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**CHAKOWSKY: ONLY AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION WOULD ESTABLISH IF THE PRESIDENT MANIPULATED INTELLIGENCE TO JUSTIFY WAR WITH IRAQ**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a chief Deputy Whip, today issued the following statement after President Bush signed an Executive Order to create a commission to examine pre-war intelligence.□

"President Bush's handpicked commission with its narrow focus is unacceptable and an insult to the millions of Americans demanding to know the truth," Schakowsky said.□□□

"Hundreds of U.S. soldiers and thousands of innocent Iraqis lost their lives because President Bush predetermined our nation's path to war.□ Only an independent commission, not a subsidiary of the White House, would establish whether the President and those around him manipulated intelligence to justify a war with Iraq," Schakowsky added.□

Schakowsky is a cosponsor of H.R. 2625, legislation authored by U.S. Representative Henry Waxman, to create an independent commission - modeled after the September 11 Commission.□ The Commission would examine the intelligence about Iraq, representations made by executive branch officials about this intelligence, and whether the Bush Administration distorted evidence about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.