



For Immediate Release
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The Rest of the Story: Iraq's Links to Al Qaeda

[Setting the Record Straight](#)

The Washington Post Quotes The President Without Including The Full Context Of His Remarks Distinguishing Al Qaeda From Saddam. The Washington Post: "On Sept. 25, 2002, just days after the CIA received the source's information, President Bush told reporters: 'Al-Qaeda hides. Saddam doesn't, but 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. ... [Y]ou can't distinguish between al-Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror.'" (Walter Pincus, "CIA Learned in '02 That Bin Laden Had No Iraq Ties, Report Says," The Washington Post, 9/15/06)

- **The Full Context Of The President's Quote Shows That He Was NOT Drawing An Operational Link Between Al Qaeda And Saddam But Was Making The Point That Both Posed Threats To The World.** QUESTION: "Mr. President, do you believe that Saddam Hussein is a bigger threat to the United States than al Qaeda?" THE PRESIDENT: "That's a - that is an interesting question. I'm trying to think of something humorous to say. But I can't when I think about al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. They're both risks, they're both dangerous. The difference, of course, is that al Qaeda likes to hijack governments. Saddam Hussein is a dictator of a government. Al Qaeda hides, Saddam doesn't, but 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. And so it's a comparison that is - I can't make because I can't distinguish between the two, because they're both equally as bad, and equally as evil, and equally as destructive." (President George W. Bush, Remarks In A Photo Opportunity With Colombian President Uribe, Washington, DC, 9/25/02)

In February 2003, CIA Director George Tenet Testified That Iraq Had Links To Al Qaeda

The Washington Post Says That A CIA Report From Late September 2002 Claimed That Saddam Did Not Have Links To Al Qaeda. "The CIA learned in late September 2002 from a high-level member of Saddam Hussein's inner circle that Iraq had no past or present contact with Osama bin Laden and that the Iraqi leader considered bin Laden an enemy of the Baghdad regime, according to a recent Senate Intelligence Committee report." (Walter Pincus, "CIA Learned in '02 That Bin Laden Had No Iraq Ties, Report Says," The Washington Post, 9/15/02)

- **In February 2003, CIA Director George Tenet Testified That Iraq Had Links To Al Qaeda.** TENET: "Iraq is harboring senior members of a terrorist network led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a close associate of al Qaeda. ... Iraq has in the past provided training in document forgery and bomb-making to al Qaeda. It has also provided training in poisons and gases to two al Qaeda associates. One of these associates characterized the relationship he forged with Iraqi officials as successful. ... I know that part of this - and part of this Zarqawi network in Baghdad are two dozen Egyptian Islamic jihad which is indistinguishable from al Qaeda - operatives who are aiding the Zarqawi network, and two senior planners who have been in Baghdad since last May. Now, whether there is a base or whether there is not a base, they are operating freely, supporting the Zarqawi network that is supporting the poisons network in Europe and around the world. So these people have been operating there. And, as you know - I don't want to recount everything that Secretary Powell said, but as you know a foreign service went to the Iraqis twice to talk to them about Zarqawi and were rebuffed. So there is a presence in Baghdad that is beyond Zarqawi." (George Tenet, Select Committee On Intelligence, U.S. Senate, Hearing, 2/11/03)
- **Tenet Testified That Iraq Was Providing Safe Haven To Al Qaeda.** SEN. CARL LEVIN (D-MI): "Would you say, Mr. Tenet, that the Zarqawi terrorist network is under the control or sponsorship of the Iraqi government?" TENET: "I don't know that, sir, but I know that there's a safe haven that's been provided to this network in Baghdad." LEVIN: "So you're not - well, you're saying that you don't know if they're under the support - that they are under the control or direction?" TENET: "Yes, sir. We have said - what we've said is Zarqawi and this large number of operatives are in Baghdad. They say the environment is good. And it is inconceivable to us that the Iraqi intelligence service doesn't know that they live there or what they're doing." (George Tenet, Select Committee On Intelligence, U.S. Senate, Hearing, 2/11/03)
- **In March 2002, Tenet Testified On Iraq's Links To Al Qaeda.** TENET: "We continue to watch Iraq's involvement in terrorists' activities. Baghdad has a long history of supporting terrorism, altering its targets to reflect changing priorities and goals. It is also had contacts with Al Qaeda." (George Tenet, Committee On Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Hearing, 3/19/02)

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