interface between the Intelligence Community and the policymaker—the way that intelligence analysis is conveyed to the consumer—needs reexamination.

Conclusion 22

The President's Daily Brief likely conveyed a greater sense of certainty about analytic judgments than warranted.

As part of its investigation, this Commission was provided access, on a limited basis, to a number of articles from the President's Daily Brief (PDB) relating to Iraq's WMD programs. Although we saw only a limited cross-section of this product, we can make several observations about the art form. In short, many of the same problems that occurred with other intelligence products occurred with the PDBs, only in a magnified manner. For instance, the PDBs often failed to explain, or even signal, the uncertainties underlying their judgments. Information from a known fabricator was used in PDBs, despite the publication of a fabrication notice on that source months earlier. PDB articles discounted information that appeared to contradict the prevailing analytical view by characterizing, without justifications, such information as a "cover story" or purposeful deception. The PDBs attributed information to multiple sources without making clear that the information rested very heavily on only one of those sources. And the titles of PDB articles were sometimes more alarmist than the text would support.

In addition to the problems it shares with other intelligence products, the PDB format presents some unique problems as well. As discussed above, the emphasis on current intelligence can adversely affect the distribution of analytical resources and can reduce the level of expertise needed for contextual analysis. But the focus on current intelligence may also adversely affect the consumers of intelligence. In particular, the daily exposure to current intelligence products such as the PDB may create, over time, a greater perception of certainty about their judgments than is warranted. And the way these products are generated and disseminated may actually skew the way their content is perceived. For example, when senior policymakers are briefed with the President's Daily Brief or a similar product, they often levy follow-up questions on the briefer. The response to those questions is then typically disseminated in the same format. Therefore, if one policymaker has an intense interest in one area and actively seeks follow-up, that questioning can itself generate numer-

ous PDBs or Senior Executive Memoranda. A large volume of reporting on one topic can result, and that large volume may skew the sense among other policymakers as to the topic's importance.

Conclusion 23

The National Intelligence Estimate process is subject to flaws as well, and the Iraq NIE displays some of them. The length of the NIE encourages policymakers to rely on the less caveated Key Judgments. And the language of consensus ("most agencies believe") may obscure situations in which the dissenting agency has more expertise than the majority.

Long-term products such as the NIE bear reexamination as well. With respect to the October 2002 NIE on Iraq, some of the weaknesses in that product are attributable to anomalies in this particular NIE process, including the unusually short timeframe for publication (discussed further below), while others are attributable to inherent weaknesses in the NIE process itself.

One criticism of NIEs in general is that they are too long, read poorly, and are not popular with consumers.[797] The October 2002 NIE, at 90 pages, is almost twice as long as the average NIE.[798] One consequence of the length of the NIE—aside from discouraging its readers to look beyond the Key Judgments—is that its sheer heft suggests that there was a surfeit of evidence supporting those Key Judgments. That impression may encourage reliance on the Key Judgments alone. To the extent that intelligence judgments are often questions of degree (*e.g.*, the *likelihood* that an adversary has BW), however, short summaries and Key Judgments run a serious risk of misleading readers. Moreover, to the extent that daily intelligence products to senior policymakers may have conveyed a high level of confidence on Iraq WMD previous to the publication of the NIE, policymakers may have understood the confidence levels in the NIE to be higher than actually intended. At a minimum, therefore, NIEs must be carefully caveated and the degree of uncertainty in the judgments clearly communicated.

Another criticism of the NIE process is that it is inappropriately democratic—as the Assistant DCI for Analysis and Production described it, the "FBI has the same vote as the DOE" even when one agency clearly has greater expertise on the relevant subject matter.[799] The quest for consensus in NIEs—and