

Cheney's Ouster Is Key to U.S. Survival

by Jeffrey Steinberg

A number of senior U.S. policymakers responded instantaneously to Lyndon LaRouche's April 20 document, "World System on Weimar Collapse Curve," with shocked recognition that their own timetable for a major, top-down political shakeup of the Bush White House, was way off the mark. LaRouche's highlighting of the Weimar-style hyperinflationary spike in primary commodity prices over the past 16 months (see *EIR*, April 28, 2006), and his forecast that the present global financial system cannot survive the third quarter of 2006 without a major change in policy, suddenly pushed the issue of Vice President Dick Cheney to the top of the strategic agenda.

LaRouche zeroed in on Cheney at the start of his April 27 international webcast, published in full in this issue. After walking the audience through the documentation of the strategic commodities price explosion, LaRouche declared: "This means that the present system is finished! And it's finished this year, unless dramatic interventions to radically change the situation are made by the U.S. government. Which means you've got to get the nerd out of the White House. And Cheney first."

LaRouche continued: "Cheney, I understand, could be in deep trouble, this week, or next week. It's already in process. There's no chance this nation would survive, number one, unless we change the composition of the Presidency. Because this President will never do what's required. He hasn't got the brains to do it, and he'd be 'agin it'—sort of like the Mortimer Snerd of the White House.

"And if Cheney's not out, it's not possible to make the kind of changes that are required, which are changes that are consistent with what Franklin Roosevelt began to do in early March of 1933, at the time of his inauguration. Unless we go

back to Franklin Roosevelt, and do it this year, this nation is not going to make it. We're going to Hell—and we're going to take the rest of the world with us."

Fortunately, there are some signs that there is renewed momentum to dump the Vice President. For the first time, senior Washington sources report that a faction inside the Bush White House itself is pressing for Cheney's ouster. There is some speculation that Karl Rove, President Bush's senior political strategist, has now joined the "Dump Cheney" bandwagon. If that proves true, the consequences for the Veep could be politically deadly.

The Fitzgerald Grand Jury

On April 26, Rove made his fifth appearance before Independent Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald's Alexandria, Va. grand jury investigation of the "outing" of CIA official Valerie Plame. According to news accounts and government sources, Rove's attorney recently received a "target" letter from Fitzgerald, indicating that the senior Presidential aide is likely to be indicted—for perjury and/or obstruction of justice. Government sources have told *EIR* that Rove's testimony could be vital, in shaping whether the Independent Counsel probe remains focussed on the Vice President and his top aides, or whether it broadens to include top Oval Office and National Security Council personnel. These sources indicate that the pace of the Fitzgerald probe was greatly accelerated, as the result of recent court filings by attorneys for indicted former Cheney chief-of-staff Lewis "Scooter" Libby. Libby's lawyers indicated that they intend to call Rove as a defense witness when the case goes to trial early next year.

Other well-placed Washington sources indicate that there has been a significant rift between Rove and Cheney, since

early in the 2004 re-election campaign, when Rove floated the idea of dumping Cheney from the ticket, due to the Vice President's growing unpopularity. These sources suggest that Rove has already provided the Independent Counsel with damning evidence about Cheney's personal role in leaking the identity of Plame, who in addition to being a CIA officer, is the wife of former Ambassador Joseph Wilson IV.

The Rove-Cheney-Fitzgerald drama took on even greater significance on April 27, when Federal Judge Reggie Walton issued a 31-page opinion, denying Libby's motion to dismiss the indictment. Libby's lawyers had argued that the appointment of Fitzgerald as Independent Counsel had been unconstitutional. Judge Walton's ruling shot down all of Libby's arguments, in stark language: "The integrity of the rule of law," Judge Walton wrote, "which is a core ingredient of the American system of government, is challenged to the greatest degree when high-level government officials come under suspicion for violating the law. . . . For obvious reasons, the Attorney General recused himself and the Deputy Attorney General concluded that someone removed from the hierarchy of the Department of Justice should investigate individuals holding some of the country's highest executive branch offices."

Editorial Calls To Dump Cheney

Further fueling the "Dump Cheney" momentum, the *Los Angeles Times* published a lead editorial on Sunday, April 23, bluntly demanding that Cheney be fired. "If President Bush hopes the 'shake-up' of his administration initiated last week will re-energize his listless presidency, he's bound to be disappointed," the editorial began. "A far more audacious makeover is needed—one that sends Vice President Dick Cheney into early retirement."

After reviewing the collapse of the Bush Presidency, the *Times* editorial warned, "The remaking of the president in the public eye likely will require more than last week's game of musical chairs." After demanding the firing of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the editors concluded: "Suppose Bush didn't stop there. Suppose he also asked Cheney, his mentor and friend but an even more polarizing figure than Rumsfeld, to step down. . . . Having changed his tune, the president should also think about changing the company he keeps—big time, as Dick Cheney would say."

On April 24, the *New York Times* ran a puff piece on former Secretary of State and Bush family confidant James Baker III, whom the President has recently anointed to head a Congressionally-funded Iraq Study Group. The article compared Baker's potential role with that of Dean Acheson, another former Secretary of State, who played a pivotal role in convincing President Lyndon Johnson not to seek re-election in 1968. Republican Party sources have told *EIR* that Baker, an old, bitter political adversary of Cheney, would like nothing better than to deliver the bad news to the Veep: It's time to go.

The *Los Angeles Times* editorial appeared the same day that *The Sunday Times*, the semi-official voice of the City of London financier establishment, also called for Cheney's ouster, citing a wide range of Republican Party officials. Writing from Washington, *Sunday Times* correspondent Sarah Baxter reported that "Republicans are urging President George W. Bush to dump Dick Cheney as Vice President and replace him with Condoleezza Rice if he is serious about presenting a new face to the jaded American public. They believe that only the sacrifice of one or more of the big beasts of the jungle, such as Cheney or Donald Rumsfeld, the defence secretary, will convince voters that Bush understands the need for a fresh start."

Baxter even quoted Fred Barnes, of the neo-con *Weekly Standard*, calling for Cheney's departure. Barnes called for Bush to announce that "Dick Cheney will be around as an outside advisor and I can call him on the phone, but I'd like to anoint somebody who I think will be the next leader of the United States." As silly as the prospect of a Condi Rice appointment as Cheney's replacement is, the *Times* article ended on a deadly serious note, directed personally at George W. Bush: "Only one two-term victor has been more unpopular than Bush at a similar six-year stage in his presidency—Richard Nixon in the months before he was impeached."

Impeachment Calls and the Jefferson Rules

Bush's own impeachment is also on the political agenda, along with the calls for Cheney's ouster. As of this writing, three state legislatures are deliberating on impeachment resolutions against President Bush—California, Illinois, and Vermont. The California resolution, introduced by Assemblyman Paul Koretz, a Los Angeles area Democrat, names both Bush and Cheney, and mandates the California delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to "cause to be instituted in the Congress proper proceedings for the investigation of President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard Cheney, to the end that they may be impeached and removed from office."

All three of the impeachment initiatives cite Section 603 of Thomas Jefferson's *Manual* of the House of Representatives as the basis for a state legislature initiating an impeachment proceeding. Between 1797 and 1801, then-Vice President Thomas Jefferson prepared a *Manual of Parliamentary Practice*, to guide him in his capacity as President Pro Tem of the U.S. Senate. In 1837, the U.S. House of Representatives formally adopted the Jefferson rules to "govern the House in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the standing rules and orders of the House and joint rules of the Senate and House of Representatives."

Section 603, "Inception of impeachment proceedings," specifically states that impeachment proceedings can be initiated "by charges transmitted from the legislature of a state or territory, or from a grand jury."