

THE MERRIMAN SMITH AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PRESIDENTIAL NEWS COVERAGE

NAME OF NOMINEE: ED HENRY

NEWS ORGANIZATION: CNN

DATES OF PUBLICATION: February 14, 2007

AWARD ENTRY LENGTH: 18:00

LIST OF CREDITS:

- 1) Feb. 14 - 12pm - CNN's Your World Today
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- 2) Feb. 14 - 2:08pm - CNN's Newsroom
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- 3) Feb. 14 - 4pm - CNN's The Situation Room
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- 4) Feb. 14 - 6pm - CNN's Lou Dobbs Tonight
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Anchor John Roberts Q&A with reporters Ed Henry, Michael Ware, and Jamie McIntyre

CNN

February 14, 2007 Wednesday

SHOW: YOUR WORLD TODAY 11:59 AM EST

Presidential News Conference; New Poll: Iraq is Most Serious Problem for U.S.

BYLINE: Tony Harris, Ed Henry

HIGHLIGHT: In a news conference, President Bush says he's confident Iranian Quds force is providing weapons to Iraq. According to polls, Americans don't believe keeping the fighting Iraqi sides apart is necessarily the job of U.S. forces.

...HARRIS: And let's start with Ed Henry in the East Room.

Ed, you are trying, you really are trying to get the president to clarify his administration's position here on Iran's role in destabilizing Iraq, specifically going back to this briefing over the weekend and what the administration put forward as clear evidence of Iranian involvement at the highest levels of the Iranian government.

Fill us in again on the question and what you were able to get from the president.

ED HENRY, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Well, Tony, today we did hear something new from the president. You're right, there seems to be a contradiction there.

The president saying that what the U.S. does not know is whether or not senior levels of the Iranian government -- whether those levels are actually behind these explosives going in from Iran, in to Iraq, being used by insurgents to kill and maim U.S. soldiers and Marines. He said today for the first that that we do not know whether senior levels of the government are actually behind it.

He mentioned those Quds forces, as you mentioned, that they're behind it, that we believe they're behind it, but he was certainly pressed on that. And I think we have some sound.

Take a listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HENRY: What assurances can you give the American people that the intelligence this time will be accurate?

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Ed, we know they're there. We know they're provided by the Quds force. We know the Quds force is a part of the Iranian government. I don't think we know who picked up the phone and said to the Quds force go do this, but we know it's a vital part of the Iranian government.

What matters is, is that we're responding. The idea that somehow we're manufacturing the idea that the Iranians are providing IEDs is preposterous, Ed.

My job is to protect our troops. And when we find devices that are in that country that are hurting our troops, we're going to do something about it, pure and simple.

Now, David said, "Does this mean you're trying to have a pretext for war?" No. It means I'm trying to protect our troops. That's what that means.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HENRY: So you can hear the president a bit on the defensive there. He's been facing these questions about whether or not he's planning to go to war with Iran.

Also, again, what he is saying, that senior -- he does not know whether senior officials or the Iranian government are behind it. That does contradict what U.S. officials said in Baghdad on Sunday, like you noted.

Also, though, a lot on Iraq here as well. Heard what I thought was a new line from the president, new term saying that what he wants is "political breathing space" for the Iraqis to secure Baghdad, and then he believes we could "change our force posture."

Obviously a reference to eventually pulling out U.S. troops. A lot, of course, as well, about that House debate in the Congress. The president trying to push back a bit on that -- Tony.

HARRIS: And Ed, if I could very quickly here -- I know you have to clear out of the room pretty -- pretty soon here. The president says the U.S. military -- back to the whole Iran situation, the U.S. military will deal with the individuals or networks involved in plotting and planning attacks on Americans. As it seemed to be implicit there as for this nexus between the actors and the government in Iran, we'll leave that for another day.

HENRY: Absolutely. And I think what you're hearing from the president as well is that he's trying to stress diplomacy.

He's heard the criticism over and over that he did not give diplomacy enough of a chance in the buildup to the war in Iraq. So, this time, he wants to do everything -- as you heard at the very end of the press conference -- to say it's different this time, and that with Iran, he believes he can solve it diplomatically.

Well, does he have credibility on that question? Given Iraq, his credibility has been strained. But as he noted, he has gained some credibility because there's been some success in the North Korea talks. As he pointed out, he gave diplomacy a chance there. A lot of critics said it would not work, and now in the last few days, as you've seen, there's been a breakthrough there -- Tony.

HARRIS: Our White House correspondent Ed Henry for us.

Ed, thank you.

HENRY: Thank you.

CNN

February 14, 2007 Wednesday

SHOW: CNN NEWSROOM 2:08PM EST

BYLINE: Kyra Phillips, Ed Henry

...PHILLIPS: Well, who gave the go-ahead? Who knows? But President Bush says one thing is for sure, Iranian-made weapons have made their way to Iraq. He made that point crystal clear to our Ed Henry at his first news conference of the year.

Ed joins us live now with more. Hey, Ed.

ED HENRY, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Well, good afternoon, Kyra.

That's right. The president did say firmly that he knows for sure the Iranian government is behind these explosive devices that are being sent across the border into Iraq to kill and maim U.S. troops. But he said he's not sure if this can be tied to senior members of the Iranian government.

Now, that seems to contradict what we've been hearing from some other U.S. officials in recent days. So I pressed the president on that point.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HENRY: You're saying today that you do not know if senior members of the Iranian government are, in fact, behind these explosives. That contradicts what U.S. officials said in Baghdad on Sunday. They said the highest levels of the Iranian government were behind this. It also -- it seems to square with what General Pace has been saying, but contradicts with what your own press secretary said yesterday.

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I can't say -- let me finish, Ed -- I can't say it more plainly. There are weapons in Iraq that are harming U.S. troops because of the Quds force. And as you know, I hope, that the Quds force is a part of the Iranian government.

Whether Ahmadinejad ordered the Quds force to do this, we don't know. But we do know that they are there, and I intend to do something about it. And I've asked our commanders to do something about it, and we're going to protect our troops.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HENRY: Now, the president went on to deny that all of this intelligence gathering about Iran is about a case for war with Iran. He insisted once again, as he has several times in recent weeks, that that is not the case. And I can tell you privately, White House officials are insisting there's no contradiction here between what the president is saying and various other U.S. officials. They believe this is much to do about very little -- Kyra.

PHILLIPS: So, Ed, what's the relationship then between the Quds part of the government and the president? I mean, does the president listen to the radicals? Do the radicals listen to the president? And then there's the ayatollah, the clergy.

Who listens to who?

HENRY: Well, that's certainly one of the questions that everyone is trying to pursue, exactly how far up do they go? I mean, as one of my colleagues in the press corps said yesterday to White House spokesman Tony Snow, is it just government in general?

You know, there could be a deputy assistant secretary of agriculture in the U.S. government who goes ahead and does something. That doesn't necessarily mean that President Bush ordered that low, low level official to do it.

And so that is going to be one of the bottom-line questions here, and that's obviously one of the questions that U.S. intelligence officials are trying to answer. How far up does this go?

But I can tell you, those officials in Baghdad on Sunday were much more certain in believing this went to the senior levels and the Quds force was very senior. And that it could be tied all the way up there. But today the president suggesting no, not necessarily that senior.

And also, secondly, General Caldwell, in his briefing in Baghdad this morning you saw right here on CNN, seemed to be much more cautious about how high up this goes than U.S. officials were over the weekend -- Kyra.

PHILLIPS: All right. Ed Henry live at the White House.

Thanks, Ed.

HENRY: Thank you.

CNN

February 14, 2007 Wednesday

SHOW: THE SITUATION ROOM 4:00 PM EST

Bush Confronts Attacks on Credibility, Unrest in Republican Ranks, William Caldwell Interview

BYLINE: Wolf Blitzer, Ed Henry

...BLITZER: At his first news conference this year, President Bush seemed resigned to a symbolic Congressional vote against his plan for a troop build-up in Iraq. But he sounded downright miffed at repeated questions about whether Iran is arming Iraqi insurgents.

Mr. Bush says he's certain Iran's military Quds force is supplying deadly weapons being used against U.S. troops in Iraq. But he says he doesn't know if top officials in Tehran actually gave the order. The president made those points after being pressed hard about mixed signals being sent by the administration on this issue.

The man doing the pressing? Our own White House correspondent, Ed Henry.

He's joining us from the White House -- But before we go to you, Ed, I want to play for our viewers this exchange that you had at that White House news conference.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ED HENRY, CNN CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Mr. President, I want to follow up on Iran one more time.

Are you saying today that you do not know if senior members of the Iranian government are, in fact, behind these explosives?

That contradicts what U.S. officials said in Baghdad on Sunday. They said the highest levels of the Iranian government were behind this. It also -- it seems to square with what General Pace has been saying but contradicts with what your own press secretary...

GEORGE BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Can I...

HENRY: ... said yesterday.

BUSH: Can I -- look, I can't say...

HENRY: What is...

BUSH: Let me finish, Ed.

I can't say it more plainly -- there are weapons in Iraq that are harming U.S. troops because of the Quds force. And, as you know, I hope, that the Quds force is a part of the Iranian government. Whether Ahmadinejad ordered the Quds force to do this, I don't think we know. But we do know that they're there and I intend to do something about it. And I've asked our commanders to do something about it. And we're going to protect our troops.

HENRY: Some of those contradictions, Mr. President...

BUSH: There's no contradiction that the weapons are there and they were provided by the Quds force, Ed.

HENRY: But what assurances can you give the American people that the intelligence this time will be accurate?

BUSH: Ed, we know they're there. We know they're provided by the Quds force. We know the Quds force is a part of the Iranian government. I don't think we know that -- who picked up the phone and said the Quds force go do this, but we know it's a vital part of the Iranian government.

What matters is, is that we're responding. The idea that somehow we're manufacturing the idea that the Iranians are providing IEDs is preposterous, Ed.

My job is to protect our troops. And when we find devices that are in that country that are hurting our troops, we're going to do something about it, pure and simple.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: All right, Ed Henry, you're at the White House right now. And he really didn't answer your specific question about the discrepancy between what he and General Peter Pace, the chairman of the joint chiefs, are saying now, that they don't know if the highest officials in the Iranian government actually authorized these shipments of explosives to Iraqi Shiites, even though Sunday morning in Baghdad, U.S. officials were making that specific charge.

HENRY: That's right, Wolf.

I mean, look, this all started with the administration itself, on Sunday, making these claims that the highest levels of the Iranian government were involved. That's why we've been pursuing these questions for the last couple of days.

And it really appears that the administration is not on the same page, that they're all over the map on this.

Now, I'm getting pushed back from very senior White House officials saying look, this is much ado about very little.

But the fact of the matter is that the president today really seemed to be pulling back from what those officials said Sunday -- Wolf.

BLITZER: Is -- is this, as some of the president's critics are suggesting -- a pretext or a possibility of a step leading toward actual military confrontation with Iran?

HENRY: Look, the president insists absolutely not, that he has no intention of going to war with Iran. He said that again today. He's been saying that for weeks, as have a whole bunch of top officials.

Bottom line is that all of this talk about intelligence, what do they have, when did they have it, it's obviously reminding a lot of people about the buildup to the war in Iraq. There are a lot of lingering questions of credibility from that and that's why the president is getting these questions now -- Wolf.

BLITZER: Ed Henry doing his job at the White House for us, asking important questions of the president of the United States.

Ed, thank you.

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Bush Presser/6p	Ed Henry	redisch			2:05
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White House			henryed	2/14/2008 13:07:19	redisch	2/14/2008 13:07:19

v/o bush walk-up to presser

PRESIDENT BUSH WAS CONFRONTED WITH QUESTIONS OF CREDIBILITY -- ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION CLAIMS THAT TOP IRANIAN OFFICIALS ARE SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO SHIITE MILITIAS IN IRAQ

V/O ahmadinejad, etc. in iran
v/o insurgent violence in iraq

henry-bush exchange

henry question -- "given some of those contradictions, Mr. President...
bush 11:21:25 SOT -- "There's no contradiction that the weapons are there and they were provided by the Quds Force..."

V/O IRAN REVOLUTIONARY GUARD?

MISTER BUSH WAS REFERRING TO AN ELITE SECTION OF IRAN'S REVOLUTIONARY GUARD -- WHICH IS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT

V/O BUSH TODAY
V/O IRAN?

BUT HE SEEMED TO PULL BACK FROM PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION CLAIMS THAT HIGH-LEVEL IRANIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE RESPONSIBLE

BUSH at presser

bush SOT -- 11:17:00 -- "What we don't know is whether or not the head leaders of Iran ordered the Quds Force to do what they did."

V/O gen. pace walk-up

THAT SQUARES WITH GENERAL PETER PACE -- CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS -- WHO SAID WHILE THE EXPLOSIVE DEVICES ARE MANUFACTURED IN IRAN

Gen. Peter Pace
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

pace SOT -- "that does not translate to, that Iranian government per se, for sure is directly involved in doing this."

V/O U.S. MILITARY IN BAGHDAD

BUT IT FLATLY CONTRADICTS WHAT A U.S. OFFICIAL SAID SUNDAY IN BAGHDAD DURING AN OFF-CAMERA BRIEFING WITH REPORTERS

henry-bush exchange

henry question -- "They said the highest

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levels of the Iranian government were behind this. [COVER WITH CUTAWAY] pick-up at 11:26:53 bush SOT -- "Can I -- let me -- I can't say it more plainly: There are weapons in Iraq that are harming U.S. troops because of the Quds Force. As you know, I hope, the Quds Force is a part of the Iranian government. Whether Ahmadinejad ordered the Quds Force to do this, I don't think we know."

V/O BUSH TODAY?

MIXED SIGNALS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION ARE FUELING QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER THE WHITE HOUSE IS RELYING ON FLAWED INTELLIGENCE -- JUST LIKE THE RUN-UP TO THE IRAQ WAR

V/O POWELL AND TENET AT UNITED NATIONS

henry-bush exchange

henry question -- "What assurances can you give the American people that the intelligence this time will be accurate? [cover with cutaway] bush -- approx 11:28 -- "I don't think we need who picked up the phone and said to the Quds Force, "Go do this," but we know it's a vital part of the Iranian government. What matters is, is that we're responding. The idea that somehow we're manufacturing the idea that the Iranians are providing IEDs is preposterous, Ed."

V/O BUSH TODAY

THE PRESIDENT SEEMED FRUSTRATED WITH CONTINUED QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER THE MANEUVERING IS BUILDING A CASE FOR WAR WITH IRAN

V/O iranian president giving speech to large crowd

bush SOT -- "No. It means I'm trying to protect our troops. That's what that means." 11:28:25

bush today

live tag/standup

CNN

February 14, 2007 Wednesday

SHOW: LOU DOBBS TONIGHT 6:00 PM EST

Defending the War; Iran's Role in Iraq; GOP Reps Break With Bush

BYLINE: Lou Dobbs, Ed Henry

...DOBBS: We begin with Ed Henry at the White House -- Ed.

ED HENRY, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Lou, the president did get questions today in his first press conference of the year about that security plan in Baghdad, but it was persistent queries about Iran that seemed to irritate him.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

HENRY (voice over): President Bush was confronted with questions of credibility about administration claims that top Iranian officials are supplying weapons to Shiite militias in Iraq.

(on camera): Though some of those contradictions, Mr. President...

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: There's no contradiction that the weapons are there and they were provided by the Quds force.

HENRY (voice over): Mr. Bush was referring to an elite section of Iran's Revolutionary Guard which is part of the government, but he seemed to pull back from previous administration charges that high-level Iranian government officials were responsible.

BUSH: What we don't know is whether or not the head leaders of Iran ordered the Quds force to do what they did.

HENRY: That squares with General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, who said while the explosive devices are manufactured in Iran...

GEN. PETER PACE, JOINT CHIEFS CHAIRMAN: That does not translate to that the Iranian government, per se, for sure, is directly involved in doing this.

HENRY: But the president's comments flatly contradict what a U.S. official said Sunday in Baghdad during an off-camera briefing with reporters.

HENRY: They said the highest levels of the Iranian government were behind this...

(CROSSTALK)

BUSH: Can I -- I can't say --let me finish, Ed.

I can't save it more plainly. There are weapons in Iraq that are harming U.S. troops because of the Quds force. And as you know, I hope, that the Quds force is a part of the Iranian government. Whether Ahmadinejad ordered the Quds force to do this, I don't think we know. HENRY (voice over): Mixed signals are fueling questions about whether the White House is relying on flawed intelligence just like in the run-up to the Iraq war.

(on camera): What assurances can you give the American people that the intelligence this time will be accurate?

BUSH: I don't think we know who picked up the phone and said to the Quds force, go do this. But we know it's a vital part of the Iranian government.

What matters is, is that we're responding. The idea that somehow we're manufacturing the idea that the Iranians are providing IEDs is preposterous, Ed.

HENRY (voice over): The president seemed frustrated with continued questions about whether the maneuvering is building a case for war with Iran.

BUSH: No. It means I'm trying to protect our troops. That's what that means.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

HENRY: Now, Democrats will be turning up the heat on the president about all of this tomorrow. CNN has learned that the House Intelligence Committee chairman, Sylvestre Reyes, is going to have a closed, classified hearing Thursday on Iran -- exactly what the intelligence community knows, why is this information being rolled out now, and is the entire intelligence community on board with the White House interpretation of this intelligence -- Lou.

DOBBS: Let's go to the question that the president raises. And that is, what is the United States government doing about the fact that Iranian manufactured weapons are in Iraq and being used against our troops?

HENRY: Well, they say that they're trying to crack down on it. But since there have been more than 100 U.S. soldiers, by the administration's account -- own account who have been killed by these various weapons, obviously there are questions being raised about why there wasn't a crackdown sooner -- Lou.

DOBBS: Absolutely. And why there isn't a clear statement as to what is being done about that very important fact.

Thank you very much.

Ed Henry from the White House.

CNN

February 14, 2007 Wednesday

SHOW: ANDERSON COOPER 360 DEGREES 10:00 PM EST

BYLINE: John Roberts, Ed Henry, Michael Ware, Jamie McIntyre

...JOHN ROBERTS, CNN ANCHOR: This timeline came together through the reporting of CNN's Jamie McIntyre, Ed Henry, and Michael Ware, who was at that briefing in Baghdad on Sunday.

All three join us tonight. Michael, let's start with you.

What were your impressions when you heard this intelligence official say those words that, clearly, this is connected to the highest levels of the Iranian government?

MICHAEL WARE, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Well, if you accept the premise of the central allegation that is agreed upon by everybody from the chairman, General Peter Pace, to President George Bush, to Secretary Gates, and that is, that this Iranian special forces unit, the Quds Force, are the ones responsible for sending these deadly IEDs to Iraq, then you have to accept that what the intelligence analyst says is correct.

If President Bush is right, and this is the Quds Force, then you talk to anyone who knows anything about the Revolutionary Guard or the Quds Force, or someone who's followed them for two years, like myself -- indeed, I have met members of the Quds Force -- then there is one thing you know. They don't do anything without orders. And they answer to the highest office in the land.

So, if everybody is right, then, yes, these orders are coming from the highest levels in the Iranian government.

ROBERTS: So, Jamie McIntyre, if what Michael Ware is saying is, in fact, the case when it comes to the chain of command for the Quds Force, why is everybody walking this back?

JAMIE MCINTYRE, CNN SENIOR PENTAGON CORRESPONDENT: Well, you know, he is absolutely right. And, of course, the intelligence officer who said that is absolutely reflecting the belief of the U.S. military.

The problem is, they expected this briefing, whatever was presented at it, to be bulletproof, to be backed up by evidence. And while, you know, common sense tells you, and -- and circumstantial evidence tells you, and everything else tells you that this is the case, they need to be able to really point to something. And they couldn't. So, they were not expecting this conclusion to be made public during this briefing.

And that's why you see everybody else being more cautious publicly. And, frankly, part of it is because the U.S. was stung by the intelligence failures leading up to the Iraq war.

ROBERTS: So, Ed Henry, what are the potential political ramifications of having -- having statements that you can't back up with evidence? You asked the president today in that back-and-forth, you know, can you guarantee that this evidence is going to be solid, unlike the evidence that took us to war in Iraq?

ED HENRY, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: That -- that is the rub.

And, as Jamie McIntyre just pointed out, I mean, after everything that happened in the lead-up to the Iraq war, you would think that, this time, in dealing with Iran, that the administration would make sure that it was rock-solid, that they had everything in line.

And, instead, what you are seeing between the reporting of Jamie McIntyre and Michael Ware in Baghdad is all this confusion about exactly what the truth is. And that has now put a cloud over what very well may be a rock-solid case that the Iranian government is behind this.

But now there's so much confusion and back-and-forth, and General Pace saying one thing, the president saying this, Tony Snow at the White House saying that, that it's almost clouded what could be -- and I stress could be -- a rock-solid case. And you have to wonder why all the confusion.