

short, the facts were not there to show any connection between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein.

It is clear: The administration knew or should have known it was misleading America in its effort to make the case for a war in Iraq.

Just as significant, today's report shows America what you get with a Republican-led Congress. What do you get? You get the White House refusing to declassify information. And you find that in this report. You find that the White House refuses to declassify information that would embarrass them 2 months before a midterm election. And you get a Republican-led committee that is perfectly willing to bow down to the White House and keep the American people in the dark about its mistakes and its distortions.

Nearly 4 years since the war started in Iraq, 2½ years after the Republican chairman of the Intelligence Committee was pressured into starting this investigation, and nearly a year after Democrats sent the Senate into closed session to discuss the Republicans' stonewalling, 60 percent of the Intelligence Committee's investigation still is unfinished, and questions as to how and why the administration exaggerated and cherry-picked intelligence to sell its case for war remain unanswered.

These are critically, crucially important questions for our troops and our security. Authorizing the use of force and placing our citizens in harm's way is the most significant vote a Member of Congress can make, and it is essential we understand how this administration skewed that decision in the runup to the war in Iraq so we can take the steps necessary to ensure these abuses are never repeated. That is why you have to complete the work of the Intelligence Committee.

With 140,000 American troops serving bravely in the middle of a civil war in Iraq, bin Laden still at large, and a growing threat posed by North Korea and Iran, it is long past time this rubberstamping Republican Congress stood up to the Bush administration and did its job, did its job of being a separate and equal branch of Government.

The problem during the 6 years of President Bush's administration is that the Constitution has not been what it should be, not the checks and balances, not three separate, equal branches of Government. It is no mystery why there have been no vetoes—because the President has gotten everything he has wanted, with the exception of stem cell. Other than that, the Republican Congress has given him everything he has wanted.

We have had no congressional oversight. We have had committees not doing their work, as indicated by the Intelligence Committee today.

I do extend my congratulations to the entire committee. They do very valuable work for this country in dealing with the most sensitive issues

America has to deal with; that is, intelligence operations of this country. I am glad we have gotten 40 percent of the work that has been so long overdue. I look forward, in the weeks ahead, to getting the remaining 60 percent. I doubt it will happen before the elections, but it should.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST STEPHEN P. DOWNING II

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of a father, son, uncle, and brother from the Commonwealth of Kentucky who was lost in the line of duty as a member of America's Armed Forces. I ask the Senate to pause today in memory of SPC Stephen P. Downing II of Burkesville, KY. He was 30 years old.

On October 28, 2004, Specialist Downing and his squad were on patrol securing one of the busiest intersections in Ramadi, Iraq. As a key route for vital U.S. convoys, this crossroads had become a focal point of terrorist attacks. The threat to vulnerable U.S. vehicles meant soldiers like Stephen Downing were needed to stand guard against would-be bombers.

As his squad waited to be relieved at noon, Stephen, whose duty was simply to drive the armored humvee, volunteered to give his gunner a break from the intense heat. He climbed out of the relative safety of the driver's seat to man the .50 caliber machinegun mounted on top of the roof. Then, just a few minutes before his squad was to be replaced, he was fatally wounded by a lone sniper's bullet.

For his actions as a soldier, Specialist Downing earned numerous medals and awards, including the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

Stephen Downing was a man of action, with a keen sense of right and wrong. He was more comfortable working on an engine or being outdoors than sitting inside. He was quick-witted, with a knack for pulling practical jokes. This quality endeared him to his family, friends, and fellow soldiers.

Stephen loved his family. As SPC Robert Gonzales, who served with Stephen Downing in both Korea and Iraq, recalls—using Stephen's nickname with the unit—

Stevy D. was very proud of his kids. He always talked about how proud they made him. . . . I can't remember how many times he showed me a picture of his son and his daughter swimming in a pool, wearing floaties. He kept it with him all the time.

Stephen's fatherly tenderness extended beyond his daughter, Taylor,

and his son, Stephen, to include his niece, Chelsea. As Stephen's sister, Danica, says:

Stephen was like a father to my daughter . . . and Chelsea always looked up to Stephen.

When Stephen himself was a child, his appetite for adventure could not be satisfied. His sister recalls that her brother loved to go diving, swimming, skiing—if it was to be done outside, Stephen was eager to pursue the challenge.

When he was not taking things apart, he was putting them back together. Stephen loved modifying his BMX bikes, even if his modifications did not always turn out to be an improvement.

According to his stepfather, Jim Maynard, Stephen seemed blessed with a constant smile on his face.

And nothing could make Stephen smile more than pulling a prank on his sister. As the older sibling by almost 2 years, Danica was a constant presence for her brother growing up, helping him if older bullies tried to pick on him. But this didn't stop Stephen from having a good-natured laugh at her expense.

One morning, Stephen rushed out to catch the schoolbus and told the driver to go ahead because his sister was not going to school that day. About 3 miles down the road, the bus driver and everyone else on the bus learned the truth when Stephen's mother flagged down the schoolbus and Danica jumped on.

Another time, Danica was babysitting for a neighbor, and she and a girlfriend decided to take the baby for an evening stroll. Along their path they passed an abandoned old farm house, an infamously spooky local attraction.

As you might have guessed, Mr. President, what better way to scare your sister than to hide in the weeds by a house such as this and at the right time, jump out yelling. As Danica recounts, "Stephen scared [us] half to death . . . we both were so scared, we just took off screaming. It took us a minute to realize neither of us had brought the stroller."

Stephen enlisted in the Army in 1992. He joined the National Guard in 1994, and left the service in 2000. In 2002, however, Stephen felt compelled to reenlist in the Army. He was sent to Korea, where he was stationed with the Second Infantry Division.

After a year-long stint, his unit was ordered to prepare for deployment to Iraq. Given the choice between staying with the unit or being transferred to Fort Carson, CO, Stephen elected to go to war with the men he had come to know and depend on.

Shortly before Stephen deployed to Iraq with the 2nd I.D., he returned home for 2 weeks to be with his family. During that time, his mother, Stella Maynard, fixed all of Stephen's favorite foods, including her famous cherry delight cake. Each family member let Stephen know how proud they were of

him, while also quietly airing their greatest fears.

Stephen told his daughter, who pleaded with him not to go, that he was needed in Iraq. Putting her on his knee, Stephen told her that he was going to Iraq to help the children there—to keep them safe, so that they could have a chance at a better life.

Danica also pulled her brother aside and told him to be careful. “I told him to keep his head down,” she says. “Not to be a hero, not to do more than what he had to do to get by.” Stephen understood his sister’s motivations, but as his actions would demonstrate, and as his fellow soldiers would later recall, Stephen did anything but the bare minimum.

SP Phillip Pilcher, who was on patrol with Stephen that fateful day, recalls “Stephen was one of the hardest working guys over there; he would work two to three hours later than everyone else just to make sure that everything was where it needed to be.”

Specialist Gonzales, who credits Stephen with being instrumental in making him a better soldier, strikes a similar chord. “Stephen was the heart and soul of our squad and our regiment,” he says. “Even though he didn’t have the stripes on his arm, he was still a great leader.”

Many of the friends Stephen made over his 30 years came to say goodbye when he was laid to rest. BG Dan Bolger, who helped command the Second Infantry Division in Korea and asked to be the survivor-assistance officer for Stephen’s family, was astounded by what he saw that day: For a 22-mile stretch along the path of the funeral procession, people, some holding signs, others flags, stood in silent tribute to their fallen hero.

A few months before his death, Stephen wrote a letter to his mother, to be sent in the event he did not return. He wrote, “Different people will remember me for different reasons, but I would hope that everyone would think that I was over here for them.”

The devotion to honor and sacrifice expressed in those words tells us how Specialist Downing was able to touch so many people, and why so many people paid their final respects to his memory. As his mother recalls, “Stephen didn’t have friends—he had family.”

I thank Stephen’s mother, Stella Maynard, and his niece, Chelsea Downing, who have traveled to our Nation’s capital to—meet with me today, for sharing Stephen’s story. His children, Taylor and Stephen, his sister, Danica, his step-father, Jim Maynard, and other beloved family members are in our thoughts today as well.

We can never repay Specialist Downing’s family for their loss. But we can, and we must, honor the sacrifice of their beloved father, son, uncle and brother, and recognize that without his courage and the courage of the men and women of our Armed Forces, America could not lead the world in the defense of freedom.

Mr. President, Stephen’s mother, Stella, put it just right, and we are all blessed to have had SP Stephen Downing in our family.

MISSILE DEFENSE

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the recent successes of the Missile Defense Agency. Last Friday, a week ago from today, the Missile Defense Agency conducted a test of the ground-based midcourse system and scored an intercept. This exercise was designed to evaluate the performance of several elements of the ballistic missile defense system, and it appears that all elements worked remarkably well. Although it was not a primary objective for the data collection flight test, an intercept of the target warhead was achieved.

The test marked the first time an operational interceptor was launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base while the target flew from Alaska. It was conducted by crews who were manning operational fire control systems in Colorado Springs. It also marked the first use of the early warning radar at Beale Air Force Base in California.

I congratulate the head of the Missile Defense Agency, General Obering, and especially all the dedicated men and women of the MDA who helped make this test a success.

General Obering stated that the test is about as close as we can come to an end-to-end test of our long-range missile defense system. This success only builds upon a long record of missile defense intercepts and, more importantly, it is the fourth intercept in the last 90 days that used hit-to-kill technology.

In June, we launched a sea-based AEGIS interceptor that was successful in intercepting a separating warhead. In July, we launched a land-based terminal-phase interceptor, Terminal High Altitude Air Defense—or the THAAD—interceptor, successfully intercepting the target. Very recently, we had a successful Patriot-3 intercept that was conducted by the U.S. Army in collaboration with the Missile Defense Agency.

There have been many naysayers and doubters on missile defense, but I am proud to have supported the Missile Defense Agency over the past several years as it has grappled in an intensive effort to track down and eliminate or minimize risks that have contributed to setbacks in the past. There is an emphasis on quality that is paying off, as witnessed by our most recent tests. We learn from our mistakes, and we now see the fruit of the combined efforts of a wide range of dedicated military, civilian, and contractor personnel.

Testing will continue. We will encounter difficulties, but the program will move forward. We are succeeding in building an integrated and layered ballistic missile defense system. Our defenses will continue to improve, and our citizens will be increasingly protected and grateful.

While I am pleased that we have a limited missile defense capability, I believe our missile defense system needs to be challenged even further. We need more testing so that we can better understand the task at hand and discover the errors that must be corrected. I am confident that the Missile Defense Agency is on the right path. I look forward to supporting the Agency testing plan in the future. I do not expect perfection. In fact, I expect some failures. But in the context of several missile defense intercept tests per year, one or two failures only means that we are pushing to find out the real capabilities of the system.

We all know hit-to-kill technology works. We now need to further develop the midcourse system and introduce greater capability to that system. I look forward to assisting the Missile Defense Agency in its future programs so our Nation can rest assured that we are protected from rogue nations that wish to do us harm.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter addressed to me dated September 8, 2006.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
Washington, DC, September 8, 2006.

Hon. TED STEVENS,
President Pro Tempore, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On behalf of the Select Committee on Intelligence, we submit the following unclassified reports, together with additional and minority views, for filing with the Senate: (1) Postwar Findings about Iraq’s WMD Programs and Links to Terrorism, and How they Compare with Pre-war Assessments and (2) The Use by the Intelligence Community of Information Provided by the Iraqi National Congress.

Senate Resolution 400 of the 94th Congress (1976) charges the Committee with the duty to oversee and make continuing studies of the intelligence activities and programs of the United States Government, and to report to the Senate concerning those activities and programs. Pursuant to its responsibilities under Senate Resolution 400, the Committee has undertaken an in-depth examination of the matters described in the reports.

Both reports have been approved by the Committee in both classified and unclassified form. The classified reports are available to Members for reading at the Committee. The classified reports will also be provided to appropriately cleared officials of the Executive branch.

The unclassified versions of the reports, which are hereby transmitted for printing, are intended to provide the Senate, and through it, the American public, a substantial factual record upon which to consider the issues covered by the reports.

Sincerely,

PAT ROBERTS,
Chairman.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV,
Vice Chairman.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise to speak on behalf of my amendment to