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## Plame's Identity Marked As Secret

Memo Central to Probe Of Leak Was Written By State Dept. Analyst

By *Walter Pincus and Jim VandeHei*  
Washington Post Staff Writers  
Thursday, July 21, 2005; Page A01

A classified State Department memorandum central to a federal leak investigation contained information about CIA officer Valerie Plame in a paragraph marked "(S)" for secret, a clear indication that any Bush administration official who read it should have been aware the information was classified, according to current and former government officials.

Plame -- who is referred to by her married name, Valerie Wilson, in the memo -- is mentioned in the second paragraph of the three-page document, which was written on June 10, 2003, by an analyst in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), according to a source who described the memo to The Washington Post.

The paragraph identifying her as the wife of former ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV was clearly marked to show that it contained classified material at the "secret" level, two sources said. The CIA classifies as "secret" the names of officers whose identities are covert, according to former senior agency officials.

Anyone reading that paragraph should have been aware that it contained secret information, though that designation was not specifically attached to Plame's

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name and did not describe her status as covert, the sources said. It is a federal crime, punishable by up to 10 years in prison, for a federal official to knowingly disclose the identity of a covert CIA official if the person knows the government is trying to keep it secret.

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Prosecutors attempting to determine whether senior government officials knowingly leaked Plame's identity as a covert CIA operative to the media are investigating whether White House officials gained access to information about her from the memo, according to two sources familiar with the investigation.

The memo may be important to answering three central questions in the Plame case: Who in the Bush administration knew about Plame's CIA role? Did they know the agency was trying to protect her identity? And, who leaked it to the media?

Almost all of the memo is devoted to describing why State Department intelligence experts did not believe claims that Saddam Hussein had in the recent past sought to purchase uranium from Niger. Only two sentences in the seven-sentence paragraph mention Wilson's wife.

The memo was delivered to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell on July 7, 2003, as he headed to Africa for a trip with President Bush aboard Air Force One. Plame was unmasked in a syndicated column by Robert D. Novak seven days later.

Wilson has said his wife's identity was revealed to retaliate against him for accusing the Bush administration of "twisting" intelligence to justify the Iraq war. In a July 6 opinion piece in the New York Times and in an interview with The Washington Post, he cited a secret mission he conducted in February 2002 for the CIA, when he determined there was no evidence that Iraq was seeking uranium for a nuclear weapons program in the African nation of Niger.

White House officials discussed Wilson's wife's CIA connection in telling at least two reporters that she helped arrange his trip, according to one of the reporters, Matthew Cooper of Time magazine, and a lawyer familiar with the case.

Prosecutors have shown interest in the memo, especially when they were questioning White House officials during the early days of the investigation, people familiar with the probe said.

Karl Rove, President Bush's deputy chief of staff, has testified that he learned Plame's name from Novak a few days before telling

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another reporter she worked at the CIA and played a role in her husband's mission, according to a lawyer familiar with Rove's account. Rove has also testified that the first time he saw the State Department memo was when "people in the special prosecutor's office" showed it to him, said Robert Luskin, his attorney.

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