

Subpoena Threats Haunt Cheney and White House

by Michele Steinberg

Vice President Dick Cheney's national security advisor Lewis "Scooter" Libby is again in the sights of the ongoing Federal grand jury investigation into the leaking of the identity of CIA "non-official cover" agent Valerie Plame. Plame's husband, former Amb. Joe Wilson, provoked the ire of Cheney when he publicized his finding that the reports of Iraq purchases of "yellow cake" uranium for nuclear weapons fuel, were false. Wilson had gone to Niger to investigate the allegation in February 2002, after Cheney demanded that the CIA check it out.

Libby's name has come up in subpoenas issued for the records of all meetings of the super-secret "White House Iraq Group," says *Newsday* reporter Tom Brune in a March 5 article. The subpoenas seek all records from the group from July 6-30, 2003—the time frame covering the leak of Plame's identity to columnist Robert Novak. The little-known Iraq Group "met weekly in the Situation Room," according to a *Washington Post* article cited by Brune, and the group's highest-ranking participants were Libby; his White House counterpart, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice; and her deputy Stephen Hadley, an early advocate of the Iraq war policy.

Libby is one of the "Iraq War triumvirate," run out of Cheney's office, which included Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and former Defense Policy Board chairman Richard Perle. Libby is believed to be the hub around which revolved coordination of the flow and creation of raw intelligence, managing of statements to the public, and pressure on the intelligence community to come up with lies to back up the neo-conservative propaganda that came to serve as the basis for the illegal, unjustified, and unnecessary Iraq war.

As *EIR* has reported, Libby had a direct pipeline to Wolfowitz' Office of Special Plans, the secret Pentagon rogue intelligence group, headed by a former Cheney aide, Bill Luti. According to Karen Kwiatkowski, a retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel who worked under Luti's Near East and South Asia (NESA) unit in the Pentagon, Luti would rush production of reports to deliver to "Scooter," outside the chain of command.

It was reported on Feb. 26 that Perle had resigned from the Defense Policy Board, in a letter to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld which burned with frustration over the spotlight on his business activities, and criticism of his policies. Perle's letter did not mention the ongoing investigations into his

money-making deals, involving a company he set up called Trireme Partners. But, Washington sources say that Perle's resignation does not necessarily mean that the Iraq war rogue operation of which he was an important part, will be closed down. That will take a full Congressional inquiry.

Floodgates Opening

But the Plame grand jury is not the only subpoena haunting the Cheney-controlled White House, and the atmosphere is reportedly so paranoid, that clashes have begun with leading Republican Party figures. On March 5, one of Congress' "insider" newspapers, *The Hill*, broadcast that wild-man Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who had been even more fanatical about deposing Saddam Hussein than Cheney and Bush, was "pushing" the White House to give subpoena powers to the "Independent Commission" that Bush created on Feb. 7, and to which Bush had appointed McCain. "The administration has turned him down," reports *The Hill*, but McCain "is refusing to take no for an answer."

No doubt the White House was surprised when McCain was seconded by Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kans.), the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, who usually has the combativity of a dish-rag, and who, when asked if the Commission should have subpoena power, said, "If they ask for it, I think they ought to have it."

Just a week earlier, on Feb. 27, in lockstep with the usual procedure identified with Cheney—who engineered the shut-down of the committee completely in November 2003—Roberts hastily pressured the *New York Times* to correct (in truth, to retract) a story that the committee had set a three-week deadline for voluntary compliance by the White House, to turn over documents, or there would be "further action," understood to mean subpoenas. The *Times* "corrected" on Feb. 29 that the committee had not voted, and there was no specific time frame. But, Roberts did assert that the committee does "possess and will exercise its authority when necessary to compel testimony or the production of documents."

There are other signs that belatedly show a determination to use the power the Constitution affords to the Congress, despite the stonewalling and lies of the Administration. And all roads lead to Dick Cheney, as LaRouche had identified in September 2002.

Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), the strongest opponent in the Senate of the Iraq war, blasted the "Independent Commission" on March 5. "If Congress is serious about getting to the bottom of . . . this administration's rush to war, we must realize that once stripped of its dazzling plumage, the White House proposal for its own so-called independent commission is a real, honest-to-goodness turkey." The executive order says the President determines what classified reports the commission sees; the Congress is not allowed to *read* the commission report—they will be briefed by the White House—maybe. And the President "may at any time modify" the rules allowing access to "classified information."

Byrd gets at another poison pill in the order: exemption from judicial review. "Let us not forget that the Office of the Vice President fought tooth and nail in Federal courts, and is still doing so, to keep the General Accounting Office, an arm of the Congress, from learning about the meetings of the Vice President's energy task force," Byrd said. "Could this be an attempt to hide the work of the . . . commission from the Congress? I would not put such a scheme beyond the White House."

Byrd said that Congress should act quickly to create an independent Iraq intelligence commission.

There is another investigation closing in on Cheney: Halliburton. On March 11, the House Government Reform Committee opens hearings into the contracts that Halliburton has in Iraq—billions of dollars of no-bid, non-competitive contracts given to the company of which Cheney was the President and CEO, until he quit to run for office in 2000. Halliburton has already owned up to taking millions of dollars in kickbacks from sub-contracting companies in Kuwait. Halliburton has admitted that its subsidiary, Kellogg, Brown and Root, had charged tens of millions of dollars for non-existent meals that they claimed had been delivered to soldiers in Iraq. The firm is also under criminal investigation by the Pentagon for overcharging \$61 million for gasoline supplies to Iraq.

Then, on March 4, Democratic Senators Carl Levin of Michigan and Byron Dorgan of North Dakota released a General Accounting Office (GAO) study of how Halliburton and other top government contractors "have subsidiaries in tax-haven countries . . . that could enable them to avoid paying U.S. income taxes even as they reap millions in Federal contract revenue each year." A press release from the Senators says that Halliburton has 17 subsidiaries in tax-haven countries, "including 13 in the Cayman Islands, which does not impose a corporate tax."

The London *Economist* has duly noted that Cheney is not just a vulnerability for Bush, but also for Halliburton. In back-to-back articles in its Feb. 19, 2004 edition, the *Economist* suggested that Halliburton will continue to have problems as long as Cheney is in the White House. The other article in its well-read "Lexington" column was titled "Time for him to go?" It ominously warned that "Dick Cheney should watch whom he travels with," referring to the recent duck-killing spree that Cheney went on, with Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, just after Scalia was



The Congressional investigations and "Independent Commissions" created thus far are not so much Cheney's problem, as the subpoenas and criminal investigations lurking just over the horizon. At right is Iraqi National Congress head Ahmed Chalabi, whose bragging about pre-war intelligence fabrications his group made up, backfired hard against Cheney chief of staff Lewis Libby.

scheduled to decide if Cheney must turn over the Energy Task Force documents.

But the biggest crime is only now beginning to be revealed: the private "intelligence" pipeline of fraud provided by Cheney's good friend, Iraqi National Congress (INC) leader Ahmed Chalabi, who boasted to the London *Telegraph* that it did not matter "what was said" about weapons of mass destruction before the war, "Our objective has been achieved. That tyrant Saddam is gone, and the Americans are in Baghdad."

On March 5, the *Washington Post* reported that a so-called Iraqi defector, who had information on the "mobile bio-weapons labs" was a member of the INC, and *had never been questioned by the United States*. His story, featured in Secretary of State Colin Powell's UN testimony on Feb. 5, 2003, was backed up by another INC member who had already been exposed as a fabricator by the Defense Intelligence Agency. The INC and Chalabi are now the subject of at least three investigations involving the conveyance of bogus intelligence on Iraq, whether INC members cashed in on the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and contracts that went to firms with business or family ties to Chalabi.

A former high-ranking military official says that the story of the Iraq war disinformation is the type of thing that leads to impeachment hearings. A life-long Republican who worked for years in the U.S. foreign policy establishment called this "criminal stuff," and said Congress must correct its dereliction and abdication of its duty and responsibility before the war. But, the Republican added, it is only "LaRouche's leadership that has made things move."