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**Emne:** Amb. Moskva 359 - Præsident Putins udtalelse i Astana den 18.6.2004 vedr. Iraks rolle i den internationale terrorisme.



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Præsident Putins udtalelse i Astana den 18.6.2004 vedr. Iraks rolle i den internationale terrorisme.

Præsident Putin fremkom den 18.6.2004 i Astana med en udtalelse vedr. Iraks rolle i den internationale terrorisme, herunder planlægning af terrorangreb i USA og mod amerikanske mål i udlandet. Udtalelsen faldt på det afsluttende pressemøde efter topmødet i Den Kollektive Sikkerhedsaftales Organisation, og pressen har efterfølgende flittigt diskuteret, hvad Putin egentlig sagde og med hvilket formål.

Vedlagt indsendes eksempler på russisk pressedækning samt uddrag fra den russiske præsidentadministrations hjemmeside.

Ambassaden har efterfølgende været i kontakt med herv. amerikanske og britiske ambassader, men ingen af ambassaderne havde aktivt søgt uddybende oplysninger hos de russiske myndigheder. Ambassaderne havde registreret præsident Putins udtalelser, men man lå angiveligt ikke selv inde med information, der kunne bekræfte udtalelsen. Amerikanske ambassade henviste herudover til State Department.

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PAV/Thomas Richter og Anders C. Hougård

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## **Russisk presse om præsident Putins udtalelse i Astana vedrørende Saddam Hussein og Iraks rolle i international terrorisme.**

*Kommersant* skriver i mandagens udgave, at præsident Putin på det afsluttende pressemøde i Astana den 18. juni 2004 af en journalist blev udspurgt om de omdiskuterede forbindelser mellem Saddam Hussein og Al-Qaeda.

Putin svarede beredvilligt, at man allerede i starten af 2002 havde fået kendskab til, at den irakiske efterretningstjeneste planlagde terrorangreb i USA samt på amerikanske diplomatiske og militære mål i udlandet. Disse efterretninger blev flere gange viderebragt til amerikanerne i efteråret 2002, både skriftligt og mundtligt. Putin sagde også, at Vi havde ikke efterretninger om, at Hussein havde været medvirkende til nogen terrorangreb.

Ifølge Putin har Bush personligt takket lederen af en af de russiske efterretningstjenester for oplysninger om Saddam, og anså dem for meget vigtige.

Kommersant giver udtryk for, at man ikke kan undgå at undre sig over Putins udtalelser, når man tager Ruslands kommentarer om at Irak ikke udgjorde nogen trussel for omverdenen og de aktive russisk-irakiske forhold i betragtning.

**Hvad angår spørgsmålet om USA's påstand om, at man handlede i selvforsvar – så ved jeg ikke rigtigt. Det er et helt andet emne, udtalte Putin, der fulgte op med en understregning af Ruslands nuværende holdning til krigen i Irak, som er, at der findes internationale retningslinier for anvendelse af magt, og i dette tilfælde er de ikke blevet overholdt.**

Kommersant fortolker denne udtalelse som ”at Rusland ikke er enig med USA's håndtering af situationen, men i det store hele mener, at der var grundlag for at handle aktivt.” Årsagen til den pludselige russiske støtte finder avisen fuldt forståelig. Traditionelt er det lettere for Rusland at samarbejde med en republikansk administration, som ikke fokuserer så meget på emner som menneskerettigheder. Man er i den forbindelse bange for at blive smidt ud af G8-samarbejdet, hvis John Kerry kommer til magten. Ydermere mener avisen, at Rusland valgte stedet og tidspunktet for udtalelserne netop for trække SNG-partnerne tættere på Rusland. Disse partnere har i den senere tid fået flere forbindelser til USA, hvad man er utilfreds med i Moskva. Moskva viser på denne her måde, at forbindelserne mellem Moskva og Washington er så tætte, at SNG-landenes forsøg på at udnytte konkurrencemomentet mellem Rusland og USA og skyde en kile ind imellem dem er nyttesløst. Rusland kæmper mod terrorisme på samme niveau som USA, og er i den forbindelse den væsentligste faktor for SNG-landene.

*Vremja og internetavisen "Grani"* deler Kommersants vurdering af årsagerne til den russiske støtte, og finder, at man i Kreml, ved at videreføre Putins kommentarer fra G8-møderne på Sea Island ("demokraterne har intet moralsk grundlag at kritisere Bush på"), har valgt at satse på Bush ved præsidentvalget.

Fra Moscow Times:

Monday, June 21, 2004

## Putin Says Iraq Planned U.S. Attacks

By [Simon Saradzhyan](mailto:saradzhyan@imedia.ru) <<mailto:saradzhyan@imedia.ru>>

Staff Writer

Giving an unexpected boost to U.S. President George W. Bush's claim that Saddam Hussein's regime had posed a threat to the United States, President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Russian intelligence agencies had received information that Iraq was planning terrorist attacks against American targets and warned U.S. intelligence. The announcement appeared to surprise the Bush administration, which is under fire in an election year for still not proving Hussein's regime had weapons of mass destruction or links to al-Qaida, which carried out the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. "After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and before the start of the military operation in Iraq, intelligence repeatedly received information that the official services of the Saddam regime were preparing terrorist acts against military and civil targets on the territory of the United States and beyond," Putin told reporters Friday in the Kazakh capital, Astana, where he was attending a summit of several former Soviet republics. Putin said the information had been passed on to U.S. intelligence and that Bush had personally thanked a Russian intelligence chief for it. Putin said Russia had no knowledge of whether Iraq had managed to carry out any attacks. But he stressed that Russia still opposed the U.S. decision to invade Iraq because it did not follow "international legislation on procedures of the use of force in international affairs." Putin made no mention of whether Russian intelligence knew of links between the Hussein regime and al-Qaida. His remarks came as Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney continued to insist that Iraq had ties to al-Qaida -- despite findings last week by a U.S. commission investigating the Sept. 11 attacks that there was no credible evidence Iraq had cooperated with al-Qaida in the attacks. The White House would not comment about Putin's announcement Friday. "We've declassified as much information as we can to talk about the threat that Saddam Hussein posed," a White House spokeswoman told the Los Angeles Times. A National Security Council spokesman also refused to comment, The Washington Post reported. A State Department official told Reuters that "everyone is scratching their heads" about Putin's remarks. Speaking with reporters at a round table Friday, Secretary of State Colin Powell was equally vague. "Yeah, I don't -- I'm not familiar with what the Russians might have given us, but I'd just have to yield to my friends in the intelligence community," he said. "Those sorts of things usually come from service to service, and I just haven't had a chance this afternoon to see what the CIA is saying about it." The Bush administration had tried to justify its plans to invade Iraq by suggesting that Iraq might have links to al-Qaida and then pressing the case that Hussein was actively pursuing WMD programs. The Russian leadership, including Putin, had challenged the Bush administration's rationale, pointing out that there was no solid evidence of active WMD programs in Iraq. Given Russia's opposition to the war, Putin's statement, which essentially indicates the United States might have had a case to go to war, came as a surprise. "The timing of it leaves no doubt that it is -- directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally -- support for President Bush," said Alexander Pikayev, an independent defense analyst. He said the Kremlin might have decided to give Bush some support as he runs for re-election in November because it sees his Republican administration as more pragmatic and "less inclined to emphasize" Russia's human rights record and the situation in Chechnya than the Democrats. At the same time, Russian intelligence agencies probably had better capabilities to collect

information in Iraq than their counterparts in the United States and also Britain and Israel, which reportedly helped build the U.S. case to attack, he said. Putin and Bush forged a personal relationship after Sept. 11, when Putin was the first world leader to call and offer his support. Just days after the attacks, Putin told MSNBC that he had ordered Russian intelligence to warn the U.S. government in "the strongest possible terms" of imminent assaults on airports and government buildings. Putin's statement Friday "may have come as a result of a concrete agreement with the Bush administration," said Ivan Safranchuk, head of the Moscow office of the Washington-based Center for Defense Information. "But we might not know for a while what the agreement was." Putin spoke in response to a reporter's question about an Interfax report on Thursday. The report, which cited an unidentified intelligence agent, said Russian intelligence had received information in early 2002 that Iraq was planning an attack against the United States. "This information was more than once passed on to our U.S. partners in oral and written form in the fall of 2002," the agent was quoted as saying. The agent said Iraq's plans needed to be made public because "in investigating the causes of the Iraq crisis, it is necessary to take into account everything, including the direct threat to the United States from Saddam Hussein's regime." The agent said Russia had no evidence of a link between Hussein and al-Qaida, but he suggested that the Sept. 11 commission's findings failed to "draw a comprehensive picture." Safranchuk said the fact that Putin was asked to comment on a report carried by a state-run news agency and at a summit of former Soviet republics indicates that his announcement had been carefully orchestrated. He noted that Putin had carefully worded his response in such a way that he offered support to Bush but did not reverse his opposition to the war in Iraq. Given Moscow's close ties to Iraq from Soviet times, Russian intelligence services may have had good footing there. In April 2002, U.S. Ambassador to Russia Alexander Vershbow said Washington knew contacts had been made between Russian and Iraqi intelligence agencies. In January and February 2003, as the U.S. and coalition forces massed in Kuwait and the Persian Gulf area, the Bush administration asked countries including Russia to keep close surveillance on Iraqi intelligence officers in their countries to make certain they were not preparing terrorist attacks against U.S. facilities, The Washington Post reported.

June 18, 2004

**Response to a question at the press conference following the meetings of the Eurasian Economic Community Interstate Council and Collective Security Treaty Organisation's Collective Security Council.**

**QUESTION:** In your opinion, what role can the Eurasian Economic Community play in developing the economies of the CIS countries and in promoting integration in general in the post-Soviet area? And, if you will allow, I would also like to ask another question. Yesterday the news came that, citing a Russian intelligence source, the Russian intelligence services passed on information to their U.S. counterparts in autumn 2002 that Saddam Hussein's regime was preparing terrorist attacks in the United States and against American targets abroad. Can you comment on this information? Is this true, and if it is, then has Russia changed its position regarding the military operations in Iraq and was the United States in fact rightly acting in necessary self-defence?

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** We have discussed the role of the Eurasian Economic Community on many occasions, including with the press. I think that the Eurasian Economic Community is in many ways a driving force for integration in the post-Soviet area. As you know, this idea was the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan. We, all the representatives of the community's member states here today, gave this initiative our active support and we were right in doing so. I think that recent events, including the work being done on creating the Single Economic Space, and you know that the four countries involved are moving forward with this, were sparked to a considerable extent by the processes underway within the Eurasian Economic Community.

We are creating a real tool for integration. The results of today's meeting, more precisely, the adoption of the documents you know about and our common work on the securities market, will give the community's economic legislation the status it needs for us to be able to approve supranational, direct legislation. This is very important for achieving genuine integration. The Eurasian Economic Community, therefore, really does have great significance and I hope that its importance will increase further.

As for your second question, which concerns a different matter altogether, I have no reason to avoid it. I can confirm that, following the events of September 11, 2001 and up until the beginning of military operations in Iraq, Russian intelligence did indeed receive on several occasions information that official organisations in Saddam Hussein's regime were preparing terrorist attacks on U.S. territory and against U.S. military and civilian targets abroad. This information was indeed passed on through our cooperation channels to our U.S. colleagues. Moreover, U.S. President George Bush had the chance, and used it, to personally thank the head of one of the Russian intelligence services for this information that he considered of great importance.

As for whether this constitutes grounds for saying that the United States acted in necessary self-defence, I don't know, that is another matter.

Has Russia's position changed regarding the military operations in Iraq? No, it has not changed. This information was received by the Russian intelligence services and passed on to our American partners, but we think that international law sets out certain procedures for using force in international affairs, and in this case these procedures were not complied with.

I would like to add a couple more words on Iraq. It is one thing to have information that Saddam Hussein's regime was preparing terrorist attacks. We had that information and we passed it on. But we did not have information linking his regime to any actual terrorist attacks and really, this is quite another matter.