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PRESS RELEASES AND STATEMENTS

Statement 2 November 2003

Statement by Dr. David Kay Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence

A version of this statement appeared in the Washington Post on Saturday, November 1, 2003.

Taking Exception

A front page article in the Washington Post on October 26th entitled "Search in Iraq Fails to Find Nuclear Threat: No Evidence Uncovered of Reconstituted Program" is wildly off the mark. The article is replete with simple factual errors that could have and should have been avoided.

The author, Barton Gellman, bases much of his analysis on what he says was told him by an Australian Brigadier General Meekin. Leaving completely aside that General Meekin disputes the substance of these purported conversations, Gellman describes Meekin as someone "*who commands the Joint Captured Enemy Material Exploitation Center, the largest of a half-dozen units that report to Kay.*" Neither in any individual capacity or as commander of JCEMEC does, or has ever, BG Steve Meekin report to me. He has never attended any of my routine staff meetings. The work of JCEMEC did not form a part of my first Interim Report, which was delivered last month, nor do I direct what BG Meekin's organization does. JCEMEC predates the stand-up in mid-June of the Iraqi Survey Group and the retasking of ISG to a WMD role in late June. JCEMEC carries out a very valuable role, the collection of samples of Iraq's huge *conventional* munitions holdings for intelligence exploitation by the Coalition. It has never played a role in the WMD mission nor does it have any WMD expertise. These are very simple, unclassified facts that could have easily been checked.

Gellman's description of information on Iraq's pre-1991 centrifuge program from Dr. Obeidi relies on "a U.S. official who read one" reporting cable to describe the reporting over the summer of a

CIA officer, "Joe". How an unnamed source who, by the reporter's own admission, only read one reporting cable is able to describe reporting that covered four months, is a mystery to me. Gellman's source mischaracterized our views on the reliability of Obeidi's information.

With regard to Obeidi's movement to the US, the story says "By summer's end, under unknown circumstances, Obeidi received permission to bring his family to an East Coast suburb in the United States." The reader is left with the impression that there were "unknown circumstances" that must be manipulative or sinister behind this move. These "unknown circumstances" are called Public Law 110. This mechanism was created during the Cold War, to give the Director of Central Intelligence the authority, under conditions established by Congress, to resettle those who help the United States by providing valuable intelligence information. Nothing unusual nor mysterious here.

When the article moves to describe the actual work of the nuclear team, he is once again confused. He starts by detailing that "frustrated members of the nuclear search team by late spring began calling themselves the 'book of the month club'." Nowhere in this description is the reader told that these activities predate the standing-up of the ISG or that frustration with the pace of this pre-existing group is what led President Bush to shift the responsibility for the WMD search to the DCI and my own dispatch to Baghdad. One would believe from what Gellman has written that I have sent the two leaders of my nuclear team, William Domke and Jeffrey Bedell, home and abandoned all attempts to determine the state of Iraq's nuclear activities. Wrong again. Domke had been twice extended and left only because he was well beyond what the Department of Energy had agreed to for his assignment but that he and Jeff Bedell had been replaced with a much larger contingent of experts from DOE's National Labs. The nuclear team today is, in fact, larger than all but two of our teams.

Finally, with regard to the aluminum tubes, as I said in my unclassified statement in October, the tubes were certainly being used for rockets. The question that continues to occupy us is whether similar tubes, with higher specifications, had other uses, specifically in nuclear centrifuges. Gellman writes as if it is a startling revelation that these tubes were used for rocket motor bodies. It is not and has been reported as such since Iraq's clandestine efforts to import these tubes were discovered before the war. It is unclear why anyone would think that we should want to pick up the thousands of aluminum tubes of the lower specification that were clearly being used for rocket motor bodies. Our investigation is focused on determining whether there was a nuclear centrifuge program either underway or in the planning stages, what design and components were being contemplated or used in such a program if it existed, and looking for the origin of the constant raising of the specifications of the tubes the Iraqis were clandestinely importing. In this effort, picking up aluminum tubes clearly used in rockets is not an activity that is remotely interesting to the ISG.

We have much work left to do before any conclusions can be reached on the state of possible Iraqi nuclear weapons program efforts. Sunday's Washington Post story gives the false impression that conclusions can already be drawn.

David Kay

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