

# CIA Received Data Showing No Bin Laden-Hussein Link

While top Bush administration officials in 2002 were linking Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, the CIA had learned from an Iraqi Cabinet member that there was no relationship, the *Washington Post* reported today (see [GSN](#), Sept 11).

The new information was provided in a Senate Intelligence Committee report released last week.

The Cabinet official, then-Foreign Minister Naji Sabri, told a CIA questioner in September 2002 that "Iraq has no past, current or anticipated future contact with Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda," the committee report says. The official "added that bin Laden was in fact a longtime enemy of Iraq," says the report. Sabri was reportedly a paid CIA informant during the runup to the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, but he has denied this publicly (see [GSN](#), March 23).

At about the same time, President George W. Bush and other administration officials were charging that bin Laden and Hussein had a dangerous relationship.

"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. ... You can't distinguish between al-Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror," Bush told reporters in late September 2002.

Last week's committee report says CIA did not pass on the Sabri information about bin Laden to administration officials, but other information that bolstered claims being made by administration officials quickly reached the president and his top aides (Walter Pincus, [Washington Post](#), Sept. 15).

