigation have also confirmed that special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald is trying to determine Vice President Che-

ney's role in the outing of Mrs. Wilson, more specifically, if Cheney ordered the leak."

The day before the rawstory.com story, the *Wall Street Journal*, normally a solidly pro-Bush-Cheney newspaper, reported on the widening probe by Fitzgerald, writing, "There are signs that prosecutors now are looking into contacts between administration officials and journalists that took place much earlier than previously thought. Earlier conversations are potentially significant, because that suggests that the special prosecutor leading the investigation is exploring whether there was an effort within the administration at an early stage to develop and disseminate confidential information to the press that could undercut former Ambassador Joseph Wilson and his wife, Central Intelligence Agency official Valerie Plame."

The *Journal* concluded, "Lawyers familiar with the investigation believe that at least part of the outcome likely hangs on the inner workings of what has been dubbed the White House Iraq Group. Formed in August 2002, the group, which included Messrs. Rove and Libby, worked on setting strategy for selling the war in Iraq to the public in the months leading up to the March 2003 invasion. The group likely would have played a significant role in responding to Mr. Wilson's claims."

EIR Called the Shot

This news service was the first to report that the "Get Joe Wilson" effort was launched in March 2003, at a meeting in the Vice President's office, chaired by Libby. The meeting was triggered by a CNN appearance by Amb. Wilson, just after the UN Security Council testimony by International Atomic Energy Agency head Dr. Mohammed ElBaradei, in which he exposed supposed Niger government documents as shoddy forgeries, purporting to prove that Saddam Hussein was seeking large quantities of uranium from the African state. Wilson told CNN that the White House should search its files, because it received evidence months earlier, disproving the Niger uranium story.

Now, all of these issues are coming to a head, as the Fitzgerald probe moves into end-game phase, and Dick Cheney's political fortunes continue to crash.

Increasingly, the fate of the United States and the world, as Lyndon LaRouche has emphasized, hangs on the Cheney question. If Cheney has his way, the United States will launch a new string of insane "regime change" wars in Southwest Asia, throwing the entire world situation into chaos, characterized by \$150 barrels of oil, global asymmetrical warfare, and new moves for domestic dictatorship in America.

If, on the other hand, Cheney is ousted from office—in the immediate days ahead—the opportunity will be there for a dramatic turnabout in American policy, a turnabout that would be greeted enthusiastically by much of the world.