

Floor Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
November 18, 2005

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the gentleman from Pennsylvania spoke with courage and conviction about the war in Iraq. There is no one in this body who knows more about our national defense and who has devoted more of his life to our troops and our security than Jack Murtha.

But evidently his speech has prompted the stunt that the Republicans are pulling here to force a vote on a resolution never considered by any committee.

Well, I must tell you that like the intelligence that led to war, the resolution before this body is a fake. Republicans are describing this resolution as a Murtha resolution, but it's not his language and differs in key ways from his proposal.

One of the points Mr. Murtha raised yesterday was the misuse of intelligence on Iraq. He called the war "a flawed policy wrapped in illusion." Now, like Mr. Murtha, I voted for that war and like him, I have profound concerns about the intelligence — that it was warped and twisted to justify an invasion.

My concerns are deeply personal. I voted for the war resolution because the president said Iraq would soon brandish nuclear bombs. And like millions of Americans, I was misled.

I raised concerns about the nuclear intelligence in a letter to the President on March 17, 2003, before any bullets were fired and before the war started.

I'm going to attach this letter to my statement, but I want to read a part of it. I wrote,

"Dear Mr. President: ... In the last 10 days it has become incontrovertibly clear that a key piece of evidence you and others in the Administration have cited regarding Iraq's efforts to obtain nuclear weapons is a hoax. ...

"The evidence in question is correspondence that indicates that Iraq sought nuclear material from an African country ... For several months, this evidence has been a central part for the U.S. case against Iraq. ...

"It has now been conceded this evidence was a forgery. ... Even more troubling ... the CIA, which has been aware of this information since 2001, has never regarded the evidence as reliable. The implications of this fact are profound: it means that a key part of the case you have been building against Iraq is evidence that your own intelligence experts ... do not believe it's credible.

"It's hard to imagine how this situation could have developed. The two most obvious explanations — knowing deception or unfathomable incompetence — both have immediate and serious implications."

I made that request 2 1/2 years ago and I'm still waiting for an answer. The President has never explained how forged evidence could become a cornerstone in the case for the war in Iraq.