
Documentation

‘Behaving Like a Madman’

*The following letter was submitted to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in opposition to the nomination of John Bolton. The author is **Melody Townsel**, now a Texas businesswoman, who was working as a subcontractor on a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) project in Kyrgyzstan in 1994. Since Bolton’s abusive behavior has become an issue of investigation, Bolton cheerleaders tried to claim her charges were not made at the time, and that she is partisan, having organized a group called “Mothers Against Bush.” But witnesses have come forward to confirm Townsel’s letter, which says, in part:*

I’m writing to urge you to consider blocking in committee the nomination of John Bolton as ambassador to the UN.

In the late summer of 1994, I worked as the subcontracted leader of a USAID project in Kyrgyzstan officially awarded to a HUB primary contractor. My own employer was Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly, and I reported directly to Republican leader Charlie Black.

After months of incompetence, poor contract performance, inadequate in-country funding, and a general lack of interest or support in our work from the prime contractor, I was forced to make USAID officials aware of the prime contractor’s poor performance.

I flew from Kyrgyzstan to Moscow to meet with other Black Manafort employees who were leading or subcontracted to other USAID projects. While there, I met with USAID officials and expressed my concerns about the project. . . .

Within hours of sending a letter to USAID officials outlining my concerns, I met John Bolton, whom the prime contractor hired as legal counsel to represent them to USAID. And, so, within hours of dispatching that letter, my hell began.

Mr. Bolton proceeded to chase me through the halls of a Russian hotel—throwing things at me, shoving threatening letters under my door and, generally, behaving like a madman. For nearly two weeks, while I awaited fresh direction from my company and from USAID, John Bolton hounded me in such an appalling way that I eventually retreated to my hotel room and stayed there. Mr. Bolton, of course, then routinely visited me there to pound on the door and shout threats.

When USAID asked me to return to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in advance of assuming leadership of a project in Kazakstan, I returned to my project to find that John Bolton had preceded me by two days. Why? To meet with every other AID team

leader as well as US foreign-service officials in Bishkek, claiming that I was under investigation for misuse of funds and likely was facing jail time. As USAID can confirm, nothing was further from the truth.

He indicated to key employees of or contractors to State that, based on his discussions with investigatory officials, I was headed for federal prison and, if they refused to cooperate with either him or the prime contractor’s replacement team leader, they, too, would find themselves the subjects of federal investigation. As a further aside, he made unconscionable comments about my weight, my wardrobe and, with a couple of team leaders, my sexuality, hinting that I was a lesbian (for the record, I’m not).

As a maligned whistleblower, I’ve learned firsthand the lengths Mr. Bolton will go to accomplish any goal he sets for himself. Truth flew out the window. Decency flew out the window. . . .

John Bolton put me through hell—and he did everything he could to intimidate, malign and threaten not just me, but anybody unwilling to go along with his version of events. His behavior back in 1994 wasn’t just unforgivable, it was pathological. . . .

I urge you from the bottom of my heart to use your ability to block Mr. Bolton’s nomination in committee.

Bolton Behind False Fact Sheet on Niger Uranium

On March 1, 2005, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) sent a 12-page letter to the ranking Democrat on the House Government Reform Committee, Christopher Shays (Conn.), asking that the Subcommittee on National Security investigate the State Department for trying to conceal the role of John Bolton in the creation of a fact sheet distributed to the United Nations “that falsely claimed Iraq had sought uranium from Niger.” The Bolton case is one of six incidents cited by Waxman where Executive Branch agencies ordered unclassified documents to be kept out of public dissemination in order to conceal gross misrepresentation of intelligence, or other matters in the area of national security. In the subheading “Concealment of a State Department Official’s Role in the Niger Uranium Claim,” Waxman wrote:

In April 2004, the State Department used the designation “sensitive but unclassified” to conceal unclassified information about the role of John Bolton, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control, in the creation of a fact sheet distributed to the United Nations that falsely claimed Iraq had sought uranium from Niger.

On December 19, 2002, the State Department issued a fact sheet entitled “Illustrative Examples of Omissions from

the Iraqi Declaration to the United Nations Security Council.” The fact sheet listed eight key areas in which the Bush Administration found fault with Iraq’s weapons declaration to the United Nations on December 7, 2002. Under the heading “Nuclear Weapons,” the fact sheet stated:

“The Declaration ignores efforts to procure uranium from Niger. Why is the Iraqi regime hiding their uranium procurement?”

It was later discovered that this claim was based on fabricated documents. In addition, both State Department intelligence officials and CIA officials reported that they had rejected the claim as unreliable. As a result, it was unclear who within the State Department was involved in preparing the fact sheet.

On July 21, 2003, I wrote to Secretary of State Colin Powell, asking for an explanation of the role of John Bolton, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, in creating the document. On September 25, 2003, the State Department responded with a definitive denial: “Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, John R. Bolton, did not play a role in the creation of this document.”

Subsequently, however, I joined six other members of the Government Reform Committee in requesting from the State Department Inspector General a copy of an unclassified “chronology” on how the fact sheet was developed. This chronology described a meeting on December 18, 2002, between Secretary Powell, Mr. Bolton, and Richard Boucher, the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Public Affairs. According to this chronology, Mr. Boucher specifically asked Mr. Bolton “for help developing a response to Iraq’s Dec 7 Declaration to the United Nations Security Council that could be used with the press. According to the chronology, which is phrased in the present tense, Mr. Bolton “agrees and tasks the Bureau of Nonproliferation,” a subordinate office that reports directly to Mr. Bolton, to conduct the work.

This unclassified chronology also stated that on the next day, December 19, 2003, the Bureau of Nonproliferation “sends email with the fact sheet, “Fact Sheet Iraq Declaration.doc.” to Mr. Bolton’s office. A second e-mail was sent a few minutes later, and a third e-mail was sent about an hour after that. According to the chronology, each version “still includes Niger reference.” Although Mr. Bolton may not have personally drafted the document, the chronology appears to indicate that he ordered its creation and received updates on its development.

The Inspector General’s chronology was marked “sensitive but unclassified.” In addition, the letter transmitting the chronology stated that it “contains sensitive information, which may be protected from public release under the Freedom of Information Act” and requested that no “public release of this information” be made. In fact, however, the chronology consisted of nothing more than a factual recitation of information on meetings, e-mails, and documents.