

Cheney's Scheme for Nuclear War In Secret Gathering at Stratcom HQ

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Approximately 150 White House, Defense and Energy Department officials, weapons laboratory scientists, and private contractors met behind closed doors at the Offutt Air Force Base headquarters of the U.S. Strategic Command near Omaha, Nebraska on Aug. 7, to accelerate plans for a new generation of American nuclear weapons to be integrated into the U.S. offensive arsenal. Word of plans for the top-secret session (even Members of Congress were barred from attending) had first been heard in February, in a London *Guardian* story, citing a leaked Jan. 10, 2003 memo from Dr. Dale Klein, summarizing a planning session for the Offutt meeting. While the precise details of what took place at the closed "Dr. Strangelove" session are not known, the basic parameters of what went on are hardly a secret.

On the eve of the Offutt meeting, Paul Robinson, the head of the weapons lab at Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque, New Mexico, wrote an op-ed in the *Albuquerque Tribune*, arguing that the post-Cold War environment demands that the line separating conventional and nuclear weapons must be blurred, if rogue states are to be deterred from developing and using weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). "Military strategy is evolving," he wrote, "to consider combinations of conventional and/or nuclear attacks for pre-emption or retaliation."

Indeed, from the outset of the Bush Administration, utopians, led by Vice President Dick Cheney, and including Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Pentagon "intelligence czar" Stephen Cambone, and State Department lead arms control negotiator John Bolton, have all been tripping over each other in their rush to promote the development, deployment and first use of a new generation of mini-nukes, "bunker busters" and other offensive nuclear weapons—against a publicly advertised list of targets.

In January 2002, already, the Bush Administration had issued its Congressionally mandated Nuclear Posture Review, and, for the first time, openly discussed the possible use of nuclear weapons against Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya, and Syria.

The following month, John Bolton gave an interview to the *Washington Times*, in which he declared that the world had changed so drastically, following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on Washington and New York, that it was no longer unthinkable to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries. He stated that the continued adherence to a doctrine of "no first

use" was now "an unrealistic view of the international situation. The idea that fine theories of deterrence work against everybody, which is implicit in the negative security assurances [of no U.S. first-use of nuclear weapons] has just been disproven by Sept. 11." Bolton is the former Vice President of the American Enterprise Institute, and a leading neo-con, who was imposed upon Secretary of State Colin Powell, and has been running a wrecking operation against Powell's multi-lateral diplomacy from inside Foggy Bottom since day one.

More Than They Bargained For

In response to the Cheney-led madness, Lyndon LaRouche issued a dire warning to the Bush Administration: You don't know what you are provoking, if you go forward with the mini-nuke schemes, under the official "National Security Strategy" of preventive war against potential future adversaries.

In an in-depth LaRouche in 2004 policy statement, titled "World Nuclear War, When?" (see *Strategic Studies*, this issue; it is also available on his campaign website: www.larouchein2004.org), LaRouche warned that the combination of the American imperial war drive, and the threat of first use of nuclear weapons, would provoke an incalculable response from Russia, China and India. LaRouche made reference to the former Soviet Union's longstanding scientific pre-eminence in fields of new physical principles research, which would enable Russia to field shockingly effective counters to such U.S. madness. While LaRouche cited some examples of Russian advanced work on nuclear mines, he left much of the detail unstated.

Based on his own late-1970s and 1980s work on ballistic missile defense, including his role as back-channel between the U.S.A. Reagan Administration and the Soviet Andropov regime, on what came to be known as Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, LaRouche is one of the world's leading specialists in new physical principles weaponry and the underlying scientific revolutions.

His warnings were buttressed, days after the LaRouche in 2004 strategic study was released, by former Russian Atomic Energy Minister Viktor Mikhailov, who gave an interview to the Aug. 12 issue of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, published for the 50th anniversary of Russia's first hydrogen bomb test. Mikhailov declared that Russia still maintained an advantage



Command center of the U.S. Strategic Command. The closed session on U.S. development and use of “mini-nuclear” weapons in warfare, took place at the Strategic Command’s headquarters, at Offutt AFB in Nebraska.

over the United States in nuclear arms technology. “Whereas before 1953 we trailed the United States in the sphere of nuclear weapon technology, after 1953—and to this day—they have been trailing us,” he told the paper.

He continued: now, the “philosophy of thermonuclear weapons has changed today, and on the agenda is the development of high-precision and deep-penetration nuclear bombs.”

Mikhailov should know. He is now head of research at the Russian Federal Nuclear Center in Sarov, Russia’s key research facility for nuclear weapons programs, where all Russian nuclear bombs have been built.

Two weeks earlier, President Vladimir Putin had visited Sarov, where he said that nuclear weapons “have been and remain the basis of Russia’s security” and that Russia “must and will remain a great nuclear power.” He also said that Russia would maintain its ban on nuclear testing, but only if other nuclear powers do so—a clear reference to the United States.

LaRouche was blunt in his warning that the issue of nuclear war, unless the “Cheney-acs” are stopped, will be a live proposition for the next person to enter the White House as President in January 2005.

Cheney Unleashed the Genie

As *EIR* revealed on March 7, 2003, the man most responsible for unleashing the nuclear weapons genie is Vice President Dick Cheney. As Secretary of Defense in the “Bush 41” Administration, Cheney had issued a top-secret “Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (NU-WEP),” right after the 1991 Operation Desert Storm. It tasked military planning for the use of nuclear weapons against Third World countries thought to be developing weapons of mass destruction.

Cheney’s promotion of a new generation of mini-nukes, to be incorporated into the active U.S. military arsenal, was

rejected, outright, by President George H.W. Bush; but the utopian Secretary of Defense, and his top policy aides, Wolfowitz and Lewis “Scooter” Libby (now the Vice President’s chief of staff and top national security assistant) got in the last word—after Bush was defeated by Bill Clinton in the 1992 Presidential race. In January 1993, just before the Clinton inauguration, Cheney released the “Defense Strategy for the 1990s” study, which peddled the idea of using small-scale nuclear weapons against the Third World. Libby was the principal author of the paper.

In 1994, the U.S. Congress, still recoiling from the Cheney lunacy of promoting a doctrine of preventive war with the use of mini-nukes, passed the Spratt-Furce amendment to the defense authorization bill, prohibiting U.S.

weapons laboratories from conducting any research and development on low-yield nuclear weapons (nuclear weapons with yields below 5 kilotons).

Just as the Cheney-Wolfowitz preventive war doctrine was shot down by “Bush 41,” but was never abandoned by the neo-con lunatics, so, too, the push for a new generation of mini-nukes was stalled, but not forgotten by the same gang. In January 2001, the “usual suspects” revived the drive for the development and deployment of mini-nukes. That month, the National Institute for Public Policy released a study, “Rationale and Requirements for U.S. Nuclear Forces and Arms Control,” once again promoting the idea that the U.S.A. needed to field combat-ready mini-nukes to deal with rogue states.

Among the participants in the task force, who soon took top posts in the George W. Bush Administration:

- Stephen Cambone, currently Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, and former staff director of the Rumsfeld Commission to assess the threat of ballistic missiles to the United States. Cambone has been identified as a leading member of the “Blue Team” of Washington China-hawks, peddling the new offensive nuclear weapons doctrine, with an eye toward a full-scale confrontation with Beijing in the not too distant future.
- Dr. Robert Joseph, National Security Council staffer in charge of arms control, and the author of the infamous Jan. 28, 2003 State of the Union disinformation about Iraq seeking uranium in Africa. Dr. Joseph is a Richard Perle protégé, dating back to the 1970s, when both men served on the Senate staff of Henry “Scoop” Jackson (D-Wash.). Sources tell *EIR* that all of Joseph’s provocative actions on the NSC staff—including the Africa yellowcake State of the Union insert—are steered by Cheney and Libby.
- Ambassador Linton Brooks, head of the National Nu-



Mini-nuclear weapons with “perhaps only a few thousand” casualties, as one planner put it: The Cheney gang are itching to use them against Third World “rogue states.” But the threat sets off reactions they don’t dream of—and not only from Third World states.

clear Security Administration, which oversees new weapons projects.

- R. James Woolsey, leading chicken-hawk and member of the Defense Policy Board, and reportedly a subcontractor to the Office of Special Plans (OSP), the secret Pentagon intelligence and dirty tricks unit that was instrumental in the “information warfare” leading up to the Iraq War, and which is now promoting wars against Iran and Syria.

- Dr. Fred C. Iklé, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Reagan Administration, and a leading suspect in the Jonathan Jay Pollard “X Committee” probe of high-level Israeli moles inside the upper echelons of the U.S. intelligence community.

Target: China

According to one former senior Congressional staffer, it is an open secret among the chicken-hawk faction inside the Bush Administration, that the ongoing North Korea crisis is viewed as the most viable pretext for actually using a mini-nuke. A group of foreign military officials was recently treated to a crash course in the latest “Strangelove” geostrategic thinking, while visiting a leading protégé of neo-con Frank Gaffney, the source reported. They were told that, once the

Iraq confrontation is concluded, the United States or Israel will bomb the Bushehr nuclear reactor site in Iran—using conventional weaponry—and then the United States will use a mini-nuke against North Korea “to send a message to Beijing.”

This report was confirmed in spades by John Bolton, who recently gave an interview to the *New Statesman*’s John Pilger. Writing about the Offutt planning session, Pilger reported, “Last month I interviewed Bolton in Washington and asked him: ‘If you stop [North Korean] ships, isn’t there an echo of what happened in 1962, with the threat of nuclear war? Won’t the North Korean regime be moved to defend themselves with the nuclear weapons they have?’ He replied that a North Korean ship had already been stopped and ‘the regime did nothing in response.’ ‘But if you take action, then nuclear risk is there, isn’t it?’ I asked. He replied, ‘The risk is there if we don’t take action . . . of them blackmailing other countries.’ ” Pilger noted that Bolton went on to quote the now thoroughly discredited statement by National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, when talking about the bogus claims of Iraq’s possession of nuclear weapons: “We don’t want to wait for the mushroom cloud.”

Willis Stanley, a senior fellow at the National Institute for Public Policy and a participant in the 1999 nuclear forces task force, was even more blunt in a recent interview, in which he argued that North Korea is the perfect case where use of nuclear weapons may be unavoidable. North Korea has “vast conventional force, and chemical weapons, 12,000 artillery tubes and 2,300 multiple rocket launchers that are capable of raining 500,000 shells per hour on U.S. and South Korean troops.” Under these circumstances, nuclear weapons are most relevant, he argued. “It remains possible that an American President’s only option to avoid catastrophic loss of life might be to authorize nuclear use” for a “prompt, certain kill of a [North Korean] weapon of mass destruction-armed ballistic missile preparing for launch against Tokyo or perhaps even Anchorage,” or to “defeat certain target types that currently are only vulnerable to nuclear attack; for example, mobile strategic targets and hard underground facilities.” Stanley concluded his pitch for mini-nuclear strikes against North Korea with the warning: “In the post-Cold War world, including Korea, the barrier between tactical and strategic nuclear forces has crumbled. . . . U.S. planners can not in good conscience rule out an option that may be the lesser of two very evil choices.”

This kind of utopian madness has been a well-known fact of life within the weapons labs, and Armageddon think-tanks in America, throughout the post-World War II period. What makes things so dangerous now, is that the drive for actual use of nuclear weapons is being peddled by high-level Administration policy-makers—starting with the Vice President, Dick Cheney. To allow Cheney and the chicken-hawk gang to stay in office now poses an existential risk to the national security of the United States, and to the world as a whole.