

Emergency Closed Session of Senate Launches ‘Cheneygate’

by Michele Steinberg

We need to not only complete the second phase of the intelligence Committee’s investigation, *we need to re-open the first part of the Iraq report we released in July of last year*, to find out what role the White House played in denying the committee documents it needed to carry out its investigation. That is not part of the agreement, I fully and freely admit. It is time the Senate, as a body, own up to our oversight responsibilities and provide the American people the answers we promised we would give them over 20 months ago.

—Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.)

—Speech to the Senate, Nov. 1, 2005

If it were not for the stonewalling, lying, and obstruction of the investigation of Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald by Vice President Dick Cheney, and his chief of staff/national security advisor, I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, there might not ever have been a second George W. Bush Administration. This was made clear in the press conference by Fitzgerald on Oct. 28, 2005, when he indicated that it took the past year to cross-check every possible consideration in indicting Libby.

But now, the U.S. Senate—spurred on by the relentless organizing by Lyndon LaRouche’s Political Action Committee—has taken action that puts the investigation of the gravest crime of all by Dick Cheney on the agenda, that is, the launching of the Iraq War on the basis of fraud. On Nov. 1, the Democratic Senators, led by Minority Leader Harry Reid (Nev.), called for—and won—a full investigation of the role of the White House, the Defense Department’s Office of Special Plans, and the Pentagon-backed Iraqi National Congress. In addition, as indicated by the above statement by Senator Rockefeller, he wants to reopen the *entire* Senate Intelligence Committee investigation on the basis of information that Cheney and Libby may have withheld crucial information from the Committee.

The dramatic Nov. 1 action was known beforehand to only three members of the Senate. Senator Reid, unilaterally and unannounced, moved the Senate into closed, executive session, under Senate Rule 21, an action that has only been taken 53 times since 1929.

Reid was motivated, he said, by the dire seriousness of the indictment of Cheney’s chief of staff, “Scooter” Libby—the first indictment of a sitting White House staff member in 135 years—and by the continuing loss of American lives in Iraq. Reid broke the back of the Cheney dictatorship in the Senate, and the White House is still reeling. Under Rule 21, any Senator can make a motion for a closed session of the Senate, provided he or she has another Senator to second the motion. When Reid raised his motion at the end of lengthy floor statement (see *Documentation*), he was seconded by two Democratic Senators, Dick Durbin (Ill.) and Debbie Stabenow (Mi.).

Washington sources indicate that the emergency move was carefully planned in the wake of the outrageous post-indictment behavior of sociopath Dick Cheney, and the deranged George W. Bush. Immediately after Libby was indicted, Bush and Cheney praised him as a “patriot.” Then, in a cheap trick, the White House tried to sweep the Libby indictment under the rug with a massive media campaign to change the subject to the appointment of a new Supreme Court justice. Massive pressure by Cheney on the Senate was mounted over the weekend to schedule immediate confirmation hearings for appointee Samuel Alito, Jr.

But it was the appointment of Libby’s replacement—lawyer David Addington—that led many in Congress to conclude that Cheney is a menace. Addington was the author of memoranda justifying the use of torture by the U.S. in the “war on terror” (see article, p. 16). He also is referred to in the Libby indictment as one of the officials to whom Libby turned to get information about Valerie Plame Wilson’s work at the CIA,

part of the White House revenge campaign against her husband, Amb. Joe Wilson, who had exposed the Niger yellowcake uranium story as bogus.

Victory for the American People

The fight in the Senate began about 2:30 p.m., when Reid took to the Senate floor, and delivered a powerful speech that began with the indictment of Libby, and then turned the focus on Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), who had violated his promise to carry out “Phase II” of an investigation of the intelligence failures before the war—focussed on the policymakers and Cabinet members, and a special rogue intelligence unit in the Pentagon (see p. 20).

“This past weekend,” Reid said, “we witnessed the indictment of I. Lewis Libby, the Vice President’s Chief of Staff and a senior advisor to President Bush. Libby is the first sitting White House staffer to be indicted in 135 years. This indictment raises very serious charges. It asserts this administration engaged in actions that both harmed our national security and are morally repugnant.” He then added, “The decision to place U.S. soldiers in harm’s way is the most significant responsibility the Constitution invests in the Congress. The Libby indictment provides a window into what this is really about: how the

administration manufactured and manipulated intelligence in order to sell the war in Iraq and attempted to destroy those who dared to challenge its actions.”

Immediately, after Reid’s motion, the Senate chamber was cleared in order to reconvene in closed session, with no press or visitors allowed. The closed session could only be ended by a majority vote to return to the “regular legislative calendar.”

While the closed session was being brought to order, Democratic Senators Dick Durbin (Ill.), Jay Rockefeller, and Chuck Schumer (N.Y.), held a press conference to describe the issue that had been raised. They made clear that the conduct of Libby and his boss, Cheney, was so inexcusable, that they had to be held accountable, and therefore the Democrats would make the motion for a closed session, “every day” until the Republicans lived up to their responsibility and their promises to conduct the full investigation of the administration conduct.

The Republicans, gripped with rage and hysteria, held their own press conference, with Senators Bill Frist (Tenn.), Trent Lott (Miss.), John Kyl (Ariz.), and Rick Santorum (Pa.) accusing Reid of having “hijacked” the Senate. This was the worst “affront” and “slap in the face” that had ever been delivered to him as Senate Majority Leader, said Frist. But the Republicans were powerless to do anything to stop the debate.

Cheney: Rome Burns Nero

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

November 3, 2005

While American soldiers are dying by the day, and cities are burning, Halliburton’s “cash cow,” an already politically doomed Vice-President Dick Cheney, is playing Nero with the fate of our United States.

The evidence is already conclusive. Vice-President Cheney not only lied about the threat of non-existent nuclear weapons, in his successful duping of members of the U.S. Senate into voting up the worse-than-Indochina catastrophe in Iraq, while looting the U.S. Treasury to the advantage of his former employer Halliburton, but Cheney has been the origin of, or accomplice in various high crimes and misdemeanors which have been perpetrated in the effort to promote and continue his rampage of primary crimes in office.

The latest of these scams was the dumping of Supreme Court nominee Harriet Miers in the attempt to divert attention from Cheney’s crimes by changing the subject from the lives of U.S. service personnel in Iraq, and from the issues of Hitler-like prison-camp tortures, by insisting that all else be put aside in the purely diversionary effort to

confirm the appointment of a completely unsuitable and unnecessary candidate for Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Is there any member of the U.S. legislature, so gutless, or so stupid that he or she would condone the attempted stalling-tactic of using Samuel A. Alito, Jr. as a way of covering for the now-naked crimes of Vice-President Cheney and his torturous crew?

The fact is, that but for the intrinsically fraudulent stalling tactics employed by the office of the Vice-President and his accomplices, the evidence of the crimes perpetrated in the Valerie Plame Wilson case would have been publicly exposed in October 2004, and the present Bush-Cheney Administration would not be in office today. Is there any U.S. citizen either so ignorant, or so craven and corrupt as to condone the attempt to use the Alito nomination as a pretext for further stalling on exposing the crimes against the U.S. Constitution which were fabricated through leading efforts of Cheney’s office in order to perpetrate the murderous fraud of the presently continuing Iraq war on the U.S. Senate and our republic?

All that is required, is a wee bit of old-fashioned honesty and guts, and dirty Dick Cheney were soon gone from office, and the human race might then resume a civilized approach to the desperate issues of the day.

Rome has now burned our Nero, Cheney. So, although Mrs. Lynne Cheney is not exactly Nero’s mother, once more, history has spoken to those who can hear her voice.

For the Democrats, there was only one thing on the agenda: a full investigation of the Iraq War lies, led by those of Vice President Cheney and his office.

Senator Durbin told the press, “The purpose of this closed session is to discuss the need for a Phase II investigation by the Senate Intelligence Committee.”

He added that the Democrats would not be deterred from pursuing this vital investigation, saying, “We’re serving notice on them [the Republican majority] at this moment: Be prepared for this motion every day until you face the reality. . . . The Senate Intelligence Committee has a responsibility to hold this administration accountable for the misuse of intelligence information. They have promised this investigation. We will continue to make this request until they do it.”

Durbin also turned the press conference over to Rockefeller, the ranking member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, who said, “The degree of frustration is impossible to explain. . . . I have tried everything and the members of the minority side of the Intelligence Committee have tried everything . . . to get the majority and the chairman of that committee to move on Phase II and other important matters.

“What it really comes down to, in my judgment, is, if there is any subject or any matter which seems to get close to the doings of the administration, that being particularly the White House, *then all of a sudden an iron curtain comes down and we’re no longer able to pursue that, quite literally*” (emphasis added).

At the exact same moment, Republican Frist was railing, “About ten minutes ago or so, the United States Senate has been hijacked by the Democratic leadership.” The man who had acted as Cheney’s agent in preventing *every* necessary oversight investigation into the torture of prisoners by the United States, and the like, trembled with anger, complaining that Reid had given him “no warning whatsoever.” This was only “a stunt,” and “scare tactics,” Frist screeched.

Reid also released a fact sheet listing the more than 20 times that the investigation of the misuse of intelligence had been requested by the Democrats, and blocked by the Republican leadership. Tragically, the first request by Rockefeller, to the FBI, demanding an investigation of the forged Niger documents was on March 14, 2003, before the war began—just one week after the International Atomic Energy Agency had exposed the forgery at the UN Security Council. not about to answer questions, –and the bombing started on March 19.

After the debate, Reid said that it was “a victory for the American people.” By forcing this showdown, the Republicans agreed to appoint a six-person bipartisan committee to review the status of “Phase II” and report to the leadership by Nov. 14 on its status.

But, already by Nov. 4, three Democrats, Rockefeller, Carl Levin (Mich.), and Dianne Feinstein (Calif.), alleged that there was a serious breach, with Senator Roberts trying to rush a “report” into print without a thorough investigation. The matter is now under review.