

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 05/08/2004

(U) RICHARD B. CHENEY, Vice President of the United States, Date of Birth: 1/30/41, [redacted] was interviewed in his office at the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald, Department of Justice, also participated in the interview. Vice President Cheney was represented by Terrence O'Donnell and Emmet T. Flood of the law firm of Williams and Connolly, 725 12th Street, NW, Washington, DC. Vice President Cheney was familiar with the nature of the investigation and provided the following information:

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(U) At the outset of the interview, the Vice President advised that, like all employees in the White House, he had been directed by the President to cooperate in the Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation of the matter involving the alleged leak of classified information to newspaper columnist Robert Novak. Vice President Cheney advised that he would cooperate with the investigation and provide as much information as he could, consistent with the President's directive. However, the Vice President added that any matters which might arise during the course of the interview which, in his judgment, fall outside of the scope of the investigation may require him to exercise a privilege not to answer certain questions, particularly those that relate to private conversations he may have had with the President. In those situations, the Vice President advised that he would consult with David Addington, Counsel to the Office of the Vice President (OVP), who would be waiting nearby for consultation in the event any such instances arise. Special Counsel Fitzgerald suggested that the interview proceed and the parties could address any potential issues when, and if, they arose.

(U) The Vice President advised that he has no idea who may have made the unauthorized disclosure to newspaper columnist Robert Novak of information identifying Valerie Wilson, the wife of former Ambassador Joe Wilson, as a CIA employee. He does not know of any other reporters who may have been provided this information before July 14, 2003. While he assumed people talked about the issue with the press after the article appeared, he did not know of anyone who had told him of any discussions on that issue with reporters even after July 14, 2003. No one has ever told him that they talked to any other reporters and provided the information to

Investigation on 5/8/04 at Washington, D.C.
File # [redacted]
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them about Mrs. Wilson's employment. Furthermore, he has no personal knowledge of anyone having provided this information to Robert Novak, or any other reporter, and he has never been advised by anyone to that effect.

[] The Vice President advised that he first learned about former Ambassador Joseph Wilson when news reports surfaced in approximately May and June 2003 about an unnamed ex-envoy who had traveled to Niger to investigate intelligence reports that the Government of Iraq had attempted to purchase yellowcake uranium from Niger. In fact, when the Vice President first heard of this trip, he did not know the actual identity of the ex-envoy, but only became aware of his identity at some point later in time. He also recalled that early media reports had suggested that the Ambassador had been sent on the fact-finding mission at the request of the OVP, which was news to the Vice President because he was not aware of such a trip. The Vice President advised he recalled making an initial inquiry for intelligence about the alleged transaction, or efforts by the Iraqis to purchase the uranium from Niger, during a CIA briefing in February 2002, when it was brought to his attention that

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[] had made such an assertion. He believed that the very first time he had heard the information about the ex-envoy's trip was from a New York Times column written by Nicholas Kristof in approximately May 2003.

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[] The Vice President could not recall whether the Wilson trip was discussed during any of the visits he made to the CIA with his Chief of Staff I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby when they met with intelligence analysts to discuss various issues such as weapons of mass destruction, China or other matters. These issues usually were discussed as part of a prepared agenda. He said it is possible that the trip by Wilson may have been discussed, but he could not specifically remember. He also advised that he could not recall whether or not he and Libby made a visit to the CIA in March 2003, nor could he recall an appearance by former Ambassador Wilson on CNN in March 2003. The Vice President could not remember any reaction he had to the Kristof article at the time it was published.

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(U) He also remembered Washington Post reporter Walter Pincus wrote a similar article, subsequent to the Kristof column, about an ex-envoy's trip to Niger, making the same assertion, namely that the Vice President had signed off on Wilson's mission to Niger. In preparation for that article, Pincus may have called

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the OVP making inquiries about the role of the Vice President, but Pincus would not have spoken directly with the Vice President. The Vice President does not, as a matter of practice, speak directly to journalists, but allows OVP staff members to respond to media inquiries. He does occasionally appear on television talk shows, but that is the extent of his interactions with journalists.

[] The Vice President also had no recollection of discussing this matter at a meeting on 6/10/03 he attended with Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) George Tenet and CIA Counter Proliferation Division Manager []

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[] When asked about the Administrations efforts to research Wilsons mission, the Vice President advised that around the time of the initial media reports, exact date not recalled, he spoke to DCI Tenet directly on the secure telephone line (MLP) from his office []

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[] The Vice President advised that the MLP line from his office enables him to make a direct connection to various individuals in the national security apparatus, including the Secretaries of Defense, State, and CIA Director Tenet.

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[] Vice President Cheney believed that all of this discussion occurred during a single telephone conversation that he had with DCI Tenet. The Vice President described the tone of his conversation with DCI Tenet as cordial, however, he had a sense that the DCI was defensive and embarrassed about the issue and had not known what was going on with regards to this mission. The Vice President based this latter assertion on the tone and temperament used by the DCI in the conversation, which was uncharacteristic for Tenet.

(U) The Vice President cannot recall if he mentioned the content of his conversation with DCI Tenet to Libby, but he stated that if he would have shared it with anyone, it would have been Libby. He probably would not have shared this information with Cathie Martin or anyone else from the OVP staff.

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(U) The Vice President has no recollection of reading or hearing about a Kristof article published 6/13/03 about the ex-envoy's trip, nor does he recall an article about it in the New Republic magazine dated 6/19/03. With respect to any press inquiries about the trip that may have been made by Walter Pincus in preparation for his June 2003 article, the Vice President said any such inquiries would have gone to either Libby or Cathie Martin. However, he does not know the specifics of any inquiries which were made by Pincus.

(U) He first became aware of Joe Wilson's editorial in the *New York Times* on either 7/6/03, the day it was published, either by personally reading it in Wyoming, or during the return flight to Washington. The Vice President explained that he had traveled to Jackson Hole, Wyoming for the holiday weekend and cannot recall if he read the *New York Times* editorial when he was on the ground in Wyoming, or returning on the flight to Washington on 7/6/03, or when he got back to Washington, in which case he may not have read the editorial until the next day. Vice President Cheney explained that he has a subscription to the *New York Times* in Wyoming, but the newspaper is sometimes delivered late and it may not have arrived in time for his departure. He did not see Joseph Wilson's appearance on *Meet the Press* on television that Sunday, 7/6/03.

His initial reaction to the Wilson article was his sense that it was "amateur hour" out at the CIA. According to the article, Wilson claimed that he'd been sent on assignment by the CIA, directly implying it was done at the request of the Vice President. Moreover, Wilson's fact-finding mission did not appear to be up to professional trade-craft standards inasmuch as Wilson did not review the relevant documents, did not execute a confidentiality requirement, and he apparently returned without filing a written report of his findings. In fact, the Vice President stated that he'd learned more details about Wilson's trip and its purpose from the *New York Times* than he'd been able to get from the CIA. Vice President Cheney said Wilson's July 6 article was disturbing, in part because it referred to information arising out of confidential meetings with his daily briefers. He was most disturbed because of the false implication of the OVPs role in the trip, especially since all he knew about the matter was that he'd made a legitimate inquiry of a CIA briefer regarding Niger and Iraq in February 2002, and it was now being made to look as if he'd personally sent Wilson on the trip.

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(U) The Vice President is relatively certain he spoke to someone about the article, but he cannot recall exactly who it was. He remembered that there were a number of other matters going on that week, particularly the controversy over the "16 words" in the President's State of the Union (SOTU) address, and assertions made in the British White Paper in the Fall of 2002, about Iraq's efforts to purchase yellowcake uranium. He recalled the week culminated with DCI Tenet's statement released to the media on Friday, July 11th regarding the SOTU controversy. DCI Tenet's statement knocked down some of the claims made by Wilson about his trip, including the assertion that the Vice President had sent him.

(U) Returning to the 7/6/03 New York Times editorial by Wilson, the Vice President recalled that he tore it out of the newspaper. When shown a copy of the Wilson editorial with handwritten notes on it, the Vice President acknowledged that the handwriting was his. Though he has no specific recollection of when he wrote the notes on the upper margin of the editorial, the Vice President believed it was probably contemporaneous with the time he read the editorial. He stated that it was his normal practice to make such notes and underline relevant or important portions of news articles at the same time he read them, so he suspects that was the case with this article.

(U) During the interview, the Vice President read aloud those underlined portions of the Wilson editorial, OVP Bates Stamp Number 1595, and discussed certain parts. For example, he had underlined and read aloud that part of the Wilson editorial that stated, "...it would be exceedingly difficult for Niger to transfer uranium to Iraq." In discussing this portion of the editorial, the Vice President stated that such a transfer had already happened once before. Therefore, although what Wilson was saying might be accurate, i.e. that such a transfer would be difficult, it did not mean that it could not occur. He said he was struck by the thought as he read the Wilson editorial that this attempt by Wilson and the CIA to investigate the intelligence re Iraq and Niger was not really a serious enterprise. Once again, the Vice President cited as an example the underlined portion of the article wherein former Ambassador Wilson wrote that, "... I have every confidence that the answer I provided was circulated to the appropriate officials within our government." The Vice President stated that had not happened so he questioned again the "seriousness" of this effort by Wilson and the CIA.

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(U) The Vice President also read aloud the handwritten notes he had made in the upper margin of the editorial. He commented that his notation reading, "Or did his wife send him on a junket?" was written as he recalled the earlier statement made to him by DCI Tenet that the ex-envoy's wife worked in the Unit that sent him. Vice President Cheney also noted that he thought it was strange that Joe Wilson did his investigative work pro bono.

(U) Regarding the editorial which he cut out of the paper, Vice President Cheney advised that it was his normal practice to carry such documents around with him for a few days and then place them in his "out" box when he was finished with them. He cannot recall if he discussed the underlined portions of the editorial with anyone, but he probably did. After he placed the article in his "out" box, he does not know whatever happened to it, nor did he ask for any specific treatment or follow-up with respect to his handwritten questions on the newspaper.

(U) The Vice President advised that between the time of the publication of the Wilson editorial on July 6, 2003, and the publication of the Novak editorial eight days later, he does not recall having any discussions about Wilson's wife or Wilson's trip with either DCI George Tenet or Deputy DCI John McLaughlin. He does recall at one point "gigging" Tenet and/or McLaughlin about vetting a separate, unrelated intelligence matter by sarcastically suggesting to them that perhaps they ought to send Joe Wilson to check it out. The Vice President stated that the issue of Valerie Wilson's possible involvement in sending her husband to Niger was just not a big deal and did not become one until after the publication of the Novak editorial.

() However, with respect to inquiries of the CIA, the Vice President does recall at some point in time []

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began by explaining that in addition to [] documents located [] He in his briefing binder, []

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not sure of the identity of his briefer at the time, but he believed Dave Terry had left the position [] He stated that he was

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either [] so the briefer involved would have probably been [] or Craig Schmall.

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[] In order to clarify this matter and to refresh the Vice President's recollection, he was shown a series of three sets of documents which had been sent via fax to his office on 6/9/03, OVP Bates Stamp numbers 1445 through 1465 for set #1. The Vice President initially did not recognize the documents which contained as a cover sheet a memorandum dated 6/9/03 from John Hannah, the subject of which was Information: CIA Paper on Purported Iraq-Niger Uranium Deal. The Vice President advised that he did not specifically recognize the documents so he spent several minutes perusing them. The Vice President then made several comments about the documents, including the fact that the documents confirmed that he had asked questions about the purported Iraq/Niger uranium deal at a briefing in February 2002; the information from [] lacked detail; and the [] had determined that some of the documents which had been provided to the [] were forgeries. The Vice President speculated that may have been the reason he asked for the compilation of documents related to the issue.

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[] The Vice President was asked specifically about the document with OVP Bates Stamp Number 1450, entitled "Purported Iraqi attempt to get Uranium from Niger." The Vice President advised he could not recall reading or seeing this particular document. In reviewing it, the Vice President specifically commented on paragraphs numbered three and six. He stated that the third paragraph relates to [] reports regarding Iraq and Niger. With respect to the sixth paragraph, the Vice President related that this paragraph concerned the written report and debriefing of Joe Wilson after his return from Niger. The Vice President was then asked to review the page of the same document containing OVP Bates Stamp number 1456 which contained the hand printed notation, "Did CIA have it in their document?" The Vice President advised he did not recognize the printing.

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[] The Vice President was then provided with a set of documents bearing OVP Bates Stamp numbers 1472 through 1481. The Vice President commented that this set was basically a reformatting of the document he had previously reviewed "Purported Iraqi attempt to get uranium from Niger." The Vice President was directed to OVP Bates Stamp number 1475, a document which contained the same paragraph number 6 as the previous document. This particular document contained underlining of certain portions of the paragraph and an asterisk in the left hand margin. The Vice President

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advised that he did not complete the underlining and the asterisk, nor does he have any idea who may have done so.

() The Vice President was then shown a two page document dated March 8, 2002 bearing OVP Bates Stamp numbers 1552 and 1553. The Vice President reviewed it and advised he recognized it as the Wilson debrief document. The Vice President advised that he first saw this document more than one year after it was written, recalling that was around the time the Wilson story began developing in the summer of 2003, either in May, June, or July. The Vice President recognized his handwriting of the word "Wilson" at the top right hand side of the document. The Vice President also believed he underlined that portion of paragraph two because he believed it raised a "red flag," seeming to show that the former Niger Prime Minister Mayaki had been approached about commercial relations with Iraq which the former Prime Minister believed meant yellowcake uranium sales. The Vice President could not recall if he read this document prior to the publication of Joseph Wilson's editorial on 7/6/03 in the New York Times.

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() The Vice President was then shown a two page document containing OVP Bates Stamp Numbers 1588 and 1590. The Vice President was advised that OVP Bates Stamp number 1589 was missing and apparently may have not been included with the original production. The Vice President advised that he believed that this document also was a reformatting of the document he had previously reviewed, namely the Wilson "debrief." The Vice President advised that it looks like his handwriting of the name "Joe Wilson" at the top of this document. He has no idea why he received the document in a different format from the previous one, indicating its possible the other one may have been lost.

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() Finally, the Vice President was shown a set of documents bearing OVP Bates Stamp numbers 1781 through 1790. The Vice President remarked that this was another copy of the document containing numbered paragraphs that he had previously reviewed. The Vice President was directed to OVP Bates Stamp number 1784, which contained that part of the document marked paragraph six. The Vice President noted that "Joe Wilson" was printed in the margin to the left of the paragraph while a handwritten notation which may have said "Wilson" was just below it. The Vice President advised that neither the printed portion or the handwritten portion was done by him. The Vice President advised that it was possible that the handwritten portion containing the word "Wilson" may have

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been written by Scooter Libby, but the Vice President did not believe the printed notation was done by Scooter.

() The Vice President advised that he believed the documents discussed above represent the CIA's attempt []

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[] as well as requests by Congress and the [] above, the Vice President could not recall specifically when this was completed, but he believes it may have been after Wilson's trip to Niger became public and questions were raised about the Vice President's involvement in sending Wilson on the trip. He also recalled that he believes the CIA report produced from a debriefing of former Ambassador Wilson after he returned from Niger was the only document produced which reported the results of Wilson's trip. And although there was allegedly "wide dissemination" of this document in the intelligence community, the Vice President had never read it at the time it was purportedly widely disseminated.

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(U) Because of the intense interest in Wilson's trip after his 7/6/03 editorial was published, the Vice President speculated that may have been the period when he saw this report for the first time. He characterized the earlier media interest at the time of the Pincus and Kristof articles as less intense. However, because there was so much developing controversy at the time, including the "16 words" issue, which was related to the Wilson episode to some extent, he was not certain when he reviewed this report.

(U) The Vice President reiterated that he does not take incoming calls from the media. Routine press inquiries would have gone to Cathie Martin, while some of those involving more substantive matters, particularly in the area of intelligence and national security, would have likely been handled by Scooter Libby. He provided press guidance to both of them at times and, though he can't recall any specific advice he gave in the May/June 2003 time frame, he generally would have advised them of the following points regarding the Wilson trip to Niger:

1. He made legitimate intelligence inquiries about alleged Iraq/Niger uranium transactions.
2. He did not select or send former Ambassador Wilson on the fact-finding mission to Niger.

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3. He had never been briefed on the proposed trip, nor was he briefed after former Ambassador Wilson returned from Niger.

4. The findings and written report of the trip were not provided to him until after the Wilson trip became public in 2003.

(U) Regarding the controversy over the "16 words" in the SOTU, the Vice President advised that in his mind he could not draw a distinction between the inquiries on the issue before the publication of the Wilson editorial and after the publication of the Wilson editorial.

[] The Vice President was then provided a series of classified documents marked with OVP Bates Stamp Numbers 129 through 191, but did not include all sequentially numbered documents in between. These documents were CIA cables related to former Ambassador Wilson's trip to Niger. The Vice President was asked specifically about those documents with Bates Stamp numbers 147-48, 162, and 165. The Vice President advised he did not recognize any of the CIA documents or recall having seen any of them before.

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(U) Vice President Cheney was then asked if he discussed Ambassador Wilson or Valerie Wilson with specific White House staff. Regarding whether or not he discussed either of the Wilsons with Eric Edelman, current Ambassador to Turkey, the Vice President advised that if Edelman was, at the time, involved in the operations of the National Security Council under Scooter Libby, it was possible he discussed the Wilsons with Edelman, but he was unsure about whether Edelman was still in Washington. In any event, he has no specific recollection of any such discussion. The Vice President said the same would be true for Neil Patel, a White House staffer who, because of his job, might have been involved in such a discussion, though the Vice President had no specific recollection of any discussion with Patel. Vice President Cheney can recall no other discussions regarding the Wilsons with either DCI Tenet or DDCI McCloughlin except for the previously mentioned MLP telephone conversation, and the occasion when he giggered Tenet over Joe Wilsons assistance. Finally, he does not recall having a conversation with the President about the Wilsons.

(U) By contrast, the Vice President advised that White House employee Dean McGrath was more involved in the administrative aspects of the Council so he probably did not discuss the Wilsons with him. The Vice President also advised that NSC staffer John

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Hannah was primarily involved in issues relating to the Middle East, which included Iraq and weapons of mass destruction. However, Vice President Cheney believed it was possible he might have discussed the Wilsons with Hannah, but he did not think it was likely.

(U) Regarding his press secretary Cathie Martin, the Vice President was sure he had discussed Joe Wilson with her but he had no recollection of ever discussing Valerie Wilson with her. He has no recollection of Cathie Martin entering his office at some point while Scooter Libby was present and advising both of them that Joseph Wilson's wife was employed by the CIA. He also has no recollection of learning of an episode when the CIA apparently was upset that NBC News reporter Andrea Mitchell and CBS reporter David Martin had publicly reported on a conflict between the White House and the CIA relative to the SOTU "16 words." It was reported that the CIA was being blamed by White House staffers for the mistake and that Steven Hadley of the NSC had criticized Cathie Martin for the tension that surfaced between the CIA and the White House over the report. The Vice President advised he was not aware of that tension, but he was aware of a struggle between the White House and the CIA while they were both working to disseminate George Tenet's explanation of the "16 words" controversy.

(U) Regarding Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, the Vice President advised that he did not ever discuss either Joseph Wilson or Wilsons wife with either of them. The Vice President stated that the identity of Valerie Wilson and her employment was not high on his radar screen and her employment with the CIA and relationship with Joe Wilson did not figure prominently in his thinking.

(U) The Vice President advised that it was probable that he discussed Joe Wilson at some point with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, but he had no recollection of discussing Valerie Wilson at all with her. He advised his thoughts were the same regarding Presidential Chief of Staff Andrew Card - he probably would have discussed Joe Wilson with Card, but not Valerie Wilson. He said the same held true for Presidential Advisor Karl Rove - he probably discussed Joe Wilson with Rove, but would not have discussed Valerie Wilson with him.

(U) The Vice President went on to explain his reason for believing he possibly discussed Joe Wilson with the latter three individuals. The Vice President stated that after he receives his

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7:00 a.m. briefing at his residence from the CIA briefer, he travels to the White House where he joins the President for a daily CIA briefing which the President receives from either DCI Tenet or DDCI McLaughlin. Chief of Staff Card and Dr. Rice are also present for these briefings, along with a Presidential briefer from the CIA. Normally, when the CIA's briefing is completed, the four, who are sometimes joined after the briefing by Mr. Rove, will discuss a wide range of topics. At some point in time, after the Wilson issue had become public, the Vice President recalls]

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The Vice President said he could not recall exactly when he had this discussion and who was present for it, but it may have been at one of the morning meetings. He said that it was possible he had the discussion with the President prior to the publication of Wilson's editorial on 7/6/03, but it probably occurred afterwards. It may have occurred early on Monday, 7/7/03 although he stated that he would not have discussed it with the President on Sunday, 7/6/03, the day when he returned to Washington from Wyoming. Additionally, the Vice President had no recollection of discussing Wilson's wife at any time with the President.

(U) Asked about any possible discussions of either of the Wilsons with three high-ranking Department of State employees - Secretary of State Colin Powell, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, or Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman - the Vice President advised that he did not discuss either Wilson or Wilson's wife with any of the three men. He is also unaware of any of his staffers having discussed the Wilsons with Grossman, nor have any of the staffers told him about having any such discussion.

(U) Thereafter, the Vice President advised that he did not discuss either of the Wilsons with Bush-Cheney campaign Manager Ken Mehlman. In response to this question, Vice President Cheney asked, Why would I talk to Mehlman about that? However, he stated that it was possible he or Scooter Libby had discussed the Wilsons with his former press secretary, Mary Matalin. The Vice President advised that after Ms. Matalin left her full-time position with the White House, he continued to consult with her on a variety of issues and it was not uncommon for him to reach out to her for advice. He would normally consult with her prior to television appearances, particularly the talk shows, such as "Meet the Press." He has no specific recollection of discussing Wilson or Wilson's wife with Matalin, but he said it was possible.

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(U) The Vice President advised that he is unaware of anyone in the administration conducting any research or completing a research project on either Joe Wilson or his wife. He advised that he never directed anyone on his staff to conduct such a project and no one advised him they were working on one.

(U) Regarding his relationship with columnist Robert Novak, the Vice President advised that he has known Novak for a number of years. In fact, the Vice President stated that Novak had come to Washington even before the Vice President, which was quite a number of years ago. The Vice President also knew Novak's late partner, Rowland Evans. However, despite the fact that the Vice President has known Novak for a long time, he does not have a great deal of contact with him. Vice President Cheney reiterated that he does not have routine contact with members of the press who make inquiries of the Office of the Vice President - he leaves that job to the staff. Therefore, he would not be taking telephone calls from Novak. He recalled being interviewed by Novak during the post-election transition period because Novak predicted, correctly in hindsight, that the administration was making a mistake in naming Paul O'Neill as Secretary of the Treasury. He has done several interviews on Novak's television show. He has never discussed Wilson or Wilsons wife with Novak and he has never heard Novak speak to anyone about either of the Wilsons.

(U) The Vice President advised that he assumes he discussed Joseph Wilson with Scooter Libby when the issue of Wilson's trip to Niger first surfaced in the media. He does not recall discussing Valerie Wilson with Libby prior to her name appearing in Novak's column on 7/14/03. Scooter Libby never advised him of any conversation he had with Marc Grossman from the State Department about Joe Wilson and/or Wilsons wife. Libby also never told him about any conversation he had with former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer about the Wilsons. The Vice President advised that it would have been logical for Libby to brief the White House Press Office if inquiries about Wilson were being made to the OVP. He is not aware of any lunch meetings or discussions between Ari Fleischer and Scooter Libby, but it would not surprise him if they had been to lunch together at some time during Fleischer's White House tenure.

(U) The Vice President advised that he had not made any inquiries about a contractual arrangement which might have existed between former Ambassador Wilson and the CIA. He stated that it's

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possible someone else might have made such an inquiry, but he is not aware of any such request.

(U) Vice President Cheney advised he was aware, prior to the unauthorized disclosure of Valerie Wilsons identity in Robert Novaks newspaper editorial on 7/14/03, that Scooter Libby was speaking to reporters about Joseph Wilson and his trip to Niger. He stated that Libby was not required to clear every public statement and press contact because the Vice President had confidence in Libbys abilities and experience in handling such inquiries. However, the Vice President was generally aware of Libby's contacts with Walter Pincus of the Washington Post but not aware of any other specific reporters with whom Libby had contact. Asked specifically about whether there was a media strategy developed within the OVP to counter the unfair implications raised by Wilson, the Vice President made it clear that the White House and the OVP were not trying to affirmatively generate coverage on this issue, but were merely responding to media inquiries.

(U) The Vice President is not aware of any contacts Scooter Libby may have had with Robert Novak prior to the publication of the Novak newspaper column on 7/14/03. If Libby had such contacts, he did not tell the Vice President about them. The Vice President was not advised by Libby that Novak had asked for an outline of the chronology of how the SOTU was prepared.

(U) The Vice President advised that he believed he had always been the subject of unfavorable press coverage by []

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[] The Vice President did not recall [] coverage of the Joe Wilson matter in the week following the publication of Wilson's editorial on 7/6/03 as being a particular problem, but he acknowledged that it was possible. The Vice President advised that he was not aware of any attempts by Libby to complain to []

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[] and Libby did not discuss any such plan with the Vice President. When asked if he had been told of any conversation that Scooter Libby may have had with [] Vice President Cheney said it was possible, but that he could not recall. He repeated that he had no specific recollection of any reporters being talked to by Scooter Libby prior to July 14. Finally, the Vice President was not aware of any discussions which Scooter Libby may have had with Karl Rove about Joe Wilson or Wilsons wife, and Libby did not tell him of any such discussions.

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(U) Regarding the Presidential trip to Africa beginning on 7/7/03 and ending on 7/12/03, the Vice President did not recall discussing Joe Wilson with anyone traveling with the President on Air Force One or while the entourage was in Africa. The Vice President does recall talking to Dr. Rice about the CIA statement being prepared by George Tenet, which was eventually released on 7/11/03. He recalls that the Tenet statement addressed the Wilson controversy in several respects, to include rebutting several assertions made by Wilson about the Vice President. The Vice President recalls DCI Tenet's statement admitting the CIA unilaterally decided to send Wilson to Niger to check the Iraqi/Niger uranium allegation, and the Vice President had nothing to do with that decision. Additionally, DCI Tenet's statement indicated that neither the President nor Vice President had been briefed on the findings of Wilson's trip, as Wilson asserted.

(U) The Vice President cannot recall any specific discussion with Dr. Rice about Joe Wilson or Wilson's wife. []

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[] He believes that the only person he spoke with on the telephone on Air Force One or in Africa during the Presidential trip was Dr. Rice. He does not recall talking to the President during the Africa trip.

[] Regarding DCI Tenet's statement of 7/11/03, the Vice President stated that to the best of his recollection, he did not believe the CIA statement went as far as it could have in clarifying the "16 words" controversy. []

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] The Vice President recalled that components of the NIE, and some of the findings of the Wilson mission, and cables relating to it, were declassified and included in the statement, even though the actual NIE was not declassified.

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(U) The Vice President advised that it was conceivable that he may have had discussions about Joe Wilson during the week of 7/6/03 because the Tenet statement covered the bulk of the Wilson matter, namely that the CIA had dispatched Wilson to Niger on its own without direction from the Vice President; Wilson's report confirmed there had been an approach by Iraq to Niger at one time; and the results of Wilson's trip were not briefed to the Vice President.

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] a statement Dr. Rice made to the press sometime shortly after the publication of the Wilson editorial wherein she had said it had been a "mistake" to include the "16 words" about the Iraqi efforts to acquire uranium in the Presidents SOTU. The Vice President acknowledged that Ari Fleischer may have made a similar acknowledgment in a press "gaggle" he held the day after Wilson's editorial was published.

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[] Vice President Cheney advised that he normally receives a daily briefing from the CIA at the Vice Presidential residence beginning at 7:00 a.m. Following that briefing, he joins the President in the Oval Office for an 8:00 a.m. briefing.

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] Scooter Libby normally plans to

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sit in on the briefings with him at the Vice-Presidential residence, but often cannot make it due to conflicts. They receive separate briefings on Saturdays.

(U) On Saturday, 7/12/03, the Vice President recalled making the trip to Norfolk, Virginia for the commissioning ceremony for the USS Ronald Reagan. He does not remember anything in particular about the CIA briefing he received at the Vice-Presidential residence that day. The Vice President was given a series of documents to review, including several from the briefing that day. With respect to the CIA briefing document marked with OVP Bates Stamp number 1537, the Vice President acknowledged that it was his handwriting of the name "Wilson" in the margin and on the face of the document. He noticed after further review of the document that it was similar to the previous document he had seen regarding Wilson's trip to Africa, but it was in a slightly different format. He noted that the paragraph which is numbered six of the document referred to the report made of Wilson's trip by the CIA Reports Officer who debriefed Joe Wilson upon his return from Niger. The Vice President advised that a review of the document did not successfully refresh his recollection about the CIA briefing on the morning of 7/12/03. He stated that the document in question did not appear to be [redacted] but looked like a type of document he may have kept. He has no specific memory of this document, and recalls no reason why he kept it.

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(U) The Vice President looked at documents bearing OVP Bates Stamp numbers 1538 and 1539. It is possible that he may have received one of the two documents, or even the previously-described one from Scooter Libby, but he has no specific recollection of having obtained either one of them from him.

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(U) The Vice President advised that he very clearly remembered the trip to Norfolk on 7/12/03 for the commissioning of the USS Ronald Reagan. He looked forward to making the trip for some time and was actually pleased that the President had declined the opportunity to commission the ship. He was particularly looking forward to spending time with former First Lady Nancy Reagan and some of his old friends from Yale University. He recalled that his wife and several members of his family made the trip on Air Force Two with him for the ceremony. Initially, he could not remember that Scooter Libby attended the ceremony with members of his family, but did seem to recall that fact when he was advised that it was Libby's son's birthday and he was attending with his father.

(U) The Vice President advised that after Air Force Two arrived in Norfolk on the morning of 7/12/03, he believed that he and his wife went to the Admiral's house for breakfast where he met with Nancy Reagan. After spending time and visiting with her, the group went to the aircraft carrier for the commissioning ceremony which took place on board the ship. He recalled spending several hours at the ceremony and he also remembers the helicopter ride back to Air Force Two for the short flight back to Washington.

(U) The Vice President advised that it was possible while on the return flight, that he and Scooter Libby discussed media responses to inquiries regarding Joe Wilson's charges about the use of flawed intelligence. Though he cannot recall any specific conversation, he would not be surprised to learn that he had such a discussion with his Chief of Staff. The Vice President advised that he sees Libby several times each day and the two have previously discussed communication strategies for responding to questions from particular reporters.

(U) Vice President Cheney is familiar with Glenn Kessler, a reporter from the Washington Post, but he is not familiar with Matthew Cooper, who was identified as a reporter from Time Magazine. In handling press inquiries regarding Joe Wilson, it is conceivable that he tasked Scooter Libby with this responsibility rather than OVP press secretary Cathie Martin. As he mentioned earlier, Martin handled routine press inquiries, while Scooter's experience dictates that he assist with those press questions pertaining more explicitly to foreign policy and national security. He stated that Martin was good in getting things done and following through but she did not have Libby's experience in certain policy areas. Therefore, Libby was the more appropriate person to answer those inquiries.

(U) The Vice President said he does not recall specifically, but it would be possible he discussed the Wilson talking points with Libby aboard Air Force Two on 7/12/03. Because DCI Tenet's CIA statement had been released the previous evening, Vice President Cheney would have expected there to be press inquiries about it the following day. He stated that he might have dictated to Libby certain logical responses to the press inquiries which may have been made regarding DCI Tenet's statement. He stated that he does not recall Joe Wilson's wife or her affiliation with the CIA ever being a part of any media talking points about Wilson's trip to Niger because her employment was not an issue. He

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cannot recall if he and Scooter Libby talked about Valerie Wilsons CIA position as a data point.

(U) The Vice President advised he has no idea what Scooter Libby knew about Valerie Wilson on 7/12/03. He does not recall if he told Scooter Libby about Mrs. Wilson and her employment at the CIA, or if Libby revealed to the Vice President his independent knowledge about that fact. The Vice President repeated that he believed he first heard about Joe Wilson's wife's employment in the telephone conversation he had with DCI Tenet. He did not recall hearing anything else about her until the Novak column was written on 7/14/03. He stated that he had made the handwritten notation about Wilsons wife on the Sunday New York Times newspaper from 7/6/03, because he was remembering his telephone conversation with Tenet in approximately June 2003, wherein the Vice President learned for the first time of Valerie Wilson's position with the CIA. With respect to the 7/14/03 Novak column, he had been given no advance knowledge of the subject or substance of the column, and he had no idea Novak or any other reporter was working on such a story.

() Vice President Cheney then reviewed documents bearing OVP Bates Stamp Numbers 2892 and 2893 which were two pages of handwritten notes depicting media talking points pertaining to Joe Wilson. Although the notes were not dated, he acknowledged that they appeared to have been written by Scooter Libby. After reviewing the notes, the Vice President stated that the talking points in the notes resemble something he would have said to Libby, but he cannot remember the specifics of the conversation. The Vice President stated again that he was not aware of which reporter, or reporters, were working with Scooter Libby on OVP responses to Joe Wilsons criticisms. The Vice President is not sure if Mr. Libby followed up with the media on these notes and talking points as he does not recall whether Libby reported back to him the results of any contact with reporters. b1

() With respect to the portion of the notes containing the phrase "deep background," the Vice President indicated that Mr. Libby alone would be the judge of whether or not information was to be presented to any reporters with that caveat. As a general rule, the Office of the Vice President and the Vice President himself try not to be critical of other government agencies as it is not productive. His review of the Libby notes indicated to the Vice President that they generally contain the same information in them as was in the DCI's statement. b1

(U) The Vice President defined his understanding of the ground rules he believed existed for reporters' use of information provided by the administration. He stated that information provided on the record could be used by the media in their reporting and also attributed to the source who provided it. Furnishing information "on background" means the information could be used and attributed to an anonymous administration official. When working "on deep background" the information could be used by a reporter to form derivative judgements, but not quoted or attributed to a source; and, finally, "off the record" means the information provided by a source could not be used.

(U) The Vice President repeated that he was not familiar with a reporter from Time magazine by the name of Matthew Cooper. The Vice President has no recollection of a misunderstanding between Scooter Libby and Time magazine wherein Libby had provided a quote relative to the Wilson matter to Time on the record and the quote, when published, was incomplete or truncated. The Vice President stated, apart from this instance, that would not be the first time that has happened in journalism. He also stated he had no recollection that Time made a change to the article in its subsequent on-line edition and printed the entire quote from Libby. He also has no recollection of instructing Libby to give the same information to Newsweek magazine as he gave to Time in the interest of balance. Because he does not have a very favorable view of Newsweek, the Vice President advised he could not conceive of giving such a direction, but stated it was possible he told Libby to contact both magazines. It is also possible that Libby made these contacts on his own initiative.

(U) Vice President Cheney reiterated that Libby's 7/12/03 handwritten notes look and sound like something he might dictate to Libby, but he cannot specifically recall having dictated such instructions to him on that occasion. The Vice President repeated that any decisions about whether Libby, when talking to the media, provides information "on the record" or "on background" are made by Libby himself. Finally, with respect to the Fall 2002 NIE, the Vice President did not believe he discussed it with Libby on 7/12/03. The Vice President advised that if Scooter Libby had any discussion with any reporters on 7/12/03 upon his return from Norfolk, VA, he must have viewed those discussions as unremarkable, inasmuch as the Vice President was never told the outcome of any conversations, discussions or interviews with the media by Libby.

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(U) The Vice President believed he read the Robert Novak column in the newspaper on the day it was published, 7/14/03. He cannot recall discussing it, or any of its contents, with anyone at the time it was published. He did not pay any particular attention to Novak's disclosure of the identity of Valerie Wilson, and he does not know how Novak might have received this information. He emphasized that it did not appear to him to be an important or even relevant fact in the Joe Wilson controversy.

(U) When asked his view of former Ambassador Wilson, the Vice President described him as something of an aggravation. He also advised that it is a bit hard for him to separate his feelings about Wilson from the 2003 time-frame of the publication of the various news articles, and from his view of Wilson now. The Vice President advised that his biggest problem in the entire Wilson matter has been the performance of the CIA. The Vice President noted that he had a history of experience with the CIA, and has been a consumer of CIA intelligence, ranging from his time as a Congressman when he served on the House Intelligence Committee, through his service as Secretary of Defense and currently as Vice President. The Vice President described himself as a long-time admirer of the CIA and its people and programs, but he characterized their performance in the Wilson matter as "amateur hour." His mind-set about the entire issue led him to wonder to himself about what was going on out at Langley. He also believed, with respect to Joe Wilson, that Wilson has built a career on this niche, noting that he understood Wilson had just written a book. He also saw him on television discussing the book and it appears that some of what Wilson has said has expanded over time.

(U) The Vice President indicated that in the July 2003 time-frame he did not have the impression that Joe Wilson was a partisan. His handwritten notes on the 7/6/03 editorial about Wilson's trip and the involvement of Wilson's wife in the CIA's selection of Wilson was triggered by his recollection of the prior telephone conversation he had with George Tenet, wherein Tenet identified Wilson's wife as an employee of the agency. The Vice President also indicated that he never discussed the substance of his call with Tenet with anyone prior to the publication of Valerie Wilson's identity in Novak's 7/14/03 newspaper column.

(U) Vice President Cheney advised that no one ever told him that Wilson went to Niger because of his wife's CIA status and, in fact, the Vice President does not have any idea to this day why Joseph Wilson was selected to go to Niger. He has never been

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advised by anyone of the findings of the CIA's Inspector General investigation alluded to by DCI Tenet in their initial telephone call regarding Wilson. The Vice President advised that it is possible he and Scooter Libby discussed former Ambassador Wilson's credentials for undertaking the mission for the CIA, but he has no specific recollection of such a discussion. Additionally, he does not recall any discussion with Libby of perceived nepotism associated with Wilson's selection for the CIA assignment. The Vice President believed, based on Joe Wilson's past service as an ambassador in the region, that his qualifications for the trip were "OK." However, the Vice President believed the CIA did not go about the mission in the right way. He assumed that Scooter Libby very likely shares his view of the CIA's handling of the Wilson mission as "amateur hour." The Vice President believed it possible that he and Libby discussed the Wilson trip as some kind of a junket or boondoggle, words which are to him synonymous in their meaning. However, he has no solid recollection of any such discussion.

(U) The Vice President advised that there was no discussion of "pushing back" on Wilson's credibility by raising the nepotism issue, and there was no discussion of using Valerie Wilson's employment with the CIA in countering Joe Wilson's criticisms and claims about Iraqi efforts to procure yellowcake uranium from Niger.

(U) The Vice President recalled the Gerald Ford 90th birthday party celebration at the White House on 7/16/03. He indicated that he was the host and organizer of the party and is aware that both Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan and his wife, NBC News reporter Andrea Mitchell, attended the party. Greenspan received an award from the Gerald Ford Foundation. The Vice President could not recall any discussion that evening with Andrea Mitchell about the Wilson matter. He advised that he has long known Andrea Mitchell and has been in attendance at numerous social functions with her in the past. He described her as a reporter who does not mix business and social occasions. The Vice President cannot recall if Secretary of State Powell attended the party, but he advised he was sure there was a list available of the party attendees.

(U) The Vice President advised that during the period from the publication of Robert Novak's column on 7/14/03, until the Department of Justice investigation was announced in late September, he does not recall much, if any, discussion about former

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ambassador Wilson and the trip to Niger. He has some recollection of Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley providing a "back-grounder" to the press addressing Iraq/WMD matters. He recalled that this briefing occurred some time shortly after declassification of the October 2002 NIE.

(U) The Vice President learned of the investigation at the same time White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales issued a document preservation order to all White House employees directing that they preserve any and all records relating to this matter. To the best of the Vice President's recollection, everyone in the White House was advised that because an investigation was underway, the documents were to be preserved and employees should not discuss the investigation with anyone else. At that time, no one came to him and told him of any discussion they had with Robert Novak regarding Valerie Wilson prior to the publication of Novak's column. No one told him at that time of talking to any reporters about Joe Wilson or Wilsons wife.

(U) The Vice President advised that he became aware of a statement that White House press secretary Scott McClellan made on 9/29/03 in his daily press briefing, wherein McClellan attempted to exonerate Karl Rove before the media as a possible source of the leak to Novak. The Vice President was not happy about it, as it appeared that the White House press office was putting down markers for some individuals and not for others. Specifically, Vice President Cheney believed that fairness dictated that similar disqualifying statements should be made to the media on behalf of Libby and Elliot Abrams of the NSC, both of whom were the speculative targets of leak allegations by the media that week.

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[] He did not know if Scooter Libby independently attempted to get the White House press office to make

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a statement clearing him prior to discussing it with the Vice President.

(U) Regarding his conversations with Libby about this time, although the Vice President has no specific memory of such a conversation, Libby may have told him he was not Novak's source. In any event, the Vice President did not suspect Libby of being Novak's source. He cannot recall Scooter Libby telling him how he first learned about Valerie Wilson. It is possible Libby may have learned about Valerie Wilson's employment from the Vice President after the Vice President's phone call with George Tenet, but the Vice President has no specific recollection of such a conversation. The Vice President also cannot recall ever waving Libby off, at a certain point in time, when Libby offered to tell him everything he knew about the Wilson matter. The Vice President has no recollection of Libby saying that he'd learned about Valerie Wilson from a reporter, nor does he have any recollection of Libby indicating that anyone else in the administration knew about Valerie Wilson's employment at the CIA. Moreover, Vice President Cheney does not have any recollection of Libby indicating that reporters with whom Libby was speaking about the Wilson matter, ever informed him of Valerie Wilson's employment with the CIA.

(U) The Vice President was then provided a document bearing OVP Bates Stamp number 002518. This document reflected some hand printed talking points on the top half, and the rest of the document contained separate handwritten notes on its lower half, which the Vice President advised was his handwriting. The Vice President recognized this note from a conversation he had with Scooter Libby after White House press secretary McClellan had issued his September 2003 press statement clearing Rove as Novak's source. He recalled Libby presented the hand printed talking points to him as a suggested response to the media to be used by McClellan in an effort to clear Libby of any involvement in the leak. The Vice President, during the interview, read aloud the handwritten portion of the document. The Vice President stated that he could not decipher that part of his own handwritten notes which appeared to have been crossed out. He stated that the crossed out words might have been written as "the Pres.", however, Vice President Cheney advised he could not be certain and, in any event, it had been crossed out. The Vice President stated that the portion of his handwritten notes which read in part, "...sacrifice the guy that was asked to stick his neck in the meat grinder because of the incompetence of others", was his reference to the efforts of Libby who was forced to respond to numerous media inquiries involving Joe

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Wilson because of the incompetence of the CIA. The Vice President believed at the time that both Libby and Elliot Abrams were being left out there in the public eye as the alleged sources for Novak in the aftermath of McClellan's public exoneration of Karl Rove.

(U) The Vice President acknowledged that it was also his handwriting in the left margin of the one-page note referring to "Tenet" and "Wilson memo." However, he said his review of that portion of the document did not ring a bell as to why he wrote those words. The Vice President could not recall exactly when he wrote this note, but assumes it had to have been sometime after McClellan's September 2003 press statement about Rove, and prior to a similar statement McClellan subsequently issued during a press briefing denying any involvement in the leak on the part of either Libby or Abrams as Novak's sources.

(U) The Vice President does not recall any member of his staff, including Scooter Libby, meeting with New York Times reporter Judith Miller during the week of 7/7/03, just after publication of Joe Wilson's editorial in the New York Times. The Vice President was familiar with Judith Miller and her reporting expertise in the area of weapons of mass destruction. The Vice President does recall some OVP discussion with Miller about the key judgements of the Fall, 2002 NIE around the time of the declassification of the NIE. The Vice President recalled this time-frame as being after Baghdad had fallen and the search was on in Iraq for weapons of mass destruction. The Vice President recalled that certain portions of the NIE had been declassified regarding WMD, namely the summary judgment portions about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and those parts of the body of the overall NIE report which dealt with Iraq's efforts to procure uranium from Africa.

(U) The Vice President described the declassification process stating that the President has the ultimate authority to declassify a document, with other declassification responsibilities vested with those agencies having originally classified a given document. He also noted that the Vice President himself had declassification authority which commonly occurs when two different agencies cannot agree on the declassification of certain matters and the Vice President, in essence, referees the dispute. As an example, []

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] The Vice President advised he eventually made the declassification decisions in those matters.

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(U) With respect to the NIE, questions had arisen about the President's decision to go to war with Iraq, so the White House had been in favor of declassifying the summary judgment portions of the NIE, and eventually made the decision to declassify them. The Vice President advised that he was unaware of any objections to the declassification coming from the CIA. [

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] Issues relating to those portions of the NIE had been publicly discussed on several prior occasions, including with the publication of a White Paper in the Fall of 2002 and in Secretary Powell's speech to the United Nations prior to the Iraq war. [

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] Therefore, the White House made the decision to declassify the portions of the NIE mentioned above. The Vice President recalled again that after the declassification, Steve Hadley provided a background briefing and the Vice President believed Communications Director Dan Bartlett attended the briefing. When advised that the NIE was declassified on 7/18/03, the Vice President stated that he believed it was declassified before that date. He recalled [

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] He said there was never any "secret" declassification of the NIE by him, as he would not have kept such a decision from the other principals mentioned above.

(U) With respect to dissemination of the information contained in the NIE to the press, the Vice President advised that it is possible to talk about something contained in a classified document without violating the law regarding declassification. For example, the Vice President has made numerous public statements about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction which were based on and, in some cases tracked, his reading of classified information, including the NIE. However, he did not violate any relevant laws or rules in making these statements because he did not reveal the confidential sources or methods involved in gathering the classified information. Vice President Cheney advised that he believed it was justifiable to rely on classified information to shape and inform what one says publicly. He further advised that his own public statements, at times tracked the NIE and were

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informed by data within the NIE. Vice President Cheney believed this was a perfectly appropriate way to use the NIE.

(U) The Vice President advised that no one ever told him of a desire to share key judgments of the NIE with a news reporter prior to the NIEs declassification on 7/18/03. The Vice President advised that the only person on his staff who would have made such a request was Scooter Libby who was familiar with the governing rules for utilizing the information contained in the NIE. Libby knew it was appropriate to use the information in the NIE derivatively, without attributing it to its source and without disseminating the actual NIE document itself. The Vice President cannot specifically recall having a conversation with Scooter Libby during which Libby advised the Vice President that he wanted to share the key judgments of the NIE with Judith Miller. Although the Vice President cannot recall having such a conversation, if one did occur, he would have advised Libby only to use something if it was declassified. He believed Libby would have told him about any attempts to put something out to the media prior to its declassification and the Vice President cannot recall such a discussion. However, the Vice President does recall having a conversation at some time with Libby about the NIE.

(U) When asked if he ever had a conversation with Scooter Libby wherein Libby informed the Vice President that certain material within the NIE needed to be declassified before it could be shared externally, Vice President Cheney advised that he does not recall. When asked if he ever advised Libby that the President had decided to declassify the NIE, the Vice President declined to answer in view of his concerns about sharing potentially privileged conversations between himself and the President. It was clarified for the Vice President that he was not being asked to comment on the substance of his conversations with the President, but rather, only whether he ever told Libby that he had such a discussion with the President. In response, Vice President Cheney repeated his assertion that he must refrain from commenting to the investigators about any private and/or privileged conversations he may have had with the President.

(U) Finally, the Vice President reiterated that it should be noted that a distinction existed in the NIE between information located in the summary judgement portions of the NIE and those portions in the body of the report dealing with Iraqi efforts to obtain uranium from Africa. All of the summary judgement information in the NIE, about a wide range of topics, was

declassified, while only that part of the body of the NIE regarding Iraqi efforts to obtain uranium from Africa was declassified, with the balance of the NIE remaining classified.

(U) After the Vice President again mentioned that he was pressed for time, two separate requests were made to Vice President Cheney in an effort to assist the DOJ/FBI investigation into this matter. First, an FBI waiver form was presented to the Vice President and copies were given to his attorneys. It was explained to Vice President Cheney that his signature was being sought on the waiver form in order to release any reporters with whom the Vice President may have had conversations about the subject matter of this investigation, from promises of confidentiality arising from any such conversations. Vice President Cheney acknowledged receipt of the FBI's waiver form but declined to sign until his attorneys have had sufficient time to review it.

(U) Secondly, it was requested of Vice President Cheney and his lawyers that all parties to this interview agree to refrain from any external discussion of this subject matter with any unauthorized persons. It was specifically requested that no discussions take place with other witnesses in this case and that the classified nature of the subject matters discussed in this interview be properly protected. In response to this special request, the Vice President's attorney, Terry O'Donnell, advised that he understood the FBI's request, but said he could not make a binding commitment to refrain from discussing the interview with persons who may need to help him properly advise and represent his client. The Special Counsel explained that it was important to ensure that everything be done to keep the recollections of other witnesses from being influenced.