

Home Alone, Dick and George Desperately Scheme for War

by Jeffrey Steinberg

The sudden resignation of Attorney General Alberto Gonzales may have caught some in Washington by surprise, but the decision to throw the thoroughly discredited and legally challenged AG overboard was made over a month ago, following his bungled, lying testimony before House and Senate Judiciary committees. The delay in announcing his resignation was pure political calculus. By waiting until the late August doldrums, and creating distance from the Congressional hearings that actually brought the Attorney General down, White House strategists, led by the recently departed Karl Rove, hoped to minimize the political damage. They were kidding themselves.

Sources familiar with the present state of chaos at the Bush-Cheney White House say that the Gonzales departure creates a vacuum at the top of the Justice Department, where more than a dozen investigations into impeachable crimes by the President and Vice President are now ongoing. One of those probes, into the payoffs by the British arms firm, BAE Systems, to former Saudi Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin-Sultan, could strike a deadly blow to the entire Anglo-American strategic partnership that has guided the current Administration on its path of self-destruction for the past seven years. More on the implications of the BAE saga follow below.

According to several of *EIR*'s Washington sources, the White House is desperate to recreate the bodyguard of lies that Gonzales loyally provided, atop the Justice Department. So far, these sources report, the top candidate to replace Gonzales is White House terrorism advisor Fran Townsend. A one-time Clinton Administration DOJ and White House insider, Townsend reinvented herself as a Bush-Cheney loyalist over the past seven years, and is now one of the Vice President's most trusted allies. As Cheney's key contact to the

Saudi royal family, Townsend has been traveling quietly back and forth to Riyadh, and faithfully representing Cheney's schemes to create a permanent Sunni-Shi'ite conflict in the Muslim world.

Townsend is also on President Bush's A-list of trusted White House gal-pals, a status far more important than her formal rank as an assistant to the President on counter-terrorism and homeland security affairs. Townsend's most important qualifications for the Attorney General post: her total loyalty to Cheney and Bush, and her insider status with the Saudis, which assure that she would move Heaven and Earth to quash the BAE probe.

BAE Probe Would Be Explosive

Well-placed Washington and Arab world sources insist that a thorough probe of BAE's ties to Prince Bandar, particularly his role in the "Al-Yamamah" oil-for-weapons barter deal, would provide the key to the darkest secrets of the past several decades, from the Anglo-American and Saudi bankrolling of the Afghani mujahideen and the cocaine Contras in the 1980s, to the real story behind al-Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks. There is perhaps no Justice Department probe in recent memory that carries such profound implications, if thoroughly pursued, as the Bandar-BAE case. At the moment, the investigation has been confined to violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a law barring bribery of foreign officials in the United States and other related crimes. Over the span of the "Al-Yamamah" operation, Prince Bandar received a reported \$2 billion in payments. The funds originated with the Saudi Ministry of Defense, went through BAE and British Defence Ministry accounts at the Bank of England, and ultimately were passed into the Saudi Embassy accounts in Washington at Riggs National Bank. If the DOJ

probe is expanded to cover violations of the 1997 amended U.S. drug money laundering law, sources tell *EIR* that a Pandora's box would open up.

Like the Last Days of the Soviet Union

The situation in and around the White House has become so desperate and isolated, that Washington insiders are drawing parallels between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the House of Bush-Cheney. The appearance of Soviet solidity, long cultivated, came crashing down in the wake of the failed KGB coup of 1991 against the last Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachov. Within weeks, the Soviet Union was no more. Similarly, sources report, the once-impervious Bush White House is now embroiled in factional battles, mass resignations, and a total loss of control over the policy agenda for the final 16 months.

The well-orchestrated, vintage Karl Rove plans to skunk Congressional Democrats on the Iraq War issue, through the White House-scripted "testimony" of Gen. David Petraeus, touting the success of the so-called troop "surge," were delivered a death blow in late August, when Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), the Senate's "Mr. Military," freshly back in Washington from a four-day tour of Iraq, "suggested" that President Bush should announce the start of a withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, in his scheduled Sept. 15 speech to the nation. Warner's much-agonized defection from Team Bush, long in the making, shook the White House to the core, according to GOP sources, at precisely the moment they were trying to delicately dump Alberto Gonzales and quickly replace him with another "firewall" loyalist.

Cheney as a British Puppet

While President Bush may be too caught up in his fantasy world to realize that his biggest problem is the collapse of the world financial system, and, at home, an immediate home-foreclosure and banking crisis, others in and around the Administration are not so blind. For weeks, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke have been conducting round-the-clock consultations with central bankers and leading private financiers from Europe, Japan, China, and other leading creditor countries, trying to devise a plan to postpone the inevitable collapse of the entire world financial system. According to one banker involved in some of the talks, Paulson, in particular, has been desperately looking for false assurances that the crisis can be postponed or localized, while he and the others actually know better. The idea that the Bush-Cheney White House is going to have to face up to the biggest financial blowout in modern history is, unquestionably, the scariest feature of the entire unraveling strategic situation.

Ironically, Paulson brings a unique bank of experiences into this crisis. From 1972-73, he was an aide to John Ehrlichman, President Richard Nixon's chief of staff, and a central player in the Watergate scandal that was erupting at the

time; Paulson was advised to say "sayonara" to White House politics and seek more "honest work"—on Wall Street. It is ironic that Paulson should return to Washington, only to find himself, once again, in the belly of a scandal that John Dean, Nixon's White House counsel and a key Watergate whistleblower, has described as "bigger than Watergate."

If history is to be any guide to the present, the Bush-Cheney Administration is facing an existential choice in the immediate days and weeks ahead: Either return to the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt, or go with a Hitler/Mussolini alternative, meaning war. As reported elsewhere in this issue of *EIR*, there is no doubt that the Vice President is hell-bent on war with Iran, as the immediate "way out" of the financial catastrophe already unfolding.

Cheney, by all accounts, has been the driver for a showdown with Iran, aimed at triggering a "permanent war" between Sunni and Shi'ites throughout Asia. Cheney was the chief impediment to getting President Bush to embrace the Kennebunkport offer by Russian President Vladimir Putin, to launch a U.S.-Russian strategic partnership, which would begin with the creation of a joint missile defense shield, covering Eurasia. As one well-placed Washington strategist put it: "Such a U.S.-Russian strategic partnership is London's worst nightmare. If Washington and Moscow agreed on a long-range cooperative agenda, centered around the economic development of Eurasia, the leading continental Western European nations, led by Germany, would jump on board. Britain would be isolated and powerless."

Thus the imperial drive for a war between the United States and Iran—a war that would bring decades of chaos to the Persian Gulf oil patch, and pit the United States against all civilized nations, including both Russia and China—is a top British priority. Dick Cheney is the "last man standing" in the British scheme, and as long as Cheney remains in his Vice Presidential perch, war is just around the corner.

No 'Double Impeachment'

Thus, with all of the mounting real-world crises piling up as Congress returns from the Summer holiday, the number one priority is the ouster of Dick Cheney. Any talk of a double impeachment of Bush and Cheney, Lyndon LaRouche warned on Aug. 31, would be worse than folly. Bush without Cheney, LaRouche explained, could be managed, with proper advisors and a Vice President who is not a British war party stooge. To bring down both the President and Vice President at a moment of global financial crisis, when American leadership is key to any viable solution, would be a disastrous, irreparable blunder. Oust Cheney now, and the problem can be solved, through the kinds of emergency measures proposed by LaRouche, beginning with his Homeowners and Banks Protection Act of 2007. Take Cheney's impeachment "off the table," and there is no bottom in sight.