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HEADLINE: Mohammed Atta met Saddam prior to September 11: US official

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Mohammed Atta consulted Saddam Hussein prior to leading the suicide attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, according to Richard Perle, an advisor to the US defense secretary.

"Mohammed Atta met Saddam Hussein in Baghdad prior to September 11. We have proof of that, and we are sure he wasn't just there for a holiday," Perle told Italy's business daily "Il Sole 24 Ore".

"The meeting is one of the motives for an American attack on Iraq," added Perle, who is chairman of the Defense Policy Board and consultant to US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, a leading advocate of an attack on Iraq.

"The main objective of the American administration is to avoid weapons of mass destruction falling into the wrong hands," said Perle.

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