

Rosenbergs, Senate Intelligence Committee chairman Shelby, a Conservative Revolution relic, agreed.

This reference to the Rosenbergs, who were executed for allegedly passing nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union, unfortunately has relevance to the current situation. The Soviet Union, with its scientific tradition and capabilities, did not require stolen secrets to develop its nuclear arms capability. China, too, developed the atomic bomb in 1964 in a massive national effort, after being denied all technology by the U.S.S.R. and the United States, more rapidly than either other nuclear power had.

Senator Shelby fulminated about U.S. national security, and said that he is planning to hold closed-door hearings starting on March 17, where his first witness will be FBI Director Louis Freeh. According to the *New York Times*, the discovery of the alleged Chinese espionage came to light while Congress was investigating the role of foreign money in the 1996 Presidential campaign and as charges emerged that Beijing had secretly funneled money to the Democratic Party.

The same day, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.), a notorious racist, said that the Senate may consider holding the administration in contempt of Congress in an attempt to expose more “security violations” in relation to China. On March 11, Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), who sits on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, published his own diatribe claiming that the United States “may now be at significantly greater risk from a Chinese ballistic missile attack.”

Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jianxuan dismissed the charges as baseless and “very irresponsible” during his Beijing news conference: “There are some people who want to stop the United States from exporting normal high-technology products to China. I think this will not be beneficial to the interests of the United States.”

The most recent operation has been the firing of the Chinese-born scientist Wen Ho Lee from Los Alamos National Laboratory. Unfortunately, Department of Energy Secretary Bill Richardson on March 8 recommended to the University of California, which operates the laboratory, that it fire Lee for “failing to properly inform the Laboratory and DOE about contact with people from a sensitive country; specific instances of failing to properly safeguard classified material; and *apparently* attempting to deceive the laboratory about security-related issues” (emphasis added).

However, even the FBI, which had been investigating Lee, has admitted that it has no proof of any wrongdoing, and therefore has no ground to arrest him. Gaffney again raised the specter of the McCarthy period, in a March 8 press release, claiming that Los Alamos has been a “security problem” since “Julius Rosenberg, half a century ago went shopping for atomic secrets for the Soviet Union.”

Sen. Bob Smith (R-N.H.), chairman of a Senate Armed Services subcommittee, has also joined the fray, calling for the firing of National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, a Clinton loyalist, over the “spy cases.”

Principals Committee readies ‘Final Solution’ in the Middle East

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

The Anglo-American aggression against Iraq is scheduled to escalate through this month, and, by the latest, in April, to culminate in a ground offensive by special forces, which will attempt to topple the government of Saddam Hussein. This is the plan, elaborated by Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry Hugh Shelton. Over the first two weeks of March, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen followed in Shelton’s footsteps on a tour of the region, to discuss the plan with the Arab Gulf governments, and Israel. His discussions with the Israelis, though not publicized, most certainly dealt with the other prong of the regional offensive: Israel’s planned attack against Lebanon and/or Syria.

The timing of both projected offensives, is determined by events outside the purely military context. The British, Shelton, and Cohen are eager to see through their reenactment of the Panama invasion before the April summit of NATO in Washington, during which they intend to present the “new NATO doctrine” tested against Iraq, as a *fait accompli*. Israel’s scheduling considerations are largely shaped by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s calculation, that a campaign into Lebanon could enhance his electoral chances, if the hostilities can be brought to a successful conclusion well enough in advance of the May 17 vote in Israel.

There is no guarantee that either option will function according to prescription. If the insane Shelton plan is implemented, and special forces enter Iraq, all indications are that civil war will be the result. Failure in the putsch attempt would then put the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons on the table. This, like Israel’s aggression against Lebanon/Syria, will be vehemently opposed by Russia, China, and France. Thus, this two-front conflict constitutes a test case for the new NATO doctrine of Shelton et al., of utterly unforeseeable ultimate consequences.

Cohen readies the troops

For the first time on such a tour of the Persian Gulf and Middle East, the U.S. Defense Secretary openly discussed ground troop deployments. As noted in an Associated Press wire March 10, “The U.S. military is taking a series of low-profile military steps to improve its capability for ground combat in the Persian Gulf region—even as the high-profile air battle over northern and southern Iraq thunders on.” Cohen

succeeded in wrenching an agreement from the Saudis, to run joint ground troop maneuvers, and focussed, in his talks with King Abdallah of Jordan, on providing military and financial input, to make the Hashemite kingdom's ground forces more mobile and and stronger. Although it is highly unlikely that the U.K. and U.S. would deploy Arab ground troops, the admission that this was a topic of talks, contributes to preparing public opinion for the next phase of the war. The illusion Cohen and Shelton would like to create, is that there is such support from the neighboring regimes and their military.

Cohen was most explicit, in remarks he made to U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. Inspecting a battery of eight launchers for Patriot anti-missile missiles, and a launch drill carried out by 100 American soldiers, at the Riyadh Air Base on March 7, Cohen told the troops that they must be "able to respond to virtually any type of challenge or crisis." Cohen went on to specify, they had to be prepared "to take on someone like Saddam [Hussein], or be able to go to war in Korea if that should become necessary."

The bellicose posture provoked an angry response from the host governments as well as the press. On March 8, as Cohen was scheduled to arrive, the Abu Dhabi paper *Al-Khaleej* published an article saying, "William Cohen's tour this time includes a new plan to establish a Kurdish entity in the north of Iraq . . . which would serve as a launch pad for the Iraq opposition." In his talks with the Sheikh of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Cohen had to deny that the projected coup in Baghdad would entail a break-up of Iraq. "I pointed out that the press accounts that the U.S. is trying to organize or orchestrate a break-up of Iraq are completely false," he told reporters after the talks. "There have been a number of stories and rumors that have circulated locally that that is the objective and goal of the U.S. There is no basis to that. In fact, we have said time and time again that Iraq's integrity must be maintained. Our goal is to one day help bring about a change in regime so that the people of Iraq can in fact rejoin the international community as a full-fledged member."

The Defense Secretary was forced to reiterate these denials, and others, at a press conference the following day in Doha, Qatar, where he was accused of exacerbating tensions in order to sell weapons, and "beating the drums of war against Iraq." On his tour, Cohen had in fact offered all the Gulf states intelligence sharing on the Iranian and Iraqi missile launches. Cohen said the Pentagon was ready to set up receivers, in the U.A.E., Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain. This, he said, would establish a "direct link between what our sensors pick up and then communicate that to them to keep them apprised of ballistic-missile testing taking place in the region." In addition, Cohen promised to deliver advanced U.S. AMRAAM air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia during his meeting with King Fahd, and told U.A.E. officials that a \$6 billion sale of F-16 fighters to the U.A.E. remained on track. "I think we are moving ahead with the proposal," he said,

after talks on the 80 fighter deal with the Chief of Staff of the U.A.E. Armed Forces. "We hope to continue to make progress on it."

But despite the sweet talk and heavy weapons deals, the Gulf sheikhdoms would not openly support the U.K.-U.S. strategy for war. Throughout Cohen's tour, there were no joint press conferences with his hosts, apparently out of their desire not to be publicly associated with him. The one exception was in Doha, where he was joined in a press conference by Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabor Al-Thani on March 9. When Sheikh Hamad was asked about the Qatari position on the U.K.-U.S. aerial bombardments against Iraq, he said, "We wish not to see Iraq being bombed daily." As for the U.A.E., although no press conference was scheduled, government representatives managed to get the message across: When asked by a journalist if the subject of air attacks was raised at the meeting with Cohen, a U.A.E. official replied, "The position of the U.A.E. has not changed. It is opposed to the military strikes on Iraq and favors a diplomatic solution through the UN Security Council." The official said that the U.A.E. was also "against any change of Iraqi regime that is imposed from outside," and that it supported Iraq's unity and territorial integrity.

As the Chinese press agencies via Xinhua reported, in a wire entitled "Cohen Receives Minimal Support for Air Attacks," the American Defense Secretary ended his Gulf tour, "with no public expressions of support for U.S. air strikes against Iraq." It added, "He also received blunt criticism from U.S. friends in the region." After noting that Cohen justified the strikes as self-defense, and offered the Gulf states shared intelligence, etc., the Chinese wires concluded, "The response from Gulf leaders to all of this was either a discreet silence on the issue of Iraq or frank criticism of the air strikes."

Cohen and the second front

Significantly, it was after having toured the Persian Gulf and visited Egypt, that Cohen landed in Israel for a final stop-over. Officially, he was to meet his counterpart, Defense Minister Moshe Arens. But according to highly reliable sources, Cohen also met Netanyahu, Labor Party leader Ehud Barak, former Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, and others. At his meetings, there were also officials of the Mossad and Israeli military intelligence present. In the words of one insider, this was "not normal diplomacy; it was a planning meeting."

Just what was being planned, can be surmised from the direction of developments inside Israel and abroad, over the days and weeks prior to Cohen's visit. Most significant was the targetting of Syria, in the British press and in the Israeli military establishment. On March 8, the London *Times* defense editor, Michael Evans, penned a report, with absolutely no basis in fact, to the effect that Syria was providing Iraq with military supplies. The article, "Damascus to Rearm Saddam," cited unnamed "Middle East intelligence sources," to the ef-

fect that “a secret deal has been agreed between Syria and Iraq for the supply of military equipment to Baghdad. . . . Relations between the two countries have been improving significantly in recent months, with agreements already signed to develop both political and economic cooperation. Now, after a new deal between the Syrian and Iraqi intelligence services, military equipment valued at about £60 million is to be shipped across the border.” Referring to the shortage of spare parts in Iraq, due to the embargo, Evans wrote, that “under the Damascus agreement, Syrian spare parts for military equipment would be converted for use by the Iraqi army, the sources said. The parts would include engines for Russian-made tanks and tracks for armored fighting vehicles. Syria is also expected to supply spares for anti-aircraft radar facilities—hit by recent American and British bombing—lorries, aircraft and helicopters, and ammunition.”

The same day, the Israel daily *Ha'aretz* ran an article by its defense expert, Ze'ev Schiff, which shed light on the military options being considered in Israel against Syria. Schiff said that there were two factions in Israel, one in favor of solving the problem of southern Lebanon through diplomatic means, the other preferring a military option. The hawks, he wrote, were ignoring the guideline of the former Defense Minister Mordechai, “who did not allow the fighting against Hezbollah to develop into a military confrontation with Syria. It is also the view favored by Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz, who maintains that as long as there is a chance of peace talks with Syria, a military confrontation should be avoided, unless the government decides otherwise,” Schiff wrote.

Schiff, who is usually privy to insider information from military intelligence circles, went on to say, however, that the government had apparently decided “otherwise.” “There are those with a different perspective. Arens is one of them.” They have the analysis that “Damascus has no strategic or military aces up its sleeve but does know how to effectively utilize the few good cards it holds against Israel, in view of our weak position. Thus,” he concluded from this reading, “Syria must be told categorically that it is risking war with Israel,” because Israel cannot be expected to let the Syrians get away with utilizing Hamas or the Hezbollah forces. Schiff was careful to say, that this of course did not mean that Arens et al. were preparing war on Syria; rather, he claimed, “a wider conflict could develop if the situation gets out of control.”

In light of the article planted by the *Times* on the same day, it is interesting to note that Schiff listed the options Syria had as follows: “Syria could also disrupt Israel’s relations with the Palestinian Authority or Jordan, or could upgrade its joint operations with Iran *and even Iraq*.”

The following day, March 9, the same paper reported on what Defense Minister Arens was actually doing. Arens, it said, had instructed the General Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to reexamine the military situation in Lebanon and present him with various “alternatives” to the present

restrictive use of the forces on Lebanese territory. Arens told reporters on March 8, that he was “not convinced that the way to deal with the Lebanese problem is necessarily through negotiations,” and he added that when he talked about alternatives, he was referring both to “the territory and to the rules of the game.” In the view of Arens—who, together with Ariel Sharon, had launched the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, “Lebanon is not a country in the real sense of the word. It is ruled by the Syrians. There is just a pretense of it being an independent country.” He also said that “there is no chance of reaching an agreement with the Syrians without a total [Syrian] surrender of the Golan. Anyone who says differently is deluding himself or the public.”

The upshot of Arens’s review of the deployment in Lebanon, is that Israeli military, currently confined to the southern part of the country, should feel free to occupy the entire land area, an idea shared by the IDF command. The perspective, then, which Cohen probably discussed with the Israeli intelligence and military leaders, was for an Israeli drive into Lebanon. According to an Israeli strategist, this has been being prepared by Netanyahu, who has “placed his selected hawks in the leading positions of the armed forces.” The strategist added that Netanyahu planned to “cancel the understandings with the Hezbollah that have been maintained since 1996,” regarding the rules of engagement in southern Lebanon. “This,” he continued, “could mean a move, soon, into Lebanon, and possible confrontation with Syria.”

Britain’s Fatchett runs war against Iraq

by Scott Thompson

On Feb. 22-25, The Right Honorable Derek Fatchett made his fourth visit to the United States since he became the British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with ministerial responsibility for the Middle East, in 1997. Fatchett’s mission is to coordinate the decade-long, insane war against Iraq, and specifically to topple Saddam Hussein. In this, he is coordinating closely with the U.S. Principals Committee of Vice President Al Gore, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Henry H. Shelton, Defense Secretary William Cohen, and other top officials who have effectively carried out a coup d’état against President Clinton (as described elsewhere in this *Feature*).

A British Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Office (FCO) announcement on Fatchett’s trip said that he would start in New York, where he would discuss not only the Middle East, but also his responsibilities for North Africa and Asia, with the leadership of the United Nations. And, on the