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United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6475

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July 20, 2005

The Honorable John F. Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kerry:

Thank you for your interest in the Committee's continuing review of Iraq intelligence. As I am sure you have read our report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's prewar intelligence assessments about Iraq, you know that the Committee unanimously concluded that the Intelligence Community did mischaracterize and, in some cases exaggerate, intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities, but that there was no evidence this was the result of political pressure. Intelligence analysts from the lowest to the highest levels of the Community told our Committee that their judgments were based solely on their own analysis, not the desires of policymakers.

In February 2004, the Committee unanimously agreed to refine the terms of reference of the inquiry and agreed to examine several additional issues including 1) whether public statements and reports and testimony regarding Iraq by U.S. Government officials made between the Gulf War period and the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom were substantiated by intelligence information, 2) the postwar findings about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and weapons programs and links to terrorism and how they compare with prewar assessments, 3) prewar intelligence assessments about postwar Iraq, 4) any intelligence activities relating to Iraq conducted by the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group (PCTEG) and the Office of Special Plans within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 5) the use by the Intelligence Community of information provided by the Iraqi National Congress (INC). The areas of inquiry are outlined in the joint statement Vice Chairman Rockefeller and I released on February 12, 2004.

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You should be aware that the Committee did not agree to examine the vague notion of “use of intelligence by policymakers” as your letter indicates. As noted above, the Committee has already examined the issue of whether the Intelligence Community’s assessments were influenced by political pressure and found unanimously that they were not. Accordingly, the opinions of a British government official as expressed in the “Downing Street Memo” are not pertinent to the Committee’s inquiry on Iraq.

The Committee is examining each of the issues outlined in phase II, while at the same time, continuing its oversight of issues vital to our nation’s security, including intelligence reform, and understanding and improving the Intelligence Community’s capabilities to counter terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. When the Committee has completed its work on phase II, we will determine the form in which the Committee will express its findings and whether it will be possible or prudent to release them publicly.

Once again, thank you for your keen interest in the activities of our committee. I am available at any time to assist further your understanding of the Committee’s continuing review.

Sincerely,



Pat Roberts
Chairman