

The 'Al-Yamamah Factor' In Musharraf's Ouster

by Jeffrey Steinberg

In the days leading up to the forced resignation of Pakistan's President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, on Aug. 18, a combined British and Saudi delegation was on the scene, to ensure that the embattled head of state would quit. Mark Lyall Grant, director-general of the Political Directorate of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, was in Islamabad, along with a delegation of Saudi officials, all demanding Musharraf's departure.

In stark contrast to these Anglo-Saudi maneuvers, Lyndon LaRouche issued a dramatic warning, on Aug. 15, about the consequences for Pakistan and the entire region, if Musharraf caved in to the pressure and left office.

"It is precisely because of the 'Al-Yamamah' complication that I urge a halt in the drive to remove President Musharraf from power. The Bandar crowd in Saudi Arabia should not be allowed to control the destiny of Pakistan, and that is exactly where we are headed if Musharraf's removal is allowed. There is a serious narco-terrorist factor to deal with, centered around the Taliban and al-Qaeda nexus, which enjoys continuing support from the relevant British and Saudi factions."

"Given half a chance," LaRouche concluded, "they will wreak havoc on the entire region, and that does not serve U.S. or regional interests in the least."

The "Al-Yamamah" complication cited by LaRouche refers to the oil-for-weapons barter deal, first struck between Britain and Saudi Arabia in 1985, which has generated an offshore, off-the-books covert opera-

tions slush fund, estimated to be far in excess of \$100 billion. Former Saudi Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin-Sultan was one of the key architects of the Al-Yamamah program, and in a 2006 authorized biography, Bandar boasted that the covert funds had been used to bankroll the Afghan mujahideen, out of which both the Taliban and al-Qaeda emerged.

Despite grave warnings from U.S. intelligence circles about the consequences of Musharraf's ouster, the Bush White House did absolutely nothing to stop it. In an Aug. 20 statement, LaRouche accused the White House of "another massive act of strategic stupidity." "The Bush White House is absolutely indifferent to the situation on the ground," LaRouche charged. "It is looking more and more like the White House has been outright bought up by the Saudis, judging from some of the policies coming out of Bush and company."

Indeed, one of the most important of the "bad actors" who led the charge against Musharraf is former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. Sharif is known to be bankrolled by the Saudis (he lived in exile in a Saudi palace, after he was removed from power in a military coup led by General Musharraf nine years ago), and to take his cues from Riyadh. He maintains a base of support among the very fundamentalists whom Musharraf had been battling—fundamentalists bankrolled from Saudi Arabia and from other Persian Gulf Arab states.

LaRouche warned: "President Musharraf's regrettable retirement will only make matters worse. And, for

that, I hold President Bush and the Bush White House responsible. Any serious American President would have put his foot down, and demanded that the Saudis, and their British allies, stop the interference in the Pakistan situation.”

A Russian Voice Concurs

On Aug. 19, a senior Russian television journalist, Mikhail Leontyev, weighed in with a similar assessment of the post-Musharraf situation in South Asia, in a broadcast on Russian Channel One. After his co-anchor reviewed Musharraf’s role in cracking down on al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and in suppressing other radical Islamists, Leontyev added, “Musharraf was the only leader who could maintain stability in an extremely complex country like Pakistan, restrain radical Islamists, and guarantee that the nuclear potential would remain under control. The so-called opposition’s corrupt leaders, let out of an Anglo-American jar, hate each other and are incapable of ensuring either. In the view of responsible American analysts, the Pakistani bomb is much more dangerous than the non-existent Iranian one. Who gets it and what happens to this not quite low-priority, and not the least-populated region? This is what the United States’ European partners should be thinking about, not about the moaning of a whipped Georgian paranoid man.”

LaRouche added to Leontyev’s picture: “The whole thing was obvious to me. It was obvious in the discussions I had with people, that while Pakistan was already a mess, by this concession of dumping Musharraf, you actually unleash all the instabilities in the area. And, Pakistan *is* a nuclear power in a sense, but the more significant thing is that the whole thing was done by the Saudis. That’s what has to be said. And this thing is an Anglo-American Saudi operation.”

LaRouche further elaborated: “The Saudi Bandar-Al-Yamamah operation is what’s key here. And the whole region is in trouble, because the Saudis are the center of the whole destabilization of the region. It’s a Saudi-British operation in which Prince Bandar is crucial. The Bush family is deeply indebted, in a sense, to these Saudi types. The corruption goes right inside the United States government. The Bandar Saudi operation and the Bush connections to that, are absolutely crucial.”

LaRouche concluded: “Leontyev is right; he’s absolutely correct. It’s just that he’s left out this one part: that this is a case in which the London-Saudi operation,

the BAE-connected operation, is the key monster in this thing, which is a controlling factor in the U.S. behavior. You don’t need to have a President Barack Obama, because the real Presidency is the Saudi monarchy. The White House is a dependency of the Saudi monarchy.”

Pakistan Implodes

Just as LaRouche warned, within days of the announced resignation of President Musharraf, in the face of a threatened impeachment proceeding, the fragile governing coalition came unraveled.

But more significant, the departure of Musharraf, and the American acquiescence to his ouster, signaled that any obstacles to a new eruption of asymmetric warfare were removed.

- On Aug. 21, suicide bombers killed 59 people at the massive Pakistan Ordnance Factory in Islamabad. Pakistani Taliban, an offshoot of the Afghan organization, claimed credit, just nine days after they had declared a state of war against the state. In an incident several days before the factory bombing, 14 air force personnel were killed in a bombing attack in Peshawar, a city in the Northwest Frontier Province that is virtually in the hands of Islamist insurgents.

- Between Aug. 19 and 20, a series of Taliban attacks was launched in Afghanistan, including the targeting of French paratroopers, and a full assault on a U.S. military base near the Pakistan border in Khost.

U.S. intelligence sources confirm that Musharraf’s departure, following months of Anglo-Saudi efforts to weaken him, opens the door to a far-reaching insurgency, based in the tribal areas of Pakistan, targeting Kashmir, Afghanistan, and the western provinces of China, where Uighur separatists are active. The insurgencies, which reach into Turkey and North Africa, are funded by the proceeds of the vast Afghan opium trade, which generates an estimated \$160 billion a year in revenue, much of it now laundered through unregulated Persian Gulf banking centers, like Dubai. The source emphasized that some of these opium trade profits are then funneled to the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other insurgent groups, in the form of “charitable” contributions.

“This is not a situation that lends itself to a military solution,” one senior U.S. intelligence official told *EIR*. “This requires serious strategic planning, and a wide range of actions, including hard-nosed diplomacy. This is a war that the United States cannot win with boots on the ground. The Musharraf departure means a whole new situation.”