

Will Cheney Be Booted Out in Time?

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On April 5, Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, who is investigating the Valerie Plame leak, filed court papers in the Lewis Libby prosecution. In those papers, Fitzgerald revealed that, during his grand jury testimony, Libby, the former chief of staff and chief national security aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, reported that he had been ordered by *Cheney* to leak the contents of a classified National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program, to *New York Times* journalist Judith Miller in July 2003. Cheney told Libby that the NIE leak had been approved by President George Bush, and that this was tantamount to the President declassifying the document. The leak of the NIE was aimed at countering charges by former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, that claims that Iraq was seeking uranium in Africa were false.

Fitzgerald's revelations were immediately front-page news everywhere, with the spin-doctors pointing the finger at President Bush. Such headlines, however, miss the point. There is *no way*, according to his psychological profile, as correctly identified by psychiatrist Dr. Justin Frank in *EIR* April 7, that President Bush could be expected to admit that he authorized such a leak, even if he did (which is not at all clear, given that the source is liar Cheney). What Dr. Frank made clear is that Bush is so disturbed, due to his mental disorder, that he can no longer distinguish between truth and fiction, and is incapable of reliably saying whether or not he gave such orders to Cheney.

Vice President Cheney remains the pivot for the White House crime of leaking and coverup.

The Question Is When

Among Republican Party insiders, the question is no longer *whether* Vice President Dick Cheney is going to be dumped, but *when*. At every level, Republicans are bracing for a crushing electoral defeat in November, likely leading to a Democratic Party majority in the House and the Senate, and a Democratic takeover of a majority of statehouses.

Whether or not a Congressional Democratic majority would immediately begin impeachment proceedings against President Bush and Vice President Cheney, there is no doubt that a Democratic-led Congress would resume its constitutional oversight responsibilities, which have been crushed for the past five years, and place a long-overdue public spotlight on Cheneygate crimes, starting with Halliburton's war profiteering, and the faking of intelligence by the Cheney-Rumsfeld "stovepipe," to shove the Iraq War down the throats

of Congress and the American people.

Recent White House polls show that President Bush is drawing under 50% support *from Republican voters*, with some states, including New Hampshire, showing a GOP Presidential approval rating of 30-35%, according to one party source. And whatever approval ratings the President gets, Vice President Cheney gets half that support—across the board.

While issues such as the Iraq quagmire, the Katrina fiasco, the incredibly shrinking U.S. economy, and the illegal spying on American citizens, all rank among the top issues, driving the Bush-Cheney White House into early lame-duck status. The term most widely used to describe the current Presidency is "incompetent." And that is a hard label to undo.

All this spells a record low GOP voter turnout in November.

A number of well-placed Republican strategists report that the Bush inner core of White House advisors is already planning to use the November election fiasco as the pretext to dump Dick Cheney as Vice President. "Blame Cheney, force his resignation, and move on," is the scheme being floated by Karl Rove circles. This, the argument goes, will make the White House relevant again, because whoever is chosen to replace the discredited Dick Cheney as Vice President will be a natural frontrunner for the 2008 GOP Presidential nomination.

Sen. John McCain's (R-Ariz.) embarrassing performance on April 2 on "Meet the Press," in which he praised George Bush up and down the line, could only be explained by his hope of stepping in as Cheney's replacement, and as the savior of the "Bush Presidential legacy," giving him the inside track for the 2008 Presidential nomination.

More and more reports are bubbling to the surface about a deep rift between Karl Rove and Cheney—dating back at least to the Spring of 2004, when the Vice learned that Rove was testing the idea of dumping the unpopular Cheney from the re-election team. More recently, news accounts claim that Rove was the secret source for Special Counsel Fitzgerald, on the existence of 250 e-mails from the Vice President's Office, all dealing with the Valerie Plame leak, which had been withheld. Fitzgerald obtained those missing e-mails from the White House early this year.

It is no secret that Fitzgerald has the goods on Cheney, and will call in the Vice President for further questioning—after the November elections. A recent Internet column by Jason Leopold revived a story first published by *EIR* in 2004,



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It's no longer a question of whether he's going to get the boot, but only when.

naming Cheney aide John Hannah as another Fitzgerald informant on the Vice President's direct role in the Plame leak.

All these factors point to a very nasty "November Surprise" for the Vice President.

Too Late

"November Surprise" scenarios aside, the reality of the current situation is that a post-November departure of Cheney will be too late. The issues that will decide the fate of the United States and the world are playing out over the next 60-90 days, and if Cheney remains on the job during that period, the chances of avoiding catastrophe are slim.

On the other hand, as Lyndon LaRouche emphasized in a series of recent interviews and discussions, if Cheney is dumped from office now, these otherwise impossible crises can be solved.

What are the most pressing crises? First, Iraq: By all estimates, unless a viable coalition government is installed in power in the next 60 days, Iraq will degenerate, hopelessly and irreversibly, into a civil war of ethnic and religious cleansing, that will soon spread into neighboring Persian Gulf states.

The desperation of the Iraq situation was underscored over the weekend, when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw flew to Baghdad, for two days of hard-nosed talks with top Iraqi officials. According to U.S. intelligence sources, the trip was a fiasco.

As *EIR* revealed on April 7, in a cover story titled "Halliburton's War," Cheney was *the* number one saboteur of an exit strategy from Iraq in May 2003. At the same time, he nixed bilateral talks with Iran, that offered the last best hope for cooperation on a wide range of issues. Now, Cheney is pushing for a bombing attack on Iran's nuclear research sites, as early as this month, according to a number of Washington sources.

The other crisis that is hitting now is the imminent bankruptcy of General Motors, which could be triggered by a

United Auto Workers strike against Delphi, GM's major parts supplier. Financial community sources warn that a GM bankruptcy would likely trigger a blowout of the credit derivatives market, and a possible meltdown of the international financial system.

By dumping Cheney and his longtime partner in crime, Don Rumsfeld, President Bush would at least stand a chance of starting out with a new team, willing to tackle these grave crises.

On March 30, the *Financial Times'* Washington commentator, Edward Luce, bluntly called for Cheney and Rumsfeld to be sacked. Citing the resignation of White House Chief of Staff Andy Card, and his replacement by Office of Management and Budget chief Josh Bolton, Luce wrote that the housecleaning has to go much deeper, to do any good. "Sacking Dick Cheney or Donald Rumsfeld, the two figures most associated with the Administration's disdain for the advice of others, would tear up Mr. Bush's record of unbroken loyalty to his friends. But it would signal loud and clear that he was sincere in wanting to change direction."

Libby Spills the Beans

According to the latest filing by Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, Lewis Libby testified that Vice President Cheney thought it was "very important" for key aspects of the National Intelligence Estimate to come out publicly, but that he (Libby) was reluctant to discuss it with Miller because it was classified. Fitzgerald continues:

"Defendant [Libby] testified that the Vice President later advised him that the President had authorized defendant to disclose relevant portions of the NIE. Defendant testified that he also spoke to David Addington, then counsel to the Vice President, whom defendant considered to be an expert in national security law, and Mr. Addington opined that Presidential authorization to publicly disclose a document amounted to a declassification of the document."

A few days later, Cheney specifically designated Libby to speak with the press, in place of his usual press spokesman, about the NIE and Wilson's trip, including disclosing information from a cable authored by Wilson. On this occasion, Libby spoke to *Time* magazine's Matt Cooper, and again to Judith Miller.

What is absolutely clear from Fitzgerald's account, is that Cheney—not Bush nor anyone else in the White House—was the one running the operation to discredit Wilson, and that he was personally directing Libby's activities.