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Behind the Iraq Dossier Hoax: Intelligence Was Cooked in Israel

by Jeffrey Steinberg

According to media accounts, the 10 Downing Street "dossier," cited favorably by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell in his disastrous Feb. 5 report to the United Nations Security Council, was plagiarized from an American graduate school paper, based on information more than a decade old. The scandal that erupted when the Blair dossier hoax hit the press, seriously undermined the credibility of those war party advocates of an immediate Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. As Lyndon LaRouche wrote, Powell was set up by a gang of public relations flacks who can't think straight.

So far so good. But a deeper probe into the scandal reveals that there was good reason that the spin-meisters at the Coalition Information Center—the Washington-London civilian government propaganda unit that crafted both the Blair dossier and major portions of Secretary Powell's own lighter-than-air book of evidence—did not reveal the sources of their information. The entire cooked intelligence picture was "Made in Israel." It was cooked up at a right-wing think-tank complex notorious as a hotbed of radical Likudnik propaganda, and with links to the Office of Vice President Dick Cheney, via his Chief of Staff Lewis Libby and his former client, Marc Rich.

The essential facts are as follows: Two days before Powell's UN appearance, 10 Downing Street issued a 16-page paper, "Iraq: Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception, and Intimidation," purportedly based on high-level British intelligence data. In fact, at least 11 of the 16 pages were lifted, verbatim, from an Israeli

journal, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, whose sole proprietor is Dr. Barry Rubin, an American-born Israeli citizen. The 11 pages were drawn from two articles, by Ibrahim al-Marashi and Robert Rabil, that appeared in the September 2002 edition of that journal.

Al-Marashi's article, a profile of Iraqi intelligence, was drawn, largely, from Iraqi government documents confiscated during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Al-Marashi, in turn, heavily footnoted his article to other, earlier stories published in Rubin's obscure online journal, by Amazia Baram, the journal's deputy editor.

This was no bit of grammar school plagiarism. The public relations team that put together the Blair and Powell propaganda drive were themselves linked to Rubin and his fellow Israeli pranksters, through Ahmed Chalabi's discredited and corrupt Iraqi National Congress (INC). Chalabi, University of Chicago protégé of the late utopian Albert Wohlstetter, then fugitive swindler, was adopted as the Iraqi oppositionist-of-choice by Israeli "X Committee" agent and chairman of the Defense Policy Board Richard Perle and his British Arab Bureau handler, Dr. Bernard Lewis, in the 1980s.

Rubin and the Chicken-hawk Intelligence Agency

Rubin issued a statement following the Downing Street dossier flap, taking full credit for the cooked intelligence report. His only complaint was that, while the Blair government apologized to Al-Marashi, they did not issue a similar public statement of regret to him and his journal.

To have done so would have been suicidal, as a quick review of Rubin's pedigree makes clear.

According to three current biographies, Prof. Barry Rubin is the deputy director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies in Israel, and a senior fellow at Hebrew University's Harry Truman Center and Haifa University's Jewish-Arab Center. He is the director of the Global Research in International Affairs Center, research director of the Lauder School of Government

Policy and Diplomacy, and a senior fellow at the International Center for Counterterrorist Policy (ICT)—all of which are part of the Interdisciplinary Center, Israel's first private university, in Herzliya.

The Lauder School was named after Ronald Lauder, the former Reagan Ambassador to Austria, former president of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, soon-to-be-successor of Edgar Bronfman Sr. as head of the World Jewish Congress, and a notorious financier of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The ICT, which co-sponsored a May 26, 2002 Herzliya center conference on suicide terrorism with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, is financed by the Marc Rich Foundation, the tax shelter of fugitive Russian Mafiya don Marc Rich. Avner Azulay, a former Mossad officer and director of the Rich Foundation, is an ICT director. Another publicly listed associate of the ICT is Maj. Gen. Meir Dagan, one of Ariel Sharon's most notorious thugs, and the current head of the Mossad.

Rubin, a transplanted Israeli citizen, still spends a good deal of time in the United States. On Feb. 4, he was one of the speakers at a Willard Hotel luncheon in Washington sponsored by Eleana Benador Associates, a New York City public relations firm that counts among its clients the entire chicken-hawk apparatus. Among the other speakers with Rubin were Benador clients Perle, Michael Ledeen, Frank Gaffney, Laurie Mylroie, former UN weapons inspector Richard Spertzel, and former Iraqi weapons scientist Khidhir Hamza.

Rubin is also the chief Middle East columnist for Conrad Black's Hollinger Corp.-owned *Jerusalem Post*, and a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), the think-tank spawn of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the official Israel lobby in America. His writings frequently appear in *Middle East Quarterly*, the hyper-shrill propaganda journal of Daniel Pipes. Rubin and Pipes are both funded by the Bradley Foundation, one of the

quartet of ultra-right-wing tax-exempt funds, along with the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Olin Foundation, and the Mellon Scaife Foundation.

Typical of Rubin's prolific writings was a Dec. 3, 2002 Op-Ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, entitled "Sharon the Centrist?" The article celebrated Sharon's Likud party primary victory over Netanyahu, and assailed both Netanyahu and the Labor Party candidate, Gen. Amram Mitzna, whom Rubin labelled an apologist for the Yasser Arafat whom he termed an unrepentant terrorist.

In his Benador schpiel, Rubin echoed Perle and Doug Feith's "A Clean Break" strategy, arguing that the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein would herald the "third Arab revolution" of the postwar period, triggering a spontaneous outbreak of democracy, human rights, and free trade throughout the Arab world. Rubin's simplistic fantasy of a Middle East re-made in the American-Israeli image has prompted some genuine experts to denounce him as the "Bernard Lewis for dummies." Princeton Professor Lewis is the author of the "Arc of Crisis" strategy for permanent instability in the Middle East.

The Coalition Information Center

It takes two to tango. The Blair dossier—based on the cooked-in-Israel propaganda of Rubin—and the Powell UN speech, were both largely the work of the Coalition Information Center (CIC), an Anglo-American government propaganda unit set up to counter opposition to the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan, and later transformed into a permanent shared venture of the White House and 10 Downing Street.

According to recent news accounts in *New Yorker* magazine and the *New Republic*, the CIC was the brainchild of Gen. Wayne Downing (USA-ret.)—who was chief of counter-terrorism at the National Security Council until last June—and his deputy, former CIA officer Linda Flohr. The two hired a discredited public relations firm, the Rendon Group, which had a reputation for burning through government cash, but which had been instrumental in the launching of Chalabi's INC.

Downing, before joining the White House team, was the "military advisor" to the INC. In mid-February, Downing was in India, as part of a delegation from the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), another thinly-disguised Israeli espionage and recruiting front which targets retired American military and intelligence officers.

John Rendon, a Jimmy Carter-era Democratic National Committee executive director, made his connections to Team Bush in 1989, when he handled the propaganda for the overthrow of Gen. Manuel Noriega. In Panama, Rendon hooked up with CIA Iran-Contra operative Flohr, who got Rendon the propaganda contract for Operation Desert Storm. In 1991, President Bush signed a Presidential Finding, authorizing a covert campaign to overthrow Saddam Hussein, and Rendon got an estimated \$150 million in CIA cash to manufacture a Potemkin Village opposition to the Baghdad regime, built around Chalabi. According to investigative reporters Seymour Hersh and Jeff Stein, most of the CIA money went to overpaid public relations consultants, posh London flats, flights on the Concorde, and even more suspect cash diversions. Ultimately, the CIA Inspector General got into the act, and Rendon was dumped by the Agency.

Things improved for this crowd, once again, when "Bush 43" came to town. Flohr, who had gone to work for the Rendon Group after retiring from the CIA in 1994—and working for Oliver North's bullet-proof vest company—was tapped by Downing to join him at the National Security Council (she is now officially listed as the director of counter-terrorism for the NSC and director of security for the Office of Homeland Security). Not only did Rendon put together the CIC, but, following Sept. 11, 2001, he won a \$100,000 per month Pentagon contract to work for the short-lived Office of Strategic Influence. This was a black-propaganda unit inside the Feith's "chicken-hawk intelligence agency" led by William Luti, a retired Navy captain who was seconded to the Pentagon from the Office of Vice President Dick Cheney. When the *New York Times* exposed the planned OSI agitprop unit, the plans were

scrapped, but Rendon retained the Pentagon cash-flow.