

Cheney's Fraud To Bring Down Britain's Blair?

by Mark Burdman

As Lyndon LaRouche's fight to get U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney out of office is being massively bolstered by the revelations by former Ambassador Joseph Wilson about Cheney's role in falsifying "Iraqi weapons of mass destruction" (WMD) intelligence, the same scandal may bring down another culprit. British Prime Minister Tony Blair is under fire for his wild lies about the Iraqi threat for what former Blair Cabinet minister Robin Cook characterizes as bringing Britain into "war on a false premise." The week of July 7 witnessed a growing chorus of calls for Blair to step down from power.

Blair and Cheney, politically, are the same species. They represent the latest reincarnation of the Synarchist-fascist mob that the late British Prime Minister Winston Churchill combatted, in league with American President Franklin Roosevelt, in the 1940s. Those Synarchists were not only the regimes of Nazi Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and Franco's Spain, but an extremely powerful British grouping, led by Lord Halifax, and including Lord Beaverbrook, the Duke of Windsor (who had abdicated as King Edward VIII in 1936), Sir Samuel Hoare, and the disreputable political "fixer" Kenneth de Courcy. The Cheney-Blair axis today, might usefully be dubbed the "Hitler-Halifax axis of 2003."

Blair's downfall would be a critical blow to the fascist-imperial war party congregated under the scowling Cheney. A growing number of informed Britons are, more and more, seeing Blair as, indeed, the same kind of creature that Churchill and FDR fought. The issue of the fascist danger is coming more to the fore, as outrage grows in Britain that the Bush-Cheney Administration has designated two British subjects to be tried in secret military tribunal at Guantanamo Bay, and possibly executed. (The death penalty is banned in Britain, as it is throughout the European Union.) This Administration decision has been vehemently denounced in Britain, including by the most senior levels of the Foreign Office, and Blair, who is soon to travel to the United States, to intervene against this barbarism.

'It's Time for Him To Quit'

For Blair, the week of July 7 began with the British media highlighting the dramatic statements of Wilson, which drew attention to Cheney's key role in the affair of Niger uranium, the so-called "yellowcake," but also focussed on Wilson's comments about the strange Blair government behavior in perpetuating the Niger fraud.

On July 9, the *Independent*, under the banner headline "Is

Niger the Smoking Gun?” aimed its ire at Blair, not Cheney. Noting the July 8 statement by White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, admitting that the Niger story was bogus, the *Independent* wrote: “The White House yesterday dealt a devastating blow to Tony Blair, after it rejected as flawed British claims Saddam Hussein attempted to buy uranium from Africa, to restart his nuclear weapons program. . . . The American admission represented the first major split between London and Washington over the case against Saddam, and exploded into a full-scale row in Westminster, as Blair told senior MPs [Members of Parliament] the British government stood by its story. But Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, and Labour backbenchers demanded that Mr. Blair release the intelligence behind the uranium allegation to an independent inquiry.”

The *Independent*’s lead editorial, “America’s Dismissal of the Niger Connection Has Damaged Mr. Blair,” said that “the charges about Iraq’s quest for nuclear weapons . . . are rapidly coming unstuck. . . . The Niger connection was a key part of the government’s case against Iraq, a case based on Saddam Hussein’s illegal possession of lethal weapons. . . . The Niger accusation emerged from the [House of Commons Foreign Affairs] Committee report as a point of singular vulnerability in the government’s argument. . . . If it is shown that Mr. Blair cited the Niger argument, knowing it to be discredited, then he misled Parliament, he misled the country, and he must draw the only appropriate conclusion, which is resignation.” On July 10, the paper ran a front-page spread on the Niger story.

On July 8, *Guardian* senior diplomatic correspondent Hugo Young, in the lead op-ed entitled “Blair Has Run Out of Steam—It’s Time for Him To Quit,” delivered a clear message: Blair “needs to face the unthinkable fact that he may have stayed too long,” and that he has become “the problem not the solution.” Young concluded: “The country is ready for a new voice. All Blair passion spent, someone else deserves a turn.”

Young approvingly cited the example of Blair’s partner in the war against Iraq, Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar, who has decided not to run for re-election. Aznar, according to Young, has “anticipated the limited life-cycle of his value to his country.”

Another devastating attack on Blair was launched by Labour MP Tam Dalyell on July 9, in an interview with the Arabic Al-Jazeera TV network. Dalyell favorably cited Ambassador Wilson’s revelations, and a July 8 *Los Angeles Times* article blasting Cheney for the Iraq WMD fraud. When asked if he held to his statements from this past March that Blair should resign, Dalyell acknowledged that this idea produced terror among Labour Party MPs who fear that Blair’s downfall would end their own careers. So, rather than a precipitous resignation, Dalyell insisted that there be a change of leadership of the Labour Party and government—both of which Blair heads. That is, the same end by different means. He said that a great deal would be decided before Parliament

reconvenes in early Autumn. Dalyell denounced the Iraq invasion and occupation as a disaster.

Echoing Ambassador Wilson

Another blow to Blair was delivered on July 7, with the release of two reports. One was the final report of the House of Commons Select Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC), entitled “The Decision To Go to War in Iraq.” The second was a new British Ministry of Defense (MOD) report, the first overview of the military campaign in Iraq, entitled, “Operations in Iraq 2003: First Reflections.”

The FAC report appeared, at first glance, to exonerate Blair and 10 Downing Street Director of Communications Alastair Campbell, on whether Campbell had, as BBC correspondent Andrew Gilligan charged, “sexed up” the Blair government’s September 2002 dossier on Iraq WMDs, which made the absurd contention (repeated many times by Blair), that Iraq could assemble weapons in 45 minutes and threaten the British Isles. Blair and Campbell played up the FAC findings as a victory.

The reality is exactly the opposite. Done in impeccably deadly British fashion, it employs qualifying words, nuances, and subtle criticisms about how the Blair government got Britain into the Iraq War, that it amounts to a condemnation. On the most important issue, namely, the “Iraqi WMD threat,” the FAC authors demand that the Blair government present proof that this threat existed.

The details of the FAC’s argumentation being beyond the scope of this article, we cite the estimation of the July 8 *Guardian* editorial, “War and Westminster: MPs Put Government Under Fire on Iraq.” The paper asserted that “the overall tone of the report is overwhelmingly skeptical. It is full of distancing and cautious phrases. If the report had been written by Blairite clones, they would not have employed the language that the committee adopts. . . . The dossier’s claim that Iraq was trying to obtain uranium from Niger, in order to help build a nuclear weapon, is trashed, as it has been by the former U.S. Ambassador Joseph Wilson. . . .

“Any ministers who claim this report is a vindication of the government’s policy over the decision to go to war in Iraq are deluding themselves, the public, or both. Perhaps not for the first time, either.”

The MOD report asserted that Anglo-American military commanders were unsure whether the Iraqis were able to deploy WMD, assuming that they existed. The July 8 *Independent* article on the matter was headlined, “MOD Report Pours Scorn on Evidence for Iraqi Weapons.” It noted that the first official MOD report on the Iraq War “gave no support to Tony Blair’s claim that Saddam Hussein was ‘ready’ to use chemical and biological weapons ‘within 45 minutes.’ ”

‘War on a False Premise’

Blair’s woes were exacerbated by verbal barrages from former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, who resigned from

his Cabinet position as Leader of the House of Commons in March, in protest against the approaching Iraq War. Cook had access to a wide range of sensitive intelligence.

On July 7, in an interview with the *Guardian* headlined "One Stark Truth: Blair Was Wrong and Must Admit It Now," Cook insisted that the issues involved go far beyond the dispute between Blair's Campbell and BBC (see *EIR*, July 11). He accused Campbell of using the BBC issue as a diversionary "red herring," to get public attention away from the much more massive scandal.

Cook insisted that Iraq never had weapons of mass destruction of any significance: "There is a problem of credibility if they continue to deny reality. There have been recently a number of government ministers or spokesmen saying that the September [2002] dossier was accurate. It clearly wasn't accurate. There aren't any weapons of mass destruction ready for use in 45 minutes, there was no uranium from Niger, there were no chemical production factories rebuilt, there was no nuclear weapons program. . . .

"We are not now going to find a credible weapon of mass destruction that poses a current and serious danger to Britain, as was the phrase used in the debate on Iraq before the war. Such a weapon requires quite a large industrial infrastructure, a large workforce.

"It is inconceivable that such factories exist in Iraq, and we've not found them. There is no part of the globe that has been more managed by aerial surveillance. It is also inconceivable that anybody working on that program hasn't come forward to tell us where it is: We've had the top people under interrogation for weeks now."

The next day, Cook repeated much of this in the lead opened in the *Independent*. The real issue, he charged, is that the Blair government took Britain into "war on a false premise." With bitter sarcasm, he wrote, "We have not uncovered any weapons of mass destruction, never mind any within a 45-minute drive of the artillery units."

Cook said that Blair cannot evade responsibility for the problem by trying to dump on the intelligence services, especially as the latter "have kept their heads down very loyally for the past month, but nothing would be more likely to provoke further murmuring from them than the sense that they were being set up as the fall guys." In any case, "it was not the intelligence agencies who took the decision to go to war. The decision was that of the Prime Minister, and it was he who used intelligence to justify the case for war."

Cook made another point: "The tragedy was that the UN weapons inspectors had already demonstrated that the intelligence claims were unsound. Hans Blix observed again on Sunday [July 6] that whenever they went to a site identified by Western intelligence, they drew a blank. It is extraordinary that this gulf between our intelligence information and the reality on the ground did not prompt doubts in the government before they unleashed the war. I fear there is some truth in the suspicion that Washington wanted the

inspectors out of Iraq before they comprehensively proved that Iraq was no threat."

Blair Digs in His Heels

In response, Blair not only refused to acknowledge any errors by his government, but he insisted, yet again, in defiance of all evidence to the contrary, that he was absolutely right on "the Iraqi threat," and on having gone to war against Iraq, together with the Bush-Cheney Administration. Appearing before the House of Commons Liaison Committee on July 8, Blair defiantly refused to concede reality, insisting that he stood "totally . . . 100%" behind the case his government made for war against Iraq. "The jury is not out at all" on the accuracy of intelligence presented in the September 2002 dossier, he said. "There is no doubt that Saddam was developing weapons of mass destruction." Blair was even so bull-headed, as to reaffirm the claim that Iraq had the capability to launch chemical and biological weapons in 45 minutes.

In mid-July, Blair is to go to the United States, hoping, as the *Independent* writes, to "bask in the adulation" overseas. But given the intensity of the moves against Cheney and his mob initiated by LaRouche, and fuelled by the revelations of Wilson and others, Blair will likely discover that this is yet another of his miscalculations.

'Through the Big Black Door'

Blair suffered yet another defeat when, contrary to expectations, the Governors of the BBC met on July 6 and refused to back down in the feud with Campbell. The BBC Governors' statement on July 7 affirmed that, after a discussion with BBC Director General Greg Dyke and Director of News Richard Sambrook, "the board reiterates that the BBC's overall coverage of the war, and the political issues surrounding it, has been entirely impartial, and it emphatically rejects Mr. Campbell's claim that large parts of the BBC had an agenda against the war. We call on Mr. Campbell to withdraw these allegations of bias against the BBC and its journalists."

The BBC Governors added: "Moreover, as these reports fitted in to a general pattern of concern, conveyed to a number of BBC journalists with good contacts in the security services, we consider that it was entirely proper to reflect some unease about the presentation of the government's arguments in the disputed dossiers."

On July 8, *Guardian* Political Editor Michael White affirmed that Campbell may soon walk "through the black door" of 10 Downing Street, out of a job. According to White, Campbell's aggressive confrontation with BBC is likely a "miscalculation," but even worse, was his "alpha male mode" behavior, when he barged into the news studio of Channel 4 on the evening of June 27. What Campbell evidenced then, was "the disciplined official out of control and furious." This episode, rather than his fight with BBC, might be "the fatal blow" for Campbell, White concluded.

The only question seems to be: who will "walk through the black door" first, Campbell or Blair?