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Time-Line

Moves To Shut Down the SSCI Cheney-Gate Probe

This chronology of events in the weeks following Lyndon LaRouche's Oct. 22 "Preparing the Post-Cheney Era" webcast from Washington, builds up to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist's shocking move to shut down the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 7.

Wednesday, Oct. 22: Democratic Presidential candidate LaRouche told international webcast audience: "If you want to get through to next year, to the next election, *get rid of Cheney now!* Tell that man to go!"

Thursday, Oct. 23: At the request of former CIA officers Larry Johnson and Jim Marcinkowski, SSCI holds special, closed-door session on the Valerie Plame Wilson leak.

Friday, Oct. 24: The *Washington Post* ran a planted lead article, claiming that the SSCI was preparing a "blistering report" blaming the intelligence community, and the CIA in particular, for "overstating" the case on Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, and his alleged links to al-Qaeda terrorists. The chairman of the Committee, Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), said, "The Executive was ill-served by the intelligence community" and its "sloppy" intelligence, but that the investigation is "95% complete."

A special briefing was held by the Senate Democratic Policy committee, featuring three retired CIA officials: Vincent Cannistraro, Larry Johnson, and Jim Marcinkowski, highlighting the severe damage to U.S. national security resulting from the Wilson leak, and attacking the overall faking of intelligence to justify the Iraq war. They stressed that cur-

rent CIA analysts were under heavy pressure from Cheney and others to produce intelligence that supported the Administration's push for war, noting the "unprecedented" visits to Langley by Cheney and Libby. They disclosed that analysts interviewed by the SSCI had "minders" from their agency with them when they were interviewed by Roberts SSCI staff.

Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), the senior Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, held a press conference to denounce Roberts for trying to rule out the "matter of use" of intelligence by the White House, when this aspect is specifically part of the jurisdiction of the Committee. Rockefeller made it clear he was prepared to utilize a special SSCI rule to conduct his own investigation of how top Administration officials such as Bush, Cheney, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, used or exaggerated Iraq intelligence. "All I have to do is to get five signatures that we want to investigate a subject—the use of, for example, of intelligence, the shaping of intelligence, the manipulation of intelligence, or whatever," Rockefeller states. "And there's no way that the Chairman can say that we cannot do that."

Reports of pressure: By Friday afternoon, it was reported that Vice President Dick Cheney himself had pressed Roberts to put the blame on the CIA. "A senior administration official, who agreed to speak only on the condition of anonymity, said Roberts' CIA comments were issued with Cheney's encouragement," reported the Knight-Ridder news service. "The official said Cheney is trying to shift the blame for the lack of progress on Iraq, which is becoming an issue in next year's Presidential and Congressional elections, from the White House to the CIA."

Later in the day, Senator Roberts backed off the statements attributed to him by the *Washington Post*, saying they had been "mischaracterized." The CIA also held an unusual press conference, with four senior CIA officials speaking on background, refuting the claims of CIA failure made by Roberts.

Saturday, Oct. 25: Senator Roberts, speaking in Kansas, said that Congress would have voted against the Iraq war authorization, if they had known at that time, what they know now.

Sunday, Oct. 26: Senators Rockefeller and Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), also a member of the SSCI, appeared together on "Meet the Press." Both expressed anger at the Administration's failure to produce documents to the SSCI. Rockefeller indicated the Committee would focus attention on the Pentagon units that provided intelligence, outside of normal channels, to justify the war.

Monday, Oct. 27: A senior retired CIA official told *EIR* that Rockefeller had broken with Roberts, over Roberts' efforts, under immense White House pressure, to stall and obstruct the investigation into the Wilson leak, and into the Pentagon's disinformation leading into the war. Cheney is leading the effort to get Roberts to scapegoat the CIA and the

intelligence community for the fake intelligence that stam-
peded the Congress into voting to give the President the autho-
rization to go to war; and he added that the Cheney crowd is
desperate to prevent a serious investigation of the Office of
Special Plans (OSP) in the Pentagon.

Thursday, Oct. 30: Sometime between Tuesday and
Thursday, Senator Roberts, in a dramatic about-face, co-
signed letters with Senator Rockefeller, which letters were
sent to the National Security Council at the White House, the
State Department, and the Defense Department, castigating
those agencies for delaying the production of documents
which the SSCI had been demanding for months, and giving
them a deadline of noon on Friday, Oct. 31. The letter to
Rumsfeld specifically named Undersecretary of Defense for
Policy Doug Feith; sources cited in news accounts said that
the SSCI is looking into the Pentagon's OSP, and also Assis-
tant Secretary of State John Bolton. A Congressional source
told the *Los Angeles Times*: "By co-signing these letters, Rob-
erts has done what he spent the last two months saying he
wouldn't—extending this into the White House."

Sunday, Nov. 2: Senators Roberts and Rockefeller ap-
peared on CNN's "Late Edition." Rockefeller insisted the
Administration would be forced to deliver all the requested
records. He reported that, as of Friday, the State Department
and CIA had complied, while both the NSC and the Pentagon
had failed to meet the deadline. Senator Roberts "apolo-
gized" to Rockefeller for not yet informing him that, late
Friday afternoon, a very top White House official had called
him to promise, in the "spirit of cooperation," that all the
subpoenaed records would be turned over. Roberts said his
staff received a similar call from the Pentagon. Rockefeller
reserved judgment on this cooperation until he had the mate-
rial in hand.

Rockefeller repeated his earlier statements about the
broad legislative mandate of the SSCI, and specified that he
is interested in the intelligence leading up to President Bush's
Oct. 7, 2002 speech in Cincinnati, from which all references
to the Niger yellowcake allegations were struck, in contrast
to Bush's State of the Union message three months later, in
which he cited the already-discredited report of Saddam's
African uranium search. Rockefeller also says that he and
Roberts have agreed that there would be personal calls by
them to senior Administration and Pentagon officials this
week, if they have not complied with the Committee's de-
mands.

Monday, Nov. 3: The *Washington Post* reported that, in
addition to the document requests, Roberts and Rockefeller
"have requested interviews with officials of the National Se-
curity Council and Cheney's office."

Tuesday, Nov. 4: Fox News commentator and talk-show
host Sean Hannity reported that he had obtained a memoran-
dum, circulated among the Democratic staff on the SSCI,
which, he claimed, showed that Democrats intend to use clas-
sified information to drive President Bush from office in the

2004 elections. The memo actually only reiterated Rockefel-
ler's Oct. 24 statement. The leak memo quickly went from
Fox's website to many others.

Roberts responded that the memo "exposes politics in its
most raw form," and "appears to be a road map for how the
Democrats intend to politicize what should be a bipartisan,
objective review of pre-war intelligence."

Wednesday, Nov. 5: Republican Senators took to the
Senate floor and press gallery to denounce the Democrats for
"politicizing" the Iraq intelligence investigation.

Rockefeller said that Roberts is trying to shield the White
House from scrutiny, and suggested that Republicans may
have stolen the memo by breaking into a Committee com-
puter: "I would suggest to my colleagues that there is reason
for concern today, and it is not for the content of this draft
staff memo. It was an internal memo, a draft. At some point,
the Committee and the Senate are going to have to explore
the chain of events surrounding this draft memo, since it raises
serious questions about whether the majority is obtaining un-
authorized access to private internal materials of the mi-
nority."

Thursday, Nov. 6: The *Washington Times* urged, in its
lead editorial, that the White House should henceforth be
extremely cautious about providing any classified informa-
tion to the Intelligence Committee, "until the credibility and
reliability of the committee can be re-established." A *New
York Post* editorial demanded that the Senate dump Jay
Rockefeller from the Committee, and conduct a thorough
purge of its staff.

Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Penn.), chairman of the Senate
Republican Conference, threatened to scrap the bi-partisan,
power-sharing arrangements in the Intelligence Committee.
(Under those rules, either Roberts or Rockefeller can chair a
hearing, and the minority party can launch an investigation
by obtaining five signatures out of the eight Democrats on
the Committee.)

Friday, Nov. 7: The *Wall Street Journal* editorial de-
manded that, until those responsible for the memo are fired,
the SSCI be "shut down, cleaned out and reconstituted later,
preferably after the next election."

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist shut down the SSCI,
cancelling all its activities, including a meeting scheduled
that day.

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