

that you have reached the conclusion that it is one of those.

Q He wasn't raising his own questions, he was just echoing those he --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, no, these are questions that sometimes are going to be circulated and other people are going to raise, and that you do need to acknowledge that those are questions that are -- that people have raised to the President or within the broader foreign policy community. And then if you go ahead and take a look -- and please do go look through the rest of the memo -- you see that the emphasis is on capability building.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's just what it says -- a range of possibilities. But if you read the whole memo, it clearly gives the context of the judgment that has been passed, and what we are telling you it's a capability issue.

Q There's the list of the nine items that -- nine action items that he should take in there. Do you know, were those shared with him before today? And do you -- other than the two you mentioned, what else of that list have there been action on?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, many of the conversations have centered around the action items. As we've noted, there are some that he's taking action on. It will be a question about how more aggressively he can be, how more comprehensive he can be. That will be a lot of the discussion in which the President will talk about.

As we say in here, he has the proper vision and intent and understands the issues that have to be dealt with, whether it be issues of oil, political reconciliation, hydrocarbon law is mentioned in there, the issue of illegal militias. What will happen in these meetings is an opportunity for the two leaders to flesh that out in greater detail, determine the road map to dealing with some of those issues in greater detail.

So, I'm not going to be -- we're not going to be in a position to sit here and check off all nine and where -- and give you a grade of where they are in each one of those. But that is the bulk of the conversation, to be talking about these areas, because everybody recognizes the areas that need to be addressed.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Keep in mind, also, that Prime Minister Maliki comes -- this all seems to be -- I want to caution against this being one-sided. This is not the President dictating terms. Prime Minister Maliki is the sovereign head of state. The President respects that. And there are going to be things that Prime Minister Maliki thinks are going to be helpful to him, and he is going to be sharing his thoughts.

Keep in mind that the Iraqis also have clear and practical thoughts about how to deal with problems that are going on in their own cities and on their own soil. And this is a very good opportunity for the two leaders to talk in detail and very candidly about precisely what challenges they face and how we can be of assistance.

But again, the point to underscore is that the United States position is in support of Prime Minister