

Now More Than Ever: Cheney Must Go!

by Jeffrey Steinberg

In a series of personnel and policy shifts at the end of May, some officials in the Bush Administration have, for the first time, shown signs of waking up to the grave strategic crises exploding around the world. The most profound of these crises is the imminent collapse of the entire global financial system, under the weight of commodity hyperinflation, hedge-fund blowouts, and the bursting of the real-estate bubble.

These cascading events, and the U.S. institutional moves to insert some element of competence into a Bush Administration notorious for its incompetence, shallowness, and neocon and fundy ideological zealotry, will all be of little consequence, if Vice President Dick Cheney is not immediately driven from office.

These are not only the views of Democratic Party statesman Lyndon LaRouche, but are shared by a large number of experienced political figures and intelligence community professionals. Some of these individuals also share LaRouche's continuing concern that, as long as Cheney is roaming the halls of the White House, in an ever-more-desperate state of mind, the danger of a preventive U.S. military strike against Iran will remain real—despite significant moves in recent days to defer such action.

One factor in the concert of anti-Cheney actions has been the wide international circulation of Lyndon LaRouche's warnings of terrorist attacks against the month-long World Cup soccer championships, which take place in a dozen German cities beginning June 9. Already, dozens of newspapers and websites in English, Arabic, Farsi, Russian, and Spanish have either reproduced the LaRouche warning, or reported extensively on it, since it was released on May 24.

No More Snow Jobs

On May 30, President Bush announced the resignation of Treasury Secretary John Snow, and named as his replacement

Henry Paulson, the head of the investment bank Goldman Sachs. Former Clinton Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin hailed the Paulson nomination, describing the Wall Street executive as a very competent manager, who will remain "cool" in the face of major crises. Rubin told the *Washington Post's* David Ignatius: "If you do run into problems, it's important to have someone at Treasury people respect. They do respect Hank and they should. He's a good choice." Ignatius went on to describe the Paulson appointment as "the Boltinization of the Bush White House," explaining, "Since taking over as chief of staff two months ago, Josh Bolten has overseen the firing of Porter Goss as CIA director, the installation of the telegenic Tony Snow as White House spokesman, and, now, the posting at Treasury of a man who epitomizes what's left of the old Republican Establishment—not just a white-shoe investment banker, but an environmentalist to boot."

Paulson, like Bolten (the son of one of the CIA's early operations officers and senior aides to then-CIA Director George H.W. Bush, Seymour Bolten), is one of the rare Bush Administration senior appointees to come from outside the small circle of trusted Bush cronies and Cheney sycophants. Josh Bolten worked under Paulson at Goldman Sachs prior to joining the Bush Administration. And former White House economic council head, now chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), Stephen Friedman, is another former Goldman Sachs executive.

According to one senior intelligence source, the Paulson appointment reflects an institutional move to install competent, experienced managers into top Cabinet crisis-management posts. Previously, the Bush Texas cronies were putty in the hands of the Cheney apparatus. Nevertheless, the source cautioned, Paulson does not bring in any new policies, and his Goldman Sachs background puts him at the center of the hedge-fund apparatus that has been a driving force behind the financial meltdown, ever since Alan Greenspan took over the



U.S. Navy/Chief Photographer's Mate Johnny Bivera

Vice President Dick Cheney is still smiling . . . but not for long. Here he is addressing Naval Academy graduates.

Federal Reserve in 1987, in the midst of the stock-market crash.

One former White House official emphasized that the imminence of a global financial catastrophe drove the decision to install Paulson.

Hayden and Kappes at CIA

A similar shakeup was advanced within the U.S. intelligence community during the week of May 29, as well, also reflecting a move to replace Cheney ideologues with experienced professionals. Following the rapid Senate confirmation of Gen. Michael Hayden as the new Director of Central Intelligence, one of the general's first orders of business was to name Stephen Kappes as the new deputy director. A veteran CIA operations officer with long experience in the Near East, Kappes was credited with playing a key role in the normalization of relations with Libya. He is a fluent Farsi speaker, and had been involved in back-channel efforts with Iran before his abrupt resignation, in protest over former CIA Director Porter Goss's ham-fisted purges of those suspected of "disloyalty" to the Cheney radicals at the White House.

As LaRouche noted, after General Hayden's confirmation, the institutions of the U.S. intelligence community, which have been decimated during the five years of the Bush-Cheney Presidency, are now in a position to repair damage and prepare for the post-Cheney era, when the real rebuilding work will have to ensue.

Iran Preventive War Setback

The most dramatic event of the week was the May 31 press conference by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, announcing that the United States was prepared to join the European Union and Russia in direct negotiations with Iran, so long as Iran freezes its nuclear-enrichment efforts.

Sources familiar with the Administration brawl over the

Iran policy shift report that Rice is seeking European Union, Russian, and Chinese backing for financial sanctions against Iran—if the Tehran regime rejects the U.S. overture. In return, the U.S. Administration has reportedly temporarily taken the option of preventive military strikes off of the table. Indeed, according to news reports of the June 1 meeting of the Permanent Five UN Security Council foreign ministers, plus Germany, in Vienna, Austria, the United States does not expect a response from the Iranian government until the time of the G-8 summit meeting in early July in St. Petersburg, Russia.

"This is a major setback for Cheney," LaRouche commented, following the Rice press conference. "Cheney had staked everything on an attack on Iran, sometime around June or early July."

LaRouche elaborated: "If the Bush-Cheney Administration were to go ahead with attacks on Iran, pretty soon, there would be no U.S. government left. Certainly not anything that we could recognize. We are already suffering tremendous economic strains, due to the costs of the disastrous U.S. military misadventure in Iraq. Add on top of that, an Iran attack, and you have all the ingredients for a general collapse of the entire world economy."

LaRouche noted that there was no alternative to an institutional intervention to shake up the Administration. "This is not a game of checkers," he said. "You have an insane administration, and the Congress, especially the Democrats in the Congress, are not responding sanely to the crisis."

Two other Cheney allies within the Bush Administration are also on the chopping block, as of the last week in May. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, already the target of the "revolt of the generals," for the Iraq quagmire, is now targeted for his role in the coverup of the November 2005 massacre in the western Iraq town of Haditha, where 24 civilians, including women and children, were gunned down by U.S. Marines. One senior retired Army source told this news service that the Haditha incident is the "tip of the iceberg. There are many other smaller-scale massacres being covered up. The Army and the Marine Corps have been broken, and Rumsfeld is to blame."

Members of Congress on both sides of aisle are also out for Homeland Security Department Secretary Michael Chertoff's scalp, after he announced significant cuts in homeland security/war on terror funds for New York City and Washington, D.C.

With Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald zeroing in on Cheney's role in the Valerie Plame Wilson leak, the perfect opportunity is there to force Cheney out now. As one retired CIA officer warned, you cannot put anything past Cheney, until he is out the door. Drawing a parallel between Cheney's schemes to orchestrate a military preventive strike against Iran, and Hitler's 1939 invasion of Poland, on a pretext of Polish aggression, the source cautioned that he would not put it past Cheney's faction to orchestrate an incident, providing a pretext for an Iran attack. "Remember the Gulf of Tonkin?" he asked.