

Yes, Dick, You Are a Liar

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Vice President Dick Cheney spent the second half of November ranting against Administration critics who dared accuse him of lying the United States into a disastrous war with Iraq. Speaking on Nov. 21 at the American Enterprise Institute, Cheney snarled that anyone making such accusations is “reprehensible” and practically guilty of high treason. His scheduled 90-minute appearance at the primo neo-con think-tank in Washington, where his wife Lynne is a resident fellow, lasted a total of 19 minutes. Cheney came, he ranted, and he departed, without taking a single question.

The Vice President is a man with something to hide. The simple truth is: Cheney did lie, repeatedly, to bludgeon the U.S. Congress into approving an unnecessary and disastrous invasion and occupation of Iraq. According to several eyewitness accounts, Cheney personally lied to scores of members of the U.S. Senate, claiming that the White House had rock-solid proof that Saddam Hussein was close to building a nuclear bomb, and that war was the only option. No such evidence existed—and Cheney knew it.

Cheney’s favorite Iraqi liar, Dr. Ahmed Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), now a deputy prime minister, all but gloated over his and Cheney’s war-by-deception scam in an infamous Feb. 19, 2004 interview with the *Daily Telegraph*. Confronted on the piles of INC-fabricated intelligence that helped lead the United States to war in Iraq, Chalabi shrugged his shoulders, and said, “We are heroes in error. As far as we’re concerned, we’ve been entirely successful. That tyrant Saddam is gone and the Americans are in Baghdad. What was said before is not important.”

Not so. Now, despite Cheney’s campaign of obstruction, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) is scheduled to produce a Phase II report on the role of policymakers, starting with the Vice President, in the so-called “intelligence failures” leading up to the Iraq invasion. No doubt, there were some significant intelligence failures—notably, failures of nerve by senior intelligence community bureaucrats, to resist

White House pressure to “spin” the intelligence to justify invasion. But the overriding factor in the rush to war was a campaign of lies by Cheney, and by what Col. Lawrence Wilkerson (USA-ret.), former Secretary of State Colin Powell’s former chief of staff, dubbed the “Cheney-Rumsfeld Cabal.”

In a *Los Angeles Times* op-ed on Oct. 25, 2005, Colonel Wilkerson declared: “In President Bush’s first term, some of the most important decisions about U.S. national security—including vital decisions about postwar Iraq—were made by a secretive, little-known cabal. It was made up of a very small group of people led by Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. . . . Its insular and secret workings were efficient and swift—not unlike the decision-making one would associate more with a dictatorship than a democracy. . . . But the secret process was ultimately a failure. It produced a series of disastrous decisions and virtually ensured that the agencies charged with implementing them would not or could not execute them well. . . . It’s a disaster. Given the choice, I’d choose a frustrating bureaucracy over an efficient cabal every time.”

While the SSCI probe is expected to take months, and a parallel investigation by the Pentagon’s Inspector General into the role of former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith in intelligence fakery is not expected to be completed until March, there are already public caches full of “smoking guns,” proving that the Cheney-Rumsfeld Cabal wittingly lied America into the Iraq War. And many of those lies had already been refuted by the U.S. intelligence community before the first bombs dropped on Baghdad on March 19, 2003.

Saddam and al-Qaeda

Senate Democrats have demanded that the White House provide the SSCI with the text of a Sept. 21, 2001 President’s Daily Briefing (PDB), and a more in-depth CIA analysis de-

livered to the White House shortly afterwards, dealing with the alleged links between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. The White House has refused.

Why? One of Dick Cheney's favorite arguments for invading Iraq and overthrowing Saddam was that Iraq was behind the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington. And according to news accounts, the Sept. 21, 2001 PDB made clear that there was no evidence of any Saddam/al-Qaeda ties. In fact, the intelligence estimate presented to President Bush, Cheney, and other top national security officials on Sept. 21, was that Saddam was an arch enemy of al-Qaeda, and had spied on it.

Despite this, and the more in-depth CIA study on why the Saddam/al-Qaeda ties were bogus, Cheney and company kept on lying that Saddam was behind 9/11.

Now, Lynne Cheney has brought the White House deception campaign to a new low. Appearing on Nov. 28 on National Public Radio, she launched into an hysterical defense of "her man," claiming that "Dick never said" that there were any links between Saddam Hussein and the 9/11 attacks! Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Sept. 21, 2001 PDB came in response to demands from the White House for all available evidence of a Saddam link to the authors of the 9/11 attack. Five days before the PDB was delivered, President Bush had convened a War Cabinet meeting at Camp David, where the planned attack on Afghanistan was finalized. At that meeting, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, speaking for the Cheney-Rumsfeld Cabal, had called for an invasion of Iraq, claiming that Saddam was at the center of global terror and should be America's first target. The next day, President Bush signed a secret order, authorizing the military campaign against Afghanistan, but also ordering the Pentagon and CIA to begin plans for future action against Iraq.

On Sept. 19, the Defense Policy Board (DPB), a Pentagon advisory panel then chaired by neo-con Richard Perle, and populated by a collection of like-minded war hawks, convened a closed-door session. Both Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz attended the meeting, which was addressed by INC head Ahmed Chalabi and Dr. Bernard Lewis, the octogenarian British intelligence Arab Bureau spook, who was a longtime booster of Chalabi. The topic was the need to overthrow Saddam Hussein in retaliation for 9/11. As the direct result of the session, one DPB member, former CIA Director R. James Woolsey, was dispatched on a mission to London, to round



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Members of the LaRouche Youth Movement demonstrate in Washington on Nov. 17.

up evidence that Saddam was behind the recent terror attacks, as well as the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. London was the headquarters of the INC.

Atta in Prague

Shortly after Woolsey's first Defense Policy Board sojourn to London, the first news stories appeared, alleging that 9/11 plotter Mohammed Atta had been in the Czech capital, Prague, on April 8, 2001, meeting with Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim Samir al-Ani, the Second Secretary of the Iraqi Embassy and an officer in the Iraqi foreign intelligence service. The "Atta in Prague" urban legend would serve as Cheney's favorite "smoking gun" on the issue of Saddam's hand in 9/11.

The ostensible source of the information was an "Arab student," working undercover for Czech intelligence, who had spotted the two men in a restaurant. The "student" would later relocate to London, raising some speculation that he may have been part of the INC disinformation machine from the outset. Later versions of the story claimed that Czech intelligence had photographed the meeting, because al-Ani was under surveillance as the result of an earlier alleged terror plot against American targets in the Czech capital. One well-placed U.S. military intelligence source recently told *EIR* that Czech intelligence had indeed surveilled the meeting, but had later determined that the man with al-Ani was not Atta.

Despite conflicting evidence, showing that Atta was in the United States on the date of the alleged Prague meeting, Vice President Cheney was among the first Bush Administration officials to jump the gun and proclaim the Atta-Baghdad ties. On Dec. 9, 2001, in an appearance on "Meet the Press,"

Cheney declared, "It's been pretty well confirmed that [Atta] did go to Prague and he did meet with a senior official of the Iraqi intelligence service in Czechoslovakia last April, several months before the attack."

On April 30, 2002, FBI Director Robert Mueller gave a speech in San Francisco, in which he publicly refuted the Atta-in-Prague story, citing the FBI's detailed evidence that Atta was in Virginia Beach, Va. on that date. "We ran down literally hundreds of thousands of leads and checked every record we could get our hands on," he explained.

The FBI trashing of the Atta links to Iraq did nothing to deter Cheney. On another "Meet the Press" appearance on Sept. 8, 2003, the Vice President reiterated, "There has been reporting that suggests that there have been a number of contacts over the years. We've seen, in connection with the hijackers, of course, Mohammed Atta, who was the lead hijacker, did apparently travel to Prague on a number of occasions. And on at least one occasion, we have reporting that places him in Prague with a senior Iraqi intelligence official a few months before the attack on the World Trade Cen-

ter." Cheney went so far as to describe Iraq as "the geographic base of the terrorists who have had us under assault for many years, but most especially on 9/11."

Cheney's Parallel Intelligence Stovepipe

To further counter the assessments of the official U.S. intelligence establishment that there were no Iraqi ties to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, in October 2001, the Cheney-Rumsfeld Cabal created a secret "Iraq intelligence unit" in the office of Undersecretary Feith, Wolfowitz's policy deputy. This Policy Counter-Terrorism Evaluations Group (PCTEG) initially consisted of two well-known neo-cons with no intelligence backgrounds: David Wurmser and Michael Maloof. They produced scores of reports, based on a combination of "cherry-picked" raw intelligence from the community's data base, and information gathered from outside sources, particularly from the Iraqi National Congress. Their reports claimed that the CIA, DIA, and other agencies had ignored "proof" of Saddam's role in the 9/11 attacks, and similar "proof" of Saddam's nuclear weapons and other

The Fat Lady Sings

Out of the blue, six days after Thanksgiving, Lynne Cheney, the wife of the Vice President, launched into a bitter, last-ditch defense of her puppet-husband and his lies and crimes.

How desperate they must be, to bring her out now.

As a guest on National Public Radio's "Diane Rehm Show" Nov. 30, Mrs. Cheney said that her politics had come to resemble her husband's in the same way that people come to look like their pets. Or has pet Dick come to resemble her? In any case, resemblance there is: He lies, she lies. She told host Rehm that neither Cheney nor Bush had ever said that there were links between Iraq and al-Qaeda.

When a caller cited the statement of Colin Powell's aide, Col. Larry Wilkerson, that Cheney was the inspirer of the torture of prisoners by the United States, Lynne Cheney claimed never to have heard of Wilkerson and refused to answer. When host Rehm repeated the question in a gentler way ("Do you ever have doubts?"), Mrs. Cheney claimed that the question was offensive and refused to answer again.

In refusing to answer any questions about torture, Mrs. Cheney is saying that what goes on in her bedroom, is no one else's concern.

The same evening, at an event planned as a book chat at the National Archive in Washington, D.C., Mrs. Cheney startled her host, Archivist of the United States



AFPS/Kathleen T. Rhem

Lynne Cheney is attempting to stop revelations of her husband's lies, with lies of her own.

Allen Weinstein, by launching into an unprovoked tirade in behalf of the Iraq War. Weinstein asked the audience to take note that it had been Cheney who had introduced Iraq, not he. She went on to a series of attacks against her and her husband's opponents.

Is it a coincidence that Lynne Cheney has reportedly added a *bobcat* to the menagerie at the Naval Observatory (or the bunker beneath it), which already featured two huge dogs and the Vice President?

WMD programs. Wurmser would later serve as executive assistant to John Bolton, the State Department's top arms control official and a leading neo-con, and then move on to Cheney's office as the key Mideast aide, a post he still holds.

Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz kept the existence of the PCTEG secret for over a year, to conceal the fact that they had created a parallel intelligence organization, working behind the back of, and at cross-purposes with the official agencies, including the Pentagon's own Defense Intelligence Agency. On Oct. 24, 2002, Rumsfeld finally admitted that he had commissioned "a small team of defense officials outside regular intelligence channels to focus on unearthing details about Iraqi ties with al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks."

Chalabi/INC-generated disinformation was "stovepiped" to Feith's office and to senior staff in the Office of the Vice President. Even when the Chalabi fabrications were passed to the CIA and DIA for official vetting, they often appeared in Cheney speeches before the agencies did their work. More often than not, DIA and CIA detailed vetting efforts showed that the purported intelligence was fabricated, grossly exaggerated, or impossible to independently corroborate.

A most revealing handwritten note by Dick Cheney has recently surfaced on a PCTEG document from the period. It reads: "This is very good indeed. . . . Encouraging. . . . Not like the crap we are all so used to getting out of CIA."

The Feith stovepipe ultimately became a bone of contention between the Administration and the Congress—especially after it was learned that officials of the Office of Special Plans (OSP), an Iraq war planning cell in the Office of Near East and South Asia (NESA), had given power-point intelligence briefings to Cheney's Chief of Staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley behind the back of the CIA and DIA. NESA/OSP, which was housed in Feith's office, was headed by William Luti, a transplant from Cheney's staff, who boasted to colleagues that he reported "directly to Scooter." Luti has since returned to Cheney's office.

On Sept. 16, 2002, as Cheney was cranking up the agit-prop for an Iraq invasion, OSP briefers presented the "proof" of a Saddam/al-Qaeda connection—retreading the already-discredited Atta-in-Prague gibberish. What highlighted the briefing, however, was a diatribe against the CIA, for "flawed" intelligence gathering and analysis methods. It was not until July 8, 2004—16 months after the invasion of Iraq—that Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, was able to get the Pentagon to declassify one of the three slides in question. It was headlined "Fundamental Problems With How Intelligence Community Is Assessing Information." The slide accused the intelligence community of applying too high a standard in vetting intelligence leads; and of overstating the frictions between "secularists and Islamists."

Following Rumsfeld's admission that he had created his own parallel intelligence and analysis team, the SSCI demanded that Feith submit a classified report, detailing the



New America Foundation/Sarah Brennan

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson (ret.), former chief of staff of then-Secretary of State Colin Powell, is denouncing the "Cheney-Rumsfeld Cabal." Lynne Cheney says she never heard of him.

findings of the unit. Feith stalled for months, but finally produced a 16-page memo, citing 50 itemized instances where the PCTEG had found intelligence citations of the Saddam/al-Qaeda links.

That Oct. 27, 2003 memo was not just passed to Senators Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) and Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), the ranking members of the SSCI. It was promptly leaked to Stephen F. Hayes, a reporter for the neo-con *Weekly Standard*, who was, according to intelligence community sources, then working on a book on Saddam's alleged ties to the 9/11 attacks.

Hayes virtually supercopied the classified document, and published it in the Nov. 24, 2003 issue of the *Weekly Standard*, with annotated comments. The article was brashly titled "Case Closed," implying that there was no longer any question that the Saddam/al-Qaeda connection was real. Hayes began his story by summarizing the fractured fairy-tale case presented in the Feith memo: "Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein had an operational relationship from the early 1990s to 2003 that involved training in explosives and weapons of mass destruction, logistical support for terrorist attacks, al Qaeda training camps and safe haven in Iraq, and Iraqi financial support for al Qaeda—perhaps even for Mohammed Atta—according to a top secret U.S. government memorandum obtained by THE WEEKLY STANDARD."

In a highly unusual move, the Department of Defense issued a News Release, responding to the Hayes article, which read in part: "News reports that the Defense Department recently confirmed new information with respect to contacts between al Qaeda and Iraq in a letter to the Senate Intelligence Committee are inaccurate." Directly citing the classified annex which had been leaked and published by Hayes, the News Release asserted that the document "was not an analysis of the substantive issue of the relationship between Iraq and

al Qaeda, and it drew no conclusions.”

Six weeks after the Hayes story hit the newsstands, and well after the Defense Department refutation, Dick Cheney gave an interview, on Jan. 9, 2004, to the *Rocky Mountain News*, in which he regurgitated the contents of the Feith memo, and commended Hayes and the *Weekly Standard* by name, for setting the record straight on the Saddam/al-Qaeda links. “One place you ought to go look is an article that Stephen Hayes did in the *Weekly Standard* a few weeks ago, that goes through and lays out in some detail, based on an assessment that was done by the Department of Defense and forwarded to the Senate Intelligence Committee. That’s your best source of information,” Cheney told the paper.

In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 9, 2004, CIA Director George Tenet, in response to questioning from Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) about the Jan. 9 Cheney interview, said, “Senator, we did not clear the [Feith] document. We did not agree with the way the data was characterized in that document.”

What’s more, on July 1, 2004, Director Tenet provided a more extensive written answer to Senator Levin’s question about the CIA’s assessment of the Atta/al-Ani meeting and the overall Iraqi role in the 9/11 attacks. On the Prague meeting, Tenet stated, “we are increasingly skeptical that such a meeting occurred. . . . In the absence of any credible information that the April 2001 meeting occurred, we assess that Atta would have been unlikely to undertake the substantial risk of contacting any Iraqi official as late as April 2001, with the plot already well along toward execution.” Several paragraphs later, Tenet also dismissed an Iraqi role in 9/11 (see box).

Cheney’s open embrace of the classified document leaked to the neo-con weekly had already triggered yet another firestorm. On Jan. 28, 2004, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a watchdog group, wrote to President Bush, demanding an investigation into the Vice President by the White House Counsel. The letter pointed out that it is a crime to publicly confirm information illegally leaked. “Further,” the letter read, “the Counsel should investigate whether any damage to national security was done by Mr. Cheney’s statement.” To this date, no action has been taken on the demand.

On Feb. 12, 2004, Senator Levin wrote to the Vice President, demanding to know whether the statements attributed to him in the *Rocky Mountain News* interview were accurate.

The Libby Draft

Another White House document demanded by the Senate intelligence panel but refused by Cheney, was the draft UN testimony for Secretary of State Colin Powell, written by Scooter Libby, Cheney’s chief of staff and chief national security aide until his indictment on Oct. 28, 2005 in the Valerie Plame Wilson case.

According to numerous news accounts, two separate

Libby drafts, totaling more than 90 pages, were tossed in the garbage by Powell, after he reviewed them with intelligence community analysts and senior officials, on the eve of his appearance at the UN Security Council on Feb. 5, 2003.

The Libby drafts contained allegations against Iraq that were not backed up by intelligence community data—including the allegations of Mohammed Atta’s Iraqi intelligence ties. Where did Libby get the bogus information? The answer to that question, sources report, has Cheney sweating bullets. It may be the “smoking gun” that proves that Cheney was running his own rogue disinformation operation, to fake the case for war.

Much of the evidence of Cheney’s conniving is fortunately available, because Secretary Powell had delegated his chief of staff, Colonel Wilkerson, to assemble and run the task force of intelligence community specialists, who would prepare the Feb. 5, 2003 UN Security Council testimony. In a series of news interviews, Wilkerson spelled out a chronology of skirmishes between his task force and the “Cabal.”

On Jan. 25, 2003, Scooter Libby and John Hannah, Libby’s deputy national security aide and a former vice president of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), the think tank of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), delivered a briefing on their proposed UN testimony at the White House situation room.

According to a Sept. 29, 2003 account of that session in the *Washington Post*, by Dana Priest and Glenn Kessler: “On Jan. 25, with a stack of notebooks at his side, color-coded with the sources for the information, Libby laid out the potential case against Iraq to a packed White House situation room. ‘We read [their proposal to include Atta] and some of us said, Wow! Here we go again,’ said one official who helped draft the speech. ‘You write it. You take it out, and then it comes back again.’ . . . Other officials present said they felt that Libby’s presentation was over the top, that the wording was too aggressive and most of the material could not be used in a public forum. Much of it, in fact, unraveled when closely examined by intelligence analysts from other agencies and, in the end, was largely discarded. ‘After one day of hearing screams about who put this together and what are the sources, we essentially threw it out,’ one official present said.”

Four days after the Jan. 25 situation room session, Libby and Hannah presented Powell with a 48-page draft text. Powell turned it over to Wilkerson and instructed him to take it to the CIA headquarters and scrub it for accuracy. Within 48 hours, the document had been shown to be based almost exclusively on sources the intelligence community had trashed as unreliable.

Libby came back with a second draft, this one 45 pages, containing much of the same material. Soon, this draft, too, was in the trash can, after careful scrutiny by Wilkerson and the team of CIA and DIA analysts assembled to vet the speech. “We fought tooth and nail with other members of the administration to scrub it and get the crap out,” Wilkerson told *Gentle-*

CIA Director Tenet: No Saddam Link to Atta

This is the July 1, 2004 response of Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet to Sen. Carl Levin's question at the March 9, 2004 Armed Services Committee Hearing.

Q: Director Tenet, do you believe it is likely that Sept. 11 hijacker Muhammad Atta and Iraqi Intelligence Service officer Ahmed al-Ani met in Prague in April 2001, or do you believe it is unlikely that the meeting took place?

Tenet: Although we cannot rule it out, we are increasingly skeptical that such a meeting occurred. The veracity of the single-threaded reporting on which the original account of the meeting was based has been questioned, and the Iraqi official with whom Atta was alleged to have met has denied ever having met Atta.

We have been able to corroborate only two visits by Atta to the Czech Republic: one in late 1994, when he passed through enroute to Syria; the other in June 2000, when, according to detainee reporting, he departed for the

United States from Prague because he thought a non-EU member country would be less likely to keep meticulous travel data.

In absence of any credible information that the April 2001 meeting occurred, we assess that Atta would have been unlikely to undertake the substantial risk of contacting any Iraqi official as late as April 2001, with the plot already well along toward execution.

It is likewise hard to conceive of any single ingredient crucial to the plot's success that could only be obtained from Iraq.

In our judgment, the Sept. 11 plot was complex in its orchestration but simple in its basic conception. We believe that the factors vital to success of the plot were all easily within al-Qaeda's means without resort to Iraqi expertise: shrewd selection of operatives, training in hijacking aircraft, a mastermind and pilots well-versed in the procedures and behavior needed to blend in with U.S. society, long experience in moving money to support operations, and the openness and tolerance of U.S. society as well as the ready availability of important information about targets, flight schools, and airport and airline security practices.

men's Quarterly on April 29, 2004.

In an interview with author James Bamford, Wilkerson added another tantalizing piece to the picture. Still describing Libby's efforts to shape the Powell testimony, the colonel complained, "It was all cartoon. The specious connection between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, much of which I subsequently found came from the INC and from their sources, defectors and so forth, [regarding the] training in Iraq for terrorists. . . . No question in my mind that some of the sources that we were using were probably Israeli intelligence. That was one thing that was rarely revealed to us—if it was a foreign source."

By the time that Secretary of State Powell had settled on a final draft for his UN testimony, *sans* much of the "bullshit," the Cheney Cabalists were beside themselves over their failure to convince the Secretary to go with the Atta-Saddam links. On the morning of Feb. 5, 2003, as Secretary Powell was resting in a suite at the Waldorf Astoria, awaiting his UN Security Council appearance, a frantic Lewis Libby repeatedly phoned Colonel Wilkerson, to make one final pitch to get Powell to go with the "Saddam did 9/11" hoax. Wilkerson was already at the United Nations. In a Nov. 22, 2005 interview with Democracy Now's Amy Goodman, Wilkerson said, "I didn't take the call from the Vice President's chief of staff, Scooter Libby. I referred it to someone else." Nevertheless, Wilkerson did confirm that the purpose of the call was to press for inclusion of the bogus Saddam/al-Qaeda links.

Curveball

In his Security Council testimony, Powell cited what he claimed as hard evidence that Saddam had developed mobile biological weapons labs, which were producing weapons that posed a grave threat to the region. Powell has since called that testimony the low point of his long career.

The sole source on the mobile labs was an Iraqi informant codenamed "Curveball," who was controlled by the German intelligence service, BND.

On Nov. 20, 2005, the *Los Angeles Times* published an exposé, based on interviews with five BND officials, revealing that the German government had warned repeatedly that "Curveball" was a fabricator and a drunk, his information highly suspect. Subsequently, German state radio and other German news outlets elaborated on the "Curveball" story, providing further details of repeated German intelligence warnings to the Americans that they increasingly viewed their source as thoroughly unreliable, and perhaps "crazy." The CIA later issued its own warnings that Curveball was yet another frontman for Chalabi's INC. As of 1996, the CIA had written off the INC as a collection of corrupt losers and fabricators.

The "Curveball" disinformation was another of Cheney's favorite fibs. Well after the Iraq invasion, and well after the CIA and the Defense Human Intelligence Service (Defense Humint) had concluded that "Curveball" was a liar, and that there was no evidence that Iraq had the so-called mobile bio-

weapon labs, Dick Cheney appeared on National Public Radio and declared: “We know, for example, that prior to our going in, that he had spent time and effort acquiring mobile biological weapons labs, and we’re quite confident he did, in fact, have such a program. We’ve found a couple of semi-trailers at this point which we believe were, in fact, part of that program. Now it’s not clear at this stage whether or not he used any of that to produce, or whether he was simply getting ready for the next war. That, in my mind, is a serious danger in the hands of a man like Saddam Hussein, and I would deem that conclusive evidence, if you will, that he did, in fact, have programs for weapons of mass destruction.”

Cheney’s love affair with “Curveball’s” fabrications was, at least partly, explained by the fact that Doug Feith’s spin machine alone had produced 75 intelligence reports, based exclusively on “Curveball’s” debriefings, which were passed into the hand of U.S. intelligence through Defense Humint, and were accessed by Feith’s cherry-pickers.

The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, otherwise known as the Silberman-Robb Commission, issued its final report to the President on March 31, 2005. The report contained a 31-page chapter dealing exclusively with “Curveball,” detailing the battles that took place within the intelligence community over the vetting of that source. Ultimately, both CIA and Defense Humint concurred with the BND that “Curveball” was a liar. But the Silberman-Robb Commission catalogued a string of failures by the relevant intelligence services to communicate to policymakers that they had issued a “burn notice” on “Curveball” until after the disastrous Powell UN appearance and the start of the war.

Rendon Group’s Info Warfare

After the CIA’s mid-1990s dumping of Chalabi, the convicted bank swindler kept up his ties to such neo-con outposts as the American Enterprise Institute and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA). When Bush-Cheney came into office in 2001, the Pentagon picked up the INC franchise, and gave a lucrative contract to a Beltway PR firm, The Rendon Group, to promote the overthrow of Saddam. The Rendon Group had literally created the INC back in 1992, on a secret CIA contract to begin covert operation to overthrow Saddam.

Under Bush-Cheney, the Rendon Group and INC ran a Pentagon-funded program, the Information Collection Program, through which Iraqi defectors were debriefed on Saddam regime crimes.

In December 2001, the INC promoted a defector, Saeed al-Haideri, who claimed to have worked at dozens of secret WMD sites in Iraq. A CIA polygraph exam exposed him as a liar. Yet, within weeks of submission of the CIA assessment, the *New York Times*’ Judith Miller and Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s Paul Moran were publishing “exclusive” stories based on interviews with al-Haideri. Cheney gave a series of speeches based on the Miller article.

On Sept. 8, 2002, as Cheney was gearing up the war drive, Miller wrote another “exclusive” INC-sourced story, claiming Iraq had purchased aluminum tubes that could only be used for centrifuges, a key component of a nuclear weapons program.

The State Department intelligence unit and the Department of Energy strenuously objected to the story. But based on Miller’s article, and already-discredited reports that Iraq was seeking to buy yellowcake uranium from Africa, Cheney et al. forced the war down the throat of Congress with images of “nuclear mushroom clouds.”

This article is the first in a series of in-depth reports on Cheney’s lies, being developed by an EIR task force which includes Michele Steinberg, George Canning, Mark Bender, Scott Thompson, Carl Osgood, and Judy DeMarco, all of whom contributed to this first part.

Documentation

Murtha: ‘Because They Say It, Doesn’t Make It So’

National Public Radio aired an interview with Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.) on Dec. 1. The following is the transcript.

Murtha: We need to change direction. And the overwhelming calls I’m getting, the emotional response I’m getting—they are thirsting for a direction, a plan. The latest plan of the President’s is not a plan. It’s just the same thing. And when I visit the hospitals and see these troops that are so shot up, I realize that we need to change direction. That change of direction is what I’ve proposed.

Q: Congressman, you’re saying that the time has come, and that the U.S. should pull out fast. A number of your fellow Democrats, though, have some real problems with this. Congressman Steny Hoyer of Maryland said, “A precipitous withdrawal of American forces in Iraq could lead to disaster, spawning civil war, fostering a haven for terrorists.” It sounds like something you yourself wrote in an epilogue to your own book. About a year ago you said, “An untimely exit could rapidly devolve into a civil war.”

Murtha: I said 18 months ago that we either had to totally mobilize, or we had to get out. A year ago I said we can’t win this militarily. I’ve changed my mind, obviously. Because we’ve come to the point where our troops are the targets of the insurgency. There’s four plans that I’ve seen, and three of them are not good; one is the President’s plan, that’s “Stay the Course.” That’s not a plan. Two, is that you mobilize