

accurate?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It is what it is. And I'm going to leave it at that.

Q Is the text an accurate rendition of the memo?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not going to confirm classified information that's been leaked.

Q So we assume it is.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: You've got my answer.

Q Did I mishear you when you say that Maliki is trying to gain further control of the security forces?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, absolutely -- I mean, that's been a stated objective for a long time. It's been -- I mean, he's --

Q I mean, it's a sovereign nation.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: But as part of the charter, the U.N. Charter, and the part of the arrangement we have right now, the multinational force, MNFI, has complete control, command and control over both all forces on the ground, which include Iraq security forces.

Q There have been indications that he's not feeling very secure. How can this make him feel more secure in office -- Maliki?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I think the very substance of the conversations tonight and the commitment the President has made, and the President publicly made as early as yesterday, demonstrating his confidence not only in the government, but the fact that the United States of America understands the stakes in Iraq and is committed to success.

Q You know, on one hand, you guys are always saying that the President has confidence in Maliki. But on the other hand, you know, Maliki is not doing enough, Maliki doesn't have control, as much control over the situation as possibly he should, is he capable of turning things around --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me jump in there. I mean, Toby, the way you frame this is a summary judgment that seems to imply negligence on the part of the Prime Minister. And again, look, this is an enormously complicated situation for which there is no cookbook answer. We have said of ourselves that we're not doing well enough fast enough. And the fact is -- so I don't want -- it's very important to make it clear, again, that there is not summary judgment of Prime Minister Maliki, but instead there is a great deal of respect for the enormity and complexity of the challenge he faces. And it is worth it, as you do your work, to think through it, too, because you start putting together the layout of the country, you take a look at the different factions, you take a look at the history of the country, you