

Q That's okay. I'm just wondering what the President's -- what he will express in the speech, specifically about Prime Minister Maliki, his confidence in Maliki being the right man for the job, in the same way that he expressed it very clearly in Amman, or has the President undergone rethinking about the confidence level in Maliki?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He continues to think that Maliki is the right man for the job; one, because he's the man that the Iraqis have put in the job, but secondly, because he has had a number of exchanges -- Prime Minister Maliki has been very clear to the President on what his intentions are with the plan, very clear about these ground rules of rules of engagement, to let this security plan work, let the Iraqi commander do the job of bringing security everywhere in the city, operating without political interference and continuing until the job is done. So again -- but he has also said to Prime Minister Maliki, this is the right plan, these are the right words. Now we need to see you perform.

Q So does the speech implicitly put Prime Minister Maliki on notice?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it makes it

-- calls it like it is, which is that they have a plan, they have good statements, it's time to perform. And that's the message he's getting from his own people, that's the message he's getting from the President, and that's the message that he's getting from the American people.

Q What has changed in the last two months? Two months ago, the President said we were winning, and now you're saying that the President made clear the current status is not working. What is the single catalyst for that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it's really what we've seen over the last year. The big trigger was obviously going after the Golden -- the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samara. I think it's true that the Iraqis did look into the abyss. Two months later, they did -- had a unity government. The Iraqi security forces, particularly the army, did not fracture.

But over the spring and summer, that sectarian violence did not abate, but it continued to build. And I think it led people to conclude that what we were doing wasn't working. And obviously, you don't want to declare a strategy dead until you have a new one to put in its place.

And so -- and about two, three months ago, the President asked -- these reviews started, very informally, and then, as you know, the President asked they be brought together in an NSC system and done in a systematic way. And he's been pretty public about that review over the last two or three months.

Q And last question, how is the President going to justify to Congress the additional need for troops?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: By explaining the problem, emphasizing and I think playing on the fact that most congressmen understand that we can't afford to fail, that -- he will explain why this,