

Atta's Alleged Trip to Prague

Mohamed Atta is known to have been in Prague on two occasions: in December 1994, when he stayed one night at a transit hotel, and in June 2000, when he was en route to the United States. On the latter occasion, he arrived by bus from Germany, on June 2, and departed for Newark the following day.⁶⁹

The allegation that Atta met with an Iraqi intelligence officer in Prague in April 2001 originates from the reporting of a single source of the Czech intelligence service. Shortly after 9/11, the source reported having seen Atta meet with Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim Samir al Ani, an Iraqi diplomat, at the Iraqi Embassy in Prague on April 9, 2001, at 11:00 A.M. This information was passed to CIA headquarters.

The U.S. legal attaché ("Legat") in Prague, the representative of the FBI, met with the Czech service's source. After the meeting, the assessment of the Legat and the Czech officers present was that they were 70 percent sure that the source was sincere and believed his own story of the meeting. Subsequently, the Czech intelligence service publicly stated that there was a 70 percent probability that the meeting between Atta and Ani had taken place. The Czech Interior Minister also made several statements to the press about his belief that the meeting had occurred, and the story was widely reported.

The FBI has gathered evidence indicating that Atta was in Virginia Beach on April 4 (as evidenced by a bank surveillance camera photo), and in Coral Springs, Florida on April 11, where he and Shehhi leased an apartment. On April 6, 9, 10, and 11, Atta's cellular telephone was used numerous times to call various lodging establishments in Florida from cell sites within Florida. We cannot confirm that he placed those calls. But there are no U.S. records indicating that Atta departed the country during this period. Czech officials have reviewed their flight and border records as well for any indication that Atta was in the Czech Republic in April 2001, including records of anyone crossing the border who even looked Arab. They have also reviewed pictures from the area near the Iraqi embassy and have not discovered photos of anyone who looked like Atta. No evidence has been found that Atta was in the Czech Republic in April 2001.

According to the Czech government, Ani, the Iraqi officer alleged to have met with Atta, was about 70 miles away from Prague on April 8–9 and did not return until the afternoon of the ninth, while the source was firm that the sighting occurred at 11:00 A.M. When questioned about the reported April 2001 meeting, Ani—now in custody—has denied ever