

Dick Cheney's Imminent Political Crash Landing

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Dick Cheney's "Go fuck yourself" flip-out at Senate Judiciary Committee ranking Democrat Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) in June 22 on the floor of the U.S. Senate, was but the most public display of the Vice President's mounting hysteria over accelerating pressure for his ouster from the 2004 Republican ticket. According to one Washington insider, Cheney's verbal assault was a premeditated act, calculated to send a sharp warning to Senate Republicans, who have made the Vice President's life miserable by throwing their support behind probes by the Intelligence and Armed Services Committees into pre-Iraq War intelligence fraud, Abu Ghraib torture, and other atrocities sanctioned by the White House in general, and the Vice President's Office in particular.

While no one has yet officially suggested that Cheney step down due to a diagnosed early onset of Tourette's Syndrome, or some other medical problem, it is no secret around Washington that Cheney is now viewed by Karl Rove and other Bush re-election campaign strategists as a big and growing liability. According to one source close to the White House, private polls prepared for President Bush and Rove show that 9% of core Republican voters are planning to stay home on Election Day.

One public "poll" that accelerated the "dump Cheney" momentum inside the GOP came on June 30, when Cheney made an appearance at Yankee Stadium for a Major League baseball game. When Cheney's picture flashed on the scoreboard screen, spontaneous booing filled the stadium. Later that night, television host David Letterman cited the incident on his late night show, and joked that Cheney had ordered all of the people who were booing to be brought onto the stadium field, stripped naked, and forced to prance around with dog collars and leashes around their necks.

Tourette's Syndrome is otherwise referred to as *coprolalia*, a disease whose frequent symptom is unprovoked, un-

controlled shouting of obscenities. It is often diagnosed by psychiatrists as a form of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Cheney's Persecution Complex

The Vice President is also evidencing signs of an acute persecution complex. It is now widely known around Washington Republican circles that Cheney holds Lyndon LaRouche personally responsible for most of his election-year woes. Every time a House or Senate Democrat, or an establishment media pundit raises a question about Halliburton patronage, the Valerie Plame leak, Ahmed Chalabi's disinformation mill, or the non-existent Saddam weapons of mass destruction, Cheney sees LaRouche's face before his eyes, and goes wild. He has been reportedly overheard muttering under his breath about this persecution.

As one Republican insider put it to EIRNS: "Cheney has not yet figured out that he is his own worst enemy. Until he gets over that hurdle, he is going to continue digging his own political grave."

As they say, sometimes people with persecution complexes really are being targeted. This is certainly the case with the Veep. Cheney's activities, first as CEO of Halliburton, and later as Vice President, are now the subject of at least four Federal criminal probes.

First, there is the Valerie Plame grand jury, run by independent counsel Patrick Fitzgerald. Plame, the wife of diplomat Joseph Wilson, was "outed" as a CIA agent in a leak to the press by someone in the Administration, after her husband exposed the fraud of Administration claims about Iraq's alleged procurement of "yellow cake" uranium ore in Nigeria. In the past few weeks, the prosecutors have heard from Cheney, President Bush, and White House General Counsel Alberto Gonzales. In a highly unusual development, the President was questioned for 70 minutes, in mid-June, at the Oval

Office, apparently with a personal lawyer present. The tape of the President's testimony was to be presented to the grand jury.

At least one key target of the Plame leak probe is Cheney's chief of staff, Lewis Libby. There are widespread reports that at least one top aide to the Vice President has been "turned" by Federal prosecutors, and is now talking. One former intelligence community veteran suggested that the individual may be John Hannah, Libby's deputy and a former vice president of the right-wing Israeli lobby think-tank, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP).

Second are the multiple probes, in the United States, France, Great Britain, and Switzerland, into \$180 million or more in alleged bribes, paid by a Halliburton-led consortium, to top Nigerian government officials, to win a lucrative natural gas contract in the African state. The events in question occurred between 1995-2000, during the period that Cheney was the company's CEO.

A French magistrate, Van Ruymbeke, has been probing the bribe case since Oct. 8, 2003. French sources familiar with the investigation say that the aspect that has top Halliburton executives in Houston most hysterical, is the inquiry into where the slush-fund payments actually went. One key player, Jeffrey Tessler, a London-based lawyer, set up offshore accounts in Gibraltar for a shadow firm called Tri Star, through which at least \$180 million passed. It is suspected that some of the funds passed through Tessler may have gone to the Republican Party, or even to the Bush-Cheney campaign in 2000. American prosecutors are in Paris, and will be meeting with the French magistrate. A separate U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) investigation is also under way into the Halliburton bribe charges.

A second Halliburton-related criminal probe involves corporate activities during Cheney's tenure. Halliburton set up an offshore subsidiary company in the Cayman Islands, Halliburton Services and Products, which did hundreds of millions of dollars in business with Iran, during the period when there were strict sanctions against American firms doing business with the Islamic Republic, because it was on a State Department list of states sponsoring terrorism. Those sanctions still exist, and Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) has highlighted the Halliburton potential violations, as part of a larger drive to shut any possible enforcement loopholes.

According to June 18 report in *Forward* magazine, Halliburton has admitted that it has three other subsidiaries, based in Sweden and the United Kingdom, which are also doing work in Iran. The SEC is investigating whether these actions are in violation of U.S. laws, according to the *Forward*. A recent CBS-TV "Sixty Minutes" documentary revealed that the Cayman Islands-based Halliburton subsidiary, which has no employees or office on the islands, does have offices, telephones, and faxes in Dubai, which are shared with Kellogg, Brown & Root, which is an American subsidiary.

Violation of Geneva Conventions

The Vice President is also in the dead center of the scandal around the Bush Administration's repudiation of the Geneva Conventions, in the torturing of prisoners in Iraq, Afghanistan, at Guantánamo Bay, and other "secure, undisclosed locations" around the globe.

Several highly placed U.S. national security veterans have identified Cheney's Vice Presidential General Counsel, David Addington, as an architect of the torture policy. On June 27, the *Washington Post* confirmed these reports, noting that Addington had not only reviewed and signed off on the August 2002 Department of Justice memorandum justifying torture; he had also written to DOJ lawyers, demanding "that the opinion include a clear-cut section on the President's authority." The DOJ and White House memos, in effect, asserted that the President of the United States was above the law, and could use the war on terrorism as an excuse to trample over international law, just as Adolf Hitler declared himself above the Hague Convention banning war crimes in the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 (see *EIR*, July 9).

Cheney Factor and the Elections

In the run-up to his July 15 webcast and the Democratic Party nominating convention two weeks later, candidate Lynndon LaRouche emphasized on June 30 that the looming fall of Cheney is a momentous event, which will transform both the Democratic Party and the 2004 election process.

When LaRouche launched his campaign to force the ouster of Cheney and the entire neo-con crowd from the Bush Administration in August 2002, the "conventional wisdom" among Democrats was that this was a futile, near-suicidal act. LaRouche ignored their advice, and produced a series of multimillion-copy campaign special reports, *The Children of Satan*, which exposed the neo-cons as the political descendants of fascist philosopher Leo Strauss, and exposed Dick Cheney as a Beast-Man, in the tradition of the Spanish Inquisition of Tomás de Torquemada, and the writings of Joseph de Maistre.

Now some leading Democrats are privately admitting that they had been wrong. However, in a July 1 encounter with members of the LaRouche Youth Movement, Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe insisted that he wanted Cheney to stay on the job, arguing, lamely, that his presence on the ticket would be "good for the Democrats," regardless of the harm Cheney's continued role in the Bush White House would do for the United States and the world.

The question for the Democratic Party is: McAuliffe's foolishness aside, will the lesson learned by other leaders of the party be truly internalized? If so, LaRouche has to be brought in, publicly, at the nominating convention in Boston, to assure that Cheney is gone and that the Democratic Party, under a revived majority in the model of Franklin Roosevelt's coalition, scores a landslide victory in November.