

Cheney's Pre-War Fakery

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- In 1990, while he was Secretary of Defense, Cheney set up a project to “rethink” U.S. foreign policy after the fall of the Berlin Wall. One group included Paul Wolfowitz (now Deputy Secretary of Defense), and Lewis Libby (now Cheney’s Chief of Staff). A competing, more moderate group, was headed by Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Cheney seized on the work of the first group, ignoring the work of the Powell group.

- In the Summer of 1990, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, an Israeli delegation, including a senior Mossad representative, met with Defense Secretary Cheney in Washington, to brief him on “clear proof” that Saddam Hussein was again attempting to acquire nuclear weapons—for the first time since Israel bombed Iraq’s Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981.

- In February 1992, a draft “Defense Planning Guidance” reflecting the Wolfowitz-Libby group’s work, was leaked to the press, creating an international uproar. The document proposed that the United States should “prevent any other nation or alliance from becoming a great power,” and advocated use of U.S. military, even nuclear, force to accomplish this, as well as pre-emptive strikes against states suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction. The Cheney-Wolfowitz-Libby draft met violent opposition from within the Bush “41” Administration, and was toned down beyond recognition.

- In January 1993, in his last days as Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney issued his final policy statement, which advocated the development of a new generation of tactical nuclear weapons. His “Defense Strategy for the 1990s” stated: “In the decade ahead, we must adopt the right combination of deterrent forces, tactical and strategic . . . to mitigate risk from weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, whatever the source. For now, this requires retaining ready forces for a survivable nuclear deterrent, including tactical forces. In addition, we must complete needed force modernization and upgrades.” Already by October 1991, the U.S. Air Force Strategic Air Command had commissioned a study on the future uses of mini-nuclear weapons.

- In September 2000, the Project for a New American Century released a document entitled “Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century,” which openly resurrected the “defense strategy outlined by the Cheney Defense Department in the waning days of the Bush Administration.” It called for “maintaining U.S. pre-eminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival,” and argued “the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf” which, it said, “transcends the issue of the regime

of Saddam Hussein.”

- In September 2001, within days of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, the decision was made by the war-party faction within the Bush Administration—Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, and others—to launch a war against Iraq at the earliest possible date.

- In October 2001, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz established a special unit in the office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Policy Doug Feith, to cook up intelligence to provide a pretext for war on Iraq, bypassing the CIA and the DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency). The unit, called the Office of Special Plans (OSP), was headed by Straussian Abram Shulsky and former Cheney aide William Luti. According to the London *Guardian*, Cheney “was at the shadow network’s sharp end,” and he was the primary customer for OSP “product.”

- Around the same time, a parallel unit was set up in the office of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, for the purpose of bypassing the Israeli Mossad intelligence agency, and feeding information into the Pentagon’s OSP.

- In late 2001, stories began circulating about an alleged attempt by Iraq to purchase uranium yellowcake from Niger, and Cheney and his National Security Adviser Lewis “Scooter” Libby, were believed to have made at least one visit to CIA headquarters, to press the CIA to get more information on the story; according to one source, Cheney and Libby had gotten the information from the OSP.

- On Jan. 1-2, 2002, a break-in occurred at the Niger Embassy in Rome.

- In February 2002, as a result of Cheney’s pressure, the CIA dispatched former Ambassador Joseph Wilson to Niger, to check out the Iraq/yellowcake story. The U.S. Ambassador in Niamey told Wilson that she had already sent reports to Washington debunking the yellowcake story. Wilson interviewed numerous current and former Niger officials; when he returned, he told the CIA that the story was almost certainly bogus, and the CIA informed various government agencies and offices, including the Office of the Vice President.

- On Feb. 24, 2002, a second U.S. official, Gen. Carlton Fulford, was sent to Niger to determine the status of Niger’s uranium supply. He reported back to the Defense and State Departments, that Niger’s uranium stocks are kept under tight control by a French consortium.

- Meanwhile, in January 2002, the Bush Administration issued its Nuclear Posture Review, a Congressionally mandated report on the U.S. nuclear weapons program. For the first time, the 2002 report openly discussed the possible use of nuclear weapons, naming seven countries that could be targets of the American nuclear arsenal: Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya, and Syria.

- On Feb. 22, 2002, John Bolton, a leading Administration chicken-hawk, who ran the arms control and disarmament office at the State Department, gave an interview to the *Washington Times*, boasting about the Bush Administration’s intent to use nuclear weapons, under certain circumstances.



The LaRouche Youth Movement, in a July 2003 demonstration, demands Congress act to investigate and impeach Vice President Cheney for Iraq “WMD” intelligence frauds and lying.

He candidly told the *Times* that the world had changed so dramatically on Sept. 11, 2001, that it was no longer unthinkable to use nuclear arms against rogue states thought to possess weapons of mass destruction.

- On March 24, 2002, Cheney appeared on Sunday talk shows to sound the alarm about Saddam, having just returned from a trip to the Middle East. On CNN he said: “The issue is that he’s developing and has biological weapons. The issue is that he’s pursuing nuclear weapons.” On NBC, Cheney said: “I think it would be a great tragedy if Saddam Hussein were allowed to acquire nuclear weapons. . . . Our friends and allies in the region know we’re deadly serious and that we do need to find a way to address this problem.”

- Some time in mid-2002, the Italian intelligence agency SISMI obtained a set of documents purporting to show that Iraq was trying to purchase some 500 tons of yellowcake from Niger. The Italian government notified the United States, Britain, and, by some accounts, Israel.

- During 2002, Cheney, Libby, and Newt Gingrich (of Richard Perle’s Defense Policy Board) all paid numerous visits to CIA headquarters, to press CIA analysts to come up with incriminating evidence against Iraq. During this time, a senior Administration official told *U.S. News & World Report*, “Nearly every day, Cheney and Scooter hammered the Agency on Iraq or terrorism. Over time, the Agency got tired of fighting.”

- On Aug. 7, 2002, Cheney, speaking in California, said Saddam Hussein could obtain nuclear weapons in the not too distant future. “Left to his own devices, it’s the judgment of many of us that in the not-too-distant future he will acquire nuclear weapons. . . . And a nuclear-armed Saddam Hussein is not a pleasant prospect for anyone in the region or for anyone in the world, for that matter.”

- On Aug. 26, 2002, Cheney, in a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, declared that Saddam Hussein “has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons,” and announced, “Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear

weapons fairly soon.” This speech was widely seen as launching the campaign by the Bush Administration to portray Saddam Hussein as being on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons—despite the complete lack of any current, reliable intelligence to this effect.

- On Sept. 8, 2002, Cheney appeared on a Sunday talk show to strongly defend the new pre-emptive war doctrine. Cheney insisted that Saddam Hussein had accelerated his biological weapons programs and was actively and aggressively seeking a nuclear bomb, based upon unspecified intelligence gathered over the past 12-14 months. “And increasingly, we believe the United States will become the target of those activities,” Cheney declared.

- On Sept. 14, 2002, President Bush signed a secret National Security Presidential Directive 17, which stated, in part: “The United States will continue to make clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force—including potentially nuclear weapons—to the use of [weapons of mass destruction] against the United States, our forces abroad, and friends and allies.” Later, on Dec. 11, 2002, the Bush Administration released a declassified version of NSPD-17, under the title “National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction.” The reference to the use of nuclear weapons was not included in the declassified version, which instead said that the government would “resort to all of our options”—an only slightly camouflaged version of the same idea.

- On Sept. 24, 2002, the government of British Prime Minister Tony Blair released a dossier stating that “Iraq has sought the supply of significant quantities of uranium from Africa.” Shortly after this, the CIA advised the British government of its doubts on the matter.

- On Oct. 7, 2002, President Bush delivered a major speech in Cincinnati. In the days preceding the speech, CIA Director George Tenet personally intervened and persuaded Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley to delete not only any claim regarding Niger, but all references to Iraq attempting to obtain uranium from Africa.

- On Oct. 11, 2002, Italian journalist Elisabetta Burba obtained the bogus Niger documents. She provided them to the U.S. Embassy in Rome, which sent them on to Washington. State Department intelligence (INR) provided them to other agencies (but apparently not to the CIA), with the *caveat* that they are “highly dubious.” Meanwhile, the CIA station in Rome, knowing that the yellowcake story had already been discredited, didn’t even bother to send them to headquarters.

- A December 2002 State Department “Fact Sheet” said that Iraq failed to disclose attempts to purchase uranium oxide from Niger. The Fact Sheet was not cleared by State Department’s INR. The CIA objected. In cabling the Fact Sheet around the world, the Niger reference was dropped.

- On Jan. 10, 2003, a group of senior nuclear weapons managers met at the Pentagon to plan a conference set for August 2003 in Omaha, Nebraska, to discuss the production and deployment of a new generation of “mini”-nuclear

weapons

- On Jan. 25, 2003, Cheney’s Chief of Staff Lewis Libby made a presentation outlining the case for war against Saddam Hussein, to a group of senior officials gathered in the White House situation room. Later, Libby summarized the results of the discussion in a written document, which became the first draft of the script for Secretary of State Colin Powell’s presentation to the UN Security Council on Feb. 5. Although reports of the timing differ, it is reliably reported that the Niger claim was originally in Libby’s presentation, but was taken out at the insistence of Powell and the CIA.

- Jan. 27: In the days preceding the President’s State of the Union address, CIA proliferation expert Alan Foley discovered that the White House is attempting to revive the Niger yellowcake claim, and objects. National Security Council aide Robert Joseph, a long-time crony of Richard Perle and neo-con Center for Security Policy head Frank Gaffney, insisted that the claim must go in. After negotiations, a compromise was reached, by which the claim would be attributed to the British government.

- On Jan. 28, President Bush delivered the State of the Union address, stating: “The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. . . . Saddam Hussein has not credibly explained these activities. He clearly has much to hide.”

- On Jan. 30, Dick Cheney reiterated that the United States had the right to act unilaterally against Iraq, because it could affect the “survival of civilization itself.” He said that within the next week, Secretary of State Powell would present “information and intelligence” to the UN to this effect, and insisted, “Saddam has never accounted for, nor destroyed, these instruments of terror, and his desire for nuclear weapons remains undiminished.”

- Within days of the State of the Union address, the CIA obtained copies of the original Niger documents, by some accounts, having sent a representative to Rome to get them.

- On Feb. 5, Secretary of State Powell delivered a presentation to the UN Security Council on Iraq’s WMD programs. He omitted any reference to the Niger yellowcake claim.

- On Feb. 5, the State Department gave copies of the Niger documents to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with the warning that the documents were likely fraudulent. Within one to two hours, the IAEA easily determined that the documents were forgeries.

- On March 7, in a presentation to the UN Security Council, IAEA Director General Mohammed ElBaradei announced to the world that the Niger documents were forgeries.

- On March 16, on NBC’s Sunday broadcast, “Meet the Press,” Dick Cheney stated, when asked about ElBaradei’s statement: “I disagree . . . we know that he [Saddam Hussein] has been absolutely devoted to trying to acquire nuclear weapons. And we believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons. I think Mr. ElBaradei frankly is wrong.”

- On March 19, the U.S. launched the war on Iraq.