

Did Wolfowitz Blow CIA Secret To Set Up the President?

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, the Administration's leading "Chickenhawk" proponent of the imperial doctrine of unilateral pre-emptive war, may have willfully "blown" a CIA covert operation in early November. His possible purpose: To set up President Bush, and force through the Chickenhaws' illegal doctrine against strong opposition within the intelligence community and from others on the Bush national security team. Some details of the incident were provided by *Newsweek* in its Nov. 18 issue; Wolfowitz's actions were broadcast live on CNN on Nov. 5; and two high-level national security sources provided *EIR* with additional crucial leads.

The essentials of the story are as follows: On Sunday, Nov. 3, six purported top al-Qaeda members were killed, when the car they were driving in the Marib province of Yemen, near the Saudi border, was blown up. Initial news reports said the car had been carrying highly inflammable propane gas, and that perhaps, someone in the car was careless with a cigarette.

Among the six killed instantly in the blast was Qaed Senyan al-Harithi, a.k.a. Abu Ali, who was on the FBI's Most Wanted List, and was suspected of having masterminded the October 2000 attack in Yemen on the *USS Cole*. It later turned out that one of the six men was an American citizen, Kamel Derwish, who was accused of recruiting a cell of al-Qaeda sympathizers recently arrested in Lackawanna, New York, an industrial suburb of Buffalo.

The initial word out of Yemen was that the car explosion could have been an accident, or an act of clan warfare. As *Newsweek* reported, "It was a plausible cover story, but it lasted less than 48 hours. Tribesmen told journalists they had seen a helicopter flying near the scene of the explosion. In Washington, reporters suspected that the 'helicopter' was in

fact a Predator, a low-flying, missile-firing unmanned drone. Had the United States taken out the terrorists with a well-aimed Hellfire missile? By Tuesday morning, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz was not only confirming the story, he seemed to be boasting about it."

Indeed, in a Nov. 5 interview with CNN's Maria Ressa, Wolfowitz was the first, and—according to one intelligence community source—the only American government official to blow the covert operation. Wolfowitz told CNN that the attack in Yemen was "a very successful tactical operation"; and added, "One hopes each time you get a success like that, not only to have gotten rid of somebody dangerous, but to have imposed changes in their tactics and operations and procedures."

Wolfowitz, who never served in the military, but who has been the loudest proponent within the Administration of a U.S. military invasion of Iraq, blabbed on to CNN about the apparently new U.S. doctrine of pre-emptive assassination: "Sometimes when people are changing, they expose themselves in new ways. So we've just got to keep the pressure on everywhere we are able to, and we've got to deny the sanctuaries everywhere we are able to, and we've got to put pressure on every government that is giving these people support to get out of that business."

Newsweek confirmed that Wolfowitz's revelations were not well received inside the intelligence community. "The CIA," *Newsweek* noted, "which ran the operation, was furious with the Defense Department for blowing its cover story." *Newsweek* authors Evan Thomas and Mark Hosenball elaborated on the controversial Wolfowitz leak. "The CIA has always preferred to operate in the shadows to preserve 'deniability.' Better, the spooks and most diplomats say, not to embarrass friends and clients by making them look like Amer-

ican stooges. Yemen's President Saleh was 'highly pissed' when the Predator story leaked, says a knowledgeable source. Now CIA officials worry that the leak will discourage other countries from allowing Predator strikes within their borders. They blame the Defense Department for making a macho show of force."

The *Christian Science Monitor* on Nov. 12 confirmed that the Yemeni officials were furious at the leak. Brig. Gen. Yahya M. Al Mutawakel, the deputy secretary general of the ruling Peoples Congress Party, complained, "This is why it is so difficult to make deals with the United States. This is why we are reluctant to work closely with them. They don't consider the internal circumstances in Yemen. In security matters, you don't want to alert the enemy." One former CIA official interviewed by *Newsweek* put it this way: "The Pentagon view seems to be, this is good, it shows we can reach out and touch 'em. The CIA view is, you dumb bastards, this means no other country will cooperate with us."

Indeed, former CIA general counsel Jeffrey Smith warned that the Wolfowitz leak and the underlying policy of preemptive assassinations would blow up in the face of the United States and jeopardize the war on terrorism. "There is a moral issue, and you'll make mistakes and generate resentment abroad."

When State Department counter-terrorism chief Francis Taylor attended a conference in Manila, the Philippines, just days after the Wolfowitz leak, he encountered a wall of opposition to the now-public U.S. policy of preventive assassination. Wolfowitz's warnings to governments carried the implicit message that the United States would carry out such attacks with or without permission from host governments. The Malaysian government issued a stern warning that it would not cooperate with the United States in allowing American hit teams to operate on its soil.

'Chickenhawk Intelligence Agency'

It is not possible to say, precisely, what prompted Wolfowitz to take the extraordinary step of going on CNN to expose a secret CIA assassination program. Leaks of classified information, particularly such damaging information, ought to trigger a serious investigation into Wolfowitz. When former CIA Director John Deutch was caught bringing classified materials home and uploading them onto a family personal computer, it generated a full investigation, and led, shortly, to his resignation. Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk had his security clearances stripped for a period of time, while government counterintelligence investigators probed whether he, too, was mishandling classified material, and holding unauthorized meetings with the head of the Mossad. It is not known at this point whether there is a live investigation into Wolfowitz's action.

What is now well established, however, is the fact that Wolfowitz, along with other Israeli-allied Chickenhawks in the Pentagon, have been conducting their own intelligence operations, directed against the Middle East intelligence as-



Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz (left) made an arrogant public display of the United States' beginning a "pre-emptive assassination" policy modelled on the Sharon government of Israel's. The President will be hurt by Wolfowitz's antics.

essments coming out of the CIA and even the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Wolfowitz's "Chickenhawk intelligence agency" is being run by Doug Feith, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy, in close coordination with the Defense Policy Board, headed by Richard Perle.

One thing that Wolfowitz, Perle, and Feith all have in common is that they were all suspected, in the 1980s, of being part of the "X Committee" of Israeli spies, inside the Reagan-Bush Pentagon, who were running the Jonathan Jay Pollard spy operation, in league with Ariel Sharon and "Dirty Rafi" Eytan, the head of Israel's Lekem scientific espionage agency.

Wolfowitz's actions came precisely at the moment that President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell were finalizing an agreement with Russia, France, and China, to secure passage of a United Nations Security Council resolution on Iraq. For Wolfowitz and the Chickenhawk/Sharonistas in the Bush Administration, this decision signaled a delay, and perhaps, cancellation of the war on Iraq—for which Wolfowitz et al. had been pressing since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Wolfowitz's actions have jeopardized cooperation with scores of governments around the world, whose close collaboration is vital to any effective—and legal—counterterror campaign. This effort to subvert the President's war on terror cannot go unchallenged.