

THE PERFECT STORM - Part II

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by Michael C. Ruppert

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March 24, 2003, 2100 EDT (*FTW*) – Atlanta, **M**military, economic, oil, and political storms continue to gather and converge in what may become a Perfect Storm for the Bush Administration and the United States economy.

On the fifth day of a U.S. military campaign rejected by the U.N. Security Council, at least 12 U.S. soldiers have been captured by Iraqi forces near al Nasiriyah even as various foreign news sources are reporting that as many as four to ten of the vaunted M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks have been destroyed in combat. A helicopter aircrew has been captured further north. *ABC* has reported that coalition

casualties are approaching 200. Promises that Iraqi civilians expecting liberation would greet coalition troops with open arms have been unfulfilled as Iraqi resistance stiffens on a daily basis. In a tragic event, an African-American Sergeant of the 101st Air Assault Division staged a grenade attack on tents occupied by his comrades-in-arms, killing one and wounding fourteen. The fallout from this tragedy will have lasting repercussions on the psyches of both U.S. military and civilian populations. Images of an American Black man face down and handcuffed - no matter how serious the offense - will not fade quickly and will further erode an extremely fragile and increasingly volatile domestic landscape. The suspect is Muslim.

Saddam Hussein and his forces are now gaining strength, political cachet, and popular support with each new engagement while coalition forces lose it with every casualty and delay. One of the first questions asked at a somber, live press conference at Central Command headquarters in Qatar on Sunday was, "Has America gotten itself into another Vietnam?" This question came after only three days of ground combat. Around the Arab and Muslim world, Saddam Hussein's picture is becoming an icon of anti-colonial resistance. Over a thousand years of European and American history, the Arab world has never given in easily to occupying forces; they always prefer one of their own - no matter how distasteful - to an outsider. The Crusades were the earliest lesson for Europe and the Suez crisis of 1956 the most recent.

Consistent with predictions made in **FTW**, the Turkish government, poised to send several brigades into northern Iraq, is threatening to turn Northern Iraq into absolute chaos. The Kurds who live in the region ethnically blur the borders of Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran and their support is critical to U.S. military plans. Having sought an independent homeland for decades, they have been consistently used by the U.S. and western powers for covert operations and destabilization programs and they have always been betrayed later. At the moment **FTW** gives a 50-50 likelihood that the U.S. will ultimately - and after much protestation for effect - allow the Turkish incursion. That will instantly create a highly unstable and balkanized region. The U.S. has historically both created and preferred "balkanization" to secure commercial control of natural resources and civilian populations with devastating results for anyone living in the region. This could ultimately - if the U.S. invasion is successful - result in Iraq being divided into three or more separately governed regions.

The instability created by such a development would likely spread

throughout the Middle East quickly. None of the region's borders has existed for more than eighty years and all of them were drawn by departing colonial powers. Perceptions in Saudi Arabia of this kind of trend might automatically require U.S. forces to engage in a two-front war if the already unstable Saudi regime begins to fracture and weaken.

To date, this writer has seen no reportage of how the Saudi populace is reacting to a war plan that is stumbling. For approximately six months, **FTW** has been reporting that Saudi Arabia would likely become unstable with the invasion and that American war planners might be planning for a nearly simultaneous operation to control Saudi oil fields, which contain 25% of all the oil on the planet. But as the efficacy of U.S. military might comes into question, the brass ring of oil becomes ever more elusive and a Saudi occupation becomes a military goal out of reach.

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. These indications include: written press attacks on the Bush administration by select journalists long known for their loyalty and obedience to financial interests and the CIA; a growing revolt from within the intelligence communities of the U.S. and the U.K. including damaging leaks undermining the credibility of the administration; serious economic consequences closing in on the financial markets; growing signs of pending oil shortages; and indications that the use of forged documents by the Bush and Blair regimes may become the Watergate burglary of the 21st century.

THE WRITTEN PRESS TURN ON BUSH, BIG TIME

While most of the American people rely on television coverage for their worldview, those within the government, politics and the financial markets look to a select group of entrenched print journalists to sniff the winds of political change. Those winds started blowing against George W. Bush and his administration before the war began. In what appears to be intensifying anti-Bush rhetoric, an unprecedented media effort is beginning to cut the legs from under the administration even as it gambles everything on an increasingly elusive military victory.

March 12 – Beginning with a relatively unknown press organization, it

was reported at www.informationtimes.com that 35 members of the U.S. Congress, overwhelmingly Democrat, had flatly rejected the U.S. war effort and were calling for a repeal of the February resolution authorizing the president to use force against Iraq.

March 12 – On the same day, journalistic heavyweight Howard Fineman of *NEWSWEEK* reported that the "blame game" had already begun for a war that had not. He wrote "But few think it's going to be easy. And my guess is that team discipline inside the Bush administration is about to be fractured by the collateral damage that already is being caused by a war we have yet to fight. We are embarrassingly alone diplomatically, and State Department underlings (privately) blame Rumsfeld & Co. Inside the Pentagon - but outside of Rumsfeld's office – I'm told that E-Ring brass have adopted what one source calls a 'Vietnam mentality,' a sense of resignation about a policy...they seriously doubt will work..."

"This time around is a different story. The closer we get to the event, the less Bush is in control of events..."

March 14 – *The Los Angeles Times*' Greg Miller reported that a State Department document was contradicting the Bush administration's claim that the Iraqi invasion would encourage the spread of democracy.

"A classified State Department report expresses doubt that installing a new regime in Iraq will foster the spread of democracy in the Middle East, a claim President Bush has made in trying to build support for a war, according to intelligence officials familiar with the document.

"The report exposes significant divisions within the Bush administration over the so-called domino theory, one of the arguments that underpins the case for invading Iraq."

The story specifically singled out Pentagon hawks Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz as objects of criticism by the U.S. intelligence community.

March 15 – The *International Herald Tribune* reported that top officials of the World Trade Organization had also started turning on Bush by reporting, "...officials said they feared that American moves within the organization and toward a war in Iraq would weaken respect for international rules and lead to serious practical consequences for the world economy and business.

"In the past months the United States has compiled one of the worst records for violating trade rules...

"They said they were worried that all international institutions would suffer a loss of credibility if the one superpower appeared to be choosing which rules to obey and which rules to ignore."

The WTO, globalization, is the heart of the economic power bloc that brought Bush into power.

March 16 – The big guns at *The Washington Post* begin to open fire. In a lengthy story on the controversial Carlyle Group, a major private investment bank with which both the President and his father have deep financial connections, Greg Schneider made some absolutely stunning statements:

"David M. Rubenstein is exasperated, and he blurts something that a quick look around the room proves is outrageous: "We're not," he nearly shouts, "that well connected!"

"Behind him is a picture of Rubenstein on a plane with then-Gov. George W. Bush. Across the room, a photo of Rubenstein with the President's father and mother. Next to that, Rubenstein and Mikhail Gorbachev. Elsewhere: Rubenstein and Jimmy Carter. On a bookshelf: Rubenstein and the pope..."

"Rubenstein, after all, is founder of the Carlyle Group..."

"But the connections have cost Carlyle, in ways that are hard to measure. It has developed a reputation as the CIA of the business world – omnipresent, powerful, a little sinister..."

"Last year then-congresswoman Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) even suggested that Carlyle's and Bush's ties to the Middle East made them somehow complicitous in the Sept. 11 terror attacks. While her comments were widely dismissed as irresponsible, the publicity highlighted Carlyle's increasingly notorious reputation. Internet sites with headlines such as "The Axis of Corporate Evil" purport to link Carlyle to everything from Enron to Al Qaeda.

"We've actually replaced the Trilateral Commission' as the darling of

conspiracy theorists, says Rubenstein – who, truth be told, happens to be a member of the Trilateral Commission.

"It didn't help that as the World trade Center burned on Sept. 11, 2001, the news interrupted a Carlyle business conference at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel here attended by a brother of Osama bin Laden. Former President Bush, a fellow investor, had been with him at the conference the previous day...

"The company has rewarded its faithful with a 36 percent average annual rate of return...

"Times are changing, though. It's no longer valid to assume that Carlyle's golden roll of all-stars automatically opens doors in certain parts of the world, says Youssef M. Ibrahim of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. 'George Bush junior is kind of screwing his father up, slowly but surely, in terms of securing relationships in the region,' Ibrahim says of the Mideast. The current administration's support for Israel, its hostility toward Iraq and its rocky dealings with the Saudi royal family have soured business and political relationships alike, he says."

[To view previous **FTW** stories on the Carlyle group please visit <http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/index.html#bush>.]

March 16 – On the same day as the Carlyle story, one of *The Washington Post's* biggest pundits for several decades, Walter Pincus, fired a serious shot into the administration's belly. To veterans of the 1996-98 popular nationwide campaign to expose CIA connections to cocaine trafficking, Pincus' name will be remembered as one of the chief defenders of the CIA. In fact, Pincus has been one of the Post's primary CIA conduits for more than thirty years. In 1967, he wrote a short feature for the Post titled, "How I Traveled the World on a CIA Stipend."

In a story titled "U.S. Lacks Specifics on Banned Arms", Pincus described how U.S. "Senior intelligence analysts say they feel caught between the demands from the White House, Pentagon and other government policymakers for intelligence that would make the administration's case 'and what they say is a lack of hard facts,' one official said.

"The assertions, coming on the eve of a possible decision by President

Bush to go to war against Iraq, have raised concerns among some members of the intelligence community about whether administration officials have exaggerated intelligence in a desire to convince the American public..."

Pincus went on to detail how key U.S. Senators like Carl Levin and John Warner were questioning data that had apparently been misrepresented and/or hidden from the U.N.

An ominous note at the end of the story, reminding anyone who read it of Watergate and the demise of the Nixon presidency, added "Staff Writer Bob Woodward contributed to this report."

March 18 – Pincus returned again, in the company of Post Staff Writer Dana Milbank, to place more bricks in the wall that might seal the administration's fate. The story titled, "Bush Clings to Dubious Allegations About Iraq" opened with the lead, "As the Bush administration prepares to attack Iraq this week, it is doing so on the basis of a number of allegations against Iraqi president Saddam Hussein that have been challenged – and in some cases disproved – by the United Nations, European governments and even U.S. intelligence reports."

The story went on to document misrepresentations by George Bush, Dick Cheney and Colin Powell that made it clear that if George W. Bush was going down his whole administration was going with him. It was now a part of the official Washington record that all three had been guilty of misrepresentations to the press and the American people.

March 20 – Columnist Craig Roberts, writing in the traditionally pro-Republican, conservative *Washington Times* delivered perhaps the most shocking signal that the power establishment, which should have stopped the war before it started, was moving to set the administration up for a fall.

In a column titled "A Reckless Path", Roberts' lead paragraph read:

"Will Bush be impeached? Will he be called a war criminal? These are not hyperbolic questions. Mr. Bush has permitted a small cadre of neoconservatives to isolate him from world opinion, putting him at odds with the United Nations and America's allies."

It got worse from there.

"...On the eve of Mr. Bush's ultimatum, it came to light that a key piece of evidence used by the Bush administration to link Iraq to a nuclear weapons program is a forgery. Sen. Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia, the ranking Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, has asked the FBI to investigate the forged documents that the Bush administration has used to make its case that Saddam Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction."

Amazingly, Roberts then went on to make a comparison with Adolf Hitler's faked attacks by SS soldiers dressed as Polish troops in 1939 to justify the invasion of Poland, which started the Second World War.

Roberts closed his column with a dire warning. "Mr. Bush and his advisers have forgotten that the power of an American president is temporary and relative."

March 22 – One of The New York Times' chief experts on intelligence, with close contacts at the CIA, is James Risen. Whenever reading a Risen story it's a safe bet to assume that it was fed to him directly by CIA headquarters. In a story headlined, "CIA Aides Feel Pressure in Preparing Iraqi Reports" Risen wrote:

"The recent disclosure that reports claiming Iraq tried to buy uranium from Niger were based partly on forged documents has renewed complaints among analysts at the C.I.A. about the way intelligence related to Iraq has been handled, several intelligence officials said.

"Analysts at the agency said they had felt pressured to make their intelligence reports on Iraq conform to Bush administration policies.

"For months, a few C.I.A. analysts have privately expressed concerns to colleagues and Congressional officials that they have faced pressure in writing intelligence reports to emphasize links between Saddam Hussein's government and Al Qaeda.

"As the White House contended that links between Mr. Hussein and Al Qaeda justified military action against Iraq, these analysts complained that reports on Iraq have attracted unusually intense scrutiny from senior policy makers within the Bush administration.

"A lot of analysts have been upset about the way the Iraq-Al Qaeda case has been handled,' said one intelligence official familiar with the debate."

INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES TURN ON BUSH/BLAIR

It has been happening for two months now. Leaks, protests, even overt criticisms from those like former senior CIA analyst Stephen Pelletier, who has revealed that it was Iran rather than Iraq which had killed thousands of Kurds in massive poison gas attacks in the 1980s. More recently we have seen British intelligence personnel leak information to the press showing that Britain's infamous intelligence dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) had been plagiarized from outdated information in graduate student papers and that the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) has engaged in illegal wiretapping of U.N. officials in attempts to secure enough votes for a resolution in support of the invasion. One or perhaps two of these events could be explained as the actions of individuals. But the frequency and number of these attacks is suggesting that the intelligence services, which view themselves as permanent and enduring institutions as compared to passing administrations, are slowly pulling structural supports from underneath the Bush and Blair administrations' platform.

On February 8, *Counterpunch* published a statement by a group calling itself Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS) which gave Secretary of State Colin Powell a C- grade for providing "context and perspective" on Iraqi weapons and intent. The statement specifically and correctly chided the Bush administration for making the violation of a U.N. resolution a pretext for war pointing out that Israel's refusal to comply from a U.N. resolution calling for its withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 has never been addressed.

[NOTE: Israel is currently in violation of 64 U.N. resolutions as opposed to Iraq's 17]

The VIPS statement also vigorously disputed any notion that Iraq posed any immediate threat to the U.S. and quoted CIA reports supporting that position. It also disputed Bush/Powell contentions that Iraq had any previous involvement with terrorist activities. Revealing what may actually be an intention of the Bush administration, VIPS stated, "Indeed, it is our view that an invasion of Iraq would ensure overflowing recruitment centers for terrorists into the indefinite future."

And, striking a chord that is sure to resonate in millions of U.S. military veterans, VIPS observed, "Reminder: The last time we sent troops to the Gulf, over 600,000 of them, one out of three came back ill – many with unexplained disorders of the nervous system. Your Secretary of Veteran's Affairs recently closed the VA healthcare system to nearly 200,000 eligible veterans by administrative fiat."

Stories from early March in Britain's *The Observer* actually produced a copy of a Top Secret NSA memorandum calling on allied intelligence agencies to increase their wiretapping and monitoring of U.N. diplomats who might swing a Security Council vote in favor of the U.S. While reportage on this major breach of international trust and protocol has gone away, the rage felt by many diplomats has not. It was later disclosed that an employee of British intelligence who was outraged by its contents had leaked the memo. However, reading between the lines, this writer suspects that the leak took place with a wink and a nod from higher ups.

By March 14, the activities of VIPS were getting favorable coverage by the Associated Press, a sign that powers controlling both the media and the intelligence services were pushing the agenda. Although varying editions of the story appeared in print, on the AP web site and in different parts of the country, the basic story retained a key lead sentence. "A small group comprised mostly of retired CIA officers is appealing to colleagues still inside to go public with any evidence the Bush administration is slanting intelligence to support its case for war with Iraq."

Such a statement from intelligence veterans has serious repercussions in a discipline that is noted for never leaking information. That is, unless there is an agenda that intelligence agencies themselves are pursuing. In those cases the CIA plays the media, as one CIA executive once described, "like a Mighty Wurlitzer."

As resignations of outraged civil servants are stacking up on both sides of the Atlantic like freshly cut firewood, the Bush administration was also seriously hurt by the resignation of the top Bush National Security Council official in charge of terrorism, Rand Beers. A March 19 UPI story, while repeating the Bush administration position that Beers' resignation was not because of administration deceit and vanishing credibility, left no doubt that Beers, widely respected in Washington, was just plain fed up and possibly sensing a sinking ship.

OIL'S NOT WELL

The utterly ridiculous and unjustified drop in oil prices and upsurge in the Dow last week is belied by real data on oil supplies as the Iraqi invasion stumbles. As the war intensifies some real garbage and some occasional gems of truth are coming from the major media.

First, it is a given that while the war is in progress, Iraqi oil exports are virtually non-existent. The port region around Basra – which accounts for well more than half of Iraqi exports -- is virtually shut down. One pipeline running from northern Iraq to the Turkish port of Ceyhan is reported to be intact but there are no reports as to whether oil is actually flowing. It's not likely. What this means is that it is a safe bet that two million plus barrels per day (Mbpd) have been taken out of world supplies.

In the face of this, *BusinessWeek*, in the February 24 issue, has engaged in the outrageously dishonest reporting that the Caspian basin may hold 200 billion barrels (Gb) of reserves and that there are some three trillion barrels of proven conventional oil remaining on the planet. Extensive research conducted by **FTW** has shown that Caspian reserves have been verified by drilling results over the last three years to be only around 40 Gb and are a major disappointment. **FTW** data was derived through extensive research in oil and gas journals, official government reports and by direct interviews with oil executives who have been in the region.

Planetary reserves of conventional oil are only about one trillion barrels or enough to keep the world supplied for approximately 30 years in an ever tightening and ever more expensive marketplace that threatens economies all over the globe. Motives for the *BusinessWeek* deception would include providing propaganda cover for the fact that the invasion of Iraq is totally about oil and also give false confidence to investors as financial and equity markets teeter on the brink of collapse.

The Wall Street Journal, however, on March 18, recently engaged in some serious truth telling. In a page-one story titled "Why the U.S. IS Still Hooked On Oil Imports", the Journal reported:

"President Bush says hydrogen power will lead to energy independence... Mr. Bush is almost certain to be proved wrong, at least

in the next couple of decades."

After acknowledging that oil price spikes have always led to recessions, the *Journal* relied on an extensive body of research of the statements of OPEC founder, Saudi Sheikh Zaki Yamani to hit at one of the core motivators for the Iraqi invasion – oil production costs. Not every country or region spends the same amount of money to produce a barrel of oil. And nowhere is oil cheaper to produce than in the Persian Gulf. The *Journal* quoted Yamani as stating at a 1980s OPEC meeting, "Let's see how the North Sea can produce oil when prices are at \$5 a barrel."

The *Journal* continued: "At low prices, the Persian Gulf countries have an unbeatable edge. In the mid 1980s it cost them a couple of dollars a barrel to produce oil. It cost about \$15 a barrel off the coast of Britain and Norway or in the U.S." That was in the 1980s. Credible estimates of North Sea production costs in dying fields now place the cost per barrel at over \$20.

Russia has current estimated production costs of between \$19 and \$27 a barrel which reveal the key to everything that's going on now. The world is running out of oil. In order to save a teetering U.S. economy the Bush administration is betting on the rapidly diminishing hope that it can get Iraqi oil back on the markets and available to the U.S. at a price of between \$15 and \$20 per barrel. If the prices drop to the levels Bush needs, OPEC loses its profits and Russian oil becomes uncompetitive in the market place.

Bush is not going to get his way.

In a major development, it was reported on Saturday that growing unrest in Nigeria, an OPEC member and the world's sixth largest exporter, had shut down the Chevron Texaco pumping facilities. A story in today's *Economist* confirmed earlier reports that both Chevron and French giant TotalFinaElf had not only shut down production but ordered evacuations of all their personnel. These moves take an immediate 330,000 barrels a day out of world supplies and they also hearken back to recent lessons learned in Venezuela after a massive strike shut down Venezuelan production. Refineries and wells don't operate at the flip of a switch. They require a constant flow of chemicals and products to keep their systems primed. When recovering from a shut down, it often takes a considerable period to reach previous

production levels.

While OPEC has announced that it will increase production to offset shortages, its ability to do so is limited to perhaps a 3-5 Mbpd increase. That's a drop in the bucket in current tight markets and in a world that consumes a billion barrels every twelve days. Iraqi oil fields will require billions of dollars of investment and years to increase Iraqi production to five or eight Mbpd. And that clock will only start ticking once the country is secure and safe, an outcome that is not at all guaranteed at the moment.

In the meantime, according to *The Financial Times* today, the Mexican government has announced its intent to start selling U.S. dollars on world currency markets. This move could further weaken an already shaky U.S. dollar, especially if other nations, angered at the U.S. invasion of Iraq, follow suit. Since oil is currently purchased in dollars, inevitable future oil price spikes could become doubly painful for the U.S. economy as the dollar loses value.

BUSH'S WATGERATE BURGLARY

"At the Security Council, some are questioning the veracity of any U.S. claim regarding Iraq." – The Boston Globe, March 16, 2003

The first official report that documents prepared on stationery of the governments of Niger and Iraq detailing a planned sale of uranium to Iraq were forged came on March 7. Mohamed ElBaradei, the chief nuclear inspector for the International Atomic Energy Agency told the U.N. Security Council that the documents, "were not authentic." The first paper to break the news was London's *Financial Times*. The documents, not very clever or convincing, failed to convince the U.N. but were, however, included in British Prime Minister Tony Blair's now legendary flawed intelligence dossier, which had been presented to Parliament on Sept. 24, 2002.

The Washington Post picked up on the story on March 8 where it reported that, "The forgers had 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, the officials said."

The *Post* reported administration officials as giving the somewhat lame

excuse, "We fell for it." No one even tried to suggest a motive for someone other than the Bush or Blair regimes to commit the crime.

Not everyone fell for it. As reported in what are now at least a half dozen stories, the CIA was suspicious of the documents and purposely left them out of their own report on Iraqi weapons. That did not, however, prevent George W. Bush, Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld or Dick Cheney from touting them as authentic. The State Department even authoritatively referred to the documents in a December 19, 2002 Fact Sheet titled "Illustrative Examples of Omissions From the Iraqi Declaration to the United Nations Security Council".

By March 13, The *Post* was back with a story indicating that the FBI was looking into the source of the documents and "the possibility that a foreign government is using a deception campaign to foster support for military action against Iraq."

Huh? Is there some country out there we haven't heard of that really hates Iraq other than the U.S., Britain or Israel?

The *Post* story closed by saying, "The CIA, which also had obtained the documents, 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."

This begs the question as to whether CIA Director George Tenet told Bush or Cheney or Powell that the documents were forged. That's his job above all else: to give the President reliable and trustworthy intelligence.

On March 14, Ken Guggenheim of The Associated Press reported that Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WVa.), ranking member of the Senate Intelligence Committee had called the FBI and asked for an investigation of the documents. Rockefeller's full name is John D. Rockefeller, IV and he is a direct descendant of the same family that essentially brought the Bush family into power. What is amazing here is not only that someone has requested an investigation of just one of the hundreds of Bush administration inconsistencies and proven lies since 9-11, but that it was a Rockefeller who requested it. That reality has thundered throughout Washington's power corridors like an earthquake.

FTW placed calls to both FBI headquarters and Rockefeller's

Washington offices asking for comment or further information. An FBI spokesperson told **FTW** that the Bureau had nothing to say. After hearing what the topic was, a Rockefeller spokesperson promised to call back but did not.

Colin Powell immediately started denying that the State Department had anything to do with creating the forgeries. No one had accused him! And the story picked up "legs" in print media around the world.

By the 15th, CNN had picked up the story on its web site and had added damning observations about the childish, crude and "obvious" nature of the forgeries that "should never have gotten past the CIA." But the CIA had already established a record saying that it never trusted the documents. Asked about the documents on *Meet the Press* the previous Sunday, Powell simply stated, "It was the information that we had. We provided it. If that information is inaccurate, fine."

Not so fine.

Where did the documents come from? Already inconsistent finger pointing, eerily reminiscent of the loose threads pulled on by Woodward and Bernstein in 1972 and 1973 are starting to surface. Powell says he doesn't know where the documents came from. Britain is remaining silent and the government of Niger has issued a blunt statement indicating that the documents were forged in London and Washington.

My guess is that they were forged inside the National Security Council rather than at the CIA. The CIA would have done a better job. Can you say, "Iran-Contra"?

The most scathing blow to date – and there are sure to be more – came from Congressman Henry Waxman (D, Ca.) who, in a six-page March 17 letter to George Bush, created a locked-down record of Bush's, Cheney's, Rumsfeld's and Powell's use of the documents, even pointing out that the President had made reference to the documents in his State-of-the-Union address in January by saying, "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." Waxman noted next that, "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."

Waxman closed his letter with three chilling questions that may now distance George Tenet from George W. Bush and his cabinet, who will all go down together if it becomes necessary. Waxman asked the President to directly address:

1. Whether CIA officials communicated their doubts about the credibility of the forged evidence to other Administration officials, including officials at 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.

I can hear the distant echoes of Senator Howard Baker in the Senate Watergate hearings asking, "What did the President know and when did he know it?"

THE PERFECT STORM

It's all coming together on the radar screen and the chances are that these storms are going to merge. In this all out economic war of survival, as Peak Oil forces its way into the public consciousness, Russia will likely continue to provide Saddam with arms and technical assistance. France may well share intelligence. China, with the slightest nod, can contribute tactical advice and many mines for the Mediterranean. All of them can indirectly, and through plausibly deniable methods, foster and supply revolts in oil producing regions around the globe. And they can all laugh and deny as the U.S. tries to point a finger at them. This has all been done before.

In the meantime Vladimir Putin can cushion his allies with cheap oil as the U.S. starts to die of thirst.

Before Americans become outraged that such a scenario might be unfolding, I would remind them that every one of these tactics has been employed by the United States in spades against each of these countries for more than fifty years. It was the U.S. that chose this course to begin with. The tragedy, of course, is that the American people will suffer greatly as the storms converge. The truth is that the American people have never been any more of a concern to the powers

that be than the people in the rest of the world have, except that giving them a higher standard of living made them compliant and dumb. It appears as if even that is no longer necessary. The destruction of American credibility and the transfer of its wealth are necessary steps in the creation of the New World Order.

Everything might just come crashing down all at once and if that happens the powers that rule will sacrifice their little Caesar and cut a deal with the other nations quickly. Just as in Shakespeare's play, there will be many wounds in Caesar's body, inflicted by many different people. But most certainly one of the daggers will be found in the hand of George Tenet and the CIA. He knows where the real power resides.



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