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Ayoon wa Azan (Biographies Of The Neo-Cons: Lewis Libby & Norman Podhoretz)

Jihad Al Khazen Al-Hayat 2003/06/17

Lewis Libby



Lewis 'Scooter' Libby is Chief of Staff of Vice President Dick Cheney. He worked in the Defense Department during George Bush Sr.'s presidency, and is a particular friend and confidant of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz.

Libby was a founding member of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) and he was one of the participants in the PNAC's 2000 report Rebuilding America's Defenses - Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century, along with Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, Robert

Kagan, Gary Schmitt and others.

In March 1992 Libby was appointed to the new position of Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Prior to that he had been Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Strategy and Resources at the Defense Department. From 1985 to 1989 he was a partner with the law firm of Dickstein, Shapiro and Morin in Washington. In 1982-85 he was Director of Special Projects at the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the State Department, and he was on the Policy Planning Staff in the Office of the Secretary in 1981-82. He is a graduate from Yale and Columbia University School of Law.

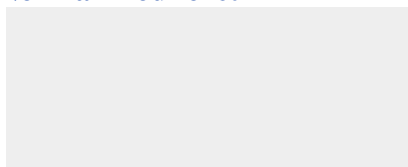
Libby is particularly associated with the report 'Defense Planning Guidance' which he and Wolfowitz produced for the Defense Secretary Dick Cheney in 1992. At the time the report, which called for pre-emptive action against states developing weapons of mass destruction was seen as reckless and over-aggressive, but since September 11 the policy of pre-emption has become mainstream administration policy.

Libby is on the board of the Rand Corporation, which has many contacts with the Pentagon. He owns shares in armaments companies and has oil interests. He is a consultant to Northrop Grumman, the Defense contractor, which has an active presence in the Defense Policy Board of the Pentagon.

Libby's reputation has been tainted by his having been chief Defense counsel to Marc Rich, who had faced federal charges of evading more than \$48 million in taxes, fraud and taking part in illegal oil deals with Iran. Libby became embroiled in the controversy over Marc Rich's being pardoned by President Bill Clinton just before he left office.

Clinton has asserted that it was pressure from Israel rather than donations from Marc Rich and his ex-wife Denise that led him to pardon Rich. Libby represented Rich for several years ending in spring 2000. Libby told the House Government Reform Committee on 1 March 2001 that he believed Rich was not guilty of the tax and racketeering charges filed by federal prosecutors in 1983. He declined to say whether he approved of the decision to pardon Rich, but conceded that he did call Rich two days after the pardon to congratulate him, making it clear he did this in a personal capacity, calling from home, rather than as a representative of the Bush administration.

Norman Podhoretz

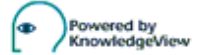


Norman Podhoretz is a veteran neo-conservative who has exerted an enormous pull. He is married to Midge Decter, and together they helped found the Committee

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on the Present Danger in the late 1970s and the Committee for the Free World in the early 1980s, which Decter co-chaired with Donald Rumsfeld.

Norman Podhoretz joined Hudson Institute as a senior fellow in May 1995 after retiring from Commentary, where he had been editor-in-chief since 1960. Podhoretz studies, writes, and speaks on social, cultural, and international issues. He also

serves as editor-at-large of Commentary.

Podhoretz still appears on TV - on BBC-2's Newsnight on 7 May he called for regime change throughout the Middle East in order to fight terrorism. As editor of Commentary he published articles by many of those who become known in the neo-conservatives movement since then. (Many will remember how Commentary tried to destroy the reputation of the most effective Palestinian voice in the USA, that of Edward Said, just when Said was on the verge of publishing his memoir out of place in 1999).

Podhoretz started off advocating liberal political views, but by the early 1970s he became unsympathetic to the liberals who favored cuts in military spending and a reduction on American intervention abroad. He became part of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority founded in 1973 by Senator Henry Jackson, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and other Democrats with hawkish tendencies.

Elliott Abrams, Podhoretz' son-in-law, was a member, and he joined the State Department at the time of Reagan presidency as Assistant Secretary for Human Rights.

In his book *Breaking Ranks*, Podhoretz stressed the link between a strong U.S. military machine and the future of Israel. He saw an inextricable connection between the survival of Israel and the "military adequacy" of the U.S., as had been demonstrated by the airlift of U.S. arms in the 1973 war.

In the book Podhoretz describes how he supported Patrick Moynihan's race against Bella Abzug and Ramsey Clark for the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate in New York in 1976. He countered the calls of Abzug and Clark for deep cuts in military spending. "It was in the course of raising this issue that Moynihan was able to demonstrate more vividly than anyone had done before that there was a direct contradiction between caring about the survival of Israel - as both Abzug and Clark professed to - and opposing, as they both did, the Defense appropriations out of which aid to Israel had to come."

Norman Podhoretz' son, John, is a columnist for the New York Post, owned by Rupert Murdoch, and often appears on the Fox Channel, which Murdoch also owns. John Podhoretz wrote speeches for Ronald Reagan and then for George Bush Sr. He has written against America putting any pressure on Israel, and even claims that Israel refuses to defend itself so, as to show its "good faith" in seeking peace.

According to Eric Alterman writing in Salon magazine, John Podhoretz has "spent virtually his entire life supping at the table of strange right-wing foreigners seeking to buy their way into respectability by courting the American right." Starting with the Reverend Sun Myung Moon of the Moonies "who hired John and his college roommate Todd Lindberg to provide a Nice-Jewish-Boy front for his nefarious activities."

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