

Syria War: Straussians' 'Clean Break' Again

by Michele Steinberg

"If George Bush attacks Syria, all Hell will break loose in the Arab world against us," stated a retired U.S. general, who served under World War II Gen. "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell. He believes the policies of neo-con Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz are insane. On April 14, British press reported that Lawrence Eagleburger, former Secretary of State under President George H.W. Bush, "41," told BBC that President George W. Bush should and would be impeached if he "turned troops on Syria now and then Iran."

But criticism from military heroes and veteran diplomats, even paired with the fact that the military is exhausted and weapons depleted after two *unfinished* wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, is not enough to stop the war against Syria. Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche warned, "Don't make any assumptions that the war is off. The neo-cons are crazy." Only a counter-coup that ousts them can secure peace.

Like the Iraq war, the attack on Syria has nothing to do with a current threat—it was planned by the neo-conservative chicken-hawks as early as 1996.

On April 10, the *Oakland Tribune* reported that Donald Rumsfeld had commissioned two of the Pentagon's neo-cons, Douglas Feith and Dr. William Luti, to draw up plans for attacks on Syria. It was a "perfect fit"—Feith had already written the "talking points" for war against Syria in the policy paper prepared for the Israeli right-wing government in 1996, titled "Clean Break: A New Strategy for Security the Realm." A co-author was scandal-ridden Rumsfeld advisor Richard Perle, who delivered it to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The paper has two pillars of "regime change": toppling Saddam Hussein in Iraq; and destroying the Ba'ath regime in Syria. It's a game plan, in its own words, for "re-drawing the map of the Middle East."

Syria is a "regime murderous of its own people, openly aggressive toward its neighbors . . . and supportive of the most deadly terrorist organizations," wrote Feith and Perle in 1996. "It is both natural and moral that Israel . . . move to *contain* Syria, drawing attention to its weapons of mass destruction program."

In May 2000, Feith, Perle, David Wursmer (all "Clean Break" authors) signed onto an updated attack plan against Syria, prepared for the Middle East Forum by Islam-hater Daniel Pipes and Ziad AbdeInour, called "Ending Syria's Occupation of Lebanon: The U.S. Role." Something of a follow-up to "Clean Break," the report demanded that "use of force

needs to be considered” against Syria, utilizing America’s “new era of undisputed military supremacy.” This must be done sooner rather than later, it said, because Syria is developing weapons of mass destruction. Signers also include Elliott Abrams, the Iran-Contra perjurer who now heads the National Security Council’s Middle East desk.

Neo-Con Aim: Greater Israel

But the neo-cons have an Achilles’ heel—the third emphasis of “Clean Break”—which is to prevent a Palestinian state from coming into being. This puts them at odds with Bush’s policy for a Palestinian state—something the President considers *his own policy*, report sources close to the “road map” discussions. So, instead of confronting Bush, the neo-cons and their Israeli counterparts are driving for war on Syria—to keep the region in “permanent war” where talk of a “peace process” is a sick joke. The Israeli newspaper, *Ha’aretz* calls this “oratorical Shock and Awe.”

Rumsfeld began with accusing Syria of hiding people and weapons for Iraq. Then, on April 6, Bush said, “Syria just needs to cooperate . . . not harbor any Ba’athists, any military officials, any people who need to be held to account.” He added, “We believe there are chemical weapons in Syria,” but “I expect they will cooperate.”

Rumsfeld had already ordered the Syria war plans to be drawn up. By April 14, he escalated again: “We have seen the chemical weapons tests in Syria over the past 12, 15 months.” He charged that Syrian terrorists were going into Iraq to kill Americans.

By April 15, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s cabinet started a drumbeat for a U.S. attack on Syria. Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom announced, “Syria is letting terrorist organizations operate in the country.” Cabinet Minister Uzi Landau railed about the Syrian danger, and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, in a radio interview, praised the Americans for threatening Syria. Mofaz then told the daily *Ma’ariv* that Israel has “a long list of issues that we are thinking of demanding of the Syrians” and they are going to get the “Americans” to deliver it.

But this time, there is a counter-offensive against the neo-cons’ “permanent war,” in large part triggered by the “LaRouche in 2004” campaign release of 400,000 copies of a pamphlet exposing the war party’s “Children of Satan.” By April 17, with the backing of the Arab Group of 22 countries in the UN, Syria—a member of the Security Council—introduced a resolution for a Middle East “WMD Free Zone,” specifically targetting Israel, the only nuclear-armed country in the region. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that he may be visiting Syria in the immediate future to seek a diplomatic solution to the growing tension. The London *Guardian* reported that Bush had “vetoed” the Rumsfeld war plan against Syria, and U.S. syndicated columnist Robert Novak blew the lid off the right-wing Israeli interest in the Syria war, citing Mofaz’s plan to use the United States to “deliver” a message.