

Rothman Calls For Independent Commission To Investigate Intelligence On Iraq Says The American People

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To Investigate Intelligence On Iraq
Says The American People Deserve To Know Exactly
What White House Knew Before Going To War

Washington, DC - Deeply troubled by the White House's recent admission that some of the intelligence it used to justify military action in Iraq was erroneous and based on forged documents, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today announced that he has cosponsored a resolution that would establish an independent commission to examine the United States' intelligence on Iraq.

"With the White House now admitting that some of the intelligence it asked the nation to rely on as a reason to go to war with Iraq was knowingly false, it is imperative that an independent investigation is conducted to determine exactly what the Bush Administration knew before deciding to launch this war to disarm Saddam Hussein," said Rothman, who voted to authorize the war in October 2002. "The integrity of the United States is at stake. The White House must be forthcoming with the facts it knew before the war so that the American people and the global community can be certain that when the leader of the United States issues public statements that they are true and can be relied upon."

The legislation Rothman is pushing for would establish a commission similar to the bipartisan September 11th Commission. The Iraq Intelligence Commission would examine the executive branch's efforts to collect, assess, and interpret intelligence data about the threats posed by Iraq. The measure requires a report to Congress within 18 months of its findings and recommendations on future public presentations of intelligence. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Intelligence.

Rothman also joined a number of his House colleagues in sending two letters last month to President Bush asking him to be more forthcoming in discussing the intelligence regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction that the White House had prior to launching the war against Iraq. In a July 10 letter, Rothman and 15 of his colleagues wrote to President Bush asking him to explain in detail why he included a now-retracted sentence from his State of Union address that said British intelligence had learned Iraq was seeking uranium from Africa in order to develop nuclear weapons. In a July 15 letter, just prior to President Bush's meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Rothman and 39 of his colleagues also called on the President to ask Prime Minister Blair for a full explanation of how and why the British government believed Iraq was attempting to acquire uranium from Niger.

"Going to war is one of the most important decisions a President has to make, which is why it is imperative that we understand the information that motivated President Bush to launch this war against Iraq," Rothman said. "The American people deserve honest answers about what the Bush Administration knew and when they knew it. We must be able to trust our President when he addresses the nation in the future, but right now there is an unfortunate cloud hanging over this Administration as a result of the uranium claim."

Rothman is one of 110 cosponsors of the resolution to establish the independent commission to investigate intelligence on Iraq. The measure is sponsored by Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA30).

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