

THE VERY UGLY TRUTH ABOUT MICHAEL LEDEEN

The 'Universal Fascism' Behind the Cheney Cabal

by Jeffrey Steinberg

The awesome power of a free society committed to a single mission is something [our enemies] cannot imagine. . . . Our unexpectedly quick and impressive victory in Afghanistan is a prelude to a much broader war, which will in all likelihood transform the Middle East for at least a generation, and reshape the politics of many older countries around the world.

—From Michael Ledeen's book,
War Against the Terror Masters

On March 10, 2003, in a revealing profile of President George Bush's political svengali, Karl Rove, the *Washington Post* reported that when the President's man needs advice on the war on terrorism or other national security matters, he turns to one man in particular: Michael Ledeen.

Ledeen told the *Post* that the two men met shortly after Bush's 2000 election. "He said, 'Anytime you have a good idea, tell me.'" Ledeen obliged, passing on faxes to Rove on a regular basis. According to the *Post*, "More than once, Ledeen has seen his ideas, faxed to Rove, become official policy or rhetoric."

Now, as Karl Rove sweats out the possibility of indictment in the Valerie Plame leak investigation, his Ledeen ties may come back to haunt him. And Rove is not alone. Ledeen, according to a wide range of American and Italian sources, has emerged as a central player in the intrigue of the century: the forging of Niger government documents and the use of those shoddy fakes by Vice President Dick Cheney and others, to shove the unjustified and disastrous Iraq War down the

throats of the U.S. Congress, the American people, and the United Nations, on the basis of the bogus claim that Saddam Hussein was on the verge of having a nuclear bomb.

In the wake of the Oct. 28 criminal indictment and resignation of Vice President Cheney's chief of staff and alter ego, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, for his role in the Plame leak, sources report that the Special Counsel probe will now enter an expanded new phase, focussed on more underlying issues of how the United States came into the Iraq War, and the specific role the Niger forgeries hoax played in that process. According to a variety of sources, confidential documents from an Italian parliamentary probe into the Niger hoax, have been recently provided to prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald. Those documents reportedly name a number of American spooks, including Ledeen, as suspects in the hoax: former CIA "Iran-Contra" figure Duane Clarridge; former CIA Rome station chief Allan Wolfe; and Gen. Wayne Downing (USA-ret.), a longtime mentor of the Iraqi National Congress's leader Ahmed Chalabi.

The surfacing of Ledeen's name in the Niger affair sheds important light on the entire nature of what has been labelled "the Cheney-Rumsfeld Cabal," the network of permanent-war fanatics inside the Vice President's Office, the Pentagon, and other corners of the Bush Administration, and in a cluster of neo-conservative think-tanks in Washington, who brought the United States into war with Iraq, and who still, to this day, scheme for other perpetual wars in Southwest Asia, targeting Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt—and in other parts of the world, as well.

A 'Universal Fascist'

Michael Ledeen is not your garden variety neo-conservative, who is typically a former Trotskyist-turned-right-wing "chicken-hawk." While he certainly deserves the "chicken-hawk" label, his pedigree is that of a self-professed "universal fascist," who preaches permanent revolution and counts early-20th-Century fascist Gabriele D'Annunzio, the subject of his doctoral dissertation, as one of his personal idols. As Lyndon LaRouche emphasized, it is Ledeen's open embrace of "universal fascism" that provides a deeper insight into the true character of the Cheney Cabal as a whole.

Echoing the rhetoric of Mussolini and Hitler, Ledeen has written: "D'Annunzian political style—the politics of mass manipulation, the politics of myth and symbol—have become the norm in the modern world."

In his book *Machiavelli on Modern Leadership*, Ledeen wrote: "To be an effective leader, the most prudent method is to ensure that your people are afraid of you. To instill that fear, you must demonstrate that those who attack you will not survive."

In an insightful Oct. 10, 2004 profile in the *Boston Globe*, writers Jeet Heer and David Wagner quoted Ledeen from a 1999 *Society* magazine rant. Ledeen was then demanding the impeachment of President Bill Clinton: "New leaders with an iron will are required to root out the corruption and either reestablish a virtuous state, or to institute a new one. . . . If we bask in false security and drop our guard, the rot spreads, corrupting the entire society. Once that happens, only violent and extremely unpleasant methods can bring us back to virtue."

Ledeen's mentor in his late 1960s studies, Renzo de Felice, made the explicit link between Jacobinism and Fascism in his book *The Illuminati and Revolutionary Mysticism, 1789-1900*, writing, "There is something in common between my Jacobins and a certain kind of Fascism. . . . Fascism wanted to achieve the transformation of society and the individual . . . [toward] a new phase in the history of civilization."

Ledeen launched his own career in neo-Fascist politics in Rome in 1975-77, when he taught history at the University of Rome, served as the Rome correspondent of *The New Republic*, and became involved with the secret Propaganda Two (P-2) Freemasonic Lodge, of wartime Nazi Licio Gelli. P-2 was behind a string of right-wing terrorist attacks and Fascist coup plots in Italy throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, known collectively as the "strategy of tension."

When the Reagan Administration came into office in January 1981, Ledeen was brought on by Secretary of State Alexander Haig as his special advisor. When Haig was dumped from the Reagan Cabinet in 1982, Ledeen was brought into the National Security Council and the Department of Defense (1982-86) as a consultant. He played a central role in the great political scandal of that decade—the Iran-Contra affair. It was Ledeen who made the initial contact with Iranian arms dealer

and swindler, Manucher Ghorbanifar, which launched the arms-for-hostages scheme that nearly brought down the Reagan Presidency.

All the while, according to several former senior U.S. intelligence officials, Ledeen was on the payroll of the Italian military intelligence service, SISMI. Back in the late 1970s and early 80s, the SISMI boss was Gen. Giuseppe Santovito, a member of P-2.

Rome Revisited

It was ostensibly his longstanding ties to Ghorbanifar that brought Ledeen back to Rome in December 2001. Ledeen, once again a Pentagon "consultant," this time to Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, was aggressively promoting regime change in Iraq and Iran. He claimed that his old colleague Ghorbanifar had vital intelligence to assist the United States in the high-priority "war on terrorism." Ledeen spent three days in Rome, accompanied by two full-time Pentagon civilians—Harold Rhode of the Office of Net Assessments and Lawrence Franklin, the Iran desk officer in the Near East and South Asia policy shop. Franklin worked for Feith, and his immediate boss was William Luti, who had just arrived at the Pentagon from the Office of Vice President Cheney. Luti frequently boasted that he really worked for "Scooter," a reference to the now fallen Lewis "Scooter" Libby.

Ledeen's meetings with his two Pentagon colleagues and Ghorbanifar reportedly also involved SISMI head Nicolo Pollari and Italy's Minister of Defense Antonio Martino. Ledeen and Martino were longtime associates, through the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA).

A different version of the meetings has appeared in the Italian daily newspaper *La Repubblica* recently. In a three-part series on the Niger hoax, published Oct. 24-26, 2005, reporters Carlo Bonnini and Giuseppe D'Avanzo reported that Ledeen's meetings with Pollari centered on the Niger-Iraq allegations, which had first surfaced in mid-October 2001. According to this account, after being rebuffed by the Rome CIA Station Chief, Pollari, on the advice of Defense Minister Martino, sought to establish an intelligence channel between Rome and Washington via the "longtime friend of Italy," Ledeen. The backdrop to the whole affair was the desire of Italy's new Prime Minister, and alleged former P-2 Lodge member, Silvio Berlusconi, to build a "special relationship" with the new U.S. President, George W. Bush. Ledeen reportedly became a conduit of the Niger hoax into the White House Iraq Group, the Pentagon's office of Special Plans, and Vice President Cheney.

With Special Counsel Fitzgerald now reportedly probing the Niger hoax, the truth about the whole Niger forgery affair could be unearthed. In the meantime, the more important task at hand is to unmask the true character of the Cheney Cabal, and the in-depth profile of the intriguer Michael Ledeen that follows is the best starting point for that understanding.