

CIA and FBI Counter-Terrorism Officials: Cheney Lied About 9/11 Hijacker

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Cheney Caught In Another Major Lie

[Everyone knew](#) that Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction (update [here](#)).

Dick Cheney [admits that he lied about 9/11](#).

MSNBC recently [noted](#) that these two facts are intertwined:

Mark Rossini, was then an FBI counter-terrorism agent detailed to the CIA. He was assigned the task of evaluating a Czech intelligence report that Mohammed Atta, the lead 9/11 hijacker, had met with an Iraqi intelligence agent in Prague before the attack on the World Trade Towers.

Cheney repeatedly invoked the report as evidence of Iraqi involvement in 9/11. "It's been pretty well confirmed that he [Atta] did go to Prague and he did meet with a senior official of the Iraqi intelligence service in Czechoslovakia last April," Cheney said on Meet the Press on Dec. 9, 2001.

But the evidence used to support the claim—a supposed photograph of Atta in Prague the day of the alleged meeting—had already been debunked by Rossini. **He analyzed the photo and immediately saw it was bogus: the picture of the Czech "Atta" looked nothing like the real terrorist.** It was a conclusion he relayed up the chain, assuming he had put the matter to rest.

Then he heard Cheney endorsing the discredited report on national television. "I remember looking at the TV screen and saying, 'What did I just hear?' And I—first time in my life, I actually threw something at the television because I couldn't believe what I just heard," Rossini says.

Rossini gave MSNBC an example in an interview for the documentary [Hubris](#):

Mohammed Atta was a slight guy ... barely 5'5 or 5'6, and skinny. The guy in the photograph was muscular, thick, and had a neck like the size of two of my necks. And I thought, "that's not Mohammed Atta in the photograph!" But I sent it to the lab anyway, knowing that would put it to rest.

McClatchy [confirmed](#) in 2009:

Former senior U.S. intelligence official familiar with the interrogation issue said that Cheney and former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld demanded that

the interrogators find evidence of al Qaida-Iraq collaboration...

For most of 2002 and into 2003, Cheney and Rumsfeld, especially, were also demanding proof of the links between al Qaida and Iraq that (former Iraqi exile leader Ahmed) Chalabi and others had told them were there."

It was during this period that CIA interrogators waterboarded two alleged top al Qaida detainees repeatedly — Abu Zubaydah at least 83 times in August 2002 and Khalid Sheik Muhammed 183 times in March 2003 — according to a newly released Justice Department document...

When people kept coming up empty, they were told by Cheney's and Rumsfeld's people to push harder," he continued."Cheney's and Rumsfeld's people were told repeatedly, by CIA . . . and by others, that there wasn't any reliable intelligence that pointed to operational ties between bin Laden and Saddam . . .

A former U.S. Army psychiatrist, Maj. Charles Burney, told Army investigators in 2006 that interrogators at the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, detention facility were under "pressure" to produce evidence of ties between al Qaida and Iraq.

"While we were there a large part of the time we were focused on trying to establish a link between al Qaida and Iraq and we were not successful in establishing a link between al Qaida and Iraq," Burney told staff of the Army Inspector General. "The more frustrated people got in not being able to establish that link . . . there was more and more pressure to resort to measures that might produce more immediate results."

"I think it's obvious that the administration was scrambling then to try to find a connection, a link (between al Qaida and Iraq)," [Senator] Levin said in a conference call with reporters. "They made out links where they didn't exist."

Levin recalled Cheney's assertions that a senior Iraqi intelligence officer had met Mohammad Atta, the leader of the 9/11 hijackers, in the Czech Republic capital of Prague just months before the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The FBI and CIA found that no such meeting occurred.

Postscript: Indeed the [entire torture program was implemented in an attempt to justify the Iraq war](#). And [the 9/11 Commission was set up with false torture testimony](#). [More background](#) on the Iraq war.

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