

Opposition Trumps Bush's 'Independent Commission'

by Michele Steinberg

On Feb. 12, after months of battling, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, headed by Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kans.) and Jay Rockefeller IV (D-W.Va.), voted unanimously to approve “new terms” of investigation of the private intelligence empire run by Vice President Dick Cheney through his network of neo-conservatives. The threat was identified in the now famous special report, *Children of Satan: The Ignoble Liars Behind George W. Bush's No-Exit War*, issued in April 2003, by the Presidential campaign of Democrat Lyndon H. LaRouche.

The Senate investigation has already eclipsed the so-called Independent Commission created by a Presidential executive order on Feb. 6. That commission has been denounced as a coverup by veterans of U.S. intelligence agencies, by members of Congress, and by several of the Democratic Party candidates for the 2004 Presidential nomination, including John Kerry, Dennis Kucinich, and now ex-candidates Howard Dean and Wesley Clark. But none of these Democratic critics had the guts or intelligence to join with LaRouche back in September 2002, in calling for the impeachment of Vice President Cheney. That call stressed Cheney's known connections to the Straussian liars who were inventing intelligence to justify an Iraq war: I. Lewis Libby, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, Richard Perle, David Wurmser, Abram Shulsky, William Luti, Ahmed Chalabi, and members of Perle's Defense Policy Board.

Had members of Congress, or *any* leading Democrat had the courage to fight Cheney's lies in 2002, the war in Iraq might have been averted.

Threats, Dirty Tricks Against Dissenters

Well-informed sources in the U.S. intelligence community have told *EIR* that the campaign to discredit former Ambassador Joseph Wilson—by “outing” his wife, Valerie Plame, a covert operative of the CIA—because of Wilson's report that it was false that Iraq bought yellowcake uranium from the African country of Niger, was not the only case of such tactics.

According to Larry Johnson, a former senior analyst for the CIA, and former Deputy Director in the office of the Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism at the Department of State, the intelligence “failure” was more than distortion or misinterpretation of intelligence reports by Iraq war-hawks. It was policymakers and senior officials “making stuff up out of whole

cloth.” In a statement released at a news conference sponsored by MoveOn.org and Win Without War on Feb. 10, Johnson said that intelligence analysts “were pressured to find an operational link between Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. One analyst in particular, told me they were repeatedly pressured by the most senior officials in the Department of Defense.” He added that “I have spoken to more than two analysts who have expressed fear of retaliation if they come forward and tell what they know.”

The Senate Intelligence committee itself has been the victim of Cheney's hooligan tactics. It is an open secret on Capitol Hill that it was Cheney—not Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn)—who shut down the Senate Intelligence Committee probe of the intelligence hoaxes leading up to the Iraq, following the theft of a Democratic staff memo prepared for Senator Rockefeller, which was then leaked to right-wing radio talking head Sean Hannity in early December 2003.

Within hours of the theft and leak of the staff document, Frist announced the wholesale shutdown of the Senate intelligence panel, which was just gearing up to accelerate its probe into the Valerie Plame and Niger yellowcake uranium scandals. At the same time, the Senate Judiciary Committee Democrats were victim of a similar “plumbers”-style electronic break-in, where memos addressed to Senators Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) were stolen and passed on to the *Wall Street Journal* and other neo-con media sewers.

But, now, to the shock of many Washington observers, who believed that Cheney was “untouchable,” there is a broad-based investigation of Cheney and his neo-cons. According to the joint statement issued by Roberts and Rockefeller, on Feb. 12, the Senate Intelligence Committee will be investigating:

- “whether public statements and reports and testimony regarding Iraq by U.S. government officials, made between the Gulf War period and the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom, were substantiated by intelligence information;
- “any intelligence activities relating to Iraq conducted by the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group (PCTEG) and the Office of Special Plans within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy [Douglas Feith];
- “the use by the Intelligence Community of information provided by the Iraqi National Congress (INC).”

All of these roads lead to Cheney.

At the same time, David Kay, the former U.N. weapons inspector, who resigned from President Bush's Iraqi Survey Group and announced that there “are no Iraqi wmd,” after months of hunting for them in Iraq, has recanted his statement that the whole WMD misunderstanding was due only to “intelligence community failures.” Kay, a neo-con ally before the war, said on Feb. 10 at the U.S. Institute for Peace, in response to a number of hostile questions, that he “clearly believe[s]” that the issue of “cherry-picking” and the “political use” of intelligence “must be examined.”