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Reyes on Pentagon IG report on pre-Iraq war intelligence

Washington, D.C. – *Congressman Silvestre Reyes, D-TX, Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, released the following statement expressing concern with the report released by the Pentagon Inspector General today:*

“The Pentagon Inspector General has concluded that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy inappropriately “expanded its role and mission from formulating Defense Policy to analyzing and disseminating alternative intelligence” about the Iraq – Al Qaida relationship and, therefore, did not provide “the most accurate analysis of intelligence to senior decision makers,” said Reyes. “This is a disturbing report that confirms what many of us believed: that Pentagon officials hyped the intelligence on Al Qaida’s role in Iraq to justify the decision to go to war.

“On February 6, 2003, I wrote to the then-Chair and Ranking Member of the Intelligence Committee to express my deep concern that, on the eve of war, we were being fed inaccurate intelligence to support the claim that there was a relationship between Al Qaida and Iraq, even though we had always been told that there was no relationship. I wrote:

“Either our Committee has been kept deliberately in the dark and has been specifically misled or the intelligence community has adopted a policy of telling our President ‘you make the claim and we’ll cover you.’ Either way it raises some serious issues about our ability to do our job of oversight, and it puts in jeopardy the confidence and trust that our colleagues place in us.”

“This new IG report confirms that my concerns were justified.

“Taking a nation to war is the most serious action a President can take. We must never again allow our country to be led into war based on inaccurate or skewed intelligence.”