

we go to war? Our vote is to go to war, said the London-based Economist magazine.

So those are the decisions we were dealing with. Every intelligence agency in the world concluded that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. I am not aware of any that did not believe he had some. Certainly, that is what the President of the United States was told. Certainly, that is what the Members of the Senate were told.

But the more troubling, deeper, strategic imperative, to deal with Saddam Hussein, was what galvanized the attention of the President and, I think, of the Senate. When I looked at my remarks from the time I had discussed my decision to support a war in Iraq, I hardly mentioned weapons of mass destruction.

It was this idea—that Saddam Hussein had not been faithful to his agreements, that he was determined to get out of those agreements, that he was determined to reconstitute his military, that he could be a threat to the region and that he could easily, and we thought he did, have weapons of mass destruction that he would use. We know he used a weapon of mass destruction, poison gas, against his own people, the Kurds. We know he used it. So it would have been unthinkable to think he had none at the time. Whatever happened to it, I don't know.

We made a commitment in this Nation to remove Saddam Hussein, and that has been done. We have had two elections in Iraq toward establishing a democratic government. For that, I am most proud and hopeful that this new election in December, which will create a new permanent government, will help further to demonstrate the confidence the Iraqi people have in that government and make attacks upon it even more difficult to sustain and defend.

I ask my colleagues to remember this one thing—it is still a dangerous place there. Our soldiers are there because we sent them. We asked them to go there to execute the policy we in the Senate voted for. We ought not do things and say things out of political anger or partisanship that are exaggerated, unfair to the President or our troops and how they conduct themselves, that puts their lives more at risk and makes their job more difficult.

I am pleased that this authorization bill came out of Chairman WARNER's committee unanimously with a bipartisan vote. As we go forward with it, we will improve the quality of our military, their effectiveness, and help execute more effectively the policies we have established.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I thank our distinguished colleague. He has taken an active role in a number of issues and that, together with his work on the Judiciary Committee, gives him

a special insight into the issue of detainee matters.

The distinguished ranking member has arrived. I had hoped that Senator CORNYN could speak for 15 to 20 minutes, if that is agreeable, and then following that, perhaps the Senator from Michigan and I will have some matters to address the Senate on. For the benefit of all Members, the bill is open for amendment at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, that certainly is fine with me. I always welcome the opportunity to hear from our colleagues. I understand there are a number of amendments on the side of the Senator from Virginia that may be ready to go this afternoon. We believe we have one that will be ready at 4:30.

Mr. WARNER. I thank my distinguished colleague. I say, with a sense of modesty, that we are making good progress on the bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

IRAQ

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I thank the chairman and distinguished ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. It is more with sadness than in anger that I rise to respond to recent allegations made by some Democrats that the Bush administration "manufactured and manipulated intelligence in order to sell the war in Iraq." War is serious business. I don't need to remind my colleagues that more than 2,000 Americans have sacrificed their lives fighting to liberate the Iraqi people, and many brave Texans are among them.

Today, Iraq represents the central front in the global war on terror. Yet we have even seen the sad occasion of having sustained 2,000 deaths of America's fighting men and women in Iraq spark an ill-advised and premature call for withdrawal of our troops by the angry antiwar left. That call has been picked up, in part, if not in whole, by some politicians seeking to capitalize on that anger. But merely venting anger without proposing alternative solutions is not the work of serious people. It is a sad commentary on our public discourse when politicians seek to use the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform to advance a political agenda.

While the critics focused on 2,000 Americans killed in action in Iraq, another important number to remember is 3,000—the number of innocent Americans killed on September 11. Is there any doubt that if we pulled out of Iraq prematurely without stabilizing security, without building the necessary infrastructure, and without allowing

Iraqis to build successful democratic institutions as they are doing, that 9/11 would be repeated over and over and over again by an enemy that would continue to target innocent civilians in pursuit of their perverse ideology? If Iraq descends into civil war or is overrun by terrorists, if Iraq becomes a place where terrorists recruit, train, and export terror with impunity, how long do the critics believe it would take until we would be hit again on our own soil?

The war on terrorism is a war we must win. The stakes are too high to use the war on terror as a political football. If there is any doubt about the enemy and their goals, all one needs to do is read the letter from Osama bin Laden's chief deputy, Zawahiri, his chief lieutenant in Iraq. Zawahiri clearly describes al-Qaida's vision of establishing an Islamic caliphate that would rule the Middle East and eventually the world. It would also, not incidentally, include the destruction of our best ally in the Middle East, the state of Israel.

Although we are making progress in Iraq, as we saw most recently during the successful referendum on the constitution, there is obviously more work that needs to be done. We know that our troops have the will to win. I am concerned that there are some here at home and even in the Senate who do not share this same resolve because they stubbornly refuse to learn the lessons of 9/11.

The latest accusation by some in the Democratic leadership, that the administration has manipulated intelligence and has exaggerated the threat, is nothing more than an effort to use the war in Iraq for political gain. That is shameful. It devalues the sacrifice our men and women are making on the battlefield every day. It places at risk everything that Americans have sacrificed on behalf of the cause of liberty here and abroad. Do the critics need to be reminded that it was a few years ago when Democrats joined Republicans in a bipartisan acknowledgment that Saddam Hussein posed a threat to the world?

In fact, it was the Senate, in 1998, that unanimously passed the Iraq Liberation Act that called for the United States to support efforts to overthrow that terrible dictator. It was President Clinton who so eloquently described the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and the consequences of inaction when he said:

The hard fact is that so long as Saddam remains in power, he threatens the well-being of his people, the peace of the region, the security of the world. The best way to end that threat once and for all is with the new Iraqi government, a government ready to live at peace with its neighbors, a government that respects the rights of its people.

President Clinton went on to say:

Heavy as they are, the costs of action must be weighed against the price of inaction. If Saddam defies the world and we fail to respond, we will face a far greater threat in the future. Saddam will strike again at his

neighbors; he will make war against his own people. And mark my words, he will develop weapons of mass destruction. He did will deploy them, and he will use them.

President Clinton was correct in that assessment made in 1998. We are fortunate that today Saddam Hussein is no longer a threat to the region or to the world due to the bipartisan vote of the Congress to authorize the use of force to remove Saddam Hussein in October of 2002. It was a bipartisan vote of the Senate that authorized that use of force.

Today, the political dynamics have changed. For their own cynical reasons, some Democrats have charged that the Bush administration has somehow manipulated intelligence to justify the war in Iraq. These same individuals are calling for yet another investigation to somehow justify their patently false claims. I remind my colleagues that this issue has been investigated not only by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence but the bipartisan Silberman-Robb Commission. Of course, the results of both investigations do not support the charges of manipulation, so we hear yet another call for another investigation. Wishing that the results were different cannot make it so. What do they propose? To initiate investigation after investigation until somehow they manage to will into existence the results they have been hoping for, I imagine.

I wish to ask my colleagues, did President Clinton lie when he discussed the intelligence that led him to support the forced ouster of Saddam Hussein? Did he manipulate intelligence to justify his bombing in Iraq? Or did he rely upon the same intelligence that this administration and this Congress and our allies did when they came to the same conclusion that Saddam was a threat to the region and to the world? Are there Senators who today would renounce their vote to remove Saddam by force in October of 2002? Out of the bipartisan 77 who voted to authorize the use of force to remove Saddam Hussein, I have only learned of two who have said they regret that vote and would renounce it.

Before the war, a leading Democrat—in fact, the Democratic leader—clearly stated his position in Iraq. As of this morning, his quotation was still on his Senate Web site. It says:

What is my position on Iraq? Saddam Hussein is an evil dictator who presents a serious threat to international peace and security. Under Saddam's rule, Iraq has engaged in far-reaching human rights abuses, been a state sponsor of terrorism, and has long sought to obtain and develop weapons of mass destruction.

I agree with this statement on the Web site of Senator REID of today, November 7, 2005. But today we are told by the same Democratic leader that somehow this administration was responsible for manipulating intelligence to authorize the war in Iraq when, in fact, he took the same position at the time that force was used. At least his Web site takes that same position today.

For the record, I would like to read the conclusions of the Intelligence Committee investigation and the Silberman-Robb investigation so there will be no doubt that the Bush administration did not manipulate intelligence to justify this war. The Intelligence Committee report, which was supported by both Democrats and Republicans, states the following:

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.

Likewise, the Silberman-Robb Commission, a bipartisan commission appointed to look into our intelligence failures, concluded:

The Intelligence Community did not make or change any analytic judgments in response to political pressure to reach a particular conclusion, but the pervasive conventional wisdom that Saddam retained WMD affected the analytic process.

Madam President, this much is clear. No one attempted to manipulate intelligence leading up to the war in Iraq—not President Clinton, not Members of the Senate, not this administration, all of whom, based upon the same intelligence, concluded that Saddam represented an imminent threat to the national security of the United States. Instead, we found that while some of our intelligence was wrong on Hussein, it was obvious, and it is obvious today, that he was a threat to the civilized world.

I believe all of this crystallizes into a question about how doubts are resolved in a dangerous and uncertain world. Do we resolve doubts in favor of a tyrant who has used weapons of mass destruction on his own people, who demonstrated an interest in acquiring nuclear weapons, who refused to cooperate with weapons inspectors after 17 Security Council resolutions ordered him to do so, and who at last count murdered at least 400,000 of his own people who are lying in mass graves?

Giving Saddam Hussein the benefit of the doubt would have been a crazy and irresponsible thing to do. Of course, the 77 Senators who voted for the use of force against Saddam in October 2002 weren't buying that Saddam was some harmless individual then.

So why now? Sure, we need better intelligence and we have undertaken substantial and meaningful intelligence reform to remedy the defects. Intelligence by its very nature is never certain, but we are restructuring our intelligence community to ensure the President of our country, whether he be Democrat or Republican, gets the most accurate intelligence available.

Meanwhile, I hope the Members of this body who have politicized this issue by making false allegations of manipulation of intelligence would realize that their allegations only serve to divide the American people and to dishonor the sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform and undermine critical American resolve to finish the important work that we are about in Iraq.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business but on the amendment before us.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, we have certainly no objection to that. At this juncture in the bill, it does not impair our ability to manage. I ask the Senator to please proceed.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I thank, as always, the distinguished senior Senator from the State of Virginia.

TREATMENT OF DETAINEES

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I commend Senator LEVIN and others for their leadership in proposing this amendment. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the amendment based on the belief that a comprehensive, objective, and independent investigation into the collection of intelligence through the detention, interrogation, and rendition of prisoners is long overdue. While I am a strong supporter of the amendment, I regret greatly the fact that we have been forced to seek the creation of a national commission on such a critically important matter that falls squarely within the oversight responsibility of the Congress. Unfortunately, Congress's unwillingness to carry out these oversight duties in the past year has left us with no remaining alternative but to seek the creation of a national commission.

Why do I say this? The collection of intelligence through interrogation and rendition is an extremely important part of our counterterrorism effort. The interrogation of captured terrorists and insurgents is, in fact, one of the most important of intelligence tools. We must ensure that those interrogations are carried out in a proper and effective manner. This tool, as with all others, must be applied within the bounds of our laws and our own national moral framework, and it must be subject to the same scrutiny and congressional oversight as every other aspect of intelligence. This, unfortunately, has not been the case.

Despite the critical importance of interrogation-derived intelligence and the growing controversy surrounding retention, interrogation, and rendition policies and practices, the Congress has largely ignored the issue, holding a limited number of hearings that have provided limited insight.

More disturbing, the Senate Intelligence Committee, the Senate committee charged with overseeing U.S. intelligence programs and the only one with jurisdiction to investigate all aspects of this issue, is sitting on the sidelines and effectively abdicating its oversight responsibility to media investigative reporters.

As the Intelligence Committee's vice chairman, I have been pushing for the past 10 months for a formal investigation into the legal and operational