

As we all know, Ms. Plame's husband, former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, was sent by the CIA on a fact-finding mission to Niger early in 2002 to examine claims that Saddam Hussein had sought to purchase uranium from Niger. Wilson said he found the claims lacked credibility. The Intelligence Committee report provides an interesting new perspective on these events. It indicates that in October of 2002, CIA Director Tenet called the Deputy National Security Adviser, Stephen Hadley, to express the CIA's serious concerns about references to uranium and Africa in a speech the President was going to give in Cincinnati.

Guess what. The references were removed.

Then in December of 2002, the State Department officials advised that the documents underlying the claim were likely forgeries. That is in December. However, the President comes before a joint session in January and says that the "British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

One thing that remains unclear throughout this series of events is exactly how and why the same NSC officials—National Security Council officials—who heard Director Tenet's concerns in October, who removed that language from the speech the President was giving in Cincinnati, who also knew the State Department in December had said these were probably forgeries, how did they allow this back into the State of the Union Message in January 2003?

We still don't have a full picture of how the administration manipulated intelligence on Iraq. The Intelligence Committee report stops short of that inquiry. But it is clear that the intelligence community felt a great deal of pressure to conform its views to the administration's public characterizations of certainty about Iraqi production of weapons of mass destruction and Iraq's connections to terrorism.

The minority views of the report note that former Director Tenet confirmed that agency staff raised with him the matter of "repetitive tasking" and the pressure that it created. The CIA ombudsman told the committee that he believed "the 'hammering' of the Bush administration on Iraq intelligence was harder than he had previously witnessed in his 32-year career."

The minority views went on to say:

By the time American troops had been deployed overseas and were poised to attack Iraq, the administration had skillfully manipulated and cowed the intelligence community into approving public statements that conveyed a level of conviction and certainty that was not supported by an objective reading of the underlying intelligence reporting.

That was the fundamental point that Ambassador Wilson made in his op-ed in the New York Times: Intelligence was stretched to fit a predetermined course of action.

One year later—365 days later—we still don't know who was involved in leaking this name and exposing a covert CIA agent. We don't know who gave this classified information to the leakers in the White House.

The disclosure of Ms. Plame's identity was malicious and probably criminal. Mr. Fitzgerald, the special prosecutor, has been conducting a thorough investigation but with very little assistance from the person who could easily get to the bottom of it—the President of the United States.

I believe the President has been too cavalier, too dismissive of the situation. He has made only one statement on this issue. Here is what he said:

This is a town that likes to leak. I do not know if we are going to find out the senior administration official. Now this is a large administration, and there's a lot of senior officials. I don't have any idea.

That is the President of the United States.

Where is his outrage?

What about the Vice President? We know he can be relentless when he is on a quest for information to justify the war in Iraq. Vice President CHENEY personally journeyed to CIA headquarters repeatedly—I have heard up to eight or nine times—to meet directly with analysts on Iraq. I am further told that was unheard of before, that Vice Presidents have never done this before.

Here is Vice President CHENEY personally going to CIA headquarters across the river eight or nine times to sit down with analysts to tell them to get their story straight.

Where is that kind of determination when it comes to finding the people who committed treasonous acts against this country and leaked Ms. Plame's identity?

This administration has used the power of the Presidency to bend facts to fit predetermined views and then to suppress dissent.

That is why so much rests on the outcome of Mr. Fitzgerald's investigation. We need to send a clear message to any President that sacrificing intelligence assets and breaching national security is wrong and it is against the law.

We should be as vigorous and determined and unrelenting in finding these perpetrators, finding those who broke this law, finding those who undermined the security of our country as we are in going after any drug pusher or drug dealer anywhere in the United States.

This President, President Bush—yes, President Bush—has got to come out and help the special prosecutor. Quit hiding behind executive privilege. Quit hiding behind the fact that this is a large administration, and maybe we will never find out who did it. It is time for the President to come clean, and for the Vice President to come clean; otherwise, I fear for the future of our intelligence community and what kind of freedom they will have to give correct analysis to future Presidents of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). Who yields time?

The Senator from Kentucky.

INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last Friday the Senate Intelligence Committee released a report on the CIA's threat assessments regarding Iraq conducted in the years prior to the liberation of that country. That the CIA overestimated the extent of Hussein's WMD infrastructure and underestimated the threat posed by al-Qaida prior to September 11 raises critical issues worthy of debate and deliberation. Unfortunately, we are not having this debate.

We know now that America was basically blind for over a decade throughout the Middle East, that we lacked agents in Iraq and Afghanistan or Arabic linguists or Middle east experts.

We also know that there are structural problems that have frustrated the intelligence community's ability to provide the best possible information to political leaders. And we know these structural flaws led to inaccurate estimates that misinformed policy makers.

Rather than working to fix the problems of the intelligence community, some Democrats are now issuing statements notably at odds with their prior positions.

The Vice-Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senator ROCKEFELLER, accused the Bush administration of pressuring the CIA to come up with a certain viewpoint, even as he endorsed a committee report that concludes the opposite.

The Senator from West Virginia went further and charged that: "Our standing in the world has never been lower. We have fostered a deep hatred of America in the Muslim world, and that will grow. As a direct consequence, our nation is more vulnerable today than ever before."

Oddly, these charges are at variance with the sensible claims he and other critics of the President have said for years about the threat Saddam Hussein posed to the United States.

In October 2002, Senator ROCKEFELLER, then as now a member of the Intelligence Committee and privy to the sensitive intelligence data that administration officials use, gave a thoughtful speech defending his vote in favor of the use of force resolution. It was a very good speech. So let me highlight a few quotes from the speech of our good friend from West Virginia. He said:

There is no doubt in my mind Saddam Hussein is a despicable dictator, a war criminal, a regional menace, and a real and growing threat to the United States . . .

He went on to say:

Saddam's government has contact with many international terrorist organizations that likely have cells here in the United States . . .

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 . . .

The Senator from West Virginia continues:

Saddam's existing biological and chemical weapons capabilities pose real threats to America today, tomorrow. Saddam has used chemical weapons before, both against Iraq's enemies and against his own people . . . At the end of the day, we cannot let the security of the American people rest in the hands of somebody whose track record gives us every reason to fear that he is prepared to use the weapons he has used against his enemies before . . .

There has been some debate over how "imminent" a threat Iraq poses. I do believe Iraq poses an imminent threat. I also believe after September 11, that question is increasingly outdated. It is in the nature of these weapons that he has and the way they are targeted against civilian populations, that the documented capability and demonstrated intent may be the only warning we get. To insist on further evidence could put some of our fellow Americans at risk. Can we afford to take that chance? I do not think we can.

That was Senator ROCKFELLER back in 2002. I agree with what he said. Senator ROCKFELLER's assessment was a reasonable judgment at the time given Hussein's belligerence, his refusal to open his country to weapons inspectors, decades of intelligence collection, and the fact that not a single international intelligence agency believed that Iraq did not have WMD. Indeed, what we have found in Iraq indicates that Hussein maintained the capacity to produce chemical and biological weapons, even if he had destroyed or shipped out of country his stockpiles of WMD.

Senator ROCKFELLER is not the only democrat to change his tune. Senator JOHN KERRY, with Senator EDWARDS at his side, told the New York Times over the weekend that President Bush "certainly misled America about nuclear involvement, and he misled America about the types of weapons that were there, and he misled America about how the would go about using the authority he was given."

But in March of 1998, the Senator from Massachusetts declared on the Senate floor that Iraq continued clandestinely to maintain its WMD stockpiles and programs. This is what he said in 1998.

We do know that he had them [WMD] in his inventory, and the means of delivering them. We do know that his chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons development programs were proceeding with his active support.

We have evidence . . . that despite his pledges at the conclusion of the war that no further work would be done in these weapons of mass destruction programs, and that all prior work and weapons that resulted from it would be destroyed, this work has continued illegally and covertly.

And, Mr. President, We have every reason to believe that Saddam Hussein will continue to do everything in his power to further develop weapons of mass destruction and the ability to deliver those weapons, and that he will use those weapons without concern or pangs of conscience if ever and when-

ever his own calculations persuade him in is in his interests to do so . . .

. . . The United States must take every feasible step to lead the world to remove this unacceptable threat.

I have to ask: How can Senator KERRY claim he was misled by the current President into believing precisely the allegations he made back in 1998, when President Bush was Governor Bush?

Those who hold Senator KERRY's view would have you believe that President Bush invented these allegations and forced this war upon an unwilling Congress. Far from it.

Senator EDWARDS noted in 2002:

As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I firmly believe that the issue of Iraq is not about politics. It's about national security. We know that for at least 20 years, Saddam Hussein has aggressively and obsessively sought weapons of mass destruction through every means available.

We know that he has chemical and biological weapons today . . . I believe that Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime represents a clear threat to the United States, to our allies, to our interest around the world, and to the values of freedom and democracy we hold dear.

Now, I find it troubling that neither Senator KERRY, nor his running mate seems to recall his own prior assessments of the threats posed by the Hussein regime.

I believe America is better off with Hussein gone, and I know the Iraqis are happy with his ouster and increasingly optimistic about their future. Unfortunately, some here in the Senate don't share their optimism.

Equally perplexing is a partisan view of this United States economy. Just as partisans see no threat from Iraq now when they call it a threat a few years back, they see a Great Depression now when they would have called it a great recovery a few years back.

They claim signs of this Great Depression are all around. But the cold, hard, inconvenient fact for their theory is that we have added 1.3 million jobs so far this year. The unemployment rate has been dropping for a year, to 5.6 percent today. That is below the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s, but the naysayers read it as proof of an economic collapse.

They point to all sorts of signs of weakness in our economy, such as strongest annual growth in 20 years, low mortgage rates, low inflation rates and the highest productivity rates in half a century. The stock market has "crashed" upward by 40 percent in the last 2 years. NASDAQ has had a 70 percent gain! The "human costs" of this Great Depression are apparent, such as having the highest homeownership rate in United States history.

This is the new speak of the Great Depression.

We don't have a depression; what we have is political spin. We have political leaders who are trying to convince the American people that the economy is bad, that we have not gotten over the 2001 recession, the terrorist attacks of

9/11, the corporate scandals, or the uncertainties of war.

Yet the facts say we are well on our way, and we won't rest until every American who wants a job, has a job.

I understand the spin game in Washington. We can spin a lot of things in Washington, but a weak economy can't be spun as a strong one, and a strong economy can't be twisted as a weak one.

Ant I can only hope my friends have not dizzied themselves so much that they cannot separate reality from politics or understand the difference between a recovery and a depression. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the deputy majority leader for his excellent comments. As a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, I congratulate him on his very thorough and thoughtful discussion of the work of the Intelligence Committee.

Last week, as we all recall, the committee released a remarkable report unanimously supported by the Democrat and Republican members of the committee. However, despite the findings of fact, which took a year of interviews by staff of over 200 people reviewing 15,000 documents, the campaign continues to attempt to politicize this process perfectly consistent with the political strategy memo uncovered last November designed by minority staff to show how the Intelligence Committee could be manipulated in order to hamper the President and his administration during the election year. The fact this is a time of war is apparently insufficient justification for leaving politics at the water's edge.

No rule of law should ever stifle honest debate, discourse, or dissent in this country, but somewhere public leaders can recognize self-discipline can be a benefit to our troops and our Nation. I saw a report recently that in the 1944 election, as Republican candidate Thomas Dewey was set to blame President Roosevelt for what transpired at Pearl Harbor, General Marshall appealed to Dewey, arguing that the Nation should be united against the real enemy. Dewey acted on behalf of the country. I guess times were different then.

In this country, we need to make sure our service men and women understand that while we can have our debate, we can demonstrate more disdain for the enemy than we have for the opposition party.

Since Friday, we have heard the suggestions that the efforts of our troops to depose Saddam Hussein and set the long-term stage for peace and democracy in the most dangerous region in the world was not—yes, not—warranted. Besides being wrong, what kind