

**U.S. Senator Jon Kyl**  
**“Iraq: Intelligence, Facts, and Fantasies”**  
**Council on Foreign Relations**  
**March 12, 2004**

In his address before the Council on Foreign Relations on March 5, Senator Edward Kennedy laid out a case against the Bush Administration’s decision to take military action against Saddam Hussein. His primary thesis was that the Administration misrepresented intelligence to Congress and the public. Though this case was ostensibly based on “Stubborn Facts” – from John Adams’ frequently cited quotation – it turned out to be long on innuendo and very short on actual facts.

Senator Kennedy has been one of the most vocal critics of the Administration on this matter, but other Democrats have rallied behind his charges – including some who voted to support the war. Before these charges become part of the accepted history of these events, I believe it is important to set the record straight. I would hope we can then return to more rational discourse on the subject. Thus, I appreciate the opportunity to correct the record.

Senator Kennedy began his presentation by calling on CIA Director George Tenet to use his upcoming testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee to state whether “he feels that the White House altered the facts, or misused the intelligence.” If Director Tenet believed that, Senator Kennedy said, then Tenet “should say so, and say it plainly.” As we all know now, Senator Kennedy on Tuesday asked Director Tenet whether he believed the administration had misrepresented the facts to justify the war. Tenet answered: “No, sir, I don’t.”

So, from the best possible source, Kennedy’s thesis was rejected. It would be tempting to say, “Case closed,” but I doubt the statement of the Director of Central Intelligence will silence the President’s critics; so let’s review some of the other stubborn facts.

The Senator next claimed that the “rushed decision to invade Iraq” is the result not only of flawed intelligence, but also of “the Administration’s manipulation of the intelligence.” Indeed, in the course of his speech, Senator Kennedy also claimed that intelligence was “distorted,” “misrepresented,” “retrofitted,” “exaggerated,” “concealed,” and “misused” – that the whole case was “trumped up,” presumably politically motivated. And that’s just the warm-up. He concluded that it was “pure unadulterated fear-mongering based on a devious strategy.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Senator Kennedy reveals the extremism of his position by favorably quoting Lt. Col. Karen Kwiatkowski, a former U.S. Air Force officer who served at the Pentagon during the buildup to Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is a person who works closely with Lyndon LaRouche (having been interviewed for his publication *Executive Intelligence Review* on numerous occasions), contributes to Pat Buchanan’s magazine, the *American Conservative*, and writes for lewrockwell.com, an ultra-libertarian website. An example of her recent work: In a September 2003 Lewrockwell.com article, “Holding Fire,” she referred to Secretary Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, Under Secretary Feith, and Richard Perle as “desert pirates disguised as advisors to the President.” She further noted that, “Firing Rummy, Wolfie, Dougie, and Richie

What was the “devious strategy”? Quoting Senator Kennedy: “We now know that from the moment President Bush took office, Iraq was given high priority as unfinished business from the first Bush Administration.”

What are the stubborn facts?

The policy to remove Saddam Hussein was not left over from the first Bush Administration, but, rather, unfinished business from the Clinton Administration. Upon entering office in January of 2001, President Bush inherited from the Clinton Administration a policy of regime-change. That policy was based upon the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act (P.L. 105-338), which stated, “It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime.” This policy was unanimously approved by the Senate and strongly supported by the Clinton Administration.

Not two months after he signed the Iraq Liberation Act into law, President Clinton delivered an address to the nation explaining his decision to order air strikes against Iraqi military targets. He discussed the potential long-term threat posed by Saddam Hussein, stating,

“The hard fact is that so long as Saddam Hussein remains in power, he threatens the well-being of his people, the peace of his region, the security of the world. The best way to end that threat once and for all is with the new Iraqi government, a government ready to live in peace with its neighbors, a government that respects the rights of its people.

“. . . Heavy as they are, the costs of inaction must be weighed against the price of inaction. If Saddam defies the world and we fail to respond, we will face a far greater threat in the future. Saddam will strike again at his neighbors; he will make war on his own people. And mark my words, he will develop weapons of mass destruction. He will deploy them, and he will use them.” (Emphasis added)

The words, again, of President Clinton. It is hard to think of any Bush Administration words more forceful, unqualified or expressive of the grave and growing danger posed by the Iraqi regime. Yet, I’ve heard no criticism of Clinton Administration misuse of intelligence.

Senator Kennedy’s primary source for his claim is former Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill, who supposedly asserted that President Bush began planning for Saddam Hussein’s removal upon taking office in January 2001. But the Senator did not mention that O’Neill later clarified his comments. During an *NBC* interview on January 13 of this year, he stated: “You know, people are trying to make the case that I said the president was planning war in Iraq early in the Administration. Actually, there was a continuation of work that had been going on in the Clinton Administration with the notion that there needed to be regime change in Iraq.” Exactly;

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would . . . tip the scales toward practical solutions by instantly removing the two-legged roadblocks to bringing the rest of the world on board in cleaning up the neocons’ mess in Iraq.”

those darned stubborn facts!

It did not require an exaggeration of intelligence to make the case that Saddam had to go. The agreed upon indictment includes – the refusal of Saddam Hussein to comply with the cease-fire agreement he signed in 1991 and his flagrant violation of the 16 other Security Council resolutions that followed, Saddam’s repeated military attacks on U.S. and British planes enforcing the “no-fly” zones, his refusal to cooperate with U.N. inspectors, his deplorable treatment of the Iraqi people, his aggression against his neighbors, his aid to terrorists, his use of chemical weapons against Iran and against the Iraqi Kurds, his firing of ballistic missiles at four of his neighbors, his WMD programs, his attempt to assassinate former President Bush, and much more.

After September 11, the administration took a sober look at Iraq’s position, its continued defiance, and the threat it would likely pose in the war on terror. We’ll discuss Senator Kennedy’s terrorism-related argument later, but suffice it to say, he does not appear to grant any credit to the view that, like the Taliban, Saddam Hussein was on the wrong side – that we were not dealing with him in a vacuum. As President Bush said in his 2003 State of the Union address: “Before September 11, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained. But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other plans – this time armed by Saddam Hussein. . . .”

One of the great myths generated by the President’s opponents is that he justified action by claiming the threat posed by Saddam’s regime was imminent.<sup>2</sup> Well, the stubborn fact is, that wasn’t the President’s claim – in fact, he specifically disclaimed that rationale for his decision. In his 2003 State of the Union address, he stated:

“Some have said we must not act until the threat is imminent. Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their intentions, politely putting us on notice before they strike? If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, and all recriminations would come too late. Trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not a strategy, and it is not an option.”

Confronted by the stubborn fact that the President did not claim the threat was imminent, Senator Kennedy makes two arguments: (1) it was “senior Administration officials” who suggested it and (2) that the words Bush used were semantically the same as imminent.

Both arguments are flawed. As to the first, it wasn’t as if the President was silent and the

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<sup>2</sup>Example: Sen. Kerry (Press release, February 5, 2004): “Today, the CIA Director, George Tenet, admitted that the intelligence agencies never told the White House that Iraq posed an imminent threat. But that’s not what the Bush White House told the American people. They said Iraq posed a ‘mortal threat,’ and ‘urgent threat,’ an ‘immediate threat,’ a ‘serious threat,’ and, yes, an ‘imminent threat’ to the people of the United States.”

only way to know his views was through spokesmen.<sup>3</sup> He addressed the entire nation specifically disclaiming an imminent threat. The best evidence is what he said, especially since he repeated it so many times and since it was central to the doctrine of pre-emptive action, which some Democrats criticized, but all understood was predicated on acting before a threat became imminent.

As to the second argument, amplified at Tuesday's Armed Services Committee hearing, it is no proof that the President or his Administration described the threat as imminent to say that other words he used were similar, so its just semantics. Senator Kennedy misses the whole point. It is inconsistent with the notion of pre-emption to argue that the threat is imminent. President Bush recently summarized the necessity of dealing with Saddam: ". . . the lessons of September the 11<sup>th</sup> mean that we must be clear-eyed and realistic and deal with threats before they fully materialize. I looked at the intelligence and came to the conclusion that Saddam was a threat. . . . [H]is actions [also] said he was a threat."<sup>4</sup>

One reason this is important is because of the dramatic assertion at the end of Senator Kennedy's speech that, "Congress never would have voted to authorize the war if we had known the facts," including, presumably, that the threat was not imminent. But even Democratic colleagues understood that the action was predicated on pre-emption, not on an imminent threat. Consider, for example, Senator Daschle's explanation of his support for the resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq: "The threat posed by Saddam Hussein," Daschle said, "may not be imminent, but it is real, it is growing, and it cannot be ignored."<sup>5</sup>

Senator Kennedy is right that the Intelligence Community never characterized the threat as "imminent," but that's hardly big news unless you think the President did. Tenet said: "The community recognized that Saddam was a threat, but it never suggested the threat was imminent or immediate or urgent." This, of course, was the reason Dr. Rice said: "We cannot wait for the

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<sup>3</sup>Senator Kennedy: "In February 2003 . . . then Press Secretary Scott McClellan was asked why NATO allies should support Turkey's request for military assistance against Iraq. His clear response was, 'This is about an imminent threat.' In May 2003, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer was asked whether we went to war 'because we said WMD were a direct and imminent threat to the United States.' Fleisher responded, 'Absolutely.'" As to the third source, Secretary Rumsfeld did not say the threat was imminent. A fair reading of what he said is that he "would not be so certain" that "Saddam is at least 5-7 years away from having nuclear weapons."

<sup>4</sup>President George W. Bush, Speech to the National Governors Association, February 23, 2004.

<sup>5</sup>*Congressional Record*, October 10, 2002

final proof – the smoking gun.” That’s the whole point of pre-emption.<sup>6</sup>

Policymakers, whether the President or Members of Congress, do not always qualify their public discussions as precisely as intelligence officers do, a point Director Tenet made in his testimony on Tuesday. He stated: “Policymakers take data. They interpret threat. They assess risk. They put urgency behind it, and sometimes it doesn’t uniquely comport with every word of an intelligence estimate.” I will quote later several statements of Democratic colleagues that confirm this point.

I would add that policymakers appear even more likely to stray from exactitude when they are especially passionate about a matter – as when Senator Kennedy characterized the administration’s analysis as “the trumped-up argument.” Here he singled out Vice President Cheney for criticism, first implying the Vice President was somehow incorrect in noting that, “We now know that Saddam Hussein has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons . . . Many of us are now convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon.” And he says that the Vice President’s rhetoric was “overheated” when he stated, “[W]e do know, with absolute certainty, that he is using his procurement system to acquire the equipment he needs in order to enrich uranium to build a nuclear weapon.”

So exactly what facts were “trumped up”?

As Director Tenet described in an August 2003 press release, “. . . most agencies believed that Iraq’s attempts to obtain high-strength aluminum tubes for centrifuge rotors, magnets, high-speed balancing machines, and machine tools, as well as Iraq’s efforts to enhance its cadre of weapons personnel and activities at several suspect nuclear sites indicated that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.” The State Department deviated from the general Intelligence Community assessment, but, even so, according to Tenet, “[It] assessed that Baghdad was pursuing at least a limited effort to acquire nuclear weapon-related capabilities.”

So, Vice President Cheney was exactly correct about Saddam’s procurement program. One could argue about the phrase “fairly soon” – it is subjective – but recall that the NIE posited that Iraq could have a weapon in months to a year if Saddam acquired the fissile material (which,

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<sup>6</sup>The Intelligence Community doesn’t ordinarily characterize intelligence that way. It provides assessments based on information. Policymakers, in turn, use those judgements to evaluate the relative urgency of action and formulate policy to carry it out. Here’s an example of an Intelligence Community product. The 2002 Iraq National Intelligence Estimate stated that the intelligence community had “high confidence” in the following:

1. “Iraq is continuing, and in some areas expanding, its chemical, biological, nuclear and missile programs contrary to U.N. resolutions.”
2. “Iraq possesses proscribed chemical and biological weapons and missiles.”
3. “Iraq could make a nuclear weapon in months to a year once it acquires sufficient weapons-grade material.”

of course, could be made or purchased).

Some of the Intelligence Community's assessments may have been wrong. We have yet to complete the work of the Iraq Survey Group. But Vice President Cheney's comments were entirely consistent with the intelligence assessment. Senator Kennedy further attempts to cast doubt on Vice President Cheney's statement by noting that the intelligence community "was deeply divided about the aluminum tubes, but Cheney was absolutely certain." This is a sleight of hand argument: what Cheney said he was certain of was not the aluminum tubes, but "that [Saddam] is using his procurement system to acquire the equipment he needs." And the stubborn fact is, that's true. Again, as Tenet described in his press release, and as the NIE stated, the Intelligence Community's assessment that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear program was based, in part, on intelligence about Saddam's procurement efforts.<sup>7</sup>

Senator Kennedy is also critical of President Bush's true statement that: "If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year." He claims that the Intelligence Community was "far from unified on Iraq's nuclear threat." Really?

The NIE consensus was that, "Iraq could make a nuclear weapon in months to a year once it acquires sufficient weapons-grade material." The only dissent came from the State Department, but even this alternate view stated that "Saddam continues to want nuclear weapons and that available evidence indicates that Baghdad is pursuing a limited effort to maintain and acquire nuclear weapons capabilities."

Senator Kennedy also revisited the infamous (and somewhat irrelevant) question of whether Saddam Hussein was pursuing the acquisition of nuclear material from Africa. After acknowledging that "most agencies" believed Iraq had restarted its nuclear program after inspectors left in 1998 and that, if unchecked, Iraq "probably will have a nuclear weapon during this decade," Senator Kennedy cited the NIE report that Niger was one of several potential African sources of nuclear material. Senator Kennedy noted that the State Department regarded the African involvement as "highly dubious." The Senator then said the intelligence regarding nuclear weapons was "distorted" because "the following January, the President included the

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<sup>7</sup>Actually, Senator Kennedy's assertion that the intelligence community was "deeply divided" about the aluminum tubes isn't totally accurate either. As Tenet described in an August 2003 press release, ". . . most agencies believed that Iraq's attempts to obtain high-strength aluminum tubes for centrifuge rotors, magnets, high-speed balancing machines, and machine tools, as well as Iraq's efforts to enhance its cadres of weapons personnel and activities at several suspect nuclear sites indicated that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program." Only the Energy and State Departments questioned whether the tubes were to be used for the nuclear program. (Statement by the Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet on the 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction, August 11, 2003.)

claims about Africa in his State of the Union address.” What, exactly, was distorted?

The President included in his speech information that was part of the National Intelligence Estimate. He cited as the source of the information the British Government, which believed the information to be accurate. The speech was approved by Tenet. And that the State Department held a different view of the information is really rather unremarkable, given that the Intelligence Community includes all of the Directors of U.S. intelligence agencies composing the DCI-chaired National Foreign Intelligence Board – CIA, DIA, INR, NSA, DOE, and NIMA.

The intelligence may or may not be accurate; but it can hardly be said it was “distorted,” when the NIE backed it up. In a statement issued on July 12, 2003, DCI George Tenet stated that “the CIA approved the president's State of the Union address before it was delivered;” that he was “responsible for the approval process in my agency; and that “the president had every reason to believe that the text presented to him was sound.” He concluded: “From what we know now, agency officials in the end concurred that the text in the speech was factually correct, i.e. that the British Government report said that Iraq sought uranium from Africa.”<sup>8</sup>

Now we come to the issue of chemical and biological weapons stockpiles. Secretary Rumsfeld is quoted by Senator Kennedy saying Saddam Hussein had them, but Senator Kennedy says Rumsfeld is “wrong on all counts.”

How does Senator Kennedy know this? The Iraq Survey Group has not completed its work, which could take another two or more years.<sup>9</sup>

But the real question is not what we may someday find out; the question is whether Senator Kennedy is right that the Administration deliberately misled the American people about the facts. There's a big difference between a possible intelligence failure and misrepresentation of the intelligence. On this point, Senator Kennedy himself answers the question by quoting from the October 2002 NIE: “Yet the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate actually quantified the size of the stockpiles, finding that ‘although we have little specific information on Iraq's CW stockpile, Saddam probably has stocked at least 100 metric tons and possibly as much as 500 metric tons of CW agents—much of it added in the last year.’”

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<sup>8</sup>In retrospect, Tenet has stated that this phrase – though factually correct and approved in the interagency process – should not have been included in the President's speech because it was not central to the intelligence community's judgment that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program. But that does not suggest the President was in any way at fault for including this information, or that he had any intention of misleading the American people.

<sup>9</sup>As the Vice President said just last Sunday on *CNN's Late Edition*, “We've still got a lot of work to do before we can say we've been through all the documents and we've interviewed all of the detainees and we've looked in all the corners in an area as big as California before we'll be able to say there is nothing there.”

So were Secretaries Rumsfeld and Powell misleading the American people or just accurately reflecting the intelligence community's judgement as documented in the NIE when they said Saddam had stockpiles of prohibited weapons?

Again, the intelligence may or may not have been accurate; but it is what Secretaries Powell and Rumsfeld quoted. **They did not distort, mislead, or misrepresent** what the Intelligence Community said; and the suggestion that they did is not only false but itself a distortion.

The second major theme in Senator Kennedy's speech is that "the Administration's case for war was the linkage between Saddam and Al Qaeda."

That was not the case for war. True, there were connections between Al Qaeda and Iraq, but nothing operational, at least that we knew of. And the Administration didn't claim otherwise as the justification for war. In fact, when asked directly if there was a connection between Saddam and 9/11, Administration officials have generally said, "We don't know."<sup>10</sup>

Senator Kennedy says that President Bush "flatly declared: you can't distinguish between Al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror." Obviously, the President was making the point that they're equally bad, not that they were plotting together. Senator Kennedy notes that President Bush accused Saddam Hussein of aiding and protecting terrorists, including Al Qaeda members. That's a stubborn fact, as is the President's statement that "Saddam Hussein has longstanding, direct, and continuing ties to terrorist networks."

Does Senator Kennedy deny the payments by Saddam Hussein to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers who attack innocent Israelis? Is that not aiding terrorists? Does he say Saddam Hussein's support of terrorists such as Abu Nidal, the Palestine Liberation Front, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Zarqawi network is not a fact? As far back as the 1999 annual report on "Patterns of Global Terrorism" (and again in the 2000, 2001, and 2002 reports), the State Department found that Saddam did, in fact, harbor and support these groups.

Specifically, in its 1999 report, the Clinton Administration's State Department found that, "Iraq continued to plan and sponsor international terrorism in 1999. Although Baghdad focused primarily on the anti-regime opposition both at home and abroad, it continued to provide safehaven and support to various terrorist groups." The report added that "Iraq continued to provide safehaven to a variety of Palestinian rejectionist groups, including the Abu Nidal organization, the Arab Liberation Front (ALF), and the former head of the now-defunct 15 May Organization, Abu Ibrahim, who masterminded several bombings of U.S. aircraft."

After the claim of exaggerated intelligence, Senator Kennedy concluded: "In fact, there

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<sup>10</sup>For example, on Sept. 14, on *Meet the Press*, Russert asked Cheney if there if that connection existed. Cheney responded, "We don't know."

was no operational link.” No one in the Administration ever claimed there was. Importantly, he does not cite any Bush Administration official claiming such a link. It’s a straw man.<sup>11</sup>

So what’s Senator Kennedy’s point except a dark innuendo that because Bush, Rice, and others noted “connections” that the President must have meant “operational linkage”? Is Senator Kennedy suggesting Members of Congress were misled by President Bush on this matter of “linkage” – that they actually thought the President was claiming “operational linkage”? If not, why bring it up? If so, where’s the evidence that Senators reached such a conclusion?

It is especially troubling that Senator Kennedy hints that the Bush Administration took us to war for political reasons: “The politics of the election trumped the stubborn facts,” he says. That charge, if more than just over-the-top bluster, would be close to an allegation of treason – suggesting that the President deliberately put our young men and women in harm’s way for no purpose other than politics. Such a charge would not only sap the morale of the troops who are fighting even now; it would undercut our entire position in the war on terror generally and in Iraq specifically.

To claim: “It was pure, unadulterated fear-mongering, based on a devious strategy to convince the American people that Saddam’s ability to provide nuclear weapons to Al Qaeda justified immediate war” is likewise disrespectful, dangerous to morale, and hurtful to our effort to work with other nations in a common effort against despots and tyrants like Saddam Hussein.

In any event, it is a gross mischaracterization to claim that President Bush sought to make the American people believe that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction that he was about to pass to Al Qaeda, and that’s why we had to go to war.

The Senator’s comments on the validity and utility of the intelligence collected by Ahmed Chalabi and the Iraqi National Congress are unwarranted. Though I cannot discuss details in an open setting, as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I can tell you that before Operation Iraqi Freedom we had very little human intelligence in Iraq, and, therefore, the INC provided one of the best—and only—avenues for

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<sup>11</sup>In a September 25, 2002 interview on “The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer,” National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice cautioned that “no one is trying to make an argument at this point that Saddam Hussein somehow had operational control of what happened on September 11th, so we don’t want to push this too far.” This was following her observation, however, that “there were in the past and have been contacts between senior Iraqi officials and members of al Qaeda going back for actually quite a long time.” She added that “we know that Saddam Hussein has a long history with terrorism in general. And there are some al Qaeda personnel who found refuge in Baghdad.”

acquiring intelligence on Saddam Hussein's regime.<sup>12</sup> I believe the Department of Defense would conclude it was useful.

When all is said and done, the most amazing claim in Senator Kennedy's speech is his conclusion that: "Congress would never have voted to authorize the war if we had known the facts."

Senator Kennedy voted against the war. He clearly thought he knew the facts, and, to him, they didn't support the war. How is it that he knew the facts, but his colleagues did not? He certainly made his case forcefully at that time. Is he saying now everyone who voted for the war was duped? Is he saying the members of the Intelligence Committee were duped?

His specific assertion is that "the Bush Administration misrepresented the facts to justify war." If this is so, why did key Senators, Republicans and Democrats, discuss the "facts" (the intelligence) the same way the President did? Were they all misleading the American people too?

What these charges of deception remind me of are the comments in 1967 of Michigan Governor (and Presidential candidate) George Romney, as he attempted to explain his shift in position on the Vietnam War: "Well, you know when I came back from Vietnam, I had just the greatest brainwashing that anybody can get when you go over to Vietnam. Not only by the generals, but also by the diplomatic corps over there, and they do a very thorough job."

Let's review what some key Senators said about the facts – and bear in mind, they all had access not only to the NIE but to the intelligence behind it.

- **Senator Daschle in February 1998:** "Iraq's actions pose a serious and continued threat to international peace and security. It is a threat we must address. Saddam is a proven aggressor who has time and again turned his wrath on his neighbors and on his own people. Iraq is not the only nation in the world to possess weapons of mass destruction,

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<sup>12</sup>Although open source reviews of the INC-provided intelligence are not available, critics have quick to discredit this information, basing their judgements largely on what has been reported in the press. In an article from September 30, 2003, in the *New York Times*, a reporter cited an internal DIA assessment [of the INC intelligence program], that found that "no more than one-third of the information was," to quote the article, "potentially useful."

However, in the same article, the author writes that two Defense Department officials defended the arrangement, and argued, again to quote the article, "while the credibility of the Iraqi defectors debriefed under the program had been low, they said, it had been roughly on par with that of most human intelligence about Iraq." The reporter even interviewed another DoD official who defended the arrangement and argued that, even though the information that was provided included 'a lot of stuff that we already knew or thought we knew,' the information had 'improved our situational awareness' by 'making us more confident about our assessments.'

- but it is the only nation with a leader who has used them against his own people. . .”<sup>13</sup>
- **Senator Kerry in October 2002:** “It would be naive to the point of grave danger not to believe that, left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future, more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world. . . .”<sup>14</sup>
  - **Senator Kerry in October 2002:** “I believe the record of Saddam Hussein’s ruthless, reckless breach of international values and standards of behavior, which is at the core of the cease-fire agreement, with no reach, no stretch, is cause enough for the world community to hold him accountable by use of force if necessary.”<sup>15</sup>
  - **Senator Rockefeller in October 2002:** “There is unmistakable evidence that Saddam Hussein is working aggressively to develop nuclear weapons and will likely have nuclear weapons within the next 5 years. He could have it earlier if he is able to obtain fissile materials on the outside market, which is possible-difficult but possible. We also should remember we have always underestimated the progress that Saddam Hussein has been able to make in the development of weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>16</sup>
  - **Senator Edwards in September 2002:** “I believe that Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime represents a clear threat to the United States, to our allies, to our interests around the world, and to the values of freedom and democracy we hold dear . . . .Thousands of terrorist operatives around the world would pay anything to get their hands on Saddam's arsenal, and there is every possibility that he could turn his weapons over to these terrorists. . . . we can hardly ignore the terrorist threat, and the serious danger that Saddam would allow his arsenal to be used in aid of terror.”<sup>17</sup>
  - **Senator Bob Graham in December 2002:** “I have seen enough evidence. I don’t know if I’ve seen all the evidence, but I’ve seen enough to be satisfied that there has been a continuing effort by Saddam Hussein since the end of the Gulf War, particularly since 1998, to re-establish and enhance Iraq’s capacity of weapons of mass destruction - chemical, biological and nuclear.”<sup>18</sup>

Now, it is possible that not all of the intelligence these Senators relied on was totally accurate. But my point is that these were the facts understood by everyone at the time: the

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<sup>13</sup>*Congressional Record*, February 12, 1998

<sup>14</sup>*Congressional Record*, October 9, 2002

<sup>15</sup>*Congressional Record*, October 9, 2002.

<sup>16</sup>*Congressional Record*, October 10, 2002

<sup>17</sup>*Congressional Record*, September 12, 2002

<sup>18</sup>*CBS’s “Face The Nation,”* December 8, 2002

United Nations, the intelligence services of our allies, Senators on the Intelligence Committee, and the Administration.

The reality is, no one was duped. We were all working off of the same data. Reasonable people reached different conclusions about what to do based on a commonly understood set of facts. There is nothing devious about that. One need not veer off into conspiracy theories to explain honest differences of opinion about policies.

### Conclusion

I much prefer strategic discussion to detailed critiques; but, as I said in the beginning, it is necessary to debunk some of the myths that have been perpetuated precisely because they have not been responded to. My hope is that, at least on this issue, we can move beyond politics and return to rational discourse about our previous, current, and future actions in Iraq. I respect those who disagree, but I believe history will judge that removing Saddam Hussein was the right thing to do – that the United States, the Iraqi people, and the international community are far better off today with Saddam Hussein in jail. While it's too early to write the definitive history of what happened, the former head of the Iraq Survey Group, David Kay, recently provided a preview: "I think . . . we'll paint a picture of Iraq that was far more dangerous than even we thought it was before the war. It was a system collapsing. It was a country that had the capability in weapons of mass destruction areas and in which terrorists, like ants to honey, were going after it."

I applaud all who have helped to resolve this challenge to our national security.