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## PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY

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## 1997

### October:

The International Atomic Energy Agency issued a definitive report declaring Iraq to be essentially free of nuclear weapons. The I.A.E.A.'s inspectors said, "There are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of amounts of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance." The report noted that Iraq's nuclear facilities had been destroyed by American bombs in the 1991 Gulf War.<sup>1</sup>

## 1998

Former U.S. Ambassador Joe Wilson's 2002 CIA report on Niger noted that "an Iranian delegation was interested in purchasing 400 tons of yellowcake from Niger in 1998 [but that] no contract was ever signed with Iran."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>2</sup> Note "Iranian", not "Iraqi". SSCI Report, p.44; for more on Wilson's report, see this Chronology for February and March 2002.

## 1999

According to an Italian intelligence official who at the time worked for the relevant division: "We [SISMI] succeeded in getting our hands on Niger code books and a telex from Ambassador Adamou Chékou to the Niger Foreign Ministry informing Niamey that Wissam al-Zahawie, the Iraqi Ambassador to the Vatican, would be coming to Niger as a representative of Saddam Hussein."<sup>3</sup>

The trip was apparently being arranged by an Algerian businessman named Baraka.<sup>4</sup>

### **February:**

February 8:

Mr. Wissam Al Zahawie, Iraq's then Ambassador to the Holy See, as part of a trip to four African countries, visited Niger as an envoy of the then President of Iraq to Mr. Ibrahim Bare, the then President of Niger, in order to deliver an official invitation for a visit to Iraq, planned for 20 to 30 April 1999.<sup>5</sup>

The visit was covered at the time by the local press in Niger and by a French press agency. The American Ambassador, Charles O. Cecil, filed a routine report to Washington on the visit, as did British intelligence. There was nothing apparently untoward about the Zahawie visit. "We reported it because his picture appeared in the paper with the President," Cecil, who is now retired, told Seymour Hersh. There was no article accompanying the photograph, only the caption, and nothing significant to report. None of the contemporaneous reports, as far as is known, made any mention of uranium.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>4</sup> SSCI report, p.38

<sup>5</sup> Butler Report, p.124

<sup>6</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

**April:**

April 9:

President Bare of Niger died.

**June:**

According to the CIA's report on Joe Wilson's discussions in Niger in February and March 2002, former Nigerien Prime Minister Ibrahim Mayaki was approached in June 1999 about expanding "commercial relations" with Iraq. Mayaki said he let the matter drop. Wilson told the SSCI in July 2003 that his verbal report refuted this claim.<sup>7</sup>

During July 2003, Administration officials said that when Wilson returned from Africa, he included in his report to the CIA an encounter with a former Nigerien government official who told him that Iraq had approached him in June 1999, expressing interest in expanding commercial relations between Iraq and Niger. The Administration claims Wilson reported that the former Nigerien official interpreted the overture as an attempt to discuss uranium sales. "This is in Wilson's report back to the CIA," White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer told reporters a few days before he left his post to join the private sector. "Wilson's own report, the very man who was on television saying Niger denies it...reports himself that officials in Niger said that Iraq was seeking to contact officials in Niger about sales." Wilson tells the story differently and in a crucial respect. He says the official in question was contacted by an Algerian-Nigerien intermediary who inquired if the official would meet with an Iraqi about "commercial" sales – an offer he declined.<sup>8</sup>

"Wilson said that a former prime minister of Niger, Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, was unaware of any sales contract with Iraq, but said that in June 1999 a businessman approached him, insisting that he meet with an Iraqi delegation to discuss "expanding commercial relations" between Niger and Iraq -- which Mayaki interpreted to mean they wanted to discuss yellowcake sales. A report

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<sup>7</sup> SSCI Report, p.43-44

<sup>8</sup> Cooper, Calabresi, Dickerson. "A War On Wilson",  
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,465270,00.html>

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CIA officials drafted after debriefing Wilson said that "although the meeting took place, Mayaki let the matter drop due to UN sanctions on Iraq."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Susan Schmidt, "Plame's Input", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A39834-2004Jul9.html>

## 2000

“Between 1999 and 2000 the French realize that someone is working abandoned mines [in Niger] to generate a brisk clandestine trade in uranium. Who is purchasing the smuggled uranium? The French are looking for an answer and Rocco Martino senses an opportunity.”<sup>10</sup>

He approached Antonio Nucera. A carabinieri (cop) like Rocco, Antonio is the Deputy Chief of the SISMI center in viale Pasteur in Rome. He’s chief of the 1st and the 8th divisions (weapons and technology transfers and WMD counterproliferation, respectively, for Africa and the Middle East). Nucera decided to give a hand to his old friend, Rocco. Rocco quickly briefs him on the job. “Isn’t there anything you can give me – Info? A good Niger contact? I’ll take anything you have! The French are as dry as trekkers lost in the desert. They want to know who is buying their uranium under the table. I’m prepared to pay well to find out.” In the archives of Nucera’s SISMI division, there are documents that could be useful in pawning off a half-baked frittata and making a few bucks. There’s the telex from the Niger ambassador. Further needs might be met at the Niger Embassy at No. 10 via Baiamonte in Rome. SISMI director Nicolò Pollari confirms to *La Repubblica*: Nucera wanted to help out his friend. He offered him the use of an intelligence asset – no big deal, you understand--one who was still on the books but inactive--to give a hand to Martino. The asset worked at the Niger Embassy in Rome. She was in bad shape. She barely eked out a living in the back of the espionage shop. She didn't get a monthly stipend from Italian intelligence. In other words, she was a contractor.<sup>11</sup>

Another slightly different version has it: In early 2000, the ‘security consultant’ was approached by a former colleague from SISMI whom he'd known for some twenty five years. This current SISMI officer told him that he had a source in the Nigerien Embassy in Rome, that they (i.e. SISMI) had no more use for her, but that she could be a source of valuable information for him if he put her on a monthly retainer. They were washing their hands of her, he said. But she could be of use to him. The ‘security consultant’ met with the woman in question and agreed to pay her 500 euros a month for various documents and materials which came into her hands in the course of her work for the Embassy. Most of the material in question had nothing to do with Iraq

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<sup>10</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>11</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

or WMD. It dealt primarily with immigration into Italy and Islamist activities in North and Central Africa --- topics of concern to at least one of the 'security consultant's' longstanding clients. What wasn't clear at the time, however, was that SISMI hadn't washed their hands of this Niger Embassy employee at all. She remained a SISMI asset. In fact, the relationship which the SISMI officer had set up was intended to serve as a conduit through which SISMI could conceal its role in the dissemination of what proved to be disinformation.<sup>12</sup>

With the blessing of Nucera, Martino and *La Signora*, a pair of clever snake oil vendors, conclude a bargain. There would be a few sheets of paper available for sale. But the help of a Niger national was needed. *La Signora* points him to the right man. He's First Embassy Counselor Zakaria Yaou Maiga. As Pollari told us, that Maiga spent six times more than he earned.<sup>13</sup>

## **December:**

December 1:

A "substantial" UK Joint Intelligence Committee assessment is published. "Unconfirmed intelligence indicates Iraqi interest in acquiring uranium."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> TPM, 040801, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/003235.php>; TPM 051101, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006908.php>

<sup>13</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>14</sup> Butler Report, p.55, 122

## 2001

### January:

January 1:

Rocco Martino arranges a burglary at the Niger Embassy in Rome. Some sheets of letterhead and official stamps are taken.<sup>15</sup>

January 2:

Niger Embassy Second Secretary for Administrative Affairs Arfou Mounkaila reports the burglary to the Carabinieri of the Trionfale station in Rome.<sup>16</sup>

January 20:

Inauguration of Bush Administration. Bush, Cheney, Rove, Libby, Powell, Rice take up their roles.

### Winter:

The forged dossier is assembled by Rocco Martino (SISMI agent), La Signora (SISMI asset), Antonia Nucera (SISMI colonel in the employ of Italy's clandestine services).<sup>17</sup> It is a package of forged documents based on the stolen papers from the Niger Embassy, plus a few older papers supplied from the SISMI archives. He hands over the "package" to agents from the French *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure*. They hand him some banknotes which he spends in Nice ... The French take the documents and toss them in the dumpster. One of the agents remarks, "Niger is a French-speaking place

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<sup>15</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>16</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>17</sup> Giovanni D'Avanzo, [La Repubblica](http://www.larepubblica.it), 3 November 2005, translated at <http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005/11/eight-nigergate-questions-in-search-of.html>

and we know how they do things there. But no one would have mistook one minister for another in they way they did in that useless piece of garbage.”<sup>18</sup>

**March:**

John Hannah joins Cheney's national security staff as principal deputy assistant for national security affairs. Before joining Cheney's staff, he worked in the State Department.

**April:**

A meeting that was supposed to have taken place in Prague in April 2001 between lead September 11 hijacker Mohamed Atta and an Iraqi intelligence official. But none of the intelligence agencies could place Atta in Prague on that date. (Indeed, receipts and other travel documents placed him in the United States.) An investigation by Czech officials dismissed the claim, which was based on a single unreliable witness.<sup>19</sup>

Cheney interview with *Rocky Mountain News*, January 9th 2004: “We did have reporting that was public, that came out shortly after the 9/11 attack, provided by the Czech government, suggesting there had been a meeting in Prague between Mohammed Atta, the lead hijacker, and a man named al-Ani (Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim Samir al-Ani), who was an Iraqi intelligence official in Prague, at the embassy there, in April of '01, prior to the 9/11 attacks. It has never been -- we've never been able to collect any more information on that. That was the one that possibly tied the two together to 9/11.”<sup>20</sup>

**Spring:**

A few months after George Bush took office, Greg Thielmann, an expert on disarmament with the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and

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<sup>18</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>19</sup> “The First Casualty”, <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJVI4q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Waxman, *Iraq On The Record*, <http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

Research, or INR, was assigned to be the daily intelligence liaison to John Bolton, the Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control, who is a prominent conservative. Thielmann understood that his posting had been mandated by Secretary of State Colin Powell, who thought that every important State Department bureau should be assigned a daily intelligence officer. "Bolton was the guy with whom I had to do business," Thielmann said. "We were going to provide him with all the information he was entitled to see. That's what being a professional intelligence officer is all about." But, Thielmann told me, "Bolton seemed to be troubled because INR was not telling him what he wanted to hear." Thielmann soon found himself shut out of Bolton's early-morning staff meetings. "I was intercepted at the door of his office and told, 'The Under-Secretary doesn't need you to attend this meeting anymore.'" When Thielmann protested that he was there to provide intelligence input, the aide said, "The Under-Secretary wants to keep this in the family." "This was my meeting with the four assistant secretaries who report to me, in preparation for the Secretary's 8:30 a.m. staff meeting," Bolton said. "This was within my family of bureaus. There was no place for INR or anyone else – the Human Resources Bureau or the Office of Foreign Buildings."<sup>21</sup>

There was also a change in procedure at the Pentagon under Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Douglas Feith, the Under-Secretary for Policy. In the early summer of 2001, a career official assigned to a Pentagon planning office undertook a routine evaluation of the assumption, adopted by Wolfowitz and Feith, that the Iraqi National Congress, an exile group headed by Ahmad Chalabi, could play a major role in a coup d'état to oust Saddam Hussein. They also assumed that Chalabi, after the coup, would be welcomed by Iraqis as a hero. An official familiar with the evaluation described how it subjected that scenario to the principle of what planners call "branches and sequels" – that is, "plan for what you expect not to happen." The official said, "It was a 'what could go wrong' study. What if it turns out that Ahmad Chalabi is not so popular? What's Plan B if you discover that Chalabi and his boys don't have it in them to accomplish the overthrow?" The people in the policy offices didn't seem to care. When the official asked about the analysis, he was told by a colleague that the new Pentagon leadership wanted to focus not on what could go wrong but on what would go right. He was told that the study's exploration of options amounted to planning for failure. "Their methodology was analogous to tossing a coin five times and assuming that it

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<sup>21</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

would always come up heads," the official told me. "You need to think about what would happen if it comes up tails." <sup>22</sup>

## **May**

May 20:

The Iraqi Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, reported to Baghdad on an approach by a Ugandan businessman to supply uranium. He was told Iraq did not deal in those things.<sup>23</sup>

## **September:**

September 11:

al-Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington.

September 15:

At Camp David on the weekend after the September 11 attacks, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz floated the idea that Iraq, with more than 20 years of inclusion on the State Department's terror-sponsor list, be held immediately accountable.<sup>24</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, former CIA Director James Woolsey, a member of the Defense Policy Board who backed an invasion of Iraq, put forth the theory that Saddam was connected to the World Trade Center attacks. In September 2001, the Bush administration flew Woolsey to London to gather evidence to back up his theory, which had the support of Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, then the Defense Policy Board chairman.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>23</sup> Silberman-Robb Report,

<sup>24</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JjVI4q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>25</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JjVI4q9T%3D%3D>

“Soon after the September 11th attacks, the Italian military intelligence agency SISMI sent its first report to the US government including details of an alleged Iraqi purchase of 500 tons of lightly-processed uranium ore from Niger.”<sup>26</sup>

“The sismi report, however, was unpersuasive. Inside the American intelligence community, it was dismissed as amateurish and unsubstantiated. One former senior C.I.A. official told me that the initial report from Italy contained no documents but only a written summary of allegations.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Fall:**

Rocco Martino: “At the end of 2001, SISMI handed the [forged] yellowcake dossier to the British of MI6.” They claim only that they got it from “a reliable source.” Then they make a small adjustment to their story: SISMI wanted to disseminate the Niger documents to allied intelligence but at the same time it did not want its role in the operation to be disclosed. These are allegations which Palazzao Chigi vehemently denies. The government tells a bald-faced lie. After the war reveals the WMD chicanery, the Italian Government swears that no uranium dossier was handed over or made to be handed over to anyone, either directly or through intermediaries.<sup>28</sup>

“THE Sunday Times has tracked down a mysterious middleman who was a key figure in the notorious Niger uranium hoax before the Iraq war. The middleman, an Italian who uses the name Giacomo, is a small-time tipster said to have worked for Italy’s armed forces and intelligence services. He says Sismi, the Italian foreign intelligence service, used him to disseminate fake documents purporting to show Saddam had tried to buy uranium for nuclear bombs from Niger. “I received a call from a former colleague in Sismi,” Giacomo said. “I was told a woman in the Niger embassy in Rome had a gift for me. I met her and she gave me documents. Sismi wanted me to pass on the documents but they didn’t want anyone to know they had been involved.” He came into possession of a bundle of telexes, letters and contracts that appeared to show Saddam had struck a deal with Niger for 500 tons of uranium ore, enough when refined to make several weapons.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> TPM 051031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006896.php>

<sup>27</sup> Seymour Hersh, “The Stovepipe”, 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>28</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle,  
[http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>29</sup> Nicholas Rufford, “Italian Spies”, 040801, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/newspaper/0,,2763-1198188,00.html>

In late 2001, the SISMI officer brought the Niger Embassy employee a packet of documents --- those later identified as forgeries --- and instructed her to slip them in with the other documents she was providing to the 'security consultant' on an on-going basis. She mixed those documents in with authentic documents which she had access to in the course of her work at the embassy. She then passed those documents --- again, a mix of authentic and forged ones --- to the 'security consultant'.<sup>30</sup>

La Repubblica's final version: "General Pollari's SISMI is in possession of a phony dossier assembled by Rocco Martino and Antonio Nucera. They show it to the CIA while Rocco Martino delivers it to Sir Richard Dearlove's MI6 ... SISMI monitored Rocco Martino's every move in London. This is confirmed to *La Repubblica* by SISMI chief Nicolò Pollari. "We monitored Martino and photographed his meetings in London. Would you like to see the pictures?"<sup>31</sup>

October:

In October 2001, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith set up a special intelligence operation in the Pentagon to "think through how the various terrorist organizations relate to each other and ... state sponsors," in Feith's description.<sup>32</sup>

"Piecing the story together from two people directly involved and three others who were briefed on it, the tale begins at the end of 2001, when third-rate forged documents turned up in West Africa purporting to show the sale by Niger to Iraq of tons of "yellowcake" uranium. Italy's intelligence service obtained the documents and shared them with British spooks, who passed them on to Washington. Mr. Cheney's office got wind of this and asked the C.I.A. to investigate."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> TPM, 030801, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/003235.php>

<sup>31</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>32</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJVI4q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Kristof, "White House In Denial",

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/13/opinion/13KRIS.html?ex=1130821200&en=5e8eae98b671da5&ei=5070>

October 15:

Nicolò Pollari, nominated by the Government on September 27 after serving as Number Two at CESIS (a coordinating intelligence agency at Palazzo Chigi), assumes control at SISMI.<sup>34</sup>

SISMI is prepared only to admit that on October 15, 2001, in a one-and-a-half page letter, it confirmed to the CIA that “intelligence data” on the attempt by Iraq to buy yellowcake in Africa provided by one of the agency’s “credible sources”, La Signora, who in the past had also passed Niger encryption pads and embassy records to Forte Braschi [the Italian equivalent of Langley – Nur].<sup>35</sup> SISMI was behind similar reports in Britain and France. Paris never put any stock in the reports, according to two European officials. London has stood behind its statement that Iraq was seeking uranium in Africa.<sup>36</sup>

In early November 2005, the Italian government denied any complicity in the production or dissemination of the forged Niger documents, blaming it all on a lone wolf operation by Rocco Martino. However, “[f]our U.S. officials said the Italian military intelligence agency known as SISMI passed three reports to the CIA station in Rome between October 2001 and March 2002 outlining an alleged deal for Iraq to buy uranium ore, known as yellowcake, from Niger.” One of the reports passed by SISMI contained language that turned out to have been lifted verbatim from crudely forged documents that outlined the purported uranium-ore deal, the U.S. officials said. “SISMI was involved in this; there is no doubt,” said a U.S. intelligence official who's closely followed the matter.<sup>37</sup>

The CIA’s Directorate of Operations issued an intelligence report “from a foreign government service indicating that Niger planned to ship several tons of uranium to Iraq.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>35</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>36</sup> Landay & Strobel, 051031,

<http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/nation/13024382.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>

<sup>37</sup> Jonathan S. Landay, “Italy provided U.S.”, 051104,

<http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/13085306.htm>

<sup>38</sup> SCCI Report, p.36

“A report on the bogus, made-in-Rome dossier ended up at the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence – in the Office of Strategic, Military and WMD Proliferation Affairs. Strategic Affairs is not a big place. At the time, 16 analysts worked there under the direction of Greg Thielmann. Thielmann tells *La Repubblica*: I received the report in fall of 2001. We thought that Langley had acquired it from their field officer in Italy. The agent in the field reports that Italian intelligence permitted him see some papers documenting the attempt by Iraq to acquire 500 tons of uranium ore from Niger.”<sup>39</sup>

October 18:

The CIA complete a Senior Executive Intelligence Brief (SEIB), “*Iraq: Nuclear-Related Procurement Efforts*” based on the October 15 intelligence report. The SEIB seems neutral on the probability of the report being accurate.<sup>40</sup>

**November:**

November 14:

As the Taliban were being routed in Afghanistan, Richard Perle, a Pentagon consultant with long-standing ties to Wolfowitz, Feith, and Chalabi, articulated in a speech what would become the Bush Administration’s most compelling argument for going to war with Iraq: the possibility that, with enough time, Saddam Hussein would be capable of attacking the United States with a nuclear weapon. Perle cited testimony from Dr. Khidhir Hamza, an Iraqi defector, who declared that Saddam Hussein, in response to the 1981 Israeli bombing of the Osiraq nuclear reactor, near Baghdad, had ordered future nuclear facilities to be dispersed at four hundred sites across the nation. “Every day,” Perle said, these sites “turn out a little bit of nuclear materials.” He told his audience, “Do we wait for Saddam and hope for the best, do we wait and hope he doesn’t do what we know he is capable of . . . or do we take some preemptive action?”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>40</sup> SSCI Report, p.36-37

<sup>41</sup> Seymour Hersh, “The Stovepipe”, 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

November 20:

US Embassy in Niamey distributes a cable on a meeting between the French Ambassador and the Director General of Niger's French-led uranium consortium. The Director General said "there was no possibility" that any yellowcake had been diverted.<sup>42</sup>

**December:**

In his memoir, speechwriter David Frum recounts that, in December, after the Afghanistan campaign against bin Laden and his Taliban sponsors, he was told to come up with a justification for war with Iraq to include in Bush's State of the Union address in January 2002.<sup>43</sup>

"The first meeting [of an Iranian back-channel group sponsored by Doug Frieth] occurred in Rome in December, 2001. It included Franklin, Rhode, and another American, the neoconservative writer and operative Michael Ledeen<sup>44</sup>, who organized the meeting. (According to UPI, Ledeen was then working for Feith as a consultant.) Also in attendance was Ghorbanifar and a number of other Iranians. One of the Iranians, according to two sources familiar with the meeting, was a former senior member of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard who claimed to have information about dissident ranks within the Iranian security services. *The Washington Monthly* has also learned from U.S. government sources that Nicolo Pollari, the head of Italy's military intelligence agency, SISMI, attended the meetings, as did the Italian Minister of Defense Antonio Martino, who is well-known in neoconservative circles in Washington."<sup>45</sup>

The meeting took place "In an Agency "safe house" near Piazza di Spagna (however, other sources have told us it was a reserved room in the Parco dei Principi Hotel).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> SSCI Report, p.37

<sup>43</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfyxhSff7JJVI4q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>44</sup> Michael Ledeen profile: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\\_East/EF26Ak03.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/EF26Ak03.html)

<sup>45</sup> Marshall, Rozen, Glastris, "Iran-Contra II",

<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/0410.marshallrozen.html>; Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle,

[http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html); Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica*, 051031, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle,

<http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005/10/sismis-war-in-iraq-iranian-connection.html>

<sup>46</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica*, 051031, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, <http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005/10/sismis-war-in-iraq-iranian-connection.html>

Pollari confirms the meeting to La Repubblica: “When [Defense Minister Martino] asked me to organize the meeting, I became curious. But it was my job and I wasn’t born yesterday. It’s true – my men were also present at the meeting. I wanted to know what was cooking. It’s also true that there were maps of Iraq and Iran on the table. I can tell you those Iranians were not exactly “exiles”. They came and went from Tehran with their passports with no difficulty whatsoever as if they were transparent to the eyes of the Pasdaran.”

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The Italians infer that Ahmed Chalabi is represented at the meeting. “The person charged with “intelligence gathering” and story invention is Aras Habib Karim, Chalabi’s personal intelligence man. Aras is a key player. He coordinates the Intelligence Collection Programme. He supervises and fabricates the “output” of the dissidents. He is a Shi’ite Kurd just under 50, extremely clever, consummately evil and a magician of double-cross and document forgery. But there is something peculiar about him. The CIA has long considered him an “Iranian agent.” A second key player is an American, Francis Brooke. The bogus Italian dossier on the Niger uranium turns up [at the meeting]also – and we don’t know exactly why--because Chalabi is in possession of it. Brooke is responsible for liaison between Condoleezza Rice and Paul Wolfowitz and between the Pentagon and the Iraqi National Congress. He is more heeded in Tehran than Chalabi.” 48

“Ghorbanifar is the decoy planted by the organizers of the meeting to keep busybodies off the scent and away from the scene of the crime ... So, forget about Manusher Ghorbanifar. In the Rome meeting held at the Parco dei Principi Hotel – or in the safe house near the Spanish Steps – the paths of three intelligence networks will cross: Nicolò Pollari’s SISMI, Ahmed Chalabi’s Iraqi National Congress and SCIRI and the [B?]Sadr Brigades led by Muhammad and Abdalaziz al-Hakim. The integration of the “processing” and “output” of the three “networks” will provide essential information to the Anglo-American war planners and above all, a concrete estimation of Saddam’s defenses, from the willingness to fight of his generals to the arsenal of weaponry at their disposal, in addition to the *influence operations*.” 49

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<sup>47</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d’Avanzo, La Repubblica, 051031, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, <http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005/10/sismis-war-in-iraq-iranian-connection.html>

<sup>48</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d’Avanzo, La Repubblica, 051031, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, <http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005/10/sismis-war-in-iraq-iranian-connection.html>

<sup>49</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d’Avanzo, La Repubblica, 051031, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, <http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005/10/sismis-war-in-iraq-iranian-connection.html>

Greg Thielmann, after being turned away from Bolton's office, worked with the INR staff on a major review of Iraq's progress in developing W.M.D.s. The review, presented to Secretary of State Powell in December, 2001, echoed the earlier I.A.E.A. findings. According to Thielmann, "It basically said that there is no persuasive evidence that the Iraqi nuclear program is being reconstituted."<sup>50</sup>

December 12:

"On Dec. 12, 2001, at the U.S. embassy in Rome, America's newly-installed ambassador, Mel Sembler, sat down for a private dinner with Ledeon, an old friend of his from Republican Party politics, and Martino, the Italian defense minister. The conversation quickly turned to the [back-channel] meeting. The problem was that this was the first that Amb. Sembler had heard about it. According to U.S. government sources, Sembler immediately set about trying to determine what he could about the meeting and how it had happened. Since U.S. government contact with foreign government intelligence agencies is supposed to be overseen by the CIA, Sembler first spoke to the CIA station chief in Rome to find out what if anything he knew about the meeting with the Iranians. But that only raised more questions because the station chief had been left in the dark as well. Soon both Sembler and the Rome station chief were sending anxious queries back to the State Department and CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., respectively, raising alarms on both sides of the Potomac."<sup>51</sup>

December 17:

An INC-supplied defector, Adnan Ihsan al-Haideri, who claimed he had visited 20 secret nuclear, biological and chemical warfare facilities in Iraq, showed deception in a CIA-administered lie detector test.<sup>52</sup>

December 20:

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<sup>50</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>51</sup> Marshall, Rozen, Glastris, "Iran-Contra II",  
<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/0410.marshallrozen.html>

<sup>52</sup> Landay and Strobel, "Cheney's New Security Adviser", 051031,  
<http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/13046078.htm>

## **PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY**

A claim by an an INC-supplied defector, Adnan Ihsan al-Haideri, that he had visited 20 secret nuclear, biological and chemical warfare facilities in Iraq, first appeared in an article in *The New York Times*.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Landay and Strobel, "Cheney's New Security Adviser", 051031, <http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/13046078.htm>

## 2002

### January:

In CIA Director George Tenet's January 2002 review of global weapons-technology proliferation, he did not mention a nuclear threat from Iraq. The review said only, "We believe that Iraq has probably continued at least low-level theoretical R&D [research and development] associated with its nuclear program."<sup>54</sup>

According to *The Washington Post*, in early 2002 Wolfowitz ordered a CIA report on Hans Blix. When the report didn't contain damning details, Wolfowitz reportedly "hit the ceiling."<sup>55</sup>

David Addington<sup>56</sup>, Cheney's general counsel – later Chief of Staff --, authored the so-called "torture memo" of January 2002. The memo, signed by then-White House counsel Alberto Gonzales -- now the U.S. attorney general -- claimed the Geneva Conventions on torture did not apply in the "war on terrorism."<sup>57</sup>

At the beginning of 2002, Paul Wolfowitz convinces Dick Cheney that the uranium trail intercepted by Italian intelligence should be explored in depth.<sup>58</sup>

### January 30:

"C.I.A. published an unclassified report to Congress that stated, "Baghdad may be attempting to acquire materials that could aid in reconstituting its nuclear-weapons program."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJVI4q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>55</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJVI4q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>56</sup> See profile at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A22665-2004Oct10?language=printer>

<sup>57</sup> <http://us.cnn.com/2005/POLITICS/10/31/leak.probe/index.html>

<sup>58</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>59</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

**February:**

“Italian spy chief Pollari raised the matter [of the Doug Freith back-channel] privately with Tenet, who himself went to Stephen J. Hadley<sup>60</sup>, then Deputy NSA, in early February 2002. Goaded by Tenet, Hadley sent word to the officials in Feith's office and to Ledeen to cease all such activities. Hadley then contacted Sembler, assuring him it wouldn't happen again and to report back if it did.”<sup>61</sup>

February 2:

The CIA's DO issued a second intelligence report again citing a foreign service. It included what it said was the verbatim text of the accord between Niger and Iraq to transfer uranium. The SSCI Report says that CIA and DIA analysts were more impressed with the detail in this second report, while INR analysts continued to be skeptical.<sup>62</sup>

February 12:

The DIA issues a finished intelligence product entitled *Niamey signed an agreement to sell 500 tons of uranium a year to Baghdad*. The paper essentially just restated the February 2 intelligence report, concluding that Saddam was “probably” searching abroad for uranium.<sup>63</sup> After reading the DIA Report, Cheney asked his CIA morning briefer for more information.<sup>64</sup>

“Cheney's staff has adamantly denied and Tenet has reinforced the claim that the Vice President had anything to do with initiating the Wilson mission. They say the Vice President merely asked routine questions at an intelligence briefing and that mid-level CIA officials, on their own, chose to dispatch Wilson.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Hadley's official bio is at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/hadleybio.html>

<sup>61</sup> Marshall, Rozen, Glastris, “Iran-Contra II”,  
<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/0410.marshallrozen.html>

<sup>62</sup> SSCI Report, p.37

<sup>63</sup> National Military Joint Intelligence Center Executive Highlight, Vol 028-02, quoted in SSCI Report, p.38

<sup>64</sup> SSCI Report, p.38

<sup>65</sup> Cooper, Calabresi, Dickerson, “A War On Wilson”,  
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,465270,00.html>

The same day, Plame wrote to her superior in the CIA's Counterproliferation Division that "my husband has good relations with both the PM [prime minister] and the former Minister of Mines (not to mention lots of French contacts), both of whom could possibly shed light on this sort of activity."<sup>66</sup>

" "The Vice-President saw a piece of intelligence reporting that Niger was attempting to buy uranium," Cathie Martin, the spokeswoman for Cheney, told me. Sometime after he first saw it, Cheney brought it up at his regularly scheduled daily briefing from the C.I.A., Martin said. "He asked the briefer a question. The briefer came back a day or two later and said, 'We do have a report, but there's a lack of details.' " The Vice-President was further told that it was known that Iraq had acquired uranium ore from Niger in the early nineteen-eighties but that that material had been placed in secure storage by the I.A.E.A., which was monitoring it. "End of story," Martin added. "That's all we know." According to a former high-level C.I.A. official, however, Cheney was dissatisfied with the initial response, and asked the agency to review the matter once again"<sup>67</sup>

February 14:

DCI's WINPAC department wrote a Senior Publish When Ready (SPWR021402-05) that says the Niger Report comes from a foreign agency and has "crucial" gaps, with some information contradicting reports from the US Embassy in Niamey. It says the department is working on clarifying the details. A version is sent to Cheney. That version names the foreign agency as SISMI.<sup>68</sup>

February 18:

The U.S. Embassy in Niamey distributes a cable saying that the Niger report bears further investigation. It notes the Ambassador had met with the Foreign Minister of Niger to get his assurances that no rogue sales had been made.<sup>69</sup>

February 19:

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<sup>66</sup> SSCI Report, p.39

<sup>67</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>68</sup> SSCI Report, p.38-39

<sup>69</sup> SSCI Report, p.39

CPD hosts a meeting with Joe Wilson and a number of analysts and regional specialists. The INR analyst in attendance thought that Valerie Wilson had “convened” the meeting.<sup>70</sup>

In an interview with *Time* in July 2003, Wilson angrily said that his wife had nothing to do with his trip to Africa. "That is bulls\_\_t. That is absolutely not the case," Wilson told *Time*. "I met with between six and eight analysts and operators from CIA and elsewhere [on February 19]. None of the people in that meeting did I know, and they took the decision to send me. This is a smear job."<sup>71</sup>

“In fact, Valerie was not in the meeting at which the subject of my trip was raised. Neither was the CPD Reports officer. After having escorted me into the room, she departed the meeting to avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest. It was at that meeting where the question of my traveling to Niger was broached with me for the first time and came only after a thorough discussion of what the participants did and did not know about the subject.”<sup>72</sup>

““A senior intelligence officer confirmed that Plame was a Directorate of Operations undercover officer who worked ‘alongside’ the operations officers who asked her husband to travel to Niger. But he said she did not recommend her husband to undertake the Niger assignment. ‘They (the officers who did ask Wilson to check the uranium story) were aware of who she was married to, which is not surprising,’ he said. ‘There are people elsewhere in government who are trying to make her look like she was the one who was cooking this up, for some reason,’ he said. ‘I can’t figure out what it could be.’ “We paid his (Wilson’s) airfare. But to go to Niger is not exactly a benefit. Most people you’d have to pay big bucks to go there,’ the senior intelligence official said. Wilson said. He was reimbursed only for expenses.”<sup>73</sup>

Wilson “was summoned to a meeting at the C.I.A. with a group of government experts on Iraq, Niger, and uranium. He was shown no documents but was told, he said, that the C.I.A. “was responding to a report that was recently received of a purported memorandum of agreement” – between Iraq and Niger – “that our boys had gotten.” He added, “It was never

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<sup>70</sup> SSCI Report, p.40

<sup>71</sup> Cooper, Calabresi, Dickerson, “A War On Wilson”,  
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,465270,00.html>

<sup>72</sup> Joe Wilson to Senators Roberts and Rockefeller, July 15, 2004, at  
<http://www.tpmcafe.com/story/2005/10/30/18754/437>

<sup>73</sup> Phelps & Royce, “Columnist Blows CIA Agent’s Cover”, *Newsday*, July 22, 2003

clear to me, or to the people who were briefing me, whether our guys had actually seen the agreement, or the purported text of an agreement.”<sup>74</sup>

The INR and some other analysts were still skeptical of the reports after the meeting. However, they seemed to agree that sending Wilson to Niger was worth a try.<sup>75</sup>

February 20:

CPD provides Wilson with talking points for his trip.<sup>76</sup>

February 24:

U.S. Embassy in Niamey distributes a cable describing a meeting between Ambassador Owns-Kirkpatrick, General Carlton Fulford, President Mamadou Tandja of Niger and Nigerien Foreign Minister Aichatou Mindaoudou. Assurances were given that all the uranium was in good hands.<sup>77</sup>

February 26:

Joe Wilson travels to Niger, and stays about eight days. He stays at the Sofitel.<sup>78</sup> “The mission I undertook was discreet but by no means secret. While the C.I.A. paid my expenses (my time was offered pro bono), I made it abundantly clear to everyone I met that I was acting on behalf of the United States government. In late February 2002, I arrived in Niger's capital, Niamey.”<sup>79</sup>

February 27:

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<sup>74</sup> Seymour Hersh, “The Stovepipe”, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>75</sup> SSCI Report, p.40-41

<sup>76</sup> SSCI Report, p.41

<sup>77</sup> SSCI Report, p.42

<sup>78</sup> Nicholas Kristof, “White House In Denial”,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/13/opinion/13KRIS.html?ex=1130821200&en=5e8eae98b671da5&ei=5070>

<sup>79</sup> Joe Wilson, “What I Didn’t Find”,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/opinion/06WILS.html?ex=1130821200&en=081916620c29f21e&ei=5070>

“The next morning, I met with Ambassador Owens-Kirkpatrick at the embassy. For reasons that are understandable, the embassy staff has always kept a close eye on Niger's uranium business. I was not surprised, then, when the ambassador told me that she knew about the allegations of uranium sales to Iraq – and that she felt she had already debunked them in her reports to Washington. Nevertheless, she and I agreed that my time would be best spent interviewing people who had been in government when the deal supposedly took place, which was before her arrival. I spent the next eight days drinking sweet mint tea and meeting with dozens of people: current government officials, former government officials, people associated with the country's uranium business. It did not take long to conclude that it was highly doubtful that any such transaction had ever taken place.”<sup>80</sup>

Ambassador Owens-Kirkpatrick asked Wilson to avoid current government officials so that his investigations would not “complicate” current diplomatic efforts.<sup>81</sup>

### **March:**

March 1:

INR published an intelligence estimate, *Niger: sale of uranium to Iraq is unlikely*. The estimate is forwarded to the White House situation room through the usual channels.<sup>82</sup>

In early March, Cheney asked his CIA briefer for an update on the Niger uranium issue.<sup>83</sup>

March 3:

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<sup>80</sup> Joe Wilson, “What I Didn’t Find”,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/opinion/06WILS.html?ex=1130821200&en=081916620c29f21e&ei=5070>

<sup>81</sup> SSCI Report, p.42

<sup>82</sup> SSCI Report, p.42

<sup>83</sup> SSCI Report, p.43

“Before I left Niger, I briefed the ambassador on my findings, which were consistent with her own. I also shared my conclusions with members of her staff.”<sup>84</sup>

According to a *New York Times* report in February 2002, the CIA found "no evidence that Iraq has engaged in terrorist operations against the United States in nearly a decade, and the agency is also convinced that President Saddam Hussein has not provided chemical or biological weapons to Al Qaeda or related terrorist groups."<sup>85</sup>

March 5:

WINPAC sends to Cheney’s CIA briefer an “analytic update” noting that the government of Niger had given assurances. It also said the CIA was to debrief that day someone who may add to the information.<sup>86</sup>

Two DO agents debrief Joe Wilson at his home. Valerie Wilson is there, acting as “hostess”. Wilson gave a verbal report which was later transcribed by one of the agents.<sup>87</sup>

“In early March, I arrived in Washington and promptly provided a detailed briefing to the C.I.A. I later shared my conclusions with the State Department African Affairs Bureau.”<sup>88</sup>

Wilson says he did not deal with the forgeries explicitly in his report because he never saw them. However, Wilson says he refuted the forgeries' central allegation that Niger had been negotiating a sale of uranium to Iraq. Wilson says he explained in the report that several Nigerien government signatures would be required to permit such a sale – signatures that were either absent or clearly botched in the forged documents.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Joe Wilson, “What I Didn’t Find”,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/opinion/06WILS.html?ex=1130821200&en=081916620c29f21e&ei=5070>

<sup>85</sup> “The First Casualty”, <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJVI4q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>86</sup> SSCI Report, p.43

<sup>87</sup> SSCI Report, p. 43

<sup>88</sup> Joe Wilson, “What I Didn’t Find”,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/opinion/06WILS.html?ex=1130821200&en=081916620c29f21e&ei=5070>

<sup>89</sup> Cooper, Calabresi, Dickerson. “A War On Wilson”,

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,465270,00.html>

“It does seem to be true that Wilson claims to have debunked the Niger deal more firmly than some people remember him debunking it.”<sup>90</sup>

March 8:

The CIA circulated a report on Wilson's trip - without identifying him - to the White House and other agencies.<sup>91</sup> According to one report, the CIA circulated the ambassador's report to the vice president's office.<sup>92</sup> However, according to the SSCI Report, CIA analysts did not think it added to the issue and therefore did not brief Cheney directly on the report.<sup>93</sup> "It was well known throughout the intelligence community that it [the Niger document] was a forgery," said Melvin Goodman, a former C.I.A. analyst who is now at the Center for International Policy.<sup>94</sup>

“My understanding is that while Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet may not have told Mr. Bush that the Niger documents were forged, lower C.I.A. officials did tell both the vice president's office and National Security Council staff members.”<sup>95</sup>

Libby: “The Vice President was unaware of the trip by Ambassador Wilson and didn't know about it until [summer 2003]” .<sup>96</sup>

March 19:

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<sup>90</sup> Nicholas Kristof quoted in “Kristof Re-Visits”, 051103,  
[http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1001433629](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1001433629)

<sup>91</sup> SSCI Report, p.43

<sup>92</sup> “The First Casualty”, <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JVI4q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>93</sup> SSCI Report, p.46

<sup>94</sup> Nicholas Kristof, “White House In Denial”,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/13/opinion/13KRIS.html?ex=1130821200&en=5e8eae98b671da5&ei=5070>

<sup>95</sup> Nicholas Kristof, “White House In Denial”,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/13/opinion/13KRIS.html?ex=1130821200&en=5e8eae98b671da5&ei=5070>

<sup>96</sup> Cooper, Calabresi, Dickerson. “A War On Wilson”,

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,465270,00.html>

Cheney in White House Remarks: "[W]e know they are pursuing nuclear weapons." <sup>97</sup>

March 24:

Cheney on *Late Edition*: "This is a man of great evil, as the President said. And he is actively pursuing nuclear weapons at this time ... The issue is that he's pursuing nuclear weapons." <sup>98</sup>

March 25:

The DO issued its third and final report from the same "foreign government agency" on the Niger sale of uranium. The analysis of the Italian information notes only minor inconsistencies with otherwise known facts. <sup>99</sup>

**Spring:**

In the spring of 2002, the former White House official told me, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz began urging the President to release more than ninety million dollars in federal funds to Chalabi. The 1998 Iraq Liberation Act had authorized ninety-seven million dollars for the Iraqi opposition, but most of the funds had not been expended. The State Department opposed releasing the rest of the money, arguing that Chalabi had failed to account properly for the funds he had already received. "The Vice-President came into a meeting furious that we hadn't given the money to Chalabi," the former official recalled. Cheney said, "Here we are, denying him money, when they" – the Iraqi National Congress – "are providing us with unique intelligence on Iraqi W.M.D.s." <sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

<sup>99</sup> SSCI Report, p.47

<sup>100</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

## PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY

NIO for NSEA starts work on what will be an unclassified White Paper on Iraqi WMD that is published on October 4, 2002. The CIA analyst who drafts the body of the paper does not use the Niger documents.<sup>101</sup>

### May:

May 10:

The CIA's Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis prepared a Principals Committee briefing book updating the knowledge on Iraq's WMD programs. It mentions the approach to Niger.<sup>102</sup>

May 19:

Cheney on *Meet The Press*: "[W]e know he's working on nuclear."<sup>103</sup>

### June:

"According to a story published [in 2004] in *Corriere della Sera*, a second meeting [of the back-channel group] took place in Rome in June 2002. Ghorbanifar tells *The Washington Monthly* that he arranged that meeting after a flurry of faxes between himself and DoD official Harold Rhode. Though he did not attend it himself, Ghorbanifar says the meeting consisted of an Egyptian, an Iraqi, and a high-level U.S. government official, whose name he declined to reveal. The first two briefed the American official about the general situation in Iraq and the Middle East, and what would happen in Iraq ... No one at the U.S. embassy in Rome seems to have known about this second Rome meeting."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> SSCI Report, p.55

<sup>102</sup> SSCI report, p.47

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

<sup>104</sup> Marshall, Rozen, Glastris, "Iran-Contra II",

<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/0410.marshallrozen.html>

## PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY

June 10:

The government of Niger signs the IAEA Accord for the peaceful use of uranium.<sup>105</sup>

June 24:

U.S. Embassy in Niamey distributes a cable *Niger's Uranium: GON signs IAEA Accord, but keeps looking for buyers as price falls.*<sup>106</sup>

June 26:

The INC wrote a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee staff identifying Hannah as the White House recipient of information gathered by the group through a U.S.-funded effort called the Information Collection Program ... The letter, written by Entifadh Qanbar, then the director of the INC's Washington office, identified 108 articles in leading Western news media to which it said the INC had funneled the same information that it fed to Hannah, as well as a senior Pentagon official.<sup>107</sup>

Summer:

In the summer of 2002, Vice President Cheney made several visits to the CIA's Langley headquarters, which were understood within the agency as an attempt to pressure the low-level specialists interpreting the raw intelligence. "That would freak people out," says one former CIA official. "It is supposed to be an ivory tower. And that kind of pressure would be enormous on these young guys."<sup>108</sup>

By summer 2002, the White House Iraq Group assigned Communications Director James R. Wilkinson to prepare a white paper for public release, describing the "grave and gathering danger" of Iraq's allegedly "reconstituted" nuclear weapons program. Wilkinson gave prominent place to the claim that

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<sup>105</sup> SSCI Report, p.48

<sup>106</sup> SSCI Report, p.48

<sup>107</sup> Landay and Strobel, "Cheney's New Security Adviser", 051031,

<http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/13046078.htm>

<sup>108</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

Iraq "sought uranium oxide, an essential ingredient in the enrichment process, from Africa."<sup>109</sup>

In "The Stovepipe", published in October of 2003, Seymour Hersh tells a story about rogue CIA operatives forging Niger documents during the summer of 2002. "The agency guys were so pissed at Cheney," the former officer said. "They said, 'O.K, we're going to put the bite on these guys' ... The thinking, he said, was that the documents would be endorsed by Iraq hawks at the top of the Bush Administration, who would be unable to resist flaunting them at a press conference or an interagency government meeting. They would then look foolish when intelligence officials pointed out that they were obvious fakes."<sup>110</sup>

"The State-CIA IG report [of late 2003] briefly noted a murky story about contacts between SISMI and the CIA in the summer of 2002. That summer SISMI had approached the CIA about an operation they intended to run against the Station Chief of Iraqi intelligence in Rome. The plan was to send disinformation about the Iraqi Station Chief back to Baghdad via a third country. And the subject of the disinformation was to be trade between Iraq and Niger. (The Americans did not object but declined to participate.)"<sup>111</sup>

### **July:**

"Ledeen again contacted Sembler and told him that he'd be back in Rome in September to continue "his work" with the Iranians (This time Ledeen made no mention of any involvement by Pentagon officials; later, he told Sembler it would be in August rather than September.) An exasperated Sembler again sent word back to Washington, and Hadley again went into motion telling Ledeen, in no uncertain terms, to back off."<sup>112</sup>

July 22:

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<sup>109</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>110</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>111</sup> TPM 051031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006896.php>

<sup>112</sup> Marshall, Rozen, Glastris, "Iran-Contra II", <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/0410.marshallrozen.html>

## PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY

DOE publishes a Daily Intelligence Highlight *Nuclear Reconstitution Efforts Underway?* It quotes the Niger documents as one of the signs that Iraq may be reconstituting its nuclear program.<sup>113</sup>

### August:

In August 2002, Feith brought the special intelligence operation in the Pentagon to Langley to brief the CIA about its findings. Rumsfeld also began publicly discussing the creation of a new Pentagon position, an undersecretary for intelligence, who would rival the CIA director and diminish the authority of the agency.<sup>114</sup>

#### August 1:

CIA issues a NESAs report on Iraq's WMD capabilities did not include the alleged Iraq-Niger uranium information.<sup>115</sup>

#### August 7:

Cheney, speaking in California, said of Saddam Hussein, "What we know now, from various sources, is that he . . . continues to pursue a nuclear weapon."<sup>116</sup>

#### August 8:

In Congress, even conservative Republicans such as Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott and House Majority Leader Dick Armey began to express doubts that war was justified. Armey declared on August 8, 2002, "If we try to act against Saddam Hussein, as obnoxious as he is, without proper provocation, we will not have the support of other nation-states who might do so."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> SSCI Report, p.48

<sup>114</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>115</sup> SSCI Report, p.48

<sup>116</sup> Quoted in Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>117</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

## PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY

By mid-August 2002, a Gallup poll showed support for war with Saddam at a post-September 11 low, with 53 percent in favor and 41 percent opposed--down from 61 percent to 31 percent just two months before.<sup>118</sup>

August 26:

In Nashville on August 26, 2002, at a speech at the 103<sup>rd</sup> VFW Convention, Vice President Dick Cheney warned of a Saddam "armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror" who could "directly threaten America's friends throughout the region and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail."<sup>119</sup> He added that the Iraqis were continuing "to pursue the nuclear program they began so many years ago."<sup>120</sup>

August 29:

Cheney in a White House statement: "[T]hey continue to pursue an aggressive nuclear weapons program."<sup>121</sup>

### Late Summer:

In the late summer of 2002, Sen. Bob Graham had requested from Tenet an analysis of the Iraqi threat. According to knowledgeable sources, he received a 25-page classified response reflecting the balanced view that had prevailed earlier among the intelligence agencies--noting, for example, that evidence of an Iraqi nuclear program or a link to Al Qaeda was inconclusive.<sup>122</sup>

### September:

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<sup>118</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>119</sup> Quoted in "The First Casualty",

<http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record,

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

<sup>122</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

Repeated use of the "mushroom cloud" image by top officials beginning in September, became the emotional heart of the case against Iraq.<sup>123</sup>

"In September 2002, however, Niger re-emerged. The British government published a "white paper" asserting that Saddam Hussein and his unconventional arms posed an immediate danger. As evidence, the report cited Iraq's attempts to purchase uranium from an African country."<sup>124</sup>

DIA publishes intelligence estimate *Iraq's Reemerging Nuclear Program*. "A substantial amount of Iraq's chemical warfare agents, precursors, munitions, and production equipment were destroyed between 1991 and 1998 as a result of Operation Desert Storm and UNSCOM [United Nations Special Commission] actions," the agency reported. "There is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has--or will--establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities."<sup>125</sup> It also reiterates the Niger information and says it cannot confirm the data.<sup>126</sup>

September 8:

In a lengthy investigative piece for the *New York Times*, Judith Miller reported that Saddam could have built an atomic weapon with the aluminum tubes known to have been in Iraq. It is known now that the story was based in part at least on the forged Niger papers.<sup>127</sup>

The administration used the anniversary of September 11, 2001, to launch its public campaign for a congressional resolution endorsing war, with or without U.N. support, against Saddam. The opening salvo came on the Sunday before the anniversary in the form of a leak to Judith Miller and Michael R. Gordon of *The New York Times* regarding the aluminum tubes. Miller and Gordon reported that, according to administration officials, Iraq had been trying to buy tubes specifically designed as "components of centrifuges to enrich uranium" for nuclear weapons. That same day, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice appeared on the

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<sup>123</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>124</sup> Joe Wilson, "What I Didn't Find",

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/opinion/06WILS.html?ex=1130821200&en=081916620c29f21e&ei=5070>

<sup>125</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JjV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>126</sup> SSCI Report, p.48

<sup>127</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

political talk shows to trumpet the discovery of the tubes and the Iraqi nuclear threat. Explained Rice, "There will always be some uncertainty about how quickly [Saddam] can acquire nuclear weapons. But we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." Rumsfeld added, "Imagine a September eleventh with weapons of mass destruction. It's not three thousand--it's tens of thousands of innocent men, women, and children."<sup>128</sup>

Cheney on *Meet The Press*: "[H]e is, in fact, actively and aggressively seeking to acquire nuclear weapons ... Now, the more recent developments have to do with our now being able to conclude, based on intelligence that's becoming available . . . that he has reconstituted his nuclear program to develop a nuclear weapon, that there are efforts under way inside Iraq to significantly expand his capability."<sup>129</sup>

Rice on *Late Edition With Wolf Blitzer*: "We do know that there have been shipments going . . . into Iraq . . . of aluminum tubes that really are only suited to -- high-quality aluminum tools [sic] that are only really suited for nuclear weapons programs, centrifuge programs ... We do know that he is actively pursuing a nuclear weapon ... We know that he has the infrastructure, nuclear scientists to make a nuclear weapon ... "The problem here is that there will always be some uncertainty about how quickly he can acquire nuclear weapons. But we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."<sup>130</sup>

September 9:

Nicolo Pollari, head of SISMI, met with then-Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley at the White House. National Security Council spokesman Frederick Jones said in October 2005 that the meeting was a 15-minute courtesy call and that no one could recollect talk about yellowcake.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> "The First Casualty",

<http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJVl4q9T%3D%3D>; Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>129</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

<sup>130</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

<sup>131</sup> Landay & Strobel, 051031,

<http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/nation/13024382.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>

Pollari does NOT tell Hadley that the Niger documents are forged. He does NOT tell Hadley the Italians are aware the aluminum tubes are for Iraqi conventional weapons.<sup>132</sup>

Hadley: "There was a meeting in Washington on that date. I did attend a meeting with him. It was, so far as we can tell from our records, about less than 15 minutes. It was a courtesy call. Nobody participating in that meeting or asked about that meeting has any recollection of a discussion of natural uranium, or any recollection of any documents being passed. And that's also my recollection. I have very little recollection of the meeting, but I have no recollection there was any of that discussion, or that there was any passing of documents. Nor does anybody else who may have participated in that meeting."<sup>133</sup>

Sen. Richard Durbin, member of the SSCI, wrote to the DCI asking that a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) be drafted on Iraq's WMD program.<sup>134</sup>

September 10:

Sen. Bob Graham, Chairman of SSCI, wrote to the DCI asking that a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) be drafted on Iraq's WMD program.<sup>135</sup>

September 11:

Stephen Hadley's office contacts the CIA for authorization to allow Bush to use the information on the sale of Niger uranium in a speech. The authorized language was: "Iraq has made several attempts to acquire aluminum tubes for use in its uranium enrichment centrifuges. And we also know this: within the past few years, Iraq has resumed efforts to obtain large quantities of uranium oxide known as yellowcake, which is an essential ingredient of this process. The regime was caught trying to purchase up to 500 metric tons of this material."<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/11/20051102-10.html>

<sup>134</sup> SSCI Report, p.12

<sup>135</sup> SSCI Report, p.12

<sup>136</sup> SSCI Report, p.48

September 12:

The appearance of a little-noticed story in *Panorama* a weekly magazine owned by Italian Prime Minister and Bush ally Silvio Berlusconi, that was published three days after Pollari's meeting with Hadley. The magazine's September 12, 2002, issue claimed that Iraq's intelligence agency, the Mukhabarat, had acquired 500 tons of uranium from Nigeria through a Jordanian intermediary. (While this September 2002 *Panorama* report mentioned Nigeria, the forgeries another *Panorama* reporter would be proffered less than a month later purportedly concerned Niger.)<sup>137</sup>

This morning, the NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs received guidance from the DCI to prepare an NIE on Iraq's WMD program.<sup>138</sup>

September 13:

Sen. Diane Feinstein, member of SSCI, wrote to Bush encouraging the production of an NIE on Iraq's WMD threat.<sup>139</sup>

September 14:

The President himself, in his weekly radio address on September 14th, stated, "Saddam Hussein has the scientists and infrastructure for a nuclear-weapons program, and has illicitly sought to purchase the equipment needed to enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon."<sup>140</sup>

September 17:

Sen. Carl Levin, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and member of the SSCI, wrote to the DCI stating it was "imperative" that an NIE be prepared on Iraq's programs for WMD.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Laura Rozen, "La Repubblica's Scoop", 051025,

[http://www.prospect.org/web/page.wv?section=root&name=ViewWeb&articleId=10506;](http://www.prospect.org/web/page.wv?section=root&name=ViewWeb&articleId=10506)

<http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005/11/eight-nigergate-questions-in-search-of.html>

<sup>138</sup> SSCI Report, p.12-13, 52

<sup>139</sup> SSCI Report, p.12

<sup>140</sup> Quoted in Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>141</sup> SSCI Report, p.12

September 18:

Rumsfeld testifying before the House Armed Services Committee: "[W]e do know they're currently pursuing nuclear weapons, that they have a proven willingness to use those weapons at their disposal ... His regime has an active program to acquire and develop nuclear weapons ... And he is aggressively pursuing nuclear weapons. The region knows that. " <sup>142</sup>

September 19:

Rumsfeld testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee: "We do know that the Iraqi regime . . . they're pursuing nuclear weapons ... His regime has an active program to acquire nuclear weapons ... is aggressively pursuing nuclear weapons. " <sup>143</sup>

September 23:

The NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs circulates a draft NIE on Iraq's WMD programs to various intelligence agencies. <sup>144</sup>

September 24:

The British government issued a dossier dramatizing the W.M.D. threat posed by Iraq. In a foreword to *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government*, Blair proclaimed that "the assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt that Saddam . . . continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons." The dossier noted that intelligence – based, again, largely on the SISMI report – showed that Iraq had "sought significant quantities of

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<sup>142</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

<sup>143</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

<sup>144</sup> SSCI Report, p.13, 52

uranium from Africa.”<sup>145</sup> In preparing the dossier, the British had access to CIA caution over the Niger facts.<sup>146</sup>

A group of senior intelligence officials, including George Tenet, the Director of Central Intelligence, briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Iraq’s weapons capability. According to two of those present at the briefing, which was highly classified and took place in the committee’s secure hearing room, Tenet declared, as he had done before, that a shipment of high-strength aluminum tubes that was intercepted on its way to Iraq had been meant for the construction of centrifuges that could be used to produce enriched uranium ... but this time the argument that Iraq had a nuclear program under way was buttressed by a new and striking fact: the C.I.A. had recently received intelligence showing that, between 1999 and 2001, Iraq had attempted to buy five hundred tons of uranium oxide from Niger, one of the world’s largest producers. (When the C.I.A. spokesman William Harlow was asked for comment, he denied that Tenet had briefed the senators on Niger.).<sup>147</sup>

The White House again contacts the CIA for clearance to use certain language in a speech. The approved language was: “we also have intelligence that Iraq has sought large amounts of uranium and uranium oxide, known as yellowcake, from Africa.”<sup>148</sup>

September 25:

Rice insisted, "There clearly are contacts between Al Qaeda and Iraq. ... There clearly is testimony that some of the contacts have been important contacts and that there's a relationship there." On the same day, President Bush warned of the danger that "Al Qaeda becomes an extension of Saddam's madness."<sup>149</sup>

The NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs holds a full-day coordinating meeting for intelligence analysts working on the Iraq WMD NIE. The only dissenting voice was the INR analyst.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> SSCI Report, p.50; see Butler Report, pp.121 ff

<sup>146</sup> Butler Report, p.123

<sup>147</sup> Seymour Hersh, “Who Lied”, 030324,

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?030331fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?030331fa_fact1)

<sup>148</sup> SSCI Report, p.51

<sup>149</sup> “The First Casualty”, <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>150</sup> SSCI Report, p.13, 52

September 26:

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld claimed he had "bulletproof" evidence of ties between Saddam and Al Qaeda.<sup>151</sup>

Secretary of State Colin Powell, appearing before a closed hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, cited Iraq's attempt to obtain uranium from Niger as evidence of its persistent nuclear ambitions.<sup>152</sup>

Bush remarks at White House: "The regime is seeking a nuclear bomb, and with fissile material, could build one within a year."<sup>153</sup>

The NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs circulates an updated draft NIE on Iraq's WMD programs to various intelligence agencies. INR dissent on the Niger story is carried in small text boxes rather than in the body of the report and is wrongly positioned in a section to do with aluminum tubes.<sup>154</sup>

September 27:

Paul Anderson, a spokesman for Sen. Bob Graham, who chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee, told *USA Today* that the senator had seen nothing in the CIA's classified reports that established a link between Saddam and Al Qaeda.<sup>155</sup>

Rumsfeld speaking to Atlanta Metro Chamber of Commerce: "His regime has an active program to acquire and develop nuclear weapons."<sup>156</sup>

September 28:

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<sup>151</sup> "The First Casualty". <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>152</sup> Seymour Hersh, "Who Lied", 030324,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?030331fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?030331fa_fact1)

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=President+George+W%2E+Bush>

<sup>154</sup> SSCI Report, p.13, 52-53

<sup>155</sup> "The First Casualty". <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>156</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

The BBC begins investigating leaks from the British national security establishment claiming that the September 24 dossier was based on hyped intelligence.<sup>157</sup>

September 30:

An email indicates that INR was still editing the text boxes in the September 26 report.<sup>158</sup>

**October:**

October 1:

US intelligence agencies released the NIE on Iraq's WMD preparations to the White House and Congress. "*Iraq's Continuing Programs For Weapons of Mass Destruction*" mentions the Niger reports as well as claims about attempts to purchase uranium in Somalia and Congo. The only doubts were raised in a footnote noting the State Department's skepticism, separated by about 60 pages of text from the uranium discussion.<sup>159</sup> The SSCI Report would later conclude that the NIE's assertions were "overstated, or were not supported".<sup>160</sup> The Silberman-Robb Commission found that the NIE's conclusions were "almost completely wrong" and the intelligence assessments were "riddled with errors."<sup>161</sup>

October 2:

The Deputy DCI testified before the SSCI. Senator Jon Kyl asked the Deputy DCI whether he had read the British White Paper and whether he disagreed with anything in the report. The Deputy DCI testified that "the one thing where I think they stretched a little bit beyond where we would stretch is on

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<sup>157</sup> TPM, 031031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/002145.php>

<sup>158</sup> SSCI Report, p.54

<sup>159</sup> SSCI Report, p.54

<sup>160</sup> SSCI Report, p.14

<sup>161</sup> Silberman-Robb Report, Looking Back, Iraq: An Overview

the points about where Iraq seeking uranium from various African locations.”  
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In the first couple days of October<sup>163</sup>, “Elisabetta Burba, an Italian journalist for the Rome magazine *Panorama*, owned by Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, received a telephone call from an Italian businessman and security consultant, Rocco Martino<sup>164</sup>, whom she believed to have once been connected to Italian intelligence. He told her that he had information connecting Saddam Hussein to the purchase of uranium in Africa. She considered the informant credible ... “I knew he was an informed person, and that he had contacts all over the world, including in the Middle East. He deals with investment and security issues.”<sup>165</sup> She agreed to meet him on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Bush remarks at the White House: "The regime has the scientists and facilities to build nuclear weapons, and is seeking the materials needed to do so."<sup>166</sup>

October 4:

The NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs testified before the SSCI. Asked by Sen. Fred Thompson if there were differences with the British, the NIO said “they put more emphasis on the uranium acquisition in Africa than we would.”<sup>167</sup>

The CIA published an unclassified White Paper, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs*. It does not mention the Niger reports.<sup>168</sup>

About this same time the CIA NESAs published a classified Iraqi handbook as a repository for information. It mentions that Iraq may be attempting to obtain tons of uranium from Niger.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> SSCI Report, p.54

<sup>163</sup> TPM, 031031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/002145.php>

<sup>164</sup> His background is covered in Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle,  
[http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>165</sup> Seymour Hersh, “The Stovepipe”, 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>166</sup> Quoted in Waxman, “Iraq On The Record”,  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=President+George+W%2E+Bush>

<sup>167</sup> SSCI Report, p.54-55

<sup>168</sup> SSCI Report, p.55

<sup>169</sup> SSCI Report, p.55

The NSC sends the fifth draft of a speech that Bush is to deliver in Cincinnati to the CIA for clearance. It includes the line "and the regime has been caught attempting to purchase up to 500 metric tons of uranium oxide from Africa."<sup>170</sup>

October 5:

The Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence (ADDI) is appointed to liaise about the Cincinnati speech. During an all topics discussion with analysts (but no representatives of WINPAC), the ADDI said an Iraq nuclear analyst - he could not remember who - raised concerns about the sourcing and some of the facts of the Niger reporting, specifically that the control of the mines in Niger would have made it very difficult to get yellowcake to Iraq. Based on the analyst's comments, the ADDI faxed a memo to Hadley that said, "remove the sentence because the amount is in dispute and it is debatable whether it can be acquired from the source. We told Congress that the Brits have exaggerated this issue. Finally, the Iraqis already have 550 metric tons of uranium oxide in their inventory."<sup>171</sup> According to Hadley's later account, an unsigned CIA memo was sent to him and to presidential speechwriter Michael Gerson ... advising that "the CIA had reservations about the British reporting" on Iraq's alleged attempts to buy uranium from the west African country of Niger.<sup>172</sup>

Later that day the NSC created draft seven of the speech. The line now read: "and the regime has been caught attempting to purchase substantial amounts of uranium oxide from sources in Africa." The draft is sent to CIA.<sup>173</sup>

October 6:

When the ADDI received the new draft he noticed that the uranium information had "not been addressed," so he alerted the DCI. The DCI called Hadley directly to outline the CIA's concerns. The DCI testified before the SSCI that he told Hadley that the "President should not be a fact witness on

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<sup>170</sup> SSCI Report, p.55

<sup>171</sup> SSCI report, p.55-56

<sup>172</sup> "White House Official Apologizes", 030722,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/22/international/worldspecial/22CND-HADLEY.html?ex=1130994000&en=0de9d05b918ec1ae&ei=5070>

<sup>173</sup> SSCI Report, p.56

this issue," because his analysts had told him the "reporting was weak." The NSC then removed the uranium reference from the draft of the speech. <sup>174</sup>

Hadley later acknowledged that he had received two memos from the CIA and a phone call from agency Director George Tenet, and that the references had been removed from the speech as a result. <sup>175</sup>

That same day, the CIA sent a second fax to the White House with "more on why we recommend removing the sentence about procuring uranium oxide from Africa." The fax repeated the familiar issues and said "we have shared points one and two with Congress, telling them that the Africa story is overblown and telling them this in one of the two issues where we differed with the British."<sup>176</sup>

October 7:

President Bush gives his speech in Cincinnati. "Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof – the smoking gun – that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud ... The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program," the president declared. "Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons." <sup>177</sup>

President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat; Remarks by the President on Iraq, White House "The Iraqi regime . . . is seeking nuclear weapons ... Saddam Hussein . . . is moving ever closer to developing a nuclear weapon ... If the Iraq regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than one year." <sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> SSCI Report, p.56; "White House Official Apologizes", 030722,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/22/international/worldspecial/22CND-HADLEY.html?ex=1130994000&en=0de9d05b918ec1ae&ei=5070>

<sup>175</sup> "White House Official Apologizes", 030722,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/22/international/worldspecial/22CND-HADLEY.html?ex=1130994000&en=0de9d05b918ec1ae&ei=5070>

<sup>176</sup> SSCI report, p.56-57

<sup>177</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html>

<sup>178</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=President+George+W%2E+Bush>

After the speech, when reporters pointed out that Bush's warning of an imminent threat was contradicted by Tenet's statement the same day that there was little likelihood of an Iraqi attack, Tenet dutifully offered a clarification, explaining that there was "no inconsistency" between the president's statement and his own and that he had personally fact-checked the president's speech. He also issued a public statement that read, "There is no question that the likelihood of Saddam using weapons of mass destruction against the United States or our allies ... grows as his arsenal continues to build."<sup>179</sup>

The CIA made comments on a draft White House paper *A Grave and Gathering Danger*. The original mentioned attempted purchases of "uranium oxide" from Africa; the CIA suggested changing it to "uranium". In the end the paper was never published.<sup>180</sup>

That evening, Graham received a call from the CIA, informing him that the White House had ordered Tenet not to release anything more.<sup>181</sup> "The analysts at the C.I.A. were beaten down defending their assessments. And they blame George Tenet" – the C.I.A. director – "for not protecting them. I've never seen a government like this."<sup>182</sup>

In Rome, Burba met with Rocco Martino in a bar.<sup>183</sup> He "showed her the Niger documents and offered to sell them to her for about ten thousand dollars<sup>184</sup>. The documents he gave her were photocopies. There were twenty-two pages, mostly in French, some with the letterhead of the Niger government or Embassy, and two on the stationery of the Iraqi Embassy to the Holy See. There were also telexes. When Burba asked how the documents could be authenticated, the man produced what appeared to be a photocopy of the codebook from the Niger Embassy, along with other items. "What I was sure of was that he had access," Burba said. "He didn't receive the documents from the moon."<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>180</sup> SSCI Report, p.57

<sup>181</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>182</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>183</sup> TPM, 031031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/002145.php>

<sup>184</sup> Fifteen thousand Euros according to SSCI report, p.57

<sup>185</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact); TPM, 031031,

<http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/002145.php>

October 8:

“Burba had questions from the start. The next day she brought the documents and her concerns to a meeting with her editors at *Panorama*. Burba then proposed a fact-finding trip to Niger to investigate the document's authenticity. But the Editor-in-Chief of Burba's magazine insisted she take the documents to the American Embassy in Rome to have them verified. That man is Carlo Rossella.”<sup>186</sup>

Carlo Rossella: “When Burba showed me the documents she had received from a source of hers, she also explained to me that she had many doubts as to their authenticity. I told her to run all the checks she deemed necessary, and I also suggested the possibility of getting an evaluation directly from the United States ... I knew perfectly well that that material could prove an extraordinary scoop, and therefore I personally called the press office and informed them about what was happening. I suggested delivering them a copy of the dossier in order to have their assessment.”<sup>187</sup>

October 9:

Burba, in a meeting arranged by Rosella<sup>188</sup>, “gave the U.S. Embassy a copy of the purported agreement by Niger to sell yellowcake to Iraq ... The embassy forwarded a copy to the State Department.<sup>189</sup> “When the forgeries arrived at the US Embassy in Rome ... the first reaction of the CIA Station chief was to wonder whether this wasn't the same story the Italians had suggested using against the Iraqi only months before.”<sup>190</sup>

“Two former C.I.A. officials provided slightly different accounts of what happened next. “The Embassy was alerted that the papers were coming,” the first former official told me, “and it passed them directly to Washington without even vetting them inside the Embassy.” Once the documents were in

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<sup>186</sup> Seymour Hersh, “The Stovepipe”, 031020,

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>187</sup> Quoted in *Corriere della Sera* via TPM, 031031,

<http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/002145.php>

<sup>188</sup> TPM, 031031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/002145.php>

<sup>189</sup> Landay & Strobel, 051031,

<http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/nation/13024382.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>; Seymour Hersh, “The Stovepipe”, 031020,

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>190</sup> TPM 051031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006896.php>

Washington, they were forwarded by the C.I.A. to the Pentagon, he said. "Everybody knew at every step of the way that they were false – until they got to the Pentagon, where they were believed." The second former official, Vincent Cannistraro, who served as chief of counter-terrorism operations and analysis, told me that copies of the Burba documents were given to the American Embassy, which passed them on to the C.I.A.'s chief of station in Rome, who forwarded them to Washington."<sup>191</sup>

October 15:

The U.S. Embassy in Rome faxes the documents to the State Department's Bureau of Nonproliferation which passed a copy to INR. The INR's Iraq nuclear analyst emails them to various IC colleagues who are already scheduled to meet the next day. He is immediately suspicious of the documents' integrity.<sup>192</sup>

October 16:

INR makes copies of the Niger documents for the attendees at the NIAG meeting attended by representatives from CIA, DOE, DIA and NSA. Members of most agencies remember receiving the documents at this meeting. However, none of the four CIA members who attended recalled the documents. One must have done so, though, as later a copy was found in the DO's CPD vault.<sup>193</sup>

Burba travelled to Niger. She visited mines and the ports that any exports would pass through, spoke to European businessmen and officials informed about Niger's uranium industry, and found no trace of a sale. She also learned that the transport company and the bank mentioned in the papers were too small and too ill-equipped to handle such a transaction. As Ambassador Wilson had done eight months earlier, she concluded that there was no evidence of a recent sale of yellowcake to Iraq.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>192</sup> SSCI Report, p.58

<sup>193</sup> SSCI Report, p.58-59

<sup>194</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

October 22:

Powell on *Oprah Winfrey*: "[T]hey're trying to acquire nuclear weapons."<sup>195</sup>

November:

By November 2002, a Gallup poll showed 59 percent in favor of an invasion and only 35 percent against.

U.N. weapons inspectors return to Iraq.

November 14:

Rumsfeld on Infinity Radio: "And we know that he has an active program for the development of nuclear weapons."<sup>196</sup>

November 22:

At a meeting with State Department officials, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director for Nonproliferation said that France had information Iraq tried to obtain uranium from Niger. He said that no shipments had been made, but said the French were certain of the attempt.<sup>197</sup>

November 25:

A Navy agency issues a brief report, *Alleged Storage of Uranium Destined For Iraq* which included the claim that a large quantity of uranium, secretly sold by Niger's President to Iraq, was allegedly in storage in Cotonou, Benin.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On the Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+State+Colin+Powell>

<sup>196</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On the Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

<sup>197</sup> SSCI Report, p.59

<sup>198</sup> SSCI Report, p.59-60

## PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY

### December:

In a December *Los Angeles Times* poll, Americans thought, by a 90 percent to 7 percent margin, that Saddam was "currently developing weapons of mass destruction." And, in an ABC/*Washington Post* poll, 81 percent thought Iraq posed a threat to the United States.

A probe by the State Department Inspector General revealed that Bolton's office was responsible for the placement of the Niger uranium claims in the State Department's December 2002 "fact sheet" on Iraq's WMD program.<sup>199</sup>

### December 3:

Rumsfeld at DoD Press Briefing: "QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, the United States has categorically said that Iraq has an active . . . nuclear weapons program. SECRETARY RUMSFELD: Because they do."<sup>200</sup>

### December 7:

The Iraqi regime provided the U.N. Security Council with a twelve-thousand-page series of documents in which it denied having a WMD arsenal.

### December 9:

The State Department submits to NSC its draft of a periodic report on Iraq that will be delivered on January 20, 2003. This draft does not include language later used about uranium procurement.<sup>201</sup>

### December 17:

The Defense Humint Service (DHS) investigates the storage facility in Cotonou, Benin, mentioned in the November 25 Navy report, and find only

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<sup>199</sup> Alexandrovna and Leopold, 051102,

[http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Lawyers\\_involved\\_in\\_leak\\_case\\_say\\_1102.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Lawyers_involved_in_leak_case_say_1102.html)

<sup>200</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On the Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

<sup>201</sup> SSCI Report, p.63

cotton bales. The agent used was a reports officer of the US Military Attache in Abidjan.<sup>202</sup>

CIA WINPAC produced a report, *U.S. Analysis of Iraq's Declaration, 7 December 2002*. The report notes that Iraq's Declaration does not deal with efforts to procure African uranium "one of the points addressed in the U.K. Dossier."<sup>203</sup>

December 18:

The State Department's Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Public Affairs asked the Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security to help develop a response to Iraq's December 7 Declaration. An NP Special assistant prepared a draft and sent it to Director WINPAC for coordination. In a phone call, the Director made a few edits but left in a reference to the Niger uranium. In a separate coordination with the NSC, the Director suggested that "Africa" be used instead of "Niger".<sup>204</sup>

December 19:

According to one report, the information on Niger and the uranium is included in the three-page *President's Daily Briefing* prepared each day by the CIA and the Department of State for George W. Bush.<sup>205</sup>

At 11:28am, NP emailed its draft fact sheet to various agencies, including the INR Office of Analysis for Strategic, Proliferation and Military Issues (SPM). At 12:20pm, the SPM office circulated the fact sheet to analysts for comment. At 1:12pm an analyst asked that the word "reported" be use before references to uranium procurement in Niger. He reiterated INR's concerns over the intelligence. The draft had already been forwarded to PA and INR made no efforts to recall it for editing.<sup>206</sup>

In rebutting the Iraqi's report to the UN of December 7, in 'Illustrative Examples of Omissions from the Iraqi Declaration to the United Nations Security Council', ambassador to the United Nations, John Negroponte, asked,

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<sup>202</sup> SSCI Report, p.60, 68

<sup>203</sup> SSCI Report, p.60

<sup>204</sup> SSCI Report, p.60

<sup>205</sup> Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo, *La Repubblica* 051023, translated by Nur-al-Cubicle, [http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_nuralcubicle\\_archive.html](http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_nuralcubicle_archive.html)

<sup>206</sup> SSCI Report, p.61

“Why is the Iraqi regime hiding their Niger procurement?” It was the first time that Niger had been publicly identified.<sup>207</sup>

December 23:

The INR Iraq nuclear analyst emails an analyst at the DOE, surprised that the INR’s skepticism about Niger uranium was not conveyed in the December 17 WINPAC report. The DOE analyst replies complaining about WINPAC “directing foreign policy in this manner.”<sup>208</sup>

December 24:

The Prime Minister of Niger publicly announces that no uranium shipments have been made to Iraq and that no such approaches had been made since he took office in 2000.<sup>209</sup>

December 27:

State Department circulates a cable reporting the Niger government statements of December 24.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Seymour Hersh, “The Stovepipe”, 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>208</sup> SSCI Report, p.60

<sup>209</sup> SSCI Report, p.61

<sup>210</sup> SSCI Report, p.61

## 2003

### January

Senator Pat Roberts appointed Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

January 6:

Jaques Baute of IAEA requests State Department to supply more information about the alleged Niger sale.<sup>211</sup>

January 13:

The INR nuclear analyst sent an email to other analysts outlining his reasons why the Niger documents were a hoax. When the CIA analyst receives the email he realizes WINPAC does not have copies of the actual documents; he requests copies from INR.<sup>212</sup>

January 15:

WINPAC repeats its October 2002 comments about a White House paper, *A Grave and Gathering Danger*, suggesting that statements about the African procurement be generalized.<sup>213</sup>

January 16:

The CIA receives copies of the forged French-language documents.<sup>214</sup>

January 17:

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<sup>211</sup> SSCI Report, p.62

<sup>212</sup> SSCI Report, p.62; Silberman-Robb Report

<sup>213</sup> SSCI Report, p.62

<sup>214</sup> SSCI Report, p.62

CIA sends French-language documents back to the State Department to be translated. <sup>215</sup>

In response to a question from the Chairman, Joint Chiefs, CIA's WINPAC published SPWR011703-01, *Request For Evidence of Iraq's Nuclear Weapons Program Other Than the Aluminum Tube Procurement Effort*. The report said there was "fragmentary reporting" on Iraqi attempts to purchase uranium from "various countries in Africa." <sup>216</sup>

By mid-January, Gallup showed that American support for the impending war had narrowed to 52 percent in favor of war and 43 percent opposed.

January 20:

French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin launched a surprise attack on the administration's war plans, declaring bluntly, "Nothing today justifies envisaging military action." <sup>217</sup>

In a letter, Bush makes a regular periodic report to Congress on Iraq's compliance with Security Council resolutions. "The [Iraqi] report also failed to deal with issues which have arisen since 1998, including: . . . attempts to acquire uranium and the means to enrich it." The normal IC channels were not used to coordinate the report. The CIA Inspector General said later that the text was drawn from a WINPAC assessment of Security Council compliance. <sup>218</sup>

Rumsfeld in speech to the Conference of Army Reserve Operators: "And he has an active program to acquire and develop nuclear weapons."

January 23:

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<sup>215</sup> SSCI Report, p.62

<sup>216</sup> SSCI Report, p.62-63; Silberman-Robb Report

<sup>217</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>218</sup> SSCI Report, p.63

In an Op-Ed column in the *Times*, entitled "Why We Know Iraq Is Lying," Condoleezza Rice wrote that the "false declaration . . . fails to account for or explain Iraq's efforts to get uranium from abroad."<sup>219</sup>

January 24:

In response to an NSC request for further information on Iraqi WMDs, the NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs faxed a packet of background material to NSC. The package included the information used for the October 2002 NIE.<sup>220</sup>

In response to a question from the Office of the Secretary of Defense/ International Security Affairs for more information on sales of uranium to Iraq by Niger, the DIA provided a background paper that included CIA Niger reporting and the November 25, 2002, Navy report.<sup>221</sup>

January 26:

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell demanded, "Why is Iraq still trying to procure uranium and the special equipment needed to transform it into material for a nuclear weapon?"<sup>222</sup>

Sometime in late January, Robert Joseph, a senior White House staffer, and Alan Foley, the head of WINPAC, agreed that Bush could refer to the uranium claim in his State of the Union speech, but he should cite a public British report.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

<sup>220</sup> SSCI Report, p.63

<sup>221</sup> SSCI Report, p.63

<sup>222</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+State+Colin+Powell>

<sup>223</sup> Landay & Strobel, 051031,  
<http://www.realcities.com/mls/krwashington/news/nation/13024382.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>

January 27:

A CIA intelligence report indicated foreign agency intelligence that uranium sodium in storage in Benin was intended for France, not Iraq, but that a contract between Niger and Iraq did exist.<sup>224</sup>

At an NSC meeting, DCI Tenet is given a hardcopy draft of the State of the Union speech. When he returned to the CIA, Tenet handed the speech to his Executive Assistant for delivery to DDI.<sup>225</sup>

At some point, Director WINPAC discussed the Niger part of the speech in a phone call with his NSC counterpart, the Special Assistant to the President for Nonproliferation. The CIA man explained his concerns were about revealing sources, not the accuracy of the information. They agreed in the end, at the suggestion of the Special Assistant that citing already unclassified British intelligence was better than citing US intelligence. This idea had apparently originated from White House speech writers looking for sources of public intelligence to support the speech.<sup>226</sup>

January 28:

Bush gives his State of the Union speech that includes the sixteen words: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."<sup>227</sup>

January 29:

Joe Wilson: "The next day, I reminded a friend at the State Department of my trip and suggested that if the president had been referring to Niger, then his conclusion was not borne out by the facts as I understood them. He replied that perhaps the president was speaking about one of the other three African

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<sup>224</sup> SSCI Report, p.64

<sup>225</sup> SSCI Report, p.64. In testimony to the SSCI in July 2003, Tenet admitted he had never read the State of the Union speech.

<sup>226</sup> SSCI Report, p.64-66

<sup>227</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html>

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countries that produce uranium: Gabon, South Africa or Namibia. At the time, I accepted the explanation."<sup>228</sup>

Rumsfeld at DoD Press Briefing: "His regime has the design for a nuclear weapon, was working on several different methods of enriching uranium, and recently was discovered seeking significant quantities of uranium from Africa."<sup>229</sup>

January 29:

Sen. Carl Levin wrote to CIA asking for details of what the US IC knows about Iraqi attempts to procure uranium in Africa.<sup>230</sup>

In late January, CIA, NSC, State and the White House began coordination on a major policy speech to be given to the UN Security Council.<sup>231</sup>

### **February:**

February 2:

During this weekend, Powell worked with State, CIA and White House officials at the CIA to draft the speech. CIA removed some White House material that is uncorroborated. After discussions with WINPAC, information on the uranium sale is left out.<sup>232</sup>

February 3:

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<sup>228</sup> Joe Wilson, "What I Didn't Find",  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/opinion/06WILS.html?ex=1130821200&en=081916620c29f21e&ei=5070>

<sup>229</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

<sup>230</sup> SSCI Report, p.69 See February 27, 2003 for reply.

<sup>231</sup> SSCI Report, p.66, 67

<sup>232</sup> SSCI Report, p.66-67

CIA cables the "foreign service" from which it received the January 27 report. It requests more conclusive proof. Later that day, CIA reports the foreign agency does not have a copy of the contract and that the source of the information was "national".<sup>233</sup>

February 4:

According to the SSCI Report, USG sends electronic copies of the Niger documents to IAEA. They give hardcopy to IAEA's INVO who is in New York. They also included the US's talking points.<sup>234</sup> However, other sources say the U.S. mission in Vienna provided the IAEA with an oral briefing while Baute was en route to New York, leaving no printed material with the nuclear inspectors. As IAEA officials recount, an astonished Baute told his aides, "That won't do. I want the actual documentary evidence." He had to register his complaints through a United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) channel before receiving the documents the day Powell spoke.<sup>235</sup>

A State Department letter to Rep. Henry Waxman makes the astonishing admission that when America handed the Niger documents to the IAEA they included the qualification 'we cannot confirm these reports and have questions regarding some specific claims' -- hardly the same tune that Bush and Blair were singing with their claims that Saddam was chasing down Niger uranium.<sup>236</sup>

The French inform the US that the Niger documents are forgeries.<sup>237</sup>

February 5:

Secretary of State Colin Powell took the administration's case to the Security Council. In addition to rehashing the aluminum-tube claims, Powell charged, for instance, that Iraq was trying to obtain magnets for uranium enrichment.

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<sup>233</sup> SSCI Report, p.67

<sup>234</sup> SSCI Report, p.67-68

<sup>235</sup> "The First Casualty",

<http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>; Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>236</sup> Neil Mackay, "Niger and Iraq", 030713, <http://www.sundayherald.com/35264>

<sup>237</sup> Giovanni D'Avanzo, *La Repubblica*, 3 November 2005, translated at

<http://nuralcubicle.blogspot.com/2005/11/eight-nigergate-questions-in-search-of.html>

Powell also described a "potentially ... sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network, a nexus that combines classic terrorist organizations and modern methods of murder." There is no mention of Niger uranium procurement.<sup>238</sup>

February 7:

The State Department's Office of Language Services, Translating Division, completed the translation of the Niger-Iraq documents. The translations were sent to State.<sup>239</sup>

February 11:

A senior CIA analyst for Africa sent an intelligence estimate to other CIA departments for coordination. He suggested the Niger documents "could be fraudulent".<sup>240</sup>

February 12:

IAEA investigators interview Al Zahawie about his 1999 trip to Niger. They concluded he had nothing to hide.<sup>241</sup>

February 27:

CIA replies to Sen. Carl Levin's letter of January 29. It notes foreign reporting about uranium procurement and states that there may have been attempts to buy in 1999. No reservations were given about the quality of the evidence.<sup>242</sup>

Late February:

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<sup>238</sup> "The First Casualty",  
<http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>; SSCI Report, p.68

<sup>239</sup> SSCI Report, p.68

<sup>240</sup> SSCI Report, p.69

<sup>241</sup> Butler Report, p.124-125

<sup>242</sup> SSCI Report, p.69

A senior British official: 'I know that the IAEA told Britain and America, two weeks before El Baradei made his statement to the UN in March, that the documents were forgeries, that the IAEA was going to publicly state the documents were faked. At that point, the IAEA gave them a chance -- they asked the US and UK if they had any other evidence to back up the claim apart from the Niger forgeries. Britain and America should have reacted with shock and horror when they found that the documents were fake -- but they did nothing, and there was no attempt to dissuade the IAEA from its course of action.'<sup>243</sup>

### **March**

March 3:

The International Atomic Energy Agency told the United States that the documents were forgeries after an expert used the Google search engine to identify false information. One of the Niger documents was a letter, dated July 2000 and apparently signed by the Niger president, discussing Iraq's agreement to purchase 500 tons of uranium oxide, and certifying that it was authorized under the Niger constitution of 1965. But U.N. officials quickly noted that Niger had promulgated a new constitution in 1999, and that the letter's signature bore little resemblance to the actual signature of President Tandja Mamadou. Another letter, dated in 1999, was signed by the Niger foreign minister. But the letterhead belonged to the military government that had been replaced earlier in 1999, and the signatory had left the job of foreign minister in 1989.<sup>244</sup>

March 4:

The U.S. Government learned that the French had based their initial assessment that Iraq had attempted to procure uranium from Niger on the same documents that the U.S. had provided to IAEA.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Quoted in Neil Mackay, "Niger and Iraq", 030713, <http://www.sundayherald.com/35264>

<sup>244</sup> Priest and deYoung, "CIA Questions Documents", 030322, <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0322-04.htm>; Landay & Strobel, 051031, <http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/nation/13024382.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>; SSCI Report, p.69; Silberman-Robb Report

<sup>245</sup> SSCI Report, p.69.

March 7:

The IAEA publicly exposed the Niger documents as forgeries on March 7, 2003. IAEA Director-General Mohammed ElBaradei delivered Baute's conclusions to the Security Council.<sup>246</sup> "Based on thorough analysis," said ElBaradei, "the IAEA has concluded, with the concurrence of outside experts, that these documents - which formed the basis for the reports of recent uranium transactions between Iraq and Niger - are in fact not authentic."<sup>247</sup> The IAEA had demanded that the US provide whatever evidence it had to support its claims that Iraq had reconstituted its nuclear weapons program. And in response the US handed over copies of the documents.<sup>248</sup>

March 8:

DIA issues info memo TS-99-177-03 to Secretary of Defense. It agrees that the specific documents may be fraudulent, but says USG has other intelligence to back it up. According to the SSCI Report, this other intelligence was the report on Wilson's 2002 trip to Niger, the Navy report from November 2002, and a shipping information fax dated late 2001 found in the possession of a Somali businessman that didn't mention uranium, Niger or Iraq.<sup>249</sup>

A State Department spokesman was quoted as saying about the forgeries "We fell for it."<sup>250</sup>

In March 2003 Sen. Rockefeller asked the FBI to investigate the source of the forged uranium documents and the motivation of those responsible for them.<sup>251</sup>

March 11:

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<sup>246</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>247</sup> Quoted in TPM 051031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006896.php>

<sup>248</sup> TPM 051031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006896.php>

<sup>249</sup> SSCI Report, p.69-70

<sup>250</sup> Joe Wilson to Senators Roberts and Rockefeller, July 15, 2004, at <http://www.tpmcafe.com/story/2005/10/30/18754/437>

<sup>251</sup> TPM, 040710, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/003144.php>

CIA issued a limited distribution assessment that said it does “not dispute” the IAEA’s assessment of the Niger documents. It claims they always warned the reports were fragmentary.<sup>252</sup>

CIA’s WINPAC drafted SWPR 031103-04, *Iraq’s Reported Interest in Buying Uranium From Niger and Whether Associated Documents Are Authentic* for the Secretary of Defense. It repeated the arguments of the limited distribution assessment of the same date.<sup>253</sup>

March 16:

"I think Mr. ElBaradei frankly is wrong," Cheney told Tim Russert on NBC's "Meet the Press" on March 16. "I think, if you look at the track record of the International Atomic Energy Agency and this kind of issue, especially where Iraq's concerned, they have consistently underestimated or missed what it was Saddam Hussein was doing. I don't have any reason to believe they're any more valid this time than they've been in the past." Incredibly, Cheney added, "We believe [Saddam] has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons."<sup>254</sup>

"QUESTION: What do you think is the most important rationale for going to war with Iraq? VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: Well, I think I've just given it, Tim, in terms of the combination of his development and use of chemical weapons, his development of biological weapons, his pursuit of nuclear weapons ... "We know he's out trying once again to produce nuclear weapons . . . "<sup>255</sup>

March 17:

In a letter sent to Bush on Monday, Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.) asked for a full accounting of "what you knew about the reliability of the evidence linking Iraq to uranium in Africa, when you knew this, and why you and senior officials in the administration presented the evidence to the U.N.

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<sup>252</sup> SSCI Report, p.70

<sup>253</sup> SSCI Report, p.70

<sup>254</sup> "The First Casualty", <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>255</sup> Quoted in Waxman, *Iraq On The Record*,

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

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Security Council, the Congress, and the American people without disclosing the doubts of the CIA."<sup>256</sup>

March 19:

The War In Iraq begins.

March 21:

Some have questioned whether the United States was duped by a foreign government or independent group. "There is a possibility that the fabrication of these [Niger] documents may be part of a larger deception campaign aimed at manipulating public opinion and foreign policy regarding Iraq," Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV (D-W.Va.) wrote to FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III. An FBI inquiry, Rockefeller wrote, "should, at a minimum, help to allay any concerns" that the U.S. government itself created the documents to build support for the war.<sup>257</sup>

**April:**

CIA issues recall notices for its three reports on Niger uranium, noting that the foreign agency may have been using fraudulent documents.<sup>258</sup>

April 5:

NIC issues Sense of the Community Memorandum (SOCM) 2001-12, *Niger: No Recent Uranium Sales To Iraq*. The report concludes that there is no genuine evidence of any sales of uranium to Iraq.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Priest and de Young, "CIA Questioned Documents", 030322,

<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0322-04.htm>

<sup>257</sup> Priest and de Young, "CIA Questioned Documents", 030322,

<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0322-04.htm>; Larisa Alexandrovna, "Senate Intelligence Chairman", 050811, [http://rawstory.com/news/2005/HowSenate\\_Intelligence\\_chairman\\_fixed\\_intelligence\\_and\\_dverted\\_blame\\_fromWhite\\_House\\_0811.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2005/HowSenate_Intelligence_chairman_fixed_intelligence_and_dverted_blame_fromWhite_House_0811.html)

<sup>258</sup> Silberman-Robb Report

<sup>259</sup> SSCI Report, p.70

April 11:

Jafar Dhia Jafar, a British-educated physicist who coördinated Iraq's efforts to make the bomb in the nineteen-eighties, and who had direct access to Saddam Hussein, fled Iraq in early April, before Baghdad fell, and, with the help of his brother, Hamid, the managing director of a large energy company, made his way to the United Arab Emirates. Jafar has refused to return to Baghdad, but he agreed to be debriefed by C.I.A. and British intelligence agents. There were some twenty meetings, involving as many as fifteen American and British experts. The first meeting, on April 11th, began with an urgent question from a C.I.A. officer: "Does Iraq have a nuclear device? The military really want to know. They are extremely worried." Jafar's response, according to the notes of an eyewitness, was to laugh. The notes continued: Jafar insisted that there was not only no bomb, but no W.M.D., period. "The answer was none." . . . Jafar explained that the Iraqi leadership had set up a new committee after the 91 Gulf war, and after the unscom [United Nations] inspection process was set up. . . and the following instructions [were sent] from the Top Man [Saddam]—"give them everything." The notes said that Jafar was then asked, "But this doesn't mean all W.M.D.? How can you be certain?" His answer was clear: "I know all the scientists involved, and they chat. There is no W.M.D."<sup>260</sup>

## **May**

In early May Joe Wilson casually mentioned his mission to Niger, and his findings, during a brief talk about Iraq at a political conference in suburban Washington sponsored by the Senate Democratic Policy Committee (Wilson is a Democrat). Another speaker at the conference was the *Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, who got Wilson's permission to mention the Niger trip in a column.<sup>261</sup>

May 1:

Bush announces the end of major military operations in Iraq.

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<sup>260</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>261</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020,  
[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

May 6:

Nicholas D. Kristof writes a column that accused Cheney of permitting truth to go "missing in action." The column reported that, following a request from the Vice President's office for an investigation of allegations that Iraq sought to buy uranium from Niger, an unnamed former ambassador was sent on a trip to Niger in 2002 to investigate the allegations. According to the column, the ambassador reported back to the CIA and State Department in early 2002 that the allegations were unequivocally wrong and based on forged documents.<sup>262</sup>

In November 2005, Kristof turns to the matter of his May 6 column reporting that Wilson had actually seen (forged) documents on the uranium deal, when he didn't. Kristof explains: "Wilson has said that he misspoke when he made references to the documents to me and to two other journalists."<sup>263</sup>

May 28:

Rice in a press briefing at the White House: "We have found, in Iraq, biological weapons laboratories that look precisely like what Secretary Powell described in his February 5th report to the United Nations."<sup>264</sup>

May 29:

On or about May 29, 2003, in the White House, **LIBBY** asked an Under Secretary of State ("Under Secretary") [Marc Grossman] for information concerning the unnamed ambassador's travel to Niger to investigate claims about Iraqi efforts to acquire uranium yellowcake. The Under Secretary thereafter directed the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research to prepare a report concerning the ambassador and his trip.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Nicholas Kristoff, "Missing In Action", <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/06/opinion/06KRIS.html?ex=1130821200&en=267d51386efb252e&ei=5070>; Libby Indictment p.4

<sup>263</sup> Quoted in "Kristof Re-Visits", 051103, [http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1001433629](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1001433629)

<sup>264</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record", <http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

<sup>265</sup> Libby Indictment p.4

News reports have identified the Undersecretary as Marc Grossman. This is technically correct, in that he is the one who had received the June 10, 2003 classified Intelligence and Research memo for Libby about Wilson's Niger trip, in addition to information about Plame's covert CIA status and her relationship to Wilson. But the attorneys said that two former Libby aides, John Hannah and David Wurmser, told the special prosecutor that Libby had actually first contacted Bolton to dig up the information.<sup>266</sup>

In an interview with Polish TV, Bush says: "We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories. You remember when Colin Powell stood up in front of the world, and he said, Iraq has got laboratories, mobile labs to build biological weapons. They're illegal. They're against the United Nations resolutions, and we've so far discovered two. And we'll find more weapons as time goes on. But for those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they're wrong, we found them." This statement was misleading because it claimed the purpose of the trailers was to produce biological weapons without disclosing that engineers from the Defense Intelligence Agency who examined the trailers concluded that they were most likely used to produce hydrogen for artillery weather balloons.<sup>267</sup>

Town Hall Meeting with Donald Rumsfeld on Infinity Radio: "We believed then, and we believe now, that the Iraqis . . . had a program to develop nuclear weapons, but did not have nuclear weapons. That is what the United Kingdom's intelligence suggested as well. We still believe that."<sup>268</sup>

## **June**

"In June 2003, there were still further [back-channel] meetings in Paris involving Rhode and Ghorbanifar. Ghorbanifar says the purpose of the meeting was for Rhode to get more information on the situation in Iraq and the Middle East. "In those meetings we met, we gave him the scenario, what

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<sup>266</sup> Alexandrovna and Leopold, 051102,

[http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Laywers\\_involved\\_in\\_leak\\_case\\_say\\_1102.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Laywers_involved_in_leak_case_say_1102.html)

<sup>267</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=President+George+W.+Bush>

<sup>268</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

would happen in the coming days in Iraq. And everything has happened word for word as we told him," Ghorbanifar repeats. "We met in several different places in Paris," he says. "Rhode met several other people -- he didn't only meet me." <sup>269</sup>

Grossman "provided **LIBBY** with interim oral reports in late May and early June 2003, and advised **LIBBY** that Wilson was the former ambassador who took the trip." <sup>270</sup>

Sources say that the memo was written on Libby's behest as part of a work-up order orchestrated out of the White House Iraq Group (WHIG), which operated out of the Cheney's office and was chaired by Special Advisor to President Bush, Karl Rove. Grossman asked Carl Ford, the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, to write the memo. Ford is the State Department official who testified before a the Senate Foreign Relations Committee against Bolton during his unsuccessful UN confirmation hearings and described Bolton as a "bully." <sup>271</sup>

June 1:

Bush: "Here's what -- we've discovered a weapons system, biological labs, that Iraq denied she had, and labs that were prohibited under the U.N. resolutions." <sup>272</sup>

June 3:

Rice on *Capitol Report*: "But let's remember what we've already found. Secretary Powell on February 5th talked about a mobile, biological weapons capability. That has now been found and this is a weapons laboratory trailers

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<sup>269</sup> Marshall, Rozen, Glastris, "Iran-Contra II",

<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/0410.marshallrozen.html>

<sup>270</sup> Libby Indictment p.4

<sup>271</sup> Alexandrovna and Leopold, 051102,

[http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Laywers\\_involved\\_in\\_leak\\_case\\_say\\_1102.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Laywers_involved_in_leak_case_say_1102.html)

<sup>272</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=President+George+W.+Bush>

capable of making a lot of agent that -- dry agent, dry biological agent that can kill a lot of people. So we are finding these pieces that were described." <sup>273</sup>

June 5:

Bush talks with troops in Qatar: "We recently found two mobile biological weapons facilities which were capable of producing biological agents." <sup>274</sup>

June 8:

Rice on *Meet The Press*: "QUESTION: [T]his is what appeared in the Washington Post: "A key piece of evidence linking Iraq to a nuclear weapons program appears to have been fabricated, the United Nations' chief nuclear inspector said in a report that called into question U.S. and British claims about Iraq's secret nuclear ambitions. . . ." In light of that, should the president retract those comments? . . . MS. RICE: The president quoted a British paper. We did not know at the time -- no one knew at the time, in our circles -- maybe someone knew down in the bowels of the agency, but no one in our circles knew that there were doubts and suspicions that this might be a forgery ... "QUESTION: You are confident you will find weapons of mass destruction. MS. RICE: We are confident that we -- I believe that we will find them. I think that we have already found important clues like the biological weapons laboratories that look surprisingly like what Colin Powell described in his speech." <sup>275</sup>

Rice on *This Week With George Stephanopolous*: ""And there were other attempts to, to get yellow cake from Africa ... At the time that the State of the Union address was prepared, there were also other sources that said that they were, the Iraqis were seeking yellow cake, uranium oxide from Africa ... The intelligence community did not know at that time or at levels that got to us that this, that there was serious questions about this report ... Already, we've discovered, uh, uh, trailers, uh, that look remarkably similar to what Colin

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<sup>273</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

<sup>274</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=President+George+W.+Bush>

<sup>275</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

Powell described in his February 5th speech, biological weapons production facilities."<sup>276</sup>

June 9:

A number of classified documents from the CIA were faxed to the Office of the Vice President to the personal attention of **LIBBY** and another person in the Office of the Vice President. The faxed documents, which were marked as classified, discussed, among other things, Wilson and his trip to Niger, but did not mention Wilson by name. After receiving these documents, **LIBBY** and one or more other persons in the Office of the Vice President handwrote the names "Wilson" and "Joe Wilson" on the documents.<sup>277</sup>

June 11:

**LIBBY** spoke with a senior officer of the CIA [Frederick Fleitz, Bolton's chief of staff and concurrently a senior CIA Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation and Arms Control official ] to ask about the origin and circumstances of Wilson's trip, and was advised by the CIA officer that Wilson's wife worked at the CIA and was believed to be responsible for sending Wilson on the trip.<sup>278</sup>

On or about June 11 or 12, 2003, [Grossman] orally advised **LIBBY** in the White House that, in sum and substance, Wilson's wife worked at the CIA and that State Department personnel were saying that Wilson's wife was involved in the planning of his trip.<sup>279</sup>

Prior to June 12, 2003, *Washington Post* reporter Walter Pincus contacted the Office of the Vice President in connection with a story he was writing about Wilson's trip. **LIBBY** participated in discussions in the Office of the Vice President concerning how to respond to Pincus.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

<sup>277</sup> Libby Indictment p.4

<sup>278</sup> Libby Indictment p.4; Alexandrovna and Leopold, 051102,  
[http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Laywers\\_involved\\_in\\_leak\\_case\\_say\\_1102.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Laywers_involved_in_leak_case_say_1102.html)

<sup>279</sup> Libby Indictment p.4

<sup>280</sup> Libby Indictment p.4

June 12:

The *Washington Post* published an article by Pincus about Wilson's trip to Niger, which described Wilson as a retired ambassador but not by name, and reported that the CIA had sent him to Niger after an aide to the Vice President raised questions about purported Iraqi efforts to acquire uranium. Pincus's article questioned the accuracy of the "sixteen words," and stated that the retired ambassador had reported to the CIA that the uranium purchase story was false.<sup>281</sup> Wilson told the SSCI that he the source for that story.<sup>282</sup>

On or about June 12, 2003, **LIBBY** was advised by the Cheney that Wilson's wife worked at the Central Intelligence Agency in the Counterproliferation Division. **LIBBY** understood that the Vice President had learned this information from the CIA.<sup>283</sup> Notes from Libby about meeting with Cheney. "Lawyers involved in the case, who described the notes to The New York Times, said they showed that Mr. Cheney knew that Ms. Wilson worked at the C.I.A. more than a month before her identity was made public and her undercover status was disclosed in a syndicated column by Robert D. Novak on July 14, 2003."<sup>284</sup>

DIA sends an information memorandum to Wolfowitz in response to questions about Iraq's nuclear program. It confirms the Niger-Iraq documents were "fake" but said there was other evidence showing attempted procurement. According to the SSCI report, the additional evidence used was the Navy's report of November 2002.<sup>285</sup>

June 13:

Condoleeza Rice appears on "Meet The Press". "Ms. Rice acknowledged that the president's information turned out to be "not credible," but insisted that the White House hadn't realized this until after Mr. Bush had cited it in his State of the Union address."<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Libby Indictment p.5

<sup>282</sup> SSCI Report, p.44

<sup>283</sup> Libby Indictment p.5

<sup>284</sup> "Cheney Told Aide", <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/25/politics/25leak.html>

<sup>285</sup> SSCI Report, p.70

<sup>286</sup> Nicholas Kristof, "White House In Denial",

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/13/opinion/13KRIS.html?ex=1130821200&en=5e8eae98b671da5&ei=5070>

June 14:

**LIBBY** met with a CIA briefer. During their conversation he expressed displeasure that CIA officials were making comments to reporters critical of the Vice President's office, and discussed with the briefer, among other things, "Joe Wilson" and his wife "Valerie Wilson," in the context of Wilson's trip to Niger.<sup>287</sup>

June 17:

The CIA produced a memo for DCI Tenet saying that since their assessments had been based on the forged documents, the CIA now had no evidence to support a claim that Iraq had tried to procure uranium.<sup>288</sup>

June 18:

The NIO for Strategic and Nuclear programs briefs SSCI on the CIA's current position on the Niger documents.<sup>289</sup>

June 19:

An article appeared in *The New Republic* magazine online entitled "*The First Casualty: The Selling of the Iraq War.*"<sup>290</sup> Among other things, the article questioned the "sixteen words" and stated that following a request for information from the Vice President, the CIA had asked an unnamed ambassador to travel to Niger to investigate allegations that Iraq had sought uranium from Niger. The article included a quotation attributed to the unnamed ambassador alleging that administration officials "knew the Niger story was a flat-out lie." The article also was critical of how the administration, including the Office of the Vice President, portrayed intelligence concerning Iraqi capabilities with regard to weapons of mass destruction, and accused the administration of suppressing dissent from the intelligence agencies on this topic.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Libby Indictment p.5

<sup>288</sup> SSCI Report, p.70; Silberman-Robb Report

<sup>289</sup> Silberman-Robb Report

<sup>290</sup> <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=0cQNpJfYxhSff7JJV14q9T%3D%3D>

<sup>291</sup> Libby Indictment p.5

Shortly after publication of the article in *The New Republic*, **LIBBY** spoke by telephone with his then Principal Deputy and discussed the article. That official asked **LIBBY** whether information about Wilson's trip could be shared with the press to rebut the allegations that the Vice President had sent Wilson. **LIBBY** responded that there would be complications at the CIA in disclosing that information publicly, and that he could not discuss the matter on a non-secure telephone line.<sup>292</sup>

The NIO for Strategic and Nuclear programs briefs the House Intelligence Committee on the CIA's current position on the Niger documents.<sup>293</sup>

June 23:

**LIBBY** met with *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller. During this meeting **LIBBY** was critical of the CIA, and disparaged what he termed "selective leaking" by the CIA concerning intelligence matters. In discussing the CIA's handling of Wilson's trip to Niger, **LIBBY** informed her that Wilson's wife might work at a bureau of the CIA.<sup>294</sup> Judith Miller visited Mr. Libby at the Old Executive Office Building in Washington. Her assignment was to write an article about the failure to find unconventional weapons in Iraq. She said Mr. Libby wanted to talk about a diplomat's fact-finding trip in 2002 to the African nation of Niger to determine whether Iraq sought uranium there.<sup>295</sup>

June 30:

Powell on NBC's *The Today Show* With Katy Couric: "We have found the mobile biological weapons labs that I could only show cartoons of that day."<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Libby Indictment p.6

<sup>293</sup> Silberman-Robb Report

<sup>294</sup> Libby Indictment p.6

<sup>295</sup> "The Miller Case",

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/national/16leak.html?pagewanted=2&ei=5070&en=481d13dc45cff215&ex=1130907600>

<sup>296</sup> Quoted in Waxman, Iraq on The Record,

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=Secretary+of+State+Colin+Powell>

**July**

July 2:

In an interview on Sean Hannity's radio show, Powell said: "'Take the mobile vans that we've been talking about, the biological vans. I can assure you, Sean, that when I presented those vans to the world on the 5th of February and described them, all I could put up were pictures or cartoons that we made of them. And later, we actually found them and showed them to the world.'" This statement was misleading because it claimed the purpose of the trailers was to produce biological weapons without disclosing that engineers from the Defense Intelligence Agency who examined the trailers concluded that they were most likely used to produce hydrogen for artillery weather balloons.<sup>297</sup>

July 6:

The *New York Times* published an Op-Ed article by Wilson entitled "What I Didn't Find in Africa."<sup>298</sup> Also on July 6, 2003, the *Washington Post* published an article about Wilson's 2002 trip to Niger, which article was based in part upon an interview of Wilson. Also on July 6, Wilson appeared as a guest on the television interview show "Meet the Press." In his Op-Ed article and interviews in print and on television, Wilson asserted, among other things, that he had taken a trip to Niger at the request of the CIA in February 2002 to investigate allegations that Iraq had sought or obtained uranium yellowcake from Niger, and that he doubted Iraq had obtained uranium from Niger recently, for a number of reasons. Wilson stated that he believed, based on his understanding of government procedures, that the Office of the Vice President was advised of the results of his trip.<sup>299</sup>

July 7:

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<sup>297</sup> Quoted in Waxman, Iraq on The Record, <http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=Secretary+of+State+Colin+Powell>

<sup>298</sup> Joe Wilson, "What I Didn't Find", <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/opinion/06WILS.html?ex=1130821200&en=081916620c29f21e&ei=5070>

<sup>299</sup> Libby Indictment p.6

**LIBBY** had lunch with the then White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer and advised Fleischer that Wilson's wife worked at the CIA and noted that such information was not widely known, dropping, perhaps, an invitation to Fleischer to leak it to a friendly reporter.<sup>300</sup>

A phone log belonging to Ari Fleischer indicated he had received a phone call from Mr. Novak in the early afternoon of Monday, July 7 ... But it is not clear whether Mr. Fleischer returned the call, or if he did, what he said.<sup>301</sup>

July 8:

Not earlier than June 2003, but on or before July 8, 2003, the Assistant to the Vice President for Public Affairs learned from another government official that Wilson's wife worked at the CIA, and advised **LIBBY** of this information.<sup>302</sup>

On the morning of July 8, 2003, **LIBBY** met for two hours with *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller. When the conversation turned to the subject of Joseph Wilson, **LIBBY** asked that the information **LIBBY** provided on the topic of Wilson be attributed to a "former Hill staffer" rather than to a "senior administration official," as had been the understanding with respect to other information that **LIBBY** provided to Miller during this meeting. **LIBBY** thereafter discussed with Miller Wilson's trip and criticized the CIA reporting concerning Wilson's trip. During this discussion, **LIBBY** advised Miller of his belief that Wilson's wife worked for the CIA.<sup>303</sup>

Judith Miller "and her source met again, for breakfast at the St. Regis Hotel, near the White House. The notebook Ms. Miller used that day includes the reference to "Valerie Flame." But she said the name did not appear in the same portion of her notebook as the interview notes from Mr. Libby. During the breakfast, Mr. Libby provided a detail about Ms. Wilson, saying she worked in a C.I.A. unit known as Winpac; the name stands for weapons intelligence, nonproliferation and arms control. Ms. Miller said she understood this to mean that Ms. Wilson was an analyst rather than an undercover operative."

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<sup>300</sup> Libby Indictment p.7; Michael Duffy, "Fall Of A Vulcan",  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124343-1,00.html>

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/19/politics/19rove.html?pagewanted=2&ei=5070&en=e5c8d874db1f8c57&ex=1130821200>

<sup>302</sup> Libby Indictment p.7

<sup>303</sup> Libby Indictment p.7

Miller insisted that Libby provide her with additional information on Wilson and Plame to bolster any story she might write. Miller testified to the grand jury that it was Libby who offered to find additional evidence to verify what he had told the Times reporter.<sup>304</sup>

When Libby returned to the White House, he immediately sought out **David Addington**, the vice president's counsel, according to court records and interviews. During their breakfast at the St. Regis Hotel, Libby had promised Miller he would try to find out more about Wilson, and Wilson's wife, CIA officer **Valerie Plame**. As the former general counsel to the CIA and counsel to the House Intelligence Committee, Addington was the right man for Libby to see. They met in an anteroom outside the Vice President's Office. During their brief conversation, **LIBBY** asked Addington, in sum and substance, what paperwork there would be at the CIA if an employee's spouse undertook an overseas trip.<sup>305</sup>

July 10:

**LIBBY** spoke to *NBC* Washington Bureau Chief Tim Russert to complain about press coverage of **LIBBY** by an *MSNBC* reporter. According to the indictment, Libby did not discuss Wilson's wife with Russert.<sup>306</sup> However, in response to questions from the FBI, Libby claimed "Russert asked **LIBBY** if **LIBBY** was aware that Wilson's wife worked for the CIA. **LIBBY** responded to Russert that he did not know that, and Russert replied that all the reporters knew it. **LIBBY** was surprised by this statement because, while speaking with Russert, **LIBBY** did not recall that he previously had learned about Wilson's wife's employment from the Vice President."<sup>307</sup> Also, in testimony before the Grand Jury in 2004, Libby claims that Russert asked **LIBBY** if **LIBBY** knew that Wilson's wife worked for the CIA, and told **LIBBY** that all the reporters knew it; and **LIBBY** was surprised to hear that Wilson's wife worked for the CIA.<sup>308</sup>

Powell Press Briefing at the State Department: "One item I showed was cartoons of the mobile biological van. They were cartoons, artist's renderings, because we had never seen one of these things, but we had good sourcing on

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<sup>304</sup> Waas & Singer, "Addington's Role", *National Journal* 051030,

<http://nationaljournal.com/about/njweekly/stories/2005/1030nj1.htm>

<sup>305</sup> Libby Indictment p.7; Waas & Singer, "Addington's Role", *National Journal* 051030,

<http://nationaljournal.com/about/njweekly/stories/2005/1030nj1.htm>

<sup>306</sup> Libby Indictment p.7

<sup>307</sup> Libby Indictment p.16

<sup>308</sup> Libby Indictment p.11, p.18

it, excellent sourcing on it. And we knew what it would look like when we found it, so we made those pictures. And I can assure you I didn't just throw those pictures up without having quite a bit of confidence in the information that I had been provided and that Director Tenet had been provided and was now supporting me in the presentation on, sitting right behind me. And we waited. And it took a couple of months, and it took until after the war, until we found a van and another van that pretty much matched what we said it would look like. And I think that's a pretty good indication that we were not cooking the books."<sup>309</sup>

July 11:

**LIBBY** spoke to a senior official in the White House ("Official A") [Karl Rove] who advised **LIBBY** of a conversation [Rove] had earlier that week with columnist Robert Novak in which Wilson's wife was discussed as a CIA employee involved in Wilson's trip. **LIBBY** was advised by [Rove] that Novak would be writing a story about Wilson's wife.<sup>310</sup>

Rove talks with Matthew Cooper. "It was 11:07 on a Friday morning, July 11, 2003, and Time magazine correspondent Matt Cooper was tapping out an e-mail to his bureau chief, Michael Duffy. "Subject: Rove/P&C," (for personal and confidential), Cooper began. "Spoke to Rove on double super secret background for about two mins before he went on vacation ... In a brief conversation with Rove, Cooper asked what to make of the flap over Wilson's criticisms ... Cooper wrote that Rove offered him a "big warning" not to "get too far out on Wilson." Rove told Cooper that Wilson's trip had not been authorized by "DCIA" – CIA Director George Tenet – or Vice President Dick Cheney. Rather, "it was, KR said, Wilson's wife, who apparently works at the agency on wmd [weapons of mass destruction] issues who authorized the trip." "<sup>311</sup>

At 11:17, Rove sent an e-mail to former press aide Adam Levine saying Levine could come up to his office to discuss a personnel issue. Levine, with whom Rove often discussed his talks with reporters, did immediately go up to see

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<sup>309</sup> Quoted in Waxman, Iraq on The Record,  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=Secretary+of+State+Colin+Powell>

<sup>310</sup> Libby Indictment p.8

<sup>311</sup> Michael Isikoff, "Matt Cooper's Source",  
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8525978/site/newsweek/>

Rove. But as Levine told the FBI in October 2005, Rove never said anything about Cooper.<sup>312</sup>

Sen. Roberts as Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, issues a statement: "Senator Rockefeller and I are committed to continue our close examination of all of the issues surrounding the Niger documents. So far, I am very disturbed by what appears to be extremely sloppy handling of the issue from the outset by the CIA. What now concerns me most, however, is what appears to be a campaign of press leaks by the CIA in an effort to discredit the President."<sup>313</sup>

Rice, in a press gaggle on the way to Entebbe, Uganda, said: "Now, I can tell you, if the CIA, the Director of Central Intelligence, had said, take this out of the speech, it would have been gone, without question. What we've said subsequently is, knowing what we now know, that some of the Niger documents were apparently forged, we wouldn't have put this in the President's speech - but that's knowing what we know now ... [T]he NIE, which, by the way, the Agency was standing by at the time of the . . . State of the Union, and was standing by at the time of the Secretary's speech, has the yellow cake story in it. . . . Now, if there were doubts about the underlying intelligence to that NIE, those doubts were not communicated to the President, to the Vice President, or to me ... So the process is an NIE that is the basis of this, and then if the Agency had reservations about information that was in the NIE, then the DCI -- and I think he will tell you that if he had reservations, he did not make those known to the President, to the Vice President, or to me -- if he had reservations."<sup>314</sup>

July 12:

Air Force Two arrived in Norfolk on Saturday morning, July 12, 2003, with Vice President Cheney and his chief of staff aboard. They had come "to send forth a great American ship bearing a great American name," as Cheney said from the flag-draped flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> "Karl Rove", <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9865842/site/newsweek/>

<sup>313</sup> Sen. Pat Roberts Statement at <http://intelligence.senate.gov/030711.htm>

<sup>314</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record", <http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

<sup>315</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

On his return trip, **LIBBY** discussed with other officials aboard the plane what **LIBBY** should say in response to certain pending media inquiries, including questions from *Time* reporter Matthew Cooper.<sup>316</sup> Apart from Libby, only press aide Catherine Martin is known to have accompanied Cheney on that flight.<sup>317</sup>

That same day, another administration official who has not been identified publicly returned a call from Walter Pincus of The Washington Post. He "veered off the precise matter we were discussing" and said Wilson's trip was a boondoggle set up by Wilson's wife, Pincus has written in *Nieman Reports*.<sup>318</sup>

Around 3pm that afternoon, **LIBBY** spoke by telephone to Cooper, who asked whether **LIBBY** had heard that Wilson's wife was involved in sending Wilson on the trip to Niger. The Indictment claims that Libby confirmed to Cooper, without elaboration or qualification, that he had heard this information too."<sup>319</sup> Accordign to Cooper, Libby responded with words to the effect of, "Yeah, I've heard that too."<sup>320</sup> However, in response to questions from the FBI, Libby claimed "**LIBBY** told Cooper that reporters were telling the administration that Wilson's wife worked for the CIA, but **LIBBY** did not know if this was true."<sup>321</sup> This claim was repeated in testimony to the Grand Jury.<sup>322</sup> Cooper says "... we talked a bit on background and off the record, and he gave me an on-the-record quote distancing Cheney from Wilson's fact-finding trip to Africa for the CIA. In fact, he was so eager to distance his boss from Wilson that a few days later, he called to rebuke me for not having used the whole quote in the piece."<sup>323</sup>

In the late afternoon, **LIBBY** spoke by telephone with Judith Miller of the *New York Times* and discussed Wilson's wife, and that she worked at the CIA.<sup>324</sup> In testimony to the Grand Jury, Libby claimed "that he had heard that other

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<sup>316</sup> Libby Indictment p.8

<sup>317</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>318</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>319</sup> Libby Indictment p.8

<sup>320</sup> Cooper, "What Scooter Libby & I Talked About", <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124234,00.html?cnn=yes>

<sup>321</sup> Libby Indictment p.17

<sup>322</sup> Libby Indictment p.12, p.20-22

<sup>323</sup> Cooper, "What Scooter Libby & I Talked About", <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124234,00.html?cnn=yes>

<sup>324</sup> Libby Indictment p.8

reporters were saying that Wilson's wife worked for the CIA but **LIBBY** did not know whether that assertion was true.<sup>325</sup> Phone records reviewed by the grand jury in the CIA leak investigation appear to confirm that Libby and Miller had a three-minute conversation on July 12 while Miller was apparently in a taxicab returning home. When the reporter got home, she and Libby spoke for a 37 minutes, according to the phone records.<sup>326</sup>

George Tenet, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, took a shot at Wilson about this time as did ex-White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer. Both contended that Wilson's report on an alleged Iraqi effort to purchase uranium from Niger, far from undermining the president's claim in his State of the Union address that Iraq sought uranium in Africa, as Wilson had said, actually strengthened it.<sup>327</sup>

July 13:

Condoleezza Rice, on *Face The Nation*: "My only point is that, in retrospect, knowing that some of the documents underneath may have been--were, indeed, forgeries, and knowing that apparently there were concerns swirling around about this, had we known that at the time, we would not have put it in. . . . And had there been even a peep that the agency did not want that sentence in or that George Tenet did not want that sentence in, that the director of Central Intelligence did not want it in, it would have been gone."<sup>328</sup>

Cheney on *This Week With George Stephanopoulos*: "We said they had a nuclear program. That was never any debate."<sup>329</sup>

July 14:

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<sup>325</sup> Libby Indictment p.12

<sup>326</sup> Waas & Singer, "Addington's Role", *National Journal* 051030,  
<http://nationaljournal.com/about/njweekly/stories/2005/1030nj1.htm>

<sup>327</sup> Cooper, Calabresi, Dickerson. "A War On Wilson",  
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,465270,00.html>

<sup>328</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?viewAll=1&Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

<sup>329</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",  
<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=Secretary+of+Defense+Donald+Rumsfeld>

For the first time, the name passed into the public domain in sixth paragraph of Novak's syndicated column: "his wife, Valerie Plame, is an agency operative." He noted his sources as "two senior administration officials."<sup>330</sup> "During a long conversation with a senior administration official, I asked why Wilson was assigned the mission to Niger. He said Wilson had been sent by the CIA's counterproliferation section at the suggestion of one of its employees, his wife. It was an offhand revelation from this official, who is no partisan gunslinger. When I called another official for confirmation, he said: "Oh, you know about it."<sup>331</sup> For all its seismic importance now, that column provoked little immediate response.<sup>332</sup>

Time magazine reported on its Web site shortly afterward -- based on sources that Cooper, the author, has since identified as Rove and Libby -- that "some government officials have noted to Time in interviews . . . that Wilson's wife, Valerie Plame, is a CIA official who monitors the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."<sup>333</sup>

In an interview with TIME, Wilson, who served as an ambassador to Gabon and as a senior American diplomat in Baghdad under the current president's father, angrily said that his wife had nothing to do with his trip to Africa. "That is bulls\_\_t. That is absolutely not the case," Wilson told TIME. "I met with between six and eight analysts and operators from CIA and elsewhere [before the Feb 2002 trip]. None of the people in that meeting did I know, and they took the decision to send me. This is a smear job."<sup>334</sup>

July 15:

Scott McLellan takes over as Presidential Press Secretary.

July 16:

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<sup>330</sup> Robert Novak, "Mission To Niger",

<http://www.townhall.com/opinion/columns/robertnovak/2003/07/14/160881.html>

<sup>331</sup> Robert Novak, "The CIA Leak",

<http://www.townhall.com/opinion/columns/robertnovak/2003/10/01/168398.html>

<sup>332</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>333</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>334</sup> Cooper, Calabresi, Dickerson, "A War On Wilson",

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,465270,00.html>

David Corn of the Nation was among the first to protest. Naming Wilson's wife, he wrote July 16, "would have compromised every operation, every relationship, every network with which she had been associated her entire career."<sup>335</sup>

July 17:

Bush, after talks at the White House with Tony Blair: "I strongly believe he was trying to reconstitute his nuclear weapons program."<sup>336</sup>

July 18:

A senior White House official told reporters at a background briefing that they had the wrong impression about Joseph Wilson's trip to Niger and the information it had yielded. "You can't draw a conclusion that we were warned by Ambassador Wilson that this was all dubious," the unnamed official said, according to a White House transcript. "It's just not accurate."<sup>337</sup>

July 20:

By the following week the story reached NBC's "Today Show," and Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) demanded an investigation. The administration replied without apology at first. According to Wilson, MSNBC's Chris Matthews told him off camera: "I just got off the phone with Karl Rove, who said your wife was 'fair game.'"<sup>338</sup>

July 21:

Joe Wilson: "The first time I actually saw what were represented as the [Niger] documents was when Andrea Mitchell, the NBC correspondent

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<sup>335</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>336</sup> White House briefing quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record", <http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=President+George+W.+Bush>

<sup>337</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>338</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

handed them to me in an interview on July 21. I was not wearing my glasses and could not read them."<sup>339</sup>

July 22:

"Hadley, in a rare on-the-record session with reporters, said that he had received two memos from the CIA and a phone call from agency Director George Tenet last October raising objections to an allegation that Iraq was seeking to buy uranium ore from Africa to use in building nuclear weapons. As a result, Hadley said the offending passage was excised from a speech on Iraq the president gave in Cincinnati last Oct. 7. But Hadley suggested that details from the memos and phone call had slipped from his attention as the State of the Union was being put together ... The controversial passage citing a British intelligence report "should have been taken out of the State of the Union," Hadley said."<sup>340</sup>

July 30:

The CIA reported to the Justice Department a possible offense "concerning the unauthorized disclosure of classified information."

On *News Hour With Jim Lehrer*, Rice says: "'[H]e had . . . an active procurement network to procure items, many of which, by the way, were on the prohibited list of the nuclear suppliers group. There's a reason that they were on the prohibited list of the nuclear suppliers group: Magnets, balancing machines, yes, aluminum tubes, about which the consensus view was that they were suitable for use in centrifuges to spin material for nuclear weapons.'" <sup>341</sup>

James Keller takes over as Executive Editor of the *New York Times*.

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<sup>339</sup> Joe Wilson to Senators Roberts and Rockefeller, July 15, 2004, at <http://www.tpmcafe.com/story/2005/10/30/18754/437>

<sup>340</sup> "White House Official Apologizes", 030722, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/22/international/worldspecial/22CND-HADLEY.html?ex=1130994000&en=0de9d05b918ec1ae&ei=5070>

<sup>341</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record", <http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

July 31:

In an interview with German television ZDF, Rice said: "'Going into the war against Iraq, we had very strong intelligence. I've been in this business for 20 years. And some of the strongest intelligence cases that I've seen, key judgments by our intelligence community that Saddam Hussein . . . had biological and chemical weapons . . .'"<sup>342</sup>

**Summer:**

"By the summer of 2003, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence had begun to get wind of the Ghorbanifar-Ledeen-DoD back-channel and made inquiries at the CIA. A month later, *Newsday* broke the original story about the secret Ghorbanifar channel. Faced with the disclosure, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld acknowledged the December 2001 meeting but dismissed it as routine and unimportant. "The information has moved around the interagency process to all the departments and agencies," he told reporters in Crawford, Texas, after a meeting with Bush. "As I understand it, there wasn't anything there that was of substance or of value that needed to be pursued further." Later that day, another senior Defense official acknowledged the second meeting in Paris in June 2003, but insisted that it was the result of a "chance encounter" between Ghorbanifar and a Pentagon official. The administration has kept to the "chance encounter" story to this day."<sup>343</sup>

**August**

In August the CIA completed an 11-question form detailing the potential damage done.<sup>344</sup>

August 21:

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<sup>342</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record", <http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

<sup>343</sup> Marshall, Rozen, Glastris, "Iran-Contra II", <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/0410.marshallrozen.html>

<sup>344</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

At a forum, Joe Wilson says: "At the end of the day, it's of keen interest to me to see whether or not we can get Karl Rove frog-marched out of the White House in handcuffs."<sup>345</sup>

## **September**

In September, Tenet followed up with a memo raising questions about whether the leakers had violated federal law.<sup>346</sup>

Italian journalist Elisabetta Burba is interviewed by three FBI officers at the American consulate in Milan.<sup>347</sup>

September 26:

Scott McClellan tells reporters that Bush "knows" that Rove is not the source of the leak of Valerie Wilson's name.<sup>348</sup>

The Department of Justice authorized the Federal Bureau of Investigation to commence a criminal investigation into the possible unauthorized disclosure of classified information regarding the disclosure of Valerie Wilson's affiliation with the CIA to various reporters in the spring of 2003.<sup>349</sup> John Dion, a veteran counter-espionage prosecutor, ran the initial investigation with a team of FBI agents at his disposal.<sup>350</sup>

September 28:

Rice on *Meet The Press*: "On nuclear there was dissent on the extent of the program and how far along the program might be. How much had he gone to

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<sup>345</sup> <http://us.cnn.com/2005/US/10/31/wilson.interview/>

<sup>346</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>347</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe", 031020, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>348</sup> Richard Stevenson, "White House Tries", 051106, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/06/national/06leak.html?ex=1288933200&en=6d9d1526762ea5a7&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

<sup>349</sup> Libby Indictment p.8

<sup>350</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

reconstitute? But the judgment of the intelligence community was that he had kept in place his infrastructure, that he was trying to procure items. For instance, there's been a lot of talk about the aluminum tubes but they were prohibited on the list of the nuclear suppliers group for a reason."<sup>351</sup>

September 29:

Scott McLellan's daily press briefing covered the Novak leak. "Q: You said this morning, "The President knows" that Karl Rove wasn't involved. How does he know that?

MR. McCLELLAN: Well, I've made it very clear that it was a ridiculous suggestion in the first place. I saw some comments this morning from the person who made that suggestion, backing away from that. And I said it is simply not true. So, I mean, it's public knowledge. I've said that it's not true. And I have spoken with Karl Rove."<sup>352</sup>

Justice Department lawyers notified then-White House Counsel Alberto R. Gonzales at about 8 p.m. Monday, Sept. 29, that the investigation had begun. Gonzales, now attorney general, has said he alerted Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr. at once. But he did not tell anyone else -- or instruct White House employees to preserve all evidence -- until the following morning.<sup>353</sup>

September 30:

Mr. Bush was informed early Tuesday morning by the White House counsel, Alberto R. Gonzales, who then informed the president's senior staff at its regular 7:30 meeting.<sup>354</sup> Later that morning, the Justice Department investigation is made public. President Bush said he was "absolutely confident that the Justice Department will do a very good job" of investigating the case, signaling that he sees no need for an outside special counsel to take over the inquiry from the Justice Department. Speaking to reporters after meeting business executives in Chicago, Mr. Bush said there were "just too many leaks" in Washington from the executive and legislative branches. "And

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<sup>351</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record", <http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=National+Security+Advisor+Condoleezza+Rice>

<sup>352</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/09/20030929-7.html>

<sup>353</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>354</sup> Stevenson & Lichtblau, "Bush Orders Full Cooperation", <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/01/politics/01LEAK.html?ex=1130821200&en=513f291551904070&ei=5070>

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if there is a leak out of my administration," he added, "I want to know who it is. And if the person has violated the law, the person will be taken care of."<sup>355</sup>

Mr. Bush embarked on a campaign fund-raising trip to the Midwest in the morning with Mr. Rove at his side. At a luncheon for campaign donors in Chicago, Mr. Bush did not mention the case in particular but pointedly referred to "this needless partisan bickering that dominates the Washington, D.C., landscape."<sup>356</sup>

In another sign of the investigation's significance – and sensitivity – an F.B.I. official said late Tuesday that the bureau intended to have headquarters personnel in the inspections division conduct the investigation, rather than the Washington field office, as originally planned.<sup>357</sup>

On Sept. 30, 2003, Mr. Bush said: "If there is a leak out of my administration, I want to know who it is," he said then. "And if the person has violated law, the person will be taken care of."<sup>358</sup>

The *New York Daily News* reported in October 2005 that Bush was furious with Rove when he learned of Rove's part in the leak. "Bush did not feel misled so much by Karl and others as believing that they handled it in a ham-handed and bush-league way," the source said.<sup>359</sup>

Josh Marshall "learned of the existence of a Joint State Department-CIA Inspectors General report on the "16 words" and the Niger forgeries which was produced in the fall of 2003. Much of the report detailed information later revealed in the Senate intelligence committee report."<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Stevenson & Lichtblau, "Bush Orders Full Cooperation", <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/01/politics/01LEAK.html?ex=1130821200&en=513f291551904070&ei=5070>

<sup>356</sup> Stevenson & Lichtblau, "Bush Orders Full Cooperation", <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/01/politics/01LEAK.html?ex=1130821200&en=513f291551904070&ei=5070>

<sup>357</sup> Stevenson & Lichtblau, "Bush Orders Full Cooperation", <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/01/politics/01LEAK.html?ex=1130821200&en=513f291551904070&ei=5070>

<sup>358</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/19/politics/19rove.html?ex=1130821200&en=e5c8d874db1f8c57&ei=5070>

<sup>359</sup> Thomas deFrank, "Bush Whacked Rove", 051019, <http://www.nydailynews.com/front/story/357107p-304312c.html>

<sup>360</sup> TPM 051031, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006896.php>

**October**

October 1:

Novak writes: "To protect my own integrity and credibility, I would like to stress three points. First, I did not receive a planned leak. Second, the CIA never warned me that the disclosure of Wilson's wife working at the agency would endanger her or anybody else. Third, it was not much of a secret."<sup>361</sup>

October 7:

Early signals from the White House suggested the probe might come to nothing. Bush expressed doubts on Oct. 7. "I don't know if we're going to find out the senior administration official," he said. "Now, this is a large administration, and there's a lot of senior officials."<sup>362</sup>

Scott McLellan at the daily press briefing, talking about Rove, Libby and Eliot Abrams: "They're good individuals, they're important members of our White House team, and that's why I spoke with them, so that I could come back to you and say that they were not involved."<sup>363</sup>

October 10:

White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters he had talked to three officials -- Libby, Rove and Elliot Abrams -- and "those individuals assured me they were not involved in this."

October 14:

Libby is interviewed by the FBI.<sup>364</sup> The indictment claims that he lied about his July conversations with Russert, Miller and Cooper.

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<sup>361</sup> <http://www.townhall.com/opinion/columns/robertnovak/2003/10/01/168398.html>

<sup>362</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>363</sup> Quoted in Richard Stevenson, "Press Secretary On Trial", 051103, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/03/politics/03memo.html>

<sup>364</sup> Libby Indictment p.9

October 20:

Seymour Hersh publishes "The Stovepipe" in *The New Yorker*: "How conflicts between the Bush Administration and the intelligence community marred the reporting on Iraq's weapons."<sup>365</sup>

## **November**

November 5:

Fox News publicizes a draft memo written for the Democratic minority on the Senate Intelligence Committee. The memo outlines a strategy for exposing what it calls "the administration's dubious motives" in the lead-up to the war in Iraq. the memo recommends that Democrats "prepare to launch an investigation when it becomes clear we have exhausted the opportunity to usefully collaborate with the [Senate] majority. We can pull the trigger on an independent investigation of the administration's use of intelligence at any time – but we can only do so once ... the best time would probably be next year." The last paragraph of the memo reads, "Intelligence issues are clearly secondary to the public's concern regarding the insurgency in Iraq."<sup>366</sup>

November 26:

Libby is interviewed by the FBI.<sup>367</sup> The indictment claims that he lied about his July conversations with Russert, Miller and Cooper.

## **December**

In the last week of December, then-Deputy Attorney General James B. Comey had multiple discussions with Attorney-General John D. Ashcroft about whether it was time for the AG to recuse himself, Comey has said.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?031027fa_fact)

<sup>366</sup> Fox News, "Democrats Mull", 031105,  
<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,102206,00.html>

<sup>367</sup> Libby Indictment p.9

December 30:

Ashcroft abruptly recuses himself from the case. Comey told reporters on Dec. 30 that an "accumulation of facts" in the investigation had brought about Ashcroft's recusal. Details of their conversations have not been made public, and it is not known who initiated them. "The issue surrounding the attorney general's recusal is not one of actual conflict of interest," Comey said, but "one of appearance."<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>369</sup> Barton Gellman, "First a leak, then a deluge", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>; Lichtblau, "Special prosecutor Is Named", <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/31/politics/31LEAK.html?ex=1130821200&en=baf37b5724743391&ei=5070>

## 2004

### **January:**

Grand Jury 03-3 is empanelled in Washington, D.C.

An INC-supplied defector, Adnan Ihsan al-Haideri, who in 2002 claimed he had visited 20 secret nuclear, biological and chemical warfare facilities in Iraq was unable to identify a single illicit arms facility when he accompanied U.S. weapons inspectors to Iraq.<sup>370</sup>

David Kay resigns as Iraq Weapons Inspector.

January 9:

Cheney interview for *Rocky Mountain News*: "[T]he reporting that we had prior to the war this time around was all consistent with that -- basically said that he had a chemical, biological and nuclear program, and estimated that if he could acquire fissile material, he could have a nuclear weapon within a year or two."<sup>371</sup>

January 27:

Cheney on NPR's *Morning Edition*: "In terms of the question what is there now, we know for example that prior to our going in that he had spent time and effort acquiring mobile biological weapons labs, and we're quite confident he did, in fact, have such a program. We've found a couple of semi trailers at this point which we believe were, in fact, part of that program."<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Landay and Strobel, "Cheney's New Security Adviser", 051031,

<http://www.realcities.com/mld/kwashington/13046078.htm>

<sup>371</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

<sup>372</sup> Quoted in Waxman, "Iraq On The Record",

<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/index.asp?Speaker=Vice+President+Richard+Cheney>

**March**

March 5:

Libby testifies before the Grand Jury.<sup>373</sup> According to the indictment. Libby committed perjury.

March 24:

Libby testifies before the Grand Jury.<sup>374</sup> According to the indictment. Libby committed perjury.

**April:**

The Intelligence Committee released a report that concluded that "much of the information provided or cleared by the Central Intelligence Agency for inclusion in Secretary Powell's [United Nation's] speech was overstated, misleading, or incorrect." Both Republicans and Democrats on the committee say that their investigation was hampered by the refusal of the White House to turn over key documents, although Republicans said the documents were not as central to the investigation ... The April 2004 Senate report blasted what it referred to as an insular and risk-averse culture of bureaucratic "group think" in which officials were reluctant to challenge their own longstanding notions about Iraq and its weapons programs. All nine Republicans and eight Democrats signed onto this document without a single dissent, a rarity for any such report in Washington, especially during an election year.<sup>375</sup>

The passion that Libby brought to his cause is perhaps further illustrated by a recent *Los Angeles Times* report that in April 2004, months after Fitzgerald's leak investigation was underway, Libby ordered "a meticulous catalog of Wilson's claims and public statements going back to early 2003" because Libby was "consumed by passages that he believed were inaccurate or unfair" to him. The newspaper reported that the "intensity with which Libby reacted to Wilson had many senior White House staffers puzzled, and few agreed with his counterattack plan, or its rationale." A former administration official said

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<sup>373</sup> Libby Indictment p.11

<sup>374</sup> Libby Indictment p.11

<sup>375</sup> Murray Waas, "Cheney, Libby Blocked Papers", 051027,  
<http://nationaljournal.com/about/njweekly/stories/2005/1027nj1.htm>

that "this might have been about politics on some level, but it is also personal. [Libby] feels that his honor has been questioned, and his instinct is to strike back." <sup>376</sup>

**Spring:**

By the late spring of 2004, *60 Minutes* had interviewed Burba, the Italian journalist, Rocco Martino, the 'security consultant' who had attempted to sell her the documents in October 2002, and the SISMI asset (the female Italian national) who works in the Nigerien Embassy in Rome. The interviews implicated Antonio Nucera, a colonel from the Italian intelligence service SISMI, as the immediate source of the documents. After an initial conversation, Nucera himself refused all contact with the reporters working on the story.<sup>377</sup>

**May:**

Matthew Cooper subpoenaed by Fitzgerald.<sup>378</sup>

May 26:

The *New York Times* publishes an editorial criticizing its own coverage of pre-war WMD stories.<sup>379</sup>

**June:**

Rocco Martino travels to New York. Is interviewed by Josh Marshall.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Murray Waas, "Cheney, Libby Blocked Papers", 051027, <http://nationaljournal.com/about/njweekly/stories/2005/1027nj1.htm>

<sup>377</sup> <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006892.php>

<sup>378</sup> Cooper, "What Scooter Libby & I Talked About", <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124234,00.html?cnn=yes>

<sup>379</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/26/international/middleeast/26FTE\\_NOTE.html?ex=1130907600&en=10efc8803a57e990&ei=5070](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/26/international/middleeast/26FTE_NOTE.html?ex=1130907600&en=10efc8803a57e990&ei=5070)

<sup>380</sup> TPM, 040919, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/003490.php>

June 8:

Presidential Press Conference at Sea Island, Ga: "Q And, and, do you stand by your pledge to fire anyone found to have done so? THE PRESIDENT: Yes."<sup>381</sup>

June 24:

A team of federal prosecutors interviewed President Bush in the Oval Office for more than an hour. Mr. Bush was not under oath as he answered questions posed by the prosecutors, who were led by Patrick J. Fitzgerald. James E. Sharp of Washington, Bush's personal lawyer, was present during the questioning.<sup>382</sup>

**July:**

July 7:

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence issues its report on pre-war intelligence, known as the SSCI Report<sup>383</sup>. It covers the intelligence on Niger closely; however, it does not look into the background to the forged documents because, it says, the FBI is investigating the matter.<sup>384</sup>

July 14:

The British *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction*, known as the Butler Report, is published in London.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/06/20040610-36.html>

<sup>382</sup> Stevenson & Johnston, "Bush Interviewed",

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/25/politics/25bush.html?ex=1130821200&en=3e4a87473570dc55&ei=5070>

<sup>383</sup> The SSCI Report can be accessed at <http://intelligence.senate.gov>

<sup>384</sup> SSCI Report, p.57, fn 8

<sup>385</sup> The Butler Report can be accessed via <http://www.butlerreview.org.uk/index.asp>

**August:**

“By the time we brought [Rocco] Martino to New York in early August, he had already been identified by name in the Italian and the British press as the man who tried to sell Burba the forged documents. And when we whisked him out of the country he was under very active and conspicuous surveillance by Italian authorities in Rome (a point we'll return to later). He flew to New York under his own name and stayed for several days ... But he came, spent several drama-filled or tragicomic days, and then left. And no one from the FBI or any other American law enforcement or intelligence agency made any attempt to contact him in any way.”<sup>386</sup>

Martino “describes the arrangement with SISMI officer Antonio Nucera and a female SISMI asset who works at the Niger embassy in Rome.”<sup>387</sup>

August 12:

Judy Miller is subpoenaed to appear before the Grand Jury on Aug 20.<sup>388</sup>

**September:**

September 15:

Walter Pincus of the *Washington Post* deposes before the Grand Jury.<sup>389</sup>

September 16:

Chief U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Hogan refused to quash a subpoena sent last month to New York Times reporter Judith Miller. Hogan ruled that

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<sup>386</sup> TPM, 040919, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/003490.php>

<sup>387</sup> TPM, 051028, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006874.php>

<sup>388</sup>

[http://www.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/politics/2005\\_LEAKTIMELINE\\_GRAPHIC/040812\\_millersubpoena.pdf](http://www.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/politics/2005_LEAKTIMELINE_GRAPHIC/040812_millersubpoena.pdf)

<sup>389</sup> Susan Schmidt, “Post Source”, 040916, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26186-2004Sep16.html>

there is no common law privilege exempting the press from testifying before a grand jury, just as he earlier found that there is no such privilege under the First Amendment.<sup>390</sup>

**October:**

October 14:

Karl Rove testifies before the Grand Jury. Sources say it is his third appearance.<sup>391</sup>

When Cheney quietly tried to bring a more experienced political hand on board to steady his creaky operation in late 2004, Libby maneuvered even more quietly behind the scenes to keep her out.<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Susan Schmidt, "Post Source", 040916, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26186-2004Sep16.html>

<sup>391</sup> <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,724804,00.html>

<sup>392</sup> Michael Duffy, "Fall Of A Vulcan",  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124343,00.html>

## 2005

### **March:**

March 31:

The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction – the Silberman-Robb Report – is published.<sup>393</sup> The report said that America's spy agencies were "dead wrong" in most of their judgments about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction before the war and that the United States knows "disturbingly little" about nuclear threats posed by many of its most dangerous adversaries.

Mr. Bush received the report in a meeting with commission members in the Cabinet Room where he was flanked by the panel's co-chairmen, Republican Laurence Silberman, a retired federal appeals court judge, and Democrat Charles Robb, a former senator from Virginia.<sup>394</sup>

### **June:**

June 27:

The United States Supreme Court declined to hear the cases of two reporters facing up to 18 months in jail for refusing to testify about conversations with their confidential sources.<sup>395</sup>

### **July:**

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<sup>393</sup> The Report can be accessed at <http://www.wmd.gov/report/report.html>

<sup>394</sup> <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/03/31/national/main684202.shtml>

<sup>395</sup>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/28/politics/28leak.html?ex=1130821200&en=ecb8a432f51cb421&ei=5070>

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## PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY

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FBI Director Mueller wrote to the Italian government, according to an FBI statement in November 2005. His letter advised the Italians that the FBI's two-year long investigation had "confirmed the [Niger] documents to be fraudulent and concluded they were more likely part of a criminal scheme for financial gain" rather than a political act.<sup>396</sup>

July 7:

Judith Miller is taken into custody.

July 18:

Faced with growing questions about the role of his close adviser Karl Rove in the C.I.A. leak case, President Bush said on Monday that he would fire any member of his staff who "committed a crime."<sup>397</sup>

**August:**

August 5:

The night before TIME Inc. and Cooper were scheduled to be sentenced, Cooper called Libby to see if he would grant a waiver for him testifying. Libby told Cooper that he used to be a lawyer and that "to be safe" the attorneys should talk and if it was O.K. with them, it was O.K. with him.<sup>398</sup>

August 23:

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<sup>396</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/print?id=1282685>

<sup>397</sup>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/19/politics/19rove.html?ex=1130821200&en=e5c8d874db1f8c57&ei=5070>

<sup>398</sup> Cooper, "What Scooter Libby & I Talked About",

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124234,00.html?cnn=yes>

Cooper gave a deposition in Abrams' Washington office about the conversation with Libby.<sup>399</sup>

August 24:

The contempt citation against Matthew Cooper and Times is lifted.

**September:**

September 12:

In a letter to Libby's lawyer, Fitzgerald wrote that he "assumed that Mr Libby had simply decided that encouraging Ms Miller to testify was not in his best interest."<sup>400</sup>

September 29:

Ms. Miller was released from jail and whisked by Mr. Sulzberger and Mr. Keller to the Ritz-Carlton Georgetown for a massage, a manicure, a martini and a steak dinner.<sup>401</sup>

September 30:

Judith Miller gives three hours of testimony to the Grand Jury.

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<sup>399</sup> Cooper, "What Scooter Libby & I Talked About",  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124234,00.html?cnn=yes>

<sup>400</sup> George Freeman, Legal Memo to NYT, Oct 4 2005,  
[http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/politics/2005\\_LEAKTIMELINE\\_GRAPHIC/051004\\_freemanmemo.pdf](http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/politics/2005_LEAKTIMELINE_GRAPHIC/051004_freemanmemo.pdf)

<sup>401</sup> "The Miller Case",  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/national/16leak.html?pagewanted=2&ei=5070&en=481d13dc45cff215&ex=1130907600>

**October:**

October 3:

Four days after Ms. Miller left jail, she returned to the headquarters of The New York Times on West 43rd Street. Before entering the building, she called her friend Ms. Payne and asked her to come downstairs and escort her in. "She felt very frightened," Ms. Payne said. "She felt very vulnerable." At a gathering in the newsroom, she made a speech claiming victories for press freedom. Her colleagues responded with restrained applause, seemingly as mystified by the outcome of her case as the public.<sup>402</sup>

October 16:

The *New York Times* publishes a long article reporting its internal discussions regarding Judith Miller<sup>403</sup>; Miller describes her Grand Jury experience<sup>404</sup>.

October 23:

*La Repubblica* in Rome begins a three-part series by Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe d'Avanzo about the origins of the forged Niger documents.<sup>405</sup>

October 24:

On Monday, two FBI agents, dressed in black, combed the northwest Washington neighborhood where Wilson and Plame live, flashing their badges and questioning neighbors about whether they knew about her affiliation with the CIA before she was exposed in an article by Novak in July 2003 ... The agents "made it clear they were part of the Fitzgerald

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<sup>402</sup> "The Miller Case",

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/national/16leak.html?pagewanted=2&ei=5070&en=481d13dc45cff215&ex=1130907600>

<sup>403</sup> "The Miller Case",

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/national/16leak.html?ex=1130907600&en=481d13dc45cf215&ei=5070>

<sup>404</sup>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/national/16miller.html?ei=5070&en=89616656ebe8339e&ex=1130907600&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1130767290-KjkiDj/qfnY22cczBps3jg>

<sup>405</sup> <http://www.repubblica.it/2005/j/sezioni/esteri/iraq69/sismicia/sismicia.html>

investigation, and they were basically tying up loose ends," said David Tillotson, a Washington lawyer and neighbor, who was among those interviewed Monday. "They really only had one interest, and that was to know whether Valerie's identity, on what she did for a living, was known prior to the Novak article. It seemed they were trying to establish clearly that prior to the Novak article she was not widely known on the cocktail circuit," Tillotson said. "And I pointed out, we were good friends, we socialized with them, and we just had no idea" until her status was made public in the Novak column, Tillotson said. "To that moment, we had no idea whatsoever that Valerie did anything for the government." .<sup>406</sup>

October 25:

Italian parliamentary officials announced that the head of Italy's military secret service, the SISMI intelligence agency, would be questioned next month over allegations that his agency gave the disputed documents to the United States and Britain, according to an Associated Press report. A spokeswoman said Nicolo Pollari, the agency director, asked to be questioned after reports this week in Italy's La Repubblica newspaper claiming that SISMI sent the CIA and U.S. and British officials information that it knew to be forged.<sup>407</sup>

On Tuesday afternoon, Fitzgerald and the chief FBI agent on the case, Jack Eckenrode, visited the offices of the D.C. law firm where Luskin works to meet with the defense lawyer. Two sources close to Rove who asked not to be identified because the probe is ongoing said Luskin presented evidence that gave the prosecutor "pause."<sup>408</sup>

A source close to the investigation told TIME that Fitzgerald and Libby's attorney Joseph Tate discussed possible plea options before the indictment was issued. But the deal was scotched because the prosecutor insisted that Libby do some "serious" jail time.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> "Fitzgerald Focuses Again On Rove", 051025, [http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-102505leak\\_lat,0,7947383.story?coll=la-home-headlines](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-102505leak_lat,0,7947383.story?coll=la-home-headlines)

<sup>407</sup> "Fitzgerald Focuses Again On Rove", 051025, [http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-102505leak\\_lat,0,7947383.story?coll=la-home-headlines](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-102505leak_lat,0,7947383.story?coll=la-home-headlines)

<sup>408</sup> "Karl Rove", <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9865842/site/newsweek/>

<sup>409</sup> Michael Duffy, "Fall Of A Vulcan", <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124343,00.html>

October 28:

“Mr. Fitzgerald was spotted Friday morning outside the office of James Sharp, Mr. Bush's personal lawyer. Mr. Bush was interviewed about the case by Mr. Fitzgerald last year. It is not known what discussions, if any, were taking place between the prosecutor and Mr. Sharp. Mr. Sharp did not return a phone call, and Mr. Fitzgerald's spokesman, Randall Samborn, declined to comment.”<sup>410</sup>

Just after noon, six men and 13 women filed silently into Courtroom Four in the E. Barrett Prettyman federal courthouse. They had served on Fitzgerald's grand jury for two years. Now they sat silently before U.S. Magistrate Judge Deborah A. Robinson. Calling the courtroom to order, Robinson asked whether the grand jury had something to present. The forewoman, wearing a black cardigan, rose and walked a few steps with a sheaf of papers. She handed them up to the magistrate's clerk. Robinson declared them in order and adjourned.<sup>411</sup>

Libby resigns.

October 29:

Libby's lawyers said that they were "surprised" and "distressed" by the charges and noted that "a person's recollection and memory of events will not always match those of other people, particularly when they are asked to testify months after the events occurred."<sup>412</sup>

In an interview for *60 Minutes*<sup>413</sup>, and in an Op-Ed piece for the *Los Angeles Times*<sup>414</sup>, Joe Wilson says that threats have been made against his wife. “There have been specific threats [against Plame]. Beyond that I just can’t go,” Wilson tells Bradley. Wilson says he and his wife have discussed security for her with “several agencies.”

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<sup>410</sup> “Cheney Aide Charged”,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/29/politics/29leak.html?pagewanted=all#>

<sup>411</sup> Barton Gellman, “First a leak, then a deluge”, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/29/AR2005102901478.html>

<sup>412</sup> <http://apnews.myway.com/article/20051029/D8DHPI000.html>; Michael Duffy, “Fall Of A Vulcan”, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1124343,00.html>

<sup>413</sup> <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/10/28/60minutes/main994753.shtml>

<sup>414</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-oe-wilson29oct29,0,940864.story?track=mostemailedlink>

October 30:

A new Washington Post-ABC News survey, conducted Friday night and yesterday, found that 55 percent of the public believes the Libby case indicates wider problems "with ethical wrongdoing" in the White House, while 41 percent believes it was an "isolated incident." And by a 3 to 1 ratio, 46 percent to 15 percent, Americans say the level of honesty and ethics in the government has declined rather than risen under Bush. In the aftermath of the latest crisis to confront the White House, Bush's overall job approval rating has fallen to 39 percent, the lowest of his presidency in Post-ABC polls. Barely a third of Americans -- 34 percent -- think Bush is doing a good job ensuring high ethics in government, which is slightly lower than President Bill Clinton's standing on this issue when he left office. The survey also found that nearly seven in 10 Americans consider the charges against Libby to be serious. A majority -- 55 percent -- said the decision of Special Counsel Patrick J. Fitzgerald to bring charges against Libby was based on the facts of the case, while 30 percent said he was motivated by partisan politics.<sup>415</sup>

October 31:

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi meets with Bush in the White House. The traditional press conference is not scheduled and does not happen.

Cheney replaces Libby. The VP's Counsel, David Addington, becomes Chief of Staff, while John Hannah is named National Security Adviser, up from Deputy NSA<sup>416</sup>.

Matthew Cooper, in an interview on "*Good Morning America*" says that Karl Rove was his original source about Valerie Plame, and that Libby was the back-up source. "There is no question. I first learned about Valerie Plame working at the CIA from Karl Rove," Cooper said.<sup>417</sup>

**November:**

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<sup>415</sup> By Richard Morin and Claudia Deane, Washington Post, Sunday, October 30, 2005; Page A14

<sup>416</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-CIA-Leak-Investigation.html>

<sup>417</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/print?id=1265736>

November 1:

The Presidential Press Briefing covered Berlusconi's visit of yesterday. Reporters were eager to find out what was discussed in regard to the Niger documents.

QUESTION: Fitzgerald found an Italian tie, and I presume this is what the discussion between the President and Berlusconi was about.

SCOTT McCLELLAN: Yes, they -- like I said they -- Prime Minister Berlusconi brought it up, and as they indicated, that there wasn't any documents that were provided to us on Niger and uranium by --

QUESTION: Wait, no documents or no intelligence?

SCOTT McCLELLAN: I'm sorry?

QUESTION: The press report out of Italy is a transcription -- it's a transcription of the forged documents, not the actual documents themselves. But Berlusconi said yesterday was, no information passed from Italy to the United States.

SCOTT McCLELLAN: Yes, I think he was accurately reflecting what he indicated in the meeting.

QUESTION: So that accurately characterizes the President's position, that the United States never received any intelligence --

SCOTT McCLELLAN: Well, Prime Minister Berlusconi was reflecting that within the meeting, and we've previously said in regards to a question that came up about a meeting here at the White House that no one here has any recollection of Niger and uranium being discussed at that meeting, much less any documents being provided.<sup>418</sup>

Senator Trent Lott (R-MS) became the first Republican senator to publicly question whether senior Bush advisor Karl Rove should stay at the White House, carefully making the argument that political advisers are not ideal for policy positions. Lott's statement was made on Chris Matthews' "Hardball."

CHRIS MATTHEWS: Is he good for American politics? Should he stay at the White House?

SEN. LOTT: Well, the question is that you asked, is it good for American politics? Look, he has been very successful, very effective in the political arena. The question is should he be the deputy chief of staff under the current circumstances? I don't know all that's going on, so I can't make that final conclusion. But, you know, how many times has the top political person become also the top policy advisor? Maybe you can make that transition, but it's a real challenge, and I think they have to -- I do think they need to look at

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<sup>418</sup> Quoted at TPM, 051101, <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/006903.php>

bringing in some more people, you know, old gray beards that have been around this town for a while, help them out a little bit at the White House.

MATTHEWS: Do you think it's a little unseemly to have svengali on the payroll? Do you think he should go?

LOTT: Well, I didn't say that. I mean, I said, you know, is he in the right position? I mean, a lot of the political advisors, in fact, most presidents in recent years have a political advisor in the White House. The question is, should they be, you know, making policy decisions. That's the question you've got to evaluate.<sup>419</sup>

November 2:

At his regular press briefing<sup>420</sup>, NSA Stephen Hadley said:

Q On September 9th, 2002, you met in Washington with Nicolo Pollari, the head of the Italian Intelligence Agency, SISMI. According to the Italian daily, La Repubblica, Mr. Pollari came to the meeting to discuss an alleged attempt by Iraq to purchase uranium from Niger. Is that claim false?

MR. HADLEY: We'd looked at this issue. We had both looked at our documentary record -- I have -- we have talked -- I've searched my own recollection; we have also talked to other people on the NSC staff at the time who might have a recollection of that meeting. I can tell you what that canvassing has unearthed. There was a meeting in Washington on that date. I did attend a meeting with him. It was, so far as we can tell from our records, about less than 15 minutes. It was a courtesy call. Nobody participating in that meeting or asked about that meeting has any recollection of a discussion of natural uranium, or any recollection of any documents being passed. And that's also my recollection. I have very little recollection of the meeting, but I have no recollection there was any of that discussion, or that there was any passing of documents. Nor does anybody else who may have participated in that meeting. That's where we are.

Q Can you say what you did discuss with Mr. Pollari?

MR. HADLEY: I told you I have very little recollection of the meeting, and it was in the order of a courtesy call, getting to know a person who is going to be a colleague going forward. And you can tell that from the relative briefness of the meeting. And I think what the Italian authorities have said is very consistent with what I just said ...

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<sup>419</sup> Excerpted at The Raw Story, 051101,

[http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Sen.\\_Lott\\_becomes\\_first\\_GOP\\_senator\\_1101.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2005/Sen._Lott_becomes_first_GOP_senator_1101.html)

<sup>420</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/11/20051102-10.html>

Q Have you or any member of your staff met with Italian intelligence officials elsewhere, outside the White House, or at any other time, when the question of Niger and uranium was discussed? And if not, can you tell us how the fake documents came into the possession of the U.S.?

MR. HADLEY: I would, obviously, in answering a question like that, want to check records and all the rest. I can tell you my recollection. My recollection is, no, not here, not anyplace else. I asked that question on the documents to refresh my own recollection. My understanding is that they came to the State Department after the NIE of October 2002. But again, I don't want to mislead you; that's the answer I got from a staff person a few minutes ago to refresh my memory. There is -- suffice to say they [the documents] didn't come to me -- they didn't come to the NSC. And we can try and get a more precise answer. But my understanding is that they came to the State Department. They were then shared with the CIA, and I think it's pretty much in the public record as to what happened with respect to those documents.

At an impromptu scrum in his office, Senate Minority leader Harry Reid said that Dick Cheney was personally responsible for the delays in the Intelligence Committee's investigations. "Nothing happens regarding intelligence gathering ... unless it's signed off on by the Vice President," he said. "[Senate Intelligence chairman Pat] Roberts couldn't do it"--i.e., Roberts couldn't conduct a full investigation without Cheney's approval. When I asked Reid whether he meant to state so flatly that Cheney was personally and directly stalling the Intelligence Committee's work, he didn't pause a beat. In fact he almost stood from his chair. "Yes. I say that without any qualification ... Circle it."<sup>421</sup>

November 3:

Scooter Libby pleads not guilty at his arraignment. "With respect, your honor, I plead not guilty," Mr. Libby told [United States](#) District Judge Reggie B. Walton, an appointee of President Bush, when asked for his plea. Mr. Libby was represented at the arraignment by four lawyers, including a well-known defense attorney, Ted Wells. Mr. Libby agreed to waive his right to a speedy trial.<sup>422</sup>

In a closed session, Italian parliamentarians Italian lawmakers questioned Cabinet Undersecretary Gianni Letta and SISMI director Nicolò Pollari about

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<sup>421</sup> The Plank at the New Republic, 051103, <http://www.tnr.com/blog/theplank?pid=3261>

<sup>422</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/03/politics/03cnd-libby.html?hp&ex=1131080400&en=d5895a44449263b6&ei=5094&partner=homepage>

allegations that Italy knowingly gave forged documents to Washington and London detailing a purported Iraqi deal to buy 500 tons of uranium concentrate from Niger. Enzo Bianco, chairman of an oversight committee on secret services, told reporters that Pollari and Letta briefed a dozen top lawmakers. Bianco said the officials denied that SISMI, Italy's secret service, "ever had a role in the dossier." At about the same time as the State of the Union address, they (Italy's SISMI secret services) said that the dossier doesn't correspond to the truth," Sen. Massimo Brutti told journalists after the parliamentary commission was briefed. But later, the senator called The Associated Press to retract that statement. He said that the commission was not told that the Italians had warned the Americans. Brutti said he was confused by the barrage of reporters' questions when the lawmakers emerged from the briefing. Brutti said what he meant to say was that the commission was told that a SISMI official, contacted by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, Austria, about the dossier, told the U.N. agency that "those documents didn't come from SISMI, they weren't produced nor supplied by Sismi." <sup>423</sup>

Berlusconi, in an interview with the conservative daily newspaper *Libero* published Thursday, said Italy had not passed any documents on the Niger affair to the United States. He added that *La Repubblica's* allegations were dangerous for Italy because "if they were believed, we would be considered the instigator" of the Iraq war. <sup>424</sup>

November 4:

FBI spokesman John Miller announced that Director Mueller had written to the Italian government in July. The letter had advised the Italians that the FBI's investigation had "confirmed the [Niger] documents to be fraudulent." Miller did not say what led the FBI to its conclusion or identify the perpetrators of the hoax. <sup>425</sup>

November 6:

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<sup>423</sup> [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-11-03-italyuranium\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-11-03-italyuranium_x.htm);  
<http://www.nynewsday.com/news/nationworld/nation/sns-ap-italy-iraq-uranium,0,3652180.story?coll=nyc-nationhome-headlines>

<sup>424</sup> [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-11-03-italyuranium\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-11-03-italyuranium_x.htm)

<sup>425</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/print?id=1282685>

## **PLAMEGATE and the NIGER DOCUMENTS SCAM: A CHRONOLOGY**

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In an interview with Wolf Blitzer on *Late Edition*, the British Foreign Minister John Reid continues to argue that attempts by Iraq to procure uranium in Niger and the Congo are both valid and supported by multiple intelligence streams.