

Intel showed no pre-war Saddam-Qaida link

by UPI

WASHINGTON - A newly declassified Defense Department report says former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was not cooperating with al-Qaida before the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The Defense Department report was based on captured Iraqi documents and intelligence interrogations of Saddam and two former aides, who "all confirmed" that Saddam's regime was not directly cooperating with al-Qaida before the U.S.-led invasion, the Washington Post reported.

The declassified version of the report by acting Inspector General Thomas F. Gimble provides new details about the pre-war consensus within the intelligence community, that Baghdad had only limited contact with al-Qaida figures, the Post said. Intelligence officials had concluded that reports of more substantial links were based on dubious or unconfirmed information, the newspaper said.

A summary of the report had been released in February.

The report was declassified at the request of Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich. He issued a statement saying the report's full text shows why the inspector general determined that Pentagon officials had inappropriately written intelligence assessments before the March 2003 invasion alleging connections between al-Qaida and Iraq that the U.S. intelligence consensus disputed, the Post reported.

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