

LaRouche Says: Bush Must Purge Neo-Cons Now!

by Jeffrey Steinberg

George W. Bush returned to Washington from his month-long vacation in Crawford, Texas, to face the biggest policy crisis of his crisis-wracked Presidency. Iraq viceroy Paul Bremer had made an emergency trip home in late August, to warn the Administration that the entire Iraq occupation regime was bankrupt, and would need an instant infusion of \$5 billion to survive. The bombings at the Jordanian Embassy and United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, and most recently at the Shi'ite holy site in Najaf on Aug. 29, had further exposed the abject failure of the U.S. occupation policy, a policy shaped by the neo-conservative-led civilian bureaucracy at the Pentagon and in the Office of Vice President Dick Cheney.

As the result of the accelerating fiasco, a growing chorus of serious policy-thinkers—foremost among them Lyndon LaRouche—have been calling for the entire Iraq effort to be turned over to the United Nations. LaRouche, a leading candidate for the 2004 Democratic Presidential nomination, in a series of public appearances and campaign statements, called for the withdrawal of the U.S. military and the rapid establishment of Iraqi sovereignty, backed by a full-force international effort to rebuild the entire regional infrastructure. LaRouche further warned that, unless President Bush begins the long-overdue purge of the Cheney-led neo-con “war party,” *en bloc*, from his Administration, he will be unable to effect these urgently needed policy changes, and the President will drown in his own folly.

The Military Speaks Out

The already-strained U.S. military deployments—in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, and Liberia—have prompted an unprecedented outpouring of criticism aimed at Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and the Bush national security team as a whole, from some of America's most respected retired

three- and four-star generals, who have been demanding that the Iraq occupation/reconstruction effort be turned over to the United Nations. Typical of this outpouring, was the Aug. 31 interview with the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* by former commander of the U.S. Central Command Gen. Anthony Zinni, who also served as President George W. Bush's special envoy to Israel and Palestine for a brief period in 2002.

“We are on the verge of chaos. We need a new mandate of the United Nations,” Zinni told the paper. Asked whether he thought that the Iraq crisis could get out of control in a matter of days, Zinni replied: “Maybe not in a matter of days, but of weeks, yes. We are in a rush against time. The U.S. has neither resources nor personnel enough for the security and the recovery of Iraq. We need a massive intervention of the international community . . . [and] also a real Iraqi government is urgent, with its own police and army.”

Zinni urged that the United States should ask for a United Nations mandate “to NATO and Islamic countries that want to participate. . . . It is not necessary that the troops wear UN blue helmets, as we have seen it in Bosnia. But it is necessary that Americans and Europeans are flanked by Muslims, otherwise they will remain or become targets.” Zinni added that the Administration must make concessions to France, Germany, and Russia, and added, “But I believe that, even reluctantly, they are getting there, they have understood that they have no alternatives. It was indicated by Deputy Secretary of State Dick Armitage, a friend of mine.”

State Department in an Uphear

Indeed, even before the President returned from vacation, on Aug. 26, Deputy Secretary Armitage publicly floated the idea of a U.S.-led, United Nations-mandated multinational peacekeeping force for Iraq. Armitage's remarks, which were reportedly not pre-cleared with the White House, capped an

extraordinary period of behind-the-scenes policy wrangling, that surfaced with an Aug. 4 *Washington Post* leak about Secretary of State Colin Powell's and Armitage's plans to leave the Bush Administration right after the Jan. 20, 2005 inauguration, unless policies change. As LaRouche stated at the time, the leak was tantamount to Powell's making an ultimatum to President Bush and White House chief political strategist Karl Rove: Dump Cheney and the neo-cons, or else I walk! Powell and Rove both know that, were the Secretary of State to leave, it would be a near-fatal blow to Bush's reelection plans.

Within days of the *Post* report, Powell and Armitage made a two-day visit to Crawford, for closed-door meetings with the President. LaRouche, at the time, anticipated that in the coming days, President Bush would have to make some monumental decisions.

The day after Powell and Armitage left Crawford, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld arrived, along with Gen. Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. According to a report in the Sept. 4 *Washington Post*, in their day-long discussion with the President, General Myers broke profile and made a forceful argument for a multilateral force for Iraq, under UN control. In late July, General Myers had been in the Persian Gulf, where he met with Gen. John Abizaid, the new Central Command chief, during which they concurred on the urgent need to get international troops into Iraq. Abizaid maintains close contact with Secretary of State Powell, who had been the elder President Bush's National Security Advisor.

Two days after the Aug. 19 car-bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, Powell met with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and the latter made it clear, that "the best feasible option was a multinational force under U.S. command," according to the Sept. 4 *Washington Post* account. Five days later, Armitage made his public pitch.

On Sept. 2—President Bush's first day back in the Oval Office—Powell met with the President and with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. There, he reportedly delivered a near-ultimatum, on behalf of the State Department and the Joint Chiefs. Powell reportedly walked out of the meeting with a green light from the President, to announce U.S. support for a new UN resolution, internationalizing the Iraq mission.

The Middle East as a Whole

The draft UN Security Council resolution, now in circulation among the Permanent Five members—United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France—has met with a frosty response from Germany and France, which insist on a much larger role for the international community, both in the military and economic reconstruction missions. Senior Arab sources report that there are larger issues at the heart of the ongoing Washington-Berlin/Paris conflict. These sources say that, throughout the month of August, Secretary Powell

was in regular contact with the German, French, and Russian foreign ministers, discussing both the Iraq fiasco and the equally dangerous situation between Israel and the Palestinians.

All parties involved in the talks agreed, that it would be folly to act responsibly in Iraq, and yet to ignore the danger of a total blowup of the Israel-Palestine conflict, with spillover potential into Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. In the talks, according to the sources, there was a consensus for a NATO deployment of peacekeepers into the Palestinian National Authority.

Zionist Lobby Obstruction

Any such move to install international peacekeepers has been virulently opposed by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his Likud party gang, and among the right wing of the Zionist Lobby internationally. *EIR*'s sources report that, just before Bush's return to Washington, there was a full-scale mobilization of groups such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Zionist Organization of America, along with their Christian Zionist allies, to stop the NATO deployment into Israel-Palestine.

As the result, for the time being, President Bush "decoupled" the two parts of the proposal, allowing serious discussion about a UN mandate over Iraq, while cutting off the kind of coordinated action to publicly box in Sharon. One source reported that Bush vowed to "tranquilize" Sharon through behind-the-scenes pressure, while avoiding a public confrontation. Thus, the Bush Administration squeezed Israel not to launch military incursions into the Gaza Strip, after several rockets were fired into Israeli territory.

The President's refusal to publicly take on Sharon is a reflection of the same cowardice that prevents him from purging the Administration of the neo-con menace, which is not-so-slowly sinking his Presidency into quicksand.

Indeed, as Secretary Powell and the Joint Chiefs were making their move, the mouthpiece of the neo-cons, the Rupert Murdoch-bankrolled *Weekly Standard* published a Sept. 1 editorial by William Kristol and Robert Kagan, two protégés of the late fascist philosopher Leo Strauss of the University of Chicago. Under the headline, "Do What It Takes in Iraq," they warned the President against flinching in the face of the chaos, and demanded the deployment of more American troops and civilian advisors, and the allocation of more American money, to "get the job done." Under no circumstances, they warned, should the Iraq mandate be turned over to the hated United Nations. A few days later, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), whose 2000 Presidential challenge to George W. Bush was directed by Kristol, delivered the same warning to Bush.

It is clear that until some leading neo-cons are publicly ousted, no one in the world is going to trust a word from the President. So long as Dick Cheney is occupying the Vice Presidential office, there will be no confidence that any sane policy act by the Administration is the final word.