

JOHN MCCAIN
ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE
AND TRANSPORTATION

United States Senate

September 19, 2005

Mr. [REDACTED]

Naples, FL [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. [REDACTED] ichi.cMg (aka: ichiban master):

Thank you for contacting me regarding the "Downing Street Memo." I appreciate hearing from you on this issue.

Press reports indicate that the "memo" is a document containing minutes of a meeting that British Prime Minister Tony Blair conducted with his foreign affairs staff in July 2002. These minutes purportedly contain a statement suggesting that "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy" by the Bush Administration.

I am not certain that this British usage of the term "fixed" has the same meaning which we might give to it in our country, and in this debate I would defer to Prime Minister Blair, who has asserted that in no way was intelligence being shaped to attain policy goals, either by the United States or by the United Kingdom.

It is a simple and incontrovertible fact that the intelligence agencies of the U.S., Britain, and of all the other Western democracies concluded that Saddam Hussein was actively pursuing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. I spent nearly a year as a member of the bipartisan WMD Commission, tasked with determining why our prewar WMD intelligence was in error. As a part of our in-depth investigation, we looked specifically at whether any piece of intelligence was altered under pressure by policymakers.

In our final report, we stated that the intelligence community "did not make or change any analytic judgments in response to political pressure to reach a particular conclusion." In fact, the Commission found no evidence whatsoever of 'politicization' of the Intelligence Community's WMD assessments. The Administration did not, as alleged, artificially build a case for war. It acted on its assessment that the WMD threat was real, a judgment supported by the entire international intelligence community.

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I strongly believe that the American people must be given full and complete information about the war in Iraq, especially with our servicemembers at risk. I supported the President's decision to go to war, and I continue to support our efforts to help the Iraqis establish a viable and secure democracy. I will also continue to push for an overhaul of our intelligence community, so that we do not again see failures like those that took place before the war in Iraq.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts. Please feel free to contact me in the future on this or other issues of concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John McCain", written over the printed name.

John McCain
United States Senator

JM/dch