

How did the U.S. government lead its people to war?

Bush Administration Claims vs. The Facts

There was no collaborative relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda



Pre-War Claims:

Bush officials suggested a collaborative relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda, citing as evidence contacts dating back over a decade.

They specifically claimed that Iraq had provided chemical weapons training to al-Qaeda, could supply the terrorist group with weapons of mass destruction, and could join forces with them to attack America.

Facts:

There was no evidence of a collaborative relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda. Although some meetings were held between Iraqi intelligence and al-Qaeda – these never led to any ongoing relationships. Mutual distrust and animosity between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden made forging such a relationship highly improbable.

Overview:

Although prior to and after 9/11 the U.S. intelligence community had no evidence to substantiate any collaborative relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda, Bush officials continued to suggest as early as September 2002 and as late as June 2004 that such a relationship existed.

A Mechanism for War

Rhetoric and Spin

War Through Rose-Colored Glasses

Abuses and Misuses of Intelligence

A Mythic Reality

Items of Note

Bush Administration Claims vs. The Facts

No weapons of mass destruction found

No mobile biological weapons labs

Iraq did not seek to acquire yellowcake uranium

Aluminum tubes not for nuclear weapons

Mohamed Atta did not meet with Iraqis

Iraq did not provide training to al-Qaeda

● No collaboration between Iraq and al-Qaeda

Iraq was not involved in the attacks of 9/11

The Costs of War

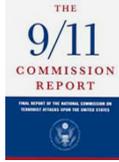


September 11, 2001

Al-Qaeda terrorists hijack four U.S. commercial airliners, crashing them into the New York World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania.

September 18, 2001 [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

The 9/11 Commission Final Report (publicly issued on July 22, 2004) states on page 334 [\[link to source\]](#)



"Responding to a presidential tasking, [chief anti-terrorism advisor, Richard] Clarke's office sent a memo to Rice on September 18, titled 'Survey of Intelligence Information on Any Iraq Involvement in the September 11 Attacks'...

"Arguing that the case for links between Iraq and al Qaeda was weak, the memo pointed out that Bin Ladin resented the secularism of Saddam Hussein's regime. Finally, the memo said, there was no confirmed reporting on Saddam cooperating with Bin Ladin on unconventional weapons."

September 21, 2001 [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

The National Journal (reported on November 22, 2005) [\[link to source\]](#)



"Ten days after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President Bush was told in a highly classified briefing that the U.S. intelligence community had no evidence linking the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein to the attacks and that there was scant credible evidence that Iraq had any significant collaborative ties with Al Qaeda, according to government records and current and former officials with firsthand knowledge of the matter.

"The information was provided to Bush on September 21, 2001 during the 'President's Daily Brief,' a 30- to 45-minute early-morning national security briefing.

"The September 21, 2001, briefing was prepared at the request of the president, who was eager in the days following the terrorist attacks to learn all that he could about any possible connection between Iraq and Al Qaeda."

February 2002 [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

The Defense Intelligence Agency's Defense Intelligence Terrorism Summary (published in February 2002 and publicly declassified by Congress on November 18, 2005) states [\[link to source\]](#)

"Saddam's regime is intensely secular and is wary of Islamic revolutionary movements. Moreover, Baghdad is unlikely to provide assistance to a group it cannot control."

June 21, 2002 [\[reported at a later date\]](#)

A CIA report, entitled Iraq and al-Qa'ida: Interpreting a Murky Relationship (published on June 21, 2002 and publicly declassified by Congress on April 15, 2005) states [\[link to source\]](#)



"We reviewed intelligence reporting over the past decade to determine whether Iraq had a relationship with al-Qa'ida and, if so, the dimensions of the relationship.

"Our knowledge of Iraqi links to Al-Qa'ida still contains many critical gaps because of limited reporting [deleted] and the questionable reliability of many of our sources...

"Some analysts concur with the assessment that intelligence reporting provides 'no conclusive evidence of cooperation on specific terrorist operations,' but believe that the available signs support a conclusion that Iraq has had sporadic, wary contacts with al-Qa'ida since the mid-1990s, rather than a relationship with al-Qa'ida that developed over time. These analysts would contend that mistrust and conflicting ideologies and goals probably tempered these contacts and severely limited the opportunities for cooperation."

September 8, 2002

Vice President Dick Cheney speaks on NBC News' Meet the Press [\[link to source\]](#)

"... We spent time looking at that relationship between Iraq, on the one hand, and the al-Qaeda organization on the other. And there has been reporting that suggests that there have been a number of contacts over the years..."

"There is a pattern of relationships going back many years. And in terms of exchanges and in terms of people, we've had recently since the operations in Afghanistan - we've seen al-Qaeda members operating physically in Iraq and off the territory of Iraq."



September 8, 2002

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice states on CNN's *Late Edition* [\[link to source\]](#)

"... It's just more of a picture that is emerging that there may well have been contacts between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime."

September 10, 2002

The *Washington Post* reports [\[link to source\]](#)



"Although administration officials say they are still trying to develop a strong case tying Hussein to global terrorism, the CIA has yet to find convincing evidence despite having combed its files and redoubled its efforts to collect and analyze information related to Iraq, according to senior intelligence officials and outside experts with knowledge of discussions within the U.S. government..."

"The administration's attempt to link Iraq to terrorism has been criticized by former military, intelligence and national security officials who monitored terrorism in both Democratic and Republican administrations.

"Is there any confirmed evidence of Iraq's links to terrorism? No," said Vincent M. Cannistraro, former head of the CIA's counterterrorism office."

September 15, 2002

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice is interviewed by Tony Snow on *Fox News Sunday* [\[link to source\]](#)

RICE: Well, there are clearly links between Iraq and terrorism, and there are al Qaeda personnel that have been spotted in Baghdad. There are some evidence that there have been various meetings concerning Iraqi personnel and al Qaeda personnel...

We are working very hard to put together the full picture... He clearly has links to terrorism.

SNOW: All right. And links to terrorism would include al Qaeda? I just want to be certain.

RICE: Links to terrorism would include al Qaeda, yes.



September 18, 2002

**Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is interviewed by Jim Lehrer on PBS's *News Hour* [\[link to source\]](#)
[\[link to source\]](#)**

"It is the nexus between an Al-Qaeda type network and other terrorist network and a terrorist state like Saddam Hussein who has those weapons of mass destruction. As we sit here, there are senior Al-Qaeda in Iraq. They are there."

September 25, 2002

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice appears on PBS's *News Hour* and states [\[link to source\]](#)

MARGARET WARNER: Secretary Rumsfeld, in Europe today, when asked if there was evidence tying Iraq to Al Qaeda, said, "Yes." He did not elaborate. Are you prepared to elaborate?

RICE: Several of the detainees, in particular, some high-ranking detainees, have said that Iraq provided some training to Al Qaeda in chemical weapons development. So yes, there are contacts between Iraq and Al Qaeda. We know that Saddam Hussein has a long history with terrorism, in general. And there are some Al Qaeda personnel who found refuge in Baghdad.



September 25, 2002

President George W. Bush answers reporters' questions in the White House Oval Office [\[link to source\]](#)

REPORTER: Mr. President, do you believe that Saddam Hussein is a bigger threat to the United States than al-Qaeda?

PRESIDENT BUSH: They're both risks, they're both dangerous...

... The danger is, is that they work in concert. The danger is, is that al-Qaeda becomes an extension of Saddam's madness and his hatred, and his capacity to extend weapons of mass destruction around the world. Both of them

need to be dealt with. The war on terror, you can't distinguish between al-Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror.

September 26, 2002

At a Department of Defense news briefing, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld speaks to reporters

[\[link to source\]](#)

"We have what we consider to be very reliable reporting of senior level contacts going back a decade... and when I say contacts, I mean between Iraq and al Qaeda. The reports of these contacts have been increasing since 1998. We have what we believe to be credible information that Iraq and al Qaeda have discussed safe haven opportunities in Iraq, reciprocal nonaggression discussions. We have what we consider to be credible evidence that al Qaeda leaders have sought contacts in Iraq who could help them acquire weapon of- weapons of mass destruction capabilities. We do have- I believe it's one report indicating that Iraq provided unspecified training relating to chemical and/or biological matters for al Qaeda members. There is, I'm told, also some other information of varying degrees of reliability that supports that conclusion of their cooperation."



September 27, 2002

The American Forces Press Service reports [\[link to source\]](#)

"Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said this morning the link between al Qaeda terrorists and Iraq is 'accurate and not debatable.'

"The secretary declined to give more details on the ties between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. He said he does not want to give away intelligence information that may help the enemy."

September 28, 2002

The New York Times reports [\[link to source\]](#) [\[link to source\]](#)

"Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said today that American intelligence had 'bulletproof' evidence of links between Al Qaeda and the government of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

"Mr. Rumsfeld said that recently declassified intelligence reports about suspected ties between Al Qaeda and the Iraqi government, including the presence of senior members of Al Qaeda in Baghdad in 'recent periods,' were 'factual' and 'exactly accurate.'"

September 28, 2002

In his weekly radio address, President George W. Bush asserts [\[link to source\]](#)

"The [Iraqi] regime has long-standing and continuing ties to terrorist groups, and there are al Qaeda terrorists inside Iraq."

September 30, 2002

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld is interviewed by Fox affiliate WAGA Channel 5 in Atlanta, GA [\[link to source\]](#)

REPORTER: Earlier this week you came out and said there's a link between Baghdad and al Qaeda. This report [inaudible] came from prisoners, a lot of the intelligence reporting came from prisoners. How credible was this information?

RUMSFELD: I wouldn't have said it if were not totally credible.

REPORTER: So there's a link in your mind.

RUMSFELD: Not in my mind, from the ground. It's in fact. It's just that simple.

October 7, 2002

President George W. Bush outlines the Iraqi threat in Cincinnati [\[link to source\]](#)

"We know that Iraq and al Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade. Some al Qaeda leaders who fled Afghanistan went to Iraq... We've learned that Iraq has trained al Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases."

October 14, 2002

President George W. Bush speaks to reporters on the South Lawn of the White House

[\[link to source\]](#)

"And I also mentioned the fact that there is a connection between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. The war on terror, Iraq is a part on the war on terror."



November 4, 2002

In his remarks at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, President George W. Bush says [\[link to source\]](#)

"This is a man who has got connections with al Qaeda. Imagine a terrorist network with Iraq as an arsenal and as a training ground, so that a Saddam Hussein could use his shadowy group of people to attack his enemy and leave no fingerprint behind."

November 14, 2002

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in an interview with Infinity CBS Radio [\[link to source\]](#)

"There is no question but that there have been interactions between the Iraqi government, Iraqi officials and Al Qaeda operatives. They have occurred over a span of some 8 or 10 years to our knowledge. There are currently Al Qaeda in Iraq."

December 2, 2002

Vice President Dick Cheney delivers a speech at the Air National Guard Senior Leadership Conference

[\[link to source\]](#)

"His [Hussein's] regime has had high-level contacts with al Qaeda going back a decade and has provided training to al Qaeda terrorists."

January 26, 2003

Secretary of State Colin Powell answers questions from the European press in Switzerland

[\[link to source\]](#)

QUESTION: You referred in your speech to the links between al-Qaida and Iraq. Now, even some of our secret service chiefs say publicly there is no evidence of that.

SECRETARY POWELL: We do have evidence of it. We are not suggesting that there is a 9/11 link, but we are suggesting – we do have evidence – of connections over the years between Iraq and al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations.



January 26, 2003

Secretary of State Colin Powell speaks at the World Economic Forum [\[link to source\]](#)

"The more we wait, the more chance there is for this dictator with clear ties to terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, more time for him to pass a weapon, share a technology, or use these weapons again."

January 28, 2003

President George W. Bush delivers his State of the Union address [\[link to source\]](#)

"Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own."

January 29, 2003

Secretary of State Colin Powell appears in an interview with Britain's ITN Television

[\[link to source\]](#)

"We do have information that suggests that there have been links over the years, and



continue to be links, between the Iraqi Government and al-Qaida. And the more we look at this, the more we are able to look back in time and connect things with people who have come into our custody and other information has become available to us. It's clear that there is a link."



February 2, 2003

The *New York Times* reports [\[link to source\]](#)

"At the Federal Bureau of Investigation, some investigators said they were baffled by the Bush administration's insistence on a solid link between Iraq and Osama bin Laden's network. 'We've been looking at this hard for more than a year and you know what, we just don't think it's there,' a government official said."

February 4, 2003

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld fields questions from reporters at a Defense Department Briefing [\[link to source\]](#)

REPORTER: Mr. Secretary, today in a broadcast interview, Saddam Hussein said, "There is only one truth: Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction whatsoever." And he went on to say, "I would like to tell you directly we have no relationship with al Qaeda."

RUMSFELD: And Abraham Lincoln was short.

February 5, 2003

Secretary of State Colin Powell addresses the United Nations Security Council [\[link to source\]](#)

"... What I want to bring to your attention today is the potentially much more sinister nexus between Iraq and the al-Qaida terrorist network, a nexus that combines classic terrorist organizations and modern methods of murder. Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi an associate and collaborator of Usama bin Laden and his al-Qaida lieutenants.



"... These al-Qaida affiliates based in Baghdad now coordinate the movement of people, money and supplies into and throughout Iraq for his network, and they have now been operating freely in the capital for more than eight months...

"We are not surprised that Iraq is harboring Zarqawi and his subordinates. This understanding builds on decades-long experience with respect to ties between Iraq and al-Qaida...

"... Some believe, some claim, these contacts do not amount to much. They say Saddam Hussein's secular tyranny and al-Qaida's religious tyranny do not mix. I am not comforted by this thought. Ambition and hatred are enough to bring Iraq and al-Qaida together, enough so al-Qaida could learn how to build more sophisticated bombs and learn how to forge documents, and enough so that al-Qaida could turn to Iraq for help in acquiring expertise on weapons of mass destruction."

March 9, 2003

Secretary of State Colin Powell is interviewed by Tim Russert on NBC News' *Meet the Press* [\[link to source\]](#)

MR. RUSSERT: Another rationale provided by the administration for action against Saddam is his connection to al-Qaida. Tom Friedman, in the *New York Times*, wrote this:

"I am also very troubled by the way Bush officials have tried to justify this war on the grounds that Saddam is allied with Usama bin Laden, or will be soon. There is simply no proof of that, and every time I hear them repeat it, I think of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution from the Vietnam times. You don't take the country to war on the wings of a lie."

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't think it's a lie. I think there is information and evidence that there are connections. We have talked about Mr. al-Zarqawi and some of the people who are in Baghdad who are linked with al-Qaida and Usama bin Laden and who were there with the certain knowledge of the Iraqi regime. We have seen connections and we are continuing to pursue those connections... And the fact that there is also an al-Qaida connection, I think certainly adds to the case...

March 19, 2003

The United States launches military strikes, commencing the Iraq war.

May 1, 2003

In front of a banner that reads "Mission Accomplished," President George W. Bush delivers a speech from the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln off the coast of San Diego, California [\[link to source\]](#)

"Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed..."

"The liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror. We've removed an ally of al Qaeda..."

"Our mission continues. Al Qaeda is wounded, not destroyed."

June 9, 2003

The New York Times reports [\[link to source\]](#)

"Two of the highest-ranking leaders of Al Qaeda in American custody have told the C.I.A. in separate interrogations that the terrorist organization did not work jointly with the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein, according to several intelligence officials."

The New York Times

"Abu Zubaydah, a Qaeda planner and recruiter until his capture in March 2002, told his questioners last year that the idea of working with Mr. Hussein's government had been discussed among Qaeda leaders, but that Osama bin Laden had rejected such proposals,

according to an official who has read the Central Intelligence Agency's classified report on the interrogation."

"In his debriefing, Mr. Zubaydah said Mr. bin Laden had vetoed the idea because he did not want to be beholden to Mr. Hussein, the official said."

"Separately, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the Qaeda chief of operations until his capture on March 1 in Pakistan, has also told interrogators that the group did not work with Mr. Hussein, officials said."

"... No conclusive evidence of joint terrorist operations by Iraq and Al Qaeda has been found, several intelligence officials acknowledged, nor have ties been discovered between Baghdad and the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on Washington and New York."

June 22, 2003

The Washington Post reports [\[link to source\]](#)

"A still-classified national intelligence report... portrayed a far less clear picture about the link between Iraq and al Qaeda than the one presented by the president..."

The Washington Post

"The National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, which represented the consensus of the U.S. intelligence community, contained cautionary language about Iraq's connections with al Qaeda and warnings about the reliability of conflicting reports by Iraqi defectors and captured al Qaeda members about the ties, the sources said..."

"In one of the more notable statements made by the president, Bush said that 'Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists,' and added: 'Alliance with terrorists could allow the Iraqi regime to attack America without leaving any fingerprints.'"

"Bush did not indicate that the consensus of U.S. intelligence analysts was that Hussein would launch a terrorist attack against the United States only if he thought he could not stop the United States from invading Iraq..."

"While Bush also spoke of Iraq and al Qaeda having had 'high-level contacts that go back a decade,' the president did not say – as the classified intelligence report asserted – that the contacts occurred in the early 1990s, when Osama bin Laden, the al Qaeda leader, was living in Sudan and his organization was in its infancy... Bush also did not refer to the report's conclusion that those early contacts had not led to any known continuing high-level relationships between the Iraqi government and al Qaeda, the sources said."

July 13, 2003

The Associated Press reports [\[link to source\]](#)

"...Two former Bush administration intelligence officials say the evidence linking Saddam to the group responsible for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks was never more than sketchy at best."



"There was no significant pattern of cooperation between Iraq and the al-Qaeda terrorist operation,' former State Department intelligence official Greg Thielmann said this week.

"Intelligence agencies agreed on the 'lack of a meaningful connection to al-Qaeda' and said so to the White House and Congress, said Thielmann, who left State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research last September...

"The relationships that were plotted were episodic, not continuous,'" [another] former [intelligence] official said.

"A United Nations terrorism committee says it has no evidence ...of any ties between al-Qaeda and Iraq.

"And U.S. officials say American forces searching in Iraq have found no significant evidence tying Saddam's regime with Osama bin Laden's terrorist network."

August 3, 2003

The *Boston Globe* reports [\[link to source\]](#)

"... President Bush asserted in his State of the Union address that "evidence from intelligence sources, secret conversations, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaeda..."

"... But a review of the White House's statements and interviews with current and former intelligence officials indicate that the assertion was extrapolated from nuggets of intelligence, some tantalizing but unproven, some subsequently disproved, and some considered suspect even at the time the administration was making its case for war..."

"... Mike Anton, spokesman for the National Security Council, said Bush never declared an 'alliance' between Hussein and Al Qaeda, only contacts.

"It's not an alliance,' Anton said. 'It was midlevel contacts, in some cases high-level contacts, going back a decade. That's a fact. No one's ever debunked it.'



"Indeed, intelligence agencies tracked contacts between Iraqi agents and Al Qaeda agents in the '90s in Sudan and Afghanistan, where bin Laden is believed to have met with Farouk Hijazi, head of Iraqi intelligence. **But current and former intelligence specialists caution that such meetings occur just as often between enemies as friends.** Spies frequently make contact with rogue groups to size up their intentions, gauge their strength, or try to infiltrate their ranks, they said. The United States sometimes seeks such contacts, they said.

"While there have been a number of promising intelligence leads hinting at possible meetings between Al Qaeda members and elements of the former Baghdad regime, nothing has been yet shown demonstrating that these potential contacts were historically any more significant than the same level of communication maintained between Osama bin Laden and ruling elements in a number of Iraq's Persian Gulf neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Yemen, Qatar, and Kuwait,' said Evan Kohlman, senior terrorism analyst at the Investigative Project, a Washington think tank credited with compiling the largest archive on Muslim militants.

...Senator Barbara Boxer of California produced a government map from late 2001 on which the administration identified 45 'countries where Al Qaeda has operated' – but Iraq was not among them...

"... Greg Thielmann, the director of the strategic, proliferation, and military affairs division in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research until last September, was charged by Bush officials with determining where Al Qaeda might acquire expertise and materials for weapons of mass destruction.

"Based on the terrorism experts I met with during my period of government, I never heard anyone make the claim there was a significant tie between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein,' he said. The Bush administration, he added, was 'misleading the public in implying there was a close connection.'

"Daniel Benjamin, who directed counterterrorism efforts on the National Security Council in the Clinton administration, said: 'No one disputes that there have been contacts over the years. In that part of the America-hating universe, contacts happen. But that's still a long way from suggesting that they were really working together.'

"In 1998, Benjamin said, he was part of a National Security Council exercise aimed at critically examining the CIA's assessment that Al Qaeda would not team up with Iraq..."

"But some current and former intelligence officials say whatever the ultimate verdict on the link between Hussein and Al Qaeda, the administration erred in presenting raw intelligence as part of an argument for its own policy rather than as a subject for analysis. In some cases, officials did not provide a context for the material. For instance, they said, only in the rarest instances did an administration official refer to a large amount of evidence that Hussein and bin Laden were on bad terms and therefore unlikely to join forces."

September 14, 2003

Vice President Dick Cheney is interviewed on NBC News' *Meet The Press* [\[link to source\]](#)

"We learned more and more that there was a relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda that stretched back through most of the decade of the '90s, that it involved training, for example, on BW [bio-weapons] and CW [chemical weapons], that al-Qaeda sent personnel to Baghdad to get trained on the systems that are involved. The Iraqis providing bomb-making expertise and advice to the al-Qaeda organization..."



September 17, 2003

President George W. Bush answers questions in the Cabinet Room [\[link to source\]](#)

QUESTION: Mr. President, Dr. Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld both said yesterday that they have seen no evidence that Iraq had anything to do with September 11th. Yet, on *Meet the Press*, Sunday, the Vice President said Iraq was a geographic base for the terrorists and he also said, I don't know, or we don't know, when asked if there was any involvement. Your critics say that this is some effort— deliberate effort to blur the line and confuse people. How would you answer that?

PRESIDENT BUSH: We've had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with the September 11th. What the Vice President said was, is that he has been involved with al Qaeda... There's no question that Saddam Hussein had al Qaeda ties.

September 28, 2003

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice speaks on NBC News' *Meet the Press* [\[link to source\]](#)

"...Let's be very clear, he [Hussein] had ties to Al Qaeda, he had Al Qaeda operatives who had operated out of Baghdad,"

January 22, 2004

Vice President Dick Cheney is interviewed on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition* [\[link to source\]](#)

"I continue to believe. I think there's overwhelming evidence that there was a connection between al-Qaeda and the Iraqi government."

March 2, 2004

Knight Ridder newspapers reports [\[link to source\]](#)

"Nearly a year after U.S. and British troops invaded Iraq, no evidence has turned up to verify allegations of Saddam's links with al-Qaida, and several key parts of the administration's case have either proved false or seem increasingly doubtful.



"Senior U.S. officials now say there never was any evidence that Saddam's secular police state and Osama bin Laden's Islamic terrorism network were in league. At most, there were occasional meetings.

"Moreover, the U.S. intelligence community never concluded that those meetings produced an operational relationship, American officials said. That verdict was in a secret report by the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence that was updated in January 2003, on the eve of the war.

"We could find no provable connection between Saddam and al-Qaida," a senior U.S. official acknowledged."

June 16, 2004

The 9/11 Commission issues staff statement number 15, "Overview of the Enemy" [\[link to source\]](#)



"There have been reports that contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda also occurred after Bin Ladin had returned to Afghanistan [in 1996], but they do not appear to have resulted in a collaborative relationship."

June 17, 2004

Remarks by President George W. Bush after his meeting with his Cabinet, in the Cabinet Room [\[link to source\]](#)

QUESTION: Mr. President, why does the administration continue to insist that Saddam had a relationship with al Qaeda, when even you have denied any connection between Saddam and September 11th? And now the September 11th Commission says that there was no collaborative relationship at all.

PRESIDENT BUSH: The reason I keep insisting that there was a relationship between Iraq and Saddam and al Qaeda, because there was a relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda. This administration never said that the 9/11 attacks were orchestrated between Saddam and al Qaeda. We did say there were numerous contacts between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. For example, Iraqi intelligence officers met with bin Laden, the head of al Qaeda, in the Sudan. There's numerous contacts between the two.



July 9, 2004

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence issues its Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq and states [\[link to source\]](#)

"The Central Intelligence Agency reasonably assessed that there were likely several instances of contacts between Iraq and al-Qaida throughout the 1990s, but that these contacts did not add up to an established formal relationship."

October 21, 2004

Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) of the Senate Arms Services Committee issues his official Report of an Inquiry into the Alternative Analysis of the Issue of an Iraq-al Qaeda Relationship [\[link to source\]](#)

"This report addresses the issue of any relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda before the Iraq war, both how it was dealt with inside the Executive Branch and how it was portrayed to the public..."

"Although Administration officials cited classified intelligence in support of their statements about the Iraq-al Qaeda relationship, their statements did not accurately reflect the intelligence assessment provided in classified reports to the Executive Branch and Congress by the IC [Intelligence Community]. Administration officials were apparently using intelligence analyses that originated outside of the IC. Those intelligence analyses claiming a close relationship were produced by the office of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, and presented to high level Administration officials.

"The Administration's pattern of utilizing the stronger, less supportable analyses regarding the Iraq-al Qaeda relationship was not limited to building its case before the Iraq war. It continued well after the war started..."

"The non-IC or 'alternative' intelligence analysis conducted by the DOD [Department of Defense] neatly fit the Administration's desire to build a strong case for an invasion of Iraq to overthrow the Saddam regime, particularly given the fact that the usual source of intelligence analysis, the IC, was skeptical about the existence of a close or cooperative relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda..."

February 9, 2007

The Defense Department Inspector General for Intelligence issues its declassified Review of the Pre-Iraqi War Activities of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy [\[link to source\]](#)



"The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy [Douglas J. Feith] developed, produced, and then disseminated alternative intelligence assessments on the Iraq and al-Qaida relationship, which included some conclusions that were inconsistent with the consensus of the Intelligence Community, to senior decision-makers. While such actions were not illegal or unauthorized, the actions were, in our opinion, inappropriate given that the intelligence assessments were intelligence products and did not clearly show the variance with the consensus of the Intelligence Community."

April 6, 2007

CNN anchor John Roberts reports on Anderson Cooper 360 [\[link to source\]](#)

"Today, a newly-classified report from the Pentagon's inspector general gives more ammunition to those who believe that the administration either deceived itself, the country, or both, into thinking that al Qaeda had close ties with Saddam Hussein."

"... The I.G.'s report says interrogations of Saddam Hussein and two aides, along with captured Iraqi documents, confirm what the intelligence community believed prior to hostilities, that the Iraqi regime was not directly cooperating with al Qaeda."

April 6, 2007

The Washington Post published an article entitled, *Hussein's Prewar Ties To Al-Qaeda Discounted: Pentagon Report Says Contacts Were Limited* [\[link to source\]](#)

"Captured Iraqi documents and intelligence interrogations of Saddam Hussein and two former aides 'all confirmed' that Hussein's regime was not directly cooperating with al-Qaeda before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, according to a declassified Defense Department report released yesterday.

"The declassified version of the report, by acting Inspector General Thomas F. Gimble, also contains new details about the intelligence community's prewar consensus that **the Iraqi government and al-Qaeda figures had only limited contacts**, and about its judgments that reports of deeper links were based on dubious or unconfirmed information...



"Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.), who requested the report's declassification, said in a written statement that the complete text demonstrates more fully why the inspector general concluded that a key Pentagon office – run by then-Undersecretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith – had inappropriately written intelligence assessments before the March 2003 invasion alleging connections between al-Qaeda and Iraq that the U.S. intelligence consensus disputed.

"The report, in a passage previously marked secret, said Feith's office had asserted in a briefing given to Cheney's chief of staff in September 2002 that the relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda was 'mature' and 'symbiotic,' marked by shared interests and evidenced by cooperation across 10 categories, including training, financing and logistics.

"Instead, the report said, the **CIA had concluded in June 2002 that there were few substantiated contacts between al-Qaeda operatives and Iraqi officials and had said that it lacked evidence of a long-term relationship** like the ones Iraq had forged with other terrorist groups..

"The CIA had separately concluded that reports of Iraqi training on weapons of mass destruction were 'episodic, sketchy, or not corroborated in other channels,' the inspector general's report said. It quoted an August 2002 CIA report describing the relationship as more closely resembling 'two organizations trying to feel out or exploit each other' rather than cooperating operationally.

"The CIA was not alone, the defense report emphasized. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) had concluded that year that 'available reporting is not firm enough to demonstrate an ongoing relationship' between the Iraqi regime and al-Qaeda, it said.

"But the contrary conclusions reached by Feith's office ...were publicly praised by Cheney as the best source of information on the topic, a circumstance the Pentagon report cites in documenting the impact of what it described as 'inappropriate' work..."

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