

Cheney Under Fire for Intelligence Frauds

by Edward Spannaus

In a June 26 radio interview, Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche was asked why he is calling for the impeachment of Vice President Dick Cheney for foisting falsified intelligence upon the President justify the war against Iraq, and whether he is thereby relieving President Bush of the burden of responsibility.

“No,” LaRouche responded, “I’m looking at government as a future President would. We have a President who ain’t worth shucks, but he happens to be the President. Now, what if you go for the President? You haven’t got much on him, because the fact that he’s not too clever, shall we say, means that that’s a moderating consideration, in any errors he made.

“The point is, he is essentially a puppet of the Vice President, and this gang we call the neo-cons. Now, my view is, if we get this bunch out, . . . then I believe that the institutions of the Executive, with a little more courage shown by the Democrats, for example, in the Congress, we can get through the next year and a half, or so, without terrible problem.

“However, if you were to go for the President, against whom you do not have a clear case, you can’t prove that he knew what he was doing, because his limitations are well known. However, the Vice President, who is actually controlling the President’s mind, like a ventriloquist controlling a dummy, he is the problem. You want to get rid of the President, and put *him* [Cheney] in as President?”

Cheney in the Spotlight

Others are pointing the finger at the Vice President as well. We reprint below a column by retired CIA analyst Ray McGovern, who tears apart some of the excuses being proffered by the *Washington Post* and others to cover up Cheney’s role in cooking the intelligence on alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Additionally, *Time* magazine, in its July 7 issue, asked “Who Lost the WMD?” The article identifies key questions that Congress wants answered, and the first question is: “What was Cheney’s role?”

Time reports that the Congressional committees investigating the Administration’s pre-war claims about Iraqi WMD, want to know about Cheney’s repeated visits to the CIA in the period before the war, to review intelligence assessments with CIA analysts. “Some Democrats say Cheney’s visits may have amounted to pressure on the normally cautious agency,” *Time* says. “Cheney’s defenders insist that his visits merely showed the importance of the issue and that

an honest analyst wouldn’t feel pressure to twist intelligence. The House intelligence committee (and possibly its Senate counterpart, sources say) plans to question the CIA analysts who briefed Cheney, and that could lead to calling Cheney’s hard-line aides and perhaps the Veep himself to testify.”

On June 25, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) offered an amendment to the Intelligence Authorization Bill, which would have required the Inspector General of the CIA “to conduct an audit of all telephone and electronic communications between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Office of the Vice President,” relating to Iraq WMD. Citing President Bush’s claim, in his State of the Union address, that Saddam Hussein had sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa, Kucinich asked: “Did the Vice President play a role in making false information become the public reason the President went to war in Iraq?”

Cheney, Fraud, and CIA: Not Business As Usual

by Ray McGovern

This column was originally published in the Hartford Courant of Connecticut on June 27. Ray McGovern, a CIA analyst from 1964-90, regularly reported to the Vice President and senior policy-makers on the President’s Daily Brief from 1981-85.

As though this were normal! I mean the repeated visits Vice President Dick Cheney made to the CIA before the war in Iraq. The visits were, in fact, unprecedented. During my 27-year career at the Central Intelligence Agency, no vice president ever came to us for a working visit. During the ’80s, it was my privilege to brief Vice President George H.W. Bush and other very senior policy-makers every other morning. I went either to the Vice President’s office or (on weekends) to his home. I am sure it never occurred to him to come to CIA headquarters.

The morning briefings gave us an excellent window on what was uppermost in the minds of those senior officials and helped us refine our tasks of collection and analysis. Thus, there was never any need for policy-makers to visit us. And the very thought of a Vice President dropping by to help us with our analysis is extraordinary. We preferred to do that work without the pressure that inevitably comes from policy-makers at the table.

Cheney got into the operational side of intelligence as well. Reports in late 2001 that Iraq had tried to acquire uranium from Niger, stirred such intense interest that his office let it be known he wanted them checked out. So, with the CIA as facilitator, a retired U.S. ambassador was dispatched to Niger in February 2002 to investigate. He found nothing to

substantiate the report and lots to call it into question. There the matter rested—until last Summer, after the Bush Administration made the decision for war in Iraq.

Cheney, in a speech on Aug. 26, 2002, claimed that Saddam Hussein had “resumed his effort to acquire nuclear weapons.” At the time, CIA analysts were involved in a knock-down, drag-out argument with the Pentagon on this very point. Most of the nuclear engineers at the CIA, and virtually all scientists at U.S. government laboratories and the International Atomic Energy Agency, found no reliable evidence that Iraq had restarted its nuclear weapons program.

Estimates Changed for Cheney

But the Vice President had spoken. Sad to say, those in charge of the draft National Intelligence Estimate took their cue and stated, falsely, that “most analysts assess Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.” Smoke was blown about aluminum tubes sought by Iraq that, it turns out, were for conventional weapons programs. The rest amounted to things like Hussein’s frequent meetings with nuclear scientists and Iraq’s foot-dragging in providing information to UN inspectors.

Not much heed was paid to the fact that Hussein’s son-in-law, who supervised Iraq’s nuclear program before he defected in 1995, had told interrogators that Iraq’s nuclear capability—save the blueprints—had been destroyed in 1991 at his order. (Documents given to the United States this week confirm that. The Iraqi scientists who provided them added that, even though the blueprints would have given Iraq a head start, no order was given to restart the program; and even had such an order been given, Iraq would still have been years away from producing a nuclear weapon.)

In sum, the evidence presented in last September’s intelligence estimate fell far short of what was required to support Cheney’s claim that Iraq was on the road to a nuclear weapon. Something scarier had to be produced, and quickly, if Congress was to be persuaded to authorize war. And so the decision was made to dust off the uranium-from-Niger canard.

The White House calculated—correctly—that before anyone would make an issue of the fact that this key piece of “intelligence” was based on a forgery, Congress would vote yes. The war could then be waged and won. In recent weeks, Administration officials have begun spreading the word that Cheney was never told the Iraq-Niger story was based on a forgery. I asked a senior official who recently served at the National Security Council if he thought that was possible. He pointed out that rigorous NSC procedures call for a very specific response to all Vice Presidential questions and added that “the fact that Cheney’s office had originally asked that the Iraq-Niger report be checked out makes it inconceivable that his office would not have been informed of the results.”

Did the President himself know that the information used to secure Congressional approval for war was based on a forgery? We don’t know. But which would be worse—that he knew or that he didn’t?

Profile: Aaron Friedberg

Cheney Adds China-Basher To National Security Staff

by Mike Billington

As of June 1, Professor Aaron Friedberg, who heads Princeton University’s Center of International Studies, moved to the White House on a one-year contract to work as Vice President Dick Cheney’s Deputy National Security Advisor with a focus on China. As *EIR* reported on June 8, Friedberg is a notorious China-basher, a founding member of the neo-conservative “Project for a New American Century” (PNAC), and one of Leo Strauss’s “Ignoble Liars.” Friedberg will fit right in among the stable of Strauss followers in Cheney’s office—if Cheney is not first impeached or forced to resign for Iraq War intelligence frauds.

A review of one of Friedberg’s public documents on China policy, “The Struggle for Mastery in Asia,” published in the American Jewish Committee’s *Commentary* for November 2000, provides evidence that Friedberg’s assignment is to create the conditions, during the coming election year, to reverse the relatively good relations which have characterized Bush Administration China policy since 9/11, and to prepare a full-scale confrontation in the second term. The neo-conservative cabal which seized power over the Bush Administration after 9/11 tolerated friendly relations with China, guided by Secretary of State Colin Powell, more out of necessity than choice, while they orchestrated the Iraq War and the adoption of the pre-emptive war doctrine. Now, in keeping with the McCarthyite assault on Powell and the State Department by Newt Gingrich—who acts as a stalking horse for Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld—Friedberg is being called on to bring China policy under full neo-conservative control.

The Only Threat to the Only Superpower?

Friedberg, in his 2000 *Commentary* article, anticipated Gingrich’s accusation that the State Department is refusing to implement the foreign policy of the President, and also breaching America’s actual imperial mission. Friedberg stated, as an assumption, that China “will seek ultimately to displace the United States as the preponderant power in the region,” and that “to permit a potentially hostile power to dominate East Asia would not only be out of line with current U.S. policy, it would also mark a deviation from the fundamental pattern of American grand strategy since at least the latter part of the 19th Century.”