

Congressional Closeup by Carl Osgood

Jackson, Jr. Hits Chalabi \$

Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-Ill.) took the Defense Department to task for funding Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmed Chalabi, during a hearing of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee on April 29. Jackson demanded to know, from Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, how the department found Chalabi to be a credible source of information. He quoted Chalabi admitting to the *London Telegraph* that the intelligence his group was providing was all lies, and demanded to know why the Pentagon was still paying his group \$340,000 per month. He also noted that Chalabi was a regular on Capitol Hill before the war, lobbying for an invasion, likely funded with the money he was getting from the Pentagon.

Both dodged Jackson's questions. Wolfowitz claimed that Chalabi was only one of many Iraqi leaders the Defense Department is working with, saying "We don't have favorites." Wolfowitz refused to discuss intelligence provided by Chalabi. On the question of Chalabi's lobbying, Armitage acknowledged that the State Department did have some difficulty in accounting for the funds given to the INC, which precipitated investigations by both the State Department and the Congressional Government Accounting Office.

Unsatisfied, Jackson told Wolfowitz and Armitage that the pre-war intelligence provided by the INC "is costing American lives." He noted, "After the State Department stopped paying Mr. Chalabi" because of inconsistencies in his statements, "the Defense Department picked up Mr. Chalabi's \$340,000 a month tab." Jackson said he plans to offer an amendment "until I get the answer to my question in the full committee, to prohibit the Defense Department from paying Mr. Chalabi one cent. . . . I don't think the Ameri-

can people should be footing his tab any longer, and I will offer that amendment before the full committee."

Lautenberg: Cheney Is A Chicken Hawk

In a speech defending John Kerry against vitriolic attacks emanating from the Bush-Cheney campaign, octogenarian Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) on April 28 identified the real character of those behind the Iraq war policy. "We now have discovered a return of the chicken-hawk," he said. "We thought they flew the coop, but in the past week or two, they have returned aplenty." Showing a large picture of a chicken in military uniform bedecked with medals, he defined a chicken-hawk as "a person enthusiastic about war, provided someone else does the fighting, particularly when that enthusiasm is undimmed by personal experience with war; most emphatically when that lack of experience came in spite of ample opportunity in that person's youth."

Lautenberg continued: "Chicken-hawks shriek like a hawk . . . but they have the backbone of a chicken." He noted that they "talk tough" on defense and military issues and cast aspersions on others. "When it was their turn to serve," he said, "where were they? A-W-O-L, that's where they were."

"The lead chicken-hawk against Senator Kerry is Vice President Cheney," Lautenberg said. (Cheney avoided military service during the Vietnam War by, as the *New York Times* reported on May 1, getting five draft deferrals between 1963 and 1967.) "The chicken-hawk has no idea what it means to have the courage to defend this nation. The reality is, the chicken-hawks in this administration are doing a lousy job of bolstering our

nation's defense and supporting the troops."

Feinstein: Bush Wants New Nukes

Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-Cal.) charged from the Senate floor on April 28, that the Bush Administration is actually seeking to develop and produce a new generation of nuclear weapons. She noted that the administration is asking for money to study earth penetrators and low-yield weapons, to prepare the Nevada Test Site for possible future tests, and for site selection for a new facility to produce up to 450 nuclear trigger devices per year. She said that only 50 such devices, called "pits," are necessary to maintain the 2,200 warheads called for in the Moscow Treaty, adding "This country doesn't need that much production unless plans are underway to increase the size of our nuclear arsenal, including a new generation of nuclear weapons."

Feinstein charged that the administration has "engaged in unnecessarily belligerent unilateralist rhetoric and action; dismissed arms control and nonproliferation efforts as ineffective, emphasized the role of pre-emptive military action; and pursued new nuclear weapons capabilities." Feinstein warned that the administration "is sending the destabilizing message that nuclear weapons have utility, thereby encouraging the proliferation the United States seeks to prevent."

Feinstein called on the Congress to "deny any funding for new nuclear weapons . . . to bring this administration's unrestrained enthusiasm for developing new nuclear weapons under control . . . and assure that the United States proceeds in this area with all seriousness and restraint that is fitting for a great power."