



The White House

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release

July 9, 2004

President Bush Discusses Senate Intelligence Committee Report

Excerpt from "Ask President Bush" remarks in Kutztown, Pennsylvania

For full remarks, [click here](#).

I appreciate the Senate's work. And I'll tell you why. Because one of the key ingredients to winning the war on terror is to make sure that our intelligence agencies provide the best and possible intelligence to the chief executive -- to the executive branch, as well as to the legislative branch. And so the idea that the Senate has taken a hard look to find out where the intelligence-gathering services went short is good and positive. And I commend the chairman of the committee for doing that.

We need to know. I want to know. I want to know how to make the agencies better, to make sure that we're better able to gather the information necessary to protect the American people. One of the key ingredients and one of the vital ingredients of keeping us safe is to gather the best intelligence we can gather.

And so this is a useful report. There's going to be a lot of talk about reform in Washington, reforms of the agencies. And I look forward to working with members of Congress to put out reforms that will work. A couple of ideas that I think make sense: One, we need to bolster human intelligence. In other words, one of the best ways to figure out what the enemy is thinking is to get to know the enemy firsthand, I guess is the best way to put it -- is to have as much human intelligence as possible. Good quality intelligence and enough human intelligence agents, assets out there so that we can cover the globe.

Secondly, one of the key ingredients is to use our technologies to listen and look better. And so we've got to always make sure our intelligence agencies are on the cutting edge of change. And thirdly, there are quite a few intelligence-gathering agencies within Washington, and there needs to be better coordination between the agencies.

Now, having said that, I want -- I haven't seen the report yet. I know it's quite critical. It's very important for our fellow citizens to know there's some really good people working hard in our intelligence-gathering agencies, taking risks for their lives, doing the very best job they can. I will remind them that there has been some failures -- listen, we thought there was going to be stockpiles of weapons. I thought so; the Congress thought so; the U.N. thought so. I'll tell you what we do know. Saddam Hussein had the capacity to make weapons. See, he had the ability to make them. He had the intent. We knew he hated America. We knew he was paying families of suiciders. We knew he tortured his own people, and we knew he had the capability of making weapons. That we do know. They haven't found the stockpiles, but we do know he could make them. And so he was a dangerous man. He was a dangerous man. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. America is safer. (Applause.)

I want to know the truth. I want to know the facts. I appreciate the fact-finders working hard, and I want to work to make it the very best system we can possibly have. Because we've got a duty to do for the American people. This war goes on. There's a mighty ideological struggle taking place. Remember, it is really -- the better way to describe what's happening is, this is a war against an ideology which stands exactly opposite of what we believe. It's an ideology that can -- if you just think, remember the Taliban -- it's an ideology that brutalized people because of what they thought. It brutalized people because of how they worshiped. It brutalized people because of their gender. The exact opposite of what America stands for.

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You see, we believe that you're as big a patriot if you worship the Almighty as if you don't. You have the freedom to do so. And if you choose to worship, whether it be as a Christian, Jew or Muslim, you're equally as patriotic as your neighbor. That's what we believe. You have the freedom to worship as you see fit in America.

That's the exact opposite of the dim view of the people who are trying to cause us harm. They use terror as a tool. So this is really a ideological struggle where the enemy is willing to use terror as a tool. And they kill innocent life because they know our good hearts break every time we see an innocent soldier die, and an innocent citizen die. They know the compassion we all feel. Forget political parties; all Americans grieve when we see a son or a daughter, a husband or wife, go down in combat. We weep when we see that. We care when suiciders bomb innocent children inside Iraq. That's the nature of our soul. And they know that.

And see, they want to use terror as a tool to drive us out. They want us to forget our duty. They want us to get scared and pale in the face of their horrific acts. They do not understand the American people. Yeah, we'll weep, but we will never cower in the face of killers and thugs.

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