

Drumbeat Grows Louder Against Dick Cheney

by Michele Steinberg

Despite White House claims to the contrary, several senior U.S. intelligence sources contend that Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, was at the center of the Valerie Plame leak—regardless of whether or not he was the person who made any of the phone calls to the half-dozen journalists who were fed the information, blowing the CIA operative's cover. According to one source, four months *prior* to the *New York Times* publication of a commentary by Plame's husband, former ambassador Joseph Wilson, debunking Cheney's claims about Iraq obtaining uranium from Africa, Vice President Cheney had tasked his staff to do a "thorough workup" on Wilson and his family. The source indicated that the targetting of Wilson came around the same time when International Atomic Energy Agency head Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei came out publicly, in early March, calling the purported Niger government documents on attempted Iraqi purchases of "yellowcake" uranium precursor, forgeries.

One source noted that Cheney may have leaked the Valerie Plame information through members of the Defense Policy Board (DPB). On Oct. 7, *Washington Post* reporter Dana Milbank had written of DPB ex-head Richard Perle's long-standing relationship to Robert Novak, the syndicated columnist, whose July 6 article named Wilson's wife as a longtime CIA official. Two separate U.S. intelligence sources told *EIR* that Perle's name should not be excluded from the list of "senior Administration officials" who may have done the leaking—at the behest of Cheney and/or Libby.

Lyndon LaRouche, the tenth Democratic Party Presidential candidate in the 2004 elections, has demanded that the Bush Administration "come clean," and identify the "senior Administration officials" who leaked Valerie Plame's iden-

tity, thereby violating Federal laws, endangering the life of a covert U.S. intelligence agent, and further compromising U.S. national security by endangering an unknown number of U.S. intelligence assets abroad.

LaRouche stated, point-blank, that the leak was done on behalf of Vice President Dick Cheney. The Attorney General, John Ashcroft, cannot be trusted to conduct a thorough probe of this felony crime, LaRouche continued. The President of the United States can find out who did the leaking, and who ordered the leaks, and he has an obligation to the American people to get to the bottom of this sordid affair.

LaRouche added that no government official would have done the leaking, without the backing of higher-ups, given that the identification of a U.S. intelligence official is a crime punishable by a significant jail sentence. Unless the leakers knew that they were going to be protected, they would not have run the risk.

LaRouche called for the appointment of a special counsel, to take the probe outside the Department of Justice. He further called for the Washington field office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, rather than FBI headquarters, to conduct the investigation.

Worse than Watergate

On Oct. 3, in an article for Salon.com, titled "More Vicious than Tricky Dick," former Nixon White House Counsel John Dean wrote: "I thought I had seen political dirty tricks as foul as they could get, but I was wrong. In blowing the cover of CIA agent Valerie Plame to take political revenge on her husband, Ambassador Joseph Wilson, for telling the truth, Bush's people have out-Nixoned Nixon's people. And my former colleagues were not amateurs by any means."



War profiteering off a new Vietnam, the latest straw in the scandals closing around Vice President Dick Cheney, may be the last. Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche said on Oct. 7 that Cheney's ouster had to be accomplished in 30 days to head off the threatened spread of new wars in the Mideast and Korea.

Dean was the lead witness in the Watergate scandal, which led to President Richard Nixon's resignation and jail terms for top White House aides. He is now a legal columnist, who was one of the first who insisted—in a column titled “The Deadly Serious Crime of Naming CIA Operatives”—that the White House was “stonewalling about an obvious leak,” citing White House spokesman Scott McClellan's statement that “absolutely no information . . . suggests there is any truth” to the allegation that Administration officials had leaked Plame Wilson's identity to reporters.

In an Aug. 15, 2003 column for the online publication findlaw.com, Dean cited the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Intelligence Identities and Protection Act of 1982, as the Federal criminal laws that could apply.

Yet, even after CIA Director George Tenet referred the investigation to the Justice Department, and after numerous members of Congress called for an independent counsel to conduct the investigation, and for Attorney General John Ashcroft to recuse himself, McClellan continues to make statements “exonerating” top White House officials. So far, McClellan has “cleared” Karl Rove, Libby, and National Security Council Middle East director Elliot Abrams (who was already convicted, then pardoned, for the crime of lying to Congress in the Iran-Contra affair).

But it will take more than “press spokesman” statements to take the heat off of Dick Cheney, as the documentation of official Congressional inquiries shows. Cheney is under the gun in a growing number of cases.

There is the Energy Task Force, where Cheney will not release records of his discussions with Enron, the ex-energy giant, whose executives admit to criminal actions.

Furthermore, there is mounting evidence that Cheney is using the massive Iraq reconstruction budget—President Bush asked for an additional \$87 billion for Iraq in Fiscal Year 2004—to fund one of the biggest unauthorized corporate bailout efforts in American history—at a handsome profit for Cheney and his former company Halliburton.

Under the new \$87 billion plan, Halliburton is to receive an additional \$2.1 billion—just to repair the Iraqi oil fields. Sources report that so far, Halliburton has spent the bulk of these billions in constructing housing and security for own its personnel in Iraq. Hardly a penny has gone to the benefit of the Iraqi people.

Moreover, the fact that Cheney lied on national television on Sept. 14, 2003, when he said that he had severed all his personal financial ties to Halliburton, is documented in a Congressional Research Service study, commissioned by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.).

Then there is the manipulation of Congress and the American people, with scare stories of Iraqi nuclear weapons and links to the Sept. 11 attacks, which Cheney made, both in speeches, and in on-the-record proclamations on Meet the Press in September 2002, March 2003, and September 2003.

And not least is the leaking of the identity of Plame, an 18-year veteran of the CIA, who worked overseas under a “non-official cover,”—i.e., outside of the protection of a dip-

lomatic posting—which came as the direct result of Wilson’s February 2002 trip to Niger, to investigate allegations of Iraq’s was yellowcake uranium purchases. Cheney had tasked the intelligence community to probe the Iraq-Niger story, and, despite his claims to the contrary, Cheney was fully briefed on the results of the Wilson trip, which debunked it.

Cheney ‘Behind the Curtain’

The Oct. 13 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* featured a cover story on Cheney, confirming that he is the most powerful Vice President in American history, and the mastermind of the Bush Administration’s Iraq war policy, and all matters hardline.

Noting that Cheney is now under intense fire for the Administration’s Iraq debacle, and for his role in the Wilson scandal, the cover story, entitled, “The Man Behind the Curtain,” reported on recent statements by Sen. Chuck Hagel, a moderate Nebraska Republican, who has questioned the rationale for going to war against Iraq. In a CNBC interview, asked about the Wilson leak, Hagel stated that President Bush “has that main responsibility to see this through and see it through quickly, and that would include, if I was President, sitting down with my Vice President and asking what he knows about it.”

The article is based primarily on sources who were officials of the Bush “41” Administration, or who are close to the Bush family. And one can only ask: If this is what they are saying in public, what are they saying in private discussions? One former advisor to Bush “41” says: “The whole Iraq situation was filtered through Cheney, and he gave the President a very skewed view.”

A source identified only as a senior advisor to a former Republican President, says: “Cheney is not always right, but he’s always certain. He and his allies thought they were invincible; that this would be the American century; that we could reshape the world any way we wanted to. Welcome to the real world.”

Following suit, both *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines also put the “leak” story on their covers.

But media coverage is not enough. LaRouche made the obvious point to be investigated: Who gave the orders, *not* who dialed the telephone? And, who mapped out the character assassination campaign?

For several months, numerous Congressmen have called for investigations, or have written official letters—most of which have gone unanswered—to the Executive branch about aspects of Cheney’s corruption, disinformation, or other malfeasance in the Iraq buildup, and the occupation. While the calls for full-scale hearings have been blocked by the White House in combination with the House and Senate GOP leadership, the Republicans’ wall of silence is beginning to crumble, with Hagel calling on Bush to do the write thing, and Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) calling for an independent counsel.

Documentation

The Coming Fall Of Dick Cheney

by Carl Osgood and Arthur Ticknor

Despite White House and GOP Congressional stonewalling and grandstanding, there are serious and continuing efforts by the Congress to investigate Vice President Dick Cheney’s Iraq War disinformation, and his profiteering from the war. Ironically, the latest investigations were triggered by two Administration actions that attempted to answer or evade criticism about the war: the first, concerns the leaking of classified information about a covert CIA operative; the second, the Sept. 14 lie by Cheney to “Meet the Press” host, Tim Russert, that he has “no financial ties” to Halliburton. Excerpts from major Congressional statements and press releases follow:

Deferred Salary and Stock Options

Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg’s (D-N.J.) Sept. 25 press release, “Cheney Deferred Salary and Stock Options Constitute a ‘Financial Interest in Halliburton: Nonpartisan Agency Analysis Conflicts With Cheney’s Denials of ‘Financial Interest’ in Company Reaping Billions From Administration Contracts”:

“Senator Frank R. Lautenberg released a CRS Report today that confirms that receiving deferred salary and holding stock options in a corporation does constitute a ‘financial interest’ under Federal ethics standards. This finding directly conflicts with statements released by the Vice President’s office after it was revealed that the Vice President continues to receive deferred salary from Halliburton and holds 433,333 Halliburton stock options. The controversy arose when Vice President Cheney made the following statement on the September 14th edition of Meet the Press:

“ ‘And since I left Halliburton to become George Bush’s vice president, I’ve severed all my ties with the company, gotten rid of all my financial interest. I have no financial interest in Halliburton of any kind and haven’t had, now, for over three years.’ ”

“After the Vice President was confronted with information to the contrary, his office continued to deny any financial tie, arguing that by taking out an insurance policy on the deferred salary and assigning his after-tax proceeds from the sale of unexercised options to charity, a financial interest no longer existed. The CRS Report explicitly rejects this dubious line of reasoning, finding that financial ties continue despite those steps.”