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Bond on Department of Defense Investigation: No Illegal Activity in Pentagon's Pre-War Intelligence Activities

Friday, February 9, 2007

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Kit Bond, Vice-Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, today said a Defense Department investigation found no illegal activity in the Pentagon's pre-war intelligence activities.

Bond stressed that the Department of Defense's (DoD) Inspector General's report "Review of the Pre-Iraqi War Activities of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy repudiates all allegations that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)) engaged in any illegal or unauthorized activity.

"The report found no evidence of illegal or unauthorized actions, or that anyone in OUSD(P) misled Congress. I hope that fact doesn't get lost in the shuffle," said Bond.

Bond noted that the report did, however, express the Inspector General's "opinion", that OUSD(P)'s criticism of Intelligence Community assessments was an intelligence activity and was, therefore, "inappropriate."

"I strongly disagree," said Bond. "The Senate Intelligence Committee's July 2004 report makes clear that no one, at any point, was under any illusion that the OUSD(P) personnel were anything other than policy people. The OUSD(P) critique was a policy exercise, not an intelligence activity."

The DoD IG's logic is internally inconsistent, Bond pointed out. "How can something that is 'authorized' and 'legal' also be 'inappropriate'? That doesn't pass the common sense test," said Bond.

Bond also emphasized that there is nothing wrong with policy makers taking a harder look at intelligence assessments.

"Just take the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq WMD. We all wish we had asked tougher questions about that," said Bond.

Bond offered the example of the Senate Intelligence Committee's current on-going examination of the Intelligence Community's assessments concerning Iran. "Is there anything wrong with the policy makers in Congress conducting such a critique? If not, why was it 'inappropriate' for a Defense Department policy office to conduct the same sort of examination of intelligence assessments of Saddam's ties to Al Qaida?" asked Bond.

Bond stated, "The DoD IG appears to be saying that policy makers are allowed to question the intelligence they are given, as long as they don't share that criticism in writing outside their agency. That's just ridiculous."

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[Return to Press Release Index](#)