

## RHETORIC VS. REALITY

### IRAQ-AL QAEDA LINK

“In Iraq, Saddam Hussein was in power, overseeing one of the bloodiest regimes of the 20th century... He had long established ties with al Qaeda.” [Cheney, Orlando, FL, 6/14/04]

**... But the Administration has admitted they have no evidence to back this claim up and have been warned by the CIA not make this charge.**

**Powell Said There Was “No Smoking Gun” Linking Iraq, Al Qaeda.** “Secretary of State Colin L. Powell conceded Thursday that despite his assertions to the United Nations last year, he had no ‘smoking gun’ proof of a link between the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and terrorists of Al Qaeda. ‘I have not seen smoking-gun, concrete evidence about the connection,’ Mr. Powell said, in response to a question at a news conference. ‘But I think the possibility of such connections did exist, and it was prudent to consider them at the time that we did.’” [New York Times, 1/9/04]

**Tenet Had to Correct Cheney on Iraq, Al Qaeda Ties.** “Tenet conceded that he had not known until the eve of Tuesday’s hearing about a specific reference Cheney made in a newspaper interview in support of his contention of an operational tie between Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and the al-Qaeda terrorist network... Tenet revealed that the CIA ‘went back to the Department of Defense, who subsequently retracted the [Al Qaeda link] and submitted a correction to you (the Senate committee) because of our concerns with what [was] said.’ When asked by Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., about Cheney’s assertion that the magazine article [Weekly Standard] ‘was the best source of information’ about the alleged connection, Tenet replied that he ‘learned about his quote last night when I was preparing for this hearing. I was unaware he had said that, and I will talk to him about it.’” [Associated Press, 3/10/04]

**No Weapons To Al Qaeda:** In February 2002, the New York Times learned that the CIA had “no evidence that Iraq has engaged in terrorist operations against the United States in nearly a decade, and the agency is also convinced that President Saddam Hussein has not provided chemical or biological weapons to Al Qaeda or related terrorist groups, according to several American intelligence officials.” [New York Times, 2/6/02]

**Defense Policy Board Tried to Link Hussein to Atta, But Failed.** “In the immediate aftermath of September 11, former CIA Director James Woolsey, a member of the Defense Policy Board who backed an invasion of Iraq, put forth the theory... that Saddam was connected to the World Trade Center attacks... Woolsey’s main piece of evidence for a link between Saddam and Al Qaeda was a meeting that was supposed to have taken place in Prague in April 2001 between lead September 11 hijacker Mohamed Atta and an Iraqi intelligence official.” But Atta was traveling in Virginia Beach at the time, according to Bush’s own FBI, and the Czech government eventually retracted the reports. [The New Republic, 6/30/03 Issue; Newsweek, 6/9/03; Los Angeles Times, 9/27/02]

**United Nations Organization Found No Evidence Linking Al Qaeda to Hussein.** According to the New York Times, “The chairman of the monitoring group appointed by the United Nations Security Council to track Al Qaeda told reporters here today that his five-member team had found no evidence linking Al Qaeda to Saddam Hussein’s administration in Iraq.” [New York Times, 6/27/03]