

As Iraq War-Lies Crumble, Bush Pushes Deeper Into the Quagmire

by Edward Spannaus

While our delusional President and Vice President continue to insist that progress is being made in Iraq, and that freedom is on the march, a series of reports and statements have been forthcoming in the two weeks since Sept. 27, which 1) continue to devastate the Administration's fraudulent case for war, which was proclaimed mostly loudly by Vice President Cheney, and 2) portray a widening disaster in Iraq, one in which the Bush-Cheney Administration is marching forward, foolhardily, deeper into the quagmire.

As Democratic Presidential nominee John Kerry put it: "If the President just does more of the same every day and it continues to deteriorate, I may be handed Lebanon, figuratively speaking," referring to the civil wars that wracked Lebanon for many years.

Notable, among the reports which have exposed the folly of the Administration's "stay the course" fixation, are the following:

- A little-noticed report on the role of Iraqi military and security forces, issued in late September by Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, which presented a much bleaker picture of the training of Iraqi security forces than that being presented by the Bush Administration, which keeps proclaiming this to be the key to establishing a "democratic" Iraq. Cordesman describes how the United States "minimized the insurgent and criminal threat, and exaggerated the popular support for U.S. and Coalition forces," and he points out that a vast majority of the Iraqi population see U.S. troops as occupiers. "As a result," Cordesman charges, "the U.S. wasted a year (at least May 2003-April 2004) in trying to create effective Iraqi military and security forces."

Cordesman projects that Iraqi security forces will not be prepared to replace U.S. forces and take over the most important missions until at least late 2005.

- On Sept. 29, the *New York Times* cited a study conducted by a private security company, which has access to official military records, which showed that there had been more than 2,300 attacks by insurgents against civilian and military targets during the previous 30 days. It showed the resistance to be much more widespread than what is described by Iraqi officials such as Prime Minister Allawi, who has said that 14-15 of Iraq's 18 provinces "are completely safe." In

fact, the attacks range over every major population center outside the Kurdish north.

- On Oct. 4, the former U.S. proconsul in Baghdad, Paul Bremer, said in a speech to insurance executives, that the United States did not have enough troops in Iraq after ousting Saddam Hussein, and that "We never had enough troops on the ground." Bremer said that he had arrived in Iraq on May 6, 2003 to find "horrid" looting and a very unstable situation. "We paid a big price for not stopping it, because it established an atmosphere of lawlessness." (More on Bremer, below.)

The WMD and al-Qaeda myths

- On the same day, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld spoke at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in New York, and some of his statements triggered minor shock waves. Most notably, when Rumsfeld was asked about the connection between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, he first said, "I'm not going to answer the question," but then went on to say: "I have seen the answer to that question migrate in the intelligence community over the period of a year in the most amazing way."

"To my knowledge," he continued, "I have not seen any strong, hard evidence that links the two."

EIR has been told, by a source close to the White House, that both Bremer and Rumsfeld got called on the carpet by the White House, almost immediately after making these comments, and were ordered to issue clarifications. Bremer's said that he fully supports the Bush Administration's current strategy in Iraq, and he even added that he supports Bush's re-election.

Rumsfeld issued a statement through the Defense Department, stating that an answer he had given at the CFR on ties between al-Qaeda and Iraq "regrettably was misunderstood," and going on to say that he has acknowledged ties between al-Qaeda and Iraq since September of 2002. "This assessment was based upon points provided to me by then-CIA Director George Tenet to describe the CIA's understanding of the al-Qaeda-Iraq relationship," Rumsfeld said, then listing a series of items purporting to list "CIA conclusions" claiming that there is solid evidence of al-Qaeda presence in Iraq, credible information of al-Qaeda seeking contacts in Iraq to help them acquire weapons of mass destruction, etc.

- On Oct. 5, Knight-Ridder news service revealed that the CIA had issued a report, prepared at Cheney's request, which debunked a central piece of evidence used by Cheney and others to justify the invasion of Iraq, that is, that Saddam Hussein had harbored the Al-Qaeda-linked Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his organization prior to the war. (See article, p. 18.)

- Then, on Oct. 6, the CIA released the final report on its 16-month search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq by the Iraqi Survey Group (ISG), and its principal author, Charles A. Duelfer, testified in the U.S. Senate. The report constitutes the final demolition of the Administration's justification for launching its war against Iraq.

In direct contrast to pre-war statements made by Vice President Cheney, the Duelfer report states: "Saddam Husayn ended the nuclear program in 1991 following the Gulf War. ISG found no evidence to suggest concerted efforts to restart the program." The report also stated that "Iraq unilaterally destroyed its undeclared chemical weapons stockpile in 1991," and that there are no indications that it had resumed production after 1991.

Regarding biological weapons, the report says that the Iraqi regime retained an intention to resume its program some day if the opportunity arose, but that had destroyed its stocks of biological weapons in 1991-92, and that in 1995, Iraq had abandoned its biological-weapons program, and that it "would have faced great difficulty in re-establishing" the program.

"We were almost all wrong," Duelfer told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

But nevertheless, in a campaign speech given after the release of the Duelfer report, Bush continued to proclaim: "There was a risk—a real risk—that Saddam Hussein would pass weapons, or materials, or information to terrorist networks. In the world after Sept. 11, that was not a risk we could afford to take."

And, as Dick Cheney continued to "stay the course" on his lies about Iraq, WMD, and al-Qaeda, Democratic Vice Presidential nominee John Edwards quipped that "Dick Cheney and George Bush need to recognize that the Earth is actually round and that the Sun rises in the east."

Bremer's Error

On the same day that the Duelfer Report was publicly issued, Lyndon LaRouche was delivering his address in Washington to an international webcast (see p. 4). During the question period, LaRouche had a number of comments about Bremer's statements, and about the overall situation in Iraq.

"It is true the United States can not cut and run from Iraq now," LaRouche said, because "you'd just make things worse." After the error of going into Iraq in the first place, LaRouche continued, the next big error, which prevented the stabilization of Iraq, so that the United States could have eventually gotten out in a peaceful manner, was that "Bremer

was ordered from Washington to discharge the Iraqi Army and the Baathist politicians from government. Had he not done that, then the Baathist Army, now working under U.S. occupation, and the Baath bureaucrats working under U.S. occupation, would have organized and stabilized the country. And, then we could have gotten out in a peaceful way. They did the absolutely worse possible thing."

In response to a specific question about the significance of Bremer's and Rumsfeld's statements, LaRouche said that the context for this, is that "you're dealing with is a psychotic President and a sociopathic Vice President, who are absolutely hysterical."

LaRouche said that "what Bremer said is partly true, but it's not true," explaining that, when Bremer was sent into Baghdad to replace Gen. Jay Garner, he was given "the screw-ball order . . . to disband the Iraqi military and Baathist establishment, who had been engaged already, under the Garner administration, to participate in the orderly reconstruction of an occupied Iraq."

Engaging the military and the existing government bureaucracy "would be a normal procedure for a military occupation of occupied territory by the U.S. military," LaRouche said. "In other words, when you go in, you occupy a territory, you are now responsible for the people in that area, and you have to see to its administration and care, as if it were your own territory. You've taken over, you're now responsible. So you don't go out to kill the people who have surrendered. You say, 'Okay, you've surrendered. Fine. We're obliged to protect you and assist you until we can get out of here.'"

But instead, Bremer was given an order from Washington, not to engage the military and the bureaucracy, but to fire them. "So what we did, is we threw the force, an organized force, a government capability and a military force, a capable military force of sufficient dimensions to handle the problem," LaRouche recounted. "We fired them. And then we did provocations, which provoked the outbreak of full-scale asymmetric warfare from within the population we had thus doubly abused. We continued to do these insane things on the impulses of the Defense Department, and the White House, and the Vice President's office, from that point on. We did everything possible to turn this into a bloody asymmetric warfare."

LaRouche pointed out that what Bremer is saying, "is, in a sense, correct: that his problem was that he was doomed to fail from the outset, because he never had enough troops to do the job." But the problem was that we didn't have the U.S. troops to give him. "So," LaRouche concluded, "he was actually double-talking, his way. He's saying what is true in one sense—that he didn't have enough troops to do the job—but on the other hand, he didn't say that the idiots forced me to fire the forces that would have prevented that situation from developing. So he was telling the truth, and lying, at the same time. That's the usual problem these days. You can never get a straight story out of any of these characters."