

***Iraq, LNG, Credibility:
As Plame Was Losing Her Cover,
Cheney Was Losing His Power***

**An OpEdNews.com Article, and
A Blog Entry in GordonTalk and Comments From Left Field**

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As the office of the Vice President of the United States has become [the focus of Special Prosecutor Patrick J. Fitzgerald's investigation](#) into the Valerie Plame Affair, the question most asked by the pundits and populace at large is, "Will Cheney be indicted?"

However, the questions that seem to be most on the mind of Fitzgerald are, "Why would the vice president order his chief of staff, I. Lewis 'Scooter' Libby, and presidential hatchetman, Karl Rove, to expose the identity of a covert CIA operative? Was this simply an attempt to discredit an administration critic? Or was there more to it than that?"

While it is true that Richard "Dick" Cheney has been called [the most vindictive man in Washington](#), he did not achieve the reputation as "[the most powerful Vice President in history](#)"—even [the de facto prime minister of the Bush administration](#) (although "C.E.O. of Geo. W. Inc." might be more appropriate)—by being as reckless with his position of power as he has been with statements of WMD "fact."

No, this uncharacteristically ham-fisted action—of exposing a CIA operative, which would predictably, and did ultimately, provoke a firestorm of criticism, including accusations of everything from obstruction of justice to treason—smacks of an act of unmitigated desperation, by someone in power cracking under enormous stress, like President Richard "Dick" Nixon, three decades ago.

And in June and July of 2003, when Libby and Rove and perhaps others in the administration were leaking the CIA identity of Valerie Plame to Judith Miller of *The New York Times*, Matthew Cooper of *Time* magazine, columnist Robert Novak, and others in the media, Dick Cheney was under incredible pressure from various quarters, both foreign and domestic; and the drastic action of outing Agent Valerie Plame—and thus her CIA front company, [Brewster Jennings](#)—must have been seen as having the effect of relieving a goodly amount of this pressure, at least from the perspective of the beleaguered Vice President.

Consider not only the conventional wisdom for why Plame was outed—to discredit her husband,

Joseph Wilson, and his criticism of the intelligence that took us into [the war that Cheney championed more than anyone else](#)—but also two other motivations much less reported but of at least equal importance to the vice president, former C.E.O. of energy-services company Halliburton Inc., a man for whom power is his stock in trade.

In June and July of 2003, such major American energy companies as ExxonMobil were scrambling to salvage [historic, multi-billion-dollar deals](#) that had just gone sour with the Saudi national energy company, ARAMCO, for some of the world's largest reserves of natural gas—which, particularly as globally transportable Liquefied Natural Gas, LNG, is considered by energy insiders as the most profitable energy resource for the 21st Century—and cutting Brewster Jennings, the eyes and ears of the CIA in ARAMCO, out of the picture would do nothing but simplify matters. But that wouldn't change the fact that these once-in-a-lifetime deals had gone bad on the watch of, and despite the good offices of, Vice President Dick Cheney, the American energy industry's chief representative in the federal government.

Overall, Mr. Cheney's credibility—the coin of the realm for a person in his position of power, both in business and in government—was effectively being called into serious question by the public at large; by his corporate colleagues in his [still barely secret Energy Task Force](#); and even by his good friend, confidant, and fellow de facto prime minister, [then-Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia](#).

[June through July of 2003](#) was a most desperate time indeed: As Valerie Plame was losing her cover, Dick Cheney was losing his grip on power.

Next—*The Conventional Wisdom: Trying in Vain to Salvage the Hostile Takeover of Iraq*

Then—*The Inside Story: Trying in Vain to Salvage the Historic Saudi LNG Deals*

Finally—*The Bottom Line: Trying in Vain to Salvage Dick Cheney's Credibility*

[Note: I never had the opportunity to follow through with the other parts of this series; nonetheless, the premise, as set forth in this article is still valid, based squarely on the significant, in some cases historic events that took place in this period, during which European, Russian, and Chinese energy corporations got the upper hand on American companies in many parts of the Near and Far East, as the United States was tied up in Iraq, causing unwelcome disruptions in the region.]