

determined. But it is also clear that the existence of militias is unacceptable.

Q If I could have one more follow-up. In terms of the meeting today, are you guys going to be carrying specific new ideas? You kind of characterize this as a listening session to kind of glean more insight into what the Prime Minister thinks about things. But are you guys going to be carrying your own ideas about what you could do to augment his capabilities, what you guys could do, specific ideas?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There's going to be a natural give-and-take in a conversation. That's how it's been every time they've met. It's always going to be a sharing of ideas. It's not one way. But as the senior administration official pointed out, he is the sovereign leader of a government that controls, in many respects, the destiny -- future destiny of that country. And it's going to be very important for us to listen to the specific ideas he has for the way forward. Obviously, we're going to have our own ideas, and it always has been a give-and-take process.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And that gets back to the point we were saying before about consultation. To get back to Sheryl's question, in dealing with the situation -- security and otherwise -- in Iraq, you have to understand that there have to be constant adjustments. We've made this point over and over.

You also -- it's also important to realize that there's a lot been going on other than the violence. There have been attempts to build up economic infrastructure. We've talked about the increased pumping of oil. There are attempts to deal with reconciliation. The hydrocarbon statute and de-Baathification are important parts of that. You have seen public declarations in terms of trying to reduce the levels of violence, and also to be supportive of the government by people from all factions within Iraq.

All of those things are taking place, as well. It's important to realize that Prime Minister Maliki has -- and this is worth emphasizing -- an enormously complex challenge in a nation that had been living under the domination and oppression of a brutal and bloodthirsty dictator, and now you have people who are coming to grips not only with the history within the country, but also trying to deal with the challenge of being a new democracy.

And so what we have seen is that Prime Minister Maliki, rather than shrinking from making decisions, has been embracing the responsibility of the head of state for taking on responsibility. And we find that not only encouraging, but necessary, and we're going to do everything we can to assist.

Q I'm assuming the President is aware that the memo was leaked. What was his reaction?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm sorry?

Q I'm assuming that the President is aware the memo was leaked. What was his reaction? Was there any concern that it will color the perception of the talks with Maliki?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Obviously, the substance of the memo was an obvious part of the agenda, so in that respect, no. But is the President ever pleased when classified information is