



FROM THE WILDERNESS

*A Nonpartisan, Non-sectarian, MAP from the Here That Is,
Into the Tomorrow of Our Own Making*

Vol. VI, No. 4

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- **George Tenet's Mea Culpa Over Forged Niger Docs Backfires**
- **Bush Shot From the Lip**
- **Media and Political Response Swift and Merciless**
- **Cheney and Rice Move Into the Crosshairs**

BLOOD IN THE WATER

Watergate II

July 15, 2003, 0100 PDT (FTW) - **T**he speed with which CIA Director George Tenet accepted responsibility last Friday for clearing George W. Bush's January 28 State of the Union Speech containing the bogus Iraq-uranium statement based upon forged documents was matched by the speed with which major news agencies - many of which had already been serving as conduits for CIA leaks - released stories that guaranteed deeper and more hostile probes. The writing appears to be on the wall for a beleaguered and disarrayed presidency, as key administration officials including Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice either wittingly or unwittingly line up like chess pieces to take the fall for a doomed King.

A multitude of stories appearing within hours of the Bush/Rice statements and Tenet's "confession" disclosed that the DCI (Director of Central Intelligence) had successfully and personally argued for the removal of a similar line three months before the State-of-the-Union speech. His admission is not credible.

Statements by both Bush and departing press spokesman Ari Fleischer that the matter is now closed will likely go down as wishful and quite possibly delusional thinking. Famous last words. Recalled is the line from Watergate's John Dean, "There is a cancer growing on the Presidency." This is the kind of cancer that eats official after official until there is nothing left between it and the King.

The deliberate distortion and misrepresentation of intelligence data about Iraq is much broader than a single line in the President's speech, and the reliance on that lie by Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice and Powell - both before and after the speech, and after it was known that the intelligence was bogus - is already being dragged into the light. The noose that will ultimately hang George W. Bush is a meticulous and carefully crafted official record compiled by California Congressman
(continued on page 17)

More *FTW* Ads Run, Mike Ruppert Hospitalized

JULY 18, 2003 - The first volley of our "Pay No Attention to That Man Behind the Curtain" ads has run today in the *Miami Herald*. This is Jeb Bush's backyard! The ad can be found on page 21A.

JULY 21, 2003 - The second city in *FTW*'s "Pay No Attention to That Man Behind the Curtain" 12-city ad campaign ran in the *Arizona Republic* today.

The ad is the entire back page of the Arizona Life section, page 8. According to the phone calls received by the newspaper, the ad has caused a tremendous stir. The fierce reaction has been no surprise to the *FTW* team, given that Arizona has long been a hotbed of conservatism, and the Republican Party stronghold of John McCain and the late Barry Goldwater. The ad will run in other major newspapers in the coming weeks.

FTW will continue monitoring these and other developments as they unfold.

JULY 30, 2003 - Today, the third of our ads ran in Oregon. The ad can be seen on Page 2 of the main section of the *Willamette Week* newspaper.

JULY 21, 2003 - On July 18, 2003, *From The Wilderness* publisher/editor Michael C. Ruppert received emergency treatment for a ruptured appendix and peritonitis. He is currently recovering from surgery, after being stricken and hospitalized on July 16.

Mike is now at home and recovering nicely. Thank you for the tons of email and letters.



— *From The Wilderness* —

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BEYOND BUSH - Part I

by Michael C. Ruppert

There is no longer any serious doubt that Bush administration officials deceived us into war. The key question now is why so many influential people are in denial, unwilling to admit the obvious...But even people who aren't partisan Republicans shy away from confronting the administration's dishonest case for war, because they don't want to face the implications...

After all, suppose a politician - or a journalist - admits to himself that Mr. Bush bamboozled the nation into war. Well, launching a war on false pretenses is, to say the least a breach of trust. So if you admit to yourself that such a thing happened, you have a moral obligation to demand accountability - and to do so in the face not only of a powerful, ruthless political machine but in the face of a country not yet ready to believe that its leaders have exploited 9/11 for political gain. It's a scary prospect.

Yet, if we can't find people willing to take the risk - to face the truth and act on it - what will happen to our democracy?

Paul Krugman, The New York Times, June 24, 2003

July 1, 2003 1600 PDT (FTW) -- Let's just suppose for a moment that George W. Bush was removed from the White House. Cheney, Powell, Rumsfeld, Ashcroft, Wolfowitz and Rove too. What would that leave us with? It would leave us stuck in hugely expensive, Vietnam-like guerrilla wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It would leave us with the Patriot Act, Homeland Security and Total Information Awareness snooping into every detail of our lives. It would leave us with a government in violation of the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th Amendments to the Constitution. It would leave us with a massive cover-up of US complicity in the attacks of 9/11 that, if fully admitted, would show not intelligence "failures" but intelligence *crimes*, approved and ordered by the most powerful people in the country. It would leave us with a government that now has the power to compel mass vaccinations on pain of imprisonment or fine, and with no legal ability to sue the vaccine makers who killed our friends or our children. It would leave us with two and half million unemployed; the largest budget deficits in history; more than \$3.3 trillion missing from the Department of Defense; and state and local governments broke to the point of having to cut back essential services like sewers, police, and fire. It would leave us with a federal government that had hit the debt ceiling and was unable to borrow any more money. And we would still be facing a looming natural gas crisis of unimagined proportions, and living on a planet that is slowly realizing that it is running out of oil with no "Plan B". Our airports however, would be very safe, and shares of Halliburton, Lockheed and DynCorp would be paying excellent dividends.

This is not good management.

Leaving all of these issues unaddressed is not good management either.

And this is why, as I will demonstrate in this article, the decision has already been made by corporate and financial powers to remove George W. Bush, whether he wants to leave or not, and whether he steals the next election or not. Before you start cheering, ask yourself three questions: "If there is someone or something that can decide that Bush will not return, nor remain for long, what is it? And if that thing is powerful enough to remove Bush, was it not also powerful enough to have put him there in the first place? And if that is the case, then isn't that what's really responsible for the state of things? George W. Bush is just a hired CEO who is about to be removed by the "Board of Directors". Who are they? Are they going to choose his replacement? Are you going to help them?

What can change this Board of Directors and the way the "Corporation" protects its interests? These are the only issues that matter.

So now the honest question about the 2004 Presidential campaign is, "What do you really want out of it?" Do you want the illusion that everything is a little better while it really gets worse? Or are you ready yet to roll up your sleeves and make some very unpleasant but necessary fixes?

The greatest test of the 2004 presidential election campaign is not with the candidates. It is with the people. There are strong signs that presidential election issues on the Democratic side are already being manipulated by corporate and financial interests. And some naïve and well-intentioned (and some not-so-naïve and not-so-well intentioned) activists are already playing right into the Board's hands. There are many disturbing signs that the only choice offered to the American people will be no choice at all. Under the psychological rationale, "This is the way it has to be done", campaign debates will likely address only half-truths and fail to come to grips with - or even acknowledge - the most important issues that I just described. In fact, only the least important issues will likely be addressed in campaign 2004 at the usual expense of future generations who are rapidly realizing that they are about to become the victims of the biggest Holocaust in mankind's history. The final platforms for Election 2004 will likely be manifestos of madness unless we dictate differently.

It is amazing to see such words of honesty coming from The *New York Times* as those of Paul Krugman. I am not referring to the recent scandals over falsified stories that brought down a reporter and two editors at the *Times*. That particular drama was overplayed by CNN, Fox and The *Washington Post* as punishment for the *Times'* opposition to the invasion of Iraq. The most vicious dogs of war are sometimes armed with sharpened, saliva-drenched keyboards. No, Paul Krugman's words

represent the essence of what *From The Wilderness* has stood for since its very first issue. Unless people find the will to address scandals, lies, and betrayals of trust that, by their very existence, reveal that the system itself is corrupt and that the people controlling it - both in government, and in America's corporations and financial institutions -- are criminals, there is no chance to make anything better, only an absolute certainty that things will get worse.

Already we can see the early signs of delusional and dishonest behavior that is being willingly embraced by equally delusional activists who have begun a sterile debate about which candidate to support and why it is better to become involved on the side of one Democratic Party candidate or another or why a vote for a Green Party candidate instead of a Democrat is tantamount to treason. The Republicans, of course, are sharpening up a campaign that will portray George W. Bush as the "Hero of 9/11", "The Protector of the American Economy", "The Savior of the Free World", "A Man Who Loves God", and "The Man Who Cut Taxes". Electroshock therapy might be useful for these people.

But is it any less warranted for people who believe that everything will be fine if there is better theme music in the background, while none of the real offenses of the past two years are addressed or undone?

Short Memories

Some on the Democratic side are already positioning themselves to co-opt and control what happened on 9/11 into a softer, less disturbing "Better this than nothing" strategy. This attitude, that the only thing that matters is finding an electable Democrat, is nothing more than a rearrangement of deck chairs on the Titanic. Has everyone suddenly forgotten that the 2000 election was stolen: first by using software and political machinery to disenfranchise tens of thousands of eligible voters, then by open interference at polling places, and finally by an absolutely illegal Supreme Court decision? Do these people believe that such a crime, absolutely successful the first time, will never be attempted again?

And has everyone also forgotten that in the 2002 midterm elections the proprietary voting software, in many cases owned by those affiliated with the Republican Party or - as in the case of Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska - the candidates themselves, has been ruled by the Supreme Court to be immune from public inspection. (Hagel won by a lopsided 83% majority). Throughout the United States in 2002 there was abundant evidence that the so-called "solution" to hanging chads did nothing more than enshrine the ability to steal elections with immunity and also much less fuss afterwards? Who in their right mind would trust such a system? Why have none of the candidates mentioned it?

And, if all else fails, we can have more Wellstone plane crashes. It has worked with three Democratic Senate candidates in key races over the last thirty years. Maybe that's why no one in Congress is talking about the election process. Plane crashes are part of that process too.

This is the process in which some are urging us to place our trust? My publication, which recently ran a full-page ad in *The Washington Post*, and is about to unleash a national ad campaign, has already been unofficially approached by people from two Democratic challengers seeking an endorsement. I have made it clear that **FTW** will not endorse any candidate who does not make the life-and-death issues facing mankind his or her number-one priority and address them openly.

Is the 2004 election already being rolled, like soft cookie dough, away from the issues? Already there are signs that some candidates who speak the truth are having their campaigns infiltrated by expert managers who might dilute the message. There are signs that others, looked upon as likely winners with strong progressive credentials, may be nothing more than different dogs from the same kennel that brought us the Bush Wolf Pack.

But first let me convince you that the Bush management team is actually on its way out and that this is not a reason to breathe a sigh of relief. Don't get me wrong, I'll be glad to see the mean-spirited and dishonest bastards go. I'll also acknowledge their healthy severance package and I'll worry about the bastards that will likely replace them who might be much harder to identify.

BUMPING BUSH

There is only one difference between the evidence showing the Bush administration's criminal culpability in and foreknowledge of the attacks of 9/11, and the evidence showing that the administration deceived the American public about the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Both sets of evidence are thoroughly documented. They are irrefutable and based upon government records and official statements and actions shown to be false, misleading or dishonest. And both sets of evidence are unimpeachable. The difference is that the evidence showing the Iraqi deception is being seriously and widely investigated by the mainstream press, and actively by an ever-increasing number of elected representatives. That's it.

It is the hard record of official statements made by Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Powell on Iraq that will sink the administration, either before or after the election. These guys are horrible managers and they have really botched things up, big time - exactly as I said they would. There is no amount of spin anywhere that can neutralize this record. As **FTW** predicted back in March, the biggest and most obvious criminal action of the administration, a knowing lie (one of many) used to deceive a nation into war, was the administration's assertion that Iraq had reconstituted its nuclear weapons program and had recently attempted to purchase uranium from the African country of Niger.

Just before the March 2003 Iraqi invasion in our two-part series titled *The Perfect Storm* we wrote:

There are serious signs of a major political revolt brewing in the United States - one that could end the Bush Presidency

- George W. Bush still has his finger on the trigger and he knows that his only hope for survival is to pull it. U.S. and British intelligence agencies are leaking documents left and right disputing White House "evidence" against Iraq that has repeatedly been shown to be falsified, plagiarized and forged. Quiet meetings are being held in Washington between members of Congress and attorneys like Ramsey Clark discussing Bush's impeachment. Leaders of the World Trade Organization (WTO), as reported in a March 15 story in the International Herald Tribune have said, "All international institutions would suffer a loss of credibility if the one superpower appeared to be choosing which rules to obey and which to ignore." And a Rockefeller has called for an investigation of a Bush. On March 14, the Associated Press reported that W. Va. Senator Jay Rockefeller has asked the FBI to investigate forged documents which were presented first by Britain and then the United States showing that Iraq had been trying to purchase uranium from the African country of Niger for its weapons program. Of all the glaring falsehoods told by the administration, the fact that these forgeries were noted by a Rockefeller may make them the second-rate Watergate burglary of the 21st century...

There are few things more closely connected to or identified with Bush family power than globalization and the Rockefellers. He has most likely failed both of them and both have the power to remove him...

In the meantime, there are increasing signs that the U.S. political and economic elites are laying the groundwork to make the Bush administration, specifically Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Powell, Perle and Wolfowitz, sacrificial scapegoats for a failed policy in time to consolidate post 9-11 gains, regroup and move forward.

That prophecy is coming true with a vengeance.

The Bush administration's gamble is that, because it can raise more money than all the Democratic challengers put together, it can still manage to re-elect itself in 2004. No doubt, the administration will put up a good fight. But an impeachment, long sought after by many - including University of Illinois law Professor Francis Boyle -- will be waiting after the second inauguration just as surely as it was for Richard Nixon in 1973.

My certainty is based upon a record that is utterly damning and penetrates to almost every assertion made by the Bush administration in its pursuit of Iraqi oil. Rather than digress into a lengthy discussion of the offenses let me refer the reader to two examples that exemplify how strong the case is and that it is being pursued.

Hard Work from the House

The legal groundwork for the Clinton impeachment of 1998-9 was laid out quietly over a period of many months. The same holds true now.

The foundation of the impeachment - or the scandal that will prompt a regime change - was laid in a March 17 letter written by California Congressman Henry Waxman who has been dogging the Bush administration on its violations of law since it took office. Waxman's first battle was over the refusal of the administration to release the mostly still-secret records of Vice President Cheney's 2001 Energy Task Force. It is there that some of the biggest secrets of 9/11 lay buried. With respect to the Iraqi invasion -- using the record of official statements made by Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Powell -- Waxman has already laid out and won the prima facie case that the administration has lied, deceived the public and broken the public trust. There can be no defense against this record once it gets into a legal proceeding.

To read the full text of Waxman's March letter please visit: http://www.house.gov/reform/min/inves_admin/admin_nuclear_evidence.htm

This web page details Waxman's meticulous compilation of evidence and - from a legal, as opposed to political standpoint - is no doubt the core of any future impeachment case against Bush. It is damning and Waxman has diligently continued to build, brick by brick, the wall into which the administration could soon crash. An important historical novelty here is that Waxman's compilation of irrefutable criminal activity also guarantees that if Bush goes, so do Cheney, Rumsfeld and Powell. What then?

Rebellion From Inside the Beltway

On June 26, a twenty-seven-year CIA veteran analyst tied the pieces together and made it clear that Bush is fighting a battle he cannot win. Just as it was with Nixon, the intelligence agencies have turned against him. Ray McGovern, affiliated with the watchdog group Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), has been out front with criticisms of the Bush administration's abuse of intelligence procedures for some time. However, in his interview with William Rivers Pitt, writing for Truthout.org, McGovern took Waxman's work several steps further. He was also critical of CIA Director George Tenet's endorsements of intelligence abuses by Powell, Cheney and Bush, yet he did not mention that Tenet had left a paper record showing that the CIA had never trusted the forged Niger documents that the administration still - even after warnings -- sold to the public and to the world as authentic.

McGovern also let Tenet off the hook for the biggest crime of the administration, allowing and facilitating the attacks of 9/11, saying, "My analysis is that George Bush had no option but to keep George Tenet on as Director, because George Tenet had warned Bush repeatedly, for months and months before September 11, that something very bad was about to happen". Even still McGovern let the Bush administration know that its conduct before the attacks was a sword of Damocles hanging over Bush's head.

"On August 6, the title of the [Presidential] briefing was, 'Bin Laden Determined to Strike in the US,' and that briefing had the word 'Hijacking' in it. That's all I know about it, but that's quite enough. In September, Bush had to make a decision. Is it feasible to let go of Tenet, whose agency flubbed the dub on this one? And the answer was no, because Tenet knows too much about what Bush knew, and Bush didn't know what to do about it. That's the bottom line for me."

I disagree with McGovern---there is a record showing that the CIA knew about 9/11---but otherwise McGovern's analysis matched perfectly with *FTW's* of three months ago. Here are some excerpts:

In the coming weeks, we're going to be seeing folks coming out and coming forth with what they know, and it is going to be very embarrassing for the Bush administration.

To be quite complete on this, it encourages me that the analysts at the Defense Intelligence Agency - who share this ethic of trying to tell the truth, even though they are under much greater pressure and have much less career protection because they work for Rumsfeld - to their great credit, in September of last year they put out a memo saying there is no reliable evidence to suggest that the Iraqis have biological or chemical weapons, or that they are producing them...

They looked around after Labor Day and said, "OK, if we're going to have this war, we really need to persuade Congress to vote for it. How are we going to do that? Well, let's do the al Qaeda-Iraq connection. That's the traumatic one. 9/11 is still a traumatic thing for most Americans. Let's do that."

But then they said, "Oh damn, those folks at CIA don't buy that, they say there's no evidence, and we can't bring them around. We've tried every which way and they won't relent. That won't work, because if we try that, Congress is going to have these CIA wimps come down, and the next day they'll undercut us. How about these chemical and biological weapons? We know they don't have any nuclear weapons, so how about the chemical and biological stuff? Well, damn. We have these other wimps at the Defense Intelligence Agency, and dammit, they won't come around either. They say there's no reliable evidence of that, so if we go up to Congress with that, the next day they'll call the DIA folks in, and the DIA folks will undercut us."

So they said, "What have we got? We've got those aluminum tubes!" The aluminum tubes, you will remember, were something that came out in late September, the 24th of September. The British and we front-paged it. These were aluminum tubes that were said by Condoleezza Rice as soon as the report came out to be only suitable for use in a nuclear application. This is hardware that they had the dimensions of. So they got that report, and the British played it up, and we played it up. It was front page in the New York Times. Condoleezza Rice said, "Ah ha! These aluminum tubes are suitable only for uranium-enrichment centrifuges."

Then they gave the tubes to the Department of Energy labs, and to a person, each one of those nuclear scientists and engineers said, "Well, if Iraq thinks it can use these dimensions and these specifications of aluminum tubes to build a nuclear program, let 'em do it! Let 'em do it. It'll never work, and we can't believe they are so stupid. These must be for conventional rockets."

And, of course, that's what they were for, and that's what the UN determined they were for. So, after Condoleezza Rice's initial foray into this scientific area, they knew that they couldn't make that stick, either. So what else did they have?

Well, somebody said, "How about those reports earlier this year that Iraq was trying to get Uranium from Niger? Yeah...that was pretty good." But of course if George Tenet were there, he would have said, "But we looked at the evidence, and they're forgeries, they stink to high heaven." So the question became, "How long would it take for someone to find out they were forgeries?" The answer was about a day or two. The next question was, "When do we have to show people this stuff?" The answer was that the IAEA had been after us for a couple of months now to give it to them, but we can probably put them off for three or four months.

So there it was. "What's the problem? We'll take these reports, we'll use them to brief Congress and to raise the specter of a mushroom cloud. You'll recall that the President on the 7th of October said, "Our smoking gun could come in the form of a mushroom cloud." Condoleezza Rice said exactly the same thing the next day. Victoria Clarke said exactly the same thing on the 9th of October, and of course the vote came on the 11th of October...

The most important and clear-cut scandal, of course, has to do with the forgery of those Niger nuclear documents that were used as proof. The very cold calculation was that Congress could be deceived, we could have our war, we could win it, and then no one would care that part of the evidence for war was forged. That may still prove to be the case, but the most encouraging thing I've seen over the last four weeks now is that the US press has sort of woken from its slumber and is interested. I've asked people in the press how they account for their lack of interest before the war, and now they seem to be interested. I guess the simple answer is that they don't like to be lied to...

I think the real difference is that no one knew, or very few people knew, before the war that there weren't any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Now they know. It's an unavoidable fact. No one likes to be conned, no one likes to be lied to, and no one particularly likes that 190 US servicemen and women have been killed in this effort, not to mention the five or six thousand Iraqi civilians.

There's a difference in tone. If the press does not succumb to the argument put out by folks like Tom Friedman, who says it doesn't really matter that there are no weapons in Iraq, if it does become a quagmire which I believe it will be, and we have a few servicemen killed every week, then there is a prospect that the American people will wake up

and say, "Tell me again why my son was killed? Why did we have to make this war on Iraq?"

So I do think that there is some hope now that the truth will come out. It won't come out through the Congressional committees. That's really a joke, a sick joke...

It doesn't take a crackerjack analyst. Take Pat Roberts, the Republican Senator from Kansas, who is chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. When the Niger forgery was unearthed and when Colin Powell admitted, well shucks, it was a forgery, Senator Jay Rockefeller, the ranking Democrat on that committee, went to Pat Roberts and said they really needed the FBI to take a look at this. After all, this was known to be a forgery and was still used on Congressmen and Senators. We'd better get the Bureau in on this. Pat Roberts said no, that would be inappropriate. So Rockefeller drafted his own letter, and went back to Roberts and said he was going to send the letter to FBI Director Mueller, and asked if Roberts would sign on to it. Roberts said no, that would be inappropriate...

What the FBI Director eventually got was a letter from one Minority member saying pretty please, would you maybe take a look at what happened here, because we think there may have been some skullduggery. The answer he got from the Bureau was a brush-off. Why do I mention all that? This is the same Pat Roberts who is going to lead the investigation into what happened with this issue.

All I'm saying is that you've got Porter Goss on the House side, you've got Pat Roberts on the Senate side, you've got John Warner who's a piece with Pat Roberts. I'm very reluctant to be so unequivocal, but in this case I can say nothing is going to come out of those hearings but a lot of smoke...

What I'm saying is that this needs to be investigated. We know that it was Dick Cheney who sent the former US ambassador to Niger to investigate. We know he was told in early March of last year that the documents were forgeries. And yet these same documents were used in that application. That is something that needs to be uncovered. We need to pursue why the Vice President allowed that to happen. To have global reporters like Walter Pincus quoting senior administration officials that Vice President Cheney was not told by CIA about the findings of this former US ambassador strains credulity well beyond the breaking point. Cheney commissioned this trip, and when the fellow came back, he said, "Don't tell me, I don't want to know what happened." That's just ridiculous.

I strongly recommend a full reading of the McGovern interview, which can be read at: http://www.truthout.org/docs_03/062603B.shtml.

McGovern's reference to Walter Pincus echoes an observation made by **FTW** in March:

FTW has previously noted strong signals in the form of published remarks by powerful figures such as Senator Jay Rockefeller and news stories by media powerhouses such as James Risen and Walter Pincus that quiet moves were underway to remove the Bush administration from power. In a harsh and stunning public statement to the BBC three days ago, former Bush I Secretary of State and Henry Kissinger business partner Lawrence Eagleburger smacked of "W" right between the eyes with a two-by-four.

The shocking April 14 Eagleburger statement revealed the depth of dissatisfaction in the real halls of power with the Bush team:

If George Bush [Jr.] decided he was going to turn the troops loose on Syria and Iran after that he would last in office for about 15 minutes. In fact if President Bush were to try that now even I would think that he ought to be impeached. You can't get away with that sort of thing in this democracy.

The Military's Silent Mutiny - A "Full Scale Rebellion"

In his interview with Pitt, retired CIA analyst McGovern hinted at what appears to be a growing but quiet dissent within the ranks of the US military at the totalitarian management style of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and the fact that the administration seems unconcerned with the facts. He said:

To be quite complete on this, it encourages me that the analysts at the Defense Intelligence Agency - who share this ethic of trying to tell the truth, even though they are under much greater pressure and have much less career protection because they work for Rumsfeld - to their great credit, in September of last year they put out a memo saying there is no reliable evidence to suggest that the Iraqis have biological or chemical weapons, or that they are producing them.

Indeed the multitude of leaks of intelligence estimates, reports, memos and other records from within the military and intelligence communities suggests a deep dissatisfaction with the Bush regime. But perhaps nothing is as telling as a recent report from Washington journalist and frequent **FTW** contributor Wayne Madsen who is also a former US Naval officer and a veteran of the National Security Agency.

In a recent article for the Online Journal (www.onlinejournal.com) Madsen noted,

Other effects of Weaponsgate are already apparent. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the majordomo of the neocons within the Pentagon, cannot find anyone to take the place of outgoing Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki. General Tommy Franks and Shinseki's vice chief, General John "Jack" Keane, want no part of the job. After winning a lightning war against Iraq, Franks suddenly announced his retirement. He and Keane witnessed how Rumsfeld and his coterie of advisers and consultants, who never once lifted a weapon in the defense of their country, constantly ignored and publicly abused Shinseki. Army Secretary and retired General Tom White resigned after a

number of clashes with Rumsfeld and his cabal.

Curious as to whether this indicated a no-confidence vote in the Bush administration by career, professional military officers I e-mailed Madsen and asked for further comment.

His reply was straight to the point.

Senior Pentagon officers have told me that Rumsfeld and his political advisers take no criticism from the military or the career civil servants, to complain publicly though is to sign a death warrant for your career. The "cabal" as they call themselves are extremely vindictive but there remains a full-scale rebellion within the Pentagon, especially the Defense Intelligence Agency, as well as the CIA and State over the cooking of the books on the non-existent Iraqi WMDs. The people who have been dissed by Rumsfeld and his gang know WMDs are their weak point and even Richard Perle is worried that the wheels are coming off their charade.

As casualties continue to mount in the worsening guerrilla war in Iraq, and as growing casualties in Afghanistan are beginning to attract notice, it is a certainty that career military leaders are going to become more restive as they watch their troops die in attacks that remind us all of Vietnam and as the world continues to disintegrate. The power of the military, rarely discussed in the news media, is substantial. And if the military has no confidence in the White House, it will shake both Washington and Wall Street to the core. Without the military, Wall Street cannot function. This is especially true as conflicts continue to erupt all over Africa and instability mounts in Iran and Saudi Arabia. That instability was created by an administration that is increasingly demonstrating zero management competence.

THE MEDIA MASSES - THE MIGHTY WURLITZER PLAYS

Not since the Watergate scandal of 1972-4 has a crescendo of press stories been more carefully crafted. And it is because of this that we can see *many* historical connections to Watergate - a coup that took down a President who believed he was invincible.

A Media Sampling

What follows is a partial list of recent articles, reports, letters and editorials in the mainstream press focusing the administration's fraudulent case for the invasion of Iraq:

June 6 - In a story published at the hugely influential *FindLaw.com*, former Nixon counsel John Dean - the witness who broke Watergate wide open - publishes a lengthy article comparing the current scandal to Watergate. He states bluntly, "If Bush has taken Congress and the nation into war based on bogus information, he is cooked;"

June 12 - Follow up letter by Henry Waxman to Condoleezza Rice asking why he has received no response to previous inquiries;

June 13 - *US News and World Report* states that in November 2002 "the Defense Intelligence Agency issued a report stating that there was 'no reliable information' showing that Iraq was actually producing or stockpiling chemical weapons;"

June 15 - Retired NATO Commander Wesley Clark tells *Meet the Press* that the administration had asked him to talk about Iraqi weapons and that he refused because there was no evidence supporting the claim;

June 18 - *USA Today* quotes former CIA Director, Admiral Stansfield Turner as saying that the administration stretched the facts on Iraq;

June 18 - The *Associated Press* quotes Democratic candidates John Kerry and Howard Dean as saying that the administration has misled Americans;

June 19 - The *Los Angeles Times* calls for open hearings on the Iraqi evidence;

June 20 - The *Boston Globe* runs a widely reprinted Op-Ed by Derrick Jackson saying that without WMDs Iraq must be about oil;

June 22 - The *Observer* (UK) quotes Council on Foreign Relations Senior Fellow, retired General William Nash saying that the administration has distorted intelligence;

June 22 - *Washington Times*/UPI correspondent Arnaud de Borchgrave raises serious questions about the administration's conduct;

June 22 - The *Washington Post*, a front-page major story by Walter Pincus;

June 24 - The *Christian Science Monitor* runs an editorial titled, "Bush Credibility Gap - a Slow, Quiet Crumble";

June 25 - The *New York Times*, James Risen and Douglas Jehl report that a top State Department expert has told Congress he was pressed by the White House to distort evidence;

June 25 - *Newsweek* correspondent Michael Isikoff in a lengthy article titled "Distorted Intelligence" reveals that intelligence documents from Germany (in *Newsweek's* possession) and Qatar blow distinct holes in the administration's claims of an Iraq-Al Qaeda alliance. This constitutes a clear message to Bush that the media case against the administration is tight;

June 29 - *Denver Post* Columnist Diane Carman publishes a column titled, "Scandal Lurks in the Shadow of Iraq Evidence";

June 29 - *Time Magazine* publishes a story titled "Who Lost the WMD?" that summarized many of the major points of the scandal including direct interference with CIA analysis by Dick Cheney during "working visits" to CIA headquarters. It contains the telling statement, "And as Bush's allies and enemies alike on Capitol Hill begin to pick apart some 19 volumes of prewar intelligence and examine them one document at a time, the cohesive Bush team is starting to come apart."

But who (and what) is the media serving?

Of all of these stories, it is the June 22 front-page *Washington Post* story by Walter Pincus that tells me that Bush is cooked. Pincus is a CIA mouthpiece who wrote a 1967 column titled, "How I traveled the world on a CIA stipend." He was the major damage control spokesman when Pulitzer Prize winner Gary Webb's 1996 stories blew the lid off of CIA connections to Contra-connected cocaine being smuggled into Los Angeles. If any journalist is a weathervane for the tides of political fortune in a scandal like this it is Pincus. His role, though likely to be shared with other press organizations, will be the same as Woodward and Bernstein's in Watergate.

In that article, titled, "Report Cast Doubt on Iraq- Al Qaeda Connection" Pincus created a virtual airtight separation of the CIA from the White House. It was, in effect, a warning to Bush that if he sought an escape by blaming the Agency, it would backfire. He wrote:

In a nationally televised address last October in which he sought to rally congressional support for a resolution authorizing war against Iraq, President Bush declared that the government of Saddam Hussein posed an immediate threat to the United States by outlining what he said was evidence pointing to its ongoing ties with al Qaeda.

A still-classified national intelligence report circulating within the Bush administration at the time, however, portrayed a far less clear picture about the link between Iraq and al Qaeda than the one presented by the president, according to U.S. intelligence analysts and congressional sources who have read the report.

The National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, which represented the consensus of the U.S. intelligence community, contained cautionary language about Iraq's connections with al Qaeda and warnings about the reliability of conflicting reports by Iraqi defectors and captured al Qaeda members about the ties, the sources said...

Similar questions have been raised about Bush's statement in his State of the Union address last January that the British had reported Iraq was attempting to buy uranium in Africa, which the president used to back up his assertion that Iraq had a reconstituted nuclear weapons program. In that case, senior U.S. officials said, the CIA 10 months earlier sent a former senior American diplomat to visit Niger who reported that country's officials said they had not made any agreement to aid the sale of uranium to Iraq and indicated documents alleging that were forged. Details of that CIA Niger inquiry were not shared with the White House, although the agency succeeded in deleting that allegation from other administration statements...

The presidential address crystallized the assertion that had been made by senior administration officials for months that the combination of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons and a terrorist organization, such as al Qaeda, committed to attacking the United States posed a grave and imminent threat. Within four days, the House and Senate overwhelmingly endorsed a resolution granting the president authority to go to war.

The handling of intelligence on Iraq's banned weapons programs and its links to al Qaeda has come under increased scrutiny on Capitol Hill, with some leading Democrats charging that the administration exaggerated the case against Hussein by publicizing intelligence that supported its policy and keeping contradictory information under wraps. The House intelligence committee opened a closed-door review into the matter last week; its Senate counterpart is planning similar hearings. The Senate Armed Services Committee is also investigating the issue...

Questions about the reliability of the intelligence that Bush cited in his Cincinnati address were raised shortly after the speech by ranking Democrats on the Senate intelligence and armed services panel. They pressed the CIA to declassify more of the 90-page National Intelligence Estimate than a 28-page "white paper" on Iraq distributed on Capitol Hill on Oct. 4.

In one of the more notable statements made by the president, Bush said that "Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists," and added: "Alliance with terrorists could allow the Iraqi regime to attack America without leaving any fingerprints."

Bush did not indicate that the consensus of U.S. intelligence analysts was that Hussein would launch a terrorist attack against the United States only if he thought he could not stop the United States from invading Iraq. The intelligence report had said that the Iraqi president might decide to give chemical or biological agents to terrorists, such as al Qaeda, for use against the United States only as a "last chance to exact vengeance by taking a large number of victims with him." And it said this would be an "extreme step" by Hussein...

These conclusions in the report were contained in a letter CIA Director George J. Tenet sent to Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.), then the chairman of the Senate intelligence panel, the day of Bush's speech.

While Bush also spoke of Iraq and al Qaeda having had "high-level contacts that go back a decade," the president did not say -- as the classified intelligence report asserted -- that the contacts occurred in the early 1990s, when Osama bin Laden, the al Qaeda leader, was living in Sudan and his organization was in its infancy. At the time, the report said, bin Laden and Hussein were united primarily by their common hostility to the Saudi Arabian monarchy, according to sources. Bush also did not refer to the report's conclusion that those early contacts had not led to any known continuing high-level relationships between the Iraqi government and al Qaeda, the sources said.

On Oct. 4, three days before the president's speech, at the urging of members of Congress, the CIA released its declassified excerpts from the intelligence report as a "white paper" on Iraq's weapons programs and al Qaeda links...

"Senator Graham felt that they declassified only things that supported their position and left classified what did not

support that policy," said Bob Philipponne, Graham's deputy chief of staff. Graham, now a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, opposed the war resolution.

When the white paper appeared, Graham and Sen. Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.), an intelligence panel member and at that time chairman of the Armed Services Committee, asked to have additional portions of the intelligence estimate as well as portions of the testimony at the Oct. 2 hearing made public.

On the day of Bush's speech, Tenet sent a letter to Graham with some of the additional information. The letter drew attention because it seemed to contradict Bush's statements that Hussein would give weapons to al Qaeda.

Tenet released a statement on Oct. 8 that said, "There is no inconsistency between our view of Saddam's growing threat and the view as expressed by the president in his speech." He went on to say, however, that the chance that the Iraqi leader would turn weapons over to al Qaeda was "low, in part because it would constitute an admission that he possesses" weapons of mass destruction.

On Oct. 9, the CIA sent a letter to Graham and Levin informing them that no additional portions of the intelligence report would be made public...

Why would Tenet refuse to declassify additional portions of the report? Because, as I am sure he will ultimately testify, he was ordered not to by President Bush himself. That would close the case for obstruction of justice in a manner similar to the way that Richard Nixon's coup de grace was an 18-minute gap on a tape recording of Oval Office deliberations. That would follow the pattern set in the joint 9/11 intelligence hearings when Staff Director Eleanor Hill objected to the fact that - even though some of it was already a matter of public record and previously documented in *FTW's* 9/11 reporting - the CIA had classified details as to what information about impending attacks the President had received before the attacks.

Just as with Watergate, every time the administration wiggles now, it will only be drawing the noose tighter. And this is what the "Board of Directors" intends. The Bush administration will be controlled as it is being eased out. Business and finance cannot afford any more militarism and this is all that the Neocons know.

The biggest challenge for those who run the country---who select, remove and replace presidents---will be to oust the Bush administration and yet keep the darkest secrets of 9/11 from being publicly acknowledged.

It will be my biggest challenge to see to it that they fail.

Coming in Part II - What is the real state of the world and why is it necessary for the Board to remove the Neocons? Why doesn't the administration just plant the WMD evidence to get off the hook? At this critical juncture, which of the critical issues facing America have the Democratic challengers really addressed and are there warning signs of infiltration and manipulation? Have any suspicious characters turned up in any of the campaigns?

When Markets Fail - America Leaps Off the Gas Cliff Without a Parachute

by Julian Darley, Post Carbon Institute
(special to *From The Wilderness*)

July 12, 2003, 2000 PDT (*FTW*) - WASHINGTON In the aptly chosen Mayflower Hotel grand ballroom, the atmosphere was coldly surreal. On June 26, 2003 Washington was climbing towards a hundred degrees, the hottest day of a damp and dismal year so far. Inside, the air conditioning kept the gathered guests a comfortable thirty degrees cooler. It was a perfect and profligate example of the absurd charade about to unfold. This particular piece of theater, was produced in a hurry by US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, hosted by the National Petroleum Council, and scripted by global corporations, like Dow Chemical and billed as a Natural Gas (crisis) Summit.

The outcome was farcical and grim: Americans should be worried, because their corporate masters with their political pawns, still have not grasped that this is not a temporary hiccup, with a happy end, but a gruesome farce written by greed, but now directed by geology, rather than 'invincible' markets.

The idea, according to Abraham's opening speech, was that the scores of invited industry guests would furnish the short-term solutions to get America out of what could be its worst energy crisis since the 1970s. The public were allowed to attend, but not given any opportunity to speak. Most notably, as the Union of Concerned Scientists pointed out, no-one from the renewable energy industry was represented amongst the panelists or the invitees.¹ No surprise there, but still the date of June 26th, 2003 should be one for the history books, as it marked a turning point in the history of petroleum. The US, having peaked in oil production more than three decades ago, has realized that the same is now true for natural gas. US oil peak has clearly been disastrous for the planet and all its life-forms. This article will lay out some context for future judgments on whether gas will follow suit.

Since natural gas is a complicated and strange business, it is worth sketching some of the back-story of the energy sequel America now finds itself in. This will also help us understand why the industry solutions presented will only work with a great

deal of luck, and why at best they will only stave off the inevitable finale for a while. Though a while may be just long enough for Bush to remove one of his many obstacles to a second term.

Though regular readers of *FTW* will already know much of the background to the present natural gas situation, some may not. The broad facts are simple enough, though the detail is as confusing as it is vital.

Overall, the US consumes about 23 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas a year,² roughly 75 thousand cubic feet (Mcf) per person, about 1 Tcf every 15 days, 50 to 60 billion cubic feet (Bcf) per day. If you think that's a mess of numbers, just wait till you throw in metric production from Canada (litres, cubic metres, metric tonnes), other US pricing in BTUs and quads, and what gases can actually be in natural gas. For those more familiar with the crisper world of oil, the US uses gas equivalent of about 11 million barrels of oil a day, or 4 billion barrels a year, which is similar to America's entire oil imports, and more energy than is consumed by all US transportation combined. Demand is colossal and rising fast. However, domestic production is now less than 20 Tcf per year and falling fast. Every year, the US must find more than 3 Tcf, or close to 20% of its consumption from outside its borders.

Dogs and Ponies

Because of failing supply, there was a huge drawdown this winter from the underground gas storage system, which came dangerously close to its working minimum of roughly 500 Bcf. Refilling it ahead of this winter has been painfully slow, despite a record injection conveniently announced on the day of the crisis summit. The following week's injection was nowhere near this amount, and could lead a cynical observer to the impression that some misleading window dressing was in play. By the administration's own calculations, the storage is likely to be about 400 Bcf short by the time winter heating season starts in October. That is easily enough to disrupt the whole system.

Of course, those in power proclaim that the answer to all this is to let global free markets do their magic. Why not just import more gas to make up the difference? The US would dearly like to, but physics and lack of planning have closed this escape route. Gas is hard to move except by pipeline. That means getting it from Canada, since Mexico is now a net gas importer. The trouble is Canadian production is also declining. That leaves only the hard way: shipping LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) mainly, from Trinidad, and soon from Africa and beyond, which is a costly and complex operation, for which the US has insufficient infrastructure. What is more, these distant sources are subject to depletion too.

In the murky world of gas, the details are convoluted, and the big picture is rarely revealed, but it is now becoming apparent even to the terminally optimistic energy industry that something is going seriously wrong – but they daren't say it too clearly, in case Wall Street and the investing public finally starts to understand. Almost every aspect of natural gas is reaching a limit situation, and the same is true of global oil. Since renewable energy at industrial scale is way over the horizon, there is nowhere to turn.

Even Gwyn Morgan (not present at the summit) who runs EnCana -- the largest gas producer in the North America -- has said that North American production has peaked, and that the industry must find new gas every day that is more than the amount being imported from Canada.³ Perhaps that is why he wasn't there. With the noose tightening, America is now discovering what John Muir once said: "When one tugs at a single thing in nature, one finds it attached to the rest of the world." The skeins of nature are now drawn very tight, thanks to humans, and they are clearly near to snapping.

However, nature is bountiful, and the friends of Secretary Abraham all agree that they want to tug at supply, though there is some disagreement about other matters. First the harmony. All the panelists from industry to government (isn't it now the same thing?) repeated the incantation over and over again that the US natural gas crisis was not Market Failure but, as usual, demon government regulation.

In a speech supposed to offer some analysis and set the stage, Daniel Yergin, fresh from his fatuous assertions that Canadian (natural-gas fuelled) tar sands operations would save the world from further oil woes, explained that though the US was in a tight corner, there was an answer: the Market. He didn't mention that rampant and uncontrolled deregulation had helped gas demand to explode, while extraordinarily inflated estimates of reserves from the both US and Canadian Geological Surveys had helped to foster the illusion of endless supply, bound only by technology and human imagination. Nor did he mention that corporate corruption, as in California 2001, had masked a worsening real underlying supply problem, nor that only the surprise find of the 'huge' Ladyfern gas field in British Columbia⁴ and the kindness of El Niño saved the US from disaster last year. But this year there have been no giant gas finds, and El Niño's moderating effect has passed. At last the US government has realized that something desperate must done, or there will be blackouts soon, or worse – economic growth will be curtailed, and the dissatisfaction of jobless, cold voters will rise as elections approach. This is not exactly what Karl Rove⁵ wants to see.

However, far from giving the White House a break, industry users bluntly told Abraham and other government representatives that they need more gas and they want it now, and they don't care how they get it. From chemical giants, to fertilizer makers, to electricity producers, they are all calling on the White House to lift the moratorium on drilling off Florida, remove drilling restrictions in the Rocky Mountains gas plays, relax widespread and popular clean air rules, and connect Alaska to the gas grid with a huge and expensive pipeline. No doubt Mr. Abraham and the rest of the green-bashing neoconservatives would love to do just that if they could.

There are a few tedious impediments in the way of course, such as the laws of physics and perhaps even US voters. Even

so, relaxing the clean air rules is the only measure that would make much difference this year. And even that is questionable. One of the government's most astute energy advisers has suggested that only fervent prayer is going to get them through.

Reason for Worry

Why are the short-term non-divine fixes unlikely to work? Take the clean air rules. All of the existing legislation, from Nixon's original Clean Air Act of 1970, through various interim amendments reacting to non-compliance, and Bush Senior's 1990 Amendment which added ozone limits and more, all in effect principally target coal-fired electric power stations, though motor vehicles were another important factor. The Clear Skies Act being promoted now by Bush Junior, will hit coal even harder, because it will aim for big reductions in mercury emissions, which only really affects coal, as well as limiting SO_x (oxides of sulfur) and NO_x (oxides of nitrogen), which also hits coal, though oil is also a culprit. As a side note, global warming watchers are furious that the Clear Skies Act says absolutely nothing about carbon dioxide emissions.⁶ Nonetheless, even with this egregious omission, all the new legislation encourages consumption of natural gas, both for electrical power generation and for home and office heating, often called space heating.

In fact, relaxing clean air regulations (to allow more coal to be burnt, thus saving natural gas), even temporarily, would mean reversing the momentum of more than a quarter century. It is likely to prove unpopular with many voters, even non-Democrats. The call for allowing more polluted air comes most loudly from the electrical power producers who want to burn more coal or switch to oil where possible, but without permit waivers they often cannot do it. There are likely to be many fights over this, and court-bound delays. But that isn't all. Just as the Muir metaphor suggests, there are many other strange plays in the fuel-switching game, which given the central importance of electricity in industrial life, should be understood by all Americans.

To be able to switch to another fuel, a power station must be built or retrofitted for the task, and there must be sufficient alternative fuel to burn.

In fact, many of the hundreds of new power stations coming on stream now are all gas and not dual-fueled, even though they were supposed to be. While this may be partly because single fuel plants are cheaper, they are also more efficient than dual-fueled plants. Furthermore, many of the plants which can fuel switch are older and often only half as efficient. Their number is dwindling as new single-fuel stations replace them. Thus, the absolute capacity to switch is further limited.

This situation harkens back to the earliest days of boom and bust oil in Pennsylvania. Extraction and price cycles of fluid, non-renewable natural resources tend to 'resonate' exactly out of sync, so that when the price is up, there is a stampede, which then floods the market, reduces price, and production falls like a stone. The ensuing shortage starts the whole cycle off again. This has been happening disastrously with North American natural gas supply for the last few years. It is now too late for North America, but some countries who are just beginning to be major producers of gas would do well to look at, and avoid, what has happened in America, and in Britain, which is about to suffer the same fate as the US, and become a net importer of gas. The free market is functionally incapable of dealing with this kind of non-renewable resource. It does much better with pegs and Playdough.

Then there is the problem of the fuel itself. Stocks of distillates (diesel and fuel oils) like heating oil, which is a primary alternative fuel, are now quite low, partly because of historically low crude oil stocks, and the knock-on effect of refining distillates into gasoline to improve low stocks of that fuel. It is as if a bear with octopus tentacles is gripping America ever tighter. This means that other important heating oil users like schools and hospitals, who can't choose to switch, will see their fuel bills rocket literally overnight if electricity fuel switching occurs en masse. The public sectors are already near financial breaking point in many places. However, so are many of the private enterprises with new gas-fired plants, like NRG Power Marketing, bankrupted by the 700% rise in gas prices over three years, and unable to pay its loans and trying to void its contract to supply the state of Connecticut.⁷ Companies with new gas power will do what they can to survive, and when they judge fuel-switching to be in their best interests, they are unlikely to worry about the public good.

Having said that, there is yet another twist that may slow the switch away from gas. Although the calorific equivalence of gas to oil means that \$5 per Mcf (thousand cubic feet) roughly matches oil at \$25 bbl (barrel), Raymond James & Associates is now suggesting that the gas price would need to be more like \$8 before switching will take place, meaning a three to one factor, rather than five or six. The reasons are those given above: low distillate inventories and the much higher efficiency of new gas power stations (that makes gas more attractive than just its straight energy value).⁸ In fact, as I write this, oil is over \$31, so that gas would then need to be at least \$10. If they are right, then the industry and government calls for fuel switching will fall on very deaf ears, and we shall have one more factor pushing gas prices upwards.

The foregoing shows that fuel switching, which is industry's (and probably the White House's) best short-term hope for avoiding more gas price hikes, if not outright shortages, is going to be a bumpy ride.

Drilling Faster, Enjoying It Less

Next in the time frame is more drilling. More drilling failed to raise supply after the price spikes of two years ago,⁹ but the industry will say that is because they were using old prospects. They say that the only good and easy new prospects are in Federal lands and seas, meaning the Rocky Mountain territories of New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and the eastern part of the Gulf of Mexico.

It is almost a physical impossibility to get from permit to pipeline in less than six months, and even a year is tight, so extra drilling cannot be seriously regarded as a short-term fix. Nonetheless, the gas companies will use this situation to argue, lever and lobby for a great increase in permits to drill. No doubt the White House would like to back them all the way, indeed Cheney's 2001 National Energy Plan is quite explicit about it, but it may not be so simple. One of the defining factors of this situation, as with most petroleum peak events, is that it is the conventional, easy and cheap reserves that generally get taken first. There are usually reasons why the unconventional reserves are so called. They might as well be called "awkward". So it is with most of the gas that is off limits.

In the Intermountain West, which means mainly Wyoming, New Mexico, & Colorado, much of the new gas will be coal-bed methane (CBM). This is gas associated with coal deposits, usually not economically interesting in themselves. The gas is extracted by pumping off some of the water above the coal deposit. The pumped water, however, contains many contaminants that increase its salinity and sodium¹⁰ to abnormal levels.¹¹ When this water reaches ordinary soil, it will usually kill the existing vegetation while encouraging noxious species. It has a toxic effect on range and crop lands, especially when used as irrigation water. As so often with regulations, despite the banning of 'direct stream discharge' for new wells, many CBM producers are still allowed to discharge straight into stream channels under "grandfathering" schemes. Wells in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming can produce anywhere from 7,000 to 28,000 gallons of contaminated water a day, and there may be as many as three wells per 80 acres.¹² For an 80 acre system that can be over 50,000 gallons a day.

Ranchers and residents are beginning to tire of having their lands and watercourses ruined, and even those in favor of conventional gas production, such as Tom Leach, a former oil and gas worker from Colorado, are opposed to coal-bed methane. Last year, in what may be a landmark case, Delta County, Colorado (usually pro-mining) opposed a federal permit to allow CBM drilling.¹³ If this pattern of local county opposition to federal permitting expands, it will make it much harder and slower to increase CBM production in the Rockies, where the NPC estimates there is 137 Tcf of gas off limits. Wyoming, home state of Dick Cheney, and the Green River and Powder River Basins, is becoming a hotbed of CBM resistance and organizing. We have seen examples of the Bush administration's corruption in packing the Bureau of Land Management with ex-industry people.¹⁴ This can have the opposite effect intended, in helping to galvanize hostility and making it easier to mount legal opposition to permits.

Rising popular resistance to CBM may be tempered by the realization that this is not simply a nationwide re-run of the California phenomenon,¹⁵ but a real shortage. Despite the local political difficulties, there is no doubt that the US will have to become increasingly reliant on coal-bed methane, or face higher likelihood of actual shortages.

A Tale of Two Bushes

The other major area of contentious gas supply is offshore. All the US coasts are targeted, but the supply prospects look most promising in the already prolific Gulf of Mexico. The problem for the Bush administration is that most of the Gulf area that is presently off limits is in the jurisdiction of Jeb Bush, the president's brother, and arch neo-conservative. But Jeb knows that three quarters of Floridians are opposed to drilling offshore and George W. knows that Florida is vital to another term in Pennsylvania Avenue.

No-one at the industry-dominated gas summit referred to this tricky conundrum directly, of course. They just made calls to open up restricted federal areas. But in a private press briefing, a Fox News reporter aggressively asked Secretary Abraham why he didn't just open up Destin Dome, off the Florida coast. Was it politically unacceptable?

In perhaps the most revealing remark of the day (albeit not made directly to the ears of his corporate supporters), Abraham said "That decision [to block offshore drilling access] was made after taking into account a lot of different perspectives." These words would not have pleased many with deep pockets but shortening tempers who were just out of earshot. Just before this, Abraham said "I think that those policies are not ones we are looking at right now. What we're trying to look at is other ways to address this short term. The broader policy issues are certainly open to Congress as it continues work an energy bill."

It looks as if for now the Gulf of Mexico will see further developments mainly in already permitted areas. This means more deep water drilling, which finds less gas and more oil, and new very deep wells in the old shallow areas.¹⁶ But Jeb Bush should not relax too quickly, because in June the Senate moved to allow a new inventory of oil and natural gas resources along US coastlines, which some say is a prelude to lifting bans on offshore drilling on all three coasts.¹⁷ This is no doubt what Abraham meant by "broader policy issues".

One of the puzzles in this 'supply push' scenario is the actual amount of gas being fought over. To hear industry talk one might imagine that the US was withholding reserves the size of Iran or Qatar. But in fact the numbers relative to US consumption are almost derisory, even though they might supply a less greedy and gas-addicted country for decades. Destin Dome, off Pensacola, for instance is reputed to have three trillion cubic feet of gas – a month and half of US demand. Petroleum geologists are not even sure of that, some even referring to it as Dusty Dome. Furthermore, these are not the giant shallow plays of the Gulf forty five years ago, but entail drilling to 20,000 feet,¹⁸ with high-powered rigs costing up to \$50,000 a day. With natural gas at \$5 per thousand cubic feet (Mcf), operations are still economically profitable, but the energy profit is sinking rapidly.

To underline this, in signs which should send shivers through Washington, both BP and Shell have recently sold off Gulf of Mexico holdings to Apache, a company known for operating mature – in other words declining - fields.¹⁹

Alice's Gas Wonderland

If the US is going to go down the path of draining every last gasp of domestic gas, then surely it would be a good idea to have some sound advice from petroleum geologists. But on June 26th 2003, not one such expert was called on to evaluate the claims of industry that the only real way forward was much more drilling.

In fact I personally asked Energy Secretary Abraham why there were no petroleum geologists in the line-up, and he angrily asked how that would help the short-term situation. The unwelcome answer would be that more drilling, allied with free market deregulation and greed, will get America still further into a black hole, from which it looks more impossible to escape. A stark assessment of US gas reserves may help the American, and indeed Canadian, public to understand that both the long and short term solutions involve using less energy all round, with the focus being on both natural gas and oil.

Meanwhile, before that unlikely day occurs, the other offshore sites on the industry's shopping list are the two main oceanic coasts. The problem in both cases is once again geological lack of large proven reserves. On June 26th, some US companies spoke of wanting to emulate Canada on its eastern seaboard, with its Hibernia and Sable Island gas production. But the geology on the US coasts further south is not the same. On the west coast, little oil or gas has been found anywhere, except some oil off California. There are no other proven petroleum deposits until you reach Alaska (the Cook Inlet), which aside from potential North Slope natural gas production, is in swift decline.²⁰

ANWR? Alaska?

And what of the Arctic gas of Alaska and the Mackenzie Delta? It was discovered in the 1970s, and is regarded as having about 35 and 9 Tcf (trillion cubic feet) respectively. If this were all agreeably located in Texas (say near a certain ranch in Crawford?), then it would be quite a useful deposit, albeit not even two years of US consumption. On the other hand it would probably all be gone by now. The only realistic way of getting the untapped Arctic gas is via very expensive pipelines. The pipeline to the Mackenzie Delta in Canada's Northwest Territories has finally been set in process, but there are many regulatory procedures which may slow its completion somewhere between 2008 and 2010.²¹ When or if it is finished, it is scheduled to provide somewhere between 800 million cubic feet and 1.2 Bcf per day to Alberta. Given that the tar sands are projected to require an extra 1.5 Bcf, that seems to offer little relief to American consumers.²²

Some believe that efforts to get a gas pipeline to Alaska appear to be complicated by the Mackenzie agreement,²³ but not all of the potential pipeline builders agree. What is not in dispute is the fact that the pipeline is not here now, will likely cost at least \$15bn, and probably much more if the Athabasca over-runs are anything to go by, and will not be ready much before 2012, even if everything goes to plan and the US government offers huge subsidies.^{24 27}

Considering that Spencer Abraham either personally knows most of the people he invited, not least because some of them give him campaign money, and they have made written pronouncements beforehand, why did he assemble a bunch of industry cronies who were bound to tell him to increase supply immediately, which is impossible, and reduce permitting, which unless done covertly will be politically costly, and won't help in time for an election anyway? Abraham's job may well be on the line over this, and indeed so might the President's re-election chances.

Is the Bush regime is so myopic and corrupt (colluding with the corporate kleptocracy from which they spring), that they cannot see what is staring them, and the American public, in the face?

The reality is that North America is a mature gas province, and that it has most certainly now peaked in production, just as with oil some thirty years ago, and any increases in continental gas consumption will have to come from LNG imports. Aside from the 1 Bcf from the reopened Cove Point terminal, there is no possibility of any more quick LNG, yet Secretary Abraham has just announced a follow-up gas summit, this time entirely focusing on LNG, which will include energy ministers from gas exporting nations.²⁸

That leaves one other option: demand reduction. To judge from Abraham's opening remarks, and the tenor of the DOE (Department of Energy) website, that may have been what he had really come to hear. If so, then Mr. Abraham's previous bad record on green issues²⁹ has come back to haunt him. With none of his normal environment foes present (except the NRDC who bizarrely backed the Alaskan pipeline), the only words of demand reduction came from the unlikely source of the American Chemistry Council (ACC), who have said that "business as usual will not work this summer".³⁰ They have called for "a massive public education campaign to convince Americans to use less electricity this summer".³¹ Furthermore, they have appealed to government to cut electricity and gas consumption in its 500 federal buildings. This at least seems possible, though only because of the political implications in swing states and on the economy. However, the ACC goes on to call for states to follow suit. The Democrats may decide to pretend to comply, but in reality do the opposite, or do nothing at all. It would be easy to do: gas numbers are notoriously easy to fudge, often revised, and are confusing at the best of times (which these are not).

Needless to say, the ACC call for reduced electrical consumption was entirely self-serving, since natural gas is a vital, and now painfully expensive, feedstock for everything from plastics to pharmaceuticals. Revealingly, for the ACC, at least publicly, the crisis is about "the runaway price of natural gas",³² not about depletion. Meanwhile the electrical power producers are unlikely to have much time for demand reduction since they have spent more than \$100bn in the last few years on new gas-fired power generators,³³ and much of it is now just coming online and hungrily looking for a return on that investment.

That leaves more 'demand destruction'. Fertilizer industry representatives noted that their industry had borne the brunt

of the three years of demand destruction, and that drastic refilling of the gas storage system was being done mainly at their expense. Half of their industry was now lying idle, and 20% has shut down permanently.³⁴ How much more 'demand destruction' can American industry provide? And how permanent is it? And of course the underlying demand for products like fertilizer and plastic doesn't really go away, manufacture just gets sent abroad, and the US then has to import it, with further unpleasant consequences for jobs and trade imbalances.

Writing on the Wall

As the day wore on, one could almost see Jimmy Carter's famous cardigan being lowered over Abraham's neck, like Damocles' sword. Behind the cardigan, the writing is on the wall. Sooner or later, and probably in the next few months, the unthinkable is going to happen: America is going to be forced to use less natural gas, just as it was forced to use less oil after 1973 – but this time it won't be geopolitics but geology in the driving seat.

But unlike oil in the 70s, it will, as noted, be very hard for America to increase gas imports. Greatly reducing absolute consumption of energy by restricting use, and radically increasing renewables, are apparently not real options, since the "American way" is not up for negotiation. Not voluntarily anyway. America lost its last traces of parsimony after World War II. The renewables business is decades behind where it would need to be to make much difference.

The morals of this story are as momentous as they are various, but strangely, as of this writing, more than two weeks after the Summit, the DOE is apparently not putting out its own report on the event's findings. This article may help to fill that void. This gas crisis should send a shockwave through energy-addicted countries like Britain, that are about to lose their energy independence, and send a message to all over-consuming countries, that rely upon a staggering and totally unsustainable intake of energy to fuel the vehicle of industrial capitalism. It should be telling us that there are, after all, 'limits to growth', that sustainable development is an oxymoronic nonsense.

It should make clear that oil wars will soon be joined by gas wars, unless the present path is averted.

To the world's mainly poor 'producers' of non-renewable, depleting petroleum resources, it should send a last warning to start limiting production now, and charging much, much more. For example, to take one of the few rich producers, why should Canada subsidize US economic imperialism and its continuing military attacks with cheap gas and oil and refined products? Some of that petroleum may even have gone into the planes that killed four Canadians in Afghanistan, and many innocent Afghans besides, not to mention Iraqis, Colombians, and soon no doubt Nigerians, Algerians, Angolans, and perhaps Iranians.

Most of all, it should also be a call to those millions of good-hearted, generous Americans who genuinely loathe what is being done in their names, who would like to get off the petroleum addiction, but who realize that the system and the infrastructure, of which we are nearly all a part, make that largely impossible.

The call for a "massive public education campaign" is a good idea, but it must go far beyond the very limited aim of telling people to use less electricity this summer. Somehow it must tell, and convince, enough Americans about what is really going on.

The US is not looking at an isolated rerun of the 1970s, nor even a scaled-up version of the California phenomenon. This is the big one. Since the new millennium, America has only escaped a catastrophic gas crisis because of Ladyfern and lady luck. Ladyfern has all but run out, and maybe luck is about to as well.

Additional Information

· Julian Darley's 6/17/03 presentation on the natural gas crisis the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) "When Crunch Becomes Crisis" is available in several formats from the Post Carbon Institute www.postcarbon.org.

· Video and audio interviews with world authorities on oil and natural gas can be found at GlobalPublicMedia (www.globalpublicmedia.com).

Websites: Post Carbon Institute www.postcarbon.org • Global Public Media www.globalpublicmedia.com

Julian Darley is a British environmental philosopher who researches and writes about non-market and non-technology-based responses to global environmental degradation. He is interested in finding cultural and social responses rather than orthodox market and technological "solutions", which rarely even slow down our rate of destruction, let alone change our direction. Two of his current projects are Global Public Media and Post Carbon Institute.

The Post Carbon Institute is exploring what civilization might look like without the use of hydrocarbons as energy and chemical feedstocks. It will offer education, research, and pilot projects directed to this end.

Darley has an eclectic education: an MSc in Environment and Sociology from University of Surrey, UK, MA in Journalism and Communications from the University of Texas at Austin, and a BA in Music & Russian as well as philosophical studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University. He can be reached at julian@postcarbon.org.

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(continued from page 1, Blood In The Water)

Henry Waxman (D) that has been in place since last March of this year.

On Sunday July 13, Britain's *Independent*, signaling a very rough road ahead for Prime Minister Tony Blair published a story titled "Twenty Lies About the War." The top two lies listed were that Iraq was responsible for the 9/11 attacks, and that Iraq had been working with al Qaeda. The entire story is located at:

<http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/story.jsp?story=424008>. Every British and American assertion about Iraq is now on the table. So is 9/11. And there is no way out for either Blair or Bush.

It is critical to understand what last Friday's statement addressed, and what it did not. Tenet's ultimate position on the line in Bush's based-upon-fiction Iraqi attempts to purchase uranium was that "the statement was factually correct because the British government had released a report saying so." This is the same position taken by Rice. Since there is a clear record that George Tenet, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the State Department all knew that the charge was unfounded for months before the speech, this amounts to Tenet, Rice and Bush stating that the line was included after it was known that it was false, only because of a technicality. Six-year-old children deceive better than this.

That position is an admission of intent to deceive the American people and the world. Tenet's statement itself begs the question, "Well, if you knew it was false, why did you sign off on it?"

Secondly, there is a clear record showing that not only were the documents on which the allegations were based known to be forged well in advance of the speech, it had been demonstrated clearly that there was no other evidence supporting the claims. Tony Blair's assertions that he still believes the allegations "based upon separate intelligence which he has not shared with the US" are ludicrous, especially in light of the fact that the British government was at the time unaware that Vice President Cheney had ordered the dispatch of retired US Ambassador Joseph Wilson IV to personally investigate in February 2002. Wilson's recent statements on *Meet The Press*, to *The New York Times* and in *TIME* make that clear.

As *TIME* reported on July 13, just two days after the Bush gambit, Wilson, with no knowledge of the forged documents which had surfaced through the Italian government in late 2001, returned from Niger in March 2002 after conducting a thorough investigation and concluded that the sales or negotiations had not taken place. Wilson said that, "The question was asked of the CIA by the office of the vice president. The office of the vice president, I am absolutely convinced, received a very specific response to the question it asked, and that response was based upon my trip out there."

As retired CIA analyst Ray McGovern has pointed out, it is ludicrous to expect that Cheney sent Wilson to investigate, and then did not want a report when Wilson returned. Yet, that is the Vice President's position.

TIME wrote:

Wilson spent eight days sleuthing in Niger, meeting with current and former government officials and businessmen; he came away convinced that the allegations were untrue. When he returned to Washington in early March, Wilson gave an oral report about his trip to both CIA and State Department officials. On March 9 of last year, the CIA circulated a memo on the yellowcake story that was sent to the White House, summarizing Wilson's assessment. Wilson was not the only official looking into the matter. Nine days earlier, the State Department's intelligence arm had sent a memo directly to Secretary of State Colin Powell that also disputed the Italian intelligence. Greg Thielmann, then a high-ranking official at State's intelligence research unit, told TIME that it was not in Niger's self-interest to sell the Iraqis destabilizing ore. 'A whole lot of things told us that the report was bogus.'

Shooting from the Lip

Contrary to press stories indicating that Friday's African statements by Bush and Rice pointing fingers at Tenet for the crime were well-considered in advance, it is much more likely that an increasingly unstable Bush shot from the lip as he responded (again) to barrages of questions about his allegations that Saddam Hussein had sought to purchase uranium from Niger for a "reconstituted" nuclear weapons program. "I gave my speech to the nation and it was cleared by the intelligence agencies," said Bush. A short time later, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was holding an unusual and hastily arranged press conference aboard Air Force One that many reports later described as a full broadside against DCI Tenet.

It was a moment the press had apparently been waiting for.

Confronted by official statements that he was responsible for the inclusion of the Niger/uranium references Tenet had but two choices. He could issue a confession that would ultimately not stand, or he could call George W. Bush an out-and-out liar. The latter would have crippled the US government.

Tenet's actions have been described as falling on his sword. Such a description is inaccurate because Tenet is far from dead. He has suffered only a flesh wound while the administration itself may be mortally wounded. For saving the government from an immediate and unavoidable constitutional crisis, Tenet, a shrewd political player who had previously served on the staff of the Senate Intelligence Committee, will be viewed as a hero by some inside the Beltway. He may have to offer to resign at some point, and may choose to do so with this event as the pretext, rather than face heavy scrutiny for a bothersome list of contradictions about the 9/11 attacks which are now fully back on the table and soon to be under renewed scrutiny. Remember, Tenet holds the secrets to 9/11, which may explain why a post-foot-in-mouth Bush is kissing Tenet's clandestine buttocks in public and reaffirming his confidence in him.

Waiting for the Moment

It was almost as if the press had been waiting for the moment and had their stories already in the works. In fact, a number of stories preceding Friday's presidential foot-chewing session show that - as described in *FTW's* two-part series *Beyond Bush* - the inertia had already turned.

July 6 - In an op-ed piece written for *The New York Times*, Joseph Wilson wrote that the CIA had sent him to Niger at the request of Cheney. Wilson also wrote, (putting British intelligence and Tony Blair on the spot) that, "It did not take long to conclude that it was highly doubtful that any such transaction had ever taken place." Niger's uranium industry is run by European, Japanese and Nigerian companies and monitored by agencies like the IAEA. Wilson wrote, "There's simply too much oversight over too small an industry for a sale to have transpired."

July 7 - A scathing editorial in *The San Francisco Chronicle* by Harley Sorenson titled, "The Madness of King George" lambasted the president for his statements to Ha'aretz that he received direct instructions from God. Sorenson wrote, "I'm becoming convinced that our president, the man with his finger on the nuclear trigger, is a bona fide nutcase."

July 8 - *CNN*, after the White House admitted that the assertion was inaccurate, wrote "It remains unclear why senior administration officials did not know about Wilson's findings to the CIA that the reports... were bogus..."

"A British panel also found intelligence on the Iraq allegations was inaccurate, according to reports."

Blair was already cooked.

"US officials said a report citing Wilson's conclusions was given to the White House and other agencies nearly a year before the president's State of the Union address."

July 10 - *CBS* publishes a lengthy and devastating poll headlined "US Losing Control in Iraq". In it, a wide range of questions showed that the Bush administration is losing support everywhere and on all major issues.

Ready, Set, Go!

After the fateful statements from Bush and Rice, the reactions came swiftly and unequivocally.

July 11 - First out of the gate was *MSNBC's* Michael Moran who has written some compelling stories since 9/11. "The familiar drip, drip, drip of a brewing political scandal echoes through the power centers of Washington and London these days." Moran quoted a source close to the Bush family as saying, "They have to get by this and they have to do it very soon." Moran then nailed Rice in a lie by quoting her statement that, if George Tenet had any objections about the uranium claim, "he did not make them known." In fact, he had done so three months before and in a variety of methods. Moran then re-emphasized a damning statement from Pentagon Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz who stupidly admitted in a May *Vanity Fair* interview that the *WMD* issue had been selected (instead of oil) as an issue of convenience on which the war could be sold to the American people.

Moran then roasted Blair's goose by pointing out the public defection of former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and his statements that the pretext for the whole war was a concoction.

July 12 - *CNN* in an early follow-up story reported that Senate Intelligence Chairman and Bush loyalist Pat Roberts was criticizing Tenet for "extremely sloppy handling" of the uranium mess and that, "Roberts also accused the agency of orchestrating a 'campaign of press leaks' to discredit the president." The *CNN* story went on state, "Tenet said top administration officials - including Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney - were never briefed on CIA's skepticism... Nor did he tell members of the administration last fall."

Now we have Tenet calling Wilson a liar. Then *CNN* chose to headline the concluding section of the story with a quote from Democratic challenger Howard Dean, this is "beginning to sound a little like Watergate."

July 12 - *CBS News* reported that many members of Congress were not satisfied with Tenet's statement. It then quoted a former National Security Council staff member as saying, "I anticipate that George Tenet... will probably be sacrificed on this one. He has taken the fall, and I think the administration will wait to see whether this flies. I'd doubt (it will)." *CBS* then quoted former Republican White House staffer David Gergen as saying, "Somebody in the administration, not in the agency, wanted to put this in the speech and got the CIA to sign off on it, even though everybody knew within the US government that there were real doubts about the validity of the report. And that's what constitutes the misleading quality of it."

July 12 - *The Washington Times of London* ran a story titled, "Bush Team Split As CIA Becomes The Fall Guy." It said, "The first salvo in what degenerated into open warfare within the Bush Administration was fired by the President himself... It capped one of the worst weeks Mr. Bush has endured since the September 11 attacks and put the... White House on the defensive as it struggled to protect the President from allegations that he may have knowingly lied to the American public... In anonymous briefings to the US media on Thursday CIA officials insisted that the agency explicitly told the White House that the claim was false before the speech."

July 12 - In a scathing editorial titled, "The Uranium Fiction," The *New York Times* wrote, "We're glad that someone in Washington has finally taken responsibility for letting President Bush make a false accusation about Saddam Hussein's nuclear weapons program... but the matter will not end there." After pointing to the Wilson investigation and reports The *Times* wrote, "The uranium charge should never have found its way into Mr. Bush's speech. Determining how it got there is essential to understanding whether the administration engaged in a deliberate effort to mislead the nation about the Iraqi threat."

July 12 - Eleanor Clift writing in *Newsweek* titled her story, "No Mistakes Were Made." Her lead paragraph bespoke the escalating tone of criticism for Bush et al. "President Bush is certain he did the right thing by going to war in Iraq. Bush never second-guesses himself, a trait that permeates his administration and contains the seeds of his undoing... He can't let cracks appear or the whole edifice could crumble. The moment Bush landed on the USS Lincoln, he was caught in his own hubris." Clift then took apart the administration's boasts that it had a broad international coalition supporting the invasion quoting a democratic lawmaker as saying, "I'm not interested in three Latvians in bio-chem suits."

July 12 - The *Associated Press*, a little more reserved in its reporting, stated, "[Senate Intelligence Chair Pat] Roberts charged that unnamed intelligence officials were telling the press that the CIA warned the White House that the information about Iraq trying to obtain uranium from Africa were unfounded. But as late as ten days before the State of the Union speech, Roberts said the CIA was still saying that Iraq was trying to get uranium from Africa." That's interesting. Where's the record of that Senator?

July 13 - In a page 1 story of the Sunday edition of The *Washington Post*, veteran reporter and CIA conduit Walter Pincus fired back at Bush. His headline was "CIA Got Uranium Reference Cut in October." In describing how Tenet had previously successfully intervened to have an October reference to the uranium removed from a Bush speech, Pincus wrote, "Tenet argued personally to White House officials, including deputy national security adviser Stephen Hadley, that the allegation should not be used... Another senior official with knowledge of the intelligence said the CIA had doubts about the accuracy of the documents underlying the allegation, which months later turned out to be forged.

If Hadley knew, then Condoleezza Rice knew. And her finger pointing is an outright lie.

Pincus continued, "It is unclear why Tenet failed to intervene in January to prevent the questionable intelligence from appearing in the president's address to Congress when Tenet intervened three months earlier in a much less symbolic speech... But it is clear from the new disclosure about Tenet's intervention... that the controversy continues to boil, and as new facts emerge a different picture is being presented than the administration has given to date..."

"...Cheney, insisted on including Hussein's quest for a nuclear weapon as a prominent part of their public case for war in Iraq."

Pincus then dropped a bombshell. He reported that a senior administration official had stated, "seeking uranium from Niger was never in the drafts". He then followed it up by stating, "A senior administration official said Bush's chief speechwriter... does not remember who wrote the line that has wound up causing... so much grief."

July 13 - The *New York Times*, calling the matter a "political storm" drew the noose tighter by reporting that "[Tenet's] involvement [in pulling the statement from the October speech] indicates that both he and the White House were aware of the doubts about the intelligence three months before the State of the Union speech.

"With the matter threatening to undermine Mr. Bush's support at a time when American soldiers continue to be killed in Iraq...the White House was clearly seeking to put the matter to rest."

In a new twist, The *Times* also reported that, "After CIA officials raised concerns about the wording in an early draft the speech, the White House changed it to make it vaguer and to attribute it to Britain." Then The *Times* raised the specter that Tenet and Colin Powell might have set the administration up. "Participants in the process note that Mr. Tenet reviewed the same material with Mr. Powell as they prepared the presentation to the United Nations. The two men decided together that the story of Iraqi efforts to obtain uranium... could not be supported.

But Powell is not off the hook. (See below)

July 13 - The *Los Angeles Times* checked in with a major story that said, "But the administration effort to have Tenet accept responsibility triggered new recriminations on Saturday - including a sharp rebuke from a key Democrat on Capitol Hill - that suggest the issue is far from closed..."

"...the administration continued to face persistent questions.

"Senator John D. 'Jay' Rockefeller IV (D-WVa) vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee said the White House has yet to explain how discredited claims about Iraqi efforts... made their way into the speech to begin with..."

"Tenet and the CIA 'have been made to take the fall to shield the president and his advisers,' Rockefeller said, adding that he believes that the National Security Council pressed to include the allegation even though it 'knew the underlying information was not credible.'"

"Rockefeller directed particularly pointed criticism at National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, saying her very public role in pinning the blame on Tenet is 'dishonorable.'"

“Why does this all fall on George Tenet? Because it’s convenient,’ Rockefeller said. ‘My guess is [Rice] had a lot more to do with this mistake than Tenet did.’”

July 13 - *TIME* Magazine took the unraveling process further in a story titled, “A Question of Trust.” In questioning whether Bush’s credibility has taken a major hit, the article by Michael Duffy and James Carney pointed out that before the Friday statements by Bush and Rice the admission of the “error” in the speech had “instead sparked a bewildering four days of changing explanations and unusually nasty finger pointing by the normally disciplined Bush team.”

In a statement that suggests to this writer that the original forged documents might have been planted by the CIA or the National Security Council (remember Iran-Contra?), *TIME* wrote, “Finally, in late 2001 [just after 9/11], the Italian government came into possession of evidence suggesting that Iraq was again trying to purchase yellowcake from Niger. Rome’s source provided half a dozen letters and other documents alleged to be correspondence between Niger and Iraqi officials negotiating a sale. The Italians’ evidence was shared with both Britain and the US.

“When it got to Washington, the Iraq-Niger uranium report caught the eye of someone important: Vice President Dick Cheney.”

Then *TIME* began the process of naming names by listing top CIA analyst Alan Foley and presidential aide Robert Joseph as playing key roles in the battle over whether to use the information or not.

When the hearings start, just as with Watergate, these men will be among the first to testify, and their testimony will begin the long and excruciating death of the Bush presidency.

THE BRICK WALL

The brick wall against which all of the administration’s chess pieces will be crushed was outlined in an unanswered March 17 letter from California Congressman Henry Waxman (D) to President Bush. The record laid out by Waxman also makes it perfectly clear that Secretary of State Colin Powell is as implicated as any member of the Bush administration.

Before presenting Waxman’s irrefutable record, it is important to ask one question: Who or what is capable of orchestrating events to remove the Bush presidency and yet leave the US with the Patriot Act, Homeland Security, a National Security Strategy calling for pre-emptive attacks on foreign powers, Total Information Awareness, and, above all, Iraqi oil and the proceeds of Afghan heroin sales flowing through US banks? It isn’t Henry Waxman, that’s for sure.

To view the original letter, please visit: http://www.house.gov/reform/min/inves_admin/admin_nuclear_evidence.htm

A portion of Waxman’s letter reads:

Use of the Evidence by U.S. Officials

The evidence that Iraq sought to purchase uranium from an African country was first revealed by the British government on September 24, 2002, when Prime Minister Tony Blair released a 50-page report on Iraqi efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. As *The New York Times* reported in a front-page article, one of the two “chief new elements” in the report was the claim that Iraq had “sought to acquire uranium in Africa that could be used to make nuclear weapons.”¹

This evidence subsequently became a significant part of the U.S. case against Iraq. On December 7, Iraq filed its weapons declaration with the United Nations Security Council. The U.S. response relied heavily on the evidence that Iraq had sought to obtain uranium from Africa.

For example, this is how *The New York Times* began its front-page article on December 13 describing the U.S. response:

“American intelligence agencies have reached a preliminary conclusion that Iraq’s 12,000 page declaration of its weapons program fails to account for chemical and biological agents missing when inspectors left Iraq four years ago, American officials and United Nations diplomats said today.”

In addition, Iraq’s declaration on its nuclear program, they say, leaves open a host of questions. Among them is why Iraq was seeking to buy uranium in Africa in recent years.²

The official U.S. response was provided on December 19, when Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared before the Security Council. As *The Los Angeles Times* reported, “A one-page State Department fact sheet... lists what Washington considers the key omissions and deceptions in Baghdad’s Dec. 7 weapons declaration.”³ One of the eight “key omissions and deceptions” was the failure to explain Iraq’s attempts to purchase uranium from an African country.

Specifically, the State Department fact sheet contains the following points under the heading “Nuclear Weapons”: “The Declaration ignores efforts to procure uranium from Niger. Why is the Iraqi regime hiding their uranium procurement?” A copy of this fact sheet is enclosed with this letter.

The Iraqi efforts to obtain uranium from Africa were deemed significant enough to be included in your State of the Union address to Congress. You stated: “The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.”⁴ As *The Washington Post* reported the next day, “the president seemed quite specific as he ticked off the allegations last night, including the news that Iraq had secured uranium from Africa for the purpose of making nuclear bombs.”⁵

A day later, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told reporters at a news briefing that Iraq “recently was discovered seeking significant quantities of uranium from Africa.”⁶

Knowledge of the Unreliability of the Evidence

The world first learned that the evidence linking Iraq to attempts to purchase uranium from Africa was forged from the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed El Baradei. On March 7, Director El Baradei reported to the U.N. Security Council:

Based on thorough analysis, the IAEA has concluded, with the concurrence of outside experts, that these documents-which formed the basis for reports of recent uranium transactions between Iraq and Niger-are in fact not authentic. We have therefore concluded that these specific allegations are unfounded.⁷

Recent accounts in the news media have provided additional details. According to *The Washington Post*, the faked evidence included "a series of letters between Iraqi agents and officials in the central African nation of Niger."⁸ The article stated that the forgers "made relatively crude errors that eventually gave them away -including names and titles that did not match up with the individuals who held office at the time the letters were purportedly written."⁹ *CNN* reported:

"One of the documents purports to be a letter signed by Tandjia Mamadou, the president of Niger, talking about the uranium deal with Iraq. On it [is] a childlike signature that is clearly not his. Another, written on paper from a 1980s military government in Niger, bears the date of October 2000 and the signature of a man who by then had not been foreign minister of Niger for 14 years."¹⁰

U.S. intelligence officials had doubts about the veracity of the evidence long before Director El Baradei's report. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on March 15 that "the CIA first heard allegations that Iraq was seeking uranium from Niger in late 2001" when "the existence of the documents was reported to [the CIA] second-or third-hand." The *Los Angeles Times* quotes one CIA official as saying: "We included that in some of our reporting, although it was all caveated because we had concerns about the accuracy of that information."¹¹ The *Washington Post* reported on March 13: "The CIA... had questions about 'whether they were accurate,' said one intelligence official, and it decided not to include them in its file on Iraq's program to procure weapons of mass destruction."¹²

There have been suggestions by some Administration officials that there may be other evidence besides the forged documents that shows Iraq tried to obtain uranium from an African country. For instance, CIA officials recently stated that "U.S. concerns regarding a possible uranium agreement between Niger and Iraq were not based solely on the documents which are now known to be fraudulent." The CIA provided this other information to the IAEA along with the forged documents. After reviewing this complete body of evidence, the IAEA stated: "we have found to date no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapons programme in Iraq."¹³ Ultimately, the IAEA concluded that "these specific allegations are unfounded."¹⁴

Questions

These facts raise troubling questions. It appears that at the same time that you, Secretary Rumsfeld, and State Department officials were citing Iraq's efforts to obtain uranium from Africa as a crucial part of the case against Iraq, U.S. intelligence officials regarded this very same evidence as unreliable. If true, this is deeply disturbing: it would mean that your Administration asked the U.N. Security Council, the Congress, and the American people to rely on information that your own experts knew was not credible.

Your statement to Congress during the State of the Union, in particular, raises a host of questions. The statement is worded in a way that suggests it was carefully crafted to be both literally true and deliberately misleading at the same time. The statement itself -"The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa" -may be technically accurate, since this appears to be the British position. But given what the CIA knew at the time, the implication you intended -that there was credible evidence that Iraq sought uranium from Africa -was simply false.

To date, the White House has avoided explaining why the Administration relied on this forged evidence in building its case against Iraq. The first Administration response, which was provided to *The Washington Post*, was "we fell for it."¹⁵ But this is no longer credible in light of the information from the CIA. Your spokesman, Ari Fleischer, was asked about this issue at a White House news briefing on March 14, but as the following transcript reveals, he claimed ignorance and avoided the question:

Q: Ari, as the president said in his State of the Union address, the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. And since then, the IAEA said that those were forged documents-

Mr. Fleischer: I'm sorry, whose statement was that?

Q: The President, in his State of the Union address. Since then, the IAEA has said those were forged documents. Was the administration aware of any doubts about these documents, the authenticity of the documents, from any government agency or department before it was submitted to the IAEA?

Mr. Fleischer: These are matters that are always reviewed with an eye toward the various information that comes in and is analyzed by a variety of different people. The President's concerns about Iraq come from multiple places, involving multiple threats that Iraq can possess, and these are matters that remain discussed. Thank you [end of briefing].¹⁸

Plainly, more explanation is needed. I urge you to provide to me and to the relevant committees of Congress a full accounting of what you knew about the reliability of the evidence linking Iraq to uranium in Africa, when you knew this, and why you and senior officials in the Administration presented the evidence to the U.N. Security Council, the Congress, and the American people without disclosing the doubts of the CIA. In particular, I urge you to address:

1. Whether CIA officials communicated their doubts about the credibility of the forged evidence to other Administration officials, including officials in the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the White House;
2. Whether the CIA had any input into the "Fact Sheet" distributed by the State Department on December 19, 2002; and
3. Whether the CIA reviewed your statement in the State of the Union address regarding Iraq's attempts to obtain uranium from Africa and, if so, what the CIA said about the statement.

Given the urgency of the situation, I would appreciate an expeditious response to these questions.

Sincerely,
Henry A. Waxman Ranking Minority Member

Endnotes

- 1 *Blair Says Iraqis Could Launch Chemical Warheads in Minutes*, *New York Times* (Sept. 25, 2002).
- 2 Threats and Responses: Report by Iraq, Iraq Arms Report Has Big Omissions, U.S. Officials Say, *New York Times* (Dec. 13, 2002) (emphasis added).
- 3 *U.S. Issues a List of the Shortcomings in Iraqi Arms Declaration*, *Los Angeles Times* (Dec. 20, 2002) (emphasis added).
- 4 The President, *State of the Union Address* (Jan. 28, 2003) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html) (emphasis added).
- 5 *A War Cry Tempered by Eloquence*, *Washington Post* (Jan. 29, 2003).
- 6 *Press Conference with Donald Rumsfeld, General Richard Myers*, *Cable News Network* (Jan. 29, 2003) (emphasis added).
- 7 IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed El Baradei, *The Status of Nuclear Inspections in Iraq: An Update* (Mar. 7, 2002) (online at www.iaea.org/worldatom/Press/Statements/2003/ebsp2003n006.shtm1).
- 8 *Some Evidence on Iraq Called Fake; UN. Nuclear Inspector Says Documents on Purchases Were Forged*, *Washington Post* (Mar. 8, 2003).
- 9 Id.
- 10 *UN. Saying Documents Were Faked*, *CNN American Morning with Paula Zahn* (Mar. 14, 2003).
- 11 *Italy May Have Been Misled by Fake Iraq Arms Papers, US. Says*, *Los Angeles Times* (Mar. 15, 2003).
- 12 *FBI Probes Fake Evidence of Iraqi Nuclear Plans*, *Washington Post* (Mar. 13, 2003).
- 13 IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed El Baradei, *supra* note 7 (emphasis added).
- 14 Id. (emphasis added).
- 15 *Some Evidence on Iraq Called Fake*, *supra* note 8.

