

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 22, 2005

The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman
The Honorable John D. Rockefeller, IV, Vice Chairman
United States Senate
Select Committee on Intelligence
SH-211
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Roberts and Senator Rockefeller:

We write concerning your committee's vital examination of pre-war Iraq intelligence failures. In particular, we urge you to accelerate to completion the work of the so-called "Phase II" effort to assess how policy makers used the intelligence they received.

Last year your committee completed the first phase of a two-phased effort to review the pre-war intelligence on Iraq. Phase I—began in the summer of 2003 and completed in the summer of 2004—examined the performance of the American intelligence community in the collection and analysis of intelligence prior to the war, including an examination of the quantity and quality of U.S. intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and the intelligence on ties between Saddam Hussein's regime and terrorist groups. At the conclusion of Phase I, your committee issued an unclassified report that made an important contribution to the American public's understanding of the issues involved.

In February 2004—well over a year ago—the committee agreed to expand the scope of inquiry to include a second phase which would examine the use of intelligence by policy makers, the comparison of pre-war assessments and post-war findings, the activities of the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group (PCTEG) and the Office of Special Plans in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and the use of information provided by the Iraqi National Congress.

The committee's efforts have taken on renewed urgency given recent revelations in the United Kingdom regarding the apparent minutes of a July 23, 2002, meeting between Prime Minister Tony Blair and his senior national security advisors. These minutes—known as the "Downing Street Memo"—raise troubling questions about the use of intelligence by American policy makers—questions that your committee is uniquely situated to address.

The memo indicates that in the summer of 2002, at a time the White House was promising Congress and the American people that war would be their last resort, that they


believed military action against Iraq was “inevitable.” The minutes reveal that President "Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.”

The American people took the warnings that the administration sounded seriously—warnings that were echoed at the United Nations and here in Congress as we voted to give the president the authority to go to war. For the sake of our democracy and our future national security, the public must know whether such warnings were driven by facts and responsible intelligence, or by political calculation.

These issues need to be addressed with urgency. This remains a dangerous world, with American forces engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan, and other challenges looming in Iran and North Korea. In this environment, the American public should have the highest confidence that policy makers are using intelligence objectively—never manipulating it to justify war, but always to protect the United States. The contents of the Downing Street Memo undermine this faith and only rigorous Congressional oversight can determine the truth.

We urge the committee to complete the second phase of its investigation with the maximum speed and transparency possible, producing, as it did at the end of Phase I, a comprehensive, unclassified report from which the American people can benefit directly.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry



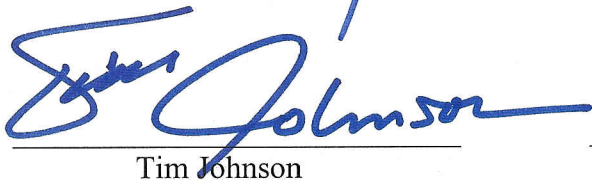
Frank R. Lautenberg



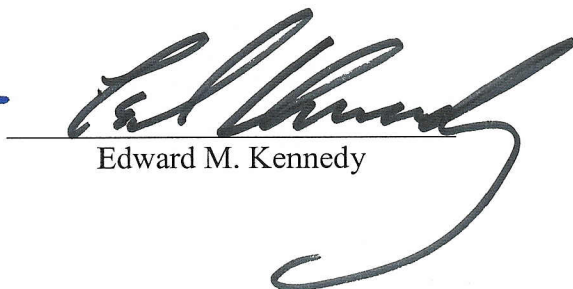
Barbara Boxer



Richard J. Durbin



Tim Johnson



Edward M. Kennedy



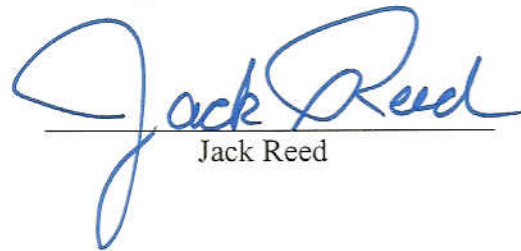
Tom Harkin



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