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ADDITIONAL VIEWS

**Additional Views
of
Chairman Pat Roberts
joined by
Senator Christopher S. Bond, Senator Orrin G. Hatch**

I have no doubt that the debate over many aspects of the U.S. liberation of Iraq will continue for decades, but one fact is now clear, the U.S. Intelligence Community told the President, the Congress, and the American people before the war that Saddam had stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, and if left unchecked, would probably have a nuclear weapon during this decade. More than a year after Saddam's fall, it also seems clear that no stockpiles are going to be found, the Iraqi nuclear program was dormant, and the President, the Congress and American people deserve an explanation. In short, the Intelligence Community's prewar assessments were wrong. This report seeks to explain how that happened.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence was formed in 1976 during a crisis of confidence in the country and in response to a need to rebuild the public's trust in government institutions including its intelligence agencies. The Senate created this Committee to conduct, for the first time, on behalf of the American people, vigorous oversight of the intelligence activities of the United States. While the underlying premise of legislative oversight is the need for "public" accountability, the Intelligence Committee's oversight usually occurs behind closed doors. This is a conundrum the Committee deals with on a daily basis. With the vast majority of our oversight being conducted out of sight, it is exceedingly difficult to assure the American people that we are doing our jobs. What may appear to be little to no Committee activity, often belies an intense and probing examination the result of which will never be made known to the public because the nation's security interests are paramount. However, the sheer gravity of certain unique issues can raise the public's interest to a level that requires a public accounting. This is such an issue.

The scope of the Committee's 12 month inquiry into the U.S. Intelligence Community's prewar assessments regarding Iraq is without precedent in the history of the Committee. The Committee has looked behind the Community's assessments to evaluate not only the quantity and quality of intelligence upon which it based its judgments, but also the reasonableness of the judgments themselves. The result is a detailed and meticulous recitation of the intelligence reporting and the concomitant evolution of the analyses. From the details emerges a report that is very critical of the Intelligence Community's performance. Some have expressed concern that such criticism is not only unnecessary, but will also engender excessive risk aversion. I believe that, although that is possible, we should not underestimate the character of the hard-working men and

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women of the Intelligence Community. While criticism is never easy to accept, professionals understand the need for self-examination and the men and women of the Intelligence Community are, first and foremost, true and dedicated professionals.

In order to begin the process of self-examination, however, one must recognize or admit that one has a problem. Unfortunately, many in the Intelligence Community are finding it difficult to recognize the full extent of this significant intelligence failure. It is my hope that this report will facilitate that process. The painstaking detail and harsh criticisms in this report are necessary not only because the democratic process demands it, but also to ensure that there is an honest accounting of the mistakes that were made so that they are not repeated. It is the constitutional responsibility of the Legislature to conduct such an accounting.

It was my hope from the outset of this inquiry that the Committee could handle this important matter in a responsible manner untainted by politics. Despite early setbacks and differences of opinion, I believe we achieved that goal. A clear measure of our success is the fact that this report was approved by a unanimous vote. However, this achievement did not come without very hard work and perseverance. The Committee's Vice Chairman and I have worked in full consultation throughout this process. I long ago lost count of the many meetings I have had with the Vice Chairman and Democrat and Republican members to hear and discuss their concerns about the inquiry. In response to Minority concerns and suggestions, we made many adjustments along the way. We conducted additional interviews, and most important, we expanded the scope of the review and made more than 200 changes to this report at the request of Democrat members. I am confident that every member of this committee has had ample opportunity to involve themselves to whatever extent they wished throughout the process.

Despite our hard and successful work to deliver a unanimous report, however, there were two issues on which the Republicans and Democrats could not agree: 1) whether the Committee should conclude that former Ambassador Joseph Wilson's public statements were not based on knowledge he actually possessed, and 2) whether the Committee should conclude that it was the former ambassador's wife who recommended him for his trip to Niger.

Niger

The Committee began its review of prewar intelligence on Iraq by examining the Intelligence Community's sharing of intelligence information with the UNMOVIC inspection teams. (The Committee's findings on that topic can be found in the section of the report titled, "The Intelligence Community's Sharing of Intelligence on Iraqi Suspect WMD Sites with UN Inspectors.") Shortly thereafter, we expanded the review when former Ambassador Joseph Wilson began speaking publicly about his role in exploring the possibility that Iraq was seeking or may have acquired uranium yellowcake from

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Africa. Ambassador Wilson's emergence was precipitated by a passage in President Bush's January 2003 State of the Union address which is now referred to as "the sixteen words." President Bush stated, ". . . the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." The details of the Committee's findings and conclusions on this issue can be found in the Niger section of the report. What cannot be found, however, are two conclusions upon which the Committee's Democrats would not agree. While there was no dispute with the underlying facts, my Democrat colleagues refused to allow the following conclusions to appear in the report:

Conclusion: The plan to send the former ambassador to Niger was suggested by the former ambassador's wife, a CIA employee.

The former ambassador's wife suggested her husband for the trip to Niger in February 2002. The former ambassador had traveled previously to Niger on behalf of the CIA, also at the suggestion of his wife, to look into another matter not related to Iraq. On February 12, 2002, the former ambassador's wife sent a memorandum to a Deputy Chief of a division in the CIA's Directorate of Operations which said, "[m]y husband has good relations with both the PM [prime minister] and the former Minister of Mines (not to mention lots of French contacts), both of whom could possibly shed light on this sort of activity." This was just one day before the same Directorate of Operations division sent a cable to one of its overseas stations requesting concurrence with the division's idea to send the former ambassador to Niger.

Conclusion: Rather than speaking publicly about his actual experiences during his inquiry of the Niger issue, the former ambassador seems to have included information he learned from press accounts and from his beliefs about how the Intelligence Community would have or should have handled the information he provided.

At the time the former ambassador traveled to Niger, the Intelligence Community did not have in its possession any actual documents on the alleged Niger-Iraq uranium deal, only second hand reporting of the deal. The former ambassador's comments to reporters that the Niger-Iraq uranium documents "may have been forged because 'the dates were wrong and the names were wrong,'" could not have been based on the former ambassador's actual experiences because the Intelligence Community did not have the documents at the time of the ambassador's trip. In addition, nothing in the report from the former ambassador's trip said anything about documents having been forged or the names or dates

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in the reports having been incorrect. The former ambassador told Committee staff that he, in fact, did not have access to any of the names and dates in the CIA's reports and said he may have become confused about his own recollection after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported in March 2003 that the names and dates on the documents were not correct. Of note, the names and dates in the documents that the IAEA found to be incorrect were not names or dates included in the CIA reports.

Following the Vice President's review of an intelligence report regarding a possible uranium deal, he asked his briefer for the CIA's analysis of the issue. It was this request which generated Mr. Wilson's trip to Niger. The former ambassador's public comments suggesting that the Vice President had been briefed on the information gathered during his trip is not correct, however. While the CIA responded to the Vice President's request for the Agency's analysis, they never provided the information gathered by the former Ambassador. The former ambassador, in an NBC Meet the Press interview on July 6, 2003, said, "The office of the Vice President, I am absolutely convinced, received a very specific response to the question it asked and that response was based upon my trip out there." The former ambassador was speaking on the basis of what he believed should have happened based on his former government experience, but he had no knowledge that this did happen.

These and other public comments from the former ambassador, such as comments that his report "debunked" the Niger-Iraq uranium story, were incorrect and have led to a distortion in the press and in the public's understanding of the facts surrounding the Niger-Iraq uranium story. The Committee found that, for most analysts, the former ambassador's report lent more credibility, not less, to the reported Niger-Iraq uranium deal.

During Mr. Wilson's media blitz, he appeared on more than thirty television shows including entertainment venues. Time and again, Joe Wilson told anyone who would listen that the President had lied to the American people, that the Vice President had lied, and that he had "debunked" the claim that Iraq was seeking uranium from Africa. As discussed in the Niger section of the report, not only did he NOT "debunk" the claim, he actually gave some intelligence analysts even more reason to believe that it may be true. I believed very strongly that it was important for the Committee to conclude publicly that many of the statements made by Ambassador Wilson were not only incorrect, but had no basis in fact.

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In an interview with Committee staff, Mr. Wilson was asked how he knew some of the things he was stating publicly with such confidence. On at least two occasions he admitted that he had no direct knowledge to support some of his claims and that he was drawing on either unrelated past experiences or no information at all. For example, when asked how he “knew” that the Intelligence Community had rejected the possibility of a Niger-Iraq uranium deal, as he wrote in his book, he told Committee staff that his assertion may have involved “a little literary flair.”

The former Ambassador, either by design or through ignorance, gave the American people and, for that matter, the world a version of events that was inaccurate, unsubstantiated, and misleading. Surely, the Senate Intelligence Committee, which has unique access to all of the facts, should have been able to agree on a conclusion that would correct the public record. Unfortunately, we were unable to do so.

Pressure

The Committee set out to examine a number of issues including whether anyone within the Intelligence Community was pressured to change their judgments or to reach a specific judgment to suit a particular policy objective. Not only did we find no such “pressure,” we found quite the opposite. Intelligence officials across the Community told Members and staff that their assessments were solely the product of their own analyses and judgments. They related to Committee staff in interview after interview their strong belief that the only “pressure” they felt was to get it right. Every individual with whom we spoke felt a deep sense of responsibility to provide the highest quality product possible. This was especially evident among terrorism analysts whose assessments had become all the more important after September 11, 2001.

There was a great deal of discussion among Members on the question of “pressure” and what constituted evidence of pressure. There was general agreement that intelligence professionals work in a high pressure environment. Therefore, it wasn’t evidence of a high pressure work environment with which we were concerned, but rather evidence of pressure to change or alter judgments. After reviewing thousands of documents and interviewing more than 200 analysts, managers, and government officials, we found only one instance that could remotely be characterized as “evidence” of pressure to reach a particular conclusion. This “evidence” was a single unsupported sentence in a report drafted by the Kerr Commission. The sentence is a brief reference to the issue of pressure on analysts in the introduction to the *Iraq’s Links to Al-Qaida* section of Kerr’s report. The sentence in question said, “Requests for reporting and analysis of this issue were steady and heavy in the period leading up to the war, creating significant pressure on the Intelligence Community to find evidence that supported a connection.” This one sentence stood out because it was the only instance where anyone or any document referenced pressure to reach a particular conclusion. The Committee’s staff vigorously pursued this question with Mr. Kerr.

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When Mr. Kerr was asked for examples of what he meant by pressure to find evidence that supported a connection, he told staff that he was actually referring to the questioning experienced by analysts on whether there was a link between Iraq and al-Qaida. He further stated that this questioning was not unlike the questioning analysts expect on any high interest topic and that, in fact, he DID NOT find that analysts were being pressured to reach a specific conclusion notwithstanding the language in his report. Therefore, this solitary piece of “evidence” was, in the end, no evidence at all.

I think that it is also important to point out that the question of pressure can be examined by means other than interviews. The Committee’s staff essentially deconstructed the Community’s assessments and reviewed in detail the progression of its judgments over many years. We were able to track and document how and why analysts reached their conclusions. Nowhere in this process did we find any unexplained gaps or evidence that judgments were changed for any reason other than the logical evolution of the analyses. Had there been a successful attempt to alter the judgments of the Intelligence Community, there would have been an obvious, unsubstantiated and inexplicable deviation from this progression. We found no such deviation. What we did find was largely good faith, albeit flawed, analyses that were influenced only by the intelligence reporting and the efforts of intelligence professionals trying hard to get it right.

Finally, as in any Congressional inquiry, we realize that certain individuals may be reluctant to be completely candid, especially when they are being interviewed by a group of congressional staff in the presence of representatives from their home agencies. In my experience, however, if such reluctance exists, it does not extend to every single individual that appears before the Committee or its staff. If someone was pressured to change their views, experience tells me someone would have come forward in some manner. The Committee’s history is replete with examples of individuals approaching its staff or members either directly or anonymously with any number of concerns. We received no such approaches during this review despite my repeated public pleas for anyone with concerns to come forward.

In the end, what the President used to make the extremely difficult decision to go to war was what he got from the Intelligence Community, and not what he or Administration officials tried to make it. The question is now: Where do we go from here?

Reform

Unlike most congressional or commission reports, this report contains no recommendations. While I have stated publicly many times that the report cries out for reform, I also believe very strongly that the issues involved are so complex and of such import that it is incumbent on the Committee and Congress to think very carefully and

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deliberately about the question of reform. We must base whatever recommendations we ultimately make on facts and considered judgment, not political expediency or media-generated momentum. I intend to examine closely all proposals for change keeping in mind that we should first do no harm and avoid, as best we can, the law of unintended consequences. Congress should not legislate change merely for the sake of change.

This Committee will direct its actions only against identifiable problems that lend themselves to legislative solutions. This report details serious problems with both the collection and analysis of the intelligence that went into the prewar assessments regarding Iraq. Not only must we be prepared to act legislatively to address these problems, we must also be prepared to accept the fact that many of the solutions will not be within our reach. In those instances, we will make recommendations to the President and strongly recommend that the appropriate action be taken.

Whatever course the Committee eventually takes on the question of reform, it will not take it unilaterally. The American people established a legislature and an executive as separate but equal branches of government in order to provide for their common defense. It is our collective duty to ensure that the branches work as intended to fulfill that promise. We will, therefore, work with the executive branch and our counterparts in the House of Representatives to construct an intelligence capability worthy of the men and women we ask to do this difficult and often dangerous work and to better safeguard our nation's security.

In my years on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence I have traveled around the world and met many of the brave, hard-working men and women of the Intelligence Community who, at times, risk their lives to keep us safe. They are dedicated, selfless patriots doing their level best to protect each and every one of us. They are, however, hampered by a flawed system that doesn't allow them to do their best work or allow us to get the most value out of that work. We need to honor their toil and sacrifices by giving them an Intelligence Community worthy of their efforts. This I intend to do.

Staff Contributions

I cannot understate the contributions of the staff members who comprised the Committee's Iraq Review Team (IRT). This group, over a period of one year, deconstructed over a decade of Intelligence Community assessments and reanalyzed the intelligence that underlay them. In the face of intense bureaucratic resistance, our staff revealed, document by document, interview by interview, the weaknesses identified in this report's findings and conclusions.

The Committee depends a great deal on the expertise, tenacity and dedication of its staff, and in this instance, they exceeded our expectations. An illustration of their dedication can be found in the final day of the Committee's deliberations which lasted

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more than five hours. The Committee's lead investigator on the WMD section of the report was nine months pregnant and one week overdue as she faced members' questions for that five-hour period. What we didn't know at the time was that she was already in early labor and refused to say so until the final vote was taken. Immediately after the vote, she drove home, collected her things and along with her husband went to the hospital and had a healthy baby boy. That is going above and beyond the call of duty, and then some.

We all owe them a debt of gratitude for what I think is not only an outstanding piece of work on behalf of the Committee, but also on behalf of the American people they serve with distinction every day.

As Chairman, I would also like to thank my colleague Senator Rockefeller and the majority of our members for their diligence, dedication and conscientious work despite a very long and sometimes contentious inquiry.

Finally, I would also like to thank the individuals within the Intelligence Community who worked diligently with the Committee and its staff throughout the process. Despite our disagreements, the people involved in fact-checking and reviewing for classification the contents of the report deserve special recognition for their efforts. This was a significant undertaking and no small accomplishment considering the very compressed time schedule under which we were operating at the end of this very long process.

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