

committee's findings are fair and objective. Our job was to compare statements to intelligence and render a narrow judgment as to whether the statement was substantiated. In those instances where a statement is not substantiated by the intelligence, the committee renders no judgment as to why. All we were interested in was the facts.

The second report we are releasing today deals with operations of the Office of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. It is a very important report. A February 2007 report from the Department of Defense inspector general addresses many of the issues the committee had originally intended to examine relating to this office. That report concluded that the Policy Office of the Pentagon had inappropriately disseminated an alternative intelligence analysis, drawing a link between Iraq and al-Qaida terrorists—again what the administration wanted—who carried out the attacks on September 11. This hypothesis has been thoroughly examined by the intelligence community and no link was found. That, however, did not stop this office from concocting its own intelligence analysis and presenting it to senior policymakers. The committee first uncovered this attempt by DOD policy officials to shape and politicize intelligence in order to bolster the administration's policy in our July 2004 report and the inspector general's review. Both of these were confirmed.

The committee's own investigation of the policy office's activities had been abruptly terminated by the former chairman of the Intelligence Committee in July of 2004 because the inspector general's report thoroughly covered the issues of alternative analysis when the committee investigation was restarted in 2007, it focused on clandestine meetings between DOD policy officials and Iranians in Rome and Paris in 2001 and 2003.

These meetings were facilitated by Manucher Ghorbanifar, an Iranian exile and intelligence fabricator implicated in the 1986 Iran Contra scandal. During these meetings, intelligence was collected, but it was not shared with the intelligence community. It went right around the intelligence community, including the CIA. They knew nothing about it. George Tenet indicated there was no possible way he knew anything about this.

The committee's findings paint a disturbing picture of Pentagon policy officials who were distrustful of the intelligence community and undertook the collection of sensitive intelligence without coordinating their activities. It was a rogue operation. It went to high levels in the administration; it went right to the National Security Council, totally bypassing all other intelligence agencies. It is infuriating and not the way intelligence should be handled at all.

The actions of DOD officials to blindly disregard the red flags over the role

played by Mr. Ghorbanifar in these meetings and to wall off the intelligence community from its activities and the information it obtained were improper and demonstrated a fundamental disdain for the intelligence community's role in vetting sensitive sources.

The committee's 2004 report presented evidence that the DOD policy office attempted to shape the CIA's terrorism analysis in late 2002, and when it failed, prepared an alternative intelligence analysis attacking the CIA for not embracing a link between Iraq and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. So the CIA and the intelligence community were trying to do what they could, and these people were just end-running them because that is what the White House wanted to see. And then, you know, it was a disgrace, an embarrassment to the Nation. The Department of Defense inspector general found himself that these actions were highly inappropriate.

Our most recent report shows that these rogue actions of this office were not isolated. The committee's body of work on Iraq-related intelligence—a series of six reports issued over a 4-year period—demonstrate why congressional oversight is essential in evaluating America's intelligence collection and analytical activities.

During the course of its investigation, the committee found that the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction was based on stale, fragmentary, and speculative intelligence reports and replete with unsupported judgments. Troubling incidents were reported in which internal dissent and warnings about the veracity of intelligence on Iraq were ignored in the rush to get to war.

The committee's investigation also revealed how administration officials applied pressure on intelligence analysts prior to the war for them to support links between Iraq and the terrorists responsible for the attacks of September 11, none of which existed.

Our investigation detailed how the Iraqi National Congress and Ahmed Chalabi attempted to influence the U.S. policy on Iraq by providing false information through defectors directed at convincing the United States at the higher levels that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and had links to terrorists and how this false information was embraced despite warnings and fabrication.

The committee's investigation also documented for the public how the administration ignored the prewar judgments of the intelligence community that the invasion would destabilize security in Iraq and provide al-Qaida with an opportunity to exploit the situation and increase attacks against U.S. forces during and after the war. After 5 years and the loss of over 4,000 American lives, these ignored judgments were tragically prescient.

Overall, the findings and conclusions of the committee's Iraq investigation

were an important catalyst in bringing about subsequent legislative and administrative reforms of the intelligence community so that these mistakes will never be repeated again, hopefully.

In conclusion, it has been a long, hard road for the committee to get to this point. There have been and continue to be a lot of finger-pointing and accusations of partisanship. It is important to remember that this undertaking was a unanimous decision—phase 1 and phase 2—was a unanimous decision of the committee in February of 2004. That it took such a long time to do is another subject. It is also important to remember that the committee adopted these two reports, both reports, by a vote of 10 to 5—in other words, bipartisan.

In undertaking these additional lines of inquiry, the committee acted to tell a complete story of how intelligence was not only collected and analyzed prior to the Iraq invasions but how it was publicly used in authoritative statements made by the highest officials in the Bush administration in furtherance of its policy to overthrow Saddam Hussein and more.

I believe these reports will help answer some of the many lingering questions surrounding the Nation's misguided decision to launch the war in Iraq.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have consulted with the Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, who is next in line, and he has agreed to permit me to—I expected to have 10 minutes at 10:45. Senator WHITEHOUSE has generously permitted me to go ahead for 5 minutes.

I ask unanimous consent that following my 5 minutes, Senator WHITEHOUSE be recognized, and then, as I have already spoken to the Senator from Maryland, Mr. CARDIN, he will be recognized, and then Senator SMITH will be recognized in the regular sequence in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUDICIAL GRIDLOCK

Mr. SPECTER. I thank my colleagues. I have sought recognition to comment on a couple of subjects. One is the gridlock we are facing now in this body on the issue of judicial confirmations.

It is my hope that we will yet be able to find a formula to break this cycle of gridlock. I have spoken on the subject repeatedly—about the events of the last 20 years, where in the last 2 years of each administration, when the White House is controlled by one party, as was the case with President Reagan in