

Why Does Cheney Ally Co-Chair Bush WMD Probe?

by Edward Spannaus

President Bush established the “Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction” by executive order on Feb. 6. *EIR* has been advised by qualified intelligence sources that Vice President Dick Cheney was the driving force behind the idea of creating a commission by Presidential executive order, as a means of heading off the creation of such an independent commission by act of Congress, and allowing the investigation to be dragged out until well after the November elections.

The biggest giveaway to the Administration’s intentions is the appointment of one of the most politically activist of right-wing judges, Lawrence Silberman, who has been in the middle of just about every major scandal hitting a Republican or Democratic White House in the past quarter-century.

Investigating Everything, and Nothing

The mandate of the Commission is extremely broad, in a transparent attempt to diffuse the focus away from the manipulation of Iraq intelligence. It is directed to “assess whether the Intelligence Community is sufficiently authorized, organized, equipped, trained, and resourced to identify and warn in a timely manner of, and to support United States Government efforts to respond to, the development and transfer of knowledge, expertise, technologies, materials, and resources associated with the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, related means of delivery, and other related threats of the 21st Century and their employment by foreign powers (including terrorists, terrorist organizations, and private networks, or other entities or individuals).” Clear enough?

Besides Iraq, it is specifically charged to compare prior intelligence assessments of WMD programs in Iran, Libya, North Korea, and Afghanistan, with what was later learned. The commission is directed to submit a report to the President by March 31, 2005.

Lawrence Silberman has been a focus of *EIR*’s attention for many years, most recently because of the key role he played in the “Get Clinton” cabal, which was centered in the “Olson Salon” held at the home of Theodore Olson, now the U.S. Solicitor General, and his late wife Barbara Olson (See, for example, “It Didn’t Start with Monica: The Five-Year Campaign To Bring Down President Clinton,” *EIR*, Jan. 1, 1999). Silberman was a very close friend of Ted and Barbara Olson, walking her down the aisle at their 1996 wedding.

At that time, Barbara Olson was chief counsel to Dan

Burton’s House Government Reform Committee, and she was also a key player in every Congressional operation against Clinton.

In 1993, when author David Brock was considering whether or not to publish the first “Troopergate” article in the *American Spectator*—the article which kicked off Whitewater and named the “Paula” who later outed herself as Paula Jones—he consulted Judge Silberman, who strongly encouraged him to go ahead and publish the article, suggesting that it might even topple Clinton’s Presidency. London *Daily Telegraph* correspondent Ambrose Evans-Pritchard then persuaded Paula Jones to file a suit against President Clinton; Pritchard admits that he discussed the strategy for the case with Silberman at a dinner party.

The Olsons also became patrons to Brock, as he continued digging up dirt on the Clintons. All of this, while Silberman was a sitting Federal appellate judge!

Rosalie Silberman then persuaded Kenneth Starr to begin preparing an *amicus curiae* brief in support of Paula Jones—which Starr had to drop, when he was appointed Independent Counsel.

On Lynne Cheney’s Campus Cops

Silberman himself also has extensive ties into the neo-conservative networks that pushed the distorted intelligence to justify their sought-after invasion of Iraq, and he has direct ties to Dick Cheney’s wife Lynne.

He is a National Council member of Lynne Cheney’s American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), a McCarthyite organization devoted to enforcing the right wing’s version of political correctness on campuses.

Rosalie Silberman was a co-founder of the Independent Women’s Forum (IWF), a right-wing group funded by Richard Mellon Scaife. Other officers and directors of the IWF include Lynne Cheney, Barbara Ledeen, Sally Pipes, and Midge Decter—all pro-war neo-cons.

Back in the fall of 1980, Silberman, along with Robert McFarlane and Richard Allen, met with a Middle Easterner who offered to arrange the release of the American hostages in Tehran directly to the Republicans (one of the “October Surprise” scenarios). Silberman admitted being in the meeting, but he claims that the Americans rejected the offer out of hand. It has been reported that, after he was appointed to the Court of Appeals, Silberman passed his Iranian contacts over to Michael Ledeen, who played a leading role in the Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages deals; Ledeen has continued to take the lead in pushing “regime change” in both Iraq and Iran.

Among his other achievements, Silberman headed the appellate panel that overturned Ollie North’s conviction for obstruction of Congress and destroying documents in the Iran-Contra affair. “Aggressively hostile” was how special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh described Silberman’s demeanor during oral arguments on North’s appeal.