

The Case for Impeachment of Vice President Richard Cheney

By The Editors

In the face of the gathering storm against the George W. Bush Administration, for engaging in a pattern of lies to justify a pre-determined course of launching illegal war against Iraq, there is a sore temptation on the part of both the uninformed, and the opportunistic, to train their guns on President George W. Bush, and to call for his impeachment. Such an impeachment proceeding against the President would be a strategic and legal error which, if successful, would put the chief culprit, Vice-President Dick Cheney, into the Presidency, and effectively consolidate the coup which he and his chicken-hawks' coterie have carried out.

On the contrary, as Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche has set forth in his leaflet now circulating nationally in 1 million copies (see below), the appropriate target of any impeachment proceeding would be the Vice President himself. Unlike those in the Democratic National Committee who are calling for impeachment of Bush—for the sake of their election prospects in 2004—LaRouche is seeking the action that will save the American republic in 2003.

The grounds for the impeachment of Vice-President Cheney are not technical legal statutes. They proceed from the reality that the Vice-President utilized and exploited the vulnerabilities and susceptibilities of President Bush, in order to induce him to do great damage to the nation. Simply put, Cheney, and his underlings, perpetrated a fraud upon the government, and upon the President as head of government. Thus it is Cheney who is liable for impeachment for “high Crimes and Misdemeanors” against these United States.

Cheney, the Svengali and Puppeteer

Let us speak bluntly: the present crisis requires it. President Bush is known to be, on public performance, patently suggestible, intellectually aberrant, to the point of incompe-

tence, and mean-spirited. These defects and weaknesses were, and are, well-known to the President's associates, especially Vice-President Cheney. In effect, this is a President who has to be guided, as if by a Trustee, in order to carry out his Constitutional functions in support of the nation.

But, instead, Cheney and his gang decided to exploit the President's weaknesses, in the manner of a “Svengali” controlling his “Trilby,” or the ventriloquist Edgar Bergen putting words in the mouth of his stupid puppet, Mortimer Snerd. The result resembles the case of a person being induced, under hypnosis, to commit acts which, while not morally repugnant to that subject when he's not under hypnosis, amount to crimes against the Constitutional order of the republic.

In effect, the relationship between the calculating empire-seeker Cheney, and President Bush, is like that of an adult inducing a child, or another person lacking the mental and moral qualifications for assuming adult responsibility, to act in an irresponsible manner, by utilizing that child's mental and moral defects as if they were puppet strings. Who could find Edgar Bergen's puppet Mortimer Snerd responsible for his acts? The puppeteer is the responsible agent.

There is ample evidence available to support this representation of the relationship between Vice-President Cheney and President Bush. Cheney is known to be the individual upon whom the President most strongly relies, and Cheney's intentions to promote a U.S. imperial posture, including through war against Iraq, are documented going back for more than a decade.

On the contrary, the President has vacillated back and forth on policy matters, while seemingly sincere in advocating contrary policies from one moment to the other. Cheney, at the same time, is shown (see grid below) to have had both interest and access to the pile of disinformation which was



“It is Cheney who is liable for impeachment for ‘high Crimes and Misdemeanors’ against these United States.” LaRouche Youth Movement activists filmed outside the Congress on July 16 as distribution of a million-run national leaflet demanding Cheney’s impeachment or resignation began.

fed into President Bush, for his State of the Union address and other policy making.

Thus it is Cheney, not Bush, who must be the object of impeachment proceedings, because he was the responsible party in perpetrating a fraud on the President, and on the country. The President, by character, was incompetent to resist the temptations put in front of him. That makes Cheney all the more guilty.

The Standard of Impeachment

Under the U.S. Constitutional system, the purpose of impeachment is the protection of the nation, by removing from high office an official who is causing grave injury to the nation, its people, and its Constitution. Impeachment is not a criminal proceeding; its purpose is not to punish a wrongdoer, but to prevent him or her from doing further harm to the country. The question of prosecution, or imprisonment, comes later—if at all.

From that standpoint, it is noteworthy to look at the discussions which occurred in the Constitutional Convention on the matter of impeachment. Originally, the article read as follows: “The President, the Vice-President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors against the United States.” For reasons unknown, the phrase “against the United States” was removed from the document by the Committee on Style—which was not supposed to make any substantive changes—but the *intent* is well known and clear.

The distinction between ordinary crimes, and crimes against the state and the Constitution, has been a leading ele-

ment in all discussions of impeachment, up to and including that of President Clinton. This fact was reflected in the articles of impeachment which were drawn up against President Nixon, each of which was followed by the following statement: “In all of this, Richard M. Nixon has acted in a manner contrary to his trust as President and subversive of constitutional government, in the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.”

Now, there is no question but that the lies which were used by the Bush Administration, to induce the Congress to acquiesce in its drive for war against Iraq, and to build support in the American population, amounted to a *fraud* perpetrated on the state. As no less an “expert” than former Nixon White House counsel John W. Dean wrote recently, “manipulation or deliberate misuse of national security intelligence data, if proven, could be ‘a high crime’ under the Constitution’s impeachment clause. It would also be a violation of Federal criminal law, including the broad Federal anti-conspiracy statute, which renders it a felony ‘to defraud the United States, or any agency thereof in any manner or for any purpose.’ ”

The crucial issue is *who* committed the fraud. In the present case, the President was the victim of a fraud, perpetrated by the Vice-President, who lied to him, misled him, and virtually put words in his mouth, in order to get the war which he wanted. In so doing, the Vice-President induced the President to do something that was wrong, against the interests of the nation, and in violation of the laws of war and international law. It is the Vice President who is a candidate for impeachment, not the President.



“The puppeteer is the responsible agent. . . . Cheney and his gang decided to exploit the President’s weaknesses, in the manner of a ‘Svengali’ controlling his ‘Trilby,’ or the ventriloquist Edgar Bergen putting words in the mouth of his stupid puppet, Mortimer Snerd.”

Some Historical Perspective

The most recent case of impeachment, that against President Bill Clinton, having been such an obviously unconstitutional, partisan witchhunt, the standard generally looked to in these matters is that of Watergate. A look at that historical event, can be useful in the current situation.

It was the view of *EIR* and its founder Lyndon LaRouche, that the Watergate affair which led to the levelling of three charges of impeachment against President Nixon, and his subsequent resignation from office, was a calculated political “coup attempt” against the Constitutional government of the United States. The truth is still not known about exactly who

ordered the break-in to Democratic headquarters in the Watergate Hotel, and why. What trapped President Nixon, and led him to resign, was what he did subsequent to that act, in terms of arranging for a wide-ranging coverup by government agencies, and his staff, of a whole series of illegal acts.

While President Nixon was not the ignorant incompetent that George W. Bush is, there are some striking similarities between the way in which he was manipulated, and how President Bush is being controlled. As LaRouche pointed out in May of 1974—as Nixon was digging himself deeper and deeper into the hole—there was a political force, centered around Nelson Rockefeller, Henry Kissinger, and their collaborators, that was committed, from 1971 on, to getting rid of President Nixon, and paving the way for replacing Constitutional government with a form of fascism.

Nixon, it would seem, was not adverse to carrying out much of the Rockefeller agenda, both in fascist economics and police-state measures against the population. His paranoia made him susceptible to suggestions from others, like Kissinger and sections of the CIA—to tape his adversaries, and other dirty tricks—which contributed to his undoing. But as *EIR* uncovered, President Nixon had a significantly different outlook from the Kissingerians on foreign policy—especially in the Middle East, and also vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Nixon was less a utopian fascist than a traditional conservative, whom the utopians considered untrustworthy at least, when it came to the grand strategy of pursuing one-world fascism.

What occurred after Watergate, was a significant weakening of the Presidency. While this might not appear to have been a problem, given the character of the Presidents who have followed him, it would be, if this nation would once again elect a President of the caliber of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A strong institution of the Presidency—in contradis-



Vice President Cheney, unlike the President, has been committed to abusing and manipulating intelligence to justify pre-emptive war, and specifically a war against Iraq, since years prior to Sept. 11, 2001.

'When Dick Cheney's Talking, It's Me Talking'

"And when you think of the Bush people, concentrate on Cheney. He's the heart and soul and brains of the show. He's the quiet American, the silent partner, the *consigliere*. Way back in the Ford Administration, his secret-service code name was Backseat. He's the man with the map, quietly giving directions to the driver. . . .

"Senior foreign officials who call at the Oval Office tend to remark on one thing—that there is always a silent person there. His smile appears affable, his silence disconcerting—some even find it menacing. He is the buddha in the corner, always with the President in his line of sight. Cheney considers that he has a constituency of one: the President. He is the first and the last man George W. Bush talks to every day. He is the President's encyclopedia. He is calm. He is reassuring. He is totally certain of his views. . . . Bush finds him indispensable. He said: 'When you're

talking to Dick Cheney, you're talking to me. When Dick Cheney's talking, it's me talking.'"

—*"Standing in the Shadow of George,"* by William Showcross, Sunday Times Magazine (London), July 6

"Cheney was facing me, an even look on his face. . . . Afterward, when I listened to our conversation on tape, I was struck by how strong the theme of peril to the United States had been—struck, because as Cheney was talking, my main sense had been one of intense reassurance. His presence had the effect like that of being hooked up to an intravenous line that delivers a powerful timed dosage of serotonin uptake inhibitors. Everything felt kind of evened out, no highs, no lows. He wasn't going to be flaky or half-baked, he wasn't going to let his emotions distort his views, and he certainly wasn't going to be soft or naive. . . .

"All the time Cheney was talking, I was imagining what it must be like for President Bush to get hooked up to the I.V. several times each day, for first dose coming at eight in the morning."

—*"The Quiet Man: Dick Cheney's Discreet Rise to Unprecedented Power,"* by Nicholas Lemann, The New Yorker, May 7, 2001.

tion to parliamentary government—is a leading characteristic of our republic.

There is an older historical instance of serious Presidential misconduct which is also useful to review in the current context. That is the case of President Polk, the President who launched the Mexican-American war of 1846, in the interest of seizing territory from Mexico. That war was opposed by the young first-term Congressman Abraham Lincoln, who saw it as a war of aggression, and tried to stop it. Lincoln put forward the famous "Spot Resolutions," which called on Polk to identify the precise "spot" where hostilities broke out, in order to ascertain whether the war really proceeded from Mexican intrusion onto U.S. territory, as Polk asserted, or not. (Lincoln strongly suspected that it didn't.)

In the Spot Resolutions, Lincoln accused President Polk of "employing every artifice to work round, befooled and cover up" the real reasons for going to war with Mexico, and argued that the President was "deeply conscious of being wrong." Polk was conscious of his lying. It is doubtful the President Bush has the competence to be conscious of the lies he has been induced to repeat.

Thus, President Bush is not capable of being compared to Polk in a crucial respect: Bush *did not* devise the plan for misleading the U.S. Congress into going to war—he was manipulated by Svengali Cheney into simply playing his part. It is Cheney who is responsible, guilty, and liable to be impeached.

The People's Choice

While Vice-President Cheney must be the target of any Constitutional impeachment proceeding, because he manipulated the dupe, President Bush, there is another party whose guilt has to be taken into account. That party is the American voter.

The year 2000 elections were characterized by the fact that neither major party candidate was qualified to become President of the United States. To a large extent, this fact was due to the corruption and virtual takeover by Wall Street synarchist interests of the Democratic and Republican parties. But there is no way of exculpating the American population itself. The voters were the accomplices of Cheney et al., in putting a fool into office, who could be manipulated into doing Cheney's bidding.

Now, therefore, it is up to the *people* to undo the damage. Some Democratic Party figures, such as Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), Edward Markey (D-Mass.), and others have stood up to point the finger at the Vice-President, as the key culprit in the fraudulent intelligence caper. These Congressmen, and, most importantly, Presidential candidate LaRouche, deserve deep public support for the only truthful, and efficient, approach toward cleaning out the Bush Administration of those war-mongers who are threatening to go beyond Iraq and bring on new disasters.

Vice President Richard Cheney must resign—or face impeachment.