





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**Presenter:** Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz

Wednesday, May 28, 2003

### Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Interview with Karen DeYoung, Washington Post

DeYoung: As Kevin probably told you, I was initially calling to find out about this quote that's in the Vanity Fair article. I don't know if you've seen it or not. And Kevin gave me this sort of additional context to it, but I did want to ask... This quote where it says "for bureaucratic reasons, we settled on one issue - weapons of mass destruction, because it was the one reason everyone could agree on." And I sort of have just kind of taken that apart to ask you what you meant by "bureaucratic reasons."

Wolfowitz: The truth is, we've always had all three of those reasons, and in fact, if you look at Powell's presentation, there have always been all three. There has been a tendency to emphasize the weapons of mass destruction issue. But, as I said in the fuller quote, the real thing that has concerned the President from the beginning and which I think is even the "axis" that's referred to in the "axis of evil" is the connection between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. So in a way, that's always been the main thing. But if you look at where the intelligence community tends to go, the issue about weapons of mass destruction has never been in controversy. Whereas there's been a lot of arguing back and forth about how much Iraq is involved in terrorism. At the end of the day, it's actually the connection between the two that was seen as completely different in



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the light of September 11th.

DeYoung: So, when you say...

Wolfowitz: By the way, I've never - you know, apropos of the WMD thing--I can't recall (m)any intelligence assessments that have been as unanimous as the judgment about Iraqi chemical and biological weapons. And even the terrorism one at the end of the day, Tenet spoke to it in that letter he sent to the SASC last fall and obviously Powell spoke to it quite clearly in his talk at the UN, but there have been times when we seem like we're ... or people say, I don't think it's fair actually, but people say that we shouldn't focus so much on WMD. I really do think we've always had all three reasons, together.

DeYoung: So when you say "it's the thing people could agree on", you're referring back to this sort of arguing about the terrorism thing, that that was always kind of a...

Wolfowitz: Well, there've been disputes within the intelligence community on the exact nature of that one. There's been very little dispute about the WMD, except for some of the borderline issues.

DeYoung: Right. Would you say... I mean, in recent days, some things that people have said... there's been a lot of talk about, well, they're very good at hiding them, maybe they destroyed them. I mean the Secretary said yesterday that they might have destroyed them. How frustrating is it not to be able to find them?

Wolfowitz: Well, look, I mean, we've stressed since 1441 was passed that the key to finding out what this program is, what they have, what they've destroyed, what they were working on, is getting people to talk to us. And that remains the key. And it will take time. I mean, it took time in 1991, if you recall. I think it was three months after the war that the IAEA was prepared to declare there was no nuclear program, and it was about 3-6 months later that they discovered that, in fact, they were pursuing not one, but I think four different routes to nuclear weapons, a couple of which we had completely missed. So it takes time to do this stuff.

DeYoung: But, I mean obviously, Saddam Hussein was still there and they were still in charge and sort of calling the shots.

Wolfowitz: Well, but they hadn't had 12 years to build mobile production facilities and hide things in tunnels and... They made a lot of early mistakes with

the UN inspectors that opened up things.... Look, the two situations are different, I agree. But no one should expect this kind of deception effort to get penetrated overnight.

DeYoung: Are there still scientists that you can't find that you want to talk to?

Wolfowitz: Oh yeah. I mean look, the list of... I don't keep the list, but you know, the larger list of 250-some people that we're looking for includes a lot of the people who would know about this program. And the ones that we do have so far would appear to be pretty deceptive.

DeYoung: Why would they still be lying about it?

Wolfowitz: I think for some of the same reasons that we still have elements of the old terror apparatus and the old regime still sitting in the background. There's still a mechanism there that intimidates people.

Kellems: We're going to need to wrap it up.

DeYoung: Okay, let me just... But do you think that you might have oversold the whole WMD thing last fall? With the sort of, not only do they have production facilities, they actually have weapons that are ready to be used?

Wolfowitz: I don't think so. I mean, I think we were working from, as I told you, one of the most widely shared intelligence assessments I know of.

DeYoung: And even if we end up not finding...?

Wolfowitz: We're a long way from...

Kellems: We can't go there. Karen, come on! [Laughter] That was a trick question.

DeYoung: Oh, it was? I'm sorry. I didn't mean it to be.

Kellems: I was just kidding.

DeYoung: No, I didn't.

Wolfowitz: No, there was no oversell. I mean, let's go back and remember what changed the whole world, which is 3,000 Americans were killed on September

11th by commercial airliners. And a couple of weeks later we got a warning of what somebody could do with envelopes filled with anthrax. And the question is, in the face of an understanding of a threat of that kind, and the kinds of intelligence assessments that we had, and the kind of determined efforts by this hostile regime to frustrate the whole effort to uncover their weapons, I don't think we were overselling at all.

DeYoung: Okay. Thanks. Have a good trip.

Wolfowitz: Goodbye.



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