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**REPORT ON THE U.S. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY'S  
PREWAR INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS ON IRAQ**



**Ordered Reported on July 7, 2004**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

(U) In June 2003, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence began a formal review of U.S. intelligence into the existence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs, Iraq's ties to terrorist groups, Saddam Hussein's threat to stability and security in the region, and his violations of human rights including the actual use of weapons of mass destruction against his own people, as a part of the Committee's continuing oversight of the intelligence activities of the United States.

(U) Committee staff had, for the previous several months, already been examining aspects of intelligence activities regarding Iraq, including the Intelligence Community's (IC's) intelligence support to the United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) weapons inspections in Iraq and the IC's analysis and collection of reporting related to the alleged Niger-Iraq uranium deal. On June 20, 2003, however, Senator Pat Roberts, Chairman, and Senator John D. Rockefeller IV, Vice Chairman, of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence released a press statement announcing their joint commitment to continue the Committee's thorough review of U.S. intelligence. Chairman Roberts and Vice Chairman Rockefeller said the Committee would examine:

- the quantity and quality of U.S. intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs, ties to terrorist groups, Saddam Hussein's threat to stability and security in the region, and his repression of his own people;
- the objectivity, reasonableness, independence, and accuracy of the judgments reached by the Intelligence Community;
- whether those judgments were properly disseminated to policymakers in the executive branch and Congress;
- whether any influence was brought to bear on anyone to shape their analysis to support policy objectives; and
- other issues we mutually identify in the course of the Committee's review.

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With the exception of the question of accuracy, all of the foregoing are addressed in this report.

(U) On February 12, 2004, the Committee unanimously agreed to refine the terms of reference of the Committee's inquiry. In addition to the matters set forth in the joint release of the Chairman and Vice Chairman on June 20, 2003, the Committee agreed to examine additional issues in two phases. Issues annotated as phase one have been addressed in this report. Issues annotated as phase two are currently under review by the Committee. The additional issues are:

- the collection of intelligence on Iraq from the end of the Gulf War to the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom (phase I);
- whether public statements, reports, and testimony regarding Iraq by U.S. Government officials made between the Gulf War period and the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom were substantiated by intelligence information (phase II);
- the postwar findings about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and weapons programs and links to terrorism and how they compare with prewar assessments (phase II);
- prewar intelligence assessments about postwar Iraq (phase II);
- any intelligence activities relating to Iraq conducted by the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group (PCTEG) and the Office of Special Plans within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (phase I and II); and
- the use by the Intelligence Community of information provided by the Iraqi National Congress (INC) (phase I and II).

(U) In early June 2003, the IC provided the Committee with nineteen volumes (approximately 15,000 pages) of intelligence assessments and source reporting underlying the IC's assessments of Iraq's WMD programs, ties to terrorist groups, threat to stability and security in the region, and repression of its own people. Committee staff began immediately to read and analyze every report provided to determine how intelligence analysts reached their conclusions and whether any assessments were not supported by the intelligence provided to the Committee. In late August and early September 2003, Committee staff requested additional intelligence to support IC assessments which Committee staff had judged were not supported by the intelligence that had been previously provided.

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(U) The Committee began to receive this additional supporting intelligence in October 2003. In late October 2003, Committee staff requested that the IC provide any intelligence, which had not already been provided, that contradicted the IC's analyses regarding Iraq. For example, Committee staff requested intelligence that showed Iraq had not reconstituted its nuclear program, had not renewed production of chemical agents, and had abandoned an offensive biological weapons program. In early November 2003, the IC wrote to the Committee that it was working to provide the contradictory intelligence requested by Committee staff. In the same letter, the IC said it had uncovered an additional six volumes of intelligence material that supported the IC's assessments on Iraq's WMD programs. These materials were also reviewed by Committee staff. The IC provided the contradictory intelligence information in late November. During the twelve months of the Committee's review, Committee staff submitted almost 100 requests for supplemental intelligence information, received over 30,000 pages of documents in response to those requests, and reviewed and analyzed each document provided. The Committee's request to review Presidential Daily Briefs (PDBs) relevant only to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities and links to terrorists was denied by the White House. Without examining these documents, the Committee is unable to determine fully whether Intelligence Community judgments were properly disseminated to policymakers in the executive branch, one of the tasks outlined for review.

(U) Committee staff interviewed more than 200 individuals including intelligence analysts and senior officials with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Department of State, National Ground Intelligence Center, the Air Force, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Staff also interviewed former intelligence analysts, National Intelligence Officers, operations officers, collection managers, signals intelligence collectors, imagery analysts, nuclear experts with the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ambassadors, former United Nations inspectors, Department of Defense weapons experts, State Department officials, and National Security Council staff members.

(U) The Committee held four preliminary hearings on aspects of U.S. intelligence on Iraq: the Iraq-Niger connection, the CIA and State Department Inspectors General report on the review of the Iraq-Niger issue, the history and continuity of weapons of mass destruction assessments pertaining to Iraq, and Iraq prewar intelligence.

(U) These efforts have enabled the Committee to develop a full understanding of the quantity and quality of intelligence reporting on Iraq's WMD programs, Iraq's ties to terrorist groups, Saddam Hussein's threat to stability and security in the region, and his violations of

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human rights including the actual use of weapons of mass destruction against his own people. The Committee has also gained an understanding of how intelligence analysts throughout the IC used that intelligence to develop their assessments on these issues, how those assessments were disseminated to policymakers, whether those assessments were reasonable, objective, independent of political consideration, and whether any influence was brought to bear to shape their analysis to support policy objectives.

***A. Understanding Intelligence Analysis***

(U) Over a period of one year, Committee staff, many of whom are former intelligence analysts, reviewed over a decade of Intelligence Community (IC) assessments and the intelligence that underlay them. In all cases our staff endeavored, to the greatest extent possible, to disregard post-war discoveries concerning Iraq until after completing the analysis of the prewar intelligence material in order to replicate the same analytical environment IC analysts experienced prior to the war. The Committee's review surfaced strengths and weaknesses throughout the intelligence process. These are identified in the Report's findings and conclusions.

(U) Intelligence analysis is not a perfect science and we should not expect perfection from our IC analysts. It is entirely possible for an analyst to perform meticulous and skillful analysis and be completely wrong. Likewise, it is also possible to perform careless and unskilled analysis and be completely right. While intelligence collection is not an analytical function, it is the foundation upon which all good analysis is built. Problems with collection priorities and management will be discussed in detail throughout the report.

(U) The Committee, therefore, believes that it is important to understand the role of analysts and how they learn and apply their craft. With that background, the Committee hopes the reader can fully appreciate the content of this report.

**1. Developing Professional Intelligence Analysts**

(U) In order to give context to the Committee's review of the Intelligence Community's (IC) prewar analyses, Committee staff spoke with senior CIA officers at the Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis at the CIA. The CIA relies on the Kent School to teach new analysts the trade craft of analysis. Committee staff members also drew on their own experiences working in the IC's analytic community.

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(U) Kent School officials provided a briefing, slides, and a copy of the school's brochure to explain the school's approach and how analytic trade craft is presented to new CIA analysts. The training also address how the Directorate of Intelligence (DI) views the analytic process and the DI's structure.

(U) The CIA's Directorate of Intelligence requires its new analysts to complete a training program called the Career Analyst Program, or CAP. The CAP includes eleven weeks of classroom instruction and a five week interim assignment. The participants receive two weeks of training on analysis, three weeks on DI writing and one week each on briefing, teamwork, and the business of intelligence. (These are the core analytic trade craft areas.) The CAP also devotes time to task-force exercises and visits to U.S. military commands and other agencies to help the students develop a broader perspective on the role of intelligence analysis in policymaking. For the interim assignment, analysts consult with their "home offices" to choose an assignment that is relevant to the account they will cover as a DI analyst. They can work in other intelligence agencies, a policy office or in a law enforcement agency for their interim assignment.

(U) According to the school's brochure, "The CAP emphasizes the Directorate's goal: to produce analysis that is rigorous, well-reasoned, and appropriately caveated. The analytic thinking courses' focus on questioning key assumptions and considering possible explanations and outcomes. Analysts learn to be aware of psychological, cultural, and informational factors that affect their analytic judgments." Kent School officials stated that this training involves a very hands-on approach and many small exercises that help the analysts learn by doing. Instructors give the students a number of short classroom assignments, many of which are done in groups. Students receive extensive feedback from the instructors.

(U) The same is true for the development of the analysts' writing skills. The long brochure states, "DI writing style emphasizes the bottom line up front, precise and concise language, and a clear articulation of our judgments and our confidence in them." The analysts practice writing each of the types of products that the DI produces including situation reports and short and long papers. They also participate in a final four-day course on writing for the President and senior policymakers. The Kent School officials stated that many of these assignments use case studies, such as the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the bombing of Khobar Towers, the break-up of Yugoslavia and the September 11 attacks.

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(U) Kent School officials outlined the key analytic goals as:

- providing timely, credible, and relevant intelligence analysis for the consumer;
- warning and identifying opportunities;
- maintaining analytic integrity and objectivity; and
- using all source intelligence.

They also described the analytic process as 1) dealing with facts and assertions, 2) testing assumptions and logic, 3) developing findings, 4) interpreting information, 5) developing scenarios (to include both high probability/low impact and low probability/high impact), 6) determining indicators, and 7) discussing options to determine opportunities, identifying vulnerabilities and revealing potential outcomes.


(U) By using case studies and providing the CAP participants with the intelligence cables used by analysts to build their assessments, the instructors are able to help the new analysts develop their ability to weigh information and become accustomed to the format of the reporting and source descriptions. They also learn to task collectors, structure data for presentations, and recognize indicators of activities. They also learn to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the various "INTs" – human intelligence (HUMINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT), and measurement and signature intelligence (MASINT).

(U) The Kent School also incorporates a module which alerts new analysts to the pitfalls of assumptions and biases in their own analysis and in the work of others. Recognizing one's own bias is extremely difficult, however. Therefore, it is critical to develop a workforce of analysts that are comfortable questioning each other. While it is stressed in the initial training provided by the CAP, it appears to be the lesson that analysts neglect first.

(U) In her February 11, 2004 address to the Directorate of Intelligence, the Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI) stated:

I want to focus on the danger of inherited assumptions. That may be the single most important aspect of our trade craft that needs to be examined. That is something I speak about to every new CAP class: How do we ensure that we are not passing along assumptions that haven't been sufficiently questioned or examined?





## **2. An Analyst's Daily Taskings**

(U) In terms of day-to-day work, intelligence analysts review raw reporting, draft assessments, and disseminate those assessments to policy makers. Each written assessment may be drafted by one or several analysts who have reviewed raw reporting over a period of time. Intelligence collected by the CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Security Agency (NSA), National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and in some cases, State Department diplomatic reporting, is reviewed daily by intelligence analysts using computer software that searches the various agencies' databases and produces a daily electronic read file for each analyst that is specific to their area of responsibility. In many instances, analysts from regional and functional offices, which cover issues that span across regions, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and humanitarian issues, will read the same material and draw conclusions relative to their interests and responsibilities.

(U) Each IC agency that has an all-source analysis capability or responsibility will have one or more analysts reviewing intelligence reporting on the same issues. In an ideal situation, these analysts will be in regular contact over secure communications to discuss new information, to share ideas and to brainstorm about how the information can be presented to policymakers to best satisfy their requirements, however, this exchange does not always occur. The analysts are responsible for sifting through large amounts of information and drawing connections or reaching conclusions about the implications of the information at their disposal. Depending on the product, the analysis may be coordinated with other IC members, but in many instances, each agency produces its own finished products which are subject to review and editing by its own internal management.

## **3. The Finished Product**

(U) Analysts create their products for intelligence consumers, including policy makers and warfighters, to name two of many. While DIA products are generally intended for the Secretary of Defense, CIA products for the White House, and the State Department's Bureau Intelligence & Research products for the Secretary of State, most products are available to policy makers at each of these agencies regardless of the author's organization. The vast majority of intelligence products are available to the Congress as well.

(U) It is important to note that in many cases the manager responsible for approving the final product may not, and often does not, review the raw intelligence upon which the assessment is based. Kent School officials who have worked as branch chiefs or division managers stated,

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however, that products are reviewed more carefully when the drafter is a relatively new analyst. When the drafter is a more senior, well-established analyst, the product will often be edited, but not substantively reviewed before it goes up the chain to the policymaker. If the intelligence product was not coordinated with other intelligence agencies, it is entirely possible that one analyst's views may be presented to high-level officials including the President of the United States without having been reviewed by other analysts with the same depth of knowledge. This is a dynamic we found on a number of occasions in the course of this review.

***B. Weapons of Mass Destruction Capabilities***

(U) The Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) related sections of the report recount the Committee's efforts to evaluate the quantity and quality of the intelligence underlying prewar assessments. Each section contains its own set of conclusions. There is also a separate section on the issue of objectivity which addresses whether analysts were pressured to reach specific conclusions to support a particular policy objective. This report does not address the question of accuracy regarding WMD. When the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) completes its work in Iraq, we will then be able to evaluate to the maximum extent possible the accuracy of the IC's judgments prior to the war.

(U) The Committee focused its evaluation of the Intelligence Community's WMD analysis primarily on the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE): *Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction*. This document was selected for several reasons:

- First, according to the National Intelligence Council (NIC) and the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), National Intelligence Estimates (NIE) are the IC's most authoritative written judgments concerning national security issues. The process by which the IC produces NIEs – including the one on Iraqi WMD – has been honed over nearly 30 years. According to the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) webpage, it is designed to provide policymakers in both the executive and legislative branches with the “best, unvarnished, and unbiased information – regardless of whether analytic judgments conform to U.S. policy.”
- Second, the 2002 NIE addressed all of Iraq's WMD programs and was a coordinated community judgment in which all agency views were represented and dissenting opinions were noted.

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- Third, the 2002 NIE was comprehensive, encompassing more than ten years of source reporting and analysis. The intelligence documentation provided to the Committee to support the assessments in the 2002 NIE also included the documents which were the basis for the previous decade of analytical products on Iraq's WMD programs.
- Fourth, the 2002 NIE presented some new IC assessments, some of which shifted in significant ways from previous judgments regarding Iraq's WMD programs.
- Finally, the 2002 NIE was requested by Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) Members so that policymakers could benefit from the IC's coordinated judgment on Iraq's WMD programs while they debated authorizing military action against Iraq.

(U) Since June 2003, Committee staff has worked through a decade of intelligence assessments on Iraqi WMD programs and the intelligence source reporting used by IC analysts to make those assessments – over 20,000 pages of documents. Committee staff interviewed over 160 people, including intelligence analysts from every agency involved in preparing WMD assessments on Iraq, ambassadors, operations officers, collection managers, nuclear experts with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), former United Nations (UN) inspectors, Department of Defense (DoD) weapons experts, State Department officials, and National Security Council (NSC) staff members.

(U) These efforts have enabled Committee staff to develop a full understanding of the body of intelligence on Iraq's WMD capabilities and an understanding of how intelligence analysts throughout the IC used that body of intelligence reporting to develop their assessments, particularly those in the 2002 NIE on *Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction*.

### **1. What is an NIE?**

(U) A National Intelligence Estimate is the IC's most authoritative written judgment concerning a specific national security issue. The Estimates are intended to provide policymakers in both the executive and legislative branches with the best, unvarnished, and unbiased information – regardless of whether analytic judgments conform to any particular policy objective.

(U) A 2003 NIC paper on the NIE process stated that an NIE is “. . . the most authoritative written means by which the Director of Central Intelligence conveys to the

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President and other senior leaders the judgments of the entire Intelligence Community regarding national security issues.” Sherman Kent,<sup>1</sup> a former Chairman of the Board of National Estimates, described the purpose and importance of NIEs in an essay in 1976, which noted that the NIE

. . . was and is the Director’s estimate, and its findings are his. Although many experts from perhaps all intelligence components of the community participated in the production of the papers in the NIE series, and although the intelligence chiefs themselves formally passed on the final text, they could not bend its findings to suit their own judgments contrary to the will of the DCI. They could try to win him to their sides by full and free discussions, but they could not outvote him and force him to join them, nor could they make him dissent from them . . . they could of their own accord concur with his findings or, not being able to, they could dissent and make their alternative views known in footnotes to his text.

(U) NIEs and the formal process by which they are produced, were established in the 1950s. An NIE can be requested by a variety of individuals, including members of the executive branch, members of Congress, and military commanders. After an NIE has been requested and authorized, the next step is the preparation of a document which has come to be called the Terms of Reference (TOR). According to a 1994 NIC paper describing NIE drafting guidelines, the TOR is an outline of the “issues and key questions to be covered in the Estimate.” Sherman Kent describes the TOR as a “statement of precisely what was wanted.”

(U) An officer of the NIC, typically the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) with responsibility for the substantive issue being examined in the NIE, is given responsibility for managing the NIE from its initial drafting, through the coordination process with the national intelligence agencies, to final approval. The officer presiding over the drafting of the NIE can draw on the staff of the NIC as well as the national intelligence agencies to write the draft.

(U) The 1994 NIE drafting guidelines state that an NIE can be drafted by an IC analyst, a member of the NIC staff, a deputy NIO, or an outside expert. After the draft has been reviewed within the NIC staff, it is then sent to the national intelligence agencies where each agency’s appropriate subject matter experts review the draft and prepare their comments. Agency

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<sup>1</sup>*Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: Collected Essays*, (<http://www.odci.gov/csi/books/shermankent/inst.html>). From 1952 to 1967, Sherman Kent was the Chairman of the Board of National Estimates, which would later become the National Intelligence Council.

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comments are then carried forward to the first interagency coordination session. At this and any successive coordination sessions, the goal is to produce a draft that, without unnecessary hedging or ambiguity, reflects the collective judgment of the IC. In the event any of the agency representatives find a part of the NIE with which they do not concur, they are free to argue their case before their colleagues in order to sway them. If they fail to convince their colleagues, they are free to draft a dissenting footnote. Once the agency representatives arrive at a consensus paper, with or without footnotes, this final draft is usually submitted to IC peers and to a panel of IC experts for their review. A summary of the outside experts' views is included in the NIE. The NIC front office reviews the final draft prior to forwarding it to the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB) principals for their approval. The NFIB is composed of senior representatives of the IC organizations involved in the collection, processing and analysis of intelligence<sup>2</sup> and is chaired by the DCI. The senior representatives of the military intelligence services may also attend as members of the NFIB when matters under their purview are considered and may attend other NFIB sessions as observers. The NFIB typically approves the NIE the same day it is presented.

(U) The 1994 NIE drafting guidelines described three rough time frames for the production of an NIE: a "fast track" of two to three weeks, a "normal track" of four to eight weeks, and a "long track" of two months or more. The Vice Chairman of the NIC told Committee staff that an NIE prepared within 60 days would be considered very fast, and that typically NIE's take three to six months. Sherman Kent noted in his essay that prior to 1976, NIE's had historically taken up to six to eight months to produce, but under conditions of urgency the time line has been considerably shortened. For example, during the Suez crisis of 1956, the Soviets sent a threatening note to Britain and France, who, along with the Israelis, had begun an attack on Egypt. The acting DCI convened the heads of the national intelligence agencies to develop an NIE to provide the IC's appraisal of Soviet intentions. There were no TORs and a draft was produced in about 30 minutes. The draft was immediately presented to the heads of the IC, who discussed and cleared the NIE within a few hours. The NIOs told Committee staff that ideally they would like about three months to produce an NIE.

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<sup>2</sup> The members of the NFIB are the DCI; Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (DDCI); Associate Director of Central Intelligence for Military Support; Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research (INR), Department of State; Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); Director, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA); Director, National Security Agency (NSA); Director, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA); Executive Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Director, Office of Intelligence, Department of Energy (DOE); Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury; Chairman, National Intelligence Council.

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## 2. The 2002 NIE on Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction

(U) In an unclassified letter dated September 9, 2002, Senator Richard Durbin, a member of the SSCI, wrote to the DCI expressing concern that the IC had not drafted an NIE on the status of Iraq's WMD program, and requested that the DCI "direct the production" of such an NIE – expressing the belief that "policymakers in both the executive branch and the Congress will benefit from the production of a coordinated, consensus document produced by all relevant components of the Intelligence Community" on this topic. Senator Durbin also requested that the DCI "produce an unclassified summary of this NIE" so "the American public can better understand this important issue."

(U) On September 10, 2002, Senator Bob Graham, then SSCI Chairman, sent a second letter to the DCI requesting the production of an NIE "on the status of Iraq's programs to develop weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, the status of the Iraqi military forces, including their readiness and willingness to fight, the effects a U.S.-led attack on Iraq would have on its neighbors, and Saddam Hussein's likely response to a U.S. military campaign designed to effect regime change in Iraq."

(U) On September 13, 2002, Senator Diane Feinstein, a member of the SSCI, wrote to President Bush to request his assistance in ensuring that the DCI prepare, on an immediate basis, an NIE "assessing the nature, magnitude and immediacy of the threat posed to the United States by Iraq." Senator Feinstein added, "there has not been a formal rigorous Intelligence Community assessment, such as a National Intelligence Estimate, addressing the issues relating to Iraq, and I deeply believe that such an estimate is vital to Congressional decision making, and most specifically, any resolution which may come before the Senate."

(U) On September 17, 2002, Senator Carl Levin, a member of the SSCI and then Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, wrote to the DCI stating that it was "imperative" for the IC to prepare an NIE on Iraq "including the central question of the current state of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs." Senator Levin asked that the NIE address a number of issues including Iraq's WMD holdings, development facilities, acquisition activities, denial and deception activities, deployment, doctrine for employment, means of delivery, the likelihood that Saddam Hussein would use WMD against the U.S., our allies, or our interests, the likelihood that Iraq would comply with UN resolutions; and Iraq's terrorist activities.

(U) By the morning of September 12, 2002, the NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs had received official guidance from the DCI to begin work on the NIE. The work of assembling

[REDACTED]

and coordinating the NIE was divided primarily between four NIO's: the NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs was responsible for the nuclear and ballistic missile portions as well as overall management of the entire NIE, the NIO for Conventional Military Issues was responsible for the chemical warfare (CW) and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) portions, and the NIO for Science and Technology was responsible for the biological weapons (BW) portion. The NIO for Near East South Asia (NESAs) was also involved in issues regarding regional reactions, interfacing with the NIO for Conventional Military Issues on the doctrine issues, and some terrorism issues, specifically whether Iraq might use terrorists to deliver WMD.

(U) Because of the short time period to prepare the NIE, the NIOs began by drawing language from existing agency and interagency papers. The NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs disseminated a draft to the IC agencies for review on September 23, 2002 and held an all-day coordination meeting with IC analysts on September 25, 2002. The NIO for Strategic and Nuclear Programs disseminated a second draft which incorporated the analysts' changes and comments on September 26, 2002. Due to the compressed schedule of this NIE, the NIC did not submit the draft for peer review or to a panel of outside experts. The Vice Chairman of the NIC told Committee staff that because preparation for this NIE involved four NIOs, there was a "virtual peer review," and said that he did not believe that outside experts would have had substantially different views from the NIE, noting that "I think all you could have called in is an amen chorus on this thing, because there was nobody out there with different views." The NIE was approved by a meeting of the full NFIB on October 1, 2002 and printed that day.

(U) The scope note of the NIE said that it "was requested by the Director of Central Intelligence to address the status of and outlook for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs" and built on the work and judgments of twelve previous IC products. The NIE contained four sections on specific WMD programs including:

- 1) Saddam's Pursuit of Nuclear Weapons;
- 2) Chemical Warfare Program – Rebuilt and Expanding;
- 3) Biological Warfare Program – Larger Than Before; and
- 4) Delivery Systems – Iraq Increasing Its Options.

(U) Committee staff examined each of these sections in detail, including the intelligence source reporting underlying the assessments. Committee staff also reviewed previous IC

[REDACTED]

products and assessments from individual IC agencies that discussed Iraq's WMD programs to understand the progression of analysis from the time United Nations inspectors left Iraq in December 1998 until just before the war with Iraq in 2003. The nuclear, biological, chemical and delivery sections of this report discuss the assessments made in those products and the intelligence source reporting the IC analysts used to make their judgments.

### 3. Overall Conclusions – Weapons of Mass Destruction

**(U) Conclusion 1. Most of the major key judgments in the Intelligence Community's October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), *Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction*, either overstated, or were not supported by, the underlying intelligence reporting. A series of failures, particularly in analytic trade craft, led to the mischaracterization of the intelligence.**

(U) The major key judgments in the NIE, particularly that Iraq "is reconstituting its nuclear program," "has chemical and biological weapons," was developing an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) "probably intended to deliver biological warfare agents," and that "all key aspects – research & development (R&D), production, and weaponization – of Iraq's offensive biological weapons (BW) program are active and that most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf War," either overstated, or were not supported by, the underlying intelligence reporting provided to the Committee. The assessments regarding Iraq's continued development of prohibited ballistic missiles were reasonable and did accurately describe the underlying intelligence.

(U) The assessment that Iraq "is reconstituting its nuclear program" was not supported by the intelligence provided to the Committee. The intelligence reporting did show that Iraq was procuring dual-use equipment that had potential nuclear applications, but all of the equipment had conventional military or industrial applications. In addition, none of the intelligence reporting indicated that the equipment was being procured for suspect nuclear facilities. Intelligence reporting also showed that former Iraqi nuclear scientists continued to work at former nuclear facilities and organizations, but the reporting did not show that this cadre of nuclear personnel had recently been regrouped or enhanced as stated in the NIE, nor did it suggest that they were engaged in work related to a nuclear weapons program.

(U) The statement in the key judgments of the NIE that "Baghdad has chemical and biological weapons" overstated both what was known and what intelligence analysts judged about Iraq's chemical and biological weapons holdings. The intelligence reporting did support



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the conclusion that chemical and biological weapons were within Iraq's technological capability, that Iraq was trying to procure dual-use materials that could have been used to produce these weapons, and that uncertainties existed about whether Iraq had fully destroyed its pre-Gulf War stocks of weapons and precursors. Iraq's efforts to deceive and evade United Nations weapons inspectors and its inability or unwillingness to fully account for pre-Gulf War chemical and biological weapons and precursors could have led analysts to the reasonable conclusion that Iraq may have retained those materials, but intelligence analysts did not have enough information to state with certainty that Iraq "has" these weapons.

(I) Similarly, the assessment that "all key aspects – R&D, production, and weaponization – of Iraq's offensive BW program are active and that most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf War" was not supported by the underlying intelligence provided to the Committee. Intelligence showed that Iraq was renovating or expanding facilities that had been associated with Iraq's past BW program and was engaged in research that had BW applications, but few reports suggested specifically that the activity was related to BW. Intelligence reports did indicate that Iraq may have had a mobile biological weapons program, but most of the reporting was from a single human intelligence (HUMINT) source to whom the Intelligence Community (IC) never had direct access. It was reasonable for intelligence analysts to be concerned about the potential weapons applications of Iraq's dual use activities and capabilities. The intelligence reporting did not substantiate an assessment that all aspects of Iraq's BW program "are" larger and more advanced than before the Gulf War, however.

(I) The key judgment in the NIE that Iraq was developing a UAV "probably intended to deliver biological warfare agents" also overstated what the intelligence reporting indicated about the mission of Iraq's small UAVs. Numerous intelligence reports confirmed that Iraq was developing a small UAV program [REDACTED], but none of the reports provided to the Committee said that Iraq intended to use the small UAVs to deliver chemical or biological weapons. The Air Force footnote, which stated that biological weapons delivery was a possible mission for the small UAVs, though other missions were more likely, more accurately reflected the body of intelligence reporting.

(U) The failure of the IC to accurately analyze and describe the intelligence in the NIE was the result of a combination of systemic weaknesses, primarily in analytic trade craft, compounded by a lack of information sharing, poor management, and inadequate intelligence collection. Many of these weaknesses, which are described in detail below, have not yet been fully addressed, despite having been identified previously by other inquiry panels, including the *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of*

[REDACTED]

September 11, 2002 (2002), *The Intelligence Community's Performance on the Indian Nuclear Tests* (The Jeremiah Report, 1998), and the *Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States* (The Rumsfeld Commission, 1998). The Committee found no evidence that the IC's mischaracterization or exaggeration of the intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities was the result of political pressure.

**(U) Conclusion 2. The Intelligence Community did not accurately or adequately explain to policymakers the uncertainties behind the judgments in the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate.**

(U) One of the key failures in analytic trade craft of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) was the failure of the Intelligence Community (IC) to explain the details of the reporting and the uncertainties of both the reliability of some key sources and of intelligence judgments. Intelligence analysts are not only charged with interpreting and assessing the intelligence reporting, but with clearly conveying to policymakers the difference between what intelligence analysts know, what they don't know, what they think, and to make sure that policymakers understand the difference. This articulation of the IC's responsibility to policymakers is widely attributed to Colin Powell when he was serving as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but the effective communication of judgments has been accepted as a primary analytic function for decades. For example, in 1964, Sherman Kent, considered the founder of intelligence analysis as a profession, wrote about the importance of using appropriate words of estimative probability to "set forth the community's findings in such a way as to make clear to the reader what is certain knowledge and what is reasoned judgment, and within this large realm of judgment what varying degrees of certitude lie behind each key statement."<sup>3</sup>

(U) At the time the IC drafted and coordinated the NIE on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs in September 2002, most of what intelligence analysts actually "knew" about Iraq's weapons programs pre-dated the 1991 Gulf War, leaving them with very little direct knowledge about the current state of those programs. Analysts knew that Iraq had active nuclear, chemical, biological, and delivery programs before 1991, and had previously lied to, and was still not forthcoming with, UN weapons inspectors about those programs. The analysts also knew that the United Nations was not satisfied with Iraq's efforts to account for its

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<sup>3</sup>*Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: Collected Essays*, (<http://www.odci.gov/csi/books/shermankent/inst.html>). From 1952 to 1967, Sherman Kent was the Chairman of the Board of National Estimates, which would later become the National Intelligence Council.

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destruction of all of its pre-Gulf War weapons, precursors, and equipment. Additionally, the analysts knew that Iraq was trying to import dual-use materials and equipment and had rebuilt or was continuing to use facilities that had been associated with Iraq's pre-Gulf War weapons programs, and knew that WMD were likely within Iraq's technological capabilities.

(U) The IC did not know whether Iraq had retained its pre-Gulf War weapons, whether Iraq was intending to use those dual-use materials and facilities for weapons or for legitimate purposes, or even if Iraq's attempts to obtain many of the dual-use goods it had been trying to procure were successful. The IC thought that Iraq had retained its pre-Gulf War weapons and that Iraq was using dual-use materials and facilities to manufacture weapons. While this was a reasonable assessment, considering Iraq's past behavior, statements in the 2002 NIE that Iraq "has chemical and biological weapons," "Iraq has maintained its chemical weapons effort," and "is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program," did not accurately portray the uncertainty of the information. The NIE failed in that it portrayed what intelligence analysts thought and assessed as what they knew and failed to explain the large gaps in the information on which the assessments were based.

(I) In the cases in the NIE where the IC did express uncertainty about its assessments concerning Iraq's WMD capabilities, those explanations suggested, in some cases, that Iraq's capabilities were even greater than the NIE judged. For example, the key judgments of the NIE said "we judge that we are seeing only a portion of Iraq's WMD efforts, owing to Baghdad's vigorous denial and deception efforts. Revelations after the Gulf War starkly demonstrate the extensive efforts undertaken by Iraq to deny information. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]" While this did explain that key information on Iraq's programs was lacking, it suggested that Iraq's weapons programs were probably bigger and more advanced than the IC had judged and did not explain that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] analysts did not have enough information to determine whether Iraq was hiding activity or whether Iraq's weapons programs may have been dormant.

(U) Accurately and clearly describing the gaps in intelligence knowledge is not only important for policymakers to fully understand the basis for and gaps in analytic assessments, but is essential for policymakers in both the executive and legislative branches to make informed decisions about how and where to allocate Intelligence Community resources to fill those gaps.

[REDACTED]

**(U) Conclusion 3. The Intelligence Community (IC) suffered from a collective presumption that Iraq had an active and growing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program. This “group think” dynamic led Intelligence Community analysts, collectors and managers to both interpret ambiguous evidence as conclusively indicative of a WMD program as well as ignore or minimize evidence that Iraq did not have active and expanding weapons of mass destruction programs. This presumption was so strong that formalized IC mechanisms established to challenge assumptions and group think were not utilized.**

(U) The Intelligence Community (IC) has long struggled with the need for analysts to overcome analytic biases, that is, to resist the tendency to see what they would expect to see in the intelligence reporting. In the case of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities, the Committee found that intelligence analysts, in many cases, based their analysis more on their expectations than on an objective evaluation of the information in the intelligence reporting. Analysts expected to see evidence that Iraq had retained prohibited weapons and that Iraq would resume prohibited WMD activities once United Nations’ (UN) inspections ended. This bias that pervaded both the IC’s analytic and collection communities represents “group think,” a term coined by psychologist Irving Janis in the 1970’s to describe a process in which a group can make bad or irrational decisions as each member of the group attempts to conform their opinions to what they believe to be the consensus of the group. IC personnel involved in the Iraq WMD issue demonstrated several aspects of group think: examining few alternatives, selective gathering of information, pressure to conform within the group or withhold criticism, and collective rationalization.

(U) The roots of the IC’s bias stretch back to Iraq’s pre-1991 efforts to build WMD and its efforts to hide those programs. The fact that Iraq had repeatedly lied about its pre-1991 WMD programs, its continued deceptive behavior, and its failure to fully cooperate with UN inspectors left the IC with a predisposition to believe the Iraqis were continuing to lie about their WMD efforts. This was compounded by the fact that Iraq’s pre-1991 progress on its nuclear weapons program had surprised the IC. The role this knowledge played in analysts’ thinking is evident in the 2002 National Intelligence Estimate’s (NIE) introduction which said, “revelations after the Gulf War starkly demonstrate the extensive efforts undertaken by Iraq to deny information. The revelations also underscore the extent to which limited information fostered underestimates by the Intelligence Community of Saddam’s capabilities at that time.” This bias was likely further reinforced by the IC’s failure to detect the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist plot and the criticism that the Community had not done all it could to “connect the dots.”

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U) The IC had long assessed that Iraq maintained its ambitions to obtain WMD, and would seek to resume full WMD efforts once UN sanctions and inspections ended. Accordingly, after UN inspectors left Iraq in 1998, IC analysts began to look for evidence that Iraq was expanding WMD programs. Analysts interpreted ambiguous data as indicative of the active and expanded WMD effort they expected to see. The presumption that Iraq would take advantage of the departure of inspectors to restart its WMD efforts essentially became a hypothesis in search of evidence.

(I) The IC's bias was compounded by the fact that prior to 1998, the IC had become heavily dependent on UN information on the state of Iraq's WMD programs. When the IC lost this important information, analysts were forced to rely on less reliable and less detailed sources. For example, [REDACTED] reporting during UN inspections often described the [REDACTED]. These reports provided IC analysts with much of the insight [REDACTED]. Intelligence reporting after inspectors departed relied on less direct sources of information such as satellite imagery of activity at suspect facilities, fragmentary and ambiguous reports of Iraqi dual-use procurement efforts, and reporting of suspicious or prohibited activity from human sources who were no longer in the country. These indirect sources left the IC with few ways to determine the exact nature of suspicious Iraqi activity. The expectation, however, that Iraq would take advantage of the departure of inspectors to resume and expand its WMD programs led analysts to downplay or ignore the increased uncertainty that came with these less detailed and less reliable sources.

(I) The Committee found that the IC had a tendency to accept information which supported the presumption that Iraq had active and expanded WMD programs more readily than information which contradicted it. This was evident in analysts' assessments of Iraq's attempts to procure dual-use materials and activities at dual-use facilities. Dual-use materials and facilities are those which could be used in a WMD program, but which also have conventional military or legitimate civilian applications. The IC properly noted the potential threat embodied in these dual-use capabilities, should they be turned toward WMD purposes, and did an effective job of analyzing [REDACTED] Iraq's attempts to purchase dual-use equipment and materials to show how they could advance Iraq's WMD capability. But, the IC fell short by accepting most reporting of dual-use material imports or capabilities as intended for WMD programs. Information that contradicted the IC's presumption that Iraq had WMD programs, such as indications in the intelligence reporting that the dual-use materials were intended for conventional or civilian programs, was often ignored. The IC's bias that Iraq had active WMD

[REDACTED]

programs led analysts to presume, in the absence of evidence, that if Iraq could do something to advance its WMD capabilities, it would.

( [REDACTED] ) Another example of the IC's tendency to reject information that contradicted the presumption that Iraq had active and expanded WMD programs was the return of UN inspectors to Iraq in November 2002. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] When these inspections did not find evidence of active Iraqi WMD programs and, in fact, even refuted some aspects of the IC's nuclear and biological assessments, many analysts did not regard this information as significant. For example, the 2002 NIE cited [REDACTED] Iraq's Amiriyah Serum and Vaccine institute as [REDACTED] reasons the IC believed the facility was a "fixed dual-use BW agent production" facility. When UN inspectors visited Amiriyah after their return to Iraq in November 2002, however, they did not find any evidence of BW work at the facility, [REDACTED]. Analysts discounted the UN's findings as the result of the inspectors relative inexperience in the face of Iraqi denial and deception. Similarly, when International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors returned to Iraq in late 2002, one of their key lines of work was to investigate Iraq's claims that aluminum tubes it was trying to procure were intended for artillery rockets. The IAEA found that Iraq's claims that the aluminum tubes were intended for artillery rockets was completely consistent with the evidence on the ground in Iraq. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) responded to the IAEA's analysis by producing intelligence reports which rejected the IAEA's conclusions. Without giving many details of the IAEA's findings, CIA's analysis suggested that the IAEA was being fooled by Iraq, and reiterated CIA's assessment that the tubes were to be used in uranium centrifuges.

(U) Intelligence analysts' presumption that all dual-use activity was intended for WMD programs recurs throughout the 2002 NIE. Analysts believed that the fact that Iraq often attempted to obtain dual-use materials surreptitiously, through front companies and other illicit means in violation of UN sanctions, indicated that Iraq intended to use those materials for WMD. Analysts argued that Iraq would have no reason to hide itself as the end user of these materials if they were intended for legitimate purposes. However, analysts ignored the fact that Iraq typically used front companies and evaded UN sanctions for imports of purely legitimate goods. Analysts who monitored Iraq's compliance with the Oil for Food Program noted several reasons that Iraq wanted to avoid legitimate channels for imports including 1) the UN often denied materials needed for legitimate purposes because the materials had WMD applications, 2) using the UN's bureaucratic process was more cumbersome and time consuming than using illicit channels, and

[REDACTED]

3) transactions using front companies were less transparent, making corruption and profit taking easier for Iraqi managers and officials.

(U) Likewise, analysts were predisposed to identify as suspect any activity by scientists and officials involved in Iraq's pre-1991 WMD programs. While the IC should not have ignored the activity of these people, IC analysts failed to fully consider the possibility that Iraq, having spent significant national resources developing their capabilities, might have been seeking non-WMD purposes to fully employ the idle expertise left over from closed WMD programs.

(U) The presumption that Iraq had active WMD programs affected intelligence collectors as well. None of the guidance given to human intelligence collectors suggested that collection be focused on determining *whether* Iraq had WMD. Instead, the requirements assumed that Iraq had WMD, and focused on uncovering those activities and collecting against the extent of Iraq's WMD production and the locations of hidden stocks of weapons. A former manager in the CIA's Iraq WMD Task Force also told Committee staff that, in retrospect, he believes that the CIA tended to discount human intelligence (HUMINT) sources that denied the existence of Iraqi WMD programs as just repeating the Iraqi party line. In fact, numerous interviews with intelligence analysts and documents provided to the Committee indicate that analysts and collectors assumed that sources who denied the existence or continuation of WMD programs and stocks were either lying or not knowledgeable about Iraq's programs, while those sources who reported ongoing WMD activities were seen as having provided valuable information.

(U) The presumption that Iraq had active WMD programs was so strong that formalized IC mechanisms established to challenge assumptions and "group think," such as "red teams," "devil's advocacy," and other types of alternative or competitive analysis, were not utilized. The Committee found no evidence that IC analysts, collectors, or managers made any effort to question the fundamental assumptions that Iraq had active and expanded WMD programs, nor did they give serious consideration to other possible explanations for Iraq's failure to satisfy its WMD accounting discrepancies, other than that it was hiding and preserving WMD. The fact that no one in the IC saw a need for such tools is indicative of the strength of the bias that Iraq had active and expanded WMD programs. The Committee does not regard the [REDACTED] analysis on Iraq's aluminum tubes performed by CIA contractors as an attempt to challenge assumptions, but rather as an example of the collective rationalization that is indicative of "group think." The contractors were only provided with information by CIA, did not question agencies about their analysis, were not briefed by other agencies about their analysis, and performed their analysis of a complex intelligence issue in only one day.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U) The IC's failure to find unambiguous intelligence reporting of Iraqi WMD activities should have encouraged analysts to question their presumption that Iraq had WMD. Instead, analysts rationalized the lack of evidence as the result of "vigorous" Iraqi denial and deception (D&D) efforts to hide the WMD programs that analysts were certain existed. The 2002 NIE's introduction stated that "we judge that we are only seeing a portion of Iraq's WMD efforts owing to Baghdad's vigorous D&D efforts." The intelligence provided to the Committee showed that Iraq was making efforts to hide some activity, but the reporting was not clear about what activity was being hidden or why it was being hidden. Although the IC lacked unambiguous reporting of either active WMD programs or a vigorous D&D effort to hide WMD programs, the assumptions that Iraq was engaged in both were tied together into a self-reinforcing premise that explained away the lack of strong evidence of either.

**(U) Conclusion 4. In a few significant instances, the analysis in the National Intelligence Estimate suffers from a "layering" effect whereby assessments were built based on previous judgments without carrying forward the uncertainties of the underlying judgments.**

(U) The Committee defines "layering" as the process of building an intelligence assessment primarily using previous judgments without substantial new intelligence reporting. While this process is a legitimate and often useful analytic tool in making logical connections between intelligence reports and in understanding complex analytic problems, the process can lose its legitimacy when the cumulative uncertainties of the underlying assessments are not factored into or conveyed through the new assessments.

(U) In discussions with the Committee about his experience running the Iraq Survey Group, Dr. David Kay suggested that the IC's mind set before Operation Iraqi Freedom concerning Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs was a train that seemed "to always be going in the same direction." The IC drew on very few pieces of new evidence to reach large conclusions in which new pieces of evidence would accrete to the previous conclusion and pieces that did not fit tended to be thrown aside.

(U) One example of this layering effect occurred in the IC's analysis of Iraq's chemical weapons program. The NIE assessed that Iraq had renewed production of chemical weapons agents and stockpiled as much as 500 metric tons of chemical agent, much of it added in the last year. These assessments were largely based on another assessment, that Iraq may have been engaged in chemical weapons transshipment activity in the spring of 2002. This assessment was largely based on yet another assessment, that the presence of a specific tanker truck was a



[REDACTED]

possible indicator that chemical or biological weapons related activities were occurring. The IC did not make it clear in its latter assessments that its judgments were based on layer upon layer of previous analytic judgments. This gave the reader of the NIE the impression that Iraq's chemical weapons program was advancing and growing, but did not convey that the assessment was based on very little direct or credible intelligence reporting.

( [REDACTED] ) Similarly, the IC based its judgment that "all key aspects – research & development (R&D), production, and weaponization – of Iraq's offensive biological weapons (BW) program are active and that most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf War" primarily on its assessment that Iraq had mobile biological production vans. While this assessment was based on direct intelligence that indicated Iraq had mobile biological production units, the reporting was largely from a single source to whom the Intelligence Community did not have direct access. The Committee believes that the IC's expectation that Iraq would move to mobile biological weapons production, focused their attention on reporting that supported that contention and led them to disregard information that contradicted it. This exemplifies Dr. Kay's concerns that the IC made large new conclusions based on only a few pieces of new evidence that were joined to previous conclusions and that pieces that did not fulfill its expectations tended to be thrown aside.

(U) These are just two, of many, examples of this layering effect the Committee found in the IC's analysis of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. The Committee recognizes the importance of analysts' ability to perform this type of analytic extrapolation, particularly in trying to "connect the dots" of sometimes seemingly disparate pieces of intelligence. Incorporating and accurately explaining the cumulative underlying uncertainties inherent in that process is equally important, however.

**(U) Conclusion 5. In each instance where the Committee found an analytic or collection failure, it resulted in part from a failure of Intelligence Community managers throughout their leadership chains to adequately supervise the work of their analysts and collectors. They did not encourage analysts to challenge their assumptions, fully consider alternative arguments, accurately characterize the intelligence reporting, or counsel analysts who lost their objectivity.**

(U) This report describes a variety of serious analytical and collection failures in the Intelligence Community's (IC) work on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. While not in any way diminishing the responsibility of the analysts and collectors that were directly involved, the Committee believes that blame for these failures can not be laid at their feet alone.

[REDACTED]

In each instance, the analysts' and collectors' chains of command in their respective agencies, from immediate supervisors up to the National Intelligence Council and the Director of Central Intelligence, all share responsibility for not encouraging analysts to challenge their assumptions, fully consider alternative arguments or accurately characterize the intelligence reporting. They failed to adequately question and challenge analysts about their assessments, and, most importantly, to recognize when analysts had lost their objectivity and take corrective action. It seems likely that these failures of management and leadership resulted at least in part as a result of the fact that the Intelligence Community's chain of command shared with its analysts and collectors the same "group think" presumption that Iraq had active and expanded weapons of mass destruction programs.

**(U) Conclusion 6. The Committee found significant short-comings in almost every aspect of the Intelligence Community's human intelligence collection efforts against Iraq's weapons of mass destruction activities, in particular that the Community had no sources collecting against weapons of mass destruction in Iraq after 1998. Most, if not all, of these problems stem from a broken corporate culture and poor management, and will not be solved by additional funding and personnel.**

(U) The Committee's review into the prewar intelligence concerning Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs has entailed an unprecedented outside examination of a broad range of the Intelligence Community's (IC) human intelligence (HUMINT) operations. The Committee found significant short-comings in almost every aspect of these operations.

( [REDACTED] ) From 1991 to 1998, the IC relied too heavily on United Nations (UN) inspectors to collect information about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs and did not develop a sufficient unilateral HUMINT collection effort targeting Iraq to supplement UN-collected information and to take its place upon the departure of the UN inspectors. While the UN inspection process provided a valuable source of information, the IC should have used the time when inspectors were in Iraq to plan for the possibility that inspectors would leave and to develop sources who could continue to report after inspectors left.

( [REDACTED] ) Because the United States lacked an official presence inside Iraq, the Intelligence Community depended too heavily on defectors and foreign government services to obtain HUMINT information on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction activities. While these sources had the potential to provide some valuable information, they had a limited ability to provide the kind of detailed intelligence about current Iraqi weapons of mass destruction efforts sought by U.S. policymakers. Moreover, because the Intelligence Community did not have direct access to

[REDACTED]

many of these sources, their credibility was difficult to assess and was often left to the foreign government services to judge. Intelligence Community HUMINT efforts against a closed society like Iraq prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom were hobbled by the Intelligence Community's dependence on having an official U.S. presence in-country to mount clandestine HUMINT collection efforts.

(U) When UN inspectors departed Iraq, the placement of HUMINT agents and the development of unilateral sources inside Iraq were not top priorities for the Intelligence Community. The Intelligence Community did not have a single HUMINT source collecting against Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs in Iraq after 1998. The Intelligence Community appears to have decided that the difficulty and risks inherent in developing sources or inserting operations officers into Iraq outweighed the potential benefits. The Committee found no evidence that a lack of resources significantly prevented the Intelligence Community from developing sources or inserting operations officers into Iraq.

[REDACTED] . When Committee staff asked why the CIA had not considered placing a CIA officer in Iraq years before Operation Iraqi Freedom to investigate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs, a CIA officer said, "because it's very hard to sustain . . . it takes a rare officer who can go in . . . and survive scrutiny [REDACTED] for a long time." The Committee agrees that such operations are difficult and dangerous, but they should be within the norm of the CIA's activities and capabilities. Senior CIA officials have repeatedly told the Committee that a significant increase in funding and personnel will be required to enable the CIA to penetrate difficult HUMINT targets similar to prewar Iraq. The Committee believes, however, that if an officer willing and able to take such an assignment really is "rare" at the CIA, the problem is less a question of resources than a need for dramatic changes in a risk averse corporate culture.

(U) Problems with the Intelligence Community's HUMINT efforts were also evident in the Intelligence Community's handling of Iraq's alleged efforts to acquire uranium from Niger. The Committee does not fault the CIA for exploiting the access enjoyed by the spouse of a CIA employee traveling to Niger. The Committee believes, however, that it is unfortunate, considering the significant resources available to the CIA, that this was the only option available. Given the nature of rapidly evolving global threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons and weapons technology, the Intelligence Community must develop means to quickly respond to fleeting collection opportunities outside the Community's established operating areas. The Committee also found other problems with the Intelligence Community's follow-up on the

[REDACTED]

Iraq-Niger uranium issue, including a half-hearted investigation of the reported storage of uranium in a warehouse in Benin, and a failure, to this day, to call a telephone number, provided by the Navy, of an individual who claimed to have information about Iraq's alleged efforts to acquire uranium from Niger.

( [REDACTED] ) The Committee also found that the Defense HUMINT Service (DHS) demonstrated serious lapses in its handling of the HUMINT source code named CURVE BALL, who was the principle source behind the Intelligence Community's assessments that Iraq had a mobile biological weapons program. The DHS had primary responsibility for handling the Intelligence Community's interaction with the [REDACTED] debriefers that were handling CURVE BALL, but the DHS officers that were involved in CURVE BALL's case limited themselves to a largely administrative role, translating and passing along reports [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] analysts do not have the benefit of the regular interaction with sources or, in this case, CURVE BALL's debriefers, that could have allowed them to make judgments about the reliability of source reporting.

(U) Another significant problem found by the Committee is the fact that the CIA continues to excessively compartment sensitive HUMINT reporting and fails to share important information about HUMINT reporting and sources with Intelligence Community analysts who have a need to know. In the years before Operation Iraqi Freedom, the CIA protected its Iraq weapons of mass destruction sources so well that some of the information they provided was kept from the majority of analysts with a legitimate need to know. The biological weapons and delivery sections of this report discuss at length the CIA's failure to share important information about source reporting on Iraq's alleged mobile biological weapons program and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) program that left analysts and policymakers with an incomplete and, at times, misleading picture of these issues.

(U) The process by which the Intelligence Community calculates the benefits and risks of sharing sensitive human intelligence is skewed too heavily toward withholding information. This issue has been raised repeatedly with the Intelligence Community, particularly after the lack of information sharing was found to have played a key role in the intelligence failures of 9/11. The Committee believes that the Intelligence Community must reconsider whether the risks of expanding access to *cleared* analysts are truly greater than the risks of keeping information so

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

tightly compartmented that the analysts who need it to make informed judgments are kept in the dark.

**(U) Conclusion 7. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in several significant instances, abused its unique position in the Intelligence Community, particularly in terms of information sharing, to the detriment of the Intelligence Community's prewar analysis concerning Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs.**

(U) The Intelligence Community is not a level playing field when it comes to the competition of ideas in intelligence analysis. The Director of Central Intelligence's (DCI's) responsibility, established by the National Security Act of 1947, to coordinate the nation's intelligence activities and correlate, evaluate, and disseminate intelligence that affects national security, provides the CIA with a unique position in the Intelligence Community. The fact that the DCI is the head of the CIA and head of the Intelligence Community, the principal intelligence advisor to the President, and is responsible for protecting intelligence sources and methods, provides the CIA with unique access to policymakers and unique control of intelligence reporting. This arrangement was intended to coordinate the disparate elements of the Intelligence Community in order to provide the most accurate and objective analysis to policymakers. The Committee found that in practice, however, in the case of the Intelligence Community's analysis of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs, this arrangement actually undermined the provision of accurate and objective analysis by hampering intelligence sharing and allowing CIA analysts to control the presentation of information to policymakers, and exclude analysis from other agencies.

(U) The Committee found in a number of cases that significant reportable intelligence was sequestered in CIA Directorate of Operations (DO) cables, distribution of sensitive intelligence reports was excessively restricted, and CIA analysts were often provided with "sensitive" information that was not made available to analysts who worked the same issues at other all-source analysis agencies. These restrictions, in several cases, kept information from analysts that was essential to their ability to make fully informed judgments. Analysts cannot be expected to formulate and present their best analysis to policymakers while having only partial knowledge of an issue.

(U) For example, important information concerning the reliability of two of the main sources on Iraq's alleged mobile biological weapons program was not available to most Iraq biological weapons analysts outside the CIA. Some analysts at other agencies were aware of some of the credibility concerns about the sources, but the CIA's DO did not disseminate cables

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

throughout the Intelligence Community that would have provided this information to all Iraq biological weapons analysts. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

( [REDACTED] ) The CIA also failed to share important information about Iraq's UAV software procurement efforts with other intelligence analysts. The CIA did share sensitive information that indicated Iraq [REDACTED] was trying to obtain mapping software that could only be used for mapping in the U.S. This suggested to many analysts that Iraq may have been intending to use the software to target the U.S. The CIA failed to pass on additional information, until well after the coordination and publication of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), [REDACTED]. This information was essential for analysts to make fully informed judgments about Iraq's intentions to target the U.S.

(U) In some cases CIA analysts were not open to fully considering information and opinions from other intelligence analysts or creating a level playing field in which outside analysts fully participated in meetings or analytic efforts. This problem was particularly evident in the case of the CIA's analysis of Iraq's procurement of aluminum tubes during which the Committee believes the agency lost objectivity and in several cases took action that improperly excluded useful expertise from the intelligence debate. For example, the CIA performed testing of the tubes without inviting experts from the Department of Energy (DOE) to participate. A CIA analyst told Committee staff that the DOE was not invited "because we funded it. It was our testing. We were trying to prove some things that we wanted to prove with the testing. It wasn't a joint effort." The Committee believes that such an effort should never have been intended to prove what the CIA wanted to prove, but should have been a Community effort to get to the truth about Iraq's intended use for the tubes. By excluding DOE analysts, the Intelligence Community's nuclear experts, the CIA was not able to take advantage of their potentially valuable analytic insights. In another instance, an independent Department of Defense (DOD) rocket expert told the Committee that he did not think the CIA analysts came to him for an objective opinion, but were trying "to encourage us to come up with [the] answer" that the tubes were not intended to be used for a rocket program.

(U) The Committee also found that while the DCI was supposed to function as both the head of the CIA and the head of the Intelligence Community, in many instances he only acted as head of the CIA. For example, the DCI told the Committee that he was not aware that there were dissenting opinions within the Intelligence Community on whether Iraq intended use the

[REDACTED]

aluminum tubes for a nuclear program until the NIE was drafted in September 2002, despite the fact that intelligence agencies had been fervently debating the issue since the spring of 2001. While the DCI, as the President's principal intelligence advisor, should provide policymakers, in particular the President, with the best analysis available from throughout the Intelligence Community, the DCI told Committee staff that he does not even expect to learn of dissenting opinions "until the issue gets joined" through interagency coordination of an NIE. This means that contentious debate about significant national security issues can go on at the analytic level for months, or years, without the DCI or senior policymakers being informed of any opinions other than those of CIA analysts. In addition, the Presidential Daily Briefs (PDBs) are prepared by CIA analysts and are presented by CIA briefers who may or may not include an explanation of alternative views from other intelligence agencies. Other Intelligence Community agencies essentially must rely on the analysts who disagree with their positions to accurately convey their analysis to the nation's most senior policymakers.

(U) These factors worked together to allow CIA analysts and officials to provide the agency's intelligence analysis to senior policymakers without having to explain dissenting views or defend their analysis from potential challenges from other Intelligence Community agencies. The Committee believes that policymakers at all levels of government and in both the executive and legislative branches would benefit from understanding the full range of analytic opinions directly from the agencies who hold those views, or from truly impartial representatives of the entire Intelligence Community.

### ***C. Iraq's Ties to Terrorism***

(U) The terrorism related sections of the report recount the Committee's efforts to evaluate the quantity and quality of the intelligence underlying prewar assessments. Each section contains its own set of conclusions. There is also a separate section on the issue of objectivity and whether analysts were pressured to reach specific conclusions to support a particular policy objective. Unlike the WMD sections of the report, in some instances, the issue of accuracy has been addressed as post-war reporting has become available.

(U) Because there was no National Intelligence Estimate specifically focused on Iraq's ties to terrorism, the Committee focused its work primarily on the January 2003 Intelligence Report entitled *Iraqi Support for Terrorism*. This intelligence assessment was drafted by the Director of Central Intelligence's (DCI) Counterterrorist Center (CTC). (The CTC includes analysts from across the Intelligence Community.) *Iraqi Support for Terrorism* was first published for a limited executive audience in September 2002 under the same title. There were a few changes

[REDACTED]

made to the January 2003 version of the document including the addition of new information that had been collected following the September publication. The Committee chose to evaluate it as the IC's most comprehensive product on the subject because the January 2003 paper was the most current version and was disseminated to a much wider audience.

(U) To complete this section of the report, the Committee's staff interviewed a total of sixty-two individuals and reviewed more than 1,000 documents provided by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). To gain an in-depth understanding of the Intelligence Community (IC) and CTC collection posture, Committee staff received a briefing from the Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Collection (ADCI/C) and met with two former heads of the DCI's Counterterrorist Center (CTC). Committee staff interviewed analysts from the CTC, DIA, and FBI who were responsible for assessing Iraq's links to al-Qaida. Committee staff also met with National Security Agency (NSA) employees who collected and analyzed signals intelligence (SIGINT) related to Iraq's links to terrorism. To address analytical objectivity and allegations concerning the politicization of the intelligence process, Committee staff received a briefing from the CIA Ombudsman for Politicization and interviewed IC analysts who interacted with, *inter alia*, personnel from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSDP).

(U) In addition to reviewing activities specifically relating to Iraq's links to terrorism, the Committee staff participated in a briefing to the Committee by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and in a Committee hearing with the former Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. On each occasion, the Committee raised the issue of Iraq's links to terrorism.

(U) Intelligence from the 1960s and 1970s first established the link between Iraq and terrorism, resulting in Iraq's inclusion in the State Department's 1979 list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. The State Department removed Iraq from the list in 1982.<sup>4</sup> Iraq returned to the list in 1990 based upon intelligence information linking the regime to acts of terrorism conducted by the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) and its support for Palestinian terrorists. The first intelligence

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<sup>4</sup>The 1982 State Department publication Patterns of Global Terrorism explained Iraq's removal from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism in the following manner: "The Iraqi Government has reduced support to non-Palestinian groups, thereby moving closer to the policies of its moderate Arab neighbors."



[REDACTED]

reports suggesting links between Iraq and al-Qaida emerged in the mid-1990s. The IC continues to receive reporting on these links from detainees and document exploitation.

(U) While the nature of the intelligence reporting produced or obtained by the IC has not changed dramatically in the past decade, there has been a significant shift in the way IC analysts evaluate reporting regarding terrorism, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. CIA officials interviewed by Committee staff indicated that, following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the trade craft of terrorism analysis shifted and analysts now feel obligated to make more conclusive assessments regardless of the quality of the available intelligence. In this new analytic environment analysts cannot set aside intelligence reports because the information does not fit within the context of their prior knowledge or because the report has not been corroborated. The CIA Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI), describing the unique nature of terrorism analysis, said, “. . . terrorism analysis is just fundamentally different on some issues.” She commented further that:

Sometimes it is the walk-in who has the best information about the impending attack. What we teach people in trade craft is that you want to get a report. It's preferable that that report come from a fully-vetted source whose information is from a long-established reporting record, has direct access and you've been able to corroborate it somehow. That's what you would ideally like and that's what you ideally teach analysts to look for. But with terrorism you can't dismiss the walk-in.

The Deputy Director of the CTC's Office of Terrorism Analysis noted that this is the most difficult issue he has encountered in his eighteen years of intelligence analysis. He also stated that:

On the other hand, I would also say that we've encouraged and developed a sense of trade craft specifically on terrorism that says push the envelope because the implications are so high and because we have to acknowledge up front that, unlike in some other cases, some other lines of analysis, that we have to accept that often our information is going to be fragmentary and, if we wait too long to reach conclusions, we might make a mistake.

[REDACTED]

(U) The focus of the Committee's terrorism review, *Iraqi Support for Terrorism*, addressed four main issues:

- terrorist activities conducted by the IIS;
- Iraqi support for terrorist activities conducted by regional terrorist groups;
- Iraqi contacts with al-Qaida; and,
- potential Iraqi use of terrorism in the event of a war with the United States.

(U) Committee staff evaluated each of these and other issues including the intelligence source reporting underlying the assessments. The terrorism related sections of this report discuss the assessments and the intelligence reporting in detail.

### 1. Overall Conclusions – Terrorism

**(U) Conclusion 8. Intelligence Community analysts lack a consistent post-September 11 approach to analyzing and reporting on terrorist threats.**

(U) Though analysts have been wrong on major issues in the past, no previous intelligence failure has been so costly as the September 11 attacks. As the Deputy Director of Intelligence (DDI) explained during an interview with Committee staff, terrorist threat analysts now use a different type of trade craft than generally employed by political, leadership or regional analysts. Threat analysts are encouraged to "push the envelope" and look at various possible threat scenarios that can be drawn from limited and often fragmentary information. As a result, analysts can no longer dismiss a threat as incredible because they cannot corroborate it. They cannot dismiss what may appear to be the rantings of a walk-in until additional vetting shows those stories to be fabricated.

(U) To compensate for the fragmentary nature of the reporting on Iraq's potential links to al-Qaida, Intelligence Community (IC) analysts included as much detail as they could about the nature of the sources and went to great lengths to describe their analytic approach to the problem. For example, where information was limited to a single or untested source or to a foreign government service, a source description was provided. As discussed in more detail in the body of this report, a "Scope Note" was incorporated in each product to describe the analytic approach the drafters had taken to address the issue. In *Iraq and al-Qaida: Interpreting a Murky Relationship*, the Scope Note explained that the authors had purposefully taken an aggressive approach to interpreting the available data. In both the September 2002 and January 2003 versions of *Iraqi Support for Terrorism*, the Scope Note did not describe an analytic approach,

[REDACTED]

but rather it highlighted the gaps in information and described the analysts' understanding of the Iraq-al-Qaida relationship as "evolving."

(U) Though the Committee understands the need for different analytical approaches and expressions of competing viewpoints, the IC should have considered that their readership would not necessarily understand the nuance between the first "purposely aggressive" approach and a return, in *Iraqi Support for Terrorism*, to a more traditional analysis of the reporting concerning Iraq's links to al-Qaida. A consistent approach in both assessments which carefully explained the intelligence reports and then provided a spectrum of possible conclusions would have been more useful and would have assisted policymakers in their public characterizations of the intelligence.

**(U) Conclusion 9. Source protection policies within the Intelligence Community direct or encourage reports officers to exclude relevant detail about the nature of their sources. As a result, analysts community-wide are unable to make fully informed judgments about the information they receive, relying instead on nonspecific source lines to reach their assessments. Moreover, relevant operational data is nearly always withheld from analysts, putting them at a further analytical disadvantage.**

(U) A significant portion of the intelligence reporting that was used to evaluate whether Iraq's interactions with al-Qaida operatives constituted a relationship was stripped of details prior to being made available to analysts community-wide. Source information and operational detail was provided only to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analysts. This lack of information sharing limited the level of discussion and debate that should have taken place across the Community on this critical issue. While in the case of Iraq's links to terrorism, the final analysis has proven, thus far, to have been accurate and not affected by a lack of relevant source or operational detail, we cannot rely on this system in the future. Until changes are made concerning how and when source information is made available to analysts, we run the risk of missing critical data that might provide early warning.

(U) The absence of source and operational detail affects not only analysts, but policymakers as well. The Committee found that policymakers took an active role by personally examining individual intelligence reports for themselves. If this trend continues, it is even more important that such relevant detail be provided.

[REDACTED]

**(I) Conclusion 10. The Intelligence Community relies too heavily on foreign government services and third party reporting, thereby increasing the potential for manipulation of U.S. policy by foreign interests.**

**(I)** Due to the lack of unilateral sources on Iraq's links to terrorist groups like al-Qaida [REDACTED], the Intelligence Community (IC) relied too heavily on foreign government service reporting and sources to whom it did not have direct access to determine the relationship between Iraq and [REDACTED] terrorist groups. While much of this reporting was credible, the IC left itself open to possible manipulation by foreign governments and other parties interested in influencing U.S. policy. The Intelligence Community's collectors must develop and recruit unilateral sources with direct access to terrorist groups to confirm, complement or confront foreign government service reporting on these critical targets.

**(U) Conclusion 11. Several of the allegations of pressure on Intelligence Community (IC) analysts involved repeated questioning. The Committee believes that IC analysts should expect difficult and repeated questions regarding threat information. Just as the post 9/11 environment lowered the Intelligence Community's reporting threshold, it has also affected the intensity with which policymakers will review and question threat information.**

**(U)** A number of the individuals interviewed by the Committee in conducting its review stated that Administration officials questioned analysts repeatedly on the potential for cooperation between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaida. Though these allegations appeared repeatedly in the press and in other public reporting on the lead-up to the war, no analyst questioned by the Committee stated that the questions were unreasonable, or that they were encouraged by the questioning to alter their conclusions regarding Iraq's links to al-Qaida.

**(U)** In some cases, those interviewed stated that the questions had forced them to go back and review the intelligence reporting, and that during this exercise they came across information they had overlooked in initial readings. The Committee found that this process – the policymakers probing questions – actually improved the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) products. The review revealed that the CIA analysts who prepared *Iraqi Support for Terrorism* made careful, measured assessments which did not overstate or mischaracterize the intelligence reporting upon which it was based.

**(U)** The Committee also found that CIA analysts are trained to expect questions from policymakers, and to tailor their analysis into a product that is useful to them. In an Occasional

[REDACTED]

Paper on improving CIA analytic performance, written by a Research Fellow at the Sherman Kent Center, the fellow states:

If the mission of intelligence analysis is to inform policymaking – to help the U.S. government anticipate threats and seize opportunities – then customization of analysis is the essence of the professional practice, not a defilement of it (i.e., politicization). **In effect there is no such thing as an unprofessional policymaker question for intelligence to address so long as the answer reflects professional analytic trade craft (e.g., tough-minded weighing of evidence and open-minded consideration of alternatives).** (Emphasis added)

(U) The same Research Fellow commented on strategic warning stating, “Key to the warning challenge is that the substantive uncertainty surrounding threats to U.S. interests requires analysts, and policymakers, to make judgments that are inherently vulnerable to error.” This vulnerability has never been so apparent as in the failure to detect and deter the attacks on September 11, 2001. While analysts cannot dismiss a threat because at first glance it seems unreasonable or it cannot be corroborated by other credible reporting, policymakers have the ultimate responsibility for making decisions based on this same fragmentary, inconclusive reporting. If policymakers did not respond to analysts’ caveated judgments with pointed, probing questions, and did not require them to produce the most complete assessments possible, they would not be doing their jobs.

[REDACTED]