

Lieberman-McCain Cabal Plots Against U.S. Military Opposition to Iraq War

by Michele Steinberg

In a secret meeting of the Defense Policy Board (DPB) in the Pentagon on July 10, the war-mongers for an early attack on Iraq, led by DPB chief Richard Perle, plotted to ensure that “heads would have to roll” among ranking U.S. military officers, who oppose the drive for this war led by Perle and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz.

Lyndon LaRouche, in his leading article above, points to the current face-off of three factions over Iraq, of which this bloodthirsty DPB meeting was one significant event. Reports of the session reminded LaRouche of Adolf Hitler’s inner circle sitting and planning the assassinations of top German military officers, beginning with Gen. Kurt von Schleicher.

Details of the meeting are sparse, but *Washington Post* investigative reporter Thomas E. Ricks on Aug. 1 described it in his report of the brawl in and around the Bush Administration over the looming Iraq war. According to Ricks, Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld are leading the pro-war faction, opposed by Secretary of State Colin Powell, CIA Director George Tenet, and the overwhelming majority of three- and four-star generals and admirals on active duty.

The biggest fear of the pro-Iraq war gang, Ricks reported, is that Rumsfeld will come under increasing pressure from the uniformed military command and will vacillate, delaying the war until the Presidential campaign is fully under way and there will be further reason to hold back. In this context, the Defense Policy Board meeting on July 10 particularly complained about Gen. Tommy Franks, the Commander of the U.S. Central Command, who has been named in many reports as the professional who is telling the politicians that a “successful” war against Iraq will require 250-300,000 troops.

This eerie session of back-room war-plotters is a real-life obverse of the *Seven Days in May* fictional account of a Cold War-era military coup. This time the plotters are the RAND Corporation-trained utopians and their associates, who fight their wars on video-game simulations, with no regard for the destruction of nation-states or the killing of civilians—as in the case of Afghanistan.

‘Don’t Even Consider It’

Just how serious the Joint Chiefs of Staff resistance is, was revealed by *Aviation Week & Space Technology*’s “No Iraq Attack” article of July 15. Published amid wild hysterics from Rumsfeld about leaks of Pentagon war-planning documents on the Iraq war, author Frank Morring, Jr.’s article said that “Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is firmly in the camp opposed to a big attack on Iraq.” The article quoted a senior defense official, who said, “He’s saying, ‘Don’t even consider it.’ ”

The unnamed source claimed there was no ongoing military preparation for such an attack: “In order to prepare the forces for a campaign in Iraq, you need to name the commanders, pull them together and give the forces involved two to three months of intensive training. Special operations people and bomber and fighter squadrons are all over the place right now. I don’t know that we can do that without telegraphing our intent.” The source also addressed other obstacles to an all-out military operation: “There’s a real moral question involved, and nobody thinks President Bush will ask for a resolution of support from Congress before the elections in November. That’s a bigger issue even than choosing the right war plan,” the official concluded.



Sen. Joseph Biden's hearings on Iraq heard exclusively pro-war witnesses, covering up the strong opposition both from ranking U.S. military officers, and from U.S. and UN professionals with experience in Iraq. The hearings followed the Congressional line of Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman, the "war and Wall Street" party.

The Defense Policy Board insanity alone, puts the strongest possible urgency on getting out the 5 million-leaflet "strategic flank" defined by LaRouche to stop an Iraq war "response" to the current economic collapse. ("Do it, Mr. Bush; the market will rise 2000 points," as imperial warhawk Norman Podhoretz put it.)

But, developments in the U.S. Senate at the end of July show that flanking initiative, against the operations of Senators Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), and John McCain (R-Ariz.)—the two self-anointed Congressional and Presidential rivals to George W. Bush—to be essential to stop the Iraq war.

The war projected by Wolfowitz, Perle, and other DPB members like former CIA Director James Woolsey, could be the trigger for the Clash of Civilizations or a "Hundred Years' War" that the DPB had advocated in October 2001. That imperial drive got a boost when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee put on a pro-war "dog and pony show" July 31 and Aug. 1.

Biden Hearings Are a Sham

A letter obtained by *EIR* proves that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is withholding crucial information about Iraq from the Senate and the American people; information which could serve to stop the flight forward to war. The letter was from Hans von Sponek, former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, to a member of the Committee, and a similar letter was sent to each individual member by von Sponek. In the July 26 letter, von Sponek—who administered the UN "oil for food" program for Iraq until he resigned in 2000 to protest the continued sanctions against Iraq which were killing civilians—wrote, "As the Senate Foreign Relations Committee prepares to meet next week, you and your colleagues have, it seems, an extraordinary opportunity to

provide the U.S. government and the American people with a more complete picture of the realities in Iraq. I am persuaded that, if apprised of all the facts, many of your colleagues and your constituents would realize that Iraq, an exhausted nation, should not be subjected to another military attack. . . . I would be totally at the disposal of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to testify about conditions in Iraq."

However, as the committee convened on July 31, von Sponek, and another of the world's leading experts on Iraq, Scott Ritter, who was chief UN weapons inspector in Iraq for seven years—were not allowed to testify from their first-hand knowledge. Instead came a procession of "performing" witnesses, largely presenting third- or fourth-hand testimony, to justify the war. This led even Sen. Lincoln Chaffee (R-R.I.) to protest on July 31, that all of the witnesses were totally for war, and no critics were allowed to testify. Ritter and von Sponek gave non-stop interviews on the evidence of the destruction of Iraq's economy and military capabilities.

Ritter had been in London July 16 and delivered a detailed briefing to members of the House of Commons on the realities in Iraq. He denounced the faction in the United States which wants war on Iraq at all costs (reported in last week's *EIR*).

An Aug. 1 press release from the Institute for Public Accuracy (IPA) indicated the value of the refused testimony; it quoted von Sponek that he had been in Iraq two weeks earlier, had visited sites purported to be weapons sites, and found them to be "defunct and destroyed." Two of the sites on the Tigris River singled out in recent anti-Iraq diatribes as "secret underground production centers for weapons of mass destruction" were among those he visited, where he reported finding birds nesting in the dusty ruins.

"Evidence of al-Qaeda/Iraq collaboration does not exist," von Sponek is quoted. "Six years of revisions to sanctions policy on Baghdad have repeatedly promised 'mitigation' of civilian suffering. Yet in 1999, UNICEF reported that more than 22% of the country's young children remain chronically malnourished. Credible opposition groups outside Iraq have called for delinking economic and military sanctions. At the March Arab summit in Beirut, all 22 Arab governments (including Kuwait) called for the same. If the economic embargo on Iraq is not in [Kuwait's] interest, then in whose interest is it?"

Former chief weapons inspector Ritter charged that "Sen. Joe Biden is running a sham hearing. It is clear that Biden and most of the Congressional leadership have pre-ordained a conclusion that seeks to remove Saddam Hussein from power regardless of the facts, and are using these hearings to provide political cover for a massive military attack on Iraq. . . . This isn't American democracy in action, it's the failure of American democracy.

'Senior Military Officers' Agree

"Before we go to war with Iraq," Ritter continued, "we must be able to determine that Iraq poses a threat to the

national security of the United States. Such a determination must be backed up with substantive fact. I believe that Iraq does not pose a threat to the U.S. worthy of war. This conclusion is shared by many senior military officers. According to President Bush and his advisers, Iraq is known to possess weapons of mass destruction and is actively seeking to reconstitute the weapons production capabilities. I bear personal witness, through seven years as a chief weapons inspector in Iraq for the UN, to both the scope of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs, and the effectiveness of the UN weapons inspectors in ultimately eliminating them. While we were never able to provide 100% certainty regarding the disposition of Iraq's proscribed weaponry, we did ascertain a 90-95% level of verified disarmament. . . . It is clear that Senator Biden and his colleagues have no interest in such facts."

Rather than being an opening for members of Congress to challenge administration policy on a war on Iraq, the hearings simply ran cover for the policy of "regime change" by war. On July 31, twelve witnesses attested to the necessity of a U.S. imperial attack, arguing only the timing and configuration of a military action. Every species of propaganda and disinformation was asserted and repeated—without being challenged by the Senators, who appeared to be terrified to publicly oppose the "regime change" mantra.

Former UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) chairman Richard Butler, who has been accused of filing the false reports on Iraqi weapons production, which led to the Clinton Administration's 1999 Desert Fox air assault, was the leading witness. Iraqi defector Dr. Khidir Hamza, a nuclear engineer, was there to assert that the German intelligence agency BND, had established that Iraq would have a deliverable nuclear device by 2005. But the BND officially denies that it has made any such assessment. The existence of Iraqi intelligence links to alleged al-Qaeda hijacker Mohammed Atta was asserted as fact, despite repeated denials by the "source," the government of the Czech Republic.

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney was there to promote the "quick, cheap," air attack "victory" idea, which, he said, doesn't require ground basing, and therefore avoids the nasty problem of the unanimous opposition of Arab states bordering Iraq to such a war—including opposition from Kuwait. Never was it mentioned that McInerney is on the payroll of neo-conservative Smith Richardson Foundation, and of the Business Executives for National Security (BENS), which is linked to the Likud party of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The August 1 hearing began with a panel on what should be done to rebuild Iraq after an attack, and who the new leadership would be. The second panel, "Summing Up: National Security Perspectives," offered President Clinton's National Security Adviser Sandy Berger and Reagan's Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to give weight to what had already been said. Weinberger offered himself as an authority for

outrageous statements of unnamed friends and associates which he repeated; but even he suggested that he should not be a witness at a closed hearing, because he has no first-hand information. At one point, he compared the coming attack on Iraq to what was done successfully in tiny Grenada during the Reagan Administration, triggering stifled guffaws.

The McCain-Lieberman Signature

What bureaucrat formally blocked the testimony from von Sponek, Ritter, and Arab witnesses with first-hand knowledge about Iraq, is irrelevant. The point identified by LaRouche, is that the Iraq war is the signature issue of the Lieberman-McCain assault on the U.S. Presidency, forcing the unqualified George W. Bush into an immoral, unnecessary, genocidal war. Blocking the testimony of von Sponek, and refusal to invite Ritter, is a *national scandal*, and an indication of the totalitarian control that the organized-crime-linked Lieberman-McCain duo is asserting in the Congress.

In February 2002, McCain and Lieberman led the U.S. Congressional representation in an imperial assault on the rest of the world at the 38th annual Munich International Conference on Security Policy ("Wehrkunde"), where they proclaimed the United States has the right and duty to do anything, anywhere, unilaterally, in the war against terrorism, starting with Iraq. The "Bull Moose" duo were accompanying the Defense Policy Board's Wolfowitz and Perle at the meeting. Reportedly, the Lieberman-McCain war stance overshadowed even the remarks of Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, who is one of the most dangerous advocates of a perpetual war stance against what he referred to in a radio interview last year as "1 billion Muslims"

Senator Biden was dancing to the Lieberman-McCain tune himself by the end of the two days, after earlier posing as a reasonable "opponent" of White House unilateralism. By the end of the second day, Biden was singing the praises of White House cooperation, and saying that he could ensure passage of an Iraq war resolution as soon as one comes down the pike. Biden summed up the hearings saying: "My sense is that the President understands the political value of having a Congress with them as they take off. . . . They have told me there will be no move without a discussion with Congress and an authorization. They will get a good response if they answer some questions. But we have to lay it all out to the American people, first, including what the costs are. If we have a short, successful campaign and involve our allies, the costs could be reduced. If we can make the case that the threat is real and dire, and a free and democratic Iraq will make our lives easier, it will be worth the price."

At no time since the inauguration of George W. Bush has full-scale war been so close at hand. Only the LaRouche-led flanking operation can stop this Clash of Civilizations nightmare in the midst of an economic debacle for the Presidency.