Donald Rumsfeld: Clarke: Rumsfeld took advantage of 9-11 to push Iraq agenda

I expected to go back to a round of meetings [after September 11] examining what the next attacks could be, what our vulnerabilities were, what we could do about them in the short term. Instead, I walked into a series of discussions about Iraq. At first I was incredulous that we were talking about something other than getting Al Qaeda. Then I realized with almost a sharp physical pain that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were going to try to take advantage of this national tragedy to promote their agenda about Iraq. Since the beginning of the administration, indeed well before, they had been pressing for a war with Iraq.

On the morning of the 12th DOD's focus was already beginning to shift from al Qaeda. CIA was explicit now that al Qaeda was guilty of the attacks, but Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were not persuaded. It was too sophisticated and complicated an operation, they said, for a terrorist group to have pulled off by itself, without a state sponsor-Iraq must have been helping them.

Source: Against All Enemies, by Richard Clarke, chapter 1

Donald Rumsfeld: No decent targets in Afghanistan, so bomb Iraq

By the afternoon on Wednesday [after Sept. 11], Secretary Rumsfeld was talking about broadening the objectives of our response and "getting Iraq." Secretary Powell pushed back, urging a focus on al Qaeda. Relieved to have some support, I thanked Colin Powell. "I thought I was missing something here," I vented. "Having been attacked by al Qaeda, for us now to go bombing Iraq in response would be like our invading Mexico after the Japanese attacked us at Pearl Harbor."

Powell shook his head. "It's not over yet." Indeed, it was not. Later in the day, Secy. Rumsfeld complained that there were no decent targets for bombing in Afghanistan and that we should consider bombing Iraq, which, he said, had better targets. At first I thought Rumsfeld was joking. But he was serious and the President did not reject out of hand the idea of attacking Iraq. Instead, he noted that what we needed to do with Iraq was to change the government, not just hit it with more cruise missiles, as Rumsfeld had implied.

Source: Against All Enemies, by Richard Clarke, chapter 1

George W. Bush: Clarke: Bush insisted on connecting 9-11 with Saddam

On September 12th, I left the video conferencing center and there, wandering alone around the situation room, was the president. He looked like he wanted something to do. He grabbed a few of us and closed the door to the conference room. "Look," he told us, "I know you have a lot to do and all, but I want you, as soon as you can, to go back over everything, everything. See if Saddam did this. See if he's linked in any way."

I was once again taken aback, incredulous, and it showed. "But, Mr. President, Al Qaeda did this."

"I know, I know, but - see if Saddam was involved. Just look. I want to know any shred-"

"Absolutely, we will look-again." I was trying to be more respectful, more responsive. "But you know, we have looked several times for state sponsorship of Al Qaeda and not found any real linkages to Iraq. Iran plays a little, as does Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, Yemen."
"Look into Iraq, Saddam," the president said testily and left us.
Source: Against All Enemies, by Richard Clarke, chapter 1

**George W. Bush: Bush admin knew Iraq not a threat, & had no time for terror**

[Anti-terror czar Dick Clarke said], "I am unaware of any Iraqi-sponsored terrorism directed at the US since 1993, and I think FBI and CIA concur in that judgment?" CIA Deputy Director John McLaughlin replied, "Yes, that is right. We have no evidence of any active Iraqi terrorist threat against the US."

The truth was that the [Bush administration had] a full agenda and a backlog of Bush priority issues: the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, the Kyoto agreement, and Iraq. There was no time for terrorism.
Source: Against All Enemies, by Richard Clarke, p.231-234

**George W. Bush: Clarke: CIA and FBI intelligence failures allowed 9/11**

Somewhere in CIA there was information that two known al Qaeda terrorists had come into the US. Somewhere in FBI there was information that strange things had been going on at flight schools in the US. Could we have stopped the September 11 attack? It would be facile to say yes. What is clear is that there were failures in the organizations that we trusted to protect us, failures to get information to the right place at the right time, earlier failures to act boldly to reduce or eliminate the threat.
Source: Against All Enemies, by Richard Clarke, p.236-8

**George W. Bush: Clarke: Bush Iraq policy generates Islamic hatred of America**

[Clarke says, "Ideological infiltrations by al Qaeda] would not inflame Islamic opinion and further radicalize Muslim youth into heightened hatred of America in the way invading Iraq has done. We and our values needed to be more appealing to Muslims than al Qaeda is. Far from addressing the popular appeal of the enemy that attacked us, Bush handed that enemy precisely what it wanted and needed, proof that America was at war with Islam, that we were the new Crusaders come to occupy Muslim land."
Source: Against All Enemies, by Richard Clarke, p.245-6

**Paul Wolfowitz: Clarke: Wolfowitz disbelieved Al Qaeda's threat, blamed Iraq**

Wolfowitz fidgeted and scowled, "I just don't understand why we are beginning by talking about this one man bin Laden."

"We are talking about a network of terrorist organizations called al Qaeda, that happens to be led by bin Laden, and we are talking about that network because it and it alone poses an immediate and serious threat to the US," I answered.

Wolfowitz turned to me. "You give bin Laden too much credit. He could not do all these things like the 1993 attack on New York, not without a state sponsor. Just because FBI and CIA have failed to find the linkages does not mean they don't exist."

I could hardly believe it, but Wolfowitz was actually spouting the totally discredited theory that Iraq was behind the 1993 truck bomb at the World Trade Center, a theory that had been investigated for years & found to be totally untrue. I had a flashback to Wolfowitz saying the very same thing in April. The focus on al Qaeda was wrong, he had said, we must go after Iraqi-sponsored terrorism.
Source: Against All Enemies, by Richard Clarke, chapter 1

- The above quotations are from Against All Enemies:Inside America's War on Terror, by Richard A. Clarke (anti-terror czar from 1992-2002).
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