

New 'Pentagon Papers' Scandal Could Bring Down Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Bush

by Edward Spannaus

Are the leaks coming out of the U.S. military showing Donald Rumsfeld's interference in military war plans for Iraq, the opening stages of a new "Pentagon Papers" scandal? This was the question asked recently by Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche, who noted that this scandal could quickly expand beyond Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, to Vice President Dick Cheney, and could potentially bring down President George Bush himself—if he is foolish enough to continue with the Iraq war.

Just as the "Pentagon Papers"—a top-secret history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam—showed that the American public had been systematically misled by the U.S. government, the recent leaks and criticisms of Rumsfeld coming out of the military may just be the beginning of a torrent of disclosures, showing that competent intelligence and military professionals strongly disputed the flawed assessments of Rumsfeld and his civilian advisers such as Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith, who had predicted a quick and easy victory in Iraq. Both the American people and the troops on the ground were misled by the "chicken-hawk" gang surrounding Rumsfeld, with the result that U.S. troops going into Iraq found a very different situation than they had been led to expect. Rumsfeld's expectation was that there would not have to be any ground war, because U.S. troops would be welcomed as liberators, and the Iraq forces would quickly surrender.

The deeper issue, beyond Iraq, is the utopian military policies promoted by the gang now controlling the Defense Department and the Bush Administration, which are transforming the United States into an aggressive, imperial power, contrary to this nation's traditional policies toward the rest of the world.

Within a week of the commencement of the invasion, rumblings began to be heard from the ranks of the uniformed officer corps. Among the first to report this was Knight-Ridder's Joseph Galloway (regarded by some journalists as having the best military sources), who quoted unnamed Pentagon officials as saying that Rumsfeld had cut off the flow of Army units into Iraq, saying that the war would be over in two days. Galloway reported that Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and other civilians in the Pentagon ignored the advice coming from the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency, preferring to listen to the Iraqi opposition, and to Israeli sources who predicted an immediate uprising against

Saddam, once the Americans attacked.

Other sources told *EIR*, that a major methodological flaw was that the war-planning was relying on the racist views of Jabotinskyites (such as Doug Feith) who don't accept the very idea of Arab nationalism or patriotism—and therefore had no expectation that Iraqis might rally to the defense of their country in the face of a foreign invasion, irrespective of their attitude toward Saddam Hussein.

More specific reports came out over the March 29-30 weekend, in which comparisons between Rumsfeld, and the Vietnam-era Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, began to be drawn.

A prominent *Washington Post* article featured interviews with both serving and retired officers, who charged Rumsfeld and his aides with "micromanaging" the Iraq deployment plan, out of a mistrust of Army generals, and in an attempt to prove that their own theory: that a light, maneuverable force could handily defeat Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. (This is an essential component of the Administration's strategic doctrine of pre-emptive attacks on "rogue states," which requires the United States to have the capability of swatting down distasteful regimes all over the world at any time, without a full mobilization of American's military forces.)

One military officer told the *Post* that the civilians in Rumsfeld's office "vetoed the priority and sequencing of joint forces into the region, as it was requested by the war-fighters, and manipulated it to support their priorities." He explained that "it desynchronized not only the timing of the arrival of people and their organic equipment, but also the proper mix of combat, combat support, and combat service support units." Retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey, an Army division commander in the 1991 Gulf War, was quoted in the *Post* article as saying, that Rumsfeld "sat on each element for weeks at a time and wanted an explanation for every unit called up out of the National Guard and Reserve, and argued about every 42-man maintenance detachment." McCaffrey said that, at bottom, there was "a lack of trust that these Army generals knew what they were doing."

A Direct Hit from Seymour Hersh

Over the weekend, advance copies of the third Seymour Hersh article, in the April 7 *New Yorker* magazine, began to circulate—the latest in his series exposing the chicken-hawk apparatus as a bunch of war-party fanatics who, true to the



Are current leaks about flawed war-planning for the Iraq invasion the beginnings of a new “Pentagon Papers” scandal, that could send President George W. Bush the way of Richard Nixon? The original 1974 disclosure of the “Pentagon Papers”—a secret history of the Vietnam conflict, based on Pentagon and CIA documents—set into motion a chain of events that led to the impeachment and resignation of Nixon. Daniel Ellsberg—a former Marine and Defense Department analyst—became convinced of the immorality of the Vietnam War; After leaking the documents to Congress and various newspapers in 1971, he was indicted by the Justice Department. In April 1973, during Ellsberg’s trial, the Watergate prosecutor notified the trial judge that two of the operatives involved in the Watergate Hotel break-in—Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt—had also been ordered by the White House to break into the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist. This was the first link of Liddy and Hunt to the White House; discovery of the direct White House role in the Watergate break-in quickly followed—leading to resignations of top Nixon aides, impeachment proceedings, and his resignation in August 1974.

methods of Leo Strauss, overtly lied to get their Iraq war project going. The previous week’s article had exposed the use of crudely forged documents as the basis for accusations that Iraq had tried to buy 500 tons of “yellow cake” uranium precursor from Niger. Before that came the now-famous exposé of Richard Perle’s conflicts of interest, showing how Perle had used his position as chairman of the Defense Policy Board for personal and political gain, including a crude blackmail effort directed against Saudi Arabia.

Hersh’s article described the role of Rumsfeld personally in wrecking the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their top war-planners’ efforts to devise a competent war plan against Iraq. Hersh reported widespread fury among military brass at Rumsfeld, who, over the past year, had altered the war plan six separate times, always telling the generals to reduce the number of ground troops to be used. The Iraq war plan, said Hersh, “was repeatedly updated and presented to Rumsfeld, and each time, according to the planner, Rumsfeld said, ‘You’ve got too much ground force—go back and do it again.’”

According to planners, “Rumsfeld had two goals: to demonstrate the efficacy of precision bombing and to ‘do the war on the cheap.’ Rumsfeld and his two main deputies for war-planning, Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith, ‘were so enamored of shock and awe that victory seemed assured,’ the planner said, ‘They believed that the weather would always be clear, that the enemy would expose itself, and so precision bomb-

ings would always work.’”

Hersh also reported that Rumsfeld had contempt for the top military officers, particularly the Army chiefs, and ran a purge of the Joint planning staff, eliminating anyone who opposed his utopian madness, and replacing them with people who would “churn out products to make the Secretary of Defense happy.” (This recalled the report about the July 10, 2002 meeting of the Defense Policy Board, at which Perle and the chicken-hawks insisted “heads will roll” among the military officers opposing the drive to invade Iraq.)

Hersh also reported that Rumsfeld made matters far worse by lying about his role. In February 2003, according to a senior Pentagon source, Rumsfeld spoke at the Army Commanders Conference, and, when directly asked about his personal involvement in the deployment of combat units, said “I wasn’t involved. It was the Joint Staff.”

Rumsfeld continued the same pattern of lying in a number of Sunday television talk-show appearances on March 30. When confronted with quotes from Hersh’s article, Rumsfeld flatly denied what Hersh had charged, and then went on to make the incredible statement, that “I think you will find that if you ask anyone who has been involved in the process, from the Central Command, that every single thing they’ve requested has in fact happened.” Rumsfeld also said that the plan being used was developed by Centcom Commander Gen. Tommy Franks. Throughout the day, Rumsfeld labelled the allegations being made by military officials “false,” and re-

peated the lie about the plan being developed by Tommy Franks.

Hersh's article also described Rumsfeld's interference with the operational-logistics plan known as "TPFDL"—the Time-Phased Forces-Deployment List. This aspect of Rumsfeld's meddling was described in a more detailed article in the non-political *National Journal* on March 28, by James Kitfield. This article says, that the most disruptive change to the battle plan was Rumsfeld's decision in November to slash Centcom's request for forces, which cut the size of the assault force in half in the final stages of planning; "it had a ripple effect on Centcom and Army planning that continues to color operations to this day." The scrapping of the TPFDL—by which needed forces are identified and deployments managed in order of priority—necessitated the "rolling start," and left commanders trying to manage the forward battle while also trying to manage the unloading and flow of additional forces to the rear. The strain on the supply train was exacerbated by the cutting of critical additional support forces. There were only 150 heavy transport trucks, whereas planners estimated 700 were needed. The convoy north became chaotic, with accidents, vehicles running out of fuel, overtired drivers, and so on.

At the Defense Department press briefing on March 25, at the first question asked of Rumsfeld about the criticisms from military officers, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Richard Myers jumped in (quite out of character for him) and denounced the criticisms as "bogus," saying, "they're false, they're absolutely wrong," and, "it's just harmful to our troops who are out there fighting very hard, very courageously." Myers was highly agitated, according to eyewitnesses, and Rumsfeld was also even more hysterical than usual. The *New York Times* noted the next day that Myers' comments were taken as a "shot across the bow" in military circles—as a thinly veiled warning that they could be accused of insubordination. Elsewhere, it was reported that colleagues of Lt. Gen. William Wallace—the V Corps Commander in Iraq—wondered if his head was on the chopping block.

Two sharp reactions came immediately.

That evening, General McCaffrey shot back: "I'm quite proud to be part of an attempt to explain to the American people what's happening to their young people. This war is too important to be left to the Secretary alone. I'm a professor of national security studies," McCaffrey continued, "and I know a lot more about fighting than he does. The problem isn't that the V Corps serving officers are commenting or that retired senior officers are. The problem is that they chose to attack 250 miles into Iraq with one armored division and no rear-area security and no second front."

Joining the ranks of former commanders attacking Rumsfeld—which up to this point were primarily from the Army—was Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Hoar (ret.), who wrote an op-ed for the *New York Times* entitled "Why Aren't There Enough Troops in Iraq?" Hoar said that over previous months, many military officials had reported to what he called

"the community of retired officers," that there were serious disagreements between the uniformed military and the civilian leadership. Hoar said that he was told that those uniformed officers who had called for using three additional divisions in Iraq, were ridiculed for their "old thinking." (Hersh reported, that one witness recalled Rumsfeld confronting the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Eric Shinseki, in front of many junior officers, waving his hand and demanding to know, contemptuously, "Are you *getting* this yet? Are you *getting* this yet?")

Hoar recounted that one retired four-star general warned, that the dispute was about more than just Iraq, "that civilians wanted the war done in new, leaner way to justify their vision of the 'transformational force' expected to be in place by 2010." Notably, Hoar likened the views of the Bush White House, to those of the Clinton Administration, in that there is a belief among civilians that military technology has advanced to the point, where wars can be won with relatively few ground forces. But, Hoar declared, there is a cost to this, and in this case, "the cost will be measured in American lives."

Under the title, "Washington's Republican Guard," CBS commentator Dick Meyer pointed out that with the Pentagon's military strategy under siege: "The most listened-to critics were not Democrats, protesters, or foreigners. They were generals, ex-generals, and wise men, often anonymous, associated with the regime of Bush the Elder."

An Unexpected Flank

A highly revealing indicator of the military's broader attitude toward the current Bush Administration, is the intervention of a star-studded group of retired military officers, in the University of Michigan affirmative action case, which was argued in front of the U.S. Supreme Court on April 1. The officers, including three former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Gen. John Shalikashvili, Gen. Henry Shelton, and Adm. William Crowe), plus other prominent retired officers such as Gen. Anthony Zinni and Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, who have been critical of the Administration's Iraq policy, signed a friend-of-the-court brief supporting the Michigan program, and stating if the court sided with the legal position taken by the Bush Administration, the admissions policies at all the service academies will be overturned. They argued that it is a matter of "compelling national interest," that the officers corps of the U.S. military have broad representation from all racial and ethnic groups. "African-American troops, who rarely saw members of their own race in command positions, lost confidence in the military as an institution," the brief argued. The retired officers argued that the court must take into account institutional and societal issues, not just individual rights.

The willingness of prestigious former four-stars to come out openly challenging the George W. Bush Administration, is of great significance, part and parcel of the battle between the uniformed military services, and the neo-conservatives who have seized control over the Bush Administration, and are leading this nation into certain destruction.