

Libby's Drafts of Powell's UN Speech Could Be 'Smoking Gun'

by Michele Steinberg

On Feb. 7, 2003, Lyndon LaRouche, then a candidate in the 2004 Democratic Presidential primaries, warned the nation—especially the other Democratic Party candidates—after the Feb. 5, 2003 speech delivered to the UN Security Council special session on Iraq, by then-Secretary of State Colin Powell, that Powell was the “apparent victim of a hoax.”

LaRouche said: “A suddenly unleashing, already raging international scandal over certain dubious elements included in U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell’s UNO Security Council address, tends to discredit my Democratic Party rivals even more more than a Powell who was plainly carrying out a mission crafted by others.

“For example, U.S. credibility is under assault as today’s Reuters’ ‘World News’ dispatches featured breaking news which strongly suggests that Colin Powell’s UNO Security Council address was, in significant part, a hoax based on cooked-up documents of Britain’s Blair government.” (For the full statement, see *EIR*, Feb. 21, 2003, or www.larouche-pub.com.)

As documented in the Feb. 21, 2003 issue of *EIR*, large parts of Powell’s speech were based on a British intelligence assessment, issued by British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s office, which had been prepared by a think-tank run by Barry Rubin, an American neo-conservative, and then passed into British intelligence. Rubin’s dossier, in turn, was based on a graduate student thesis, written nearly 20 years earlier!

But, there is far more to the story, as *EIR* has exposed. Rubin was an extension of the long arm of Dick Cheney’s disinformation apparatus, run out of his office by his national security aide, Lewis “Scooter” Libby, with a direct “stove-pipe” from the Pentagon’s Office of Special Plans (OSP), run by Libby’s cronies, neo-cons Douglas Feith and Paul Wolfowitz, the No. 3 and No. 2 officials in the Pentagon. In Feb. 21, 2003, *EIR* wrote:

“Rubin, a transplanted Israeli citizen, still spends a good deal of time in the United States. On Feb. 4, [2003] he was one of the speakers at a Willard Hotel luncheon in Washington sponsored by Eleana Benador Associates, a New York City public relations firm that counts among its clients the entire chicken-hawk apparatus. Among the other speakers with Rubin were Benador clients [Richard] Perle, Michael Ledeen,

Frank Gaffney, Laurie Mylroie, former UN weapons inspector Richard Spertzel, and former Iraqi weapons scientist Khidhir Hamza.”

Today, there is no question the speech was a hoax.

“I wish I had not been involved in it,” says Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, who had been an advisor to Powell for 16 years, and who served as his chief of staff from 2002 to 2005, and had worked on the speech. “I look back on it, and I still say it was the lowest point in my life,” Wilkerson told CNN in an August 2005 documentary, “Dead Wrong—Inside an Intelligence Meltdown.”

‘Book of Evidence’

The following report is an outline to enable investigators in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to conclude not only that Powell’s speech was a hoax—but that it was one cooked in Cheney’s office.

According to a former high-level intelligence professional, who also served for decades in the U.S. Armed Forces, Libby’s drafts could provide “the smoking gun.” Powell reportedly tossed the 90-page draft (or by some accounts, drafts), that Libby and Cheney’s office were trying to force him to deliver to the UN, “in the garbage,” because it was so unsubstantiated. Instead, he spent 3-4 days at CIA headquarters trying to verify each piece of information he would use at the UN. But several reports say that Libby was there, breathing down Powell’s neck, and trying to reinsert the material that Powell had rejected—even on the day of the speech. (See “Yes Dick, You Are a Liar,” *EIR*, Dec. 9, 2005.)

The Libby drafts will probably show the details that Cheney’s office *was* maintaining its own intelligence shop, gathering information that had been rejected by intelligence professionals, a former CIA official told *EIR*. Congressional investigators could get “behind the curtain” of what Cheney and Libby were *deliberately doing* to manufacture intelligence, by reviewing those drafts. Where did Lewis Libby get his information? How did it get funneled into him? The Senate must investigate this question.

Another senior Washington intelligence source told *EIR* that Libby would not have *dared* to shove a draft of a speech down the throat of the Secretary of State, unless he was doing



UN Photo

Then-Secretary of State Colin Powell addresses the UN Security Council, Feb. 5, 2003, with his infamous argument on behalf of war against Iraq. Large parts of Powell's speech were handed to him by Britain's Tony Blair and Dick Cheney's neo-con disinformation apparatus.

it for Cheney and had Cheney's okay.

Libby has now been indicted for perjury: lying to Federal investigators. Could his crime have stemmed from a *doctrine* of lying and misleading the American people—and Congress—to achieve a war that could not be justified? As 2006 begins, and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence conducts its crucial "Phase II" investigation of the lies that led up to the Iraq War, the most crucial "book of evidence" for that investigation must be the Libby draft of Powell's speech.

EIR cannot comment directly on the Libby drafts, as they are still secret.

We can show that the key allegations in Powell's testimony were false and unreliable, and that much of the false information came from a nefarious network of rogue intelligence operations run by Cheney. And sources for the false information include *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller and Ahmed Chalabi, the head of the Pentagon-funded Iraqi National Congress, and its intelligence unit, the Information Collection Program (ICP).

In addition, Congressional investigations have established that the intelligence community withheld from Congress—and possibly from Powell—*crucial information* that debunked allegations that Iraq was aiding and training al-Qaeda.

Finally, a Dec. 20, 2005 report of House Judiciary Committee Minority Staff, issued by Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), the ranking member on that committee, indicates that Powell doctored transcripts of alleged wiretapped conversations between Iraqi officials, in his UN testimony, to enhance his allegation that Iraqi officials were hiding evidence from UN inspectors.

There are already enough statements by Powell and his longtime assistant, Colonel Wilkerson, for the Senate Intelligence Committee to call Libby, and every single person in-

volved in creating and delivering that UN speech, for a full investigation. For example:

In the *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 20, 2005, on the source "Curveball," who provided faked information on "mobile bio-weapons labs," that Powell played up, Powell says: "I was not pleased. What really made me not pleased was they [the CIA and DIA] had put out a burn notice on this guy, and people who were even present at my briefings knew it."

In a 2005 interview with ABC-News interviewer Barbara Walters, Powell said the speech was a "blot" on his record, and "I'm the one who presented it to the world, and [it] will always be part of my record. It was painful. It is painful now."

Two Levels of Hoax

The final version of Powell's speech contained fake statements so numerous, that one can only imagine what he had to discard from drafts that were shoved on him by Libby and Dick Cheney's office.

Why this elaborate hoax? Simply put, the Administration's case for war was going down the tubes in January 2003, because of the ongoing and successful inspections by the UN-MOVIC, the UN team on bio-chemical weapons, headed by Dr. Hans Blix and by the International Atomic Energy Agency, headed by Dr. Mohammed ElBaradei. The UN inspectors had made repeated visits to every supposed "WMD site" that U.S. and British intelligence had identified, and every one was a dry hole.

As the investigation will show, the Iraqi defectors' network of Chalabi had been scrambling to come up with new "intelligence." The scramble dates to at least February 2002, when Amb. Joseph Wilson, sent on a CIA mission to Niger, had determined that the allegations that Iraq had purchased uranium yellowcake from Niger, were groundless. But the new "intelligence," compiled through the Iraqi National Congress's ICP, where information from Chalabi-controlled Iraqi defectors became "intelligence," was so hasty and sloppy that the hoaxes can now be documented.

Powell on the Iraqi nuclear sites: Much of the information Powell presented came from an Iraqi National Congress-promoted 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 the CIA assessment, Judy Miller, then with the *New York Times*, was given access to al-Haideri for interviews which were featured prominently in the newspaper. Cheney gave a series of speeches based on the Miller article, and al-Haideri was praised by name in White House statements.

Powell on "aluminum tubes": Powell not only asserted that the "aluminum tubes" seized from a ship bound for Iraq in 2000, were for centrifuges for the nuclear program, but he ranted, foolishly, that critics inside the intelligence community who had pointed out that it was impossible for those tubes to be used for the centrifuges, were dead wrong. The

aluminum tubes story was again, a “Cheney special,” which again had originated in a *New York Times* story by Judith Miller, on Sept. 8, 2002.

Do these two cases of Miller’s articles spreading what turned out to be false intelligence on Iraqi WMD suggest that she had a role as a White House channels for disinformation? Miller later surfaced as having a special relationship with Scooter Libby, and was one of the earliest recipients of the classified information from him about the identity of CIA covert agent Valerie Plame, the wife of Ambassador Wilson, who had debunked the Niger yellowcake story.

Powell on the “mobile trailer bio-weapons labs”: He said that biological weapons production facilities existed on trucks, and on train cars, even illustrating the point with a slide show. The whole story was a “Curveball” concoction. In November 2005, five members of the German intelligence agency, BND, were allowed to divulge to the *Los Angeles Times*, how many times, and how intensely they had warned the United States intelligence services that Curveball was a fabricator, who also turned out to be an Iraqi National Congress stringer—related to one of Chalabi’s bodyguards.

Powell on the al-Qaeda/Saddam Hussein conspiracy: Powell went on for pages, about the “decades-long experience” of the ties between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda. But the U.S. Senate learned—*long after* Cheney’s pre-emptive war against Iraq—that the White House, CIA, and DIA, had withheld crucial evidence that the information about the al-Qaeda/Iraq links was faulty.

On Nov. 23, 2005, *National Journal* reporter Murray Waas wrote that the Senate Intelligence Committee was involved in a pitched battle with the White House to get them to turn over to the committee a copy of the Sept. 21, 2001 “Presidential Daily Briefing” which was prepared for George W. Bush, and informed him that there was *no* evidence whatsoever linking Iraq to al-Qaeda, or the attacks on the United States on Sept. 11. The White House had never revealed this to the Intelligence Committee until August 2004—after the committee had completed its pre-election report on the intelligence failures! The briefing has still not been turned over to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Then, on Nov. 29, 2005, Colonel Wilkerson told BBC in an interview that the administration had misused intelligence from captured al-Qaeda member al-Shaykh al-Libi, who claims that he has been the victim of torture. Wilkerson said he is beginning to have “concerns” that the White House was not “simply fooled,” but had lied.

“One is the questioning of Shaykh al-Libi, where his confessions were obtained through interrogation techniques other than those authorized by Geneva. It led Colin Powell to say at the UN . . . that there were some pretty substantive contacts between al-Qaeda and Baghdad. And we now know that al-Libi’s forced confession has been recanted and we know—we’re pretty sure that it was invalid.

“But more important than that, we know that there was a

Defense Intelligence Agency dissent on that testimony even before Colin Powell made his presentation. We never heard about that.” Wilkerson is referring to a DIA memo from February 2002, which was declassified on Oct. 26, 2005, at the request of Senators Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) and Carl Levin (D-Mich.), both members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Wilkerson also says that the al-Libi disinformation was withheld from Powell.

The DIA’s disowning of al-Libi’s statements had also been withheld from the U.S. Senate, says Senator Levin, who is also on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

That DIA finding “is stunningly different from repeated Administration claims of a close relationship between Saddam and al-Qaeda,” said Levin in a Nov. 6, 2005 statement. “Just imagine the impact if that DIA conclusion had been disclosed at that time. It surely could have made a difference in the congressional vote authorizing the war.”

The DIA memo comments on al-Libi’s claims that al-Qaeda forces went to Iraq:

“This is the first report from Ibn al-Shaykh in which he claims Iraq assisted al-Qaida’s CBRN [Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear] efforts. However, he lacks specific details on the Iraqis involved, the CBRN materials associated with the assistance, and the location where training occurred. It is possible he does not know any further details; *it is more likely this individual is intentionally misleading the debriefers* [emphasis added by Levin]. Ibn al-Shaykh has been undergoing debriefs for several weeks and may be describing scenarios to the debriefers that he knows will retain their interest.” The DIA memo also said, “Saddam’s regime is intensely secular and is wary of Islamic revolutionary movements. Moreover, Baghdad is unlikely to provide assistance to a group it cannot control.”

Levin also stated that a CIA report on al-Shaykh al-Libi from the same time period said that he was not in a position to know anything about such training. There are also reports that al-Libi recanted his statements.

Levin and Rockefeller are now asking that four other DIA documents about Iraq be declassified.

Chalabi Gloats

In February 2004, when it had come out that David Kay, head of the U.S. occupation inspection teams, had concluded that there *are no Iraqi WMD*, Ahmed Chalabi gloated to the *London Telegraph*, “We [the Iraqi National Congress] are heroes in error. As far as we are concerned, we have been entirely successful, our objective has been achieved. That tyrant, Saddam, is gone, and the Americans are in Baghdad. What was said before is not important.” But Chalabi’s, and Cheney’s, coverup is breaking apart.

Mark Bender, George R. Canning, Carl Osgood, Jeffrey Steinberg, and Scott Thompson also contributed to this article.