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Setting the Record Straight: The Washington Post On Pre-War Intelligence

***The Washington Post* Implies That The Presidential Daily Brief (PDB) Was Superior To The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) Given To Congress.** "But Bush does not share his most sensitive intelligence, such as the President's Daily Brief, with lawmakers. Also, the National Intelligence Estimate summarizing the intelligence community's views about the threat from Iraq was given to Congress just days before the vote to authorize the use of force in that country." (Dana Milbank And Walter Pincus, "Asterisks Dot White House's Iraq Argument," *The Washington Post*, 11/12/05)

But The PDB Was The Focus Of Intelligence Reform And Was More "Problematic" Than The NIE Given To Congress.

- **The Robb-Silberman Commission Found The PDB To Contain Similar Intelligence In "More Alarmist" And "Less Nuanced" Language.** "As problematic as the October 2002 NIE was, it was not the Community's biggest analytic failure on Iraq. Even more misleading was the river of intelligence that flowed from the CIA to top policymakers over long periods of time--in the President's Daily Brief (PDB) and in its more widely distributed companion, the Senior Executive Intelligence Brief (SEIB). These daily reports were, if anything, more alarmist and less nuanced than the NIE." (Charles S. Robb And Laurence H. Silberman, *The Commission On The Intelligence Capabilities Of The United States Regarding Weapons Of Mass Destruction*, 3/31/05, Pg. 14)
- **The Robb-Silberman Commission Reported That The Intelligence In The PDB Was Not "Markedly Different" Than The Intelligence Given To Congress In The NIE.** "It was not that the intelligence was markedly different. Rather, it was that the PDBs and SEIBs, with their attention-grabbing headlines and drumbeat of repetition, left an impression of many corroborating reports where in fact there were very few sources. And in other instances, intelligence suggesting the existence of weapons programs was conveyed to senior policymakers, but later information casting doubt upon the validity of that intelligence was not." (Charles S. Robb And Laurence H. Silberman, *The Commission On The Intelligence Capabilities Of The United States Regarding Weapons Of Mass Destruction*, 3/31/05, Pg. 14)

***The Washington Post* Implies That There Have Been No Findings On The Use Of Intelligence.**

"But the only committee investigating the matter in Congress, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, has not yet done its inquiry into whether officials mischaracterized intelligence by omitting caveats and dissenting opinions. And Judge Laurence H. Silberman, chairman of Bush's commission on weapons of mass destruction, said in releasing his report on March 31, 2005: 'Our executive order did not direct us to deal with the use of intelligence by policymakers, and all of us were agreed that that was not part of our inquiry.'" (Dana Milbank And Walter Pincus, "Asterisks Dot White House's Iraq Argument," *The Washington Post*, 11/12/05)

But Congressional And Independent Committees Have Repeatedly Reported No Distortion Of Intelligence

- **The Bipartisan Senate Select Committee On Intelligence Report "Did Not Find Any Evidence" Of Attempts To Influence Analysts To Change Intelligence.** "Conclusion 83. The Committee did not find any evidence that Administration officials attempted to coerce, influence or pressure analysts to change their judgments related to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities. Conclusion 84. The Committee found no evidence that the Vice President's visits to the Central Intelligence Agency were attempts to pressure analysts, were perceived as intended to pressure analysts by those who participated in the briefings on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs, or did pressure analysts to change their assessments." ("Report On The U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments On Iraq," U.S. Senate Select Committee On Intelligence, 7/7/04, Pg. 284-285)

- **The Robb-Silberman Commission Finds "No Evidence Of Political Pressure."** "These are errors serious errors. But these errors stem from poor tradecraft and poor management. The Commission found no evidence of political pressure to influence the Intelligence Community's pre-war assessments of Iraq's weapons programs. As we discuss in detail in the body of our report, analysts universally asserted that in no instance did political pressure cause them to skew or alter any of their analytical judgments. We conclude that it was the paucity of intelligence and poor analytical tradecraft, rather than political pressure, that produced the inaccurate pre-war intelligence assessments." (Charles S. Robb And Laurence H. Silberman, *The Commission On The Intelligence Capabilities Of The United States Regarding Weapons Of Mass Destruction*, 3/31/05, Pg. 50-51)

- **The British Butler Report Finds "No Evidence" Of Intelligence Distortion.** "In general, we found that the original intelligence material was correctly reported in [Joint Intelligence

Committee] assessments. An exception was the '45 minute' report. But this sort of example was rare in the several hundred JIC assessments we read on Iraq. In general, we also found that the reliability of the original intelligence reports was fairly represented by the use of accompanying qualifications. We should record in particular that we have found no evidence of deliberate distortion or of culpable negligence. We examined JIC assessments to see whether there was evidence that the judgements inside them were systematically distorted by non-intelligence factors, in particular the influence of the policy positions of departments. We found no evidence of JIC assessments and the judgements inside them being pulled in any particular direction to meet the policy concerns of senior officials on the JIC." ("Review Of Intelligence On Weapons Of Mass Destruction," Report Of A Committee Of Privy Counsellors, 7/14/04, Pg. 110)

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