



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH



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Press Briefing on Iraq WMD and SOTU Speech

The Roosevelt Room

3:45 P.M. EDT

MR. BARTLETT: For the groundrules for this session today, both myself, as well as Steve Hadley will be on the record to discuss today's update to Friday's briefing. And I do want to start by -- because there are some people who were here and other people who were not, the fact that I am on the record today to talk a little bit about and recap the discussion from Friday, which I think is very important. After the discussions by the administration about the State of the Union process, the Chief of Staff Andy Card was -- directed his office to make sure that we get to the bottom of the process.

As you have seen throughout this process, we have attempted to share every piece of information we have that we can with regards to how the speech was developed, how we do speechwriting particularly for the State of the Union process; about the case -- the clear and compelling case against Saddam Hussein; and particularly of interest, the reconstitution of his nuclear weapons program that has been stated in the National Intelligence Estimate.

And it is important, as I talked about last Friday -- and I just want to recap both substance and the process, because it is important -- that in the National Intelligence Estimate, that the agencies involved in developing that came with a very clear key judgment and said since inspections entered in in 1998, Iraq has maintained its chemical weapons effort, energized its missile program, invested more heavily in biological weapons. In the view of most agencies, Baghdad has reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.

It goes on to say, although we assess that Saddam does not yet have nuclear weapons or sufficient material to make any, he remains intent on acquiring them. Most agencies assess that Baghdad started reconstituting its nuclear program at the time that UNSCOM inspectors departed, December of 1998.

Now, we spoke -- as we went through this, we also spoke about the alternative views about that issues, about the aluminum tubes and other alternative views with regards to the uranium. But even in the INR dissent, the Assistant Secretary of State for INR believes that Saddam continues to want nuclear weapons, and that available evidence indicates that Baghdad is pursuing at least a limited effort to maintain and acquire nuclear weapon-related capabilities.

So even in the dissent by the one agency of the six agencies that did not have a clear and convincing understanding of a nuclear weapons program still was able to state that they believe that there was a reconstitution effort, just not as robust as what the other agencies had concluded.

As we work through this process and as we do speechwriting process for the State of the Union, as I stated and as we tried to reconstruct why different decisions were made, it's first important to understand that the speechwriters, particularly on an issue such as this, which there has been a lot of conversation about, they gather facts and they go off and they write a speech. There's not -- the input from various offices within the White House and within the administration typically happens at the latter part of the process as the more formulated drafts are being distributed through the staffing process.

It is -- as I said on Friday, the reference to purchasing uranium from Africa was created in draft number two. Draft number three was the first draft of the speech which was circulated outside the speechwriting offices. That doesn't mean that it went to the administration, but that's when it starts being shared within the White House, with other people within this building. And for many aspects of the reiterations, from two through draft seven, "he has not explained his efforts to procure uranium in Africa, or high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for uranium

enrichment" -- that's the quote that was in the original drafts of the speech.

The next series of drafts through draft 15 also was quoted the following way: "We also note that he has recently sought to procure uranium in Africa and has purchased high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production." Now, when we saw that and when we went back and looked through the reconstruction of each draft of the speech, we were trying to answer your questions by determining, well, why was that change made. And as I walked through the process on Friday, the reason why is that throughout that, as a construct of the speech was developed by the speechwriters, there were a series of assertions that were made.

Those assertions were very straightforward in which they said, we know that Saddam Hussein had materials sufficient to produce more than 38,000 liters of botulism toxin; we know that Saddam Hussein had materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard, VX nerve agents; we know that Saddam Hussein had upwards of 30,000 munitions capable of delivering chemical agents; we know that Iraq in the late 1990s had several mobile biological weapons labs; we know that in the 1990s Saddam Hussein had advanced nuclear weapons program and had a design for a nuclear weapon, was working on five different methods of enriching uranium for a bomb; and we know that Saddam Hussein had recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.

So there were a whole litany of "we knows." And as we read the speech and reviewed the drafts, we believed that it would be much more credible for those that were hearing the speech and making a decision based on the speech, and being educated by the speech, if they understood how we knew these things. So we asked the speechwriters to go back and source each of these assertions that we made. That's why we go back, and you can look at the final text of the speech in which we cite specific sources, where possible that we can make public. Several of them were the U.N., IAEA; some we had to say, U.S. intelligence indicates; one we said, from three Iraqi defectors we know that Iraq in the late 1990s had several mobile biological weapons labs. Then on the issue of uranium in Africa, we said, "the British government has learned."

And as I said on Friday, the explanation for that was that we had obviously at that point two separate data points or source points in order to reference. One was the intelligence underlying in the NIE, or the British government. As the conversation took place in the fact-checking process, which took place, as I said on Friday, with the National Security staff member Bob Joseph, with the CIA -- is that they talked about the two; that one was very sensitive and was part of the NIE, and they preferred, based on that discussion, to cite the British government report.

There is a conspiracy theory out there that there was some protracted negotiation, or that this was information that was in a clandestine way being forced into the speech by various factions of the administration. It's simply nonsense. This information was provided through the normal process, and in this case, the motivation behind citing the source was to make the speech in the broader sense more credible by, in a series of claims, to give public sourcing, to give the knowledge of how we knew this information to the American people and to the world.

As I also said in my briefing on Friday, and has been said by other members of the administration -- or of the White House, that is -- is that as we went through this process, the White House was not made aware of concerns about the British reporting. There have been reports that this information was shared by the CIA with Congress, and directly with the British government last fall. As we've gone through our information and attempted to determine that information, there was no recollection by the people on the staff that remembered any citation of concern with the British intelligence reporting.

As I said in the briefing on Friday, that the recollection -- and Steve Hadley is here to talk at more length about this -- that his own recollection of the conversation we reported between himself and Director Tenet was focused on the fact of the single sourcing of the 550 tons of uranium from Africa, which was Niger, and that there was a concern about the sourcing, the single sourcing in a speech like this. And that's what I explained then; it's what other administration officials explained.

But as we have gone forward and looked for -- and to make sure that we're being as responsive as possible, we have now found memos relating to the Cincinnati speech -- not to the State of the Union speech, but to the Cincinnati speech -- that was found over the weekend by Mike Gerson, who shared this information with Steve. And in the memo, itself, it is a memo from the Director to Mike Gerson and Steve Hadley. And Steve is going to talk more about that here in a minute. So this is, like I said, new information that we have, through our process, have found paperwork to the Cincinnati speech. We had spent a lot of time looking at all the drafts and all the files on the State of the Union address. But we've now, as members have gone back and looked through their old files,

have found the information on the Cincinnati speech. And in these memos there is a direct reference to the concerns about the British reporting that was shared with the White House.

Steve Hadley is the most – as Deputy National Security Advisor, is the most senior person in the White House that is in charge of vetting for substantive purposes the President's State of the Union address and other key speeches when it pertains to national security. And I'd like for him to go ahead and make some comments about that now.

MR. HADLEY: I've got some notes I'm going to use to walk you through this, because obviously, trying to be accurate is important in these matters. This is the result of efforts that were made at the White House and the CIA after this controversy arose, to go through the files and make sure and reconstruct as best we could of what happened.

And I'm going to try and walk you through some of this as best we can reconstruct it at this point in time, recognizing that the process – there is always the likelihood that we'll find additional information. So I don't want to say this is – this is where we are at this point in time.

As we've already disclosed publicly, George Tenet had a brief telephone conversation with me during the clearance process for the October 7 Cincinnati speech. This was the one – he asked that any reference to Iraq's attempt to purchase uranium from sources from Africa to be deleted from the speech. The language he was referring to when he made that call was language that said the following – and I'll just quote it – "And the regime has been caught attempting to purchase substantial amounts of uranium oxide from sources in Africa, and a central ingredient in the enrichment process."

Based on DCI Tenet's request, the sentence was deleted from the Cincinnati speech, when he said he did not want the President to be a fact witness for that statement. To my best recollection, we did not have any discussion about the UK or UK sources or anything else at that time.

Yesterday morning –

Q What day was that?

MR. HADLEY: It's not clear. There are several phone calls. George and I both remember only one on the subject, and it's either October 5 or 6 or 7. And the records are not such that I can locate exactly which –

Yesterday morning I learned of the memorandum that is dated October 5, 2002. Dan said it was from DCI – I think, more accurately, as these things come over – it comes over with a cover sheet from CIA. It is addressed to Mike Gerson and to myself. The memo is about three and a half pages, single-spaced. It has a variety of suggestions and comments on a variety of different provisions in the Cincinnati speech.

On page three of that memorandum, there's a reference to a sentence that appears in draft six of the Cincinnati speech. And that sentence read as follows: "And the regime" – and here they're talking about the Iraqi regime – "And the regime has been caught attempting to purchase up to 500 metric tons of uranium oxide from sources in Africa, and the central ingredient for the enrichment process."

Now, with respect to that sentence, the October 5 CIA memorandum asked that we remove the sentence because the amount, 500 tons, is in dispute and it is debatable whether it can be acquired from the source.

Q Is that a direct quote from the –

MR. HADLEY: I am not giving a direct quote. I'm giving you a summary of what it says. I'm giving a summary of what it says.

Q – that's not his exact quote.

MR. HADLEY: Very close.

Q -- uranium oxide can be acquired from the source.

MR. HADLEY: I can't tell you. I can only tell you what it said. This is not my memo.

Q What does that mean?

MR. HADLEY: At this point in time, they're talking about Niger and the 500 tons. And I think what it is doing was raising question about whether the uranium could be obtained from the Niger source.

Q Meaning the consortium that controlled it?

MR. HADLEY: Right.

Q The source being where the uranium comes from, rather than an individual?

MR. HADLEY: Correct. Correct. That's how I read it.

Q In other words, the physical source as opposed to the from the consortium that --

MR. HADLEY: No. He was saying, not the source of the information, the source of the uranium.

Q Right. And I'm trying to figure out whether we're discussing -- (inaudible) -- or the consortium.

MR. HADLEY: I can't tell you. It's a three-line phrase, in about a four or five-line paragraph, in a three and a half page, single-spaced memo. And I'm telling you what it says.

Q -- the amount in the source --

MR. HADLEY: The amount is in dispute, and it's debatable whether it can be acquired from the source. The CIA memorandum said that it had told -- that CIA had told the Congress about concerns about the British claim with respect to this. And finally, the memo noted that Iraq already has 500 metric tons of uranium oxide in their inventory.

I'll tell you, as I sit here, I do not recall that paragraph. But I will also tell you that I'm confident I received the memorandum, that I would have read it carefully and in its entirety shortly after receipt.

Today I learned of a second memorandum sent by the CIA on October 6. This is commenting on draft eight of the Cincinnati speech. And by this time, by draft eight, the reference to Iraqi efforts to acquire uranium has already been deleted from the speech, as DCI Tenet asked me to do in his telephone request. And what the memorandum does is provide some additional rationale for the removal of the uranium reference.

The memorandum describes some weakness in the evidence, the fact that the effort was not particularly significant to Iraq's nuclear ambitions because the Iraqis already had a large stock of uranium oxide in their inventory. The memorandum also stated that the CIA had been telling Congress that the Africa story was one of two issues where we differed with the British intelligence.

This memorandum was received by the Situation Room here in the White House, and it was sent to both Dr. Rice and myself.

Q So there were two issues --

MR. HADLEY: Yes. And the other issue I think was the aluminum tubes issue. But I'm not sure. We need to check that. I was not party to those conversations, so we're going to have to find out from the agency what the second issue was. And we can get that --

Q It doesn't say so in --

MR. HADLEY: No. It just says, one of two issues.

Q This memorandum is classified?

MR. HADLEY: Yes.

Q Are they about to be declassified?

MR. HADLEY: That's not my call.

MR. BARTLETT: I'll try to get answers to these questions. At this time, we do not -- we'll try to give you all the information we have as soon as we get it. We'll see what we can do as far as declassification.

MR. HADLEY: I'm not being flip. I'm not part of that declassification process.

Based on these memorandum, the fact is that I had been advised on October 5 that CIA had reservations about British reporting on attempts by Iraq to purchase up to 500 metric tons of uranium oxide from Africa, which I understood to involve Niger. And these reservations were reaffirmed by the CIA memorandum on October 6.

The State of the Union speech was given January 28, 2003. It's about three-plus months later. The speech is lengthy, it sets out a pretty overwhelming case for holding Saddam Hussein to account, and was based on very strong intelligence case regarding weapons of mass destruction.

The context in which this whole discussion of the natural uranium has to be seen I think is one in which -- and I'd just like to digress for a minute -- that we know a lot about Saddam Hussein nuclear ambitions and nuclear appetites. We know he was pursuing a program at the time of the Gulf War. We found out in 1991 he was much further along in that program than we ever imagined. We found, to our surprise, in 1995, that it was continuing and it was more extensive, his nuclear program, than we thought. And we had an intelligence community judgment which Dan read that said when the various U.N. inspectors were thrown out in 1998, he began an effort to reconstitute his nuclear capability.

What we knew about that was that we still had his nuclear Mujahideen, the nuclear experts, that had been part of that program for over a decade. He had a chairman network that was trying to acquire the confines of a nuclear infrastructure. And he had, in fact, acquired a number of actual hardware items that were required for that.

We also knew that he had uranium oxide, about 550 tons, in inventory in the country, and that he had obtained about 200 tons of that, roughly, from Niger. So this is the context in which people see this language and report about seeking quantities of uranium in Africa. It is not an odd fact. It is, in fact, in the context that makes the report very plausible.

Now, the sentence that was uttered by President Bush about Iraqi efforts to acquire uranium was factually accurate. That was true when it issued, and it is true now. The British government -- the statement said, the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. As Prime Minister Blair said last week, the British government still stands by this statement and the intelligence on which it was based.

And the President had every reason to believe that the text of the State of the Union presented to him was sound. But the fact is that given the October 5 and 6 CIA memorandum, and my telephone conversation with the DCI Tenet at roughly the same time, I should have recalled at the time of the State of the Union speech that there was controversy associated with the uranium issue.

When the language in the drafts of the State of the Union referred to efforts to acquire natural uranium, I should have either asked that they -- the 16 words given to that subject be stricken, or I should have alerted DCI Tenet. And had I done so, this would have avoided the whole current controversy.

And in my current position, I am the senior most official within the NSC staff, directly responsible for the substantive review and clearance of presidential speeches. The President and the National Security Advisor look to me to ensure that the substantive statements in those speeches are the ones in which the President can have confidence. And it is now clear to me that I failed in that responsibility in connection with the inclusion of these 16 words in the speech that he gave on the 28th of January.

The National Security Advisor also wants, Condi wants it clearly understood that she feels a personal responsibility for not recognizing the potential problem presented by those 16 words. And we both agree that in permitting the inclusion of those words, the high standards that the President sets with his speeches were not met.

MR. BARTLETT: She's traveling today. That's why she's not here.

MR. HADLEY: That's why, yes.

Q So you're saying mea culpa, it's not George Tenet's fault, as was indicated last week?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, we said, indicated that last what George Tenet has said and what we have given information here is that the process failed. He acknowledged the process on his end, and the fact-checking that he did on his end did not work properly. And as Steve Hadley has talked about here today, is that based on the information that was shared with him at the time, that it should have been remembered and flagged in our process. So the point is, is that --

Q So you're saying both processes failed?

MR. HADLEY: This is a situation where a number of people had an opportunity to avoid the problem. And those opportunities were not taken advantage of. And what we needed to make clear today is that based on what we now know, we had opportunities here to avoid this problem. We didn't take them.

Q How do you --

MR. BARTLETT: Just a second. I'm just going to add a little more information here before we get down to questioning. Like I said, this information was found by Mike Gerson this weekend. I believe it was late Friday evening. The first person he shared it with was Steve Hadley, since he was the other name on the document, after a senior staff meeting on Monday morning.

This information then was shared with those who were already with Prime Minister Berlusconi in Crawford, being obviously, Dr. Rice, Secretary Card and ultimately the President. So he was informed of this yesterday. When this information was found, we obviously wanted to get to the bottom -- the first memo we discussed last night with the Director. And the Director, as we did, looking at this process, found the second memo, which was given to us this morning.

MR. HADLEY: That's correct.

MR. BARTLETT: And so as soon as we had this information in the position where we could share it, we brought it forward. I will say that the -- like I said, the President was informed of this yesterday. He -- as he has stated on many occasions, the case against Saddam Hussein was clear and compelling and comprehensive; that he is responsible for these decisions to -- the decision of going to war. He takes responsibility for those decisions and the case that he outlined to the public for that rationale to go to war, the decisions that were behind it. He accepts the explanation by this National Security Council staff, as well as the Director of Intelligence. He is, obviously, not pleased when the high standards that he expects to be met have not, but he has the highest level of confidence in the National Security team, as well as the Director of Intelligence. And we're here to answer those questions.

Q Let me just ask you one other question. You said -- if I understand the conversation between Bob Joseph and Alan Foley, of the CIA, correctly, Joseph said that he wanted to cite the British report. And Foley at that point said, we told the Brits that they shouldn't be saying that.

MR. BARTLETT: That is not -- as I stated on Friday, John, that's not Bob Joseph's recollection -- that he specifically asked Mr. Foley that we were wanting to cite how we knew the information, we had two choices, raised concerns about citing sensitive sourcing of the National Intelligence Estimate. And the decision then was citing the British report, and there was an agreement that --

Q Did Foley not at that point ever say to Joseph that CIA has some problems with that report, or we didn't think the Brits should have said that?

MR. BARTLETT: As I said on Friday --

Q -- they have their own alternative sourcing and they're comfortable with --

MR. BARTLETT: According to Bob Joseph, he did not raise that specific concern about the British reporting in that conversation, during the fact-checking on the State of the Union.

Q So there was never a concern raised -- Joseph says there was never a concern raised about the British report in that conversation?

MR. BARTLETT: That's correct.

Q So Mike Gerson also could have stopped this process, if he had remembered the memo, is that accurate?

MR. BARTLETT: He had no recollection of the memo. And he -- like I said, he discovered the memo and shared it. But he, himself, did not recall the memo during the State of the Union process.

His staff -- obviously, when you write a State of the Union address, something of that size, he gives assignments within his office to the education person -- education, economy, different people writing different parts. And his job is to keep the big picture and pull it together. As I said, on many occasions, the inclusion of this language was not at the specific request of anyone. It was based on a fact and a knowledge basis of the drafters of the speech itself.

Q How many other staff members would have seen and read the memos when they came? It was addressed to Mike and Steve. But how many other staff members would it have been passed on to?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, generally, in the process -- and not being a member of the National Security Council staff, and maybe Steve can elaborate on this when he gets back -- is that information is then shared back with the speechwriters, or through the people who are in charge of those specific accounts from a substantive standpoint on the National Security Council. These documents, for example, were shown to -- the two that we have discussed today to Bob Joseph. He has no recollection at all of seeing these documents. And Mike Gerson himself does not remember who he handed them to, or who he discussed directly with them. But obviously, they were acted upon because the information was pulled from the Cincinnati speech.

Q Did Mike get the second memo, as well, the October 6th memo?

MR. BARTLETT: His name is on the fax distribution from the CIA --

Q For both of them?

MR. BARTLETT: For both of them. But he has no document. He only had a copy of the first one, but not the second one.

Q In his possession over the weekend, he --

MR. BARTLETT: He's gone back through the rest of his documents. And like I said, the second document was the one that was found by the CIA, not by the White House.

Q Does the President have confidence in Mr. Hadley the same way he does Tenet, expects him to remain on the job?

MR. BARTLETT: He does. He has full confidence in both -- obviously, in his National Security Advisor and in his Deputy National Security Advisor and the head of the Central Intelligence Agency. As I said, this is -- the process did not work with regards to this specific piece of information. But as the President has said on many occasions, the underlying evidence and the totality of evidence that he based his decision on was clear and compelling as it was then, as it is today. And he has the highest level of confidence in these members of his team. And he accepts their explanation.

Q Dan, did Steve offer to resign?

MR. BARTLETT: Conversations he may or may not have had with the President I was not privy to.

Q Has he discussed this personally with the President?

MR. BARTLETT: He has had a conversation with the President. And the President expressed his complete confidence in him.

Q Dan, can I just go through a few specifics? Who wrote the CIA memo?

MR. BARTLETT: I do not know the authors of the memos themselves.

Q Is Steve coming back?

MR. BARTLETT: I hope. (Laughter.)

Q When he comes back, can you ask him who wrote those two memos? Secondly --

MR. BARTLETT: There's not -- I'm not sure -- there's not a name. It says who it's addressed to, but there's not a name on who it's from, from the CIA on the memo itself.

Q Was it from Tenet per se, or just from the CIA?

MR. BARTLETT: It's from the CIA.

Q To him?

MR. BARTLETT: Right. And he clarified that. It was from the CIA.

Q In October, as you all were going through these drafts, did the President see a version of the October speech that included the Niger claim?

MR. BARTLETT: I wouldn't be surprised if he did, because many drafts he's looking at -- and he's looking at them for different purposes. But also what is very common in speeches of this size is that -- because we go through many drafts. You all always ask how many, 28 drafts, 29 drafts. He is very aware that there's going to be additions and subtractions. He was not -- he has no memory of this subtraction being made during the Cincinnati process itself. But it is highly likely, and I'm almost positive he received -- again, it didn't say Niger.

Q It said Africa.

MR. BARTLETT: It said Africa and 500 tons.

Q And then when the State of the Union comes back it says Africa again. Did he raise any questions about why this was in one speech and taken out and suddenly it's back in this?

MR. BARTLETT: Again, you're starting with the premise that he was fully aware of the discussion that took place of why it was taken out of the first one. And the answer to that question is that he was not. It was not brought to his attention. There are many times when there's fact-checking and there's changes and additions, different fact-checks or data points are put in the speech or taken out of the speech. And not all of them rise to the level. Some of them we have to take to the President to make a decision on. But in this case, he was not involved in the process in Cincinnati and, therefore, did not raise concerns in the State of the Union.

Q Okay, but let me finish then. What about Gerson? Because the speech is his baby. Did he not remember that the Africa line had been taken out in October and suddenly reappears? He doesn't know -- you know he knows every word and every sentence in these speeches because he lives them. Did he just have no memory that this rather extraordinary accusation against Iraq and its nuclear ambitions had been pulled out of one speech and he was now reinserting it? He doesn't remember it?

MR. BARTLETT: Based on his recollection, he -- like I said, again, there's a team of people who are writing these speeches. And there are various reasons why decisions are made to take information out and keep information in. And the speechwriters themselves also rely upon the fact-checking process. They are not the fact-checkers themselves. There's a process in which the people who are expert in various areas, whether it's on the economy, national security, education, work through the process in which they review the speech for those purposes. That is done. And in

this case, Mike, just like other people would, would have a process in which we're following to make sure it was in. But he had no recollection of why it was taken out of the first one to raise concerns that you're suggesting in the State of the Union.

Can you hold on just a second.

Q Let me ask you this real quick. Since you're saying the devil is in the details and the process, what safeguards now are in place? Since all of these fact-checkers said that they failed in the process to check and see -- everybody is sending their letters of regret? What safeguards are coming into place to --

MR. BARTLETT: Well, that's a very good question. And that's why the Chief of Staff, Andy Card, from the very outset said, if there's a breakdown in the process, I want to know where it is and how we can fix it. We are reviewing their process, just as Director Tenet has said that they are reviewing their process. And we will put measures into place.

Now, having said that, from a procedural standpoint I think it goes without saying that every single person that has anything to do with a presidential speech, considering what has transpired within the past two weeks, that we're going to do everything in our power to make sure that the factual information of the President's speech is accurate and signed off properly.

Q Granted everything is going to be scrutinized a little bit closer, more closely, but what I'm asking is, since it was about specifics and you're saying the facts were actually correct, but it was about the specifics, the devil was in the details -- is it going to be more of a broad statement, more so that we will see in future State of the Unions or future major statements coming out?

MR. BARTLETT: A future broad --

MR. HADLEY: I think I get her point.

Q Thank you.

MR. HADLEY: The President, as you look at the State of the Union, needed to explain to the American people what was at stake in Iraq. And in order to do that, he needed to set out facts. The President is not going to run from facts. What he is going to do is insist that the facts are accurate. And, of course, in this case, the fact was accurate; there was nothing wrong with what the President said. The problem was that there was controversy

associated.

The President basically has said that, in my speeches, if I'm making a factual assertion that applies to something that a Cabinet officer is responsible for, particularly the DCI, I want the DCI to be able to stand up and say, I support the President on that fact.

And given the fact that there were some uncertainties and concerns here with the DCI, that fact should not have gotten in the President's speech. It was accurate. You know, it's interesting that the reports, and as George Tenet put in the statement he released last Friday, even Ambassador Wilson's statement and the description that George Tenet made of that statement, acknowledged that in 1999, Iraqis had come to Niger and asked about establishing commercial relations. And the Nigerians who were part of that discussion understood that to mean efforts to get yellow cake.

So it's interesting. Even Ambassador Wilson's statement supports factually what the President asserted, which is where these sources say --

Q But, Steve, you --

MR. HADLEY: So my only point is, factually it was accurate. But the problem was the DCI had reservations about it, would not feel comfortable standing behind it. And, therefore, it should not have been in the speech.

Q Steve, forget the speech for a second --

Q -- you said an apology was coming out --

Q Accurate in the sense that the British had actually said that, not in the sense that the information, itself --

MR. HADLEY: And the sense that the British had sources for the truth of that assertion. They continued to stand by the assertion and they continued to stand by the sources. So it's not just that the statement the British said is accurate because the British said it, it's because the British stand behind the substance of that statement.

Q And are there choices, is this where the controversy gets into another government's intelligence? Or is this intelligence the British, themselves, have gotten?

MR. HADLEY: We don't know. They have not -- this is really for the CIA, my understanding is that they have not disclosed the sources.

Q Can I just see if I have this -- what you're saying here today. It seems to me you're acknowledging that the CIA warned the White House that the information about Africa and uranium was weak or disputed, but you're standing by your overall judgment there was plenty of other information that indicated that he was, in fact, trying to reconstitute a nuclear weapon and that this does not cause you to fall away at all from the overall point?

MR. BARTLETT: There was specific questions asked of us, particularly about the British, well, there's been reporting by various news organizations represented here that they said, no, we warned the British government about their findings -- "we" being the CIA -- that we warned the Congress in and there's already been indications that they may have also told the White House. We have no evidence of that or recollection of that, until these documents came forward. And that's why we're sharing them with you today.

So the concern is that there was specific issues raised about the British report. Again, the British have additional information that they are obligated not to share with other governments -- not just us, but anyone -- that gives Prime Minister Blair confidence to say that they stand by it. You know, time will probably tell on that, history will show on that. But the point of the matter is, it was in the National Intelligence Estimate, understand that, these reportings of the general Africa seeking.

But with regards to the types of concerns that were raised by the CIA through the memos that were disclosed here today, we thought it was important that we said part of our process should have caught these reservations by the CIA, despite what is outlined in the NIE or elsewhere; that if these concerns, they should have been raised

and they should have been addressed. And that's why --

Q When you follow the NIE --

Q So the CIA tried to wave you off and the memos had slipped everyone's memory and, therefore, you put it in, even though had you seen those memos or remembered them, you would not have put it in?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes. That's it. They tried -- they did wave us off and it did come out of the Cincinnati speech. So it was in a different speech.

Q -- in the Cincinnati speech, though?

MR. HADLEY: So there's two points. There's the one you just made. Had we recalled those memos, had we seen them we would have raised the red flag or taken it out. That's obviously one failure. The other failure is, it's in the speech. The vetting of the State of the Union speech is a separate process, it goes out to all Agencies and at the end of the day, nobody raises their hands and says, take it out. That's the problem. There were, in fact, two failings here.

One other thing. And, obviously, we depend on that clearance process. You know, you cannot have a process that depends solely on recollections of three and a half months before. You have a process that both tries to draw from what people have learned in the past, but also sends it out again for another clearance because we want to make absolutely sure.

And one last point, if I could. The problem with this is that the -- and the real failing is that we've had a national discussion on 16 words, and it's taken away from the fact that the intelligence case supporting concerns about WMD in Iraq was overwhelming. It had been put together over a period of decades. It was based as much on U.N. sources as it was on American sources. It was supported by a variety of other intelligence services. It was supported by a number of administrations -- it was a basis for President Clinton to use military action in 1998. It was a basis for an overwhelming congressional resolution twice authorizing military force in Iraq.

In the end, it all came down to this statement, and we judged that Iraq has continued its weapons of mass destruction programs in defiance of U.N. resolutions and restrictions. Baghdad has chemical and biological weapons, as well as missiles with ranges in excess of U.N. restrictions. If left unchecked, it probably will have nuclear weapons during this decade. That is the judgment of the intelligence community. It was a strong case, a 90-plus page NIE, facts of intelligence reports behind it, as strong a case as you get in these matters.

And the tragedy of this is that that has all been obscured by the struggle over 16 words.

Q Steve --

Q I want to go back to the --

MR. BARTLETT: Orderly process here, I want to make sure everybody gets picked. Campbell.

Q Thank you. I want to ask you, U.S. News & World Report this week said there was a meeting in the Sit Room three days before the State of the Union by senior officials vetting the intelligence on WMD, that Scooter Libby led a presentation there that became the basis for Powell's presentation to the United Nations. Were you a part of that meeting? Because it was interesting, they're also reporting that Libby's paper he presented to Powell did not include any Niger reference, and that was put together three days before the State of the Union speech.

MR. HADLEY: There were two processes going on at this time. It's interesting. There is a process associated with the State of the Union, which is given on the 28th. And there is a separate, but related, process associated with getting Powell ready for his U.N. speech. And there are, obviously, meetings and activities with respect to both of those processes.

Q But they weren't coordinated? Even though they're both, essentially, making the same --

MR. HADLEY: They're coordinated in the sense that the same people are involved in many of them. But, remember, they're also designed for different purposes.

MR. BARTLETT: I was in both -- I was in that meeting, as well. And there was not a handing out of any documents at that meeting.

Q No, he -- according to the report he did an oral presentation, then wrote up a document following that, presenting it to Powell as sort of a rough draft for his presentation to the U.N., and it did not include, that initial thing he gave to Powell, any reference to Niger.

MR. BARTLETT: Well, it was -- I remember it was not read in its entirety at that meeting. The information that was being provided was offered as types of information that could be used by the Secretary of State. It was not a "here's your draft, go deliver this" -- here is some information that has been compiled from here. I would have to go back, I don't know if that specific information --

Q I get all that. I was just wondering --

MR. BARTLETT: I don't know if that specific information -- I don't know, it's not -- I don't know why that specific information was not in there.

Q Can I follow up one thing on the British intelligence? And tell me if I'm wrong. According to 1441, Article 10, if there is solid intelligence on nukes, aren't you required to share that with the IAEA? And, if so, why haven't the British done that?

MR. BARTLETT: I can't speak on behalf of the British government.

Q Well, am I wrong? Is that not -- I mean --

MR. HADLEY: I'm sorry, I had to read a note passed to me, and I didn't hear you. Could I ask you to repeat the question?

Q Fourteen forty-one, Article 10, part of it says that any government with information relating to Saddam's pursuit of nuclear weapons is required to provide that information to the IAEA. So it seems odd that the British wouldn't do that, having signed off on 1441, and, yet, sort of tap this intelligence that they're not sharing with anyone else.

MR. BARTLETT: Again, we can't speak on behalf of the British government.

Q Well, wouldn't we press them? I mean, they're your partner is this coalition and --

MR. HADLEY: Think -- we ought to -- you may want to look back at 1441. My guess is -- and you'd have to examine it -- but one possible explanation is that a lot of that was to get information to UNMOVIC and IAEA in order to make the inspection regime successful. And it was asking all countries to share intelligence with IAEA and UNMOVIC to support the effort which we were, at that point, in terms of conducting a vigorous inspection regime. So I think that's probably the context. And you can decide whether you think this discussion about efforts to acquire in Niger would help an effort to find WMD in Iraq. That's the only -- you know, that's a guess. You might want to go back and take a look at it and see if I'm -- but that's a possible explanation. That's the best I can do. I don't have the document in front of me.

Q Can I just present the kind of challenge you've been hearing, and that you'll hear more of because of what you've told us here today. You say there was a strong case that seems so far, at least, to have been badly off the mark. And the error that you described that you made and that others made, there are those who will say that it wasn't just some kind of bureaucratic snafu, it was an ideological error. You didn't want to see, you didn't notice, it didn't stick with you, any information, any communication that went against the conclusion you already wanted to reach. What do you say to that?

MR. BARTLETT: The ideological error of the United Nations Security Council and the dozens of resolutions that they passed?

Q I'm asking about the --

MR. BARTLETT: The ideological error of the British government? Of the Spanish government? Of the Italian government? Of the Australian government? Of the Clinton administration? Of the Bush administration? Of members of Congress on both sides of the aisle? All of who had information and access to intelligence based on this information that came to their own conclusion? That was embodied in the vote in 1441 and other areas? I think that's complete nonsense.

Q But is it possible that at some point during that process which you've just described which convinced the world that something was going on in Iraq, the blinders got put on? Of you, in your own mind, so that that's the reason you missed this?

MR. HADLEY: I don't think so, and I'll tell you why. The way the clearance process works is most of it is done at the lower level of experts, who are close to the intelligence, close to the data, and who are in the best position to make sure what the President says is accurate.

If there are problems and disputes, there are things that can't get resolved, they move up and they get to my level. And that is why on several occasions I've had conversations in the clearance of speeches with John McLaughlin and DCI Tenet. That is why he calls me in connection with the Cincinnati speech. And the reaction is typical. If he calls and says take something out, we take it out -- because the President's guidance is, I don't want anything in the speech of an intelligence nature that George Tenet can't stand behind. That's the test of the President.

Or you can see, from what we've been through in the last two weeks, how right that is. Nobody who was committed to Iraq and getting the case out on Iraq, wanted to go through what we did in the last two weeks. Because it has blotted what, as I just said before, the overwhelming case that was there. So I just think when it comes to presidential speeches, it's not true, the President is very clear what his standard is and we didn't -- I -- I -- didn't meet it.

Q And that's not because of your predisposition to believe something else?

MR. HADLEY: No, it's not because of predisposition to believe something else. And the other point I would have to say is it gets into the speech in the way that Dan described. By the time it gets to me, it's there, it's been through a number of drafts and it's out for the clearance process. And at that point, I'm waiting to hear problems coming in from the Agencies that need to be raised up so they can get resolved. And my standard is, you know, if Tenet has a problem, it comes out.

Q Steve, part of the story I still can't get my head around is the NIE comes out October 1st. And even if you hadn't read it then -- and I'm not sure if you did read it in that first week -- you got a call from the Director between the 5th and the 7th saying, we've got problems in the Niger element of this. And the NIE, we are told, is the gold standard of your intelligence assessments. Less than a week after it's published the Director is walking it back? And then on January 24th, four days before the speech, you get another member from the CIA quoting the NIE, presumably without some of the caveats, suggesting that it's back in.

Now, does that tell me that the CIA's story kept changing? What am I supposed to conclude from that?

MR. HADLEY: I guess the best I can do for you, actually, is George tries to address that in the statement issued last Friday and in the statements he gave in connection with the Senate Intelligence Committee. And I think that's an issue he -- is best addressed in --

Q Steve, let me put it another way. Knowing what you now know, and given the memos that you've now read, should the statement ever have been in the NIE?

MR. HADLEY: That's not a judgment for me to make.

MR. BARTLETT: You know, I think, in fact, that's part of the motivation behind the IG investigation that Director Tenet has launched internally in the CIA to determine the process of how this was vetted, the whole issue with the NIE.

Q But we do have this right, don't we, that a week later the Director of Central Intelligence is walking back one of the central facts that he put in the summary of the NIE that you've declassified, and then it comes back to you again, three months later? Do I have that right -- from the CIA?

MR. BARTLETT: The information that you're referring to in this memo was actually information that was provided for a parallel process that was going on --

Q For the Powell speech.

MR. BARTLETT: For the Powell presentation. As you said, they're interchangeable people involved in both. That information was included, re-citing what was in the NIE --

Q Even though the Director had warned you of that same data three months before? I just want to make sure I have the sequence right.

MR. HADLEY: The NIE is the NIE. We put out a declassified version of it. And what the Director said was that the central case was that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear program, that this natural uranium was not one of the things on which they relied for that judgment, but they included it in the NIE for reasons of completeness. That is my best --

Q For reasons of completeness, but then what --

MR. HADLEY: David, let me finish. Let me finish. So it is in the NIE. The NIE has the standing that people understand it is a definitive intelligence product. But what we are saying is that the Director had concerns about it appearing in a presidential speech, he asked that it be taken out of Cincinnati. And having been taken out of Cincinnati, it should have been taken out of the State of the Union.

And what we've talked about here is the failures of a number of people --

Q But he never took it out of the --

MR. HADLEY: -- sorry -- failures of a number of people who would have been in a position to raise a question and take it out, and he didn't.

Q Can I follow up on that point?

Q Dan, from the President's perspective, is this now over? Is the internal investigation, the search for memos still underway? You said that the speechwriting process will still go forward, but does the President think this is over? Will there be reprimands, resignations, firings? Is this, from the President's view, the end of it?

MR. BARTLETT: Secretary Card, as I said, wants to ensure that the process, itself, is fully understood, to ensure that we avoid this in the future. The administration, as we've demonstrated on more than one occasion now, that as we learn information, we're more than willing to share that information with the public, so there's a better understanding of the history of this speech. I cannot rule out the future. I would say that we've done a very good effort of trying to determine all the documents, all the information we have on this information.

As I said, again, President Bush is confident in his team. Both in the National Security Council, as well as the CIA. He is -- understands that the case before the public, that Saddam Hussein was a clear and compelling and comprehensive case. The decisions that he made in the wake of the diplomatic measures before the United Nations Security Council was coming to an end and ultimately using military force was a decision made on very sound intelligence. As Steve said, it was a mountain of intelligence, documents both embodied in the 90 page report, as well as all the documents that embody that document.

And as we look at each piece of information, as you go through each of these claims that are in there, and you look at a responsible leader is put in the position that he's put in after 9/11, it's important that the policy decision-makers, not the analysts, not those that are giving analytical judgments on this, but the people who are looking at the totality of information, in a post-9/11 world, it is critical that he take that information, as he has stated to the

American people, and he's going to act on it aggressively. And he stands by the decision he made then, he stands by the decision that the entire case was made upon. And he has the fullest confidence in the people that advise him on national security matters.

Q The CIA Director, in his statement a week ago Friday, accepted responsibility for the Agency that he is in charge of. We also learned today about a problem at the White House. The President is in charge of the White House. So does he not ultimately bear responsibility for these 16 words going in the speech?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, John, as I said, the President bears responsibility for the decisions he makes, the case he outlined to the public, the speeches he delivers. And the case that he outlined to the public was a clear and compelling case.

Q Okay, that's --

MR. BARTLETT: In response to your question --

Q But on this particular issue, I mean, does he not say, I'm in charge of the White House, it's ultimately my responsibility?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, and in this case, he is accepting the explanation of his staff as to why the process that we put in place to benefit him and to benefit the public to make sure that the facts that he provides are unquestioned and assertive.

Q Okay, so he's not going to take responsibility for the White House that he oversees.

MR. BARTLETT: John, he takes full responsibility for the decisions that he has made, and he has the highest confidence in the White House that operates.

MR. HADLEY: I think it's not fair to say he does not take responsibility for the White House. He set clear guidance of what he wants from the clearance process. We did not measure up to his standards. And he's made it absolutely clear that we will measure up to his standards in the future.

So in that sense, he is taking responsibility for running his shop. But his point is that what the American people are going to judge him by is the decisions he made, of which intelligence is an input. But no President makes a decision to take military action by sort of a box checker on intelligence assessments. It is an input to a judgment he makes about threats and risks the United States and the need that he has to take action to head them up. And it is an input to him. But his standpoint, these 16 words affect not one whit the decision he made, which was based on the intelligence case, his assessment of the threat and how he viewed that threat, post-9/11. So that's the point he's making. That's the standard by which the American people are going to judge him. And on that standard, he's comfortable.

Q And I understand that. I just don't quite understand why Director Tenet takes responsibility for the Agency that he is in charge of, yet the President does not take ultimate responsibility for this failure, this mistake?

MR. HADLEY: In some sense, we all work for the President of the United States: Director Tenet, we here. So if you want to know who is the equivalent of Tenet, it's me. And I've taken responsibility for this with respect to the NSC staff in the same way Director Tenet has taken responsibility for his Agency. And the President is going to have to make decisions about, with respect to both organizations, how to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

Q You just said that the President takes responsibility for the case that he outlined. This was part of the case that he outlined.

MR. HADLEY: That's correct.

Q So, then, over a couple of steps, he does, in fact, take responsibility for these 16 words.

MR. BARTLETT: He is responsible for the decisions he makes. He outlined a case to the American people that was clear and compelling. On the particular instance of this information, we've given our full estimation of how the process failed and the fact that it was put in the speech, and we also pointed out, as Steve walked through the history of why the statement is accurate, but it didn't rise to the presidential standards.

But the bottom line is, is that he takes responsibility for the decisions he makes. And he has in this case.

Q Okay. And the other question I wanted to ask. Putting aside the memos and any recall of the CIA's objection to the British intelligence in October, shouldn't NSC staffers such as yourself have been more concerned with the use of British intelligence, have queried the CIA a little bit more, saying, wait a second, we're just basing this statement on British intelligence, how do we know; do we know that intelligence is good? Or do we just accept that British intelligence is as good as U.S. intelligence?

MR. HADLEY: We depend a lot on intelligence from other countries. We depend a lot on forces from other countries, as we're doing now in Afghanistan and Iran. And in no country are we closer to and working more closely with probably than the British.

MR. BARTLETT: Again, Keith, I think it's important on that aspect to remember the desire here. And the desire here was to be able to give as much information to the public as possible, so they could understand the assertions we were making. When given the choice, any time you give me a choice, if I can cite a public document or a classified document, yes, it is one from a stalwart ally who has a sterling reputation when it comes to their capabilities. Of course we're going to cite their capability -- their report. And it's a report that people can go and study, themselves. And that was the motivation behind it.

Q You feel comfortable just using British intelligence.

MR. HADLEY: No. Let's see what happened here. Remember, in connection with the Cincinnati speech, George Tenet does have concerns about the British report. And that's what we learned from the memorandum. It's partly on the basis of those he says to take it out. The problem is, within the clearance process three-and-a-half months later, with respect to the State of the Union, nobody raises a hand and says, remember, we had problems with British reporting, you need to take this out.

Q But I'm saying -- even if you don't remember that, why doesn't someone raise a hand and say, wait a second, we're just making a statement based on British intelligence, how do we know that; do we know that it's accurate? Wasn't anybody at the NSC concerned about that?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, the NSC, as we've explained, on more than one occasion, through the vetting process of the State of the Union address, raised that issue, got it fact-checked from the CIA, came back, and that's why it was in the speech.

Q -- problem with British intelligence, specifically, the use of British intelligence was raised?

MR. HADLEY: Say again?

Q Specifically, the accuracy of British intelligence was raised with the CIA?

Q You're saying, no, it was --

MR. HADLEY: No, I said --

MR. BARTLETT: The British -- we've mentioned the British concern raised in the Cincinnati speech. When the question is whether we could cite the British in the State of the Union process, that it was signed off on by the CIA. Now, what has been explained by the CIA is that George Tenet didn't look at those relevant sections of the speech, and they've made this explanation. But in that process, it did -- it was approved.

What Steve is saying, is that in light of the history on this, with the Cincinnati process, it probably shouldn't -- it should not have been approved.

Q Mr. Hadley, just a couple of details on it. Memo number one --

MR. HADLEY: Look, I think what happens is a question is, are you okay with this, somebody says, okay. And somebody should have said, no, we're not, we've got problems with British intelligence. That's something, if I had remembered, I should have said, something that should have been said in the clearance process. Again, there are a number of people who could have raised a hand, and a hand didn't get raised.

Q Memo number one, the concerns that were raised directly and with you and Mr. Gerson, were those concerns conveyed to the President at the time?

MR. HADLEY: No, they would not have been.

Q Would they have been conveyed to Dr. Rice?

MR. HADLEY: No, I would have run those -- we would have -- see, when you do these clearance processes, it's sort of a paper process. People call you with their comments. There's also a process here, as I said, the experts that work these issues are working on the phones trying to come up with the language that is mutually acceptable and people are comfortable with. And that's a process that goes on.

I think -- we looked at it, we can get you the number. In terms of the State of the Union, there's something close to 30 facts in the WMD field alone that are being cleared in this process. And what comes up is where the experts cannot reach agreement on what the language should say. And that comes up. And basically it comes to me, and I deal with John McLaughlin and George Tenet. If there were a major issue, I might come to Condi. In this case, I didn't. There was no need.

Q And the President was not told that that passage was taken out of the Cincinnati speech?

MR. BARTLETT: That's correct. He has no memory of that.

MR. HADLEY: His standard is, don't have anything in here that George Tenet can't stand by. And the clearance process is supposed to get all that stuff out.

Q So the first time Dr. Rice --

MR. HADLEY: His assumption is, when it comes to him, everybody signed off and it's good to go.

Q So within the White House, the first time that the CIA concerns about the quality of the British intelligence went up to the level above your level, up to Dr. Rice, would have been with memo number two?

MR. HADLEY: I'm hesitating because, again, given you don't know what you don't, given what we put together at this point in time, that's the evidence we had. That's old --

Q But as of memo number two, certainly Dr. Rice was aware of the concerns, the CIA --

MR. HADLEY: What we know is, again, a copy of the memo comes to the Situation Room, it's sent to Dr. Rice, it's sent -- and that's it. You know, I can't tell you she read it. I can't even tell you she received it. But in some sense, it doesn't matter. Memo sent, we're on notice.

Q Did you ever have a discussion with Dr. Rice about the quality of the British intelligence and the CIA concerns?

MR. HADLEY: Not that I can recall.

Q I'm just trying to square --

MR. HADLEY: I understand.

Q Do you consider the case of the aluminum tubes clear and compelling, given that even the key judgment qualified in the dissent on that. Were any red flags raised about that at all?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, there was a very open discussion about that, a discussion that Secretary Powell shared with the world and with his presentation for the United Nations Security Council. And it is an assessment in which the Director and the CIA stand by to this day. And, therefore, we have every reason to be confident.

Q That's the purpose --

Q Steve, you said that one of the major problems with it was that there were a number of people that could have raised their hands, and they didn't. A lot of those people were people in the CIA. At the time, after the President's U.N. speech, leading up all the way until the war, there was a lot of pressure on the CIA to come up with more evidence to support the administration's case for going to Iraq. There were many stories in the press that the CIA felt pressured beyond what they thought was appropriate. There was an office set up in the Pentagon to go over intelligence, to try to make sure that in other cases -- not this case, but in other cases -- the CIA hadn't missed something.

There are many people who say that by the time the State of the Union came along, the CIA was too cowed, effectively, to raise their hands. How would you respond to that?

MR. HADLEY: The Pentagon story, you know, Doug Fieth and others have testified on it and talked publicly about it. I don't have anything to add on that.

Q The major point is just the pressure that was put on the CIA.

MR. HADLEY: Well, the premise that you have is that there was pressure. And I don't accept that premise. I spent a lot of time on the phone talking to George Tenet and John McLaughlin, and I am very confident that if they felt that the White House was pressuring their Agency, they would have picked up the phone and they would have called me and they would have told me and we would have addressed it.

Q So you're saying that the CIA was not under any pressure from anywhere within the administration?

MR. HADLEY: I'm saying exactly what I said, that I believe that if it was pressure coming from the White House and it raised a concern with George Tenet and John McLaughlin, they would have raised it with me.

Q So do you deny, then, that a culture could have been created through statements by administration officials and the press, through various other appearances, not by direct pressure from the White House, but from the atmosphere at the time, that would have effectively put pressure on the CIA, that would have made them -- inappropriately -- but would have made them less willing to raise flags when they should have?

MR. HADLEY: I don't accept that that happened. And if it had happened, I believe I would have heard about it from George Tenet and John McLaughlin.

MR. BARTLETT: I think it's important to take a step back from that a little bit. There is clear recognition that the pressure under many people within the intelligence community, not just in the CIA, but the FBI and others, as we fight a war -- we're in the middle of a war -- and to protect the homeland and to pursue to make sure that we are doing everything we can to hunt down al Qaeda and to make sure that we have a knowledge of weapons of mass destruction, where they are, making sure we're confronting those threats. We are obligated to make sure that we aggressively pursue any lead that may be out there, to make sure we protect the American people.

Remember the conversation we were having two years ago, is that we were not connecting the dots -- the Asian - (inaudible) -- memo, this memo, this, this -- we weren't engaging on that information pre-911. That's what some critics would say. And now it's supposed to be the flip side. And I don't think that's fair because I think these professionals are doing everything they can because they know that they help contribute to the safety of the American people. But then I just reiterate what Steve said -- I think there's a relationship and a confidence level between the White House and the Director of the CIA, and his deputy, that if he felt there was pressure coming from the White House on intelligence matters, that he would pick up the phone and call and say.

We got time for two more questions.

Q Did Steve offer to resign? You spoke to the President. Did you offer to him to resign? Or do you have any intention of doing so?

MR. HADLEY: My conversation with the President, I'm not going to talk about.

Q How unusual is it to receive two memos and a phone call on one sentence in a speech? It sounds like this was not that memorable experience for you, because you forgot it soon afterwards. Is this normal for directors to call on various items in a speech? And do you get memos?

MR. HADLEY: Look, it's a very normal process. As I said, in a major speech like that you're clearing WMD alone almost 30 different items. There's other portions to the case, as well. There's an enormous amount of back-and-forth. It's very, very typical. You're working very hard, a lot of issues in a very compressed time frame to get them right. And the bottom line is to get everybody to sign off and say we're comfortable with the speech. Once that's done, the President delivers the speech, and you move on to something. This is a pretty busy period in this period of time.

And just one thing I wanted to add on what you said. You have to recognize in this period of time, the war on terror, working Afghanistan, trying to work Iraq, events are putting a lot of pressure on everybody. Events are putting a lot of pressure on everybody because there's a lot at stake. There are American lives at stake. And do people feel pressure? You bet. Every day.

Q Let me get a quick question.

MR. BARTLETT: I just want show you -- the memos run not exclusive to this issue. The memos -- this was one of many issues.

MR. HADLEY: Remember that the first memo is three-and-a-half pages, single-spaced.

MR. BARTLETT: This is just a couple lines.

MR. HADLEY: And this has five lines.

Q Was it on other issues in the speech, as well?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes, which is common.

MR. HADLEY: Oh, yes. It's a whole series.

Q And the second memo is also --

MR. BARTLETT: Yes.

Q -- not on this point only?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes.

Q Can I go back to one thing that Steve -- you said.

MR. BARTLETT: Final question.

Q You mentioned that one of the reasons why the amount wasn't included was that the intelligence believed that Saddam had already acquired 500 metric tons of uranium, 200 from Niger.

MR. HADLEY: I think the 200 from Niger. We need to check that. That's my recollection, but we're checking.

Q So I guess my two questions, would you have been comfortable if language about that had been included, that Saddam Hussein had already acquired this uranium? And second of all, just out of curiosity, do we know what happened to this 500 metric tons? Has it been found, or is it still missing?

MR. HADLEY: Two things. First, the uncertainty about the amount, I read it was, we don't know if the 500 is the right amount that someone was talking about acquiring. That's how I read it.

And secondly, in terms of the 550 metric tons that are there, it is there. It had been up until the war -- my understanding is, had been under IAEA safeguard. And one of the things we did in the light of the looting and sabotage that went on is we invited IAEA to go in and try and locate and make sure that those 550 tons were still under safekeeping. And they have done that and have recently made a report.

MR. BARTLETT: Thanks, everyone.

Q Dan, just one last clarification. I'm sorry, but this is kind of the crux of it, I think. The CIA --

MR. BARTLETT: None of you got the crux of it. (Laughter.)

Q I may have asked you, but I just want to make sure I've got it right.

Q There are a couple of cruxes back here. (Laughter.)

Q The CIA has suggested that the conversation between Foley and Joseph was more extensive than you all have. I just want to make sure on this question of how the CIA signed off on the attribution to the British intelligence, Joseph's position is, he doesn't recall that Foley raised any concerns about the British intelligence. So it's -- he's not saying it didn't happen, he's saying he does not recall --

MR. BARTLETT: He has no memory of it. He said that the conversation was -- this is not just pick up and talk.

Q But it's an important distinction.

MR. BARTLETT: It is.

Q Tell me which one is his position, that he says it did not happen, or that he does not recall?

MR. BARTLETT: I'll tell you what he believed the conversation to be. He believed the conversation, as we're going through a series of citations on the WMD account, which is where his expertise was, and we're trying to do public citations of our sourcing, and when they got the issue of uranium -- again, they have gone through all of these. It was not just this issue. They're going through several different issue. They talk, I'm sure, all the time on issues such as this, particularly during a fact-checking process -- that the discussion was, what could we cite? There was classified, sensitive information which there was not a comfort level citing. He said, so can we cite the British intelligence? And the answer to the question was, yes. And he has no memory of them raising any specific concerns about the British intelligence.

Thanks everyone.

Q Thank you.

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