

# THE DOD/STATE TALKING POINT, TWO

This is a follow-up to my post speculating that Cheney got his talking point about DOD and State being interested in the Iraq intell from the documents Valerie Wilson wrote before Joe Wilson's trip to Niger. This post will do something very simple: show where that talking point shows up, and where it doesn't. This post raises more questions than answers—about the real function of Libby's note, about Cathie Martin's role, and about Libby's conversation with Novak. But I happen to think they're really fascinating questions.

As I've stated before, the DOD/State talking point doesn't show up in the article it was purportedly intended for. Here's what Pincus' article says about the genesis of the trip:

The CIA's decision to send an emissary to Niger was triggered by questions raised by an aide to Vice President Cheney during an agency briefing on intelligence circulating about the purported Iraqi effort to acquire the uranium, according to the senior officials. Cheney's staff was not told at the time that its concerns had been the impetus for a CIA mission and did not learn it occurred or its specific results.

The simplest explanation for why the talking point doesn't appear in the article is that CIA got involved—around 5:30 PM on Thursday, June 11—too late to get it to Pincus in time for a Friday morning article. It's also possible that CIA refused to confirm the talking point on the record.

The talking point also doesn't appear in the Judis-Ackerman article that appeared later in June.

One year earlier, Cheney's office had received from the British, via the Italians, documents purporting to show Iraq's purchase of uranium from Niger. Cheney had given the information to the CIA, which in turn asked a prominent diplomat, who had served as ambassador to three African countries, to investigate.

That's not a surprise either—there's no indication this article includes any input from OVP—though the absence of the talking point does suggest Ackerman and Judis' sources, which may or may not have CIA ties, are in no mood or position to describe State and DOD's interest.