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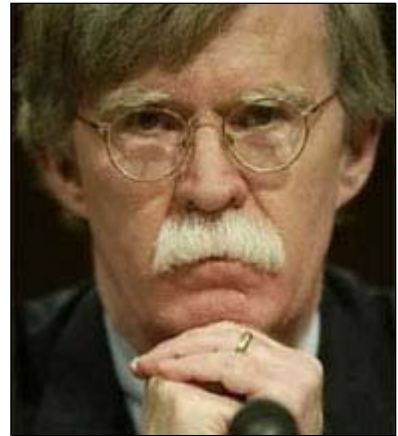
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Bolton's chief of staff gave information on outed agent to Libby, lawyers involved in leak case say

Larisa Alexandrovna and Jason Leopold

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John Bolton, the former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs who is now the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, was contacted by I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby in late May 2003 to find out who sent Ambassador Joseph Wilson on a fact-finding mission to Niger, lawyers involved in the CIA outing investigation told **RAW STORY** over the weekend. Wilson was sent to Niger to ascertain whether Iraq had sought to purchase uranium from the African country.



The attorneys, along with intelligence officials, have provided **RAW STORY** additional insight into the unnamed identities of key players referred to in the five-count indictment against Libby, who resigned last Friday as Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff.

Specifically, they relayed what two key prosecution witnesses now cooperating with the probe told Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald about the events that led to Libby learning about Wilson's mission and Valerie Plame Wilson's identity. Plame Wilson, the wife of the former ambassador, was outed as a CIA agent working on weapons of mass destruction issues after Wilson begin criticizing the Bush Administration's Iraq intelligence.

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Randall Samborn, Fitzgerald's spokesman, told **RAW STORY** he could not comment or offer "guidance" on the specifics of this story.

The 22-page indictment posted on Fitzgerald's website Friday says that on May 29, 2003 Libby "asked an Under Secretary of State ('Under Secretary') 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. The Under Secretary 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."

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.

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Wurmser, who worked as a Middle Eastern affairs aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, was on loan from Bolton's office.

Both Wurmser and Hannah have been cooperating with Fitzgerald's probe for some time, the lawyers said.

In addition, 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.

How Plame's name got to Libby

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."

Bolton was later appointed to the UN during a Congressional recess. His name came up several times during the course of the two-year investigation into Plame's outing, most notably when he paid a visit to the federal prison where *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller was housed for refusing to testify in the case.

The attorneys also said that Frederick Fleitz, Bolton's chief of staff and concurrently a senior CIA Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation and Arms Control official, supplied Bolton with Plame's identity. Bolton, they added, passed this to his aide, Wurmser, who in turn supplied the information to Hannah.

Upon receiving this information, Libby asked Bolton for a report on Wilson's trip to Niger, which Wilson presented orally to the CIA upon his return. Fleitz was one of a handful of officials who was in a position to know Plame's maiden name, the sources said.

Fleitz is named in the indictment as an unnamed CIA senior officer, they added.

Fleitz had long history with Bolton

The indictment cites Fleitz's CIA role, but not his on-loan status to Bolton's office. It reads, "On or about June 11, 2003, LIBBY spoke with a senior officer of the CIA 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."

Fleitz has been a trusted source of information to Bolton for some time and vice versa. In his book, "Peacekeeping Fiascoes of the 1990s: Causes, Solutions, and U.S. Interests," Fleitz thanked Bolton for advising him on research and providing him with guidance in writing the book.

It has long been rumored that Bolton had his own connections to agents at the CIA who shared his political philosophy on Iraq. Greg Thielman, a former director at the State Department who was assigned to Bolton and entrusted with providing the former under secretary of state with intelligence information, told *New Yorker* journalist Seymour Hersh that Bolton had become frustrated that Thielman was not providing him the smoking gun intelligence information on Iraq that he wanted to hear.

"He surrounded himself with a hand-chosen group of loyalists, and found a way to get CIA information directly," Thielman said in Hersh's book, "Chain of Command." (Page 223)

"In essence, the undersecretary (Bolton) would be running his own intelligence operation, without any guidance or support," Hersh wrote. "Eventually, Thielman said, Bolton demanded that he and his staff have direct electronic access to sensitive intelligence, such as foreign agent reports and electronic intercepts. In previous administrations, such data had been made available to undersecretaries only after it was analyzed, usually in the specific secured offices of the INR." (Page 222)

Bolton testified to grand jury, MSNBC said

According to MSNBC, Bolton testified before the grand jury investigating the Plame leak.

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Questions [were raised](#) about whether Bolton knowingly left that fact out of the questionnaire related to his UN confirmation hearing.

Wurmser likely cooperated because he faced criminal charges for his role in leaking Wilson's name on the orders of higher-ups, the lawyers said. Hannah, a key aide to Vice President Dick Cheney and one of the architects of the Iraq war, was cooperating with Fitzgerald after being told that he was identified by witnesses as a co-conspirator in the leak, they added.

It is unclear whether Bolton played any other role in the Plame outing, but his connection to the Iraq uranium claims certainly gave him a motive to discredit Wilson, who had called into question the veracity of the Niger documents. 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.

The attorneys said it is unlikely that the information Hannah and Wurmser had provided Fitzgerald and included in the indictment will ever become public, but their testimony in the case was crucial in that it allowed Fitzgerald to put together a timeline that showed how various governmental agencies knew about Plame's covert CIA status.



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Originally published on Wednesday November 2, 2005

Last Updated: 11/3/3905

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