

'October Surprise' revives Bush scandal

by Jeffrey Steinberg

In December 1980, *EIR* published the first in a series of articles identifying Iranian arms dealer Cyrus Hashemi as a "double agent" for the Reagan-Bush electoral campaign. Hashemi helped broker a deal between William Casey and the Iranian regime to delay the release of the American hostages being held in Teheran, until after the November 1980 elections. Hashemi, *EIR* charged, had been working since late 1979 as a mediator between the Carter White House and the Iranian mullahs on an arms-for-hostages deal, but had switched sides when he perceived that the GOP slate would likely win the 1980 presidential election.

EIR specifically identified George Bush and James Baker III as key players in what was already referred to at that time as the "October Surprise."

Now, over ten years later, that scandal has resurfaced in what may be the opening salvo of "Bushgate." In virtually every detail, the October Surprise scandal is identical to the reports first issued by *EIR*.

- In a lengthy commentary published in the *New York Times* on April 15, former Carter National Security Council staffer Gary Sick identified Jamshid Hashemi, the older brother of the now deceased Cyrus Hashemi, as one of his primary eyewitness sources on meetings in Washington, D.C., Madrid, and Paris involving top Iranian clerics, Reagan-Bush campaign manager and later CIA director William Casey, George Bush, and others. The Sick revelations grabbed national news headlines and were the subject of an ABC "Nightline" program.

- On April 16, PBS television's "Frontline" aired a documentary on the October Surprise, which prominently featured the Hashemi brothers. One of the other central October Surprise players interviewed by "Frontline" was Miles Copeland, a recently deceased career CIA officer, who stated that he, along with Henry Kissinger, David Rockefeller, and Kermit Roosevelt (another career CIA officer who later worked as a vice president at Chase Manhattan Bank), had worked to bring down the Carter presidency. Copeland's on-camera admissions corroborated a story first published in *New Solidarity*, a national newspaper associated with *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche, in the summer of 1982, entitled "How Kissinger Delayed the Release of U.S. Hostages in Iran." That article named Kissinger, Rockefeller, Bush, and Baker as the players in an elaborate deal with then-Iranian parliamentary speaker Ayatollah Beheshti, to hold the hos-

tages in Teheran until after the Reagan-Bush inauguration.

Shortly after the original October Surprise exposé, *EIR* was sued by Hashemi, who falsely denied that he had played any role in the hostage shenanigans. Other news agencies that were also sued by the Iranian, including Cable News Network (CNN) and the *Washington Post*, quickly settled out of court. *EIR* stuck to the accuracy of its story and the suit dragged on for years in court, until a federal judge dismissed the case "with prejudice." Government documents later revealed that the *EIR* charges were, if anything, an understatement. In an effort to conceal the truth about the shameful hostage maneuverings by both the Carter and Reagan-Bush teams, the FBI classified key Hashemi documents "State Secret," and for years blocked their release.

An independent inquiry

On April 17, one day after the "Frontline" show was aired nationally, former Carter State Department official and *New York Times* columnist Leslie Gelb called on Congress to appoint an independent panel to probe the alleged Reagan-Bush campaign interference.

Said Gelb: "Hardball politics is one thing. But presidential candidates or their aides interfering in life-and-death, war-and-peace decisions of sitting Presidents is quite another. It is treachery. There is now strong circumstantial evidence that the Reagan campaign team in 1980 undercut President Carter's efforts to gain the release of Americans held hostage by Iran. . . . Congressional leaders, if they have guts, should appoint a nonpartisan commission of private citizens to investigate the charges."

Numerous sources in the United States and Western Europe have informed *EIR* that the October Surprise revival is the first of a string of scandals that are about to be unleashed against the Bush presidency. These sources report that leading Democratic Party figures have joined forces with some Israeli intelligence networks to attempt to damage the Bush reelection prospects, and perhaps drive Bush out of the Oval Office, Nixon-style.

Among other Bushgate scandals reportedly in the media hopper are the Bush administration coverup and possible complicity in the Pan Am 103 terrorist bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988; the coverup of the Gander, Newfoundland plane crash; and the assassination in February 1986 of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, an event inextricably tied to the Reagan-Bush team's coverup of the Irangate scandal.

It is too early to tell whether the assault on Bush is serious or not. One nagging question is how Bush's Carter-Democrat rivals and the Israelis are going to slam the President's men for criminal acts in which they themselves actively participated.

If these would-be partisan warriors are serious about bringing down the Bush regime, they would do well to reopen the files on the Bush administration's railroading of political economist Lyndon LaRouche.