

A GOP congressional leader who was wavering on giving President Bush the authority to wage war in late 2002 said Vice President Cheney misled him by saying that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had direct personal ties to al-Qaeda terrorists and was making rapid progress toward a suitcase nuclear weapon, according to a new book by Washington Post investigative reporter Barton Gellman.

Cheney's assertions, described by former House majority leader Richard K. Armev (Tex.), came in a highly classified one-on-one briefing in Room H-208, the vice president's hideaway office in the Capitol. The threat Cheney described went far beyond public statements that have been criticized for relying on "cherry-picked" intelligence of unknown reliability. There was no intelligence to support the vice president's private assertions, Gellman reports, and they "crossed so far beyond the known universe of fact that they were simply without foundation."

Cheney said, according to Armev, that Iraq's "ability to miniaturize weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear," had been "substantially refined since the first Gulf War," and would soon result in "packages that could be moved even by ground personnel." Cheney linked that threat to Hussein's alleged ties to al-Qaeda, Armev said, explaining that "we now know they have the ability to develop these weapons in a very portable fashion, and they have a delivery system in their relationship with organizations such as al-Qaeda."

"Did Dick Cheney . . . purposely tell me things he knew to be untrue?" Armev said. "I seriously feel that may be the case. . . . Had I known or believed then what I believe now, I would have publicly opposed [the war] resolution right to the bitter end, and I believe I might have stopped it from happening."

**TVNL Comment: Now he tells us. This is a former Congressman? This is a person who was supposedly elected to represent the people? Why did he not speak earlier of Cheney's lies! Yes, the word is "LIES!!!"**

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