

Backlash Builds Against Cheney's 'Guns of August'

by Jeffrey Steinberg

As millions of copies of Lyndon LaRouche's July 27 "Cheney's Guns of August" statement circulate worldwide (see www.larouchepac.com), a Washington policy brawl has erupted into public view, over the Bush Administration's now-confirmed contingency plans to stage a pre-emptive military strike against Iran—possibly using nuclear weapons. The report that Vice President Dick Cheney had tasked the Strategic Command (STRATCOM) to develop military contingencies for a massive aerial bombardment campaign against Iran, in the event of a new 9/11 attack, was first revealed in *The American Conservative* magazine's Aug. 1 edition. The story highlighted the likely use of nuclear weapons, and the widespread military opposition to the pre-emptive nuclear war scheme.

Since that initial story by former CIA officer Philip Giraldi, this news service has confirmed the accuracy of the report from a significant number of horrified U.S. government officials—from Senators on both sides of the aisle, to military officers, diplomats, and spies. One former U.S. ambassador in the Persian Gulf reported that he had received angry reports from officials of the Central Command (CENTCOM), who have been tasked as part of the contingency planning.

Another military source suggested that there are probably pre-positioned tactical nuclear weapons at the U.S. military base at Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean, under the new military reorganization, which created a "Global Strike" plan for rapid, massive assaults anywhere on the planet.

The bottom line: Vice President Cheney, the architect of the pre-emptive nuclear attack plan, has gone stark raving mad, and is prepared to bring the world to the brink of chaos, before he is driven from power. Democratic Party figure Lyndon LaRouche describes Cheney's state of mind as "like Hitler in the bunker."

White House De Facto Confirms

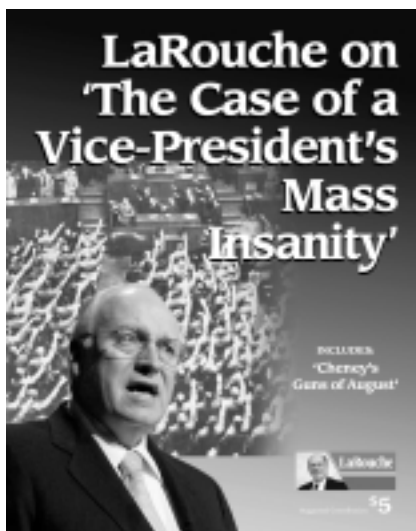
In response to a question from *EIR*'s White House correspondent Bill Jones, Presidential spokesman Scott McClellan let the cat out of the bag on July 28. Asked by Jones about the *American Conservative* report on the bombing contingencies, McClellan pointedly chose not to deny the charges, and instead, after telling Jones he "appreciated the question," went into a discussion of Iran's alleged secret nuclear program, threatening United Nations sanctions and other actions, should Iran fail to shut down its nuclear reprocessing efforts.

In response to a follow-up question by CBS reporter John Roberts about whether an attack on Iran might fall under the Bush Doctrine of pre-emptive action against "terror states," given the new Iranian President's former position in the Revolutionary Guard, McClellan again refused to reject the possibility, reminding the press that the Administration still considered Iran a "state sponsor of terrorism."

It should be recalled that on Jan. 20, 2005, the day of the Bush-Cheney second inauguration, the Vice President appeared on the Don Imus show on MSNBC cable TV, to target Iran. Using language identical to his earlier lies about Iraq, Cheney accused Iran of pursuing "a fairly robust nuclear program" and of sponsoring terrorism. "That combination is of great concern," he declared, warning that Israel could be expected to launch preventive bombing attacks on Iran's alleged nuclear weapons sites, if the Iranians don't abandon those supposed nuclear efforts.

NIE Leaked

One of the most dramatic signs of the ferocious behind-the-scenes fight was the Aug. 2 lead story of the *Washington Post*, which leaked a recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) concluding that, far from being on the verge of achiev-



LPAC

The LaRouche Political Action Committee issued this new pamphlet the first week in August, to stop Dick Cheney's drive for war against Iran, and his coup d'état against the American system.

ing a nuclear bomb, Iran was at least ten years away from such a capability. The story, by staff writer Dafna Linzer, noted that “the carefully hedged assessments, which represent consensus among U.S. intelligence agencies, contrast with forceful public statements by the White House. Administration officials have asserted, but have not offered proof, that Tehran is moving determinedly toward a nuclear arsenal.”

The last time an NIE was prepared on Iran, it was estimated that Iran was five years away from obtaining a nuclear bomb, and that was in 2002. When Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited President Bush at his Crawford, Texas ranch this past April, his top military aide, Gen. Yoav Galant, presented an Israeli assessment that Iran had a “very advanced” nuclear weapons program, could have a bomb within 12-18 months, and was near to reaching a “point of no return,” when “it could not be any longer stopped.”

The leak of the NIE, which was carefully prepared over a six-month period, beginning in January of this year, was widely hailed as a direct factional move, from high-level intelligence community circles, against the Cheney madness. One former Cabinet official noted that the mass circulation of LaRouche’s “Guns of August” statement had created the necessary political conditions for the leak to occur, seriously undermining Cheney and the neo-conservatives’ race to a new confrontation with Tehran.

The National Intelligence Council, the coordinating body of the 15 agencies that comprise the U.S. intelligence community as a whole, is now housed in the office of Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte. Just days before the leak to the *Washington Post*, Negroponte’s deputy, Gen. Michael V. Hayden, had testified before the House Intelligence Committee about the overhaul of the NIE process, to assure that there would be no repetition of the horrid mistakes

made in the October 2002 Estimate on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. That rushed October 2002 NIE vastly overstated and misrepresented Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction program, particularly its purported nuclear weapons program, and was a large contributing factor to the U.S. Congress’s capitulation to Bush and Cheney, in sanctioning the Iraq preemptive invasion—even as United Nations weapons inspectors were continuing their inspections with minimal interference from the Saddam Hussein regime, and were stating that no nuclear weapons production was to be found.

Hayden emphasized that the Estimates would now reflect the views of all the relevant intelligence agencies, would be much more “nuanced,” and would not be released without a thorough review process, including an assessment of the quality of the sources of key intelligence findings. According to the *New York Times*’s Douglas Jehl, “Other government officials said the standard had already been applied, to a recent highly classified intelligence report on Iran.”

The Usual Suspects

In further probing of the Cheney-led drive for a pretext to bomb Iran, *EIR* has confirmed that the same cast of neo-con characters who led the disinformation campaign against Iraq, in the run-up to the March 2003 invasion, have been tasked to carry out the same effort, this time targetting the regime in Tehran. Furthermore, while some media have portrayed the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad last month as President of Iran as the trigger for the new war push, the truth is that the campaign was launched, in earnest, within days of the November 2004 dubious re-election of Bush and Cheney.

In November 2004, Dr. Jerome Corsi, a leading player in the Karl Rove-inspired dirty-tricks apparatus known as Swift Boat Veterans for the Truth, suddenly emerged as the new head of the Iran Freedom Foundation (IFF), promoting regime change in Tehran. Corsi was touted by Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) as being the driving force behind the Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005, which calls for \$10 million in funds to be handed out to Iranian dissident groups. Corsi had co-authored the Rove-inspired propaganda book *Unfit To Serve*, smearing Bush’s Democratic Presidential rival John F. Kerry over his military service in Vietnam. In March 2005, Corsi published another propaganda book, *Atomic Iran*, peddling scare stories about Iran’s imminent possession of nuclear bombs.

From May 15 to May 18, Dr. Corsi led an “Iran Freedom Walk” from Philadelphia to Washington, where a rally was addressed by neo-con Richard Perle, and where Corsi was congratulated, in a written statement, by Dick Cheney.

In April 2005, Regnery Publishing, Inc. released another fractured-fairy-tale propaganda piece, promoting preemptive war on Iran, this one by Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.). Sources familiar with the book report that Weldon was snookered by ex-CIA Director and leading neo-con war party opera-

tive James Woolsey, and self-proclaimed “universal fascist” Michael Ledeen, into buying fake intelligence, pushed through a former Iranian minister under the Shah, who has more recently been a business partner of discredited Iran-Contra gun dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar. Representative Weldon concealed the identity of his high-level “source,” referring to him only as “Ali.” But “Ali” was soon identified as Fereidoun Mahdavi, a former commerce minister, who fled Iran shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and never looked back.

In an interview with *The American Prospect*’s Laura Rozan, Mahdavi professed shock and outrage that his “information” had formed the basis for Weldon’s shrill book. He confirmed that all of the information he passed on to the Congressman had, in fact, originated with Ghorbanifar, a notorious disinformationist, and Iran-Contra ally of the Washington neo-cons. Weldon’s saga with “Ali,” as recounted in his book, *Countdown to Terror—The Top-Secret Information That Could Prevent the Next Terrorist Attack on America . . . And How the CIA Has Ignored It*, began in March 2003, at the very moment that the Bush-Cheney regime was about to launch its Iraq invasion.

In late June of this year, Kenneth Timmerman, a propa-

gandist for the neo-cons and for right-wing Israeli circles around former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, published another book, *Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown With Iran*, which makes a string of preposterous claims, all based on information provided by the Mujahideen-e-Khalq, an Iranian exile group on the U.S. State Department’s list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. Timmerman asserted that: Iran was behind the 9/11 attacks; Iran is safehousing Osama bin Laden inside the country; and Iran has all of the elements to produce nuclear weapons, and possibly provide them to terrorist cells already infiltrated into American cities.

When the Timmerman book was published, the *Washington Times* ran three days of excerpts, along with an editorial touting the book and calling for action against Iran.

If all of this sounds remarkably similar to the propaganda run-up to the Iraq invasion of March 2003, that’s because it is. The same Michael Ledeen/Richard Perle/Dick Cheney circles that brought you Operation Iraqi Freedom, are aggressively pushing war against Iran. But this time, with 170,000 American troops bogged down in Iraq, Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, et al. are now pushing their decade-old plan to conduct pre-emptive nuclear strikes.

EIR Confronts McClellan On Iran War Scenario

At a White House briefing on July 28, *EIR* correspondent Bill Jones queried Bush-Cheney spokesman Scott McClellan about the “Guns of August” scenario for war against Iran.

After explaining the content of the *American Conservative* article on Vice President Dick Cheney’s revamping of the military posture toward Iran, with 4-500 missiles, including tactical nuclear missiles directly under theater commander control, now targetted on Iran, Jones asked: “Given our problems with Iran and the fact that now that they have decided to continue with developing the full fuel cycle for their peaceful nuclear program, might we not be anxious that if there were a terrorist incident here in the United States in any way attributed to Iran, that there might be a knee-jerk reaction utilizing this hair-trigger against the Iranians?”

McClellan replied: “One, I appreciate your question. I’m not going to get into accepting anything that you alleged in your comments. I’m not going to get into discussing matters relating to national security of that nature.

“Two, in terms of Iran, Iran made some commitments to suspend their uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities. We expect them to abide by that commitment. If they were to begin those activities again, they would be violating the commitment they made under the Paris agreement with the Europeans. And we have made it very clear that Iran has a history of hiding their nuclear activities from the international community. That’s why it’s so important that you have some confidence-building measures, or objective guarantees in place, so that they show the international community that their nuclear program is not being used to develop weapons, or that they’re not developing weapons under the cover of a civilian program. And if Iran is going to violate their agreements, then we would, obviously, be looking at discussing with the Europeans, who have also committed to doing so, looking at going to the Security Council.”

Other reporters pursued the line of questioning. CBS’s John Roberts focussed on the alleged role of the new President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in the 1979 hostage crisis (a role the State Department later denied), inquiring whether the Administration considered this also a “terrorist act” and if it would thus fall under the Bush Doctrine. McClellan would not give a clear answer on this, but simply said that Iran was still considered a “state sponsor of terrorism.”