

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA,  
CHAIRMAN

DAN BURTON, INDIANA  
CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT  
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA  
JOHN M. MCHUGH, NEW YORK  
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA  
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA  
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, OHIO  
DOUG OSE, CALIFORNIA  
RON LEWIS, KENTUCKY  
JO ANN DAVIS, VIRGINIA  
TODD RUSSELL PLATT'S, PENNSYLVANIA  
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH  
ADAM H. PUTNAM, FLORIDA  
EDWARD L. SCHROCK, VIRGINIA  
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE  
JOHN SULLIVAN, OKLAHOMA  
NATHAN DEAL, GEORGIA  
CANDICE MILLER, MICHIGAN  
TIM MURPHY, PENNSYLVANIA  
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO  
JOHN R. CARTER, TEXAS  
WILLIAM J. JANKLOW, SOUTH DAKOTA  
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051  
TTY (202) 225-6852

[www.house.gov/reform](http://www.house.gov/reform)

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,  
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA  
MAJOR R. OWENS, NEW YORK  
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK  
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK  
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND  
DENNIS K. DAVIS, OHIO  
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS  
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI  
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA  
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS  
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND  
LINDA T. SANCHEZ, CALIFORNIA  
C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER,  
MARYLAND  
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE  
CHRIS BELL, TEXAS

BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT,  
INDEPENDENT

### Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman Ranking Minority Member House Committee on Government Reform June 12, 2003

For nearly three months, I have been asking a simple question: Why did President Bush cite forged evidence about Iraq's nuclear capabilities in his State of the Union address?

The first response from the Administration, which was provided to the *Washington Post*, was that "we fell for it."<sup>1</sup>

The second response was that everything the White House said was closely vetted by the intelligence agencies.<sup>2</sup>

Now we learn through the *Washington Post* that the Administration has a third explanation: The CIA knew as early as the beginning of 2002 that the documents were forged, but actively misled the White House.<sup>3</sup>

According to the *Post*, the "decision to send an emissary to Niger was triggered by questions raised by an aide to Vice President Cheney during an agency briefing on intelligence circulating about the purported Iraqi efforts to acquire the uranium." Although "Cheney and his staff continued to get intelligence on the matter," the Administration claims now that "the CIA did not pass on the detailed results of its investigation to the White House or other government agencies."<sup>4</sup>

Based on what is known publicly, it is apparent that this new story from the White House omits key facts and conflicts with others. Based on all the information that I have received, including from nonpublic sources, the new account is clearly incomplete.

The new White House account is that only the CIA knew the documents were unreliable. This is obviously untrue. Greg Thielmann, the former director of the Office of Strategic, Proliferation, and Military Issues in the State Department, recently told *Newsweek* that the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) had concluded the documents were "garbage" before the President used this evidence in his State of the Union address. INR reports

directly to the Secretary of State and was a full participant in the debate regarding Iraq's nuclear capabilities. According to *Newsweek*, "the CIA had come up with some documents purporting to show Saddam had attempted to buy up to 500 tons of uranium oxide from the African country of Niger. INR had concluded that the purchases were implausible – and made that point clear to Powell's office."<sup>5</sup>

Another problem with the new White House account is that it does not explain the December 19 fact sheet released by the Administration. This fact sheet is entitled "Illustrative Examples of Omissions From the Iraqi Declaration to the United Nations Security Council." Under the heading "Nuclear Weapons," the fact sheet states: "The Declaration ignores efforts to procure uranium from Niger."<sup>6</sup>

We know that the CIA helped put this fact sheet together. A letter I received from the State Department on April 29 says: "The December 19 fact sheet was a product developed jointly by the CIA and the State Department."<sup>7</sup>

What this means – if the new White House account is true – is that the CIA did not just commit an act of omission. It affirmatively prepared a document that contained information it knew to be false. In other words, it actively tried to mislead the public and the President.

This fact sheet, by the way, was a significant document. Its claims were covered on national network news and the front pages of national newspapers. For example, *NBC Nightly News* reported: "What could Iraq be hiding? . . . U.S. officials say that Iraq . . . attempted to buy uranium from Africa to produce nuclear weapons."<sup>8</sup> The *New York Times* used Iraq's efforts to procure uranium from Africa as the lead of its page one reporting.<sup>9</sup>

Another question that is still unanswered is how the forged evidence ended up in the State of the Union address. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and others have said that the CIA gave President Bush the lines he could use in his State of the Union address.<sup>10</sup> If that account is true, the CIA affirmatively told President Bush to cite evidence that the CIA knew was forged.

And if that is true, this is a scandal of considerable consequence.

Moreover, there has been reporting that the CIA actually did convey its doubts about the forged evidence. For example, the *Washington Post* reported on March 22, 2003:

CIA officials now say they communicated significant doubts to the administration about the evidence backing up charges that Iraq tried to purchase uranium from Africa for nuclear weapons, charges that found their way into President Bush's State of the Union address, a State Department "fact sheet" and public remarks by numerous senior officials.<sup>11</sup>

A March 15, 2003, *Los Angeles Times* article reported that the CIA "first heard allegations that Iraq was seeking uranium from Niger in late 2001." The article continued: "Initially, the existence of the documents 'was reported to us second- or third- hand,' the official

said. ‘We included that in some of our reporting, although it was all caveated because we had concerns about the accuracy of that information.’”<sup>12</sup>

If the White House account is true, all of this reporting is wrong.

And I have one final question. There has been considerable reporting about how deeply the Vice President was involved in the intelligence. According to the *Washington Post*, “Vice President Cheney and his most senior aide made multiple trips to the CIA over the past year to question analysts studying Iraq’s weapons programs.” The Vice President was reportedly “taking the lead in the Administration” and had an “unusual hands-on role.”<sup>13</sup>

We need to square the Vice President’s detailed involvement in the intelligence on Iraq with today’s claim that the Vice President didn’t know about the forged evidence.

Today’s story presents us with an unavoidable obligation. We must find out whether the CIA deceived the President as he was developing his Iraq policy or whether it is deceiving the public now to protect the President and the Vice President. And the only way to answer this question is by uncovering and disclosing all the relevant facts.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Some Evidence on Iraq Called Fake; U.N. Inspector Says Documents on Purchases Were Forged*, *Washington Post* (Mar. 8, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> *See, e.g., CIA Questioned Documents Linking Iraq, Uranium Ore*, *Washington Post* (Mar. 22, 2003) (quoting a White House spokesman as saying, “all presidential speeches are fully vetted by the White House staff and relevant U.S. government agencies for factual correctness”).

<sup>3</sup> *CIA Did Not Share Doubt on Iraq Data; Bush Used Report of Uranium Bid*, *Washington Post* (June 12, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *(Over)selling the World on War*, *Newsweek* (June 9, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> United States Department of State, Fact Sheet, *Illustrative Examples of Omissions from the Iraqi Declaration to the United Nations Security Council* (Dec. 19, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Paul V. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, to Rep. Henry A. Waxman (Apr. 29, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> *U.S. Accuses Iraqi Weapons Report of Failing To Meet U.N.’s Demands*, *NBC Nightly News* (Dec. 19, 2002).

---

<sup>9</sup> *Iraq Arms Report Has Big Omissions, U.S. Officials Say*, New York Times (Dec. 13, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> *See, e.g., This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, ABC News (June 8, 2003) (quoting National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice as saying: “I am telling you that when this was raised with the intelligence community, they said what we could say” and “we actually do go through the process of asking the intelligence community, can you say this? Can you say that? Can you say this?”).

<sup>11</sup> *CIA Questioned Documents*, *supra* note 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Italy May Have Been Misled by Fake Iraq Arms Papers, U.S. Says*, Los Angeles Times (Mar. 15, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> *Some Iraq Analysts Felt Pressure From Cheney Visits*, Washington Post (June 5, 2003).