

Dick Cheney: The Sociopath Uncorked

by Jeffrey Steinberg

When Sen. John Edwards mentioned the forbidden “H word”—“Halliburton”—during the Oct. 5 Vice Presidential debate, Dick Cheney’s knuckles turned white and the Vice President seethed with his now all-too-familiar sociopathological rage. While Senator Edwards failed to push Cheney’s buttons to the point that the Veep might have uncorked with a barrage of his signature “F words,” in every other respect, Cheney made it clear, in words and gestures, that his cynical disregard for the truth, and his obsession with waging war against the rest of the world, has not been tempered by a spate of highly public revelations that his Iraq war, and war on terrorism have been, to date, abysmal failures, which have isolated the United States from virtually every former ally.

Cheney also remains a prime target of a string of criminal investigations, involving forged documents, corporate bribes, trading with the enemy, leaks of classified material, and widespread corruption in Iraq no-bid reconstruction contracts. All of these scandals, for the moment, remain under the public radar screen. However, should any one of them surface on the eve of the elections, Cheney’s corruption could prove to be the decisive factor that sends George W. packing on Nov. 2.

There is growing evidence that the White House spin machine has been working overtime to keep those scandals out of the public spotlight. A recently planned segment of CBS “60 Minutes,” on the origins of forged Niger government documents purporting to prove that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was seeking yellowcake uranium from that African state, was cancelled after Karl Rove and other top White House officials practically threatened to blackball CBS from access to the Administration if the network aired the story, several sources reported to *EIR*. According to several Congressional and intelligence community sources, an ongoing federal grand jury probe into the Niger documents has traced them to Ahmed Chalabi’s Iraqi National Congress. Top Pentagon civilians, all linked to Cheney’s chief of staff Lewis Libby, have been reportedly implicated in the document hoax, along with self-professed “universal fascist” Michael Ledeen.

Sources report that the White House squeeze play on CBS has been matched by Attorney General John “Crisco Kid” Ashcroft, who has abused his powers by sabotaging several ongoing investigations into an AIPAC/Pentagon spy ring, that passed classified information on to Israel. He also has pressed for a delay in action by the independent counsel Patrick Fitzgerald, probing the source of the leak to columnist Robert Novak of the identity of an undercover CIA officer, who hap-

pened to be married to Ambassador Joseph Wilson. Wilson made a February 2002 trip to Niger, on behalf of the CIA, in which he concluded that there was no credible evidence of the purported Niger-Iraq uranium deal.

Cheney’s al-Zarqawi-Saddam Hoax

On the day of the Vice Presidential debate, Knight Ridder news service published a damning leak of a new CIA assessment—commissioned several months ago by Cheney himself—showing that there was no solid evidence linking Abu Musa al-Zarqawi, the purported top al-Qaeda operative in Iraq, to the former Saddam Hussein regime.

As Knight Ridder writers Warren Strobel, Jonathan Landay, and John Walcott wrote, “While intelligence officials cautioned that information about al-Zarqawi remains incomplete, Bush, Cheney and other top officials have publicly made al-Zarqawi the linchpin of their contention that Saddam’s Iraq had ties to al-Qaeda. Questions about whether the president and other officials overstated the intelligence about Iraq and omitted contradictory information and analysis are now at the center of the campaign debate over Iraq policy.”

The same story grabbed headlines on ABC News just hours before the start of the debate. Indeed, on Oct. 4, the *Daily Telegraph* had run a story, based on interviews with U.S. military intelligence officials on the ground in Iraq, suggesting that much of the al-Zarqawi profile is a myth, providing the Bush Administration with a convenient villain, to blame for the out-of-control insurgency.

The leak of the Cheney-commissioned CIA report was raised specifically at the debate, but Cheney ignored the question and repeated his mantra about Saddam’s state sponsorship of terrorism, and the threat that he would have given WMD to terrorists, ad nauseum.

The week before the Cheney-Edwards encounter, several other CIA documents had come to light, showing that the intelligence community had warned, in January 2003 on the eve of the Iraq invasion, of the asymmetric warfare threat the U.S. occupation would face. In July 2004, a full National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) was produced, spelling out three scenarios for Iraq, ranging from unstable peace to a fullscale civil war, painting a far more negative picture than that offered by Bush, Cheney, and other top Administration officials.

Cheney’s reaction to the July 2004 NIE leak was typical: In a fit of rage, he banned the *New York Times* reporter who penned the new story, from his campaign plane and Air Force II. One well-placed Washington source reported that Cheney’s bouts of rage, when confronted with unpleasant truths, have resulted in two White House briefers and one CIA briefer being fired and/or banned from the White House.

Dems Flank Halliburton

As Vice Presidential candidate John Edwards was nailing Cheney on his corrupt ties to Halliburton in the televised debate, Congressional Democrats were also pulling off a successful flanking maneuver. On Oct. 4, the House Government

Reform Committee held hearings on the pre-invasion oil-for-food program, which had been administered by the United Nations, and which is now under investigation for possible mismanagement and corruption. Every Democrat on the Committee showed up for the hearings, and, as the result, a resolution was passed, extending the committee's mandate to include a probe of the post-war reconstruction effort, run by the Bush Administration, involving the use of billions of dollars in Iraqi oil revenues, some of which went to no-bid contracts given to Halliburton.

Faced with a vote, Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.), the chairman of the national security subcommittee, acquiesced to the demands by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), the ranking Committee Democrat, and co-signed a subpoena of documents, which was delivered to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Oct. 5. The subpoena demands 12 categories of Pentagon documents on the Development Fund for Iraq expenditures, and gives Rumsfeld until Nov. 5 to comply.

Another Anonymous Exposé

In effect, the Bush Administration is confronting a full-scale revolt by professional diplomats and intelligence officers, who are sickened by the Administration's persistent lies and policy disasters.

Cheney's handpicked successor to CIA Director George Tenet, Porter Goss, has been sent over to Langley with one overriding mission: to plug the leaks. So far, Goss has not been exactly successful. On Oct. 3, the *Washington Post* revealed that Goss's personal choice as Executive Director of the CIA, Michael Kostiw, had been forced to resign from the Agency in 1982 over shoplifting charges and for giving deceptive answers during a lie-detector test.

On Oct. 4, an anonymous senior foreign service officer, still employed at the State Department, penned a damning article for *Salon* magazine, warning that, if the Bush-Cheney team is re-elected, the neo-conservatives will totally take over the government, including Foggy Bottom.

"Anonymous" warned: "Secretary of State Colin Powell is not staying for a second Bush term. When he goes, the last bulwark against complete neo-conservative control of U.S. foreign policy goes with him. The implications are enormous, yet the American electorate appears to be blinded by the Bush campaign's deliberate manipulations of 9/11."

The author proceeded to document the neo-con cabal inside the Pentagon and the Office of the Vice President, focusing on the role of Cheney chief of staff Lewis Libby, his chief deputy David Wurmser (formerly part of the intelligence/disinformation cell at the Pentagon), Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, and ex-Defense Policy Board chairman Richard Perle. "Anonymous" ended: "Powell is leaving. We need to repeat that. When this reality sinks in, we will finally understand what we are getting ourselves into in a second Bush term . . . George W. Bush has signed on to the neo-con agenda with the unshakable faith of the born again."