

**B*Russells* Tribunal Dossier**  
**Introduction to the "Salvador option"**  
**and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -**



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\* **Read also: "Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 1* –**  
(<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/pdf/DeathSquads.pdf>)

# ***BRussells* Tribunal Dossier** **Introduction to the "Salvador option"** **and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -**



## **A - *BRussells* Tribunal Resources**

### **Death Squads in Iraq**

Fanatic Militias Used in a Dirty war

07 June 2006.

*(Name of Iraqi author withheld for security reasons)*

Okhwan Sinna wa Shi'a, hatha alwatan ma nbi'a (We are brothers, Sunnis and Shiites; we are not selling this homeland)

This slogan was chanted by the Iraqis in Baghdad and other provinces days after the occupation in April 2003, denouncing any sectarian division in the Iraqi society, on every occasion. There was hope. Until very recently, in spite of all the killings, Iraqis were million per cent confident that there is NO sectarian sensitivity between the Shiite and the Sunnis.

Now, death on seemingly sectarian bases is the strongest reality in Iraq. Families are afraid to show up at the morgue or the hospitals to collect a killed son's body because of the armed militias who might be hiding in disguise around the corner.

Heads of young men are rolling in the streets like watermelon, they were kidnapped near the morgue. In the first five months of 2006, directly after the elections which was supposed to stop the killing and establish (democracy) in Iraq once and for the coming four years, and the Samara Shrine explosions, the Baghdad morgue was receiving 35-50 daily, according to Dr. Qais Hassan, a director in the morgue (1).

Six thousands Baghdadis' bodies were brought to the central morgue in the last 5 months (for the first time in its history).

In May alone the bodies were 1,398. according to the Ministry of Health, not including victims of explosions.

It was the bloodiest month since the occupation.

In Basra, which was relatively calm until the last elections, more than one thousand were killed in the same period (not including May).

In May the number exceeded the last few months together that prime minister Maliki had to impose martial laws on the city, it is said that a man is killed every hour in Basra, and in Anbar the assassination were so many, especially of prominent Sunni scholars, consolations were rejected, while the city was under siege for months, and Maliki announced on TV late May, that a big (security operation) is going to take place soon.

In Diyala (east of Baghdad), tens of mutilated bodies found in isolated areas are not news any more.

This week, a passenger bus was stopped by armed men; all the 25 children, old people and students on it were ordered out and were shot one by one. At the passport office in Baghdad, which usually begins receiving people at 9:00 am, long queues gather at 5:00 for three months now, those who arrive at 6:00 are sent back. Huge family exodus is expected by July, when the summer holiday begins.

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Families are running away from the killings and threats letters, telling them to leave, or face death, and also from the unbearably bad conditions of daily life(2). It has become a very profitable trade for the passport office employees. They claim that they can not receive more than 30 files a day, making people pay \$500 to get a passport. Those who can not afford it, or do not have any where to go decide to stay and face their destiny. Some simply refuse to go "We can not just leave Iraq to the criminals, we have to resist. The only problem is our families", a man who already received two threats said.

So what happened? Is this the beginning of the civil war? If yes, why the so called sectarian killings, which actually began 3 years ago did not succeed in creating civil war then? Why now? Who is behind them? Who are the death squads after all? To begin with, it has become common knowledge, beyond any argument that the Interior Ministry and the Iraqi Army are involved in the death squad, whether the Iraqi ministers or the American authorities, admit it or not (3). There are tons of eye witnesses' testimonies, documents, evidences, films...

The type of killing now connected to the death squads began around early 2005, on the hands of the Iraqi police commandos.

But some important points worth mentioning here: that the first Iraqi interim government was (elected) in January 2005 and was heavily Shiite (Jafari government), that around that time the talk of the Salvador option in Iraq was being heard (4), and that the police commandos were formed, mainly of Shiite militias, especially Badr (the armed branch of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq) and the Mahdi Army (the Sadr Movement militia).

But does all this mean that the death squads are Shiite militias within the interior ministry forces? The answer is: NO, not exactly. I know that any Iraqi who has seen a death squads' operation (which is becoming a familiar day light phenomenon) would want to shoot me in the head for this answer; because a convoy of heavily armed men, masked, black-suited, in expensive modern cars and pick ups, calling Sunnis the worst of names, shooting in the air, calling for revenge, attacking individuals, shops, kidnapping people, beating them to death or shoving them in cars trunks, would not look like anything other than a sectarian militia. But this is only part of the story.

Throughout 2005, thousands of young Sunni men were arrested (officially) by the Iraqi police commandos (a major arrests operation in Baghdad was in May 2005, given the name of "Lightning", when hundreds were arrested). Weeks later, some of their bodies were found in different places of Baghdad, or Iraq, mainly to the east. The names of the Wolf Brigades, the Ra'ad (thunder), the Nimr (Tiger), the Karrar (Imam Ali), the Imam Hussien, the Scorpion; Al-Borkan (volcano)...became familiar names of police commandos brigades (Maghaweer). They are supposed to be counterinsurgency, intelligence based troops. They were created, trained, armed, and directed by the American intelligence officers who are well known for serving in central and South America where death squads were a major part of the political scene (5).

The Maghaweer were so brutal, that one of the prominent Iraqi personalities, who publicly denounce the occupation, told us that the American prisons are more merciful than the Iraqi. Those detainees told stories of the kinds of torture they were exposed to in the Iraqi Interior Ministry prisons. In many

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ways, they were similar to the traces seen on the bodies found in the garbage or the sewage daily in Baghdad nowadays, connected to the death squads. Holes drilled in the head, feet, lungs... etc are trade marks (they were well-known in the Iranian prisons). Broken bones, smashed skulls, burnt or peeled skin, savage beatings, electric shocks, pulled out right eye, are familiar in both cases.

Abu Omar, an Iraqi engineer who spent 4 months of 2005 in Al-Nisoor and Al-Kadimiya notorious prisons, talked about pick ups leaving after midnight and coming back after few hours with tens of men, handcuffed and blindfolded. Abu Omar was one of tens of prisoners who appeared on a famous TV program, produced by the Interior Ministry. Badly tortured, those prisoners admit committing several acts of terrorism, but more important, publicly accusing well known Sunni scholars of immoral acts or of terrorism. Interestingly enough, Abu Omar was released immediately after accusing on TV one of those scholar Sheikhs of using the mosque to hide weapons; although Abu Omar's file was filled with all kinds of fabricated crimes that would execute him a hundred times, according to his judge, who released him. Later, especially after the Shiite coalition won the December 2005 elections, and after the Samarra Shrine explosion, the killings changed dramatically in number and in technique.

The worst were in the last week of February and in March. Thousands of Sunnis were slaughtered by black-suited militias using the police cars and weapons, hundreds of mosques were burnt, thousands men, women and children were kidnapped, mainly in Baghdad suburbs and areas of mixed sectarian communities. Crime gangs, some of them are again connected to the militias, were a big part of the whole chaos. Ali, a young Sunni from Doura was kidnapped in May, the gang asked for \$50.000 ransom. Ali was one of the luckiest.

He was released after his family managed to collect and pay \$30.000. Ali told us how he was kidnapped, taken in a car trunk, driven for 1.30 hours in rural areas, and beaten. He heard the gang calling some body telling him "we got a Sunni dog", they were talking in a southern slang. It is well known that the Rashid ex-military barracks, the biggest in Iraq before the occupation, are now a shelter for criminal gangs. Mohammad, another young man from al-Madain (south east of Baghdad) was kidnapped and hidden there, he told us stories of kidnapped children and women kept by gangs there. A university student girl was brought one morning, he said. They called her the bitch, because she was not wearing the hijab. She kept on screaming until late in the afternoon that day, when she was finally "silenced".

Other crimes were also connected to these groups, white and children slavery, drugs trade and smuggling, according to Iraqi Human Rights organizations. While some kidnappings and killings are political, criminal or for sectarian revenge, many others were for obscure reasons. Medical doctors, university professors, businessmen, merchants, school teachers were also targeted. Hundreds of them are being assassinated. Some of them were Baathists, but many others were not.

The big question remains why the government is not doing anything about it. Actually, in Amara (south east of Iraq) and in Kut (east of Iraq) some armed men who were caught killing civilians and burning mosques were arrested by some police stations, but the American troops and some political

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parties intervened and released them. In Basra there was a big problem between the governor and the Shiite reference in Najaf because he accused the Shiite political parties in the Maliki government of sponsoring the assassinations and corruption (namely oil smuggling). Actually, Al-Fadhila party spokesman (Shiite) accused the prime minister, Maliki, of imposing martial law for political, not security, reasons e.g. to marginalize and control the political forces who oppose the Shiite Coalition government policies and parties. But the important fact here is: that the police commandos were mainly Shiite militias does not imply that they were always committing their brutal crimes for sectarian reasons. Actually, that was why they were used to commit those crimes, simply to instigate sectarian civil war.

It was the American Governor of Iraq, Bremer, who engineered the Shiite militias join the Iraqi security forces, according to article 91 of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) put by Bremer himself, to fight the (Sunni insurgency) by Iraqi hands. Death Squads in Iraq are units inside the security forces, whose members are not just religiously fanatic sectarian militias, by foreign intelligence: American, Israeli, Iranian or any other country. They are also Iraqis "educated" and trained outside Iraq, brought into Iraq before the occupation, and shortly after it. Their job is to instigate sectarian conflict leading to create a (federal) Iraq, e.g. a divided Iraq.

It is true that the hands are Iraqis, but the minds and the money are not. It is also true that some political sectarian militias are involved in the death squads, especially those who are connected to the Iranian project in Iraq. But it is interesting to notice how the mainstream media, and the Iraqi government keep on nurturing the idea that the sectarian killings are done by the Sunni insurgency, what they call the rogue units in the police, and the Mahdi Army.

The other militias who are involved in the sectarian killings and violence are set aside. But who are those Iraqis whose job is to instigate a civil war? Why? Many of us remember very well the few hundreds of military men who accompanied Chalabi (head of the National Congress party, well known for being the Pentagon man) into Iraq directly after the occupation. They were highly trained outside Iraq, many say in an isolated island in the Pacific, by American, Israeli, and south African officers. There are reports that some were trained in the Israel, Hungary and Poland.

Early after the occupation, there were few individual assassinations, mainly of Baathists, especially in Adhamiya, where the community still remembers a man called Mohammad Saddam. He was responsible for the arrest and killing of many Iraqi resistance members and advocates. There were some assassinations of Baathists and security individuals in Nassiriya too, where these troops were moved. There was strong reaction against their activities. The press talked then about the American authorities disarming the Chalabi militias. (6) They disappeared for a while.

But all the Iraqi families, whose houses were raided by the American troops, especially in 2003, remember masked men who speak Iraqi, accompanying the American troops in these raids. They were called informers. Maybe some were, but the way they quickly joined the occupation troops was curious. A member of these forces (they were called the Forces of Iraq Freedom) recently sent out a sheet of

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facts exposing the rule they were playing in assassinating Shiites and Sunnis to create sectarian problems.

After explaining how they were brain washed and recruited, and trained before ( and some after) the occupation, he said that these forces were infiltrated in the New Iraqi Army, the National Guards, the Iraqi police, the Maghaweer (police commandos), the Interior Intelligence and the Iraqi Special Forces. They are actually called the Iraqi Special Forces and their headquarters are in the Baghdad airport. They are not connected to any Iraqi security body, and are supervised by American and Israeli officers.

This man, who promised to expose his identity once the death squad's leadership is arrested, said that they were attacking Sunnis "in uniforms, IDs, and police cars", and they were attacking Shiites "in cars normally used by the Mujahideen". He gave an example of the biggest operation they did which was the Kadhimiya bridge stampede last summer, in which more one thousand were killed.

He gave a list of some members of these forces. Among the 67 names he gave, only 14 were Arabs, the rest were Kurds, mainly from Barzani (president of Kurdistan's party). Two were Jews, and one Iranian.

Nothing in this paper was news to us, may be some of the details, but to come from a member of the death squads talking about the dirty war they are waging in Iraq is very important at this point, when many Iraqis begin to believe that this is a sectarian war.

In some ways it is, and increasingly tribal too, especially after the Samara Shrine explosion, although in fact, there is a wide understanding that it was not the Salafists who did it, simply because Samara was under their control for months until last December, and they did not do it. In fact, the Iranian intelligence, or their Iraqi allies are accused of bombing the Shrine, just to unleash the sectarian violence through retaliatory attacks, which is what is happening the last 4 months.

When will the mainstream media give us this side of the story?

(1) -Dr. Qais said that the Baghdad morgue received 1068 bodies in January 2006, February, March, April (around four months).

He said that more 90% of them were gun shot

(2) -Extremists distribute leaflets in Baghdad streets listing prohibited things: T shirts, shorts (for boys), female drivers, not covering the hair, make up, and jewelry... Girls are being pulled out of the school buses and beaten if they do not put the scarf.

A student of chemistry in the Technological University was shaved bald. School buses drivers are being beaten or threatened if they allow (such) girls in the bus.

(3)-the Prime Minister, the Minister of Interior and the Vice president admitted publicly that some police troops were involved in the death squads.



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(4)- Shortly before that, there are at least 2 cases (that we personally know about) of American soldiers in uniform killing Iraqis in an unfamiliar way, not shooting or bombing ...etc. They were slaughtering the victims by bayonets, or shooting them in the mouth.

(5)- It is also important to mention that some of the Maghaweer brigades were actually formed late in 2004. For detailed information on this point see: Max Fuller, For Iraq, the Salvador Option Become Reality, Center for Research on Globalization.

See:

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=FUL20051110&articleId=1230>

(6) It would be interesting to notice that Chalabi – and Allawi too- were curiously very quiet lately, almost silent, in the last 5 months when the big problem of the Interior and defense ministries was negotiated among the new Iraqi political players.

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm>

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## **Press Release 17<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

### **Talafar Hospital Equipments smashed by angry armed gunmen**

Doctors for Iraq has received reports that armed gunmen entered Talafar Hospital in the West North of Iraq and threatened and attacked staff and patients waiting to be treated inside the hospital.

Doctors and medical staff reported that on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2006 there was an explosion in Talafar that caused many casualties and injuries to civilians who were brought into the hospital emergency room for treatment. Medical staff say that many of the injured were women and children who had sustained horrific injuries in the explosion. The twenty six doctors and medical staff working in the hospital rushed to treat the wounded and injured.



Doctors and medical staff report that a group of armed gunmen all carrying weapons that are usually associated with the Iraqi police ( glock pistol and AK rifles) entered the hospital in an aggressive and threatening manner. One doctor described how one of the armed men put a gun to his head demanding that he stop treating a wounded child and instead attend to a man with a minor shell

wound in his leg that the doctor had treated earlier.

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The medic described how he was called a terrorist by the armed man and was forced to stop treating the wounded child. Doctors For Iraq has received disturbing reports from staff in the hospital saying the armed group started vandalizing and breaking hospital equipment and then attacked an ambulance driver breaking his arm with a rifle butt that one of the men was carrying. Another ambulance driver was punched in the face and the hospital pharmacist was attacked by three armed men who took turns in hitting and kicking him.

One of the armed men fired bullets above a doctor's head missing him narrowly and causing fear and hysteria in the hospital.

The armed men went in to the doctor's staff room stealing money, mobile phones and damaging the hospital premises. Doctors report that some of the men were encouraging one another to break everything inside the hospital and continued to call the medical staff terrorists.



Doctors for Iraq is deeply concerned about the attack on medical staff and the hospital in Talafar. Doctors, medical staff and patients have the right to work and be treated in hospitals free of violence and intimidation. This latest incident in Talafar is just one in a long list of reports that Doctors For Iraq has received from doctors across Iraq illustrating how dangerous it has become for doctors to carry out their work in the country.

Doctors for Iraq is calling on the Iraqi government and Ministry of Health to offer greater protection to doctors, medical staff and patients inside hospitals and for an investigation to be launched into who carried out this attack on doctors and the hospital in Talafar.

For more information please contact:

[Press.officer@doctorsforiraq.org](mailto:Press.officer@doctorsforiraq.org)

[www.doctorsforiraq.org](http://www.doctorsforiraq.org) - <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm>





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## **Death Squads and Iraqi police: two sides of the same coin.**

Dirk Adriaensens (BRussells Tribunal) and Isam Rasheed (Baghdad) 03 March 2006

*"Faik Bakir, the director of the Baghdad morgue, has fled Iraq in fear of his life after reporting that more than 7,000 people have been killed by death squads in recent months, the outgoing head of the UN human rights office in Iraq has disclosed."*

*(...) "Mr Pace [UN official] said records, supported by photographs, came from Baghdad's forensic institute, which passed them to the UN. The Baghdad morgue has been receiving 700 or more bodies a month. The figures peaked at 1,100 last July - many showing signs of torture."*

*(...) "Some militias are integrated with the police and wear police uniforms," he said. "The Badr brigade [Sciri's armed wing] are in the police and are mainly the ones doing the killing. They're the most notorious." Jonathan Steele [www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,1721366,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,1721366,00.html)*

The BRussells Tribunal recently received evidence of 2 such cases, where the Iraqi police was clearly involved in "Death Squad" activities. Acting under the protection of the Ministry of Interior and the Industry Ministry, they are unscrupulous torturers and killers. We had doubts about publishing the story, because the pictures are very disturbing. But keeping Robert Fisks' words in mind: *"if the mainstream media would publish photos of the real war, as I've seen it, nobody would support this war"*, we decide to make these cases public.



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1- His name was **Khalid Waleed Ahmed**. He was Sunni, 36 years old, married and having three kids, the youngest one was only 4 months years old. He was an engineer, working for a private company, and he lived in the Ur area in Baghdad.

Thursday 23 February 2006 at 6:00 pm when he was having dinner, his house was raided by several men dressed in black. They came with many cars, and some of these cars were from the Iraqi police (as his brother said). They arrested him and also broke all the doors of his house. After three days they found him in the morgue in Baghdad.



2- His name was **Wa'ad Jajim Mohammed**, Sunni, 46 years old, married and having three kids. He lived in the Cairo area in Baghdad. he got arrested on Saturday 25 February 2006 in his house at 4:45 am. His family found his dead body in the morgue after two days.

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**Militants of Jafaari commit massacre in Al-Fursan village. US sponsored death squads in action.**

2006 March 23 (Dirk Adriaensens, Haythem Khatab)

## **Appeal For Help - Sectarian Cleansing and Coercive Displacement** **Voice of Freedom for Human Rights**

Undeclared sectarian war and bloodshed are still underway in Iraq, regardless of non-stop calls to put an end to them, which are warning against being dragged into civil war, which will definitely end up with casualties from all parties involved.

Below are the details of this ongoing war:

On March 2, 2006, an envoy of the Voice of Freedom for Human Rights and the Red Crescent visited Al-Fursan Village, located near An-Nahrawan in Madaen. It comprises of 60 brick and mud houses, inhabited by more than 60 Sunni families. The village is surrounded by a number of predominantly Shiite villages, decorated with black and red flags.



on February 27, 2006, Al-Fursan village was attacked by hordes of men in black, who were driving cars of the ministry of interior and state-backed militias. A large number of the villagers fled their homes. Eight people, including the Imam of the village mosque, whose name is Abu Aisha, and a ten year-old boy called Adnan Midab, were executed. Please find the attached photograph of the room in which Adnan was hiding and was later killed. A number of dead animals (sheep, cows and dogs) were also shot at by the attackers.

The village mosque was sabotaged and burned down like almost all the houses in the village. When the relief workers and VOF envoy were in the village, four men, who were hiding outside the village came back stealthily to recount the details of the attack. They stated that the perpetrators used machinegun, Kalashnikov, explosives and fuel to carry out the attacks. Given the fact that the villagers thought that it was the security forces, they did not take any precautionary measures to protect themselves.



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The aforementioned men, who were hiding outside the village showed us where the dead bodies of men, women and a child were buried.

We saw the room, where ten-year old Adnan Midab was shot dead. We also saw the burned down cars of the villagers.

Young men stated that they have been repeatedly harassed in order to force them into leaving their village. After this attack, all the remaining families left to other places in Dyala and Baghdad.

We have taken photographs of a large number of places in the village. There is a number of isolated predominantly Sunni villages (Al-Batta, Al-Mujamma', etc, whose people were harassed by men of the ministry of interior and militias, backed by foreigners. The latter villages are attacked on a regular basis, but it was impossible for our staff to get into them, due to security restrictions.

The above is but the tip of the iceberg. These practices are organized and carried out on a regular basis within towns, rural villages and suburbs. Civilians are asking for international forces to protect them. It is worth noting that the authorities are turning a blind eye on the perpetrators and terrorists who have been carrying out these attacks. Failure to protect the civilians will only make things worse.

## **Initial Statistics**

The coercive displacement practiced by the ministry of interior, the state-backed militias and foreigners against the people of Nahrawan is on the increase. The number of the Sunni families who have fled their homes is as follows:

- Al-Jboor Village, 50 families
- Jabir Hummadi Village, 60 families
- Shakha Village No. 5, 12 families
- Shakha Village No. 7, 30 families
- Al-Khalisa Village, 50 families
- Al-Fursan Village, 60 families
- Jasim Ibrahim Al-Battawi Village, 33 families
- Bani Zed Village, 100 families
- Al-Mujamma' Village, 100 families



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The tragedy is mounting. People are deprived of basic needs. The aid workers are helpless.

The UN and humanitarian NGOs must act and do the following:

- a) - Send a Fact Finding Committee of the UN, the Arab League or International Organizations.
- b) - Send Peacemaking forces to protect the civilians and put an end to genocides, sectarian cleansing and coercive displacement.
- c) - Control the east borders of Iraq to stop the acts of terrorism perpetrated by foreigners, who have been pouring to Iraq through the Iranian borders and raid and search the villages harbouring them.
- d) - Launch a relief program by neutral trusted parties.

#### **Additional comment from Dirk Adriaensens:**

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Human Rights Report, 1 January– 28 February 2006, states:  
*“Serious allegations have been received by UNAMI Human Rights Office regarding the actions of some segments of the security forces, in particular the police and special forces, and their apparent collusion with militias in carrying out human rights violations. Allegations that “death squads” operate in the country grew stronger following the discovery by the Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNF-I) and the Iraqi Security Forces of a suspicious group, acting within the structures of the Ministry of Interior. This re-affirms the urgent need for the Government to assert control over the security forces and all armed groups. Throughout the reporting period, insurgent activities, including terrorist acts, intensified after 22 February and continue to affect the civilian population.”*

Should the devastating role of the US in this sectarian violence not be thoroughly questioned? The MNF-I and Iraqi forces "discovered" the existence of at least one possible death squad within the Ministry of Interior, the UNAMI report states.

But if you look at the plans the US themselves have drawn for Iraq, why should they "uncover" something they have created themselves?

*According to an article recently published in New York Times Magazine, in September 2004 Counsellor to the US Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces James Steele was assigned to work with a new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, formed under the operational control of Iraq's Interior Ministry ('The Way of the Commandos', Peter Maass, [http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/resources\\_files/TheWay\\_of\\_the\\_Commandos.html](http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/resources_files/TheWay_of_the_Commandos.html)).*

*From 1984 to 1986 then Col. Steele had led the US Military Advisory Group in El Salvador, where he was responsible for developing special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. These forces, composed of the most brutal soldiers available, replicated the kind of small-unit operations with which Steele was familiar from his service in Vietnam. Rather than focusing on seizing terrain, their role was to attack*



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*'insurgent' leadership, their supporters, sources of supply and base camps. In the case of the 4th Brigade, such tactics ensured that a 20-man force was able to account for 60% of the total casualties inflicted by the unit (Manwaring, El Salvador at War, 1988, p 306-8). <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/FUL506A.html>.*

Isn't it time that the politicians in Washington stop their hypocritical double talk and answer to the question what exactly James Steele and other US military personnel have done to incite a civil war in Iraq?

*"part of a secret \$3 billion in new funds—tucked away in the \$87 billion Iraq appropriation that Congress approved in early November—will go toward the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. Experts say it could lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists—up to 120,000 of the estimated 2.5 million former Baath Party members in Iraq. (...) The hidden \$3 billion will fund covert ("black") operations disguised as an Air Force classified program. According to John Pike, an expert on classified military budgets at [www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org), the cash, spread over three years, is likely being funneled directly to the CIA, boosting that agency's estimated \$4 billion a year budget by fully 25 percent. Operations in Iraq will get the bulk of it, with some money going to Afghanistan. The number of CIA officers in Iraq, now 275, will increase significantly, supplemented by large numbers of the U.S. military's elite counterinsurgency forces." <http://www.prospect.org/print/V15/1/dreyfuss-r.html>. 01 January 2004.*

What we witness now is the result of that US policy of creating, training and funding militia's and death squads. Why doesn't the UNAMI report tell us the truth in their report? Why don't they do their job properly? And why does the mainstream press keeps on repeating His Master's Voice, when they know that the Bush Administration is solely responsible for the atrocious state the Iraqis find themselves in.

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## **Inside Iraq's secret prisons: an Iraqi testimony.**

19-12-2005 (s Tribunal *Russel/B*) Salam Al Jubouri

The White House seemed very upset with what happened in the Green zone, when US soldiers "found" the jail of Jadriya while they were looking for a 15 years old kidnapped child. The images of torture and execution disturbed the US government, who now claims to be the champion of human rights and democracy. Even Condolencia Rice proclaimed that "the US does not torture". They pretended that the Jafaari government had let them down with such abuses. How hypocrite can you get? They trained these men, spent 3,3 billion \$ out of the 2004 Pentagon's 87 billion \$ budget to create and fund militia's like the Badr militia's and the Wolf brigade. They don't fool no Iraqis, even when they hire people like Christian Bailey to plant false stories in Iraqi newspapers. We Iraqis know what's happening. The US bears prime responsibility for the torture and killing of Iraqi civilians. They transferred their dirty methods used in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala to Iraq. And they kill without remorse, using their militia's to carry out the torture for them. They must be very desperate. On the one hand they want to invade Iran, on the other hand they fund and train Iranian militia's, and support Iranian fundamentalist currents. But when they decide to invade Iran, every single Shia in Iraq will join the resistance. And they will be as ruthless against US forces as they are

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now against the Iraqi resistance. How can the US ever get out of this quagmire? A good advice: the sooner they leave, the better for them

My story is about those jails far away from the Green Zone, near to the Iranian zone. Who feels the pain of the prisoners under the whips of the Iranian investigators in Medain, Kut, Baladiyat, and Hilla ? And what is the role of the UN as independent international organization in Iraq, when “investigators” in Iranian jails in Iraq shoot people down without reason, and the UN is looking the other way

My friend Majed Hadi al-jubourie, 27 years old, was arrested in October 2005 by Al Rafidain forces, with the support of US troops, and he and his 3 brothers and 55 years old uncle were taken to the Al-Rafidain forces headquarters in Baladiyat, south east of Baghdad near to the formal Security building

“From the first moment when we were arrested, I felt that those soldiers who arrested us were not Iraqis, I mean they were really very close with Iranians, that was clear through their accents, and through the sayings and the singing that are typical for the Badr forces and the dead Hakim”, Majed said

Majed thought that he and his brothers would be executed, because incidents of arrests by the police, who execute people before throwing their bodies in isolated areas, is a common practice these days in Iraq.

“They blindfolded us, handcuffed us and put us in an American van without windows, to the Al-Rafidain forces camp, then they put us in a cell and started their investigation which consisted only of beatings. They did not ask us a specific question, they did not know why we were there, all they knew was that ‘we are Sunni’s and we are men’”, Majed said angrily. “They used sticks and pipes to hit us, every night. We were trying to cover my uncle because he is sick and older than us. We thought that he might die under these severe beatings”

Majed considered himself lucky at that time, as he was hearing the sounds of torture in investigations rooms and solitary rooms, he was hearing the shouting of the prisoners, and he saw them after the investigation: half dead. They brought them with blankets as they were not able to walk

“They were torturing people from the Dora district. They were so savage with them, so brutal. They were torturing them many times a day. One day they were torturing us after dinner, and they decided to put us with them in the same cell. We were forty people, squeezed in a tiny cell. These were the most difficult days. I thought that I would die. They broke my bones, they tortured me and everyone in that cell, to force us to confess that we killed policemen, and tried to make us confess in front of a camera to show us on Al-Iraqia tv”

“They ordered my brother Hamed to carry dead bodies from people tortured to death. They choose him because he was big and strong. I thought that they would kill him later on as he saw a lot of their crimes “

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## **Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -**

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Hamed is still afraid of the horrors he witnessed. He asked me not to mention anything that would reveal his identity, and he decided not to stay at home after that horrible experience

“They were killing people as if they were killing flies. They were not afraid of anything. It was apparently very easy for them to kill anyone. I carried many bodies which were covered with blood and filled with holes of drilling devices, and some of those bodies were shot. They gave me this job for one reason: they did not want their uniform to be covered with blood. We were putting the bodies in ambulances, and then they would take them away. I think they were thrown into rivers or in deserted areas”

Hamed told me: “the ground was covered with blood, all red. They used everything to torture people. Making holes in heads seems to be very easy for them, as they were trained to do that. They do a dirty duty and follow orders from superiors”

Majed told me about someone's horrible painful story inside the jail. This story is a good example of how terrible and inhuman the people are that were in charge of the jail. “They took someone for investigation and we were hearing him shouting during the torture. They were telling him to confess what he did. He was saying that he did nothing, then they shot in his leg with a pistol, then brought him back into the cell. He was bleeding a lot, because there was a hole in his leg. We treated him with a rag and we asked the guards to take him to hospital, but they refused, they said: ‘you Sunni’s deserve this, you are Saddam's people’. The man was dying and no one could help, they kept him for more than a week until there was a bad smell coming from his leg, we all were smelling. The place was incredibly dirty with urine and human excrements. I still feel the smell coming from that man's leg. It was like he was rotting. He remained there when we were released. He asked us to inform his family in case he would die, and said: “pray for me. I want to die, because I can’t stand the pain anymore”

Majed said: “if you get out of that jail you feel a desire to join Zarqawi’s people to fight against the Shia and Americans, and you believe what Zarqawi says, if he exists. Those militia men were hanging Hakim’s picture everywhere in the jail and tortured us continuously. I hate that picture now. I hate their black hats and their dirty beards. They are a shame for Islam. They are not Muslims”

Majed said that some Shiite religious men were mediating between the prison officers and the prisoners families. Their families had to pay something like \$3000 to release a person, sometimes more, depending on the financial situation of the prisoners families

This is now happening in Iraq, to my friends and family, on a daily basis, while you Americans are buying Christmas presents and preparing Turkey. Every Iraqi has a similar story to tell. We never had sectarian violence before, but Bremer and Bush are successfully heading for a catastrophe when they remain in Iraq. And I’ll tell you why. Let the occupation troops leave and the equilibrium will be restored. Now people can kill without impunity, because they feel protected by the occupation forces. They are pushed into a sectarian corner by every law that has been issued by Bremer and the TAL. But if the troops leave and one Iraqi kills another Iraqi, he’s certain that there will be revenge. Remember that this is a tribal society, and if one member of the tribe gets killed, the other members of the tribe have the obligation to revenge this killing. Everyone in Iraq knows this, and they will think twice

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before committing atrocities as they are doing now, with the help of US tax money and protected by Bremer's laws and US occupation forces. I hope you understand by now that there is only one way to solve this conflict before it really escalates: bring your troops home before my people kicks them out. With every new prisoner, every new civilian killed by your airplanes and Apache helicopters, ten new people will join the popular resistance

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## **Al-Islah: Another Crime Committed to the Knowledge and Support of the Occupiers and the Iraqi Government**

**Sabah Ali** (27 August 2006)

On Sunday 20.08.06, at 7 am, 500 heavily armed militia men dressed in the national guards and the Iraqi police uniforms, and using their vehicles attacked the village of Al-Islah, a village of about 5000 inhabitants of both communities: Sunnies and Shiites on the high way Baghdad-Baquba (east). They landed on the high way to Diyala province opposite to Al-Islah village.

These militias began shooting on the civilians from 7 to 1 pm; killing tens of people (according to Alsharqiya, an Iraqi satellite TV) (<http://www.alsharqiya.com/display.asp?fname=news\2006\08\962.txt&storytitle=>), burning the Rashidi mosque after stealing its furniture, and obliging the Sunni families to leave the village immediately. The American troops arrived later to stop the shooting. The only thing they did is they arrested 10 of the mosques guards, confiscated the weapons which the families in the neighborhood use to defend themselves, and left at 5 pm.

One hour after they left, at 6 pm, the community prominent people went to the nearest Sadr Movement office in Boob Al-Sham, an area close to Al- Islah, to meet the responsible of that office, whose name is Sayed Alaa'. He told the community delegation that he had two conditions to stop the attack: That the Sadr militias pass on the highway safely to go to Fahhama area (close to the village) and to consider the area from Boob Al-Sham to the Tigris river a (pure) Shiite area and that all the Sunni families have to be evacuated from it. Naturally the community delegation rejected his conditions.

The Sadr militias resumed the attack the next day; they burnt of Sunni families' houses in Boob Al-Sham, obliging 120 families to leave the areas.

In spite of all the efforts that the community did to contact the occupying forces, and the Iraqi officials, Mr. Shirwan Al-Wa'ily, the National Security Minister, is one of them, and many other political forces, but none gave the issue the attention it deserved. All that the government did, after the killing and evacuating was done, was that they sent troops saying that they would stay in the area for only 10 days , then the inhabitants have to handle it on their on.

The implicit complicity is very clear. The Iraqi and the American troops are encouraging and helping the sectarian militias in achieving their agenda. The Islah crimes are only one of many other

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genocide. The worst of things is the government is talking about national reconciliation!!! No comment or reaction has come from the American or the Iraqi authorities on this "incident".

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm>

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## **On the American steps - Corruption and Militias Twins turn Iraq in a "free fraud zone"**

Sabah Ali (10 Sept. 2006)

On May 2, 2006 evening, two floors in the *Ministry Of Oil* huge building were caught on fire, eating away two very important departments: the archives and the computers floors where all the records, documents, accounts books, and contracts...are kept. There were no employees in the building except for the guards and the Facilities Protection Services. (1)

Two days before this "incident", the general inspector in Iraq had issued the *Smuggling Crude Oil and Oil Products: Second Transparency Report* in which he exposed in details the catastrophic numbers and facts about corruption in the oil sector in Iraq : smuggling, theft, fraud, black market leading to great loss in money and resources. On his side the former *Minster of Oil*, Ibrahim Bahr Al-Oloom, said that Iraq lost at least 4 billion dollars of smuggled oil last year, referring to the involvement of the government's high officials in the smuggling and corruption scandals. Many political analyses considered the fire an attempt to conceal the corruption evidences.

The fire took place few days before the new Iraq government took office, after 6 months of delay due to conflicts on governmental offices among the Shiite winning parties within the *United Iraqi Alliance*. The *Ministry of Oil* was one of the disputed ministries, especially between the *Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq* and *Al-Fadhila* party (both in the *Alliance*). Any one who is familiar with the "new" Iraqi politics knows that the first thing each Iraqi government does, is to expose the previous government corruption scandals. Finally, the *Ministry of Oil*, and the *Ministry of Finance*, were given to two persons well known for being the closest to Iran among the Shiite *Alliance*. 2

Another "accident" : in Zafaraniya, a poor district south of Baghdad, of Shiite and Sunni mixture, a huge explosion killed and injured more than 250 civilians on Sunday evening August12. The Iraqi *Ministry of Interior* said that it was a car bomb; the American sources and witnesses said it was not; actually it was a gas explosion which caused many other explosions.

Few days later, newspapers in Baghdad were talking about a corrupt deal where the *Ministry of Oil* imported cooking gas from Iran. Bad deals, imported oil products which do not fulfill the same qualities mentioned in the purchase contracts, were one of the big corruption problems mentioned in



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the *Second Transparency Report*. The question is why the Ministry of Interior would try to cover the Oil corruption.

Another big and scandalous problem of controlling the oil production is the Ministry's failure of reinstall equipments to meter oil production, after they were stopped since the beginning of 2005. There is no way to know how much oil is officially exported, according to the UN International Advisory and Monitoring Board report published last August. The report said that \$241m of oil money were put in unrecognized ministries' accounts, and that \$221m were put in unrecognized accounts of the State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO) whose director is well known to be the previous oil Minister's closest friend.

These are just few of many recent examples which clearly indicate that the government, or members in it, is involved in the corruption scandals directly and through its connection to the armed militias, namely *Al-Mahdi* army (of the *Sadr Movement*) and the *Badr* militias (of the *Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq-SCIRI*) -both heavily and effectively represented in the Iraqi government now. These militias are controlling the corrupt oil production and marketing (*Ministry of Oil*) and controlling the security -or rather insecurity- in Iraq (*Interior and Defense*).

A parliament member said lately that the political militias are actually stronger than the government now, and an adviser in the Prime Minister office described some of the Iraqi security forces as terrorist militias paid by the government, not to mention the handsome bribes, according to the advisor. He said that many high officials who criticize corruption are corrupt themselves and are closely connected to the sectarian militias. To prove this, he said, 15 Iraqi judges were assassinated especially those who secretly work with the *Commission of Public Integrity* in Iraq. In Basra, however, those militias control the oil smuggling, with complete Iranian help and protection (together with drugs and weapons poured by the Iranians in all of the southern Iraqi regions).

In its statement on Sept 10, 2006, the *Commission* said that the number of Iraqi high officials who are involved in financial corruption cases has reached 73 (yes seventy three!), 15 of them are ministers, the rest are deputy ministers, general directors, Parliament members and parties leaders. All are granted legal immunity.

The *Commission* which is directly connected to the presidency council announced that it has 1852 corruption cases involving billions of dollars, and it is trying to change its law, obviously to have more power in the high officials' cases. The irony is that in mid 2004, a UN audit committee working on the first 6 months of 2004 found that \$6 b of the *Development Fund in Iraq* were unaccounted for, about \$2 b of them are connected to Talabani, the Iraqi president now!

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The *Commission* head, Radhi Hamza al-Radhi repeats privately and publicly that there are many government pressures on him "to slow down and take it easy", and that he is facing many obstacles. *The Ministry of Interior*, for example, did not respond to the *Commission's* 164 arrests orders against prominent officials accused of corruption, and 100 investigation order concerning administrative and financial corruption inside the *Interior Ministry* itself.

The *Commission* speaker said that there are at least 234 corruption cases in this ministry waiting to be looked in by the judicial committee. Among the officials who are called to reply to the *Commission's* inquiries are the Iraqi former prime ministers: Allawi and Al-Jafari, on cases of stealing money, accepting kickbacks and assigning millions of dollars to phantom rebuilding contracts that appeared only on paper. Another corrupt official, who is already in jail now, is the High Commissioner of the Elections, Adil Allami, on charges of fraud and bribes in millions.

In its latest report, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq - August 2006* the American Ministry of Defense, Pentagon, said that "Many of Iraq's political factions tend to view government ministries and their associated budgets as sources of power, patronage and funding for their parties. Ministers with out strong party ties...some times have little control over the politically appointed or connected people serving under them".

The corruption problem is directly connected to what is called the sectarian violence problem. It would be useful to notice that through 2005-2006, both twin problems were openly escalating together. Every "last month" was the deadliest month in Iraq, while *Transparency International* sited Iraq on the top of corruption list. Eye witnesses of the sectarian militias' raids in different parts of Iraq, especially in Baghdad suburbs, talk about expensive modern cars and weapons (including grenade launchers and heavy machine guns, apart from light weapons) and hundreds of young men in each raid. There is no declared number for the militias of course, but it is safe to say that they are hundreds of thousands each. These people are well known to be beautifully paid.

The American official reports insist on saying that terrorism is the main problem in the oil sector in Iraq, that the terrorists' attacks on pipelines are the main obstacle to normal oil industry in Iraq, implying that the resistance is responsible of depriving the Iraqi people of 95% of its national income. The Americans also attribute the reconstruction program failure to what they call terrorism.

The Iraqi General Inspector, Dr. Ali Al-Allaq, however, puts targeting oil pipelines as the fifth problem after 4 more dangerous problems (large discrepancy in oil product prices between Iraq and the neighboring countries, inadequate control and supervision of movement and trading oil products, lax judiciary measures against offenders and lawbreakers, and greater reliance on the imported oil products...).

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Each of these problems is a big story in itself –detailed in the General Inspector's *Second Transparency Report*, available in English and Arabic - but targeting pipelines is of special interest. Well informed sources in the *Ministry of Oil* and eye witnesses say that an exploded pipe would create a lake of crude oil. The *Ministry* sells these lakes very cheap to certain individuals who in turn sell them to customers outside Iraq.

These individuals are usually high officials in the government or the political parties who control it, and the customers are usually Iranians. Other eye witnesses in Basra say that there are pipelines which go from Iraq directly into Iran, and that there are tens of illegal outlets of exported Iraqi crude oil which is loaded in ships holding the Iranian flag. Everything in all these cases takes place under the protection of the Shiite militias, especially Badr. Last year the amount of smuggled oil through illegal outlets was the equivalent of one billion dollars, according to Dr. Ali.

The Shiite-Shiite (*SCIRI, Fadhila and Sadr*) conflict in Basra this summer is a flagrant evidence of the connection between corruption and the sectarian militias. To begin with, the Shiite political parties, whose militias are controlling the oil smuggling, do not consider stealing the Iraq oil revenue a crime. On the contrary they consider the southern oil fields their natural right given to them by God, and that the central Sunni governments of Iraq has deprived them of this right for ages. Actually this is what the Shiite Federal region of the south is all about.

But each of these parties wants to control the oil industry to guarantee power through wealth to fund their militias, which means that the fighting will go on as far as these militias are not controlled by any central power. So far the Maliki government and the occupation forces proved to be helpless in dealing with them, assuming that they want to.

Oil black market inside Iraq is well known for being controlled by the Sadr militias. Moqtada Al-Sadr, the Sadr Movement leader, himself is said to "order" his militias to move away from the oil black market after too many scandals were exposed. Again many eyewitnesses talk about big tankers protected by armed men secretly load oil from the warehouses or the fuel stations. One of the British generals in Basra said on a documentary, months ago, that they witness oil smuggled daily but the British troops do not want to do anything about it because "we don't want to be rained by bombs the next day".

Ironically, after fuel reached higher prices 374 percent in July than the previous month, thanks to the black market, the only solution that the Minister of Oil, Shehristani could come out with to fight corruption and smuggling, is to privatize the oil products trade, a procedure that leaves the doors wide open for the political mafias and for the powerful militias leaders to steal the market "legally", and of course all the contracts will go to Iran, which is what is already happening now.

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Administrative and financial corruption as a wide, open phenomenon is new in Iraq. The Iraqi state never knew such phenomenon before the occupation. Of course there were individual cases, as everywhere in the world, but few officials would dare to mess with the public money. It is part of Iraq's social and political culture to consider wrong doing in the public property as the worst of crimes that damage personal integrity. It is not a defense of Saddam Hussein, but all Iraqis know that a corrupt official would be dealt with very cruelly as personal offence and betrayal against the president himself.

Corruption in this sense, like many other political fatal diseases, came to Iraq with the occupation. There is an endless list of the American authorities' theft and fraud scandals; probably the biggest of them was the story of the 9 billion dollars which "disappeared" when the American governor of Iraq, Paul Bremer left the country. The Americans inherited more than \$30 billion of frozen and oil-for-food assets when they invaded Iraq in 2003, to say nothing of \$26 million worth of Iraqi property sequestered by the occupation authorities.

These fortunes were supposed to be spent on rebuilding through the *Development Fund in Iraq*. The money disappeared but the country remained in ruins. Many fraud stories are coming out and published now and then in the American mainstream media, talking about billions of Iraqi "reconstruction" money which were misused, stolen, lost, or unaccounted for. Billions dollars of Iraqi money were misused by Bremer, who issued 100 catastrophic economic decisions. 80% of big contracts were given to the American corrupt companies; only 2% were given to the Iraqis.

Millions were handed directly to officials in certain ministries, not through the *Ministry of Finance* or the *Iraqi Central Bank*. One example: last June the *Commission* was investigating kickbacks of \$300 million in purchase of "defective and outdated helicopters, machine guns and armored personnel carriers" by a former procurement chief in the Defense Ministry. Another senior defense official was convicted for receiving \$400.000 in bribes...etc.

The American officials describe the Iraqis as a corrupt and lawless society. Any Iraqi whose house was raided by the American troops tells a story of how the soldiers stole money, jewelry, personal weapons and any expensive thing, a part from documents. A lawyer in Al-Qaim handed the American troops 300 files of such cases documents (theft during raid) in 2005. When he went back to the American base asking about the cases, he found that the stolen things and the documents had disappeared.

In 2003 and 2004, Iraqis were wondering why many of the thieves and criminals who were sentenced to jail by Iraqi judges were released by the Americans. I personally was a witness of a case in which a car thief was released by an American raid on the police station in which he was kept; three days after the Iraqi judge put him in jail in Dora, south of Baghdad. One of the well known oil smugglers was arrested in April 2006 in the north-western desert, but an American military

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commander is demanding his release now. Account books, receipts, financial documents and any evidence of financial operations before the Iraqis were "handed" authority, were destroyed or disappeared instead of being handed to the *Ministry of Finance*.

The Bush Administration refuses to prosecute US firms accused of corruption, a refusal which is turning Iraq into a "free fraud zone" according to a senior official in the occupation authorities in Iraq. If the Americans are going away with their crimes, why not the Iraqis, after

the Iraqi officials now were educated and trained in the US.

- 1- Sadr's four ministries control 70,000 uniformed, armed men who are part of the Facilities Protection Service, according to the Interior Ministry. U.S. military commanders acknowledge that the agency has mushroomed to more than 140,000. A top former U.S. military commander has said militia fighters under the Facilities Protection Service are tied to kidnappings, execution-style killings and other crimes.
- 2- One of the sad jokes about corruption says that the food expenses of the protection personnel for the Minister of Finance, Bayan Jabr Solagh, alone are 40.000 dollars a month. Another says that the Minister of Oil, Shehristani, used to be paid \$25000 a month when he was a vice president of the National Assembly, and that this money was NOT his salary, but an allowance. He also put his hand on one of Saddam's palaces, and was given \$100.000 to repair it and \$50.000 to furnish it. He bought himself 3 armored cars for \$300.000 each, and got 50 armed men to protect him. This information was sent in a letter to "his Excellency" the grand Ayatollah Sistani to do some thing about it. So far "his Excellency" did not.
- 3- For more information ,see:
  - \* *Smuggling Crude Oil and Oil products: Second Transparency Report*
  - \* Commission of National Integrity in Iraq' statements
  - \* *A Switching in Time: a New Strategy for America in Iraq*. Sabban Center
  - \* SIGIR. Statement of Stuart W. Bowen, Jr.
  - \* *"So, Mr. Bremer, where did all the money go"*. Guardian, July7, 2006, or London Review of Books, Vol.27 No.13 dated July 7 2005.
  - \* *Iran, its neighbors and the regional crisis*. Chatham House
  - \* Development Fund for Iraq, Summery of Audit results. August 2006
  - \* *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*. Pentagon. August 2006



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- [www.iraq-amsi.com](http://www.iraq-amsi.com) . [www.alsharqiya.com](http://www.alsharqiya.com) . [www.azzaman.com](http://www.azzaman.com) . [www.kitabat.org](http://www.kitabat.org) . [www.albasrah.net](http://www.albasrah.net). Among others.

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm>

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## **Federalism, Sectarian War and the American Strategy in Iraq**

**Sabah Ali** (18 October 2006)

*"Everything says we are facing a very difficult time in the next few months, violence is surrounding us from all sides. Movement on the high ways to and from Baghdad is becoming extremely dangerous, and of course inside Baghdad. People disappear, get kidnapped or killed on the highways. Death squads and criminal gangs control them; only the resistance is protecting the individuals and the communities... The government is part of the killing sides (...) The streets are full of people with strange accent(...) I hear a big explosion now(...)They began artillery bombing of different parts of Baghdad, between districts of different sectarian groups (...) An eye witness from Ghazaliya said that the American troops start the bombing, and then an Iraqi doer continues. The political players are using their militias on both sides. It is very important to notice that the resistance is never mentioned within the sectarian classifications"*

These lines are written today by a well informed friend who lives in Baghdad now.

The situation in Iraq is out of control. The number of civilians savagely killed, mainly in Baghdad, is approaching 2 hundreds every day. Official Iraqi reports say that around half a million families are internally displaced, a number much less than other Iraqi sources say. According to UN an average one thousand Iraqis are forced into homelessness everyday, in spite of (or is it because of!) the 4 month Iraqi-American security plan in Baghdad.

Needless to say, nothing is done about all these catastrophes; obviously it is an American strategy of attrition against the resistance, some of the militias, and Maliki's government too. Names, addresses and operation rooms of the militias and death squads are well known and talked about publicly (maps are published on the internet) but the security and the occupation troops just ignore them in obvious collusion.

For the fourth day today, fighting is continuing in Balad and Dhuluiya, 80 Kms north of Baghdad, where there is one of the biggest American military bases, militias in uniform are slaughtering Sunnis, forcing families to leave within 2 hours, while the American forces were standing by, according to one Iraqi officer. On Monday, the Balad hospital alone received 80 bodies. Iraqi towns north of Baghdad are under siege for months, while armed men in uniform and in security cars raid them, kill or kidnap their citizens. We have to admit that the CIA death squad experts did a good job.

6.1 million Iraqis left to live in the neighboring countries especially Jordan and Syria or in other places. Iraqi hospitals and universities lost 80% of their scientific and professional cadres. Journalists,

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writers, intellectuals, judges, businessmen, religious, tribal and political personalities and others who are counted on to rebuild the country either left, kidnapped, or assassinated, e.g. silenced one way or another.

The American officials are even suggesting scenarios to Maliki's replacement. Political parties in the government are involved in the death squads and sectarian militias' atrocities against civilians, a fact confirmed by the Iraqi people and officials, Al-Maliki himself (many times), and by the Interior Minister. Meanwhile, the American and the Iraqi security forces are continuing their raids, killings, and mass arrests against certain areas in Baghdad, its suburbs, Diyala, Anbar, Musol and Salah Addeen.

The American media is admitting now that the resistance, what they call insurgency in the best, or terrorism usually, is the highest and most effective since the invasion. 58 American soldiers are killed in the first two weeks of October. American official (untrue) numbers this month say that 2774 American soldiers were killed in Iraq. One of the biggest military bases, *Falcon*, south of Baghdad is badly destroyed; nothing is mentioned about it or its casualties in media. Hardly a day passes without reports and articles analyzing the bad situation in which the occupation currently is.

On the other hand, no one talks any more about Iraq descending into civil war; they say it IS in civil war now, sectarian warfare, they call it. Until 3 months ago, at least 655.000 Iraqis are killed since the invasion in 2003, most of them civilians, women and children. The country is devastated, with some dark-minded mullahs controlling its bloody streets. Nothing is functioning in Iraq now.

And what the American solution is: Dividing Iraq into 3 petty powerless "countries" in the name of federalism.

James Baker, who vowed in 1990 to bomb Iraq into the middle ages, returned back (probably to see how far Iraq is back in the middle ages) leading a congressional team to "study" the situation in Iraq and suggest the solution, but not now, after the November elections in the US. Ruling out any prospects of victory in Iraq, Baker concentrates on "stability" first, by avoiding sectarian confrontation in Iraq, which has become out of control. Hurrrraah.

Immediately after he left, the Iraqi Parliament "passed" a law of federalism. The way it was passed is a daylight made up job, exactly like the way the constitution and the elections were "passed". It is meaningless to talk about how the "law" was passed, the usual counterfeiting, fraud, pressures, and bribes. (Informed recourses say that there were no more than 119 members attending the parliament session out of 275). "President" Talabani, on his part, offered hosting the American troops in the north.

On the other hand, a group of extremist Sunnis announced establishing an Iraqi Islamic state of 8 provinces in the middle and the north, including Baghdad, which will inflame the sectarian confrontation.

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But that does not mean that the Mission is accomplished? No. America is powerful enough to destroy Iraq for a while, but from our first hand experience with the Americans for the fourth year now, they know very little about the Iraqi culture and psychology. Officials, journalist, experts or ordinary Americans, get what their intelligence information focuses on e.g. the weak spots in the society where they can attack. They analyze whatever data they get by their own criteria. One of their worst mistakes, for example, is that they think that they can buy the underprivileged Shiite.

They do not understand that Hakeem, Allawi, Shehristani, Sadr and the rest of the bunch do not represent the Iraqis, and that they are already burnt politically. The Iraqi resistance will continue, and get stronger and stronger everyday. The Americans do not understand the logic of history; they do not have any, anyway. If the rest of the world does not recognize the fact that it is only the resistance who represent the Iraqi people, too bad. But does the Iraq resistance give a damn?

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/ArticlesIraq3.htm>

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## **MAX FULLER ARTICLES**

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### **Diyala - A Laboratory of Civil War?**

#### **A recent case study in the dynamics of occupation and sectarianism**

**Max Fuller**, member of the B*Russells* Tribunal Advisory Committee.

(20 June 2006)

- **Articles** by the same author: **['For Iraq, the Salvador Option Becomes Reality'](#)** and **['Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq'](#)** and **[Who is controlling the death squads in Iraq?](#)**
- **[Balad Massacre once again demonstrates US orchestrated genocide](#)** (09 Nov 2006)
- **[Ghosts of Jadiriyah. A survivor's testimony](#)** (14 Nov 2006)
- **[The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet](#)** (July 2006)
- **[Jihad killings in Baghdad require immediate UN investigation](#)** (12 July 2006)
- **[Conflicting Media Accounts: Evidence of Iraqi Death Squad Conspiracy](#)** (26 June 2006)
- **[¡Nunca Olvida! Never Forget! The US role in Iraq's death squads](#)** (July 2006)
- **Website: [www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk](http://www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk)**
- **Part 1:**

**[Operation Knockout in Diyala Demonstrates US Collusion with Death Squads](#)**



# ***BRussells* Tribunal Dossier** **Introduction to the "Salvador option"** **and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -**



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## **Part 1:**

### **Operation Knockout in Diyala Demonstrates US Collusion with Death Squads**

In November last year Sunni members of the Diyala provincial council began to boycott meetings in protest at a 13 November raid on the provincial capital Baquba and surrounding towns, according to a [report](#) by UPI's Pentagon correspondent, Pamela Hess. According to a US military official, the boycotting council members sent a letter to the chairman of the council in which they alleged that that raid had been orchestrated by the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) as part of a plan to disenfranchise Sunnis during the upcoming elections.

Such accusations chime with almost every commentator it seems both inside and outside Iraq, who have lavished criticism on SCIRI and the paramilitary militia known as the Badr Brigade associated with it. Whilst anti-occupation sources tend to regard SCIRI and Badr as US allies, the Western media have chosen to focus on their relationship with Iran, where they were primarily based since their foundation in 1982. In either case, commentators charge that SCIRI's militiamen have infiltrated or been amalgamated into Iraq's nascent security forces. Many reports make little or no distinction between the Badr Brigade and the security forces. In the Western media lens, this depiction tends to function as apologia for human rights abuses attributed to the security forces (for examples of this in action, see Soloman Moore [writing](#) in the Los Angeles Times or Jonathan Steele [writing](#) in the London Guardian).

Hess agrees with the media consensus, stating that 'anecdotal evidence of targeted and unsanctioned violence against Sunnis from cities across Iraq suggests Badr or other rogue elements have a presence throughout the ministry'. In the case of the Baquba raid which had prompted the walkout by Sunni councilors, Hess informs us that in this instance it was the Wolf Brigade, an 'Iraqi special police unit of some 2,000', that 'swept into Baqubah, the capital of Diyala province, and arrested some 300 people'. As if to clarify matters, she then tells us, citing a US military source, that 'The operation came in the wake of the appointment by the Shiite governor of Diyala of a new police chief for the province ... The new police chief has no law enforcement experience ... but he is associated with the SCIRI, the political arm of the Badr brigade'.

But in fact what initially appears to be an open and shut case is not so straightforward. While, according to the same military spokesperson, the governor may have requested the raid 'to show that he's got muscle to flex', 'US police assistance teams worked with the Wolf Brigade to plan the operation and American assets – including a surveillance drone, medical team and a quick reaction force – were assigned to support it'. Nonetheless, the spokesperson goes on to imply that support was reluctant, adding, 'We put forces with each of their units so that we could watch them work'.

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In the case of the 13 November raid, outside observers are fortunate that, unlike Pamela Hess, they do not have to rely solely on one military spokesperson feeding a line to the press. The raid in question was called Operation Knockout and was the first time that the Iraqi Special Police Forces of the Ministry of the Interior had planned, prepared and executed a division-size raid 'designed to destroy or disrupt all of their [ie insurgents'] cells in a large locality in a single night'. For a far more in-depth depiction of the action, we can be grateful to US Army Col James K Greer, who was so impressed by the whole operation that he wrote an [account](#) of it for the November–December issue of *Military Review*.

The following passages are taken from Greer's account.

*In late October, the minister of the interior [Bayan Jabr] told the Operations Directorate to study options for a large-scale, simultaneous strike in Diyala against a large number of suspected insurgents and their support and information networks ...*

*[On 5 November] the Operations Directorate provided a list of insurgent and terrorist targets to the Public Order Division commander with a warning to be prepared to move to Ba'qubah and conduct operations to detain those targets.*

*The Public Order Division immediately began planning, focusing on developing target folders for the hundreds of discrete targets forces would have to secure. Simultaneously, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) was notified through its cell in the MOI National Command Center. Planning and coordination continued with an MOI/Multinational Command-Iraq (MNC-I) meeting on 9 November ...*

*Throughout the planning and coordination stage of Operation Knockout, Special Police Transition Teams (SPTTs) under Colonel Gordon B. 'Skip' Davis and Colonel Jeffrey Buchanan advised the Iraqis and planned and coordinated their own support to the operation. These teams of 10 to 12 soldiers lived, trained, and fought alongside the Iraqi Special Police 24 hours a day and contributed significantly to the Iraqi's development ...*

*At execution, Public Order Division elements, reinforced by a brigade of Iraqi Special Police commandos, moved along three separate routes to their objectives in and around Ba'qubah, conducting clean-up operations in small towns along the way ...*

*Operation Knockout demonstrated the necessity for and effectiveness of intelligence-based COIN [counterinsurgency] operations. The MOI Intelligence Office of the Operations Directorate spent several weeks developing the targets that would eventually be raided. Local informants confirmed potential targets, and the Intelligence Office produced one- to three-page papers detailing why each individual was targeted ... Special Police units developed a target folder for each individual. Surreptitious eyes-on provided last-minute updates to target sets.*

In the rare case of Operation Knockout, we even have a third, official military [account](#) of proceedings given at a press briefing. This description adds one further important detail, which is that 70 per cent of the 377 detainees were Sunni, 30 per cent were Shia and 10 were Kurds. While these proportions may not accurately reflect the



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ethno-confessional makeup of Diyala province (exact figures are hard to come by), they do indicate that the raid was far from exclusively directed against Sunni targets, despite popular impression.

### **Implications of the reports**

This illustration of an intelligence-based counterinsurgency operation undertaken by US-trained proxy forces, which could have been written just as well about Vietnam, the Philippines, El Salvador or present-day Colombia, reveals a number of important points about the conflict in Iraq.

#### *(i) SCIRI had no part in orchestrating Operation Knockout*

One of the most important conclusions to be drawn is that we can be certain SCIRI had absolutely nothing to do with the 13 November raid on Baquba and its environs. This simple fact discredits 99% of what has been written in the mainstream media about the role of SCIRI and Badr within the new Interior Ministry.

#### *(ii) Even within Iraq it is very difficult to accurately assess security operations*

It is striking in this case that, if we are to believe Hess's sources, even public representatives on the ground in Iraq are unable to distinguish between what they perceive to be sectarian paramilitaries and the forces operating directly on behalf of the Occupation. This is in no way intended to represent a criticism of those on the ground, but only highlights the duplicity of the US Imperial war machine, whose goal is to cover its own tracks and spread discord amongst its enemies.

#### *(iii) The Wolf Brigade continues to be used by the media as a fob-off*

It is extremely revealing of the mainstream media position that even in Hess's relatively detailed and informative report, the responsibility for a joint MOI/MNF-I operation was subtly shifted towards SCIRI and that it was the Wolf Brigade which was reported to have carried out the raid. While Hess does not underline the point in this piece, the reference is unlikely to be missed altogether. The significance of the attribution is that in many media analyses of human rights abuses related to the Ministry of the Interior, the Wolf Brigade has been singled out for blame. Rather than seeking to analyze its structure, most commentators have been content to describe it as a police commando unit attached to the Interior Ministry with a specifically Shiite leaning (for instance, see the [Knight Ridder report](#) by Hannah Allam, now very hard to find on the Internet). In this UPI report, the US military spokesperson describes the Wolf Brigade as a 'public order Brigade' rather than as police commandos. In fact, the MOI special police forces are made up of both police commandos and public order brigades, all of them trained and supported by embedded advisors from MNF-I. According to Greer's account, the 13 November raid was planned by a Public Order Division and was conducted by Public Order Division elements, reinforced by a brigade of Special Police Commandos, probably the Wolf Brigade. The effect of the UPI report is once again to divert attention from structure and organization and frame discourse within narrow sectarian lines that exclude US responsibility.

#### *(iv) Counterinsurgency operations are not in the remit of backroom militias*

In view of the persistent reports that the majority of extrajudicial killings can be attributed to members of the security forces following the detention of the victims (eg [UN Human Rights Mission](#), [Iraqi Organization for Follow-up and Monitoring](#)), it is beholden on all interested parties to take any insight into the workings of those forces and the processes by which 'targets' are selected for arrest with the utmost seriousness. Yet no journalist has so much as mentioned the existence of an Operations Directorate, still less MNF-I's cell within the MOI

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National Command Center, while the one journalist that seems to have written about Operation Knockout has fallen back into the familiar groove of 'allegiance to Shiite groups' etc. The reason that I have quoted from Greer's account at such length is to demonstrate the enormous behind-the-scenes effort required to conduct counterinsurgency warfare.

To reiterate the stages by which targets were selected:

- 1) Two months before the operation the intelligence section of the Operations Directorate began preparing a list of suspects based on intelligence gleaned from local informers;
- 2) The intelligence section produced dossiers on individual suspects;
- 3) One week before the operation the intelligence section passed the list of suspects to the Public Order Division commander;
- 4) The Public Order Division prepared folders on the individual suspects, making use of an airborne mapping capability;
- 5) Before commencement of the operation, last minute visual checks were made of individual suspects.

In the case of Operation Knockout, which seems to have half-served as PR exercise, Greer et al are falling over themselves to persuade their audience that the police behaved in exemplary fashion and that detainees were treated humanely. So how far is it possible to regard this operation as representative and how should we evaluate such operations in human rights terms?

### **Beyond Knockout**

By far the most important aspect of this operation from an analytical perspective is that it was 'Intelligence Based'. It is quite clear from Greer's description that what that means in layman's terms is that lists of targets were put together in some sort of centralized planning hub before being passed to individual police units responsible for seizing them in the middle of the night.

Whilst nothing like the level of detail offered in Greer's report is available for most of the cases of arrest and extrajudicial killing by the security forces, in a few accounts we do have evidence that the victims have been selected based on lists of suspects (eg see [Sydney Morning Herald, 11 March 2006](#), [Reuters, 17 November 2005](#)). These details are the hallmarks of 'intelligence based' counterinsurgency operations and strongly indicate that most or all of the campaigns of mass arrests taking place nightly across Iraq emanate from the intelligence offices of the Interior Ministry. This impression is further reinforced by another [UPI account](#) of an earlier raid that took place in Baghdad in June 2004. Once again, we are told that the lists of suspects (in this case ordinary criminals) had been meticulously prepared in advance through the use of informers by the intelligence branch at the Ministry of the Interior, incidentally under the command of a Sunni Kurd.

Such operations simply cannot be conceived and carried out from some backroom at Badr or Mahdi HQ. If we were still to persist in advocating that SCIRI, or some such party, was behind these operations, against all of the available evidence, we would also be forced to conclude that the US had ceased to have influence inside the Interior Ministry, unless of course they were acting in tandem. In fact, we know that Iraq's entire new intelligence apparatus was built by the CIA (see [Washington Post, 11 December 2003](#), [Knight Ridder, 8 May 2005](#)) and we can

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be certain that the intelligence offices at the Interior Ministry and elsewhere remain saturated with US intelligence agents/advisors ([New York Times, 14 December 2005](#)).

And despite reassurances from the US military that Knockout represents the new style of 'humane' Interior Ministry operation, the empirical evidence keeps mounting up, day upon day, week upon week and month upon month, that death squads are continuing their genocidal campaign without stint. The [latest figures](#) from Baghdad suggest that an average of 70 new victims of extrajudicial execution appear in the Morgue every single day and these are now starting to be [backed up](#) in Basra, where we told that on average one person is killed per hour.

Let us pray that in this case the more than 300 detainees taken during Operation Knockout have indeed been treated humanely. In this case it is beholden not just on the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior but on Multi Nation Force-Iraq to demonstrate that every one of the people seized from the Baquba vicinity on 13 November has either been released or continues to be held in 'humane conditions'. If MNF-I really wants to prove that it is not responsible for the death squads, it must publicly release the names of all 377 supposed suspects so that the world can see who it is arresting and tell us where they are today. It needs to prove to its critics that the human rights of its detainees have been respected and that they have not been hung by their wrists until their arms are dislocated or beaten until it is impossible to tell the color of their skin, or burnt with cigarettes, or had their eyes gouged out or their fingernails removed. MNF-I needs to prove that one of its proxy policemen hasn't tortured a single one of them with an electric drill and thrown their body onto the street like the other thousand that appear every month in Baghdad. It needs to prove it, because otherwise we'll know for sure that this time it ordered it!

## **Part 2:**

### **Out for the count? Interpreting conflicting narratives**

Operation Knockout proved to be no final engagement for the security forces either in Diyala province or just around Baquba. Since then the social and political space has been dominated by at least five forms of violence. The following analysis is drawn from a trawl of mainstream Western media sources on the Internet and from a day by day examination of Iraqi Resistance reports compiled by [Free Arab Voice](#) between 13 November and the middle of May. It is not intended to be seen as comprehensive.

#### *(i) Police/army raids*

Resistance reports make reference to around a dozen supplemental raids since Operation Knockout in which hundreds more Iraqis have been detained. No information is available about the fate of the detainees and detailed reports of the raids themselves are absent. The raids are variously described as having been undertaken by 'troops', 'Interior Ministry Shock Troops', 'US occupation forces backed up by Iraqi puppet army troops', 'Interior Ministry troops', 'militiamen with official government documents issued by the Ministry of the Interior', etc. From such descriptions it is difficult to know which units were responsible, although in most cases one suspects units of the Special Police. Western media sources do not make identification any easier and fewer raids have been reported.

#### *(ii) Resistance attacks against US/Iraqi security forces, including killings of alleged collaborators and members of Shiite militias*

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Most of these attacks took the form of roadside bombs, but well-orchestrated assaults on police/army bases and checkpoints were also frequently reported. A handful of alleged 'collaborators' are also reported to have been executed by Resistance fighters.

### *(iii) 'Mysterious' bombings*

Several bombs which exploded in civilian areas were described in Resistance reports as mysterious. Mosques seem to have been the intended targets in several instances; one is reported to have been Sunni, one Shiite, and two others are not attributed. Other targets included a girls' school and a crowded market. According to a [report](#) for Middle East Online, dated 1 May 2006, the police chief of Baquba claimed that 70 bombs had been planted on the city streets in the preceding two weeks alone, of which 40 had gone off, killing 12 people.

### *(iv) Extrajudicial killings and assassinations*

Several instances of extrajudicial killings bearing the hallmarks of death squads have been reported. On 23 December 2005 three bodies were found with multiple gunshot wounds in Southern Baquba; the bodies were found blindfolded with their hands and legs bound. On 23 February gunmen pulled factory workers off buses and killed 47 of them; the bullet-riddled bodies were found behind a brick factory. On 25 February 2006 13 members of a Shia family were killed in their home by gunmen. On the same day, 12 farm laborers, both Sunnis and Shiites, were found shot dead in an orchard; the victims had been shot in the head and face. On 26 February two boys were killed when gunmen opened fire on a group of teenagers playing football. On 28 February nine bodies were found in wasteland around Tarfiya; the victims had been shot in the head. On 27 March at least 18 bodies of males were found in a deserted brush area around Tarfiya; the victims are variously described as having been decapitated or having been shot in the head. On 8 April 10 bodies were found in black body bags in Balad Rooz; the victims had been shot in the head. On 19 April three professors were killed when gunmen opened fire at Diyala University. On 10 May 11 workers at an electrical plant were killed by gunmen on their way from or to work. On 13 May four unidentified bodies with bullet holes in their heads and chests were dumped in a stream in Khan Bani Saad; according to one report they were Shiites. It should be noted that the spike in reports after 23 February may well represent increased media attention following the bombing of the Askari mosque in Samarra, rather than any quantifiable surge in attacks.

### *(v) Ethnic cleansing*

According to *Quds Press*, quoted in a Resistance report for 8 March, around 1000 Sunni families have fled their homes in the Madain area after receiving death threats from members of the police and special police.

While these accounts of various forms of violence and intimidation undoubtedly reflect a climate of pervasive and widespread violence, including an ongoing struggle between the forces of occupation and an organic resistance, it is extremely difficult to make objective comments about their significance. The following passages drawn from four separate accounts underline this point.

a) *'If the insurgency stays at this level, I expect to free up combat power before the end of our deployment,' [US Col] Salazar says.*

[The Nation, 9 April 2006](#)

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b) *In this confessionally divided provincial capital [Baquba] just north of Baghdad, the mounting sectarian tensions that have gripped the new Iraq have spelled a spate of tit-for-tat killings of civilians as Shiite militiamen avenge attacks by Sunni insurgents, sparking a vicious circle of violence ...*

*"Drive-by shootings and other gun attacks have proved deadlier, killing nearly 40 people in the past two weeks," Bawi said ...*

*The apparent impotence of Iraq's fledgling security forces in the face of the worsening bloodshed has sparked anger among residents.*

[Middle East Online, 1 May 2006](#)

c) *rebels spread control over most of Diyala Province of which the city of Baquba is the capital.*

*The city's nearly 350,000 live in a state of terror as the security forces charged with keeping law and order can hardly protect themselves.*

[Azzaman, 11 May 2006](#)

d) *Mrs Mohammed is a Kurd and a Shia in Baquba, which has a majority of Sunni Arabs. Her husband, Ahmed, who traded fruit in the local market, said: 'They threaten the Kurds and the Shia and told them to get out ...*

*It was impossible to travel to Baquba, the capital of Diyala, from Baghdad without extreme danger*

[Independent, 20 May 2006](#)

It should be noted that the US assessment referred to here predated a major increase in attacks against occupation forces that began towards the end of April, which might well invalidate the opinion expressed by US Col Salazar.

Nonetheless, even comparing these descriptions of the overall situation with the various accounts of violence that are available is far from straightforward. The account in Middle East Online indicates a level of violence against civilians that is not adequately reflected in either the mainstream media nor the Resistance reports. However, it remains credible because we know the same relationship would hold in areas where we have a better overall impression of the extent of the violence.

### **Uniting the narratives**

The accounts offered in the *Independent* and *Azzaman* appear to stand in total opposition to one another. If the Resistance has spread control over Diyala, surely a communitarian civil war of the kind alluded to in the *Independent* is extremely unlikely to be taking place. That is, unless we are prepared to entertain a very special definition of 'civil war'. Such a definition would require us to accept that the Resistance represents an exclusively Sunni faction (not even borne out in the US military's statistics for detained suspects, see above) and that the security forces, especially the counterinsurgency brigades, represent an exclusively Shiite faction (not borne out in any [credible analysis](#) of their composition, nor in their relationship to the occupying powers, including the presence of special police transition teams). Thus, with a fierce conflict taking place between the Occupation and the Resistance, it might indeed be possible to conclude that a 'sectarian civil war' was underway. This seems to be the preferred definition for the Western media establishment.



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But what of Mrs Mohammed? It is possible that angry Sunnis have responded to perceived sectarian assaults in kind, but, assuming that this story is real, it seems much more likely that she and her family are the victims of a cruel deception designed to fracture the country along ethno-confessional lines. More and more evidence of such a pattern is starting to emerge, including a [recent account](#) published by the BRussells Tribunal anonymously from within Iraq, which refers to evidence that the same special covert units are employed to fabricate sectarian attacks against both Sunni and Shiite Iraqis. In addition, there are indications that other killings are being carried out by death squads operating from within the paramilitary [Facilities Protection Service](#).

If we want to make sense of what is happening in Iraq we need to recognize that words like SCIRI, Badr and Mahdi, together with phrases like civil war, sectarian violence, revenge killings and tit-for-tat murders all serve to deemphasize the centrality of the occupation and mystify what is a very real and deadly counterinsurgency war.

From an external perspective, it is extremely difficult to discern whether the Resistance has seized control of Diyala or whether a genuine civil war along sectarian lines has broken out. What we must suspect, though, based on concrete reasoning, is that the security forces trained, armed and guided by the British and Americans will be committing terrible crimes against humanity in their role as attack dogs for the occupation.

This is not to try to say that every single killing is carried out by the security forces, but it is to say that the security forces are so obviously involved in a great many cases that the Western media and other apologists for the occupation and abettors of genocide have been forced to resort to claiming that the security forces have been infiltrated by various militias. If there are militias in the Ministry of Interior, you can be sure that they are militias that stand to attention whenever a US colonel enters the room. And if there are masked gunmen claiming to be from Badr of Mahdi or anywhere else, the first question we should all be asking is where did they get their lists of victims from? For my money, they will have come straight out of the Intelligence Office of the Operations Directorate at the US-run Ministry of the Interior.

### **Appendix: The Memory Vortex**

#### *Communities fight back against raids*

Two reports in May seem to indicate that communities are seeking ways to fight back against nighttime raids. According to an Iraqi Resistance [report](#) dated 1 May 2006, citing *Mafkarat al-Islam*, fierce fighting erupted around the areas of al-Hadid and Abu Zayd when a raid by 'Iraqi puppet police and puppet army troops' was opposed by armed residents. According to the report, nine of the assailants and dozens of locals were killed in the fighting. Following the battle, US troops joined the Iraqi forces in carrying out massive and indiscriminate arrests.

On 11 May, international press sources [reported](#) that village leaders and clerics alerted police and US soldiers when gunmen, some of them wearing military uniforms, raided two 'Sunni' villages near Khan Bani Saad. According to these reports, US and Iraqi forces were able to rescue seven of 10 men that were being abducted. Thirty people were arrested, including an unknown number of the gunmen. According to the reports, some gunmen told police they belonged to the Shiite militia loyal to Muqtada al-Sadr. This attribution was supported by the Interior Minister at the time, Bayan Jabr, who claimed that the gunmen were carrying badges identifying them as belonging to the Force Protection Service (FPS) of the Ministry of Health, which has been reported to be under

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the control of Muqtada al-Sadr. A spokesman for al-Sadr subsequently claimed that that the FPS members had gone to help, according to the [Christian Science Monitor](#).

It is difficult to believe that these two accounts are not related despite the time gap, although I can find no evidence that this is the case. It is also difficult not to credit the *Mafkarat al-Islam* as being a far more plausible general depiction of events. Clearly, if Sadr militiamen had formed a secret death squad to attack villages around Khan Bani Saad, we should be hearing about it all over the press. Unfortunately, this is yet another case 'under investigation' that is likely to be consigned to the dustbin of history and blacked out by the Western media.

### *Diyala police linked to death squads*

On 27 March, in what was described as 'an unusual admission', Reuters [reported](#) that the Iraqi Interior Ministry had arrested a police major, Arkan al-Bawi, in Diyala province for operating death squads in Baquba. According to the Interior Ministry, [Bawi confessed](#) that his gang members wore police uniforms stolen during attacks on police checkpoints and that they had killed many people. On 28 March, Reuters [reported](#) that the police chief in Diyala, major-general Ghassan al-Bawi, the brother of Arkan, had been arrested for 'corruption and threatening security'. Unbelievably, even this bombshell of a story died instantly [in fact, the story now seems to have been removed from the Internet; the version offered here is copied from a printed extract of the original]. Even more remarkably, on 28 April, provincial police chief Maj. Ghassan al-Bawi was [reported](#) to have stated that troops and police were on the streets of Baquba and roads to the city were closed because of fears the insurgents might regroup [This story too is now extremely hard to come by, with only two examples still available through Google; the only other evidence that Ghassan al-Bawi has retained his post is a cached BBC page which refers to an Interview with al-Bawi in June 2006]. It appeared that the arrest of two senior police officers linked to death squads in Diyala had simply not taken place at all. Perhaps it was a case of mistaken identity. Perhaps it was another major-general Ghassan al-Bawi that had been arrested for 'threatening security'!

If we go right back to Hess's UPI report of the November 13 raid, we will recall that the new police chief 'is associated with the SCIRI, the political arm of the Badr brigade'. Is that not then newsworthy either! Mahdi militiamen in death squad arrested in act and SCIRI police appointee linked to death squads! Apparently not. One can only assume that any detailed independent investigation would rapidly be forced to conclude that neither Mahdi nor SCIRI were responsible, but the US-installed police force were.

**Max Fuller** has worked for some years as a member of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign in the UK and has read extensively on US policy and Latin America. He is the author of several reports published in the 'Bulletin of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign'. Max Fuller is the author of '[For Iraq, the Salvador Option Becomes Reality](#)' and '[Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq](#)', both published by the Centre for Research on Globalisation. He is a member of the BRussells Tribunal Advisory Committee and he is an authority in the field of '[Death Squads](#)' and '[the Salvador Option](#)'. He can be contacted via the website [www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk](http://www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk)

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## **Conflicting Media Accounts: Evidence of Iraqi Death Squad Conspiracy**

*Max Fuller, 26 June 2006.*

On 27 October 2005, the BBC [reported](#) the following incident.

At least 20 Shia militiamen and Iraqi policemen have died in clashes with Sunni insurgents, Iraqi officials say.

Most of those killed were Mahdi Army militiamen loyal to radical Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr. Two Iraqi policemen were also killed and others wounded.

A spokesman for the militiamen said they were ambushed as they went with police to aid a comrade kidnapped by Sunni militants near Baghdad.

Some reports said the clash resulted from tensions between the communities.

Whether it involves insurgents or not, it is clearly a case of Sunnis fighting Shias - an alarming development in a country where the fear of civil war is increasingly coming to the fore, says the BBC's Jim Muir in Baghdad.

The battle took place in the town of Nahrawan, some 15 miles (25km) south-east of Baghdad.

Yet, on the same day and describing the same incident, Thomas Wagner, filed the following report for Associated Press, BBC, Deutsche Presse-Agentur and Reuters.

At least 27 people, most of them police, were killed in clashes with civilians in Nahrawan township, 30 kilometres south of Baghdad, Thursday, said Iraqi army sources.

Captain Ahmed Jassin of the Iraqi army told Deutsche Presse- Agentur dpa that forces belonging to two brigades of the Interior Ministry launched a raid in Al-Haj village of Nahrawan to release a kidnapped person.

He said the police were in civilian uniform, prompting the villagers to open fire thinking that the police were terrorists. Jassin's army brigade intervened to end the fighting.

He said the severe clashes which took place killed 25 policemen and two civilians. Four villagers were arrested.

Police in civilian uniform! What on earth are readers supposed to make of that in the context of a conflict that has seen thousands of people arrested, tortured and subsequently murdered by members of the police and security forces (eg [UN Human Rights Mission](#), [Iraqi Organization for Follow-up and Monitoring](#)).

More than merely arousing suspicion, Wagner's report recalls the [recent reference](#) to an anonymous confession by an Iraqi purporting to belong to a secret black operations unit. In the confession, the author states that special Iraqi forces were created before and after the occupation by US and Israeli officers to infiltrate all of the branches

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of the new security apparatus. Once in position, these agents have been used to fabricate sectarian attacks against both Sunnis and Shiites. According to the confession, they attack Sunnis 'in uniforms, IDs and police cars' and they attack Shiites 'in cars normally used by the Mujahideen' and undoubtedly 'in civilian uniform'. Clearly, the 'Shia militiamen' at Nahrawan were at pains not to be identified as police, so were their intended victims in this case Shiite?

It's hard to know. According to an [Iraqi Resistance Report](#) compiled by Free Arab Voice, the Sunni resistance organization Jaysh Ansar as-Sunnah posted a statement on the Internet in which they claimed that forces of the National Guard and puppet police, who had arrived in 50 white non-military pickups, attempted to arrest local men during morning prayers. A violent confrontation developed in which local villagers and residents of nearby villages joined forces against the raiders. According to the Jaysh Ansar as-Sunnah version of events, Mahdi militiamen fought alongside the security forces.

From an alternative perspective, Shaykh 'Ali al-Musawi', a leader of the Sadr movement in Diyala Province stated that 'what a number of members of the Jaysh al-Mahdi or its patrons [??] did should not be counted against the Muqtada as-Sadr movement as a whole' and that the movement 'is united with the Resistance on one goal and that is the definite requirement that the American occupation must depart Iraq and that the unity of Iraq – the land and the people – must be safeguarded' (op cit.).

Whether or not the forces that participated in this incident were part of a covert operations unit isn't particularly important. What is important is that they were not the Shiite militiamen linked to Muqtada al-Sadr that the BBC wants us to believe. Infiltrated or not, they belonged to two brigades of the Interior Ministry and were disowned by the Sadr movement. If further militiamen really were present, they attacked as auxiliaries to the police units.

All of this is particularly significant in view of the number of supposedly sectarian attacks that have been taking place in the Nahrawan area as part of a campaign of terrorization and ethnic cleansing.

The [best-documented](#) case involves an assault on the village of Al-Fursan by 'hordes of men in black, who were driving cars of the ministry of interior' on 27 February 2006. Eight people, including a 10-year-old boy, were executed and property and livestock was destroyed. According to Voice of Freedom and Human Rights and the Red Crescent, the residents did not try to protect themselves because they believed the killers to be police. In this case the victims appear to have been Sunni families.

Similar attacks are [reported](#) to have occurred against Shiite families.

### **If you can find them, maybe you can hire ... the Mahdi Army!**

According to Paul McGeough of the [Sydney Morning Herald](#), the mayor of Nahrawan has turned to the Mahdi Army to provide security for his 'Shiite' ward in the absence of alternative law-enforcement agencies capable of taking on the 'insurgency'. Of course, McGeough knows perfectly well, [as does Edward Wong](#) of the New York Times, that the Mahdi Army that they're talking about is the one that receives its uniforms, weapons, training and salaries from the US-sponsored state. For such commentators, the solution to this apparent contradiction is to conclude that the militias draw their pay by day and conduct their real business by night.

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So is McGeough claiming that the mayor of Nahrawan is content to only receive his protection after hours from some yawning militiamen who've only just had time to change out of their uniforms before undertaking raids? Or, if there's a grain of truth to his story, is he suggesting that the mayor is actually benefiting from the presence of units of the Iraqi security forces? If so, it would be more helpful if he would tell his readers which ones. We can assume that they're not ordinary policemen because Nahrawan already has ordinary policemen. So what does that leave? It essentially leaves units of the Iraqi special police, either Public Order Battalions or Special Police Commandos.

In fact, the description of both the 27 October and 27 February raids sound very much like the kind of operations being undertaken by the specialist counterinsurgency units attached to the Ministry of the Interior. The members of such units might or might not have belonged to the Mahdi Army or the Badr Brigade, but within the units of the Special Police they live, work and fight alongside embedded US special-forces trainers. And, even more importantly, their operations are carefully planned by the new CIA-built intelligence apparatus and orchestrated by American intelligence operatives (see '[Operation Knockout: Coin in Iraq](#)').

Whichever way you want to cut it, the bungled raid of 27 October is yet one more example of the US-directed war being actively waged against the Iraqi people and Jim Muir is yet one more example of the liars of the mainstream media who are attempting to cover up the tracks of their genocidal colleagues. In view of the lack of credible reporting and the terrible gravity of the events unfolding, the only immediate solution is to demand independent investigations by international bodies into what is taking place. Who could possibly oppose so utterly reasonable and humane a demand? Only those whose hands are steeped in blood and those devoted to protecting them.  
<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/DiyalaFuller.htm>



**¡Nunca Olvida! Never Forget!**  
**The US role in Iraq's death squads**

**Max Fuller**, member of the *BRussells* Tribunal Advisory Committee.

(July 2006)





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**Articles** by the same author:

- **'For Iraq, the Salvador Option Becomes Reality' / "Voor Irak wordt de 'Salvador-optie' realiteit"** and **'Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq' (www.globalresearch.ca)** and **Who is controlling the death squads in Iraq?'**
- **Ghosts of Jadiriyah. A survivor's testimony** (14 Nov 2006)
- **Balad Massacre once again demonstrates US orchestrated genocide** (09 Nov 2006)
- **The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet** (July 2006)
- **Jihad killings in Baghdad require immediate UN investigation** (12 July 2006)
- **Conflicting Media Accounts: Evidence of Iraqi Death Squad Conspiracy** (26 June 2006)
- **Diyala - A Laboratory of Civil War?** (20 June 2006)
- **Website:** **www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk**

*Hector Gomez Calito's body was found by the road, 18 miles outside Guatemala City, his legs and stomach burnt, his tongue cut out.*

'Death in the Afternoon', Edwin Charles, New Socialist April 1986

The year was 1986 and Guatemala had just just emerged from 31 years of military dictatorship. The death toll stood at 138,000 since the CIA-engineered coup of 1954. The government had officially blamed the violence on everything from foreigners to the heat, yet most of the victims had been 'disappeared' by the various branches of the security forces (or private death squads largely made up of moonlighting members of the police or army), armed, trained and supported by the US military. Guatemala's democratic 'opening' made little difference to the disenfranchised majority struggling for basic rights; nor did it halt the ravages of the security forces, which found themselves in a stronger position, free to pursue their internally directed war behind a 'constitutional veneer'. By 1989 the death toll for the decade alone had reached some 100,000 killed and another 40,000 disappeared.

You can find a similar story in El Salvador, where the US felt it necessary, first, to engineer a civilian, José Napoléon Duarte, as president in 1980 and then to insist on constitutional (1982) and presidential (1984) elections. Such a commitment to 'democracy' provided the necessary gloss for the massive expansion of US military involvement under the Reagan administration, leading to a decade of brutal internal conflict. In fact, the US [ran the war](#) in El Salvador through a handful of assets in key positions and a military mission whose role was to create counterinsurgency forces to take the war to the guerrilla while the bulk of the armed forces held static positions. The result was a genocidal war of aggression against the Salvadoran population, whose targets, as [Chomsky reminds us](#), were 'peasants, labour organizers, students, priests or anyone suspected of working in the interests of the people'.

The full extent of the US role in El Salvador was not evident at the time. It has taken the courage of dedicated investigators in truth commissions, the heartbreaking work of forensic anthropologists and the first-hand testimonies of former soldiers and torturers to break the conspiracy of silence.

Serious scholars and activists of Latin American history, and US Imperialism in general, have learned to recognize the role and impact of US involvement in 'counterinsurgency' wars. A whole [movement](#) in the US is dedicated to

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closing down the notorious School of the Americas (recently renamed the Western Hemisphere School of Security Cooperation), because activists know that despite the human rights courses and the lessons in bomb disposal, many of the war criminals that have plagued Latin America over recent decades are the alumni of that academy of war.

Such activists have also learned to mistrust the Western media, which has consistently misrepresented or failed to report the horrific crimes committed by US proxy armies. Those activists have listened closely to the voices of the people in struggle and recorded their testimonies as part of their campaign to bring an end to US military training and assistance programs. Laboratories have been established on the ground to investigate and analyze the crimes of the state, as well as to dignify the memories of the victims. Uncovering the truth is not a matter of taking selected quotations from mainstream press articles or reading through blogs, but of building real links with organizations rooted in popular struggle.

In relation to the ongoing occupation and destruction of Iraq, activists and analysts like myself have scoured the information available at a distance and have tried to hear and understand the voices coming from the ground to the best of our ability. It is not a substitute for the kind of real solidarity work that I have been describing, but, for those of us who have looked at the US mode of war, it is enough to recognize the evidence of active US involvement with death squads and genocidal intelligence-based counterinsurgency operations – and we have tried to continue hearing those Iraqi voices despite the ceaseless cacophony of disinformation put out by the Occupying powers and disseminated by the entire apparatus of the corporate media in their thrall.

In a very concrete sense, we have tried to hang a monumental question mark on the mightiest propaganda machine the world has ever known. In so doing, speaking for myself, I have questioned every assumption that I hold day after day, time after time and always been forced back to the same position: that the supposed sectarian violence afflicting Iraq is entirely an artifice of the Occupation and that British and American imperialism is not only attempting to fabricate a civil war, but is directly responsible for the vast majority of the violence, including the death squads.

It is no surprise to find that these views are challenged by such apologists as Stephen Zunes, who [writes](#) that 'there is little evidence to suggest that US trainers have actively encouraged death squad activity' (just as there is no 'evidence' that Negroponte knew anything about the death squads in El Salvador or Honduras) despite an avalanche of material available to any prepared to look. Nor is it any surprise that [these views are ridiculed](#) at such bastions of learning as the Conflict Studies Research Centre of the Defence Academy of the UK.

But it comes as a shock to find these arguments under assault from commentators criticizing an [article](#) in which I called for an independent investigation into the killings of three lawyers defending Saddam Hussein and other members of the former Iraqi government on the grounds that I have not heard and understood what is happening in Iraq. Their argument is that rather than focusing on US control of the Iraqi security apparatus, we should be looking at the involvement of Iraq's two most famous Shiite militias, the Mahdi Army of Radical Cleric Muqtada al Sadr and the Badr Brigade, linked to the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

There are both micro and macro dimensions to the criticism of my article, both of which I would like to have the opportunity to address. The micro dimensions consist in a detailed critique of my article along the following lines.

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1) I claimed that the murdered lawyer Khamis al-Obeidi had been hauled from his home in the middle of the night by Interior Ministry representatives when in fact, according to his bereaved wife, 20 men in civilian clothes who identified themselves as members of a ministry security brigade burst into their home in the early hours of the morning while the family slept; Mr Obeidi had little chance to reply before he was seized. It is hard to see how my rendering of the event differs notably from the related facts, which of course formed the basis of my account.

2) I failed to mention that Mehdi Army militiamen are reported to have paraded Mr Obeidi around the Al Thawra (Sadr City) district of Baghdad before his murder and subsequently celebrated his killing with refreshments in the streets. It is true that I did not refer to this account on one blog that is no longer available, but only referred to the disposal of My Obeidi's body under an image of the Ayatollah al-Sadr, Muqtada al-Sadr's father. However, my point was that most murderers try to conceal their crimes or transpose the blame to others. A [spokesman](#) for Muqtada al-Sadr 'angrily denied' the accusations. It should also be noted that the account of militiamen parading Mr Obeidi refers to a Mehdi Army leader named Abu Der'ra. Perhaps they would have heard the [residents of Sadr City](#) who denied that Abu Deraa was a resident of the area, or even the Thawra councilman and senior Sadr official, who insisted that Deraa is not a member of the Mehdi Army. In fact, Deraa is being referred to as the 'Shiite Zaraqawi' and, I suggest, is just as much a [psyop](#).

3) I failed to discuss an aspect of the background to the killings of the three lawyers, namely that Muqtada al-Sadr and two of his spokesmen had made hostile comments towards the trial of Saddam Hussein. I would like to deal with the various comments separately.

(i) The most substantively [incriminating comment](#) was made by Shaikh Raid al-Kadhimi in July 2004 from the 'pulpit of Baghdad's Kadhimiya Shrine'. The problem with using this as evidence against Muqtada al-Sadr is that Kadhimi seems an unreliable spokesman. Kadhimi himself had been in [exile in Syria](#) for a number of years before the US invasion (unlike Muqtada al-Sadr) and the Kadhimiya Shrine where he spoke has been [strongly linked](#) with another al-Sadr, Muqtada's uncle Hussein al-Sadr, who was not only also in exile, but [strongly supported the US invasion](#) and dines with Colin Powell. Hussein al-Sadr is not close to Muqtada, but is [closely associated](#) with US/UK intelligence asset Ayad Allawi.

(ii) Shaik Awad Khafaji and Muqtada al-Sadr are both reported to have demanded the execution of Saddam Hussein. I don't have to agree with their position to point out that in neither statement, as far as I am aware, were specific threats made against the lawyers themselves. From Muqtada al-Sadr's position, one possible outcome of killing the defence lawyers must surely be the removal of the trial to a country where the death penalty would not even be an option. On every count it would be an act of unbridled stupidity on al-Sadr's part to sanction the murder of Saddam Hussein's lawyers and there is no evidence that he has done so.

The point of my article was to emphasize the role of the US-built Ministry of the Interior and its forces and to argue that there is abundant grounds to suspect British and American involvement in most of the killings taking place, quite apart from any moral or legal argument that they are responsible by dint of being in occupation. In taking this position I was in fact listening to many of the voices I hear coming from Iraq, as well as to the victims and fighters, alive and dead, from every other US imperialist aggression.

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For instance, I was listening to the murdered lawyer Khamis Obeidi, who stated, 'The government bears the responsibility because it is supposed to protect the citizens. If there were a serious investigation into the previous murder of Janabi and the perpetrators had been arrested, we would not see today's crime.'

I was listening to Saddam Hussein's chief lawyer Khalil al-Dulaimi, who said, 'We strongly condemn this act [the killing of Mr Obeidi] and we condemn the killings done by the Interior Ministry against Iraqis.'

I was listening to Freedom Voice Society for Human Rights, which is [calling for a factfinding mission](#) of the UN, the Arab League or International Organisations and wants peacekeeping forces to protect civilians.

I was listening to an Iraqi professor who [wrote](#) that his colleagues were being killed by professional assassins, none of whom have been arrested; he said 'nobody has taken responsibility, and reasons have not been clarified.'

I was listening to the Shiite farmers who wake up to find typewritten flyers on their doorsteps telling them to leave the mixed communities where they have shared their whole lives with their Sunni neighbors and relatives.

I was listening to the boy whose ears were burnt off in a fire in a police station where he should never have been but was held for stealing some lengths of electrical cable in order to live.

I was listening to the street vendors forced off their pitch by the police and left with no means of subsistence.

I was listening to the workers encountered by Naomi Klein who said they would rather blow up their factory with themselves in it than see it privatized.

I was listening to tales of torture and horror coming out of every US-installed detention facility and every 'security' unit given unnatural life by US trainers.

I was listening to the Iraqi [Organization for follow-up and monitoring](#) who stated: "After exact counting and documenting, the Iraqi Organisation for Follow-up and Monitoring has confirmed that 92 % of the 3498 bodies found in different regions of Iraq have been arrested by officials of the Ministry of Interior. Nothing was known about the arrestees' fate until their riddled bodies were found with marks of horrible torture. It's regrettable and shameful that these crimes are being suppressed and that several states receive government officials, who fail to investigate these crimes."

The 'macro dimension' to criticisms of my article actually has very little to do with the substance of the particular piece. Their real objection is that in consistently drawing on detailed evidence, including US military sources, to examine the role of the US military-intelligence apparatus within the ongoing violence in Iraq, I have systematically downplayed the involvement of the Badr Brigade and the Mehdi Army.

The truth is that, aside from anecdotal allegations from fairly [spurious sources](#), there is no publicly available information on the organisation or structure of either group and spokespersons for both of them assiduously deny their involvement. Even more significantly, Muqtada al-Sadr has been steadfast in opposing sectarianism, as Dahr Jamail, amongst others, has [noted](#). Such a stance simply does not square with his characterisation as one of the arch villains in an internally driven conflict. You don't need to be an Islamist to see that. Even that other arch fiend, Bayan Jabr, whose [offices crawled with US agents](#), appeared out of his depth, desperately thrusting passports at impassive journalists who would rather crucify him with letters than pose a single rudimentary question about US collusion. Yet no charges are forthcoming against Jabr and it is the US state, not he, that has the more distinguished pedigree in violence.

What we do have is a growing body of eyewitness testimonies from Iraqis asserting the presence of members of one or other militia group. Such assertions are blown out of all proportion within the mainstream western media by writers who have never seriously questioned the role of US military-intelligence advisors in orchestrating the

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death squads despite a barrage of evidence. The views of journalists who take this line can be discarded as trash, but not those of the Iraqis, who, undoubtedly, genuinely see the involvement of both Badr and Mehdi militiamen.

The problem with such testimonies is not in their credibility but in their ability to perceive the structures and follow the chains of command of the various armed groups that are assaulting them. Despite truisms, the truth is that sometimes you can feel the effect of the lash, but not see the hand that is wielding it.

The most consistent detail in all accounts of raids and arrests/kidnappings is the presence of members of the new Iraqi armed forces, be they members of the National Guard (now regular army), blue-shirted policemen or paramilitary members of the Special (now National) Police. This phenomenon is so pointed that no one can seriously discuss the role of militias as death squads without qualifying their position by arguing that these militias have integrated themselves within branches of the security forces to the extent that they have become essentially indistinguishable from the security forces, with the security forces themselves (parts of them at least) now operating as the sectarian militias. Empirically, this is an extraordinarily weak position, as I have [attempted to argue](#) with detailed examinations of the relationship between such forces and the US military-intelligence apparatus.

What this leaves essentially are the eyewitnesses who report seeing members of one or other militia operating **alongside** members of the security forces.

So who are the 'militiamen' that Iraqis have seen and, in the case of the recent raids in Adhamiya, even captured? One possible answer is that they are the same plainclothes intelligence operatives that a UPI journalist [witnessed](#) participating in a Baghdad raid in June 2004, well before anyone had charged that the Ministry of the Interior or any Iraqi police forces had been infiltrated by Shiite militiamen. Such intelligence operatives might also constitute the mysterious Field Intelligence Units that Gen Rasheed Flayih, the head of the Police Commandos, uses as a euphemism for the death squads. Might such units be made up of 'militiamen'? We know they are, or at least that they were. From the outset of the occupation, the CIA [took the 'top intelligence agents'](#) from each of the main exile political groups and hammered them into the Collection Management and Analysis Directorate, which was to become the new *Mukhabharat* under the Sunni former Baathist general Mohammed Abdullah Shahwani. In November 2003 the Occupation authority [formed a paramilitary unit](#) 'composed of militiamen from the country's five largest political parties' to 'track down insurgents'. I drew attention to all of this in my article '[Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq](#)'. Do these agents knock on people's doors saying 'I'm from the Badr Brigade'? I sincerely doubt it, but even if they do, it is no reason to situate the intelligence apparatus underlying Iraq's death squads anywhere but, ultimately, with the Occupying forces. For instance, we know that the raids conducted by the paramilitary Special Police are [overseen by Multi National Force-Iraq](#) operatives. A second possibility is that local 'defence' forces of the kinds seen in Latin America are being organized by the state and deliberately given a sectarian character. If such units exist (I have seen no evidence that they do), they too will operate within the framework of the Occupation's military-intelligence apparatus.

The one thing that is really certain, is that whoever these militiamen are, they would not be able to operate without the active collusion of the Ministry of the Interior and the Occupation forces. This fact is crystal clear when we consider that units like the Special Police Commandos, which have been closely linked with death squads and militias, operate with embedded US special forces trainers at the battalion level (ie about the ratio of teacher



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to student in most class rooms), who live, work, patrol and sleep with the units. It is therefore entirely appropriate to focus on the intellectual authorship of this genocidal campaign of murder at its **highest level** in order to seek ways to prevent further crimes and prosecute those responsible. One such way would be to press for an independent international investigation by an agency such as the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. Such an investigation must not be charged with examining **specific** organizations; it must be charged with **investigating** the thousands of extrajudicial killings taking place across Iraq and determining responsibility, wherever it may lie. This is in no way an alternative to ending the occupation, but is an integral part of campaigning to uncover the crimes of the occupiers, end the occupation and act in solidarity with Iraqis facing terrible persecution. It is in just this spirit that Dennis Kucinich [wrote an open letter](#) to Donald Rumsfeld, exposing the complicity of the US war machine, not in defending Muqtada al-Sadr or the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

As I wrote at the beginning of this article, it took years of agony to finally uncover a tiny fraction of the true extent of US complicity in El Salvador's killing fields. Soldiers tormented with guilt finally had the [courage to come forward](#) at the risk of their own lives to reveal their roles in collecting information through savage torture and murder, information that was laid on the adjacent desks of US intelligence operatives, minus only the gory details of how it had been obtained. The value of such testimonies is in revealing the structure and logic of US counterinsurgency wars, so that their lessons never are forgotten.

Iraq's 'democratic opening' was just as vital a fig leaf for all-out dirty war as Duarte's civilian presidency was in El Salvador. At this moment all of the voices are telling us the same thing and that is that US-trained, armed and backed forces are committing yet another genocide. Islamofascism is just another cover for ruthless political, economic and social repression, with Shiite militiamen in Iraq no more needing to take their orders from Tehran than Guatemalan death squads needed to take theirs from the Vatican. The objective is not a mystery. It is total neo-colonial domination. Let's focus on what is concrete and start looking for ways to protect Iraqis from the wolves and wolf brigades that Anglo-American imperialism has unleashed on them. Focusing on the Mehdi Army or the Badr Brigades is exactly what the Occupation wants the anti-war movement to do, providing the real criminals with 'plausible denial' and building a climate in which Iraq can be successfully dismembered.

## **Appendix**

### **The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet**

After numerous reports of fighting in the Adhamiya district of Baghdad over the last few months, many of them drawing on first-hand testimonies, it would probably surprise few of those who have paid attention to descriptions of Sunni vs Shia warfare, that the area is Tiger Brigade territory.

What might come as slightly surprising is to learn that the Tiger Brigade is not the feared Shiite predator, against whom residents of the predominantly Sunni district have thrown up barricades and formed neighbourhood self-defence groups. Instead, the [Tiger Brigade is the 2nd Brigade of the 6th Iraqi Army Division](#) (erroneously referred to in most reports as National Guard), [headquartered at the old Defence Ministry](#) building, based in al Thawra (Sadr City) and [responsible for a large swathe of Baghdad east of the Tigris](#), including al-Adhamiya.

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The best known and [best reported](#) part of the ongoing battle for Adhamiya took place on the nights of 17 and 18 April 2006, when gunmen stormed the neighborhood and were resisted by local forces. What role did Tiger play? According to one local 'the National Guards that are usually patrolling the street left'. Did they melt away out of fear of the gunmen? Did they secretly or openly sympathize with the gunmen's aims? Were they obeying arcane orders passed down from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) not to interfere with the raid? I suggest the answer is none of those, but that the troops of the 2nd Brigade did not disappear, but redeployed to the perimeter of a predefined area of operations as part of a diligently orchestrated assault ('cordon and search') of the district. In doing so, they would have been fulfilling a role that US trainers had devised for them, and, no doubt, the [Military Transition Team](#) (MiTT), the 506th Regimental Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division under Lt Col Paul Finken, would have been on hand to ensure that the job was done properly.

From what we know of such planned raids, the actual forces that enter the area of operations are usually paramilitary units of the Special (now National) Police, formerly made up of Police Commandos and Public Order Brigades, now simply consisting of two divisions with around eight individual brigades. This seems to be essentially consistent with what happened on the night of 17 April, with first-hand accounts stating that the intruders were special police forces from MOI. Nothing so far is out of step with what we should expect from a carefully planned counterinsurgency operation (eg see the [account of Operation Knockout](#)).

Where doubt about the identity of the attackers and intellectual authorship of the assault starts to creep in is with the eyewitnesses who made the following statements (see '[The assault on Adhamiya: Limitations and perspectives of war reporting from Iraq](#)' and '[Baghdad Slipping into Civil War](#)').

*'Shia attacked a Sunni mosque'*

*'Special forces from the Ministry of Interior, probably Badr brigades'*

*'these were members of the Badr militia and Sadr's Mehdi Army who were raiding the neighborhood'*

*'I have seen these members of the Badr militia and Mehdi Army wearing Iraqi Police uniforms and using Iraqi Police pick-up trucks roaming our streets'*

*'Some were just wearing civilian clothes with black face masks, others were definitely commandos from the ministry of the interior'*

Such statements deserve neither to be dismissed, not patronised, but they do need to be questioned.

What seems clear is that many of the intruders were indeed MOI Special/National Police units and that the description of them as either Badr or Mehdi militiamen, though undoubtedly believed, relies solely on the **assumption** that such forces have been thoroughly infiltrated by these two Shiite militias. This simply is not true, certainly to any practical effect, as a wealth of evidence demonstrates (for instance, Major General Rick Lynch, who headed the training mission for the Public Order Division, [highlights the mixed ethno-sectarian make-up](#) of the Special/National Police).

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More challenging are the accounts of un-uniformed attackers in balaclavas. Could these not be Shiite militiamen loyal to Badr of Mehdi working alongside MOI forces? I believe not. Firstly because we know from a June 2004 UPI account of a raid in Baghdad (now mysteriously removed from the Internet and only currently available [here](#)) that plainclothes intelligence officers accompany MOI operations.

Secondly because, despite the initial absence of US ground forces, we can be confident that the raid had been coordinated with Multi National Force-Iraq, ie the Occupation. For instance, several witnesses reported the presence of helicopters overhead, while others mentioned that US soldiers joined the attackers subsequent to the initial incursion – these soldiers almost certainly constituted the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) that [US Army spokesman Rick Lynch told journalists](#) was dispatched (ie a planned operation was not going according to plan). That US forces were not present from the outset is not surprising. This is exactly what the US has been wanting to achieve and Lynch boasts that 60% of patrols are now conducted by Iraqi forces (op cit.). In fact, as independent journalist [Dahr Jamail rightly points out](#), the new US *modus operandi* sounds disturbingly similar (if not identical) to what just occurred in Adhamiya.

'Iraqi forces would take the lead, supported by American air power, special operations, intelligence, embedded officers and back-up troops. Helicopters suitable for urban warfare, such as the manoeuvrable AH-6 'Little Birds' ... are likely to complement ground attacks.'

So if 'militiamen' were present, we absolutely have to assume that they were under US oversight, making any accusations against Badr or Mahdi irrelevant.

## **Dude, where's my civil war?**

With the greatest possible respect to the Iraqis living and dying through this Occupation-imposed nightmare and to the commentators who are understandably confused by the inherent duplicity of 'dirty wars', it must be emphasized that it does no favors to the Iraqis to overblow the supposed sectarian dimension of the ongoing conflict.

In fact, one of the most revealing aspects of the Adhamiya battle is that it is most definitely not Sunni vs Shia. We know that the US proxy forces are not exclusively Shiite, despite popular misconceptions. It should also not be forgotten that the 'predominantly Sunni area of Adhamiya' is, de facto, mixed! Of all the unlikely sources, it is the [New York Times that reveals](#) that on one block in Adhamiya, Sunnis and Shiites stood guard on rooftops and at street corners **together**. This shouldn't really surprise us. The residents of Adhamiya and Kadhamiya, a predominantly Shiite district, [got together to send relief](#) to the residents of Fallujah during the US siege. It took the destruction of the bridge linking the two communities and the imposition of roadblocks to start breaking down that sense of solidarity.

Undoubtedly, the unity of Iraq is under desperate threat and the actions of the Occupation are producing extraordinary tensions. That is by design. Nevertheless, the closest thing to a civil war in Adhamiya is that ordinary Iraqis are attempting to protect themselves from the ravages of Iraqi mercenaries fighting for the Occupation. That some Iraqis, at the sharpest end of violence, propaganda and active disinformation campaigns (psyops), are started to falter in their belief in a shared destiny for all Iraqis is hardly surprising. It is the duty of

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the anti-war movement to listen to them, but is not our duty to follow them when they are deceived down blind alleys. It is also our duty to understand what is going on to the best of our ability and to try to find ways of building active solidarity with all sectors of Iraqi society in struggle.

Max Fuller (July 2006)

*Max Fuller has worked for some years as a member of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign in the UK and has read extensively on US policy and Latin America. He is the author of several reports published in the 'Bulletin of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign'. Max Fuller is the author of 'For Iraq, the Salvador Option Becomes Reality' and 'Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq', both published by the Centre for Research on Globalisation. He is a member of the BRussells Tribunal Advisory Committee where he has published several articles: [Conflicting Media Accounts: Evidence of Iraqi Death Squad Conspiracy](#) and [Diyala - A Laboratory of Civil War?](#) He is an authority in the field of "Death Squads" and "the Salvador Option". He can be contacted via the website [www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk](http://www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk)*

## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

**12 JULY 2006**

### **JIHAD KILLINGS IN BAGHDAD REQUIRE IMMEDIATE UN INVESTIGATION**

#### **The Massacre in al Jihad**

On Sunday 9 July 2006 several carloads of masked gunmen entered the Jihad district of western Baghdad from the main road to Baghdad International Airport (BIA) ([Associated Press](#)), where they commenced to kill at least 40 people.

The masked gunmen set up fake **police checkpoints** ([BBC](#)), where they proceeded to stop cars and demanded to see passengers' identification cards ([AP](#), [BBC](#))

The masked gunmen pulled drivers from their cars ([BBC](#)). It is **presumed** that they were looking for Sunni names ([AP](#) via ABC).

The gunmen roamed the neighbourhood ([AP](#)) and entered some houses ([BBC](#)).

The slaughter lasted several hours, according to Alaa Makki, a spokesman for the Iraqi Islamic party ([Guardian](#)).

US and Iraqi security forces sealed off the area ([AP](#), [BBC](#)).

A spokesman for a Sunni clerical association, Mohammed Beshar al-Faydhi, blamed the attack on the Mehdi Army, associated with Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr ([AP](#)).

Al-Sadr denies responsibility and has called for Sunnis and Shiites to join hands ([AP](#)).

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Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Salam al-Zubaie, **blamed Iraqi security forces for the attack** . ([AP](#)) .

The Prime Minister's office claimed al-Zubaie's statements did not represent the government's official position ( [AP](#)).

## **Unanswered Questions**

A key issue that has not so far been addressed is how several carloads of masked gunmen were able to move along the main road to Baghdad International Airport to commit massacres over the course of hours - described by the BBC's Jonny Dymond as 'breathtaking'- in an area adjacent to the road, without being intercepted.

## **Route Irish**

As every journalist familiar with Baghdad undoubtedly knows, the main road between Baghdad International Airport and the Green Zone, code named Route Irish, is one of the most heavily militarised zones in Baghdad.

*Route Irish -- the military name for the infamous road leading to Baghdad International Airport and a northern boundary line for 2-6's territory -- has grown more secure in past months, a feat accomplished mainly through a significant increase in soldiers. The last roughly 3-mile stretch of the road has up to 500 Iraqi police officers present at any time. About 150 of them are on duty at checkpoints along the road, Smith said. In addition, U.S. forces also keep a regular patrol schedule on the road.*

[Kimberly Johnson, USA Today, 5 July 2006](#)

*The road [Route Irish] is heavily patrolled, both on the ground, and in the air with UAVs and helicopters. As a result, terrorists have to go to extraordinary lengths just to plant a roadside bomb on Route Irish. Terrorists have largely given up trying to sneak out at night to plant a roadside bomb on Route Irish, as they continue to do on thousands of kilometers of less heavily patrolled roads.*

[James Dunnigan, Strategypage, 6 June 2005](#)

Two major US military bases lie at either end of Route Irish (see map), Camp Victory close to the airport, occupying the sprawling Abu Ghraib Palace complex, and Camp Prosperity in the al-Salam Palace just before the Green Zone.

Both camps are within a few kilometers of the Jihad district, connected by a fast, multilane expressway.

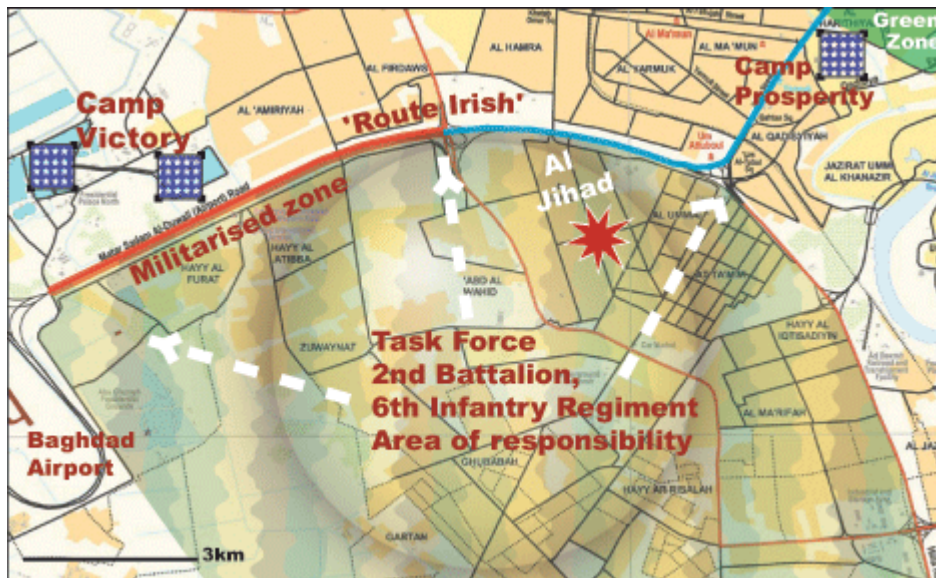
Camp Victory is the [nerve cell for Multi National Force-Iraq](#), containing underground intelligence bunkers and specialist surveillance units.

Both camps contain US military Quick Reaction Forces ([Victory](#), [Prosperity](#)), capable of responding within 15 minutes.

The Jihad district lies within the [area of responsibility](#) of the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Infantry Regiment, whose important northern perimeter is Route Irish.



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## **Failure to Intervene**

It is impossible to believe that large groups of gunmen belonging to unsanctioned militias could have made their way to the Jihad district by way of Route Irish and conducted static paramilitary operations without attracting attention. It is equally impossible to believe that US forces were unable to take any more-effective action than sealing the area after the massacre.

In view of the allegations that Ministry of Interior security forces were involved in the incident and the fact that US forces failed to take effective action to prevent an attack within minutes' drive of two major US army bases, it is stressed that **there must be an independent international enquiry into the attack of 9 July 2006 in the Jihad district and into the ongoing wave of violence linked to Iraq's security forces.**

It is not acceptable to make vague accusations about Shiite militiamen infiltrating security forces that have been trained and armed, and continue to be nurtured, by Multi National Force-Iraq.

Nor is it acceptable for the governments of those countries that set this genocide in motion to wash their hands of responsibility for the events now taking place before our eyes.

Action must be urgently taken to find out who is responsible for this and other 'death squad' style killings, bring the perpetrators to justice and halt the wave of murder unleashed by the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq. It is not too late to prevent a civil war taking place in Iraq.

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/Fuller.htm>

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## **Balad Massacre once again demonstrates US orchestrated genocide**

*(Max Fuller, 09 November 2006)*

[Click here to read articles by the same author](#)

**Website:** [www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk](http://www.cryingwolf.deconstructingiraq.org.uk)



*All truth is safe and nothing else is safe, but he who keeps back truth, or withholds it from men, from motives of expediency, is either a coward or a criminal.*  
*Max Fuller, 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher*

The tragic events that unfolded in Balad over the weekend of 13-14 October, in which around 60 residents lost their lives, have once again been portrayed as an example of inter-communal sectarian violence. In reality, as in every other reported instance, they prove that Iraq's US-trained, equipped and supported forces are responsible for the flood of killings attributed to Shiite death squads.

### **Untangling events**

According to US military spokesmen, and reiterated in mainstream media outlets, the cycle of violence in Balad began on Friday 13 October, when insurgents murdered 17 farm labourers in the vicinity of Duluiyah.

The labourers are reported to have been Shiites and the killings have consequently been labelled as sectarian murders by Sunni insurgents.

Seldom picked up in the press is the fact that in relation to these killings, two local police officers have been arrested.

On the same day (Friday 13 October), according to [Major General William Caldwell](#), spokesman for Multinational Force-Iraq, a small Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was dispatched to Balad, some 5 miles from Duluiyah, based on unconfirmed reports that some Iraqis had been murdered.

The QRF made contact with unspecified local security forces to offer military assistance. Caldwell did not clarify why the US army considered that Iraqi security forces might need assistance in Balad on 13 October. The likeliest explanation is that MNF-I was aware that a major security operation was about to commence in Balad. Caldwell states that local authorities did not want any additional ground support, but requested overhead assets (helicopters presumably) and intelligence-collecting assets, which were made available. Once again, the presence of such assets indicates that a security operation was underway. From that point on, an unknown number of US forces (Caldwell suggests a platoon) continued patrolling actively in Balad.

According to media reports the violence in Balad began the following day, Saturday 14 October. Whilst many resident undoubtedly hold militias responsible, eyewitnesses are quite clear that units of the National Police

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assisted Shiite elements in their attacks on Sunnis. Again, this is what we would expect from a government-sponsored operation.

## **Was the Mahdi Army present?**

According to Ellen Knickmeyer of the [Washington Post](#), citing a local Shiite cleric, frightened Shiite elders contacted the office of Moqtada al-Sadr in Kadhimiyah on 13 October.

In response, Mahdi fighters in plain clothes allegedly crowded into two buses and headed for Balad, followed by more Mahdi fighters in army uniforms and vehicles, as well as others in the uniform of Interior Ministry commandos (National Police units). These various elements assembled in Balad on the morning of 14 October and commenced to take control of Balad's streets, setting up checkpoints to control motor traffic.

By Tuesday (some 3 days later), the head of Balad city council, Malik Laftah, [claimed](#) that 'the Mahdi Army is controlling the town'.

But according to US and Iraqi government officials, it was government forces that were in control of Balad on Tuesday.

In fact, the three Mahdi elements that a spokesman described as heading to Balad to exact revenge are exactly the same three elements of the Iraqi state security forces that are present at every other government-sponsored cordon and search operation: army (normally holding the perimeter), police commandos (National Police) manning checkpoints and conducting house to house raids, plainclothes intelligence officers accompanying commandos\*. It may be that additional irregular 'militia' elements were also involved, but the context remains categorically a security forces operation.

Interestingly, Ellen Knickmeyer wrote that the US QRF did not arrive in Balad until the end of 14 October (even this would leave glaring questions about the total failure to take any form of preventative or remedial action), but General Caldwell was very clear on this point:

*We in fact did hear about the incident that did occur on the 13<sup>th</sup> there. We did despatch, based on the reports that occurred, a quick reaction force into the city to link up with and assist the local Iraqi security forces that were present at that time ... the first QRF force went into the city on the 13<sup>th</sup>.*

General Caldwell also stated that if coalition (occupation) forces discovered persons or groups of persons operating outside the law, they would 'target' such persons or groups, 'irrespective of who they may or may not attribute some sort of membership to'. Should we assume that the US QRF and aerial surveillance assets simply missed the presence of the Mahdi Army (an illegal militia), who had set up roadblocks and taken control of the city, or must we conclude that the forces present in Balad were Iraqi state forces?

Two further pieces of circumstantial evidence support such a conclusion.

Firstly, some of the bodies that were eventually received at the Balad morgue bore electric drill holes, indicating that the victims had been detained against their will prior to death, ie had been arrested and taken to a detention

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facility where they were tortured. This is consistent with one detailed account, in which a woman described how she and her husband were stopped at a checkpoint while attempting to flee the town. A hooded man identified her husband as a former army colonel; he was then beaten and taken away in a white sport-utility vehicle (ie a police vehicle) before being killed. These details are consistent with every other account of extrajudicial killings carried out by Interior Ministry personnel.

Secondly, the Kadhimiya district, where frightened Shiite elders looked for support, is not only home to an important Shiite shrine, but to one of the [most important military/police bases](#) (previously Camp Justice) in Baghdad, situated in a former intelligence facility. The base serves as the headquarters for one of the National Police divisions, formerly the Public Order Division. The National Police were expressly designed to be able to provide a strike force capability to the Interior Ministry, able to quickly deploy around the country to bolster local forces, in contrast to the Mahdi Army, which enjoys no formal backing, training or logistics and would be completely unable to deploy at short notice or to establish control over a large urban settlement.

Ultimately, it is the attested presence of US forces that demonstrates that this was a coordinated government operation and had nothing to do with any unauthorised militias.

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\* For further examples of security force operations that have been attributed to sectarian violence, please see:

[The Assault on Adhamiya - Not Civil War Yet](#)

[Operation Knockout in Diyala Demonstrates US Collusion with Death Squads](#)

[JIHAD KILLINGS IN BAGHDAD REQUIRE IMMEDIATE UN INVESTIGATION](#)

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## **Iraq: Security Companies and Training Camps**

By **Sarah Meyer**

[BRussells Tribunal](#) 17 May 2006

[Sarah Meyer articles and researches published by the BRussells Tribunal.](#)



[FPS in Samawa, Iraq. Yahoo photo](#)

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Private US and UK security firms are closely allied to Mr. Bremer's 'Facilities Protection Service' programme in Iraq. [Newsweek](#) (24.04.06) suggested 146,000<sup>1</sup> belong to this 'security' force. The Interior Minister, Bayan Jabr, associated the FPS with the endemic 'death squads' operating inside the police forces, which are hastening the disintegration of Iraq<sup>2</sup>.

## **What is the Facilities Protection Service?**

The establishment of the 'Facilities Protection Service' was on 04.10.03, according to Paul Bremer's [Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 27](#) (see appendix one).

This document says that "*The FPS may also consist of employees of private security firms*<sup>3</sup> who are engaged to perform services for the ministries or governorates through contracts, provided such private security firms and employees are licensed and authorized by the Ministry of Interior as provided in Section 7 herein."

According to [Global Security.org](#), "The Facilities Protection Service works for all ministries and governmental agencies, but its standards are set and enforced by the Ministry of the Interior. It can also be privately hired. The FPS is tasked with the fixed site protection of Ministerial, Governmental, or private buildings, facilities and personnel. The FPS includes Oil, Electricity Police and Port Security."

The majority of the FPS staff consists of former service members and former security guards. The FPS will now secure public facilities such as hospitals, banks, and power stations within their district. Once trained, the guards work with US military forces protecting critical sites like schools, hospitals and power plants."

## **Which private security firms are operating in Iraq?**

There are about 30 known private security firms working in Iraq. These include:

### [Aegis PLC](#)

Aegis is run by Lt. Col. [Tim Spicer](#). A film recently showed Aegis members happily shooting Iraqi civilians. See the film [here](#).

[Sourcewatch information on Aegis](#): "Aegis Defence Services was initially awarded a \$293 million



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contract by the Pentagon in May 2004 to act as the 'coordination and management hub' for the fifty-plus private security companies in Iraq. As of December, 2005, that contract was worth in excess of \$430 million. They also contributed seventy-five teams of eight armed civilians each to assist and protect the Project Management Office of the United States. They also provided protection for the Oil-for-Food Program inquiry."

## [Blackwater USA.](#)

Blackwater was the security firm hired to protect Paul Bremer in Iraq.

[Sourcewatch on Blackwater.](#) "Blackwater is one of two companies which make up The Prince Group, the other being Prince Manufacturing. ... The Prince Group bought Aviation Worldwide Services. AWS consists of STI Aviation, Inc., Air Quest, Inc., and Presidential Airways, Inc. These companies provide the logistical and air support for Blackwater operations. Blackwater itself consists of Blackwater Training Center, Blackwater Target Systems, Blackwater Security Consulting and Blackwater Canine."



## [Blackwater K9 dog](#)

Whose dogs were used at Abu Ghraib - and are now being used at some training camps? Were these dogs from [Blackwater K9?](#)

## **Blackwater vs. Fallujah**

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force took over Fallujah on 27.03.04. During a demonstration on the 28th, the US killed 18 Fallujah civilians. The Iraqi response to this was the murder and hanging of 4 Blackwater employees on 31.03.04. War crimes committed by the United States followed. See:

[Fallujah, the Hidden Nightmare \(Rai/ICH\)](#)

Najaf was also affected. Sourcewatch says: "According to Russel Mokhiber and Robert Weissman, a few days after the Fallujah killings, "Blackwater Security Consulting engaged in full-scale battle in

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Najaf, with the company flying its own helicopters amidst an intense firefight to re-supply its own commandos. ... The increased scrutiny of security firms led Blackwater to hire the [Alexander Strategy Group](#) (now involved in three "K Street" scandals) for crisis management, public and media relations."

For a shady story that gets progressively darker, see [IRAQ: Blood is Thicker Than Blackwater](#)

## [Erinys Iraq Ltd.](#)

According to Global Security, "Erinys Iraq Ltd is the private security company hired to protect Iraq's oil pipelines under a US\$40 million contract awarded in August 2003. Erinys Iraq is an affiliate of Erinys International formed in 2001, landed the Iraq contract to supply and train 6,500 armed guards charged with protecting 140 Iraqi oil wells, 7,000 kilometers of pipelines and refineries, as well as power plants and the water supply for the Iraqi Ministry of Oil. A majority of Erinys' workforce (15,000 Iraqi and 350 international staff) in Iraq are Kurdish peshmerga."

[Sourcewatch information on Erinys.](#) "Erinys Iraq Ltd, which won an \$80 million contract last August from the Coalition Provisional Authority to provide security for the oil infrastructure in Iraq, has had some powerful alliances in Iraq.

Erinys set up a Joint Venture with [Nour USA Ltd.](#) Nour's founder is Abul Huda Farouki, a wealthy Jordanian-American who lives in northern Virginia and whose companies have done extensive construction work for the Pentagon.

Farouki's businesses established \$12 million of loans from the Petra International Banking Corporation in the 1980s, which was managed at the time by Ahmed Chalabi's nephew, Mohammed Chalabi. The Jordanian government says this was part of a massive embezzlement scheme involving Chalabi<sup>4</sup> and a bank he owned in Jordan.

A founding partner and the director of Erinys Iraq is Faisal Dhaghistani. Faisal is the son of Tamara Daghistani, who played a large role in the development of Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress.

The firm's counsel in Baghdad has been Chalabi's nephew, Salem Chalabi.

Many among the 14,000 guards recruited by Erinys to protect the oil infrastructure came directly from the Iraqi Free Forces, a militia that had been loyal to Chalabi's movement."

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Following is an up-to-date [State Department list](#) <sup>5</sup> of 27 further known security firms working in Iraq:

AD Consultancy (which firm?) (UK)

AKE Ltd (UK)

BAGHDAD FIRE AND SECURITY (IRAQ)

ARMOR GROUP (in Mosul, Baghdad, Basra) (UK)

CONTROL RISKS GROUP (Baghdad) (UK)

CUSTER BATTLES (now being investigated) (US)

DEHDARI GENERAL TRADING & CONTRACTING EST. (KUWAIT)

DILIGENCE MIDDLE EAST (US)

GENRIC (outside Basra) (UK)

GLOBAL MIDDLE EAST RISK STRATEGIES (originally a firm based in UK, known as Global Risk Strategies) (Dubai, UAE)

GROUP 4 FALCK A/S (INDIA)

HENDERSON RISK LTD (UK)

HILL AND ASSOCIATES (HONG KONG)

ICP (employees are only either former British and US Special Forces or Elite Forces personnel. (UK)

ISI (Baghdad Conference Palace: ("the only security company to provide 24 hour Iraqi security guards to the CPA "Green Zone". All guards are trained by the U.S. army ... ISI's senior management includes experienced military personnel mostly ex-special forces from both the US and UK.") (IRAQ)

METEORIC TACTICAL SOLUTIONS (S. AFRICA)

MEYER & ASSOCIATES, (TEXAS, US)

OLIVE SECURITY LTD (UK)

OPTIMAL SOLUTION SERVICES (AUSTRALIA)

OVERSEAS SECURITY AND STRATEGIC INFORMATION, INC/SAFENET-IRAQ (US)

RAMOPS RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP (comprised of US special operations and military intelligence professionals.) (US)

SOG-SMG INC. (US)

SUMER INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (trained by DYNCORP. INT; (IRAQ)

TOR INTERNATIONAL (former SAS and Special Forces staff) (UK)

TRIPLE CANOPY (more than 20 years in the most elite military Special Operations units) (US)

UNITY RESOURCES GROUP (Middle East) LLC. (security professionals drawn from the Special

Forces and Police SWAT communities of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand

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and Europe. (Dubai, UAE)

WADE-BOYD & ASSOCIATES (US)

## **Where is training for the Facilities Protection Service ("death squads"?) taking place?**

- [Basra Palace \(UK\)](#)

"19/5 Battery: "Maj. A. J. Layden is responsible for the Facilities Protection Service (FPS). The Battery oversees a wide range of activities; from working with the border guards away to the east of Basra, to running training courses for the FPS. Sgt Duncan's multiple (sic) is one that has been tasked with this FPS training task. He and his team have already run four five-day courses which include foot drill, weapon handling, basic first aid and vehicle check point drills. The aim throughout each course is to raise confidence amongst the men of the FPS in basic standards and encourage good practice. At the end of each course, the top students have been selected to receive further instruction to educate them how to lead future courses. Sgt Duncan and his team are now reaping the rewards of their hard work with Iraqi FPS staff leading the most recent course under their guidance. " (There is no date on this communication.)

- [Baghdad, Al Rashid district](#)

Col. Jon Brockman said (21.01.04) "that those achievements include recruiting, training, equipping and employing 2,900 Iraqis as Facility Protection Services guards."

- [MEK Compound / FOB Mercury / Camp Mercury](#)

A photo tour of Camp Mercury can be seen [here](#). The photo of the prisoner compound has been deleted.

Global Security says: "Forward Operating Base [FOB] Mercury is an abandoned Iraqi military base and a former Iranian terrorist training camp, located midway between Baghdad and Fallujah."

"TF 1-504 operates out of FOB Mercury. They are responsible for several towns west of Baghdad, including the external security of the largest prison and detention facility in Iraq. TF 1-504 recently started training Iraqi Facility Protection Service guards. This is a program to train and equip Iraqis so

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they can begin guarding their own critical facilities, such as police stations, food warehouses, oil storage depots, etc. ... A class of twenty-five Iraqis completed the Facilities Protection Force (FPS) program 11 October 2003 at Forward Operating Base Mercury. The group of students is the first to participate in the three-day course. Upon their graduation, they became an integral part of the Iraq rehabilitation process. ...”

“There have been allegations made that between 2003-2004 at Camp Mercury U.S. military personnel engaged in routine and widespread physical punishment towards Iraqi detainees. It is alleged that enlisted men conducted beatings of prisoners prior to questioning, forced strenuous exercises to the point of unconsciousness and exposed detainees to extremes of heat and cold. These alleged methods were employed to produce greater cooperation with interrogators some of whom were apparently members of the CIA. As of September 2005 the U.S. Army was conducting an investigation on what exactly happened at Camp Mercury. Some military personnel also claim that these actions were also used as a form of stress relief from the war.”

- [An Najaf](#)

An Najaf area, two hundred one facility protection service guards graduated from security training on 03 July 2003. Sixty-seven guards will work at oil and gas facilities and 134 will work at hospitals. On 29.08.03, the mosque in Najaf was bombed.

The 11th MEU commander declared [Nov. 30 \(04\)](#) that Iraqi security forces have formally assumed local control of An Najaf province. Col. Anthony Haslam said, "In the past three months, they have demonstrated their ability to keep this province and its citizens safe and secure." As of 09.12.05, The Iraqi army had the primary responsibility for security in Najaf and Karbala, but full control had not yet been handed over.

06.14.06. Car bombing. 10 people killed near Shi'ite Muslim shrine.

Further Najaf security matters can be seen [here](#).

- [AR RAMADI](#)

- [KARBALA](#)

There is no further detailed information about where the FPS members are being trained. There is,



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however, further information about Training Camps for Iraqis. For example, see the description of [Camp David](#), where Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), emergency response, and dignitary protection, similar to functions carried out by the U.S. Secret service, take place. Black masks are 'de rigour' (see photo). These camps will be detailed in my research on US bases in North/South/East/West Iraq.

## **APPENDIX ONE: PAUL BREMER'S ORDER NUMBER 27:**

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FACILITIES PROTECTION SERVICE

... The FPS is an organization of trained, armed, uniformed entities charged with providing security for ministry and governorate offices, government infrastructure, and fixed sites under the direction and control of governmental ministries and governorate administrations.

#### Section 2: Organization of the FPS

1) Governmental employees employed by the ministries or governorates are eligible to serve in the FPS. *The FPS may also consist of employees of private security firms* who are engaged to perform services for the ministries or governorates through contracts, provided such private security firms and employees are licensed and authorized by the Ministry of Interior as provided in Section 7 herein. Persons who have participated in Ba`ath Party activity within the leadership tiers described in CPA Order Number 1, De-Ba`athification of Iraqi Society (CPA/ORD/16 May 2003/01) may not serve in the FPS in any capacity except by the express grant of an exception by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

2) Ministers and heads of governorate administrations shall determine the need for FPS members at locations under their supervision. Each ministry or governorate administration is responsible for ensuring the FPS branch under its supervision is sufficient to protect key sites for which it is responsible, with the additional support of police or other forces in times of emergency.

3) Ministries and governorate administrations are responsible for the funding of FPS members assigned to their agency. Ministries and governorate administrations are responsible for the supervision and control of the FPS force assigned to their governmental agency, consistent with the

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standards and regulations established by the Ministry of Interior.

4) Governorates will establish Regional Operations Centers to coordinate the operations of FPS guards and to ensure their proper integration with police and other emergency services.

5) The Ministry of Interior will establish standards and training for the FPS including standards and training for private security firms performing FPS duties pursuant to contracts.

Pursuant to this Order, the Ministry of Interior will issue FPS Administrative Instructions defining the standards for dress, training, certification, and deportment. All members of the FPS whether contracted or employed directly by the governmental agency are required to comply with the Administrative Instructions issued by the Ministry of Interior.

6) FPS organizations may be known by different names including, for example "Electricity Police," "Diplomatic Protective Services," or "Oil Police" but each will have only the specific powers and authorities granted in this Order.

7) Members of the FPS may not participate in any manner in organizations or activities that advocate racial, gender or ethnic hatred or intolerance; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, or regional origin; or use, or advocate the use of, force or violence or other unlawful means to achieve internal political goals. Violations may result in the removal of the member from employment in the FPS or the withdrawal of the authorization for the member to perform FPS responsibilities as a member of a private security firm.

## Section 3: Authority of the FPS

1) Members of the FPS may, while performing their official duties, apprehend persons who (i) they witness committing or attempting to commit a criminal offense, (ii) have escaped after being lawfully arrested, or (iii) otherwise interfere with their lawful activities. Persons apprehended by the FPS must be turned over to the Iraqi police or Coalition Forces within twelve hours of apprehension or be released.

2) Members of the FPS may, while performing their official duties, conduct reasonable searches for weapons or other dangerous or prohibited items of persons entering or within the governmental

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property or offices they are securing, criminal suspects in their custody, or vehicles entering or within the governmental property or offices they are securing.

3) Members of the FPS may, while performing official duties, use force against persons or things as is reasonable and necessary under the circumstances. However, the use of force that may be likely to cause death or serious bodily injury is not permitted *unless the member reasonably believes that using such force is necessary* to: (i) protect himself or others from the imminent use of deadly force or force likely to cause serious bodily injury, (ii) prevent the escape of a person suspected of committing murder or assault resulting in serious bodily injury, or (iii) defend ministry or governorate offices, government or state-owned infrastructure, and fixed sites under the direction and control of governmental ministries and governorate administrations, to prevent their destruction or incapacitation.

## Section 4: Jurisdiction

1) Members of the FPS will be subject to Iraqi law at all times, and the courts of Iraq shall have jurisdiction over offenses alleged to have been committed by members of the FPS. The Administrator of the CPA may determine that offenses alleged to have been committed by members of the FPS while on duty may be submitted to the Central Criminal Court of Iraq in accordance with CPA Order Number 13 (Revised), The Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CPA/ORD/13 July 2003/13).

2) Members of the FPS shall *enjoy immunity from civil liability for acts or omissions arising within the scope of their duties* and in the conduct of authorized operations to the same degree as other governmental officials under the law of Iraq.

## Section 5: Weapons

The possession of weapons by members of the FPS is regulated by CPA Order Number 3, Weapons Control Order (CPA/ORD/23 May 2003/03).

CPA/ORD/4 September 2003 / 27

## Comments

The UK was criticized for starting the Basra turmoil in 10.05. Two SAS, part of a 24-member team,

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were discovered with explosives in the back of their car. They were dressed in Arab clothing. See [Basra Shadowlands](#).

“Majid al-Sari, an adviser to the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, describing the situation in Basra to the daily al-Zaman, said that on average one person (in Basra) was being assassinated every hour ... The governor of Basra, Mohammed Misbahal-Wa'ili, is trying to sack the city's police chief, claiming that the police have not carried out a single investigation into hundreds of recent assassinations,” according to Patrick Cockburn (17.05.06) in [The Independent](#)

On March, 06, a [security contractor in Tikrit](#) was arrested with a “Do It Yourself Car Bomb Kit” in his BMW. What was he going to blow up? Was this going to be a “suicide bombing?” How many ‘suicide bombings’ are actually caused by ‘security’ mercenaries, ordered to do so by the US/UK government?

Headline (05.06). “Baghdad: [American security contractors shot dead](#) an Iraqi ambulance crewman on Tuesday when they opened fire on his vehicle after a roadside bomb blasted their convoy.” Which security firm did this? According to the Geneva Convention, it is a war crime to kill ambulance crew members.

Hospitals, as well as ambulances, have been bombed (also against the Geneva Convention). The excuse given is that they ‘harbour terrorists.’

Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt [defended raiding al Tabul mosque](#) in 01.04 because, he said, “Iraqi citizens had identified it as a hub of insurgency operations.” One has to extend this excuse, and ask, ‘Are mosques also bombed by security forces because they ‘harbour terrorists?’ Such charges have been made.

The Khadamiya shrine, according to [Newsweek](#) (24.04.06) is guarded by the FPS. “Not one ministry contacted by Newsweek would accept overall responsibility for the FPS.” If Bremer created the FPS, then isn’t the coalition is responsible for the FPS?

No prosecution? Bremer’s Order 27 exempts security contractors as well as the Facilities Protection Service: “Members of the FPS shall *enjoy immunity from civil liability for acts or omissions arising within the scope of their duties.*”

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How many Security (sic) people are there in total? How many of these belong now, or have belonged in the past, to the Special Forces / SAS? How many of these have put Car Bomb Kits in the back of their car? How many have carried out assassinations? How many 'Kill For Fun' (like Aegis)?

Are any of these 'security' people responsible for the 190 academic and 225 health worker assassinations? See <http://www.brusselstribunal.org> for details of these assassinations.

Is the increase in number of security companies / FPS directly related to / *causing* the increase of violence in Iraq?

## **Related Sites:**

[Negroponte](#) supports FPS.

[Wolfowitz](#) supports FPS.

[Rumsfeld](#) (22.10.03) supports the FPS.

[President Bush](#), in a 07.09.03 speech in which he talks about an Iraq "free of assassins, and torturers, and secret police," supports the FPS.

The most important articles, with excellent links, are by Max Fuller:

[For Iraq, "The Salvador Option" Becomes Reality](#)

[Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq.](#)

Video with annotated scene selection and selected links: [Crying Wolf: Who is behind the death squads in Iraq?](#)

And, additionally, articles by William Bowles:

[Private Military Contractors – A \\$300 Billion Dollar Business](#) (18.05.03)

[Corporate Media Discovers Private Military Contractors](#) (29.03.04)

[The Curious Case of Tim Spicer. Tony Blair's Pet Bulldog](#) (18.08.04)

[The Privatization of War by Niloufer Bhagwat](#) (29.06.05)

## *Footnotes*

[1] Throughout this article you will notice a variation of given numbers, dependent on the source.



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However, these numbers are not unbearably far apart.

[2] The jumping off point for this research was E. Knickmeyer's *Washington Post* story [Iraq Nears Consolidation of Paramilitary Unit](#) (11.05.06) and [Iraq Begins to Rein In Paramilitary Force](#) (14.05.06)

[3] All italics in this article are the author's.

[4] Chalabi was one of the 1998 PNAC signatories to a letter to President Clinton, calling for regime change in Iraq.

[5] [The Embassy of the United States – Iraq](#) also has a website for Security Companies in Iraq, with websites, emails, details.

The url to Iraq: Security Companies and Training Camps is:

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/SecurityCompanies.htm>

<http://indexresearch.blogspot.com/2006/05/iraq-security-companies-and-training.html>

*Sarah Meyer is a researcher living in Sussex, UK  
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Dear friends,

underneath is a very interesting article of today's Washington Post about involvement of **Facilities Protection Service** (FPS) in Death Squads operations. The 17th of May, Sarah Meyer has written extensively about this FPS. The article was first published by the [BRussells Tribunal](#) and on Sarah's weblog: <http://indexresearch.blogspot.com/2006/05/iraq-security-companies-and-training.html> . It seems the FPS is Donald Rumsfeld's baby.

We have to watch carefully this development. Who is really behind the death squads? Seems that it is the US/UK military. This sheds a new light on the so-called Civil war in Iraq.

## **What is the Facilities Protection Service?**

The establishment of the 'Facilities Protection Service' was on 04.10.03, according to Paul Bremer's [Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 27](#) (see appendix one).

This document says that "*The FPS may also consist of employees of private security firms<sup>3</sup> who are engaged to perform services for the ministries or governorates through contracts, provided such private security firms and employees are licensed and authorized by the Ministry of Interior as provided in Section 7 herein.*"

According to [Global Security.org](#), "The Facilities Protection Service works for all ministries and governmental agencies, but its standards are set and enforced by the Ministry of the Interior. It can

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also be privately hired. The FPS is tasked with the fixed site protection of Ministerial, Governmental, or private buildings, facilities and personnel. The FPS includes Oil, Electricity Police and Port Security.

The majority of the FPS staff consists of former service members and former security guards. The FPS will now secure public facilities such as hospitals, banks, and power stations within their district. Once trained, the guards work with US military forces protecting critical sites like schools, hospitals and power plants.”

Further reading of Sarah Meyer's splendid article:

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/SecurityCompanies.htm>

Dirk Adriaensens.

Member *BRussells* Tribunal executive committee.

Coordinator SOS Iraq.

## **Official: Guard Force Is Behind Death Squads**

By Ellen Knickmeyer

Washington Post Foreign Service

Saturday, October 14, 2006; A18

BAGHDAD, Oct. 13 -- [Iraq's](#) interior minister on Friday rejected allegations that Iraq's police and military have played a major role in the death squads blamed for Baghdad's surging violence, saying that only a small number of all those caught in U.S. or Iraqi raids were members of the police or army.

Jawad al-Bolani, speaking to a small group of reporters in Baghdad, blamed the Facilities Protection Service, or FPS, a massive but unregulated government guard force whose numbers he put at about 150,000.

"Whenever we capture someone, we rarely find anyone is an employee of the government ministries," Bolani said. When they are, "they've turned out to be mostly from the FPS, with very few individual, actual incidents involving anyone from the Ministry of Interior or Ministry of Defense."

Since midsummer, Shiite-Sunni violence has escalated in Baghdad, with the Health Ministry last month reporting that the number of monthly killings here had roughly doubled since spring, to 2,600. Most of the victims had been shot and their bodies dumped in the streets, often handcuffed, blindfolded and showing signs of torture.

Many victims are Sunni Arabs. Sunnis and some U.S. officials charge that Shiite Muslim militias, sometimes operating inside the mainly Shiite police forces, are responsible for much of the killing. Victims of Baghdad's violence are often taken away by men in police uniforms, and sometimes in police vehicles, and later found dead.

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## **Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -**

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Bolani and his predecessor as interior minister, Bayan Jabr, both have minimized the possibility of any police involvement in the nightly killings. "We are experiencing a problem of impressions" regarding a police role in killings and militia infiltration of police, Bolani said Friday.

American generals were among the first to publicly express suspicion that the Facilities Protection Service was playing a key role in the growing sectarian killings. U.S. commanders themselves started the agency soon after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, intending it to be a force of a few thousand men who would guard buildings against looting.

The service today has grown to a size rivaling that of the U.S. force in Iraq, although control of the service's men is split among the various ministries they are nominally assigned to guard. Most wear uniforms similar or identical to those of the police.

Bolani also said bodyguard units assigned to unspecified officials were carrying out some of the killings.

Bolani, like Jabr, has repeatedly suggested that killings by gunmen in police uniforms were being carried out by impostors. On Friday, he repeated promises made since early this year that police would soon be issued uniforms and vehicles that would be difficult to duplicate.

Bolani also said police forces are trying to reform themselves, such as by retraining men and requiring loyalty oaths. He said major changes were needed at the command level of the Interior Ministry itself and that he had the backing of the government to make them.

Iraq's government, led by the Shiite religious parties that also lead the militias, has shown little willingness to confront them.

Interior Ministry officials were serious about purging "corrupt elements" and had fired about 3,000 employees for that reason, Bolani said. Aides said 1,228 of those employees had been subjected to administrative punishment, and Bolani said 10 to 20 percent of the 3,000 had been referred for possible prosecution. He declined to immediately give examples of infractions or name those punished.

Bolani, an independent allied to the coalition of governing Shiite religious parties, also said three of the country's biggest militias -- those of the country's two main Kurdish parties and that of a leading Shiite religious party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq -- were among those that had been lawfully integrated into the country's security forces.

He said that a fourth major militia, the Mahdi Army of Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, along with Sunni insurgent groups, were "outside the political body and structure."

"We do not approve of the existence of these militias," Bolani said of the Mahdi Army and Sunni insurgents.

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## **B- Other Resources.**



### **Census: 100,000 contractors in Iraq**

**Number is 10 times that in first Gulf War, far more than previous estimate**

By Renae Merle

**The Washington Post**

Dec. 5, 2006

There are about 100,000 government contractors operating in Iraq, not counting subcontractors, a total that is approaching the size of the U.S. military force there, according to the military's first census of the growing population of civilians operating in the battlefield.

The survey finding, which includes Americans, Iraqis and third-party nationals hired by companies operating under U.S. government contracts, is significantly higher and wider in scope than the Pentagon's only previous estimate, which said there were 25,000 security contractors in the country.

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It is also 10 times the estimated number of contractors that deployed during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, reflecting the Pentagon's growing post-Cold War reliance on contractors for such jobs as providing security, interrogating prisoners, cooking meals, fixing equipment and constructing bases that were once reserved for soldiers.

Official numbers are difficult to find, said Deborah D. Avant, author of the 2005 book "The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security," but an estimated 9,200 contractors deployed during the Gulf War, a far shorter conflict without reconstruction projects. "This is the largest deployment of U.S. contractors in a military operation," said Avant, an associate professor at George Washington University.

In addition to about 140,000 U.S. troops, Iraq is now filled with a hodgepodge of contractors. DynCorp International has about 1,500 employees in Iraq, including about 700 helping train the police force. Blackwater USA has more than 1,000 employees in the country, most of them providing private security. Kellogg, Brown and Root, one of the largest contractors in Iraq, said it does not delineate its workforce by country but that it has more than 50,000 employees and subcontractors working in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait. MPRI, a unit of L-3 Communications, has about 500 employees working on 12 contracts, including providing mentors to the Iraqi Defense Ministry for strategic planning, budgeting and establishing its public affairs office. Titan, another L-3 division, has 6,500 linguists in the country.

The Pentagon's latest estimate "further demonstrates the need for Congress to finally engage in responsible, serious and aggressive oversight over the questionable and growing U.S. practice of private military contracting," said Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky (D-Ill.), who has been critical of the military's reliance on contractors.

## **Labor Department: About 650 have died**

About 650 contractors have died in Iraq since 2003, according to Labor Department statistics.

Central Command, which conducted the census, said a breakdown by nationality or job description was not immediately available because the project is still in its early stages. "This is the first time we have initiated a census of this robustness," Lt. Col. Julie Wittkoff, chief of the contracting branch at Central Command, said in an interview. Those figures do not include subcontractors, which could substantially grow the figure.

In June, government agencies were asked to provide data about contractors working for them in Iraq, including their nationality, a description of their work and locations where they were working. The information was provided by more than a dozen entities within the Pentagon and a dozen outside agencies, including the departments of State and Interior, Wittkoff said. The count increased about 15 percent from about 87,000 since Central Command began keeping a tally this summer, she said, though the increase may reflect ongoing data collection efforts. The census will be updated quarterly, Wittkoff said.



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## **Need for coordination**

Three years into the war, the headcount represents one of the Pentagon's most concrete efforts so far toward addressing the complexities and questions raised by the large numbers of civilians who have flooded into Iraq to work. With few industry standards, the military and contractors have sometimes lacked coordination, resulting in friendly fire incidents, according to a Government Accountability Office report last year.

"It takes a great deal of vigilance on the part of the military commander to ensure contractor compliance," said William L. Nash, a retired Army general and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "If you're trying to win hearts and minds and the contractor is driving 90 miles per hour through the streets and running over kids, that's not helping the image of the American army. The Iraqis aren't going to distinguish between a contractor and a soldier."

The census gives military commanders insight into the contractors operating in their region and the type of work they are doing, Wittkoff said. "It helps the combatant commanders have a better idea of . . . food and medical requirements they may need to provide to support the contractors," she said.

*Staff writer Griff Witte contributed to this report.* © 2006 The Washington Post Company

URL: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16047618/from/RSS/>

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/SecurityCompanies.htm>

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## **CIA death squads operating in Iraq**

**By Henry Michaels**

**8 April 2003**

The longer the Iraq war continues, the more Orwellian the language and the more sinister the methods adopted by the Bush administration and its allies. While President Bush and his officials depict Iraqis resisting the US-led invasion as "terrorists" and "death squads," CIA and Special Forces assassination squads are at work in Iraq, seeking to eliminate Iraqi leaders and other opponents of the US occupation of the country.

In the language of the White House and Pentagon, the thousands of Iraqi citizens in plainclothes—whether ordinary people, militia members or soldiers—who are resisting the invading forces in any way they can, are "war criminals." But the undercover US hit squads and other military-intelligence operatives roaming throughout Iraq in civilian clothes, terrorizing the population, are "heroes" in the cause of democracy and liberation.

While the Western media has largely blacked coverage of the US killers, one report in the Canadian *National Post* last week briefly mentioned the presence of special operations troops in civilian clothes

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as US Marines reached southern Baghdad. "Special forces were also out in large numbers in their distinctive fighting gear, which includes baseball caps, jeans, expensive sunglasses and specially adapted rifles," it noted.

There is a fundamental difference between the Iraqis who are defending their country and the US, British and Australian special operations units that are operating secretly, often in civilian disguise. Whereas the Iraqis are legitimately targeting Allied military personnel for ambushes, sniper fire and surprise bombings, the US-led squads are illegally hunting down civilians and government figures, sabotaging civilian facilities and arming selected local thugs to execute reprisals, flouting the international laws of war.

In the face of widespread popular resistance, these "unconventional warfare" operations are escalating, but they have been under way for many months. Well before Bush formally declared war on Iraq, US intelligence and military operatives were in Baghdad and throughout Iraq, aiming to locate and kill Saddam Hussein and other leaders. British and Australian Special Air Services (SAS) commandos were also active in the west and north of Iraq.

Citing intelligence sources, United Press International reported last week that the unsuccessful bombing operation to murder Saddam Hussein and his family and cabinet ministers on March 20 was preceded by intensive infiltration of CIA agents into Baghdad, the recruitment of Iraqi spies and the insertion of special operations troops into the capital.

According to UPI: "The March 20 operation involved more than 300 Special Forces, who moved into the country to join Delta troops and CIA paramilitaries, these sources said. One former long-time CIA operative said it was the Delta men, already in the country, who made the breakthrough for the US attack by infiltrating a key Baghdad telecommunications center and tapping a fiber optic telephone line.

"It was this that enabled the US clandestine team to locate Saddam and top leaders at Dora Farm, an Iraqi command and control complex and a legitimate war target, US officials said. Iraqi assets [spies], recruited by the agency, played a key part in the operation by providing 'priceless' information, relating to the phone system and details of Dora Farm, according to one former senior CIA official."

Having failed to "decapitate" the Iraqi government, such operations nevertheless remain one of Washington's top objectives. UPI reported: "CIA paramilitary teams, working with Delta Forces, still are inside Iraq, attempting to kill 30 top Iraqi leaders, including Saddam's other son, Uday, who commands the Iraqi Fedayeen, several US sources said. One administration official confirmed that US intelligence has the names, addresses and cell phone numbers of the 30 targets."

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Last Wednesday, acting on CIA information, a helicopter formation raided the Tharthar Palace, one of many residences allegedly used by Hussein and his sons, about 55 miles outside Baghdad.

Reporting on the “unseen” war in Iraq conducted by teams of CIA paramilitary and Special Forces operatives, the *Christian Science Monitor* quoted retired US Brigadier General John Reppert: “That is certainly the strategy now. And decapitation as a strategy works well beyond Saddam Hussein. It takes in his Revolutionary Council, leaders of his Baath Party, and below that, the four divisions of the Republican Guard plus the one Special Republican Guard unit.”

As these comments suggest, the special forces’ targets extend well beyond the Iraqi leadership. An on-the-spot-report from the city of Najaf published by the London-based *Financial Times* on April 5 provided a glimpse of the methods being employed in urban areas:

“The people of Najaf were introduced to their new government this week—a virtually unknown opposition group that claims to represent all Iraqis, cruises around the streets on US special forces vehicles, and is doing its best to present itself as part of a spontaneous ‘intifada’ against the Iraqi regime.”

Members of the group, called the Iraqi Coalition for National Unity (ICNU), “rarely stray from their US vehicles and special forces minders, grinning broadly for cameras from atop Humvees and raising their weapons in victory.... Co-ordination between ICNU and US ground forces in Najaf is tight, handled by special forces and CIA operatives.”

Nevertheless, the newspaper reported, the ICNU and its sponsors had failed to subdue the city, which hosts Shia Muslim holy sites. US troops patrolled during the day but withdrew at night, looting by hungry crowds was commonplace, and Shia religious leaders had refused to negotiate directly with US commanders, regarding them as an occupying force.

Elsewhere, including in the northern Kurdish areas, allied operatives are financing and arming tribal leaders, ethnic militias and local thugs, employing similar techniques to Afghanistan, where the CIA paid millions of dollars to regional warlords to fight against the Taliban regime. “I’m sure we’ve got guys with 80-pound rucksacks full of \$100 bills,” a former CIA station chief told the *Los Angeles Times*. “I’m sure we’re buying up some folks.”

Well before the war began, huge payments were channeled through networks of Iraqi agents recruited by the CIA and MI6, the British spy agency, to encourage uprisings against the Iraqi government. Up until now, however, these efforts have not borne fruit.

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## **Revealing cover-up at Pentagon briefing**

At an April 4 Pentagon media briefing, Army Major General Stanley McChrystal boasted that the contribution of special forces to the US operation had been “unprecedented.” Another senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said more than 10,000 special operations troops were involved in Iraq—the largest number for any US war since Vietnam.

There was a revealing exchange when a journalist asked the following question:

“Can you help us to understand one of the points—one of the arguments made by the administration on the ‘war criminals’ tag? Obviously, the administration has seen a number of irregular practices on the part of the Iraqis. One of them in particular puzzles me. When they take off their uniforms and fight in civilian clothes, why is that a war crime? Because US Special Forces do it and did it in Afghanistan—they didn’t behave in the same way, but why is the act of fighting without a uniform considered a war crime?”

McChrystal could not answer the question, becoming flummoxed as he tried unsuccessfully to draw a distinction between the tasks being performed by US personnel and Iraqi civilians. Victoria Clarke, spokeswoman for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, quickly stepped in to shut down the line of questioning.

“I’d actually like to take that question, because I don’t think you’re right about that,” she told the journalist. After a pause, Clarke said the Pentagon would respond later.

Another journalist asked if US forces were under any “special instructions” if they found Saddam Hussein or other senior Iraqi leader. Clarke immediately told McChrystal, “You don’t need to answer his question.”

After the press conference, officials said US special forces in Iraq “are wearing uniforms,” but declined to say if they were full uniforms or modified. Clarke’s abrupt intervention at the briefing suggests acute awareness in the administration that its officials and military commanders are the ones committing war crimes in Iraq.

The methods being used in Iraq will soon become as notorious as the CIA-backed coup in Iran in 1953 to install the cruel regime of the Shah, the “Operation Phoenix” killing program in Vietnam, and the 1973 overthrow of the Allende government in Chile, to name but a few of US imperialism’s crimes.

[http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/apr2003/cia-a08\\_prn.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/apr2003/cia-a08_prn.shtml)

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## **Rule of the death squads**

Iraq one year on - The shooting isn't just between occupying forces and guerrillas. The Iraqi Governing Council is "killing people one by one"

## **Stephen Grey**

**Monday 15th March 2004 "New Statesman"** - On the morning of his death, 19 January 2004, Professor Abdullatif Ali al-Mayah left his house as he always did at 8am. Placing his Samsonite briefcase on the back seat, he took the wheel of his metallic-blue 4x4, a Hyundai Galloper II. Another professor, Sarhan Abbas, who lived in the same compound of university-owned bungalows, took the passenger seat.

Al-Mayah drove down the main road, past shops and an empty plot of rubbish-strewn land. Just before a side road leading to a motorway, the road swings to the left and he slowed down. As people do in Baghdad, he continued driving against the oncoming traffic. Staff at El Banouk (The Bank), an outdoor shish kebab restaurant, were just getting ready to open.

About a hundred metres farther on, al-Mayah was forced by a large pothole to slow again, and his attackers sprung their trap. Mohamed, who works in the restaurant, told me later: "I heard all the shots and looked out on to the road. I thought it was looters who wanted to steal his car."

Al-Mayah, 54, was a prominent human rights campaigner and an opponent of the American and British occupation of Iraq. Just 12 hours earlier, on al-Jazeera TV, he had denounced the corruption of the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) and demanded universal elections as soon as possible. "I can endure any Iraqi government," he said, "but the feeling of being under occupation is



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terrible for me."

His friend Abbas recalled how he died. "Suddenly, a group of seven or eight men with their faces concealed appeared from a side road. Thinking they were carjackers, he was ready to hand them the keys. Then the attackers shot al-Mayah more than 20 times." Like other university staff, al-Mayah had been issued with a revolver for his protection, but he had little idea what to do with it. As a senior director, he was also given a bodyguard, who was in the car that morning. But Mohamed Sahib, 25, said he was waiting for an American licence to carry a gun and could do little to protect his boss.

Sahib remembered how the attackers, all in red keffiyehs (headscarves), with only their dark eyes visible through slits, approached from two sides. "They shouted for the car to stop . . . I remember one person fired directly at al-Mayah inside the car and I think another group also fired from the other side. He was shot three times in his head just as he was opening the car door to get out. He fell dead on to the ground."

There are many such deaths in Baghdad every day: al-Mayah, director of the Baghdad Centre for Human Rights, was the fourth Mustansiriyah University professor to be slain. His murder has never been properly investigated by detectives; it was left to amateurs such as myself to interview witnesses and sift through the dirt to find the shell casings of his assassins' bullets.

Al-Mayah was not a victim of the struggle between "occupying forces" and the "resistance". He was crushed as a liberal force that stood between those positions. Not everyone gets this point. A New York Times article about the same murder implied that anti-US forces were responsible. It quoted the coalition's military spokesman, Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, saying: "By silencing urban professionals, the guerrillas are waging war on Iraq's fledgling institutions and on progress itself. This works against everything we're trying to do here." But typically, even for a "liberal" American paper, the Times underplayed al-Mayah's determined opposition to US occupation. It seems unlikely he was a target for the "resistance", even though he supported calls for the elections that many Sunni guerrillas fear.

So who was responsible for his murder? A senior commander at the headquarters of the new American-installed Iraqi police told me: "Dr Abdullatif was becoming more and more popular because he spoke for people on the street here. He made some politicians quite jealous." But, he said, al-Mayah's killing was just like the seven other political assassinations carried out in the previous four weeks in the same small district. All remained unsolved. Then the leather-clad commander, tightly gripping his new Motorola police radio, looked at me sternly and demanded that his name never be printed.

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He had a strong suspicion about who was behind most of these killings, he said. "You can look no further than the Governing Council. There are political parties in this city who are systematically killing people. They are politicians that are backed by the Americans and who arrived to Iraq from exile with a list of their enemies. I've seen these lists. They are killing people one by one."

Born in Basra, al-Mayah had spent most of his life as a poorly paid academic, teaching the politics of the Arab region. He became director of the university's Arab Homeland Studies Centre. "He had no money at all," said one of his brothers. "He had no house that he owned. In his martyrdom, he leaves behind just a pen and his writing." Al-Mayah had once been a member of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party, though at a very junior level. According to Dr Talal Nathan al-Zuhary, director of the university library, al-Mayah quit the party in 1991 after seeing the reality of Saddam's regime. He was jailed in 1996 when he called for elections. He managed to escape the secret police because one of his former students was an interrogator.

"He believed in the original Ba'ath ideal of Arab unity," said al-Zuhary, "but he saw how hypocritical the regimes were, and so he wanted no connection to the party any more. After the recent American invasion, he was against both occupation and against dictatorship. He used to tell me that one day he would be bumped off by the Mossad or the CIA, although I never took that very seriously. More recently, he was more worried about the looters who came after the regime fell and stole so much. He was always telling me to watch out for my safety."

Others in Baghdad confirmed the police commander's story. In what might be called "death by Google", the names of some quite moderate figures, only tenuously connected with the old regime, appear on internet lists as Saddam supporters. Preventing the purges of such people is not a priority for US and British forces. As one British officer told me: "There is a kind of de-Ba'athification going on, a violent one, but it will come to its own natural conclusion."

Al-Mayah's brother said the professor had received many e-mails advising him to be less outspoken in his criticism of the IGC. At least one came from an IGC member. "He never told me the name of this man, only that he was a dual national, someone who had come back from exile after the Americans invaded. He told me the man never actually threatened him. It was a sort of warning that it would be safer if he left the country. He was determined not to be swayed."

The list of murder suspects is long. Some of the exiles who have returned from London, Washington or Tehran are armed to the teeth. Among the abandoned villas of former Mukhabarat (intelligence service) generals, which are now occupied by the "new" politicians, I've met some who clear heaps of revolvers from their breakfast tables as though they were used coffee mugs.

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Many are quite shameless in their threats. Last December, in a sermon in the southern city of Najaf, Sadr al-Din al-Kobanchi, a senior Shia cleric and member of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which holds power on the IGC, was categoric: "The Ba'ath Party is against God and the Prophet." He told former regime loyalists: "Leave your jobs at the ministries and institutions and companies - or all the workers will kill you by their own hands."

The militias that kill so professionally in Baghdad also flourish in southern Iraq in areas, mainly Shia, which US and British troops regard as safer. Under the noses of the occupying forces, the militias enforce their own kind of law and order. In Basra, they helped to re-establish order when the Ba'athists fled. Now, with a strong influence over the new, British-trained police forces, they continue to eliminate not only political opponents but also those, such as alcohol sellers, who violate what they regard as Islamic law.

Wahed, whose 25-year-old brother, Mohamed, a junior Ba'athist, has disappeared into the hands of the political militias, said the new world of Iraq is a confusing and unjust one. "In the old days, you knew who was running this country. I would have gone to the Ba'ath Party to argue for the release of my brother. Now there are so many different forces, parties and police forces at work; they are all armed and powerful, and how should I know which of them has kidnapped my brother?"

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<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article5841.htm>

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## **Iraq's Democracy: The El Salvador Model**

**By Ghali Hassan**

**12/10/04 "ICH"** -- The Bush administration is preparing Iraq for "democratic elections". The aims are to consolidate the Occupation, "legitimise" those who serve US interests in Iraq, and hence prolong the suffering of the Iraqi people. The Central American nation of El Salvador has been chosen as the best model of 'democracy' to be implemented in Iraq.

It seems that the Bush administration is in a dilemma trying to find a Vichy regime to install in Iraq. In 1940, in Nazi-occupied France, German leaders were able to create a regime that was acceptable to many French. By contrast, in Iraq no one seems to be able to fulfil the criteria of France's General Philippe Pétain, and provides an Arab "façade" for the Bush administration.

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It was assumed that the best regime that could form the façade in Baghdad is the current US-appointed Iraqi Interim Government (IIG). However, this is not the case. The Allawi's "government" is far less popular among Iraqis than the regime of Saddam, and Allawi is the most hated individual in Iraq today. Iraqis see all members of the IIG as collaborator with the Occupation against Iraq interests. Most of them spent decades outside the country and hold no loyalty to Iraq.

The core of the IIG are: The Allawi's group of exiles (INA), the Chalebi's group of exiles (INC), the Peshmergas of the two Kurdish parties, and the Badir Brigade (Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, SCIRI), mostly of Iranian origins. Furthermore, each group has its own mafia-style death squad, and links to the CIA or the Israeli Mossad agents. As I wrote earlier, since they entered Iraq with the US invasion, the four groups have taken the law into their own hands and have killed many innocent Iraqis, including hundreds of Iraqi scientists and community leaders. The Occupation authority has never investigated their crimes. They entered Iraq on the backs of US tanks. Their relations with the Occupation are fully symbiotic relations. They co-exist in a mutually beneficial relationship with their US master. They are participating in the upcoming elections, because they want the Occupation to continue.

In 2003, UN own findings have shown that Iraqis accept free elections under UN control, and that US troops be replaced by UN troops from neutral nations. The US and its "coalition of the willing" were able to hold elections six months after the invasion, but they refused because they were not interested in a democratic outcome that could end of the Occupation. UN officials and Iraqi officials argued at that time that elections were feasible and possible within six months, but they were intentionally dismissed by the US. The Bush administration "stifled, delayed, manipulated and otherwise thwarted the democratic aspiration of the Iraqi people".

It is not possible to hold free elections under martial law and illegal foreign Occupation. Most Iraqis view the upcoming elections as a US fig leaf to consolidate the Occupation. The process is very untransparent. According to Dahr Jamail of The New Standard, Iraqis are saying: "The Americans won't allow a legitimate election in their own country, so why would they have one here"! As it stands, Iraqis do not put great hope on these fake elections, because the outcome of these elections is a forgone conclusion. The Bush administration is relying on sectarian forces in order to create a dependent Iraq and role it indefinitely.

The upcoming elections are not for the sake of establishing democracy in Iraq; they are being prepared to add another fake legitimacy to the US Occupation and marginalize the Iraqi people. In fact, elections are very minor thing of democracy. Democracy is a collection of institutions that govern an entire nation, and the purpose of elections is to evaluate the democratic processes. Elections were the last thing the Bush administration needed.

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The best solution is for the US to completely withdraw its armed forces from Iraq. All Iraqis are in favour of elections as long as the Occupation forces withdraw from Iraq. According to recent polls, 98 percent of Iraqis want the Americans to leave their country. Meanwhile a poll conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) has reveals that more than two-thirds of both the US public and US leaders agree than the US should withdraw from Iraq if a clear majority of Iraqis want it to do so.

The US Occupation of Iraq is the most unpopular occupation in history. It is a violent occupation where innocent women, children and unarmed men have been massacred. More than 100,000 innocent Iraqis have died; thousands are imprisoned and tortured; the lives of millions more have been wrecked. The conditions of child health in US-occupied Iraq are now even worse than during the genocidal years of sanction. Despite that, those who are responsible for this wanton destruction of human lives have not been indicted for war crimes or been held accountable by prosecutors. A devastated nation and broken defenceless people are forced to prepare for an old-fashion colonial dictatorship, which has its echoes in other foreign countries under the tutelage of the US administration.

US history of preparing elections in foreign countries is full of bad examples. In 1984, the US was involved in the El Salvador elections that brought an assassin (Roberto d'Aubuisson) and a friend of the US to power. Roberto d'Aubuisson, leader for life of the ARENA party, that ruled El Salvador since, was named by the UN Truth Commission report to be implicated in the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero. The Archbishop of El Salvador was assassinated in March 1980, while giving a mass in a church and just before sainthood.

The 1984 elections in El Salvador "were little more than a farce designed to give democratic respectability to a regime that was perpetuating some of the worst human rights abuses in the hemisphere", wrote Mark Engler of Foreign Policy in Focus. Those who seized power in El Salvador with the help of uncle Reagan have murdered more than 75,000 people. In 1993, the UN Truth Commission report found that the army and its death squads committed 90% of the atrocities in the conflict. Among their heinous crimes were the 1989 murder of six Jesuit priests, and the slaughter of hundreds of villagers. The rebels, led by the FMNL party were responsible for 5 %, and the other 5% remained unknown, said the report.

In the March 2004 elections, the US used fear and threat against the Salvadoran people to promote its preferred candidates, members of the ARENA party. The Salvadorian people voted with a gun pointed to their head. The big loser of the elections are the majority of people of El Salvador, wrote Joe DeRaymond of Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad who monitored the elections.



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During the 2004 US elections, Vice President Dick Cheney praised El Salvador dictatorship as a model for 'democracy-building' in Iraq. One wonders why the US is interested in the El Salvador's model of democracy and not a Western model of democracy for Iraq? Now, as it happens, this is something I know quite a bit about. I, for some reasons have experience living in good democratic nations. I spent some years in Switzerland, Austria, New Zealand, Scandinavia and Australia. All these major democratic countries have fairly decent models of democratic elections. Indeed, the Swiss model of democracy is the best I have experienced and is very suitable for a heterogeneous country like Iraq, which has no similarity to El Salvador.

In 1993, the American analyst, Noam Chomsky commented on the US approach to 'democracy-building' in El Salvador. Chomsky wrote, "[b]y and large, our approach in El Salvador has been successful. The popular organizations have been decimated, just as Archbishop Romero predicted. Tens of thousands have been slaughtered and more than a million have become refugees. This is one of the most sordid episodes in US history-and it's got a lot of competition". It is this successful approach that the US administration is using to promote America's 'democracy-building' posture in Iraq. The US is more interested in empire-building rather than 'democracy-building'.

It should be borne in mind that, the US interference in election processes around the world is illegal and hypocritical. "The terror bombing of homes, hospitals and religious buildings by hundreds of airplanes and helicopter gunships is described by the media as 'securing the city [of Fallujah] for free elections'", wrote James Petras. The US message for Iraqis is; vote for the Occupation or you will die. Can you imagine Iran is preparing for a "democratic elections" of a puppet regime in Iraq with a massive terror campaign against the civilian population?

Instead of finding an exit strategy to end the violence in Iraq, the Bush administration is increasing it; using the pretext of democracy. An exit strategy to end the US Occupation of Iraq is not impossible. The UN General Assembly, which is less influence by the US and Britain, is the most preferable body to take over the Iraqi affairs and helps the Iraqi people achieve sovereignty and freedom. The UN has an obligation to condemn an act of aggression an illegal occupation of a sovereign nation.

There is no Vichy near Baghdad; there is Fallujah. The US-sponsored undemocratic elections in Iraq are against the long-term interests of the Iraqi people. The upcoming elections will not help achieve democracy and sovereignty for Iraq. The best solution for Iraq is the end of US Occupation and the true liberation of the Iraqi people. This will allow the Iraqi people to gain their freedom and organise their country for free and fair elections.

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<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article7441.htm>

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## **The Salvador Option**

By Michael Hirsh and John Barry

Newsweek

Saturday 08 January 2005

### ***The Pentagon may put Special-Forces-led assassination or kidnapping teams in Iraq.***

What to do about the deepening quagmire of Iraq? The Pentagon's latest approach is being called "the Salvador option"-and the fact that it is being discussed at all is a measure of just how worried Donald Rumsfeld really is. "What everyone agrees is that we can't just go on as we are," one senior military officer told Newsweek. "We have to find a way to take the offensive against the insurgents. Right now, we are playing defense. And we are losing." Last November's operation in Fallujah, most analysts agree, succeeded less in breaking "the back" of the insurgency-as Marine Gen. John Sattler optimistically declared at the time-than in spreading it out.

Now, Newsweek has learned, the Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success-despite the deaths of innocent civilians and the subsequent Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal. (Among the current administration officials who dealt with Central America back then is John Negroponte, who is today the U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Under Reagan, he was ambassador to Honduras.)

Following that model, one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions. It remains unclear, however, whether this would be a policy of assassination or so-called "snatch" operations, in which the targets are sent to secret facilities for interrogation. The current thinking is that while U.S. Special Forces would lead operations in, say, Syria, activities inside Iraq itself would be carried out by Iraqi paramilitaries, officials tell Newsweek.

Also being debated is which agency within the U.S. government-the Defense department or CIA-would take responsibility for such an operation. Rumsfeld's Pentagon has aggressively sought to build up its

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own intelligence-gathering and clandestine capability with an operation run by Defense Undersecretary Stephen Cambone. But since the Abu Ghraib interrogations scandal, some military officials are ultra-wary of any operations that could run afoul of the ethics codified in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. That, they argue, is the reason why such covert operations have always been run by the CIA and authorized by a special presidential finding. (In "covert" activity, U.S. personnel operate under cover and the U.S. government will not confirm that it instigated or ordered them into action if they are captured or killed.)

Meanwhile, intensive discussions are taking place inside the Senate Intelligence Committee over the Defense department's efforts to expand the involvement of U.S. Special Forces personnel in intelligence-gathering missions. Historically, Special Forces' intelligence gathering has been limited to objectives directly related to upcoming military operations-"preparation of the battlefield," in military lingo. But, according to intelligence and defense officials, some Pentagon civilians for years have sought to expand the use of Special Forces for other intelligence missions.

Pentagon civilians and some Special Forces personnel believe CIA civilian managers have traditionally been too conservative in planning and executing the kind of undercover missions that Special Forces soldiers believe they can effectively conduct. CIA traditionalists are believed to be adamantly opposed to ceding any authority to the Pentagon. Until now, Pentagon proposals for a capability to send soldiers out on intelligence missions without direct CIA approval or participation have been shot down. But counter-terrorist strike squads, even operating covertly, could be deemed to fall within the Defense department's orbit.

The interim government of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi is said to be among the most forthright proponents of the Salvador option. Maj. Gen. Muhammad Abdallah al-Shahwani, director of Iraq's National Intelligence Service, may have been laying the groundwork for the idea with a series of interviews during the past ten days. Shahwani told the London-based Arabic daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat that the insurgent leadership-he named three former senior figures in the Saddam regime, including Saddam Hussein's half-brother-were essentially safe across the border in a Syrian sanctuary. "We are certain that they are in Syria and move easily between Syrian and Iraqi territories," he said, adding that efforts to extradite them "have not borne fruit so far."

Shahwani also said that the U.S. occupation has failed to crack the problem of broad support for the insurgency. The insurgents, he said, "are mostly in the Sunni areas where the population there, almost 200,000, is sympathetic to them." He said most Iraqi people do not actively support the insurgents or provide them with material or logistical help, but at the same time they won't turn them in. One military source involved in the Pentagon debate agrees that this is the crux of the problem, and



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he suggests that new offensive operations are needed that would create a fear of aiding the insurgency. "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving to the terrorists," he said. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

Pentagon sources emphasize there has been no decision yet to launch the Salvador option. Last week, Rumsfeld decided to send a retired four-star general, Gary Luck, to Iraq on an open-ended mission to review the entire military strategy there. But with the U.S. Army strained to the breaking point, military strategists note that a dramatic new approach might be needed-perhaps one as potentially explosive as the Salvador option.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6802629/site/newsweek/>

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## **"Riding with the Bad Boys"**

The rise of Iraqi death squads

**By Mike Whitney**

**11/30/05 "ICH"** - --- The [New York Times confirmed today](#) that the "Iraqi (security) forces are carrying out executions in predominantly Sunnis neighborhoods." Hundreds of men have been taken from taken from their homes by men in Iraqi uniforms and either "found dead in ditches or fields, with bullet holes to their temples, acid burns to their skin, and holes in their bodies apparently made by electrical drills. Many have simply vanished". (Dexter Filkins, *"Sunnis accuse Iraqi Military of Kidnappings and Slayings"* NY Times)

The Times merely reiterates what has been echoing through internet for some time now, that the Iraqi Interior Ministry is using lethal force to undercut the Sunni-led resistance and terrorize the public. The plan was first uncovered in [an article by Seymour Hersh](#) in January 2005. Hersh reported that the Pentagon was intending to trigger "The Salvador Option"; a strategy which involves the training of "death squads" to execute a bloody secret war against "alleged" insurgents.

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"Do you remember the right-wing execution squads in El Salvador?" one official asked Hersh. "We founded them and we financed them. The objective now is to recruit locals in any area we want."

Then he added ominously, "We're going to be riding with the bad boys."

The authorization for the death squads comes straight from the Oval Office. [According to Chris Floyd](#), "Through a series of secret executive orders, George W. Bush has given Rumsfeld the authority to turn the entire world into a 'global free-fire zone'". (Chris Floyd, *Darkness Visible: The Pentagon plan to foment terrorism is now in Operation*)

Floyd's observations are consistent with what we already know of Rumsfeld's involvement in overseeing the development of the Iraqi security apparatus. Following the presidential elections in Iraq, Rumsfeld paid a surprise visit on the newly-appointed al-Jaafari to discourage any changes in the Interior Ministry where American agents were training Iraqi goons in the fine art of torture and assassination.

Commenting to BBC, Rumsfeld issued a clear "hands off" warning to al-Jaafari: "Its important that the new government be attentive to the competence of the people in the ministries and that they avoid unnecessary turbulence." He said it was important for the security forces to continue building their strength because US forces were not going to be there forever.

The genocidal attacks reported by the New York Times are the predictable upshot of a process that was initiated by the Pentagon to destroy the Iraqi resistance through violence alone. As yet, there has been no effort to engage in dialogue with members of the resistance. This suggests that the Bush administration still believes that the dilemma they face can be resolved without a political solution.

There can be no political solution without direct negotiations with the Iraqi resistance. The smoke-and-mirrors phantom that the Bush administration mistakes for democracy has nothing to do with the serious formation of a legitimate Iraqi government. Voting, in itself, does not signify democracy unless there is broad acceptance among the many factions in the society. The massive demonstration of daily violence indicates a clear rejection of the legitimacy of the state. This can only be decided by eliminating the factors that prop up the puppet regime (the occupation) and engaging in a political process free from outside coercion.

The death squads are in fact just one part of a three-pronged strategy to crush the resistance and establish Iraq as a corporate-colony of American energy giants. The other phase of the operation involves the systematic decimation of Sunni cities.



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In the last few months the US military has carried out numerous assaults on Sunni cities to break the resistance and destroy its ability to wage war. In consecutive operations, the occupation forces have followed the same ruthless pattern of wanton destruction and collective punishment they perfected in their siege of Falluja. [Ghali Hassan's shocking article, "Iraq: A Criminal Process" \(Global Research\)](#) is an invaluable resource for those who really want to grasp the breadth of the war crimes being perpetrated in Iraq.

Hassan says:

"Just before the U.S. forces attacked al Qaim last 29 August, a thriving town of 150,000 people in western Iraq, they cordoned it off, cut electricity, water and food supplies. Then they indiscriminately and disproportionately blanketed the town, from the ground and from the air, with artillery shells, cluster bombs and napalm bombs with the full knowledge that civilians, particularly women and children, would be killed.

When it was all over, the U.S. Marines entered the city to fight (with air cover) those who were still alive. Humanitarian aides and medical supplies were prevented from entering the town, in gross violations of international law and the Geneva Conventions. This cycle of criminal process to legitimize the colonization of Iraq is depicted by the Bush-Blair axis as the "political process" towards "democracy."

The slaughter and destruction in western Iraq are not simply isolated incidents that are kept from the media. They are, in fact, a pattern of willful devastation of city after city executed by the Defense Dept. to break the back of the resistance by decimating the civilian enclaves where they draw their support. The results have meant "scores of casualties due to 'indiscriminate bombing' by US forces. Paralleling the atrocities committed in other towns and cities, all of which savagely attacked and destroyed the entire population of Tal Afar are now 'ethnically cleansed' refugees". (G. Hassan)

The death squads and the intentional destruction of the Sunni heartland comprise the first two parts of the three-pronged strategy to defeat the Iraqi resistance. The final leg on the stool is the propaganda war that is being directed against the American people to conceal the details of the military's war crimes. The arrest or liquidation of independent journalists reporting from the front has allowed the Pentagon's "embedded" legions to shape a narrative of benign intervention in the name of fighting terrorism. According to the Washington Post not one of the more than one thousand prisoners captured in Tal Afar was a foreign fighter. This should put to rest the Pentagon's spurious claim that Sunni cities are "Al Qaida strongholds."

American media now functions as an annex of the War Department. The news is fashioned to meet the

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policy objectives of the state and its constituents. The war that appears on TV stations across America, where US soldiers are dutifully ushering a backwards Muslim nation towards democracy and free enterprise, bears no resemblance to the gruesome realities of the colonial war that is devastating Iraqi society.

The media's performance in Iraq has been the most successful part of the entire campaign. It continues to embellish, obfuscate or divert attention from the clear facts of America's criminal involvement.

The media has unfailingly provided the ever-shifting rationale for the ongoing occupation and continued to mobilize public support for the most unpopular war in American history. Its embedded propagandists have been more vital to the war-effort than laser-guided technology, cluster-bombs or detention centers.

The Bush administration's three-pronged strategy for Iraq precludes a political solution because it is designed as a model for future wars. The Washington warlords and their boardroom constituents have no intention of negotiating the terms of global rule; that is the exclusive duty of the White House mandarins.

Negotiation and diplomacy are signs of weakness. The administration will remain faithful to its right-wing mandate; concealing its real goals behind the smokescreen of withdrawal, while ruling according to its basic precepts of force and deception.

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## **Death squads found inside Iraqi government**

**By Matthew Schofield**

Knight Ridder Newspapers

**03/12/06 "Knight Ridder"** -- -- BAGHDAD - Senior Iraqi officials on Sunday confirmed for the first time that death squads composed of government employees had operated illegally from inside two government ministries.

"The death squads that we have captured are in the Defense and Interior ministries," Interior Minister Bayan Jabr said during a joint news conference with the minister of Defense. "There are people who have infiltrated the army and the interior."

Jabr said that investigations into death squads were ongoing in the Defense Ministry. He said the Interior Ministry had arrested 22 people, and subsequently released 18 as innocent after interrogation, detaining four for further questioning.

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"Now we have sent them (the four) to the court because it hasn't been proven that all four were involved," Jabr said. "Although I did not have clear signs (of their guilt) I sent them to the Justice Ministry so that the law could be carried out."

Although Jabr appeared to confirm the existence of death squads, the scale of the operation uncovered would appear to be far smaller than critics had alleged.

Sunni Muslims have long complained about Shiite death squads that arrived wearing official uniforms and rode in official-looking vehicles to haul away victims.

Knight Ridder first reported the accusation of death squads in February 2005, and in June documented cases in which victims were taken away allegedly by men wearing Interior Ministry commando uniforms were later found handcuffed and killed execution-style.

The government had long denied the existence of such death squads. Sunnis had accused the Badr Organization, a Shiite militia supported by Iran, of being behind the killings, inside or outside of government ministries. Jabr is a senior leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a leading Shiite political party, and has close ties to the Badr Organization.

The investigation that led to Sunday's confirmation of government death squads came after American forces stopped a group of men who were passing through a checkpoint in late January.

The men wore official uniforms and said they were preparing to kill a Sunni man in their custody.

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<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article12310.htm>

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## **Impunity**

"Successive imperialist powers have shown that the bottom line in combating the hopes and dreams of ordinary people is to resort to spreading terror through the application of extreme violence." Max Fuller; "For Iraq, the 'El Salvador Option' becomes Reality"

**By Mike Whitney**

**06/09/06 "Information Clearing House"** -- -- George Bush is right; Iraq is "the central battlefield in the global war on terror". Regrettably, it is United States that is the main sponsor and

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supporter of that terror in the form of American-trained death squads. Death squad activity in Iraq now accounts for more than 1,000 casualties per month. The Baghdad morgue has become a conveyor-belt for American-generated carnage.

Up to now, the US involvement in the killing has been effectively concealed by the mainstream media. Apart from infrequent reports on the internet, there is little information connecting the burgeoning death toll to America's counterinsurgency operations.

That changed on May 4, 2006 when Congressman Dennis Kucinich gave a speech on the floor of the House which linked the Bush administration to the death squad's in Iraq. Reading from a long list of newspaper articles he had compiled, Kucinich provided a detailed account of America's disturbing undercover war. Naturally, his speech was shunned by the major media and consigned to the memory hole. It outlines the extent of America's complicity in the ongoing slaughter and asks us to question whether any additional involvement can be morally justified.

Kucinich's speech was framed in the context of 2 letters which he delivered to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and President George Bush. His comments are entered below:

April 5, 2006

*Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:*

*I am writing to request a copy of all records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to advise, support and train Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams.*

*On January 8, 2005, Newsweek magazine first published a report that the Pentagon had a proposal to train elite Iraqi squads to quell the growing Sunni insurgency. The proposal has been called the "Salvador Option," which references the U.S. military assistance program, initiated under the Carter Administration and subsequently pursued by the Reagan Administration, that funded and supported "nationalist" paramilitary forces who hunted down and assassinated rebel leaders and their supporters in El Salvador. This program in El Salvador was highly controversial and received much public backlash in the U.S., as tens of thousands of innocent civilians were assassinated and "disappeared," including notable members of the Catholic Church, Archbishop Oscar Romero and the four American churchwomen. According to the Newsweek report, Pentagon conservatives wanted to resurrect the Salvadoran program in Iraq because they believed that despite the incredible cost in human lives and human rights, it was successful in eradicating guerrillas.*

*Mr. Secretary, at a news conference on January 11, 2005, you publicly stated that the idea of a Salvador option was "nonsense." Yet mounting evidence suggests that the U.S. has in fact funded and trained Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams and these teams are now operating with horrific success across Iraq.*

*We know that the Pentagon received funding for training Iraqi paramilitaries. About one year before the*

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*Newsweek report on the "Salvador Option," it was reported in the American Prospect magazine on January 1, 2004 that part of \$3 billion of the \$87 billion Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill to fund operations in Iraq, signed into law on November 6, 2003, was designated for the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. According to the Prospect article, experts predicted that creation of this paramilitary unit would "lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists." The article further described how the bulk of the \$3 billion program, disguised as an Air Force classified program, would be used to "support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded Iraqi security force." According to one of the article's sources, John Pike, an expert of classified military budgets at [www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org). "the big money would be for standing up an Iraqi secret police to liquidate the resistance."*

*We know that some of the Pentagon's Iraq experts were involved in the Reagan Administration's paramilitary program in El Salvador. Colonel James Steele, Counselor to the U.S. Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces, formerly led the U.S. Military Advisory Group in El Salvador from 1984-1986, where he developed special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. The role of these forces in El Salvador was to attack "insurgent" leadership, their supporters, sources of supply, and base camps. Currently Colonel Steele has been assigned to work with the new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, operating under Iraq's Interior Ministry. Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, was U.S. Ambassador to Iraq from June 2004 to April 2005. From 1981 to 1985, he was ambassador to Honduras where he played a key role in coordinating U.S. covert aid to the Contras, anti-Sandinista militias who targeted civilians in Nicaragua. Additionally, he oversaw the U.S. backing of a military death squad in Honduras, Battalion 3-16, which specialized in torture and assassination. The U.S. had similar programs of supporting paramilitary groups set up Nicaragua and Honduras as its program in El Salvador. In a Democracy Now interview on January 10, 2005, Allan Nairn, who broke the story about U.S. support of death squads in El Salvador, suspected that Ambassador Negroponte would most likely be involved in the economic side of U.S. support to death squads in Iraq.*

*We know that a wave of abductions and executions, in the style of the death squads of El Salvador, and with ties to an official government sponsor, and to the U.S., has hit Iraq. News reports over the past 10 months strongly suggest that the U.S. has trained and supported highly organized Iraqi commando brigades, and that some of those brigades have operated as death squads, abducting and assassinating thousands of Iraqis. Some news highlights: • May 1, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that the U.S. is providing technical and logistical support to the Maghawir (Fearless Warrior) brigades, the Interior Ministry's special commandos, according to Major General Rasheed Flayih Mohammed. Iraqi authorities plan to increase deployment of the 12,000-strong Maghawir (Fearless Warrior) brigades, which are composed of well-trained veterans who have worked closely with U.S. forces in Najaf, Fallujah and Mosul and include the Wolf, Scorpion, Tiger and Thunder brigades. • May 16-20, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times and New York Times reveal discovery of 46 bodies, all Iraqi men abducted and slain execution-style, in various locations: floating in the Tigris, dumped in ditches and garbage-strewn lots, and buried at a poultry farm. • June 15, 2005 -- Washington Post reports that U.S. forces had knowledge of secret and illegal abductions of hundreds of minority Arabs in Kirkuk. The abductions were by forces led by Kurdish political parties and backed by the U.S. military. • June 20, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that Saad Sultan, of Iraq Human Rights Ministry said that police and security forces attached to the Iraqi Interior Ministry, thousands of whom have been trained by American instructors, are responsible for*



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*abusing up to 60% of estimated 12,000 detainees in prison and military compounds. He says the units have used tactics reminiscent of Saddam's secret intelligence squads. • July 3, 2005 -- Reuters News reports that the government of Iraq publicly acknowledged that the new security forces were using torture. Article further says that accounts are common of people being seized by armed men in the uniforms of the police, army or special units like Baghdad's Wolf Brigade police commandos, and then disappearing without trace or being found dead. • July 28, 2005 -- Los Angeles Times reports that members of a California Army National Guard company, the Alpha Company, who were implicated in a detainee abuse scandal, trained and conducted joint operations with the Wolf Brigade, a commando unit criticized for human rights abuses. In an online Alpha Company newsletter, Captain Haviland wrote, "We have assigned 2nd Platoon to help them transition, and install some of our 'Killer Company' aggressive tactical spirit in them." The article further states that despite the Wolf Brigade's controversial reputation for human rights violations, it is regarded as the gold standard for Iraqi security forces by U.S. military officials. • August 31, 2005 -- BBC reports that on the night of August 24, a large force of the Volcano Brigade raided homes in Al-Hurriyah city in the Baghdad, kidnapping and then executing 76 citizens. The victims were all shot in the head after their hands and feet had been tied up. They suffered the harshest forms of torture, deformation and burning. • November 16, 2005 -- Reuters News reports the discovery of 173 malnourished men, some of whom were tortured, imprisoned in a secret jail run by Shi'ite militias tied to the Interior Ministry. • November 17, 2005 -- Newsday reports that in the past year, the U.S. military has helped build up Iraqi commandos under guidance from James Steele, a former Army Special Forces officer who led U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in El Salvador in the 1980s. The brigades built up over the past year include the Lion Brigade, Scorpion Brigade and Volcano Brigade. • February 15, 2006 -- Associated Press reports that the Interior Ministry has launched a probe into death squad allegations. • February 19, 2006 -- BBC reveals that morgues in Baghdad receive dozens of bodies picked up daily from rivers, sewage plants, waste burial sites, farms and desert areas. Most of the bodies are handcuffed and blindfolded civilians with a bullet or more in the forehead, indicating that they were executed. The handcuffs used on the victims are like those used by the Iraqi police. • February 26, 2006 -- The Independent reports that outgoing United Nations' human rights chief in Iraq, John Pace, revealed that hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death or summarily executed every month in Baghdad alone by the death squads working from the Ministry of Interior. He said that up to three-quarters of the corpses stacked in the Baghdad mortuary show evidence of gunshot wounds to the head or injuries caused by drill-bits or burning cigarettes. • March 9, 2006 -- Los Angeles Times reports that Iraqi police officers who worked at the Interior Ministry's illegal prison had received American training, and that U.S. trainers have also given extensive support to 27 brigades of heavily armed commandos accused of a series of abuses, including the death of 14 Sunni Arabs who were locked in an airtight van last summer. • March 10, 2006 -- Sidney Morning Herald reports that men wearing the uniforms of U.S.-trained security forces, which are controlled by the Interior Ministry, abducted 50 people in a daylight raid on a security agency. Masked men who are driving what appear to be new government-owned vehicles are carrying out many of the raids. • March 27, 2006 -- The Independent reports that while U.S. authorities have begun criticizing the Iraqi government over the "death squads," many of the paramilitary groups accused of the abuse, such as the Wolf Brigade, the Scorpion Brigade and the Special Police Commandos were set up with the help of the American military. Furthermore, the militiamen were provided with U.S. advisers some of whom were veterans of Latin American counter-insurgency which also had led to allegations of death squads at the time.*

*Mr. Secretary, in light of this evidence of U.S. support for and the existence of death squads in Iraq, what is the basis for your January 11, 2005 statement, that the idea of a Salvador option in Iraq is "nonsense"? I request a*

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*copy of all records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to advise, support and train Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams. I look forward to receiving your response.*

*Sincerely, Dennis J. Kucinich, Member of Congress*

Kucinich's speech gives us a much better idea of what is really going on in Iraq. He exposes the US as the driving force behind the paramilitary units that are currently torturing and killing vast numbers of Iraqi civilians. The entire operation has been set into motion by American intelligence agencies with the intention of inciting sectarian violence and thrusting the country towards partition.

The appearance of Colonel James Steele, as counselor for the Iraqi Security Forces, should remove any doubt about the real nature of America's involvement. Steele's "stock and trade" is the "spreading terror through the application of extreme violence"; Max Fuller's apt description of US counterinsurgency campaigns in Latin America. Steele was clearly enlisted to train others in the techniques of guerilla warfare and spread mayhem throughout the country.

Kucinich's claims are particularly illuminating in relation to the recent killing of terror-mastermind Abu Musab al Zarqawi. Zarqawi was the Pentagon's "psy-ops invention" who was created to rationalize the steady deterioration of Iraqi society. By connecting the Bush administration to the death squads the entire foundation for the war on terror begins to crumble. As Kucinich points out, the main proponent of terrorist activity in Iraq is the United States not Islamic extremists. American death squads are getting away with murder, and they are doing so with complete impunity.

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article13558.htm>

The American Advisors That Set Up The Interior Ministry



James Steele

Steven Casteel

## **The Salvador Option has been invoked in Iraq**

The American public is being prepared. If the attack on Iran does come, there will be no warning, no declaration of war, no truth.

By [John Pilger](#)

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**05/04/06 "ICH"** -- -- The lifts in the New York Hilton played CNN on a small screen you could not avoid watching. Iraq was top of the news; pronouncements about a "civil war" and "sectarian violence" were repeated incessantly. It was as if the US invasion had never happened and the killing of tens of thousands of civilians by the Americans was a surreal fiction. The Iraqis were mindless Arabs, haunted by religion, ethnic strife and the need to blow themselves up. Unctuous puppet politicians were paraded with no hint that their exercise yard was inside an American fortress.

And when you left the lift, this followed you to your room, to the hotel gym, the airport, the next airport and the next country. Such is the power of America's corporate propaganda, which, as Edward Said pointed out in [\*Culture and Imperialism\*](#), "penetrates electronically" with its equivalent of a party line.

The party line changed the other day. For almost three years it was that al-Qaeda was the ***driving force behind the "insurgency", led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi***, a bloodthirsty Jordanian who was clearly being groomed for the kind of infamy Saddam Hussein enjoys. It mattered not that al-Zarqawi had never been seen alive and that only a fraction of the "insurgents" followed al-Qaeda. For the Americans, Zarqawi's role was to distract attention from the thing that almost all Iraqis oppose: the brutal Anglo-American occupation of their country.

Now that al-Zarqawi has been replaced by "sectarian violence" and "civil war", the big news is the attacks by Sunnis on Shia mosques and bazaars. The real news, which is not reported in the CNN "mainstream", is that the Salvador Option has been invoked in Iraq. This is the campaign of terror by death squads armed and trained by the US, which attack Sunnis and Shias alike. The goal is the incitement of a real civil war and the break-up of Iraq, the original war aim of Bush's administration.

The ministry of the interior in Baghdad, which is run by the CIA, directs the principal death squads. Their members are not exclusively Shia, as the myth goes. The most brutal are the Sunni-led Special Police Commandos, headed by former senior officers in Saddam's Ba'ath Party. This unit was formed and trained by CIA "counter-insurgency" experts, including veterans of the CIA's terror operations in central America in the 1980s, notably El Salvador. In his new book, *Empire's Workshop* (Metropolitan Books), the American historian Greg Grandin describes the Salvador Option thus: "Once in office, [President] Reagan came down hard on central America, in effect letting his administration's most committed militarists set and execute policy. In El Salvador, they provided more than a million dollars a day to fund a lethal counter-insurgency campaign . . . All told, US allies in central America during Reagan's two terms killed over 300,000 people, tortured hundreds of thousands and drove millions into exile."

Although the Reagan administration spawned the current Bushites, or "neo-cons", the pattern was set earlier. In Vietnam, death squads trained, armed and directed by the CIA murdered up to 50,000 people in Operation Phoenix. In the mid-1960s in Indonesia CIA officers compiled "death lists" for General Suharto's killing spree during his seizure of power. After the 2003 invasion, it was only a matter of time before this venerable "policy" was applied in Iraq.

According to the investigative writer Max Fuller (National Review Online), the key CIA manager of the interior ministry death squads "cut his teeth in Vietnam before moving on to direct the US military mission in El

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Salvador". Professor Grandin names another central America veteran whose job now is to "train a ruthless counter-insurgent force made up of ex-Ba'athist thugs". Another, says Fuller, is well-known for his "production of death lists". A secret militia run by the Americans is the Facilities Protection Service, which has been responsible for bombings. "The British and US Special Forces," concludes Fuller, "in conjunction with the [US-created] intelligence services at the Iraqi defence ministry, are fabricating insurgent bombings of Shias."

On 16 March, Reuters reported the arrest of an American "security contractor" who was found with weapons and explosives in his car. Last year, two Britons disguised as Arabs were caught with a car full of weapons and explosives; British forces bulldozed the Basra prison to rescue them. The Boston Globe recently reported: "The FBI's counter-terrorism unit has launched a broad investigation of US-based theft rings after discovering that some of the vehicles used in deadly car bombings in Iraq, including attacks that killed US troops and Iraqi civilians, were probably stolen in the United States, according to senior government officials."

As I say, all this has been tried before - just as the preparation of the American public for an atrocious attack on Iran is similar to the WMD fabrications in Iraq. If that attack comes, there will be no warning, no declaration of war, no truth. Imprisoned in the Hilton lift, staring at CNN, my fellow passengers could be excused for not making sense of the Middle East, or Latin America, or anywhere. They are isolated. Nothing is explained. Congress is silent. The Democrats are moribund. And the freest media on earth insult the public every day. As Voltaire put it: "Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."

*This article first appeared in the New Statesman. For the latest in current and cultural affairs [subscribe](#) to the New Statesman print edition.*

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<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article12945.htm>

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## **Death Squads And Diplomacy**

**By Robert Dreyfuss**

**10/05/05 "TomPaine.com"** -- -- A flurry of Arab diplomacy over the last few days is unfolding in a rear-guard effort to prevent the crisis in Iraq from exploding into what Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal warned last month could be a regional civil war involving not only Iraq, but all of its neighbors.

The main, and well-deserved, target of Saud's ire was the increasingly authoritarian and brutal rule of the main Iraqi Shiite parties, especially the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), whose Badr Brigade militia are terrorizing Iraq's secular, urban Shiite population and carrying out death-squad attacks against Sunnis. The attacks against the Sunnis are aimed not only at the Iraqi armed resistance but at secular, nationalist Sunni leaders and activists.

Last week, I reported on the fear of Shiite militias and death squads as reported by Aiham Al Sammarae, an Iraqi oppositionist and former minister under the interim government in 2004 who is trying to broker a deal with the Iraqi resistance. Since then, other reports have surfaced concerning the extensive violence carried out by paramilitary forces tied to SCIRI and to Al Dawa, SCIRI's partner in the Shiite religious bloc in Iraq. By now it is

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clear that if Tony Soprano lived in Iraq, he'd be a member of the Shiite militia. Consider the following report from CBS News:

CBS News correspondent Lara Logan reports there is a secret, ruthless cleansing of the country's towns and cities. Bodies—blindfolded, bound and executed—just appear, like the rotting corpses of 36 Sunni men that turned up in a dry riverbed south of Baghdad.

CBS News traced 16 of those men to a single street in a Baghdad suburb, where family members showed CBS News how the killers forced their way into their homes in the middle of the night and dragged away their sons and fathers.

"My uncles were tortured, they even poured acid on them," a young boy told CBS News. Clutching photographs of the murdered men, the women and children left behind came together to grieve.

One woman said as her husband was marched away she sent her son after him with his slippers, but his abductor sent the child back with a chilling message: No need for slippers—he will come back dead.

They were targeted for one reason alone: all were Sunnis.

Or this, from the *Chicago Tribune* :

In the dead of night, bands of armed men in Iraqi commando uniforms stormed Baghdad's Hurriyah neighborhood in late August, breaking down doors with sledgehammers and grenades.

If the family inside was Shiite, the gunmen moved on to another house, witnesses said. If the family was Sunni, the gunmen tore through the building, demolishing furniture and manhandling those inside. More than 70 young Sunni Arab men were whisked away.

Countless atrocities, too, have been perpetrated by Sunni gangs and by terrorists associated with Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. But the killings by the Shiite militias are far more chilling because they have an entirely different quality: They are carried out by gunmen tied to the U.S.-supported regime in Baghdad. They don't draw criticism from U.S. officials, and most American media reports continue to portray the Shiites as victims and the Sunnis as aggressors.

Still, it is the ferocity of the Shiite fanaticism governing Iraq today, and the ruling circle's ever-closer ties to Iran, that prompted Prince Saud to warn of a regional civil war sparked by the Shiites. He brought that message to Washington last week, talking to senators and to the Washington press corps. He then flew back to the Middle East to attend a meeting of Arab foreign ministers, including Iraq's Foreign Minister Hossein Zebari. We'll come to the Arab League meeting shortly, but first some background:

After Saud's criticism of Iraq's Shiite crazies, one of them—Iraqi interior minister Bayan Jabbar—lashed out at Saudi Arabia. "This Iraq," said Jabbar, who as interior minister is directly responsible for the Shiite hit squads, "is the cradle of civilization that taught humanity reading and writing, and some Bedouin riding a camel wants to teach us!" He went on to lambaste Saudi Arabia and threaten to provoke an uprising of Shiites who predominate



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in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich Eastern Province. "There are more than four million Shiites in the kingdom who are considered second-class citizens," he sniffed.

Later, at the Arab League foreign ministers' meeting, two important things happened. First, the Iraqi foreign minister, Zebari, a Kurd, abjectly apologized for Jabor's calling Saud a Bedouin. More important, the League decided to launch an Iraqi peace initiative. The secretary-general of the Arab League is going to Baghdad on a mission to find common ground among Iraq's warring factions, including the Iraqi Sunni-led resistance. And the League is putting together a plan to convene a conference led by Iraq's Arab neighbors along with all Iraqi factions, in an effort to prevent civil war and stabilize the country. It's a very important step, one that probably does not have much more than token support from the Bush administration, which is stuck on its stay-the-course fantasy of a victory strategy. But important people in Washington believe that Jordan and Saudi Arabia, both Sunni kingdoms, are the best mediators between the United States and the Iraqi opposition.

In that context, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad managed to find his way down to Saudi Arabia this weekend to talk to Saudi Arabia's crown prince about Iraq. Iraq—and its Shiite fundamentalist ruling clique—may be too far gone to be salvaged. Perhaps civil war is inevitable. But if the United States would get out of Iraq, give the Arab League and the UN a chance to manage things there, and take part in Arab-led talks with the Sunnis, catastrophe might be averted. It's not likely, but at this point we need straws to grasp at.

*Robert Dreyfuss is a freelance writer based in Alexandria, Va., who specializes in politics and national security issues. He is a contributing editor at The Nation, a contributing writer at Mother Jones, a senior correspondent for The American Prospect, and a frequent contributor to Rolling Stone. His book, Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam, will be published by Henry Holt/Metropolitan Books in the fall.*

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<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article10531.htm>

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## **The Salvador option**

By any standard, the ongoing American occupation of Iraq is a disaster.

**By Scott Ritter**

**12/20/05 "Aljazeera"** -- The highly vaunted US military machine, lauded and praised for its historic march on Baghdad in March and April of 2003, today finds itself a broken force, on the defensive in a land that it may occupy in part, but does not control.

The all-out offensive to break the back of the resistance in Falluja has failed, leaving a city destroyed by American firepower, and still very much in the grips of the anti-American fighters.

The same is true of Mosul, Samarra, or any other location where the US military has undertaken "decisive" action against the fighters, only to find that, within days, the fighting has returned, stronger than ever.

And yet, it now appears as if the United States, in an effort to take the offensive against the fighters in Iraq, is

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prepared to compound its past mistakes in Iraq by embarking on a new course of action derived from some of the darkest, and most embarrassing moments of America's modern history.

According to press accounts, the Pentagon is considering the organisation, training and equipping of so-called death squads, teams of Iraqi assassins who would be used to infiltrate and eliminate the leadership of the Iraqi resistance.

Called the Salvador Option, in reference to similar US-backed death squads that terrorised the population of El Salvador during the 1980s, the proposed plan actually has as its roots the Phoenix assassination programme undertaken during the Vietnam war, where American-led assassins killed thousands of known or suspected Vietcong collaborators.

Perhaps it is a sign of the desperation felt inside the Pentagon, or an underscoring of the ideological perversity of those in charge, that the US military would draw upon the failed programmes of the past to resolve an insoluble problem of today.

The Salvador Option would not be the first embrace of assassination as a tool of occupation undertaken by the United States in Iraq.

In the months following Paul Bremer's taking over of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in June 2003, the streets of Baghdad crawled with scores of assassination squads.

Among the more effective and brutal of these units were those drawn from the Badr Brigade, the armed militia of the Shia political party known as the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI.

Although not publicly acknowledged, the role played by the various anti-Saddam militias in confronting the residual elements of Saddam's former ruling Baath Party offered a glimpse into what was, and is, an unspoken element of the US policy regarding de-Baathification - let the Iraqis do the dirty work.

SCIRI's efforts to exterminate Baath Party remnants still loyal to Saddam Hussein, or who stand accused of committing crimes against SCIRI or its sympathisers, attracted the attention of the "black" side of the CPA-run de-Baathification efforts – covert operations run by the CIA and elite Special Operations units of the United States military.

Of all the various players in this deadly game, the Badr militia stood out as the most willing and able to take the fight to the Baathist holdouts.

Tipped off by the CPA's covert operatives, the Badr assassination squads killed dozens of Baathists in and around Baghdad.

But the assassination of former Baathists did nothing to pacify Iraq.

The ongoing resistance to the American occupation of Iraq was not founded in the formal structure of the Baath

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Party, but rather the complex mixture of tribal and religious motivations which had, since 1995, been blended into the secretive cell structure of the Baath Party.

While the Americans and their SCIRI allies focused on bringing to heel former Baathists, the resistance morphed into a genuine grassroots national liberation movement where strategic planning may very well be the product of former Baathists, but the day-to-day tactical decisions are more likely to be made by tribal shaikhs and local clerics.

The increasing success of the resistance was attributed in part to the failure of the CPA-ordered de-Baathification policy.

In an effort to reverse this trend, Bremer rescinded his de-Baathification programme, and ordered the Badr assassination squads to stand down.

This change of policy direction could not change the reality on the ground in Iraq, however.

The Sunni-based resistance, having been targeted by the Badr assassins, struck back with a vengeance.

In a campaign of targeted assassinations using car bombs and ambushes, the resistance has engaged in its own campaign of terror against the Shia, viewed by the Sunni fighters as being little more than collaborators of the American occupation.

Having started the game of politically motivated assassination, the US has once again found itself trumped by forces inside Iraq it does not understand, and as such will never be able to defeat.

The Salvador Option fails on a number of levels. First and foremost is the moral and ethical one.

While it is difficult at times to understand and comprehend, let alone justify, the tactics used by the Iraqi resistance, history has shown that the tools of remote ambush, instead of a direct assassination, have always been used by freedom fighters when confronting an illegitimate foreign occupier who possesses overwhelming conventional military superiority.

As such, history celebrates the resistance of the French and the Russians when occupied by the Germans during the second world war, the Chinese resistance to Japanese occupation during that same time, or even the decades-long national liberation movement in Vietnam which defeated not only the French and the Americans, but also the illegitimate government these two occupiers attempted to impose on the people of South Vietnam.

History, on the other hand, treats harshly the occupying power which resorts to the use of the tools of terror to subdue an occupied people.

Thus, while it is fine for a French resistance fighter to blow up a German troop train, it is not acceptable for the Germans to burn a French village in retaliation.

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History will eventually depict as legitimate the efforts of the Iraqi resistance to destabilise and defeat the American occupation forces and their imposed Iraqi collaborationist government.

And history will condemn the immorality of the American occupation, which has debased the values and ideals of the American people by legitimising torture, rape and murder as a means of furthering an illegal war of aggression.

Ethics aside, the Salvador Option will fail simply because it cannot succeed. In an effort to confront a Sunni-based resistance, the Pentagon proposes that special assassination squads be recruited from the ranks of "loyal" Kurds and Shia.

In the 30 years of Saddam's rule, the Baathist government and its security organs were very successful in infiltrating the ranks of Kurdish and Shia opposition movements.

The Shia and Kurds, on the other hand, have no history of being able to do the same to the Sunni. If anything has emerged as the undisputable truth in post-invasion Iraq, it is that the Iraqi resistance knows Iraq infinitely better than the American occupiers.

If implemented, the Salvador Option will serve as the impetus for all-out civil war. In the same manner that the CPA-backed assassination of Baathists prompted the restructuring and strengthening of the Sunni-led resistance, any effort by US-backed Kurdish and Shia assassination teams to target Sunni resistance leaders will remove all impediments for a general outbreak of ethnic and religious warfare in Iraq.

It is hard as an American to support the failure of American military operations in Iraq. Such failure will bring with it the death and wounding of many American service members, and many more Iraqis.

As an American, I have hoped that there was a way for America to emerge victorious in Iraq, with our national security and honour intact, and Iraq itself a better nation than the one we "liberated". But it is far too late for this to happen.

We not only invaded Iraq on false pretences, but we perverted the notion of liberation by removing Saddam and his cronies from his palaces, replacing them with American occupiers who have not only kept open Saddam's most notorious prisons, but also the practice of torture, rape and abuse we were supposed to be bringing to an end.

Faced with our inability to come to grips with a popular-based resistance that has grown exponentially over the past year, the best the American policy planners can come up with is to embrace our own form of terrorism, supporting death squads we cannot control and which will only further debase the moral foundation of our nation while slaughtering even more Iraqis.

As an American, I hope and pray that common sense and basic morality prevail in Washington DC, terminating the Salvador Option before it gets off the ground. Failing that, I hope that the programme of US-backed death squads is defeated. That is the most pro-American sentiment I can muster, given the situation as it currently stands.

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Scott Ritter was a senior UN arms inspector in Iraq between 1991 and 1998. He is now an independent consultant.

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## **7 Facts You Might Not Know about the Iraq War**

**By Michael Schwartz**

**08/22/06 "TomDispatch"** --- With a tenuous cease-fire between Israel and Lebanon holding, the ever-hotter war in Iraq is once again creeping back onto newspaper front pages and towards the top of the evening news. Before being fully immersed in daily reports of bomb blasts, sectarian violence, and casualties, however, it might be worth considering some of the just-under-the-radar-screen realities of the situation in that country. Here, then, is a little guide to understanding what is likely to be a flood of new Iraqi developments -- a few enduring, but seldom commented upon, patterns central to the dynamics of the Iraq war, as well as to the fate of the American occupation and Iraqi society.

### **1. The Iraqi Government Is Little More Than a Group of "Talking Heads"**

A minimally viable central government is built on at least three foundations: the coercive capacity to maintain order, an administrative apparatus that can deliver government services and directives to society, and the resources to manage these functions. The Iraqi government has none of these attributes -- and no prospect of developing them. It has no coercive capacity. The national army we hear so much about is actually trained and commanded by the Americans, while the police forces are largely controlled by local governments and have few, if any, viable links to the central government in Baghdad. (Only the Special Forces, whose death-squad activities in the capital have lately been in the news, have any formal relationship with the elected government; and they have more enduring ties to the U.S. military that created them and the Shia militias who staffed them.)

Administratively, the Iraqi government has [no existence](#) outside Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone -- and little presence within it. Whatever local apparatus exists elsewhere in the country is led by local leaders, usually with little or no loyalty to the central government and not dependent on it for resources it doesn't, in any case, possess. In Baghdad itself, this is clearly illustrated in the vast Shiite slum of Sadr city, controlled by Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army and his elaborate network of political clerics. (Even U.S. occupation forces enter that enormous swath of the capital only in large brigades, braced for significant firefights.) In the major city of the Shia south, Basra, local clerics lead a government that alternately ignores and defies the central government on all policy issues from oil to women's rights; in Sunni cities like Tal Afar and Ramadi, where major battles with the Americans alternate with insurgent control, the government simply has no presence whatsoever. In Kurdistan in the north, the Kurdish leadership maintains full control of all local governments.

As for resources, with 85% of the country's revenues deriving from oil, all you really need to know is that oil-rich Iraq is also suffering from an [acute fuel shortage](#) (including soaring prices, all-night lines at gas stations, and [a deal](#) to get help from neighboring Syria which itself has minimal refining capacity). The almost helpless Iraqi government has had little choice but to accept the dictates of American advisors and of the International



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Monetary Fund about exactly how what energy resources exist will be used. Paying off Saddam-era debt, reparations to Kuwait from the Gulf War of 1990, and the needs of the U.S.-controlled national army have had first claim. With what remains so meager that it cannot sustain a viable administrative apparatus in Baghdad, let alone the rest of the country, there is barely enough to spare for the government leadership to line their own pockets.

## **2. There Is No Iraqi Army**

The "Iraqi Army" is a misnomer. The government's military consists of Iraqi units integrated into the U.S.-commanded occupation army. These units rely on the Americans for intelligence, logistics, and -- lacking almost all heavy weaponry themselves -- artillery, tanks, and any kind of airpower. (The Iraqi "Air Force" typically consists of fewer than 10 planes with no combat capability.) The government has no real control over either personnel or strategy.

We can see this clearly in a recent operation in Sadr City, conducted (as news reports tell us) by "Iraqi troops and US advisors" and backed up by U.S. artillery and air power. It was one of an ongoing series of attempts to undermine the Sadrists and their Mahdi army, who have governed the area since the fall of Saddam. The day after the assault, Iraqi premier [Nouri Kamel al-Maliki](#) complained about the tactics used, which he labeled "unjustified," and about the fact that neither he, nor his government, was included in the decision-making leading up to the assault. As he put it to an Agence France-Presse, "I reiterate my rejection to [sic] such an operation and it should not be executed without my consent. This particular operation did not have my approval."

This happened because the U.S. has functionally expanded its own forces in Iraq by integrating local Iraqi units into its command structure, while essentially depriving the central government of any army it could use purely for its own purposes. Iraqi units have their own officers, but they always operate with American advisers. As [American Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad](#) put it, "We'll ultimately help them become independent." (Don't hold your breath.)

## **3. The Recent Decline in American Casualties Is Not a Result of Less Fighting (and Anyway, It's Probably Ending)**

At the beginning of August, the press carried reports of a significant decline in U.S. casualties, punctuated with announcements from American officials that the military situation was improving. The figures (compiled by the [Brookings Institute](#)) do show a decline in U.S. military deaths (76 in April, 69 in May, 63 in June, and then only 48 in July). But these were [offset](#) by dramatic increases in Iraqi military fatalities, which almost doubled in July as the U.S. sent larger numbers of Iraqi units into battle, and as undermanned American units were redeployed from al-Anbar province, the heartland of the Sunni insurgency, to civil-war-torn Baghdad in preparation for a big push to recapture various out-of-control neighborhoods in the capital.

More important, when it comes to long-term U.S. casualties, the trends are not good. In recent months, U.S. units had been pulled off the streets of the capital. But the Iraqi Army units that replaced them proved incapable of controlling Baghdad in even minimal ways. So, in addition, to fighting the Sunni insurgency, American troops are now back on the streets of Baghdad in the midst of a swirling civil war with U.S. casualties likely to rise. In recent

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months, there has also been an escalation of the fighting between American forces and the insurgency, independent of the sectarian fighting that now dominates the headlines.

As a consequence, the U.S. has actually [increased](#) its troop levels in Iraq (by delaying the return of some units, sending others back to Iraq early, and sending in some troops previously held in reserve in Kuwait). The number of battles (large and small) between occupation troops and the Iraqi resistance has increased from about 70 a day to about 90 a day; and the number of resistance fighters estimated by U.S. officials has held steady at about 20,000. The [number of IEDs placed](#) -- the principle weapon targeted at occupation troops (including Iraqi units) - has been rising steadily since the spring.

The effort by Sunni guerrillas to expel the American army and its allies is more widespread and energetic than at any time since the fall of the Hussein regime.

#### **4. Most Iraqi Cities Have Active and Often Viable Local Governments**

Neither the Iraqi government, nor the American-led occupation has a significant presence in most parts of Iraq. This is well-publicized in the three Kurdish provinces, which are ruled by a stable Kurdish government without any outside presence; less so in Shia urban areas where various religio-political groups -- notably the Sadrists, the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), Da'wa, and Fadhila -- vie for local control, and then organize cities and towns around their own political and religious platforms. While there is often violent friction among these groups -- particularly when the contest for control of an area is undecided -- most cities and towns are largely peaceful as local governments and local populations struggle to provide city services without a viable national economy.

This situation also holds true in the Sunni areas, except when the occupation is actively trying to pacify them. When there is no fighting, local governments dominated by the religious and tribal leaders of the resistance establish the laws and maintain a kind of order, relying for law enforcement on guerrilla fighters and militia members.

All these governments -- Kurdish, Shia and Sunni -- have shown themselves capable of maintaining (often fundamentalist) law and (often quite harsh) order, with little crime and little resistance from the local population. Though often severely limited by the lack of resources from a paralyzed national economy and a bankrupt national government, they do collect the garbage, direct traffic, suppress the local criminal element, and perform many of the other duties expected of local governments.

#### **5. Outside Baghdad, Violence Arrives with the Occupation Army**

The portrait of chaos across Iraq that our news generally offers us is a genuine half-truth. Certainly, Baghdad has been plunged into massive and worsening disarray as both the war against the Americans and the civil war have come to be concentrated there, and as the terrifying process of ethnic cleansing has hit neighborhood after neighborhood, and is now beginning to [seep into](#) the environs of the capital.

However, outside Baghdad (with the exception of the northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul, where historic friction among Kurd, Sunni, and Turkman has created a different version of sectarian violence), Iraqi cities tend to be

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reasonably ethnically homogeneous and to have at least quasi-stable governments. The real violence often only arrives when the occupation military makes its periodic sweeps aimed at recapturing cities where it has lost all authority and even presence.

This deadly pattern of escalating violence is regularly triggered by those dreaded sweeps, involving brutal, destructive, and sometimes lethal home invasions aimed at capturing or killing suspected insurgents or their supporters. The insurgent response involves the emplacement of ever more sophisticated roadside bombs (known as IEDs) and sniper attacks, aimed at distracting or hampering the patrols. The ensuing firefights frequently involve the use of artillery, tanks, and air power in urban areas, [demolishing homes and stores](#) in a neighborhood, which only adds to the bitter resistance and increasing the support for the insurgency.

These mini-wars can last between a few hours and, in Falluja, Ramadi, or other "centers of resistance," a few weeks. They constitute the overwhelming preponderance of the fighting in Iraq. For any city, the results can be widespread death and devastation from which it can take months or years to recover. Yet these are still episodes punctuating a less violent, if increasingly more run-down normalcy.

## **6. There Is a Growing Resistance Movement in the Shia Areas of Iraq**

Lately, the pattern of violence established in largely Sunni areas of Iraq has begun to spread to largely Shia cities, which had previously been insulated from the periodic devastation of American pacification attempts. This ended with growing Bush administration anxiety about economic, religious, and militia connections between local Shia governments and Iran, and with the growing power of the anti-American Sadrist movement, which had already fought two fierce battles with the U.S. in Najaf in 2004 and a number of times since then in Sadr City.

Symptomatic of this change is the increasing violence in Basra, the urban oil hub at the southern tip of the country, whose [local government](#) has long been dominated by various fundamentalist Shia political groups with strong ties to Iran. When the British military began a campaign to undermine the fundamentalists' control of the police force there, two British military operatives were arrested, triggering a battle between British soldiers (supported by the Shia leadership of the Iraqi central government) and the local police (supported by local Shia leaders). This confrontation initiated a series of armed confrontations among the various contenders for power in Basra.

Similar confrontations have occurred in other localities, including Karbala, Najaf, Sadr City, and Maysan province. So far no general offensive to recapture the any of these areas has been attempted, but Britain has recently been concentrating its troops outside Basra.

If the occupation decides to use military means to bring the Shia cities back into anything like an American orbit, full-scale battles may be looming in the near future that could begin to replicate the fighting in Sunni areas, including the use of IEDs, so far only sporadically employed in the south. If you think American (and British) troops are overextended now, dealing with internecine warfare and a minority Sunni insurgency, just imagine what a real Shiite insurgency would mean.

## **7. There Are Three Distinct Types of Terrorism in Iraq, All Directly or Indirectly Connected to the Occupation**

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Terrorism involves attacking civilians to force them to abandon their support for your enemy, or to drive them away from a coveted territory.

The original terrorists in Iraq were the military and civilian officials of the Bush administration -- starting with their "[shock and awe](#)" bombing campaign that destroyed Iraqi infrastructure in order to "undermine civilian morale." The American form of terrorism continued with the wholesale destruction of most of [Falluja](#) and parts of other Sunni cities, designed to pacify the "hot beds" of insurgency, while teaching the residents of those areas that, if they "harbor the insurgents," they will surely "suffer the consequences."

At the individual level, this program of terror was continued through the invasions of, and demolishing of, homes (or, in some cases, parts of neighborhoods) where insurgents were believed to be hidden among a larger civilian population, thus spreading the "lesson" about "harboring terrorists" to everyone in the Sunni sections of the country. Generating a violent death rate of at least [18,000 per year](#), the American drumbeat of terror has contributed more than its share to the recently escalating civilian death toll, which reached a record [3,149](#) in the official count during July. It is unfortunately accurate to characterize the American occupation of Sunni Iraq as a reign of terror.

The Sunni terrorists like those led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi have utilized the suicide car bomb to generate the most widely publicized violence in Iraq -- hundreds of civilian casualties each month resulting from attacks on restaurants, markets, and mosques where large number of Shia congregate.

At the beginning of the U.S. occupation, car bombs were nonexistent; they only became common when a tiny proportion of the Sunni resistance movement became convinced that the Shia were the main domestic support for the American occupation. (As far as we can tell, the vast majority of those fighting the Americans oppose such terrorists and have sometimes fought with them.) As al-Qaeda leader [Ayman al-Zawahiri wrote](#), these attacks were justified by "the treason of the Shia and their collusion with the Americans." As if to prove him correct, the [number of such attacks](#) tripled to current levels of about 70 per month after the Shia-dominated Iraqi government supported the American devastation of Falluja in November 2004.

The Sunni terrorists work with the same terrorist logic that the Americans have applied in Iraq: Attacks on civilians are meant to terrify them into not supporting the enemy. There is a belief, of course, among the leadership of the Sunni terrorists that, ultimately, only the violent suppression or expulsion of the Shia is acceptable. But as Zawahiri himself stated, the "majority of Muslims don't comprehend this and possibly could not even imagine it." So the practical justification for such terrorism lies in the more immediate association of the Shia with the hated occupation.

The final link in the terrorist chain can also be traced back to the occupation. In January of 2005, [Newsweek](#) broke the story that the U.S. was establishing (Shiite) "death squads" within the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, modeled after the assassination teams that the CIA had helped organize in El Salvador during the 1980s. These death squads were intended to assassinate activists and supporters of the Sunni resistance. Particularly after the [bombing of the Golden Dome](#), an important Shia shrine in Samarra, in March 2006, they became a fixture in Baghdad, where [thousands of corpses](#) -- virtually all Sunni men -- have been found with signs of torture, including

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electric-drill holes, in their bodies and bullet holes in their heads. Here, again, the logic is the same: to use terror to stop the Sunni community from nurturing and harboring both the terrorist car bombers and the anti-American resistance fighters.

While there is disagreement about whether the Americans, the Shia-controlled Iraqi Ministry of Defense, or the Shia political parties should shoulder the most responsibility for loosing these death squads on Baghdad, one conclusion is indisputable: They have earned their place in the ignominious triumvirate of Iraqi terrorism.

One might say that the war has converted one of President Bush's biggest lies into an unimaginably horrible truth: Iraq is now the epicenter of worldwide terrorism.

### **Where the 7 Facts Lead**

With this terror triumvirate at the center of Iraqi society, we now enter the horrible era of ethnic cleansing, the logical extension of multidimensional terror.

When the U.S. toppled the Hussein regime, there was little sectarian sentiment outside of Kurdistan, which had longstanding nationalist ambitions. Even today, [opinion polls](#) show that more than two-thirds of Sunnis and Shia stand opposed to the idea of any further weakening of the central government and are not in favor of federation, no less dividing Iraq into three separate nations.

Nevertheless, ethnic cleansing by both Shia and Sunni has become the order of the day in many of the neighborhoods of Baghdad, replete with house burnings, physical assaults, torture, and murder, all directed against those who resist leaving their homes. These acts are aimed at creating religiously homogeneous neighborhoods.

This is a terrifying development that derives from the rising tide of terrorism. Sunnis believe that they must expel their Shia neighbors to stop them from giving the Shiite death squads the names of resistance fighters and their supporters. Shia believe that they must expel their Sunni neighbors to stop them from providing information and cover for car-bombing attacks. And, as the situation matures, militants on both sides come to embrace removal -- period. As these actions escalate, feeding on each other, more and more individuals, caught in a vise of fear and bent on revenge, embrace the infernal logic of terrorism: that it is acceptable to punish everyone for the actions of a tiny minority.

There is still some hope for the Iraqis to recover their equilibrium. All the centripetal forces in Iraq derive from the American occupation, and might still be sufficiently reduced by an American departure followed by a viable reconstruction program embraced by the key elements inside of Iraq. But if the occupation continues, there will certainly come a point -- perhaps already passed -- when the collapse of government legitimacy, the destruction wrought by the war, and the horror of terrorist violence become self-sustaining. If that point is reached, all parties will enter a new territory with incalculable consequences.

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## **Let A Thousand Militias Bloom**

**by A. K. Gupta**

**04/21/05 "IM"** - - In devising a strategy to defeat Iraq's insurgents, the Pentagon may be gaining the upper hand but at the cost of pushing Iraq toward civil war. [a report in the Wall Street Journal](#), from Feb. 16 revealed that "pop-up militias" are proliferating in Iraq. Not only is the U.S. aware of these illegal militias, but the Pentagon is arming, training and funding them for use them in counter-insurgency operations.

Most disturbing, one militia in particular – the "special police commandos" – is being used throughout Iraq and has been singled out by a U.S. general as conducting death squad strikes known as the "Salvador option."

Greg Jaffe, the Journal reporter, identified at least six such militias. Yet these militias owe their allegiance not to the Iraqi people or state, but to their self-appointed leaders and associated politicians such as interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. Even the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, Gen. John P. Abizaid, admitted to Congress on March 1 that such militias are "destabilizing."

Of these militias, at least three are linked to Allawi. Jaffe writes, "First came the Muthana Brigade, a unit formed by the order of... Allawi." The second is the Defenders of Khadamiya, referring to a Shiite shrine on the outskirts of Baghdad, which appears to be "closely aligned with prominent Shiite cleric Hussein al Sadr," who ran on Allawi's ticket in the January elections.

The leader of the special police commandos, Gen. Adnan Thavit, participated in the disastrous 1996 coup against Saddam Hussein that Allawi coordinated. Thavit was jailed and subsequently released shortly before the 2003 U.S. invasion. He is also the uncle of Iraq's interim minister of the interior, under which the commandos operate.

New Boss = Old Boss

A recent Human Rights Watch study on torture in Iraq noted that Al-Nahdhah, a Iraqi newspaper, reported on June 21 that the interior ministry "appointed a new security adviser to assist in the establishment of a new general security directorate [GSD] modeled on the erstwhile General Security Directorate... one of the agencies of the

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Saddam Hussein government dissolved by the CPA in May 2003.” That security advisor was “Major General ‘Adnan Thabet al-Samarra’i.” (Like most Arabic words, Thavit’s name is translated into English with various spellings.)

Jane’s Intelligence Digest commented at the time that the GSD, “will include former members of Saddam Hussein’s feared security services, collectively known as the Mukhabarat. These former Ba’athists and Saddam loyalists will be expected to hunt down their colleagues currently organizing the insurgency.”

Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who heads the mammoth U.S. effort to create Iraq’s myriad security forces, called the commandos “a horse to back.” And Petraeus has done so by providing it with “money to fix up its base and buy vehicles, ammunition, radios and more weapons.”

The special police commandos have also received special treatment from the U.S. occupation. A State Department report to Congress from Jan. 5 noted that at the request of the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, “billeting space” was provided for 1,500 commandos in the Baghdad Public Safety Academy.

Bigger than the british

In terms of numbers, a column by David Ignatius in the Feb. 25 Washington Post notes that Thavit “commands a force of about 10,000 men,” which would make them larger than the British military.

The commandos have been used extensively, first last October in the assault on Samara that was called a “model” for how to retake a city from insurgents (but which is stilled roiled by regular attacks). The commandos have also become a fixture in major cities such as Ramadi and Mosul. In Ramadi, The Stars and Stripes describes the commandos as “the Iraqi forces that might soon be responsible for security in the city.”

A report in Dec. 25 issue of The Advisor – a Pentagon publication with the tagline “Iraq’s Official Weekly Command Information Reporter” – stated that the “Special Police Commandos have been deployed all over Iraq to hunt down insurgents.”

This “hunt” seems to include death squad operations. Retired Gen. Wayne Downing, the former head of all U.S. special operations forces, appeared on NBC’s Today show on Jan. 10 to discuss a Newsweek report about the Salvador option. The reference is to the extensive use of death squads by El Salvador’s military during its war against the left in the 1980s. Downing called it a “very valid tactic” that has been employed “since we started the war back in March of 2003.” Downing added, “We have special police commandos now of the Iraqi forces which conduct these kind of strike operations.”

At the highest levels, White House officials consider the special police commandos as the leading edge against the insurgency. In hearings before the Senate on Feb. 16, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said the commandos are among “forces that are going to have the greatest leverage on suppressing and eliminating the insurgency.”

By all accounts, the insurgency is still very active, conducting up to 60 strikes a day. But one key indicator of its effectiveness – U.S. combat deaths – shows a marked decline since the razing of Fallujah last November. In that

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month, some 126 U.S. troops died in combat, more than four per day on average. By March, combat deaths had declined by more than 75 percent.

Sweeping countless thousands of Sunni Arab males off the streets has had an effect. The prison population under U.S. control alone has exploded to over 10,000. The insurgents have responded by shifting their targets, concentrating attacks more on Iraqi security forces and they have intensified economic sabotage, crippling the electrical and petroleum infrastructure.

U.S. Marines units have taken the militia strategy to a new level: by creating their own. In a recent sweep through Al Anbar province, the heartland of the insurgency, The 7th Marines Regiment brought with the Iraqi Freedom Guard, a 61-man unit set up in January and paid \$400 a month each, according to a Reuters report. During the same operation, Marines of the 23rd Regiment were accompanied by 20 members of a special forces unit called the Freedom Fighters. The Christian Science Monitor described them as Shiites from the southern city of Basra, with "little love between them and the Sunni Arab citizens of Anbar."

Despite being squeezed, no one is predicting an end to the insurgency. One U.S. general recently noted that it takes on average nine years to defeat an insurgency. Even if the rebellion is contained to "manageable" levels for the Pentagon, meaning a low rate of combat deaths, that does not mean the resistance will end. U.S. forces long ago lost the battle for hearts and minds.

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## **Iraq 'death squad caught in act'**

**Iraq has launched an investigation into claims by the US military that an Iraqi interior ministry "death squad" has been targeting Sunni Arab Iraqis.**

16 Feb 2006.

The probe comes after a US general revealed the arrest of 22 policemen allegedly on a mission to kill a Sunni.

"We have found one of the death squads. They are part of the police force," US Maj Gen Joseph Peterson said.

Sunnis have long accused Iraqi forces of operating death squads - but the claims have never been substantiated.

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Iraqi deputy interior minister Maj Gen Hussein Kamal said his ministry had set up an inquiry.

"The interior minister has formed an investigation committee to learn more about the Sunni person and those 22 men, particularly whether they work for the interior ministry or claim to belong to the ministry," he told the Associated Press news agency.

Hundreds of Sunni Arab Iraqis have been found dead since the 2003 war in what appear to have been extra-judicial killings.

On Wednesday, the bodies of four unidentified men were found in Baghdad's Shia district of Shula. They had been handcuffed, blindfolded and shot in the head.

Iraqi insurgents have also often used a similar tactic against Iraqis working with international forces or the Iraqi government.

## **Detained**

Gen Peterson, who is in charge of training the Iraqi police, told the Chicago Tribune on Wednesday that US forces had stumbled across the first evidence of death squads within the interior ministry.



**“ I think there are many people inside the interior ministry involved with these deaths or giving the uniforms of colleagues to criminals ”**

Iraqi Human Rights Minister Narmin Uthman

The 22 interior ministry traffic policemen, dressed in police commando uniforms, were arrested in late January at an Iraqi army checkpoint in northern Baghdad and asked what they were doing.

They told soldiers they were taking a Sunni man away to be shot dead.

"The amazing thing is... they tell you exactly what they're going to do," Gen Peterson said.

## **Militias**

Gen Peterson said US forces were holding four of the men at the Abu Ghraib prison and that the 18 other men were being detained at an Iraqi jail.

The Sunni man, who was accused of murder, is also being detained.

Subsequent investigations found the four men in US custody are linked to the Badr Organisation, the armed militia of one of Iraq's main Shia parties, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

But Gen Peterson said he was convinced Iraqi Interior Minister Bayan Jabr, a member of Sciri, had no knowledge of or involvement in the death squads.

"Who are these guys? That's what the minister is trying to find out," he said.

"They are discrediting him and his organisation. He wants to find these guys. He does not support them."

But Gen Peterson said he believed other death squads were operating within the Iraqi security forces.

"It's an issue of loyalties, of allegiance," he said. "If you're still wearing your Badr T-shirt under your uniform, that's a problem."

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## **'Official help'**

Iraqi Human Rights Minister Narmin Uthman said she believed lower-level officials were helping the death squads.

"These officials are helping the criminals by informing them on where targeted people are going or where people are living," she told AP.

A spokesman for the country's main Sunni Arab party, the Iraqi Islamic Party, backed the launch of the investigation.

"For a very long time we have been talking about such violations and we have been telling the interior ministry officials that there are squads that raid houses and arrest people who are found later executed in different parts of the capital," Nasser al-Ani said.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/4719252.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4719252.stm)

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## **Journalist killed after investigating US-backed death squads in Iraq**

**By James Cogan**

**1 July 2005**

On June 24, Yasser Salihee, an Iraqi special correspondent for the news agency Knight Ridder, was killed by a single bullet to the head as he approached a checkpoint that had been thrown up near his home in western Baghdad by US and Iraqi troops. It is believed that the shot was fired by an American sniper. According to eyewitnesses, no warning shots were fired.

The US military has announced it is conducting an investigation into Salihee's killing. Knight Ridder has already declared, however, that "there's no reason to think that the shooting had anything to do with his reporting work". In fact, his last assignment gives reason to suspect that it was.

Over the past month, Salihee had been gathering evidence that US-backed Iraqi forces have been carrying out extra-judicial killings of alleged members and supporters of the anti-occupation resistance. His investigation followed a feature in the *New York Times* magazine in May, detailing how the US military had modeled the Iraqi interior ministry police commandos, known as the Wolf Brigade, on the death squads unleashed in the 1980s to crush the left-wing insurgency in El Salvador.

The Wolf Brigade was recruited by US operatives and the US-installed interim government headed by Iyad Allawi during 2004. A majority of its officers and personnel served in Saddam Hussein's special forces and Republican Guard—veterans of killings, torture and repression. The unit has been used against the resistance in rebellious cities such as Mosul and Samarra, and, over the past six weeks, has played a prominent role in the massive crackdown ordered by the Iraqi government in Baghdad codenamed "Operation Lightning".



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On June 27, Knight Ridder published the results of its inquiry in an article jointly written by Salihee and correspondent Tom Lasseter. The journalists “found more than 30 examples in less than a week” of corpses turning up in Baghdad morgues of people who were last seen being detained by the police commandos.

The men, according to the central Baghdad morgue director Faik Baqr, had “been killed in a methodical fashion”. The article reported: “Their hands had been tied or handcuffed behind their backs, their eyes were blindfolded and they appeared to have been tortured. In most cases, the dead men looked as if they’d been whipped with a cord, subjected to electric shocks or beaten with a blunt object and shot to death, often with single bullets to their heads.”

A grocer in west Baghdad told Salihee that he had been detained by police with a man named Anwar Jassim on May 13. “When we were in detention, they put blindfolds and handcuffs on us. On the second day the soldiers were saying ‘He’s dead’. Later we found out it was Anwar.” According to the medical reports at the Yarmuk morgue where police dumped his body, Jassim had a “bullet wound in the back of his head and cuts and bruises on his abdomen, back and neck.”

Police commandos reportedly told the morgue director to leave the corpse “so that dogs could eat it, because he’s terrorist and he deserves it”.

In a second case, a brigadier-general in the Iraqi interior ministry related that his brother had been detained during a raid on May 14, in a working class Sunni suburb in Baghdad’s west. His body was found the next day bearing signs of torture. Witnesses told the general that the abductors “came in white police Toyota Land Cruisers, wore police commando uniforms, flak vests and helmets” and were armed with 9mm Glock pistols. Glock sidearms are used by many US law enforcement agencies and have been supplied to Iraqi security forces by the US military.

The article also cited a third case. The body of Saadi Khalif was brought to Yarmuk morgue by police commandos several days after he was taken from his home by police on June 10. Saadi’s brother told Knight Ridder: “The doctor told us he was choked and tortured before they shot him. He looked like he had been dragged by a car.” An article in the British *Financial Times* on June 29 provided further evidence of police commando atrocities. Mustafa Mohammed Ali, from the western Baghdad suburb of Abu Ghraib, told the newspaper he was detained by the Wolf Brigade on May 22, during the build-up to Operation Lightning. He alleged that he was held for 26 days.

The article reported: “He spent the first day in a barbed wire enclosure with hundreds of other detainees, without food, water or toilet facilities... On the fourth day, the interrogations began. Mr Ali says Wolf Brigade commandos attached electrical wires to his ear and his genitals, and generated a current with a hand-cranked military telephone.”

According to the figures given to the *Financial Times*, only 22 of the 474 people seized from their homes during the Wolf Brigade sweep in the Abu Ghraib area are still being held. Those released allege they suffered systematic abuse. “Mass detentions and indiscriminate torture seem to be the main tools deployed to crush an insurgency that could last ‘five, six, eight, 10, 12 years’ according to Donald Rumsfeld, US defence secretary,” the newspaper commented.

# **BRussells Tribunal Dossier**

## **Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - PART 2 -**

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In light of the evidence gathered by Salihee, significant discrepancies in the official figures for Operation Lightning in Baghdad raise further concerns about the fate of detainees. In early June, the Iraqi government reported that 1,200 had been detained. Just days later on June 6, this was revised downward to just 887, with no explanation. Some of the deaths referred to in the Knight Ridder article coincide with this period.

### **Suspicious of wholesale killings**

The revelations about the conduct of the Wolf Brigade lend credibility to the claims made by Max Fuller, in a feature headlined "For Iraq, 'The Salvador Option' Becomes Reality" and published by the Centre for Research on Globalisation.

Over the past nine months, a terrifying new development in Iraq has been the discovery of dozens of bodies dumped in rubbish heaps, rivers or abandoned buildings. In most cases, the people had suffered torture and mutilation before being killed by a single shot to the head. The US military has consistently reported that the victims were members of the Iraqi army or police. The media has universally reported the mass killings as the work of anti-occupation terrorists.

Fuller noted, however: "What is particularly striking is that many of those killings have taken place since the police commandos became operationally active and often correspond with areas where they have been deployed." In Mosul, for example, dozens of men were detained by the commandos last November, as part of a US-led operation to bring the city back under occupation control. Over the following weeks, more than 150 tortured and executed bodies were found. In Samarra, dozens of bodies appeared in nearby Lake Thartar in the wake of operations by the commandos in that city.

From February through to late April, more than 100 bodies were recovered from the Tigris River south of Baghdad—one of the most rebellious areas of the country. The Iraqi government initially claimed they were villagers who had been kidnapped by insurgents in the village of Maidan. This has since been discredited. The victims are from a range of towns and villages, including Kut in the north and Basra in the south. Police in the area told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that many of the dead had been "motorists passing through the area when stopped by masked men bearing Kalashnikov rifles at impromptu checkpoints".

Other killings have been discovered in Baquaba and the Syrian border town of Qaim in the aftermath of counter-insurgency operations by US forces and their Iraqi allies. Fuller also noted the suspicions surrounding the assassination of well over 200 university academics, most of whom were opponents of the US occupation of Iraq.

Dozens of bodies have been found over the past two months in Baghdad. In May, the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS)—the main public Sunni organisation opposed to the occupation—directly accused the Wolf Brigade of having "arrested imams and the guardians of some mosques, tortured and killed them, and then got rid of their bodies in a garbage dump in Shaab district" of Baghdad. AMS secretary general Hareth al-Dhari declared at the time: "This is state terrorism by the Minister of the Interior."

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The very existence of the Wolf Brigade underscores the criminality of the US occupation and the utter fraud of the Bush administration claims to be bringing "liberation" and "democracy" to Iraq. Many of the commandos would have been involved in murder and torture on behalf of Saddam Hussein's regime. The American military deliberately recruited them in order to make use of their experience in mass repression and has directly modeled their operations on those of right-wing death squads in Central America.

The main US advisor to the Wolf Brigade from the time of its formation until April 2005 was James Steele. Steele's own biography, promoting him for the US lecture circuit, states that "he commanded the US military group in El Salvador during the height of the guerilla war" and "was credited with training and equipping what was acknowledged to be the best counter-terrorist force in the region". In a 12-year campaign of murder and repression, the Salvadoran units, trained and advised by people like Steele, killed over 70,000 people.

In his speech on June 28, George Bush declared his administration was working with the Iraqi interior and defence ministries to "improve their capabilities to coordinate anti-terrorist operations" and "develop their command and control structures". The evidence is beginning to emerge that this means paying and equipping former Baathist killers to terrorise, torture and murder Iraqis who are believed to have links to the popular resistance, which an unnamed US analyst estimated for the June 27 edition of *Newsweek* had "as many as 400,000 auxiliaries and support personnel".

The killing of journalists seeking to document or expose allegations of state-organised murder has accompanied every dirty war against a civilian population. Since the US occupation of Iraq began, dozens of reporters, cameramen and other media workers have been killed by American-led forces in suspicious circumstances that were never independently investigated.

Two more Iraqi journalists have been killed in the days since Yasser Salihee's death. On June 26, Maha Ibrahim, a news editor with a television station operated by the anti-occupation Iraqi Islamic Party, was shot dead when US troops opened fire on her car as she and her husband drove to work. Two days later, Ahmad Wail Bakri, a program director for Iraqi al-Sharqiya television was killed by American troops as he reportedly tried to drive around a traffic accident in Baghdad.

[http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/jul2005/iraq-j01\\_prn.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/jul2005/iraq-j01_prn.shtml)

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## **Iraq's Death Squads**

Sunday, December 4, 2005;

OF ALL THE bloodshed in Iraq, none may be more disturbing than the campaign of torture and murder being conducted by U.S.-trained government police forces. Reports last week in the *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times* chronicled how Iraqi Interior Ministry commando and police units have been infiltrated by two Shiite militias, which have been conducting ethnic cleansing and rounding up Sunnis suspected of supporting the insurgency. Hundreds of bodies have been appearing along roadsides and in garbage dumps, some with acid burns or with holes drilled in them. According to the searing account by Solomon Moore of the *Los Angeles Times*, "the Baghdad morgue reports that dozens of bodies arrive at the same time on a weekly basis, including scores of corpses with wrists bound by police handcuffs." The reports followed a raid two weeks ago by U.S. troops on a

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clandestine Baghdad prison run by the Interior Ministry, where some 170 men, most of them Sunni and most of them starved or tortured, were found.

The danger this development poses to Iraq, and to the prospects of a successful end to the U.S. mission there, ought to be obvious. A dirty war conducted by the Iraqi government against one ethnic group will make civil war inevitable. It will render impossible a political accord among Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds, while increasing the likelihood that Iraq will splinter. U.S. commanders will be unable to hand responsibility off to Iraqi forces without inviting a bloodbath, and the training mission that President Bush described at length in his speech on Wednesday will be utterly discredited. If there is to be any chance of achieving Mr. Bush's goals of a united and democratic Iraq that protects the rights of its minorities, the state-sponsored death squads and torture chambers must be dismantled.

Once again, however, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld is ignoring a critical threat. Just as he dismissed the insurgency

in its formative months as a few "deadenders" and minimized the systematic breakdown of U.S. discipline in the handling of foreign prisoners as isolated freelancing, Mr. Rumsfeld now pretends not even to know about the government death squads. In a press conference last week, he called the reports "unverified comments." This despite the facts that U.S. troops uncovered the clandestine prison and that officials from the Army, FBI, Justice Department and U.S. Embassy are participating in an investigation.

Worse, Mr. Rumsfeld maintained that "the United States does not have a responsibility" to do anything about the crimes of the police forces it established and trained, other than "report it." Even the man he selected to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, could not support such an irresponsible position. Standing alongside Mr. Rumsfeld, he asserted that "it is absolutely the responsibility of every U.S. service member, if they see inhumane treatment being conducted, to intervene to stop it."

If Mr. Rumsfeld's view prevails, Mr. Bush's latest "strategy for victory" in Iraq will be fatally undermined. Many of the death squads are run by the Badr Organization, which is the military wing of the leading party in Iraq's Shiite-led government, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Its leader, Abdul Aziz Hakim, not only refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing in an interview last month with the Post's Ellen Knickmeyer, but asserted that U.S. forces were tying Iraqi hands and should get out of the way so that even tougher tactics could be adopted. Should that happen, any hope for peace in Iraq will be lost.

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[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/03/AR2005120300881\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/03/AR2005120300881_pf.html)

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## **Iraq 'failing to tackle death squads'**

**Peter Beaumont in Baghdad**

**Friday September 29, 2006**

### **The Guardian**

Senior US officials have accused the new Iraqi government - which they previously championed - of failing to deal with the scourge of sectarian death squads, which are dragging the country into civil war.

Fresh figures published yesterday show that more than 250,000 Iraqis have been displaced by the sectarian violence since February. The details emerged in a week which, say US officials, has seen the highest number of suicide bombings recorded - half of them aimed at US-led forces.

As thousands of Iraqi and US troops continued to conduct cordon-and-search operations across the capital, a senior US officer for the first time publicly questioned prime minister Nouri al-Maliki's tactics for quelling the sectarian violence.

"We have to fix this militia issue. We can't have armed militias competing with Iraq's security forces. But I have to trust the prime minister to decide when it is that we do that," said Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, the second-highest-ranking American military official in Baghdad.

His comments echoed those of Major General James Thurman, commander of US military forces in Baghdad, who said last week he believed the question of militias was "a problem that the [Iraqi] government must deal with immediately".

Other senior US officials have begun warning that if the Iraqi government does not take a lead in disarming the militias, the US military might have to do so.

Despite a massive military effort in Baghdad to clear no-go areas of militants, much of the effort has focused on strongholds of Sunni fighters, and has so far had no impact on the slaughter. Instead, a record 7,000 Iraqis have died in the last two months alone. To add to US gloom it was revealed yesterday that the Bush administration is spending \$2bn (£1bn) a week on the campaign in Iraq.

The latest political crisis has come as Iraq faces an escalating security crisis on three fronts: from the nationalist-inspired resistance to the US-led occupation, from al-Qaida and other jihadist groups which are behind most of the suicide attacks, and from a sectarian conflict between Shia and Sunni.

The lack of progress on disarming the militia death squads has been a source of growing tension between the US military and the Iraqi government. That frustration has focused in particular on an agreement between Mr Maliki's government and Jaish al-Mahdi, the militia of the Shia Sadr organisation, whose members are blamed for widespread sectarian murders.

Under the understanding, US forces have been instructed not to conduct aggressive military operations in Sadr City, Jaish al-Mahdi's stronghold, leading to accusations that a safe haven has been created for death squads.



The aftermath of a Baghdad bomb attack - a study published in the Lancet estimates that 655,000 Iraqis have died as a result of the war. Photograph: Getty Images

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Anecdotal evidence has emerged that within Sadr City, clerics and secretive sharia committees have been involved in "legitimising" the killings of Sunnis suspected of being involved in anti-Shia terror. It is said they are at times presiding over kangaroo courts before executions.

According to US officers interviewed by the Guardian, the decision not to confront the major source of the death squads was supported initially by the US because of fears of a full-scale battle with the militia in Sadr City.

"We are talking Berlin in '45 or Stalingrad," said one officer. "That is the conundrum. There is an unwillingness to tackle the problem head-on, but also a recognition that if we don't tackle the militias, death squad activities can only grow."

Instead, a decision was reached to try to bring political pressure to bear on the Sadr organisation, whose parliamentary bloc is crucial in supporting Mr Maliki's government, to bring its militia - illegal under the Iraqi constitution - into line. But with growing doubts over how much the Sadr organisation's leader, the firebrand preacher Moqtada al-Sadr, actually controls the factions within Jaish al-Mahdi, concerns are now growing about the wisdom of that policy.

"There are fractures politically inside Sadr's movement, many of whom don't find him to be sufficiently radical now that he has taken a political course of action," said a senior coalition intelligence official who spoke to reporters in Baghdad.

Sources close to Mr Maliki, defended the policy of political engagement with Jaish al-Mahdi and blamed Iraqi politicians with an interest in seeing Mr Maliki's government fail for fuelling the sense of crisis.

In a separate development a tape emerged yesterday from al-Qaida's leader in Iraq which said that 4,000 foreign insurgents had been killed since the US-led invasion in 2003. The man, who identified himself as Abu Hamza al-Muhajir - also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri - called for chemical and nuclear weapons experts to join the insurgency by targeting large US bases in Iraq.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,1883854,00.html>



**Government Death Squads Ravaging Baghdad**

**By Dahr Jamail and Ali Al-Fadhily, IPS News**

**Posted on October 23, 2006.**

<http://www.alternet.org/story/43335/>

Death squads from the Ministry of Interior posing as Iraqi police are killing more people than ever in the capital, emerging evidence shows.



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The death toll is high -- in all 1,536 bodies were brought to the Baghdad morgue in September. The health ministry announced last month that it will build two new morgues in Baghdad to take their capacity to 250 bodies a day.

Many fear a government hand in more killings to come. The U.S. military has revealed that the 8th Iraqi Police Unit was responsible for the Oct. 1 kidnapping of 26 Sunni food factory workers in the Amil quarter in southwest Baghdad. The bodies of ten of them were later found in Abu Chir neighbourhood in the capital.

Minister for the Interior Jawad al-Bolani announced he is suspending the police unit from official duties, and confining it to base until an investigation is completed.

But sections of the ministry appear responsible for the abductions and killing. Ministry of Interior vehicles were used for the kidnapping in this case, and most men conducting the raid wore Iraqi police uniforms, except for a few who wore black death squad 'uniforms', witnesses said.

The leader of the police unit is under house arrest and faces interrogation for this and other crimes, according to an official announcement.

"It is for sure that they did it," one of the victim's neighbours said on condition of anonymity. "The tortured bodies were found the second day. They came in their official police cars; it is not the first time that they did something like this. They do it all over Baghdad, and we hope they will get proper punishment this time."

Men of the police unit meanwhile do not face imminent punishment. "They are going to be rehabilitated and brought back to service," director-general of the Iraqi police Adnan Thabit said.

The Iraqi Islamic Party, the largest Sunni party, blamed militias with ties to the government and the U.S. military. "The Iraqi Islamic Party asks how could 26 people, women among them, have been transported from Amil to Abu Chir through all those Iraqi and U.S. army checkpoints and patrols," it said in a statement.

The U.S. military has denied any involvement in the killings.

General Yassin al-Dulaimi, deputy minister for the interior, has said on Iraqi television several times that death squads are composed mainly of Iraqi police and army units. His comments reflect differing allegiance and agendas even within the Shia bloc.

General Dulaimi has been trying for long to expose the organised criminal gangs that have been controlling the ministry since its formation -- a formation that was overseen by U.S. authorities.

Dulaimi says he does not believe that the Shia Badr organisation, a large, well-armed and funded militia, has complete control over his ministry. But most residents of Baghdad believe that Badr has complete control over the Baghdad Order Maintenance police force, and use this force to carry out sectarian murders. This force is one of several official security teams in Baghdad.

The force is led by Mehdi al-Gharrawi, who also led similar security units during the U.S.- led attack on Fallujah in November 2004.

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"All criminals who survived the Fallujah crisis after committing genocide and other war crimes were granted higher ranks," Major Amir Jassim from the ministry of defence said. "I and many of my colleagues were not rewarded because we disobeyed orders to set fire to people's houses (in Fallujah) after others looted them." Jassim said the looting and burning of homes in Fallujah during the November siege was ordered from the ministries of interior and defence.

"Now they want to do the same things they did in Fallujah in all Sunni areas so that they ignite a civil war in Iraq," said Jassim, referring to the Shia-dominated ministries. "A civil war is the only guarantee for them to stay in power, looting such incredible amounts of money."

Another official with the ministry of defence, Muntather al-Samarraii, said that both Iran and "collaborators" within the Ministry of Interior are to blame for the widespread sectarian killings.

"I have lists of thousands of corruption cases from within my ministry, and other files to expose to the world," he said, "But the world is not listening. When it does, I am afraid it is going to be too late."

A police officer in Samarraii's office, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that he believed that murderers would not be punished for their crimes.

"They will reward them, believe me, and give them higher ranks," he said. "This is a country that will never stand back on its feet as long as these killers are in power. And the Americans are supporting them by allowing their convoys to move during curfew hours."

While there is little evidence of direct U.S. involvement, questions have arisen over what the U.S. forces have done -- or not done -- to encourage such killings.

A UN human rights report released September last year held interior ministry forces responsible for an organised campaign of detentions, torture and killings. It reported that special police commando units accused of carrying out the killings were recruited from Shia Badr and Mehdi militias, and trained by U.S. forces.

Retired Col. James Steele, who served as advisor on Iraqi security forces to then U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte supervised the training of these forces.

Steele was commander of the U.S. military advisor group in El Salvador 1984-86, while Negroponte was U.S. ambassador to nearby Honduras 1981-85. Negroponte was accused of widespread human rights violations by the Honduras Commission on Human Rights in 1994. The Commission reported the torture and disappearance of at least 184 political workers.

The violations Negroponte oversaw in Honduras were carried out by operatives trained by the CIA, according to a CIA working group set up in 1996 to look into the U.S. role in Honduras.

The CIA records document that his "special intelligence units," better known as "death squads," comprised CIA-trained Honduran armed units which kidnapped, tortured and killed thousands of people suspected of supporting leftist guerrillas.

*Robert Parry's new book is Secrecy & Privilege: Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq.*

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## **Iraq: End Interior Ministry Death Squads** ***Police Must Be Held Accountable for Killings***

(New York, October 29, 2006) – The Iraqi government must move quickly to prosecute all Ministry of Interior personnel responsible for “death squad” killings in Baghdad and elsewhere, Human Rights Watch said today.

“Evidence suggests that Iraqi security forces are involved in these horrific crimes, and thus far the government has not held them accountable,” said Sarah Leah Whitson, director of Human Rights Watch’s Middle East division. “The Iraqi government must stop giving protection to security forces responsible for abduction, torture and murder.”

Every month, hundreds of people are abducted, tortured and killed by what many believe are death squads that include security forces. To terrorize the population, the killers often dump the mutilated corpses in public areas.

Human Rights Watch welcomed the recent suspension from duties of the 8th Iraqi Police Unit pending an investigation into their complicity in abductions and killings. The US military has claimed that the unit was responsible for the October 1 kidnapping of 26 Sunni food factory workers in southwest Baghdad, 10 of whom were later found dead. The news agency Inter Press Service reported that the unit used Ministry of Interior vehicles and, according to witnesses, some wore black “death squad” uniforms.

“The investigation into the 8th Iraqi Police Unit is only a first step,” said Whitson. “It is vital that the government get the evidence to bring criminal prosecutions against those responsible, whatever their rank.”

The Ministry of Interior is responsible for the country’s security forces, some of which have close ties to the two principal Shi`a militias – the Mahdi Army and the Badr Forces. These security forces are believed to be responsible for numerous sectarian killings, operating in some cases as death squads in Baghdad and other provinces. It is not clear to what extent the ministry controls these security forces or whether they are under the effective control of the militias.

Human Rights Watch has examined scores of bodies at the Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad over the past two years that appear to have been victims of execution-style killings, often preceded by torture. Police bring bodies of people killed in violent attacks to the institute in cases requiring criminal investigation. Victims’ family members sometimes have evidence, such as eyewitness accounts of a victim’s arrest, that Ministry of Interior security forces were involved in the killing. In addition, statements by ministry officials and information from international police advisers also point to direct participation or complicity of government security forces in these killings.

Human Rights Watch said that the failure of the Iraqi government to properly vet police recruits, establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and address reports of police abuses have contributed to the crimes

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of the security forces.

By the fall of 2004, a review of the country's police forces by international advisers and the interior ministry deemed between 20,000 and 30,000 police personnel "unsuitable" for the job, but did not remove them from service. The review, which examined police recruitment practices under the Coalition Provisional Authority, showed that some ministry personnel had no basic policing skills and in some cases were completely illiterate.

While Iraqi officials and international advisers made efforts to tackle wide-scale corruption among security and police forces, they gave low priority to establishing monitoring mechanisms and holding accountable those suspected of having abused detainees in their custody.

"Both Iraqi officials and their international advisers are responsible for the lack of effective mechanisms to monitor the post-training conduct of law enforcement personnel," said Whitson.

Since the official end of the US military occupation in June 2004, successive Iraqi governments have failed to adequately address continuing human rights abuses perpetrated by the security forces, including arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention without due process, and wide-spread torture. As a result, a climate of impunity has prevailed.

In January 2005, Human Rights Watch reported on the routine and systematic abuse of detainees in the custody of the Ministry of Interior. Human Rights Watch raised these issues of abuse repeatedly with the relevant governments over the past two years, but with little effect. Since then, Multinational Force and Iraqi investigations have uncovered horrific abuse of detainees in at least two major interior ministry facilities. While the government ordered investigations in these instances, it has never publicly revealed its findings. Worse, it continues to obstruct the pursuit of criminal proceedings against alleged perpetrators.

"The government has consistently ignored abuses by its security forces in hopes that they will bring the violence rampant in Iraq under control," said Whitson. "Today, we know that these forces are a primary source of the violent crime in the country."

<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/10/29/iraq14473.htm>

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## **Iraq's Death Squads: An Instrument Of The Occupation**

**By Ghali Hassan**

Global Research, December 7, 2006

On November 14, 2006 militias and death squads dressed as police commandos kidnapped up to 150 staff and visitors in broad daylight raid – one of daily raids throughout Iraq – on the Higher Education Ministry annexe in central Baghdad. Although some hostages have been released, the fate of others is unknown. It is alleged that large number of the hostages have been tortured and others were murdered. The totality of the raids, kidnapping,

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torture, ongoing civilian massacres and murder were part of the illegal and racist war of aggression perpetrated by the U.S. and Britain against a defenceless nation in disregard of International Law and contempt for International institutions.

Let me state the obvious. The U.S. did not invade Iraq to establish “democracy” and “free Iraqis”. The U.S. invaded and destroyed Iraq in order to humiliate and divide Muslims – Arabs in particular –, protect Israel’s Zionist expansion and control Iraq’s natural wealth. So, the U.S.-imposed democracy by force is fraud. ‘Democracy is like a plant; it grows from bottom up, not from top down’. The U.S. sabotage of democracy in Palestine and U.S. support for Israel’s criminal destruction of Lebanon are just two current examples of U.S. love for democracy. Also the idea that the U.S. and its allies are in Iraq to stabilise the situation is a falsehood. Destabilisation was one of the aims of U.S. foreign policy. The unprovoked war of aggression and the continuing U.S. presence in Iraq, including the illegal building of U.S. military bases and the largest C.I.A. station in the world on Iraqi soil, are major destabilising factors. The U.S. objectives have always been to weaken Iraq, divide the people and control Iraq behind a façade of corrupt stooges, with poorly trained and poorly armed army and police.

Long before the invasion, the U.S. and its allies were involved in the training and arming of tens of thousands of militias and anti-Iraq collaborators....

In “Let a Thousand Militias Bloom” , Arun Gupta writes that *‘the U.S. government is not only aware of these illegal militias but is arming, training and funding them for use in their counter-insurgency operations’*. According to Greg Jaffe of the Wall Street Journal, the “special police commandos” – is being used throughout Iraq and has been conducting criminal assassinations known as the “Salvador option” with the full knowledge of U.S. forces. “Pound for pound, though, they are the toughest force we’ve got”, Col. Dean Franklin, a senior officer in Gen. David Petraeus’s command told Greg Jaffe (WSJ, February 16, 2005). The occupying forces have also succeeded in turning one militia group against the other using the civilian population as a fodder. “And it’s all happening under the eyes of US commanders, who seem unwilling or unable to intervene”, revealed Deborah Davies in a special Channel 4 investigation, ‘Iraq’s Death Squads’.

To destroy Iraq as an independent nation, the U.S. initiated the criminal campaign of “De-Ba’athification”, which implied the liquidation of anyone associated with the Ba’ath Party as well as anyone with anti-Occupation nationalist views. “De-Ba’athification” is simply a murderous campaign for inciting violence and destroying the Iraqi society. Together with the Israeli Mossad, U.S. Special Forces, the pro-Occupation militias and death squads have embarked on deliberate campaign of assassinations and ethnic cleansing. Thousands of scientists, including more than 350 scientists specialized in nuclear science have been assassinated. Thousands of professors, prominent politicians, and medical doctors have been murdered in cold blood. The Ministry of Higher Education reported that at least 210 teachers have been murdered and some 3,700 have fled Iraq to neighbouring countries. According to the UN more than 3,000 Iraqis flee to Syria and Jordan every day to avoid being killed. More than 1.7 million Iraqis have fled the country.

The aim is to create a climate of terror and incite civil war among Iraqis in order to justify the ongoing Occupation of Iraq and the fraudulent “war on terror”. The growing number of daily civilian massacres, rapes and torture of Iraqis by U.S. forces and their collaborators are deliberately ignored by the media, making Iraq the biggest hidden U.S. atrocity in the U.S. history of violence against defenceless people. It is also possible that the violence is

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created to provide a "safety net" for foreign troops' withdrawal and discredit the heroic struggle and Resistance against the Occupation and deny Iraqis victory against the most violent and powerful war machine in history....

The U.S. policy of "let them kill each other" is an integral part of U.S. foreign policy carefully executed to serve U.S. imperialist interests. Hence, the comment of Senator Carl Levin, "We cannot save the Iraqis from themselves", designed to deflect any U.S. responsibility away from war crimes and misleadingly presenting the Occupation as the saviour of Iraqis. We know that the vast majority of Iraqis disagree and want the immediate end of the Occupation. More than 61 per cent of Iraqis approve of the Resistance attacks against the occupying forces. The U.S. and its allies bear full responsibility for the destruction of Iraq and for the death of more than 700,000 innocent Iraqi civilians.

Iraqis have gone many generations without fighting each other. Iraqi (males and females) worked studies and conducted their business in a safe environment. Regardless of their religious affiliations and ethnic backgrounds, the Iraqi people were living in peaceful environment despite the horror of the West-imposed genocidal sanctions. Why have they suddenly started fighting? Why all these crimes and bloodshed did not take place under the government of Saddam Hussein, even when his government was scrutinised by Western NGOs and human rights organisations? Today, these NGOs and human rights organisations have remained silent, preferring to use the fraudulent and farcical trial of Saddam to claim credibility of "defending" human rights. In less than four years, the U.S. and U.S.-trained and armed death squads and militias have destroyed Iraq beyond comprehension.

The immediate arrest of senior police commandos after the raid on the Higher Education Ministry annexes and the immediate release of some hostages shed light on the extent of U.S. complicity in the ongoing crimes against the Iraqi people. Therefore, the longer the U.S. forces stayed in Iraq, the more violence they generate. Only full and immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces and mercenaries will contribute to the end of violence and ongoing suffering of the Iraqi people.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=HAS20061207&articleId=4071>

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## **US-Trained, Supervised Police Slaughtering Iraqi Civilians**

by [francisholland](#)

*Thu Oct 05, 2006 at 07:42:23 AM PST*

### **US Forces Deny Involvement**

The 8th brigade of the Iraqi National Police, trained and organized by the United States to cordon off and "clear" Sunni areas of Baghdad, has been decommissioned by the Iraqi Interior Ministry after witnesses complained that the US-trained and supervised police officers were systematically kidnapping, torturing and killing Iraqi civilians,



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particularly Sunnis.



- [francisholland's diary](#) :: ::

Iraqi authorities said Wednesday that they have suspended an entire brigade of as many as 1,200 police officers for suspected connections to kidnappings and executions.

The Interior Ministry said it would recall and retrain the national police's 8th Brigade, based in the capital, after witnesses reported that men wearing police uniforms were behind the kidnapping Sunday of 26 workers at a south Baghdad meat processing plant.

Six of the workers later were found dead. One who had been shot and left for dead apparently crawled away to a military checkpoint, authorities said.

The decommissioning comes after street protests erupted at one of the police unit's checkpoints in the capital, and U.S. military officials requested that one of the three battalions in the brigade be recalled [

<http://www.latimes.com/...> ]

In the incident Sunday at the frozen-meat processing plant in the south Baghdad neighborhood of Amil, about half a dozen men claiming to be police officers entered and began asking employees for identification cards before ordering most of them into a truck and driving away.

At another location, the employees were beaten and then separated into Sunnis and Shiites, with the Shiites permitted to leave, according to a survivor who was interviewed by investigators from the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

A military source said the kidnappers asked one man, "Why are you working with these Sunnis?" before releasing him.

All of the shooting victims were Sunnis.

Cartridge casings found at the scene of the kidnapping match those used in handguns carried by Iraqi police, but differ from those most commonly used on the street, military investigators said. [<http://www.latimes.com/...> ]

The US Defense Department confirms that it trained and is now actively coordinating the 8th Brigade forces in Baghdad, the forces that civilians say are rounding up, torturing and executing civilians.

Iraqi National Police (INP) from the 8th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, working with Multi-National Division - Baghdad (MND-B) soldiers, searched more than 980 buildings in southern Baghdad's Risalah

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neighborhood Sept. 9.

During the first day of the clearing operation, Iraqi Security Forces and MND-B Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, detained eight suspected terrorists and confiscated more than 30 weapons. [ <http://www.defendamerica.mil/...> ]

According to the US Defense Department, the ongoing "clearing" operation, "Operation Together Forward", is "a joint effort between INP and its Coalition Forces partners from MND-B" that involves "approximately 15,000 Coalition Forces". [ <http://www.defendamerica.mil/...> ]

To address the documented murders of civilians by US-supervised police, "U.S. military officials said members of the 8th Brigade would be retrained by Iraqis under U.S. guidance, and some officers might lose their jobs or face prosecution." Meanwhile, "Iraqi Ministry of Health statistics released Wednesday show that 2,667 civilians died violently in September, and 2,994 were injured. A substantial number of them fell victim to death squads, which often pull passersby off sidewalks, seize people from their homes, or drag motorists out of their cars. Their bodies often are found bearing gunshot wounds and signs of torture." [ <http://www.latimes.com/...> ]

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has held El Salvador up as a model for Iraq. And during the recent Vice Presidential debates, Vice President Dick Cheney stated, "Twenty years ago we had a similar situation in El Salvador. We had a guerilla insurgency that controlled roughly a third of the country, 75,000 people dead. And we held free elections ... And today El Salvador is a whale of a lot better because we held free elections." According to a 1993 U.N.-sponsored truth commission, however, up to "90 percent of the atrocities in the conflict "were committed by the U.S.-sponsored army and its surrogates, "with the rebels responsible for 5 percent and the remaining 5 percent undetermined." These death squads "abducted members of the civilian population and of rebel groups.

They tortured their hostages, were responsible for their disappearance and usually executed them." [ <http://www.alternet.org/waroniraq/20941/> ]

36,000 Iraqis will die in the next 12 months if this rate of killing remains constant.

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/10/5/104223/348>

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**World Socialist Web Site [www.wsws.org](http://www.wsws.org)**

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**Torture and civilian deaths reach record levels in Iraq**

**By Peter Symonds**  
**23 September 2006**

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The latest UN findings on Iraq provide a devastating picture of torture, escalating civilian deaths and lawlessness that represents a damning indictment of US-led occupation. Three years after the illegal invasion, the violent activities of the US military and its allies in suppressing any opposition have been supplemented by a spiralling sectarian civil war.

According to a United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) report released on Wednesday, the civilian death toll throughout the country reached a record of 6,599 for July and August, or more than 100 a day, up from 5,818 for previous two months. The UNAMI figures plot a rise from 710 in January to 1,129 in April and 3,149 in June followed by 3,590 in July and 3,009 in August.

The actual toll is likely to be far higher. UNAMI estimates are based on two sources: the Ministry of Health, which records deaths reported by hospitals, and the Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad, which tallies the unidentified bodies it receives. During July, the health ministry reported no deaths in Anbar province—the region of fiercest resistance to the US military.

UNAMI stated it continued to receive reports of US-led forces participating “in incidents of excessive use of force and restrictions imposed on the movement of civilians”. Deaths are also being caused by anti-US resistance groups as well as criminal gangs. However, the huge toll is increasingly due to sectarian violence.

“These killings reflect the fact that indiscriminate killings of civilians have continued throughout the country, while hundreds of bodies appear bearing signs of severe torture and execution-style killing. Such murders are carried out by death squads or by armed groups, with sectarian or revenge connotations,” the report stated.

UNAMI also pointed to rising numbers of “honour killings” of women, with an increase of women and girls shot through the chest, rather than the head. According to local informants, extremist Sunnis and Shiites have created secretive sharia committees, responsible for the brutal enforcement of their regressive moral codes for women.

Most of the killings—5,106 for July and August—took place in Baghdad, which has been turned into a battleground between sectarian militia. Violent attacks and reprisals involving the often-arbitrary killing of civilians are a daily occurrence. A city of more than five million people, or about 20 percent of the total population, that once prided itself on its cosmopolitanism is being carved into ethnically cleansed suburbs.

The UNAMI report estimated that 300,000 people have been displaced from their homes since February when the bombing of the Al-Askariya mosque in the city of Samarra triggered a sharp rise in communal violence. UN secretary general Kofi Annan warned on Monday of a “grave danger that the Iraqi state will break down, possibly in the midst of a full-scale civil war”.

The responsibility for this sectarian carnage rests with the Bush administration, which has relied on Shiite fundamentalist and Kurdish nationalist parties to impose its rule in Iraq. Many of the gangs of killers that operate inside the police force, including the Interior Ministry’s notorious Wolf Brigade, were established by American operatives in 2004 and modelled on US-backed right-wing death squads in Latin America. A growing stream of US commentators have this year openly advocated the partition of Iraq on communal and sectarian lines as the means for bring the country and its oil firmly under US control.

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It is no surprise that shadowy government forces and various militia groups operate networks of secret torture chambers throughout Baghdad. Washington's handpicked prime minister Awad Allawi set the example in 2004 when, according to eyewitness accounts to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, he personally shot dead at least six handcuffed prisoners in Baghdad's Al-Amariyah security centre in front of police and US military personnel. As one of the eyewitnesses declared: "Allawi wanted to send a message to his policemen and soldiers not to be scared if they kill anyone."

Torture and brutal executions are now an everyday occurrence. The UNAMI report stated: "Bodies found at the Medico-Legal Institute often bear signs of severe torture, including acid-induced injuries and burns caused by chemical substances, missing skin, broken bones (back, hands and legs), missing eyes, missing teeth and wounds caused by power drills and nails."

Speaking in Geneva on Thursday, Manfred Nowak, the UN's special rapporteur on torture and cruelty, declared that torture was "totally out of hand" in Iraq. "The situation is so bad many people say it is worse than it had been in the times of Saddam Hussein," he said. "You have terrorist groups, you have the military, you have police, you have these militias. There are so many people who are abducted, seriously tortured and finally killed."

Nowak conducted extensive interviews with Iraqi refugees in neighbouring Jordan. He said he received allegations of torture in prisons run by Iraq's interior and defence ministries as well as jails under the control of the US and its allies. "Many of these allegations, I have no doubt that they are credible," he said. Nowak called for the full publication of the results of a government inquiry into human rights violations at Al-Jadiriya detention centre in November 2005.

Speaking to the London *Times*, a US State Department official vehemently rejected Nowak's statements, saying: "How anyone could compare state-sanctioned torture under a dictator to the situation today is beyond us." Torture, however, is exactly what the Bush administration has sanctioned not only in Baghdad, but Guantánamo Bay and a network of CIA-run prisons around the world. Nowak diplomatically declared that the situation appeared to have improved since the exposure of US abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib. But there is no independent confirmation of the current conditions inside US military prisons in Iraq.

The UNAMI report said 35,000 Iraqis were being held in detention at the end of August, a 28 percent increase from the end of June. Of those, 13,571 were being held by US and other foreign forces, which continue to conduct arbitrary, widespread searches and detentions. All the prisoners in US custody are being held indefinitely without charge, in flagrant violation of their basic democratic rights. As of September 9, only 1,445 had been put on trial in Iraqi courts, and 1,252 convicted.

Ex-detainee Mouayad Yasin Hassan told Associated Press last weekend that he was detained "for security reasons" in April 2004 and held for 13 months at Abu Ghraib and Bucca where he was interrogated incessantly. He was refused a lawyer or any contact with his family. Another former prisoner Waleed Abdul Karim, who was incensed about his treatment in a US military jail, declared: "I will hate Americans for the rest of my life."

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In a report to the UN Security Council on September 1, secretary general Annan tentatively expressed "concern" that arbitrary detention and torture continued to be widespread. "On June 1 2006, a joint inspection of a prison site by representatives of the Iraqi Government and the Multinational Force found 1,431 detainees with signs of physical and psychological abuse. A total of 52 arrest warrants have been issued against officials of the Ministry of the Interior but they have yet to be served," he stated.

Torture and execution-style killings are continuing unabated. Over the past week, nearly 200 bodies have been found in the capital. US military spokesman Major General William Caldwell declared on Wednesday that there had been "a spike", saying: "Many bodies found had clear signs of being bound, tortured and executed. We believe death squads and other illegal armed groups are responsible for this type of violence." Given the origins of the death squads, however, the involvement of US forces certainly cannot be ruled out.

[http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/sep2006/iraq-s23\\_prn.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/sep2006/iraq-s23_prn.shtml)

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## **CIA-Sponsored Death Squads Rampant in Iraq**

by [francisholland](#)

*Wed Sep 20, 2006 at 07:40:01 AM PST*

How could we have been so blind, decrying the scores of daily deaths of Iraqis without ever demanding the end of the **CIA-sponsored death squads** there? Many of us have been comparing the war in Iraq to Vietnam without focusing on the more obvious parallels to the modus operandi and US personnel that Iraq shares with the previous US-sponsored conflicts in the El Salvador and Guatemala of the 1980's. The difference is crucially important, because it is the key to the source of the rampant "unexplained" and "unattributed" deaths of Iraqis that we read of in the papers each day. To determine who is doing all the death-squad killing in Iraq, lets just add up what President has told us, factor in the post-Central America anti-insurgency team he has appointed, and then draw the dreadfully obvious and necessary conclusions.

- [francisholland's diary](#) :: ::

For five years, the President has told us that:

- (1) "I do think Iraq is a central front in the war on terror", [ <http://www.cbsnews.com/...> ] and he has said,
- (2) "To win the war on terror, we must be able to detain, **question** and, when appropriate, prosecute terrorists captured here in America and on the battlefields around the world." [ <http://www.cnn.com/...> ], and Bush further insists incessantly that he
- (3) Must use "all the tools" of anti-insurgency in Iraq. [ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/...> ]

Meanwhile, each day even the MSM reports one or more Iraq stories to the effect that,

Authorities in the capital discovered the bodies of six men who were blindfolded, handcuffed and shot in the back of the head, police said. [ <http://www.americanchronicle.com/...> ]

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[G]unmen, militias, and paramilitary armies have attacked buses and minivans, killing all aboard, and they have carried out mass kidnappings of scores of Iraqis at a time. [ <http://www.military.com/...> ]

Since early 2005, gruesome finds of groups of corpses, often showing signs of execution or torture, have been becoming increasingly common. [ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/...> ]

Although Bush hasn't specifically stated (to my knowledge) that death squads are among "all of the tools" he is using *per se*, Alternet.com points out that the modus operandi of the death squads operating in the US's Iraq conflict is identical to the modus operandi of the US Government's counter-insurgency techniques in the Central America in the 1980's.

Amnesty International characterized the Salvadoran death squads as "official personnel acting in civilian clothes under the direction of superior officers." A 1989 Amnesty report, El Salvador "Death Squads"-A Government Strategy, identified a "persistent pattern of gross human rights violations by the Salvadoran armed forces" including "arbitrary arrest, torture, disappearance and extrajudicial execution."

Although human rights groups have continually linked death squad activities to the Salvadoran government, most U.S. media have reported on death squads as if they were a mysterious, independent force. This convenient fiction allows the U.S. government to continue providing massive military aid to the Salvadoran government as it commits horrendous cruelties-all in the name of promoting "democracy." [ <http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/...> ]

To deal with the skyrocketing insurgency, the Pentagon is considering creating secret death squads in Iraq. Now, the Pentagon's brave new solution for democracy in the Middle East is to revisit the reprehensible "Salvador Option," the clandestine operation implemented by the Reagan White House in the 1980s in El Salvador. According to Newsweek, "Back then, faced with losing a war against the Salvadoran rebels, the United States government funded "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads which killed scores of innocent civilians." Today, according to an explosive new article in Newsweek, the Pentagon dusted off that model and has a proposal on the table to "advise, support and possibly train" secret Iraqi squads, "most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria."

It's unclear whether the current proposed policy would direct the Iraqi squads to assassinate their targets or "snatch" them and send them to secret facilities for interrogation. In plain language: the squads would be either hit men or kidnapper/torturers. [ <http://www.alternet.org/...> ]

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has held El Salvador up as a model for Iraq. And during the recent Vice Presidential debates, Vice President Dick Cheney stated, "Twenty years ago we had a similar situation in El Salvador. We had a guerilla insurgency that controlled roughly a third of the country, 75,000 people dead. And we held free elections ... And today El Salvador is a whale of a lot better because we held free elections." According to a 1993 U.N.-sponsored truth commission, however, up to "90 percent of the atrocities in the conflict "were committed by the U.S.-sponsored army and its surrogates, "with the rebels responsible for 5 percent and the remaining 5 percent undetermined." These death squads "abducted members of the civilian population and of rebel groups. They tortured their hostages, were responsible for their disappearance and usually executed them." [ <http://www.alternet.org/...> ]

President Bush also appointed neocon Elliot Abrams to be his senior adviser on the Middle East. Abrams was also a staunch supporter of the Salvador Option in the 1980s: when newspapers "reported that a U.S.-trained military



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unit had massacred hundreds of villagers in the tiny Salvadoran hamlet of El Mozote, Abrams told Congress the story was nothing but communist propaganda." When confronted with the United Nations report that the vast majority of "atrocities in El Salvador's civil war were committed by Reagan-assisted death squads," Abrams's response: "The administration's record on El Salvador is one of fabulous achievements." Abrams was convicted of lying to Congress about Iran-Contra in 1987 - he was pardoned by George H.W. Bush in 1992. [<http://www.alternet.org/...>]

The US has even hired as contractors thousands of the very same people previously responsible for US-sponsored extra-judicial killings and death squad activity in Latin America. [<http://www.alternet.org/...>]

Blackwater USA [US contractor in Iraq] has sent recruiters to Chile, Peru, Argentina, Colombia and Guatemala for one specific reason alone," said an intelligence officer in Kuwait who requested anonymity. "All these countries experienced dirty wars and they have military men well-trained in dealing with internal subversives. They are well-versed in extracting confessions from prisoners. [<http://www.alternet.org/...>]

So, if Bush says that it is necessary to torture people in the Iraqi "central front" of the terror war, and then he moves the US death-squad personnel to Iraq, and then thousands of tortured Iraqis are found dead in the streets, just like in San Salvador [<http://www.pbs.org/...>] and Guatemala City, [<http://www.gwu.edu/...>] we have to draw the obvious conclusion that CIA-sponsored death squads are rampant in the rampant daily killings occurring in Iraq.

To my incomplete knowledge, the Administration has yet to admit that death squads are US policy in Iraq, but US policy in Central America was to deny the US of death squads as well.

With continuing reports of atrocities and murders in El Salvador, the U.S. Congress no longer accepted the State Department's assurance that things were getting better. Speaker of the House Tom Foley created a special task force to monitor El Salvador's investigation of the murders. Congressman Joe Moakley of Massachusetts was selected to head up the investigation. During his research and visits to El Salvador, Congressman Moakley encountered a massive cover-up, deep problems with the Salvadoran armed forces, conspiracy and lies, which led him to challenge U.S. policy. [<http://www.pbs.org/...>]

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Above, I quoted Bush saying that he would "question [torture] and, when appropriate, prosecute terrorists." But what does Bush do with those whom he deems to be suspected or potential terrorists when he does NOT deem it "appropriate" to formally prosecute them? Does he simply let them go or do they end up dead by the score on the streets of Iraq, "blindfolded, handcuffed and shot in the back of the head" [<http://www.americanchronicle.com/...>] "showing signs of execution or torture"? [<http://news.bbc.co.uk/...>]

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History and the President's own words and deeds speak for themselves. [ <http://www.alternet.org/...> ] The US is certainly sponsoring or directly organizing the death squads that are killing thousands of Iraqi, many more than are being killed in direct confrontations with US troops.

I don't think the majority of the US public favors anonymous US-sponsored death squads that kill dozens of people a day. It's time for the public and Democratic members of Congress to conduct investigations and render a full accounting of US-sponsored death-squad activity in Iraq, just as Congressman Joe Moakley of Massachusetts led such investigations in the 1980's, as part of the effort to stop it. [ <http://www.serendipity.li/...> ]. [ <http://www.amnestyusa.org/...> ] "Our" Government, which operates in our name, should not be rounding up dozens of Iraqis each day and shooting them in the back of the head.  
<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/9/20/10401/8655>

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## **San Francisco Indymedia**

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Original article is at <http://sf.indymedia.org/news/2006/06/1729966.php> [Print comments](#).

### **You can't teach old collaborators human rights**

by Duncan McFarlane (repost) *Monday, Jun. 19, 2006 at 12:54 AM*

By Duncan McFarlane

Some of the same British military intelligence units and officers involved in collusion with terrorist death squads in the killing of civil rights lawyer Patrick Finucane and other innocent people in Northern Ireland were also involved in the killing of Jean Charles De Menezes. The same people are also involved in 'counter-terrorism' in Iraq.

"Patrick Finucane was a prominent criminal defence and civil rights lawyer; his was one of the leading law firms in the 1980s in Northern Ireland acting in defence of those detained or charged under emergency legislation. He was instrumental in raising fair trial issues in the courts, arguing against practices which were in violation of international human rights standards. He was shot dead by two masked men on 12 February 1989 in front of his wife and his three children at their home in Belfast, Northern Ireland."

Amnesty International 'Patrick Finucane's killing: Official collusion and cover-up'(1)

The murder of civil rights lawyer Pat Finucane in 1989 was the result of collusion between the Ulster Defence Association – a loyalist terrorist organisation – and a British military intelligence unit – the Forces Research Unit or FRU which was headed by one Gordon Kerr from 1987 to 1991. The FRU included the intelligence 'handler' of UDA man Brian Nelson who was involved in the Finucane murder. The FRU were also involved in the murder by the UDA of at least 14 other people – mostly innocent of any connection to the IRA. Some like Finucane acted as defence lawyers for people suspected by the FRU of being in the IRA – and on that basis the FRU passed their lawyers' names to the UDA death squads. Several people have also testified that they were employed as FRU double agents in the IRA during the 1980s and in the Real IRA cell which carried out the Omagh bombing which

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killed 29 people in 1998 (After 1991 the FRU was renamed the 'Joint Services Group'). They claim the FRU allowed bombings to go ahead rather than risk blowing their agents' cover – bringing in to question what the FRU's real motives were if they weren't to prevent terrorist attacks (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9).

You might think that there would have been charges brought against FRU members when this was revealed. Instead the FRU are now re-deployed in Britain and Iraq for under the new name of the Joint Services Group (JSG) (10). Kerr was promoted to Brigadier and given a posting at the British embassy in Beijing where he would have diplomatic immunity from prosecution (11). Geoff Hoon as Defence Minister in 2000 got a court injunction banning a Northern Irish newspaper from reporting on a court case charging British military intelligence with collusion in the murder of a 66 year old Catholic man - Francisco Notorantonio – in Belfast in 1987 (12).

After the Iraq war 'ended' in May 2003 Kerr was sent to direct intelligence operations in Iraq. By May 2005 another of the British military intelligence units involved in the 'dirty war' in Northern Ireland – the 14th Intelligence Detachment – nicknamed the '14th' or 'the Det' - was renamed the Special Reconnaissance Regiment (SRR) responsible for 'counter-terrorism' operations in Iraq and the UK. Brigadier Gordon Kerr was appointed the head of the SRR. (13,14,15). All retain immunity from prosecution – this time that held by all coalition troops in Iraq at the demand of the Bush administration as occupying power (16).

True to old form in Northern Ireland we now know that the SRR have already been involved in getting at least one more innocent person killed. On the day that the Brazilian Jean Charles De Menezes was killed by armed police in the London underground at least one member of the Special Reconnaissance Regiment was the man who wrongly identified him as possibly being one of the July the 7th bombers. The government and the Metropolitan Police have refused to answer questions about whether more than one member of the SRR was involved in the surveillance team following Menezes (17,18,19).

The Scotsman newspaper also reported that the two SAS men arrested by Iraqi police last August for allegedly driving around with automatic weapons and bomb making equipment were also under the command of the SRR – which would also put them under the command of Brigadier Gordon Kerr as head of that unit (20). Iraqi journalists hired by companies like CBS are frequently shot, jailed without charge and accused or 'aiding insurgents by their actions' or disappeared by US forces if they film the aftermath of terrorist bombings according to reports by the New York Times and Wall Street Journal (21,22)

The advanced bombs or 'improvised explosive devices' (IEDs) being used against British forces in Iraq are also apparently a legacy of the FRU's time in Northern Ireland. Using the logic that if they knew how the IRA made its bombs they could defuse them more easily the FRU was involved in using double agents to give the IRA the technology to make advanced bombs triggered by beams of light. The IRA used these against RUC police officers. It has been speculated that they then sold or shared the technology with the PLO and Hezbollah who traded it on to Iraqi insurgents – but how the technology was transferred to Iraq and by who remains uncertain (23).

Just as human rights lawyers were seen as 'IRA' by the FRU and their UDA terrorist allies and often assassinated in Northern Ireland so Iraqi academics who speak out against the occupation are routinely assassinated (24). There is no specific evidence that the Special Reconnaissance Regiment or the Joint research Group are involved in organising these assassinations but we do know that the tactic of collusion with terrorist death squad killings in

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Northern Ireland and there is no reason to think their tactics will have changed much given that many of their personnel – like Kerr – are unchanged.

There are death and torture squads linked to many different militias, to the coalition backed Iraqi government , and – according to Iraqi exile Sami Ramadani – to former Iraqi Prime Minister and ex-CIA funded terrorist Iyad Allawi (25,26,27).

US units are similarly involved in co-operating with extremely dubious groups in Iraq – including some of Saddam's torturers in the new Pentagon funded secret police , the Iraqi police and the fanatical Shia 'Wolf Brigade'. The 'Wolf Brigade' consider all Sunnis to be apostates rather than Muslims and have the same kind of relationship with US forces that paramilitaries like the Serbian extremists of Arkan's Tigers had with the Yugoslav military in the Bosnian War – i.e. US forces can deny responsibility for killings and torture carried out by Iraqi government paramilitaries they trained (28,29,30,31,32,33).

All of this is a long way from a war 'against terrorism' or for 'human rights' and 'democracy'. You can't teach human rights to torturers like the Mukhabarat, fanatics like the Wolf Brigade or old collaborators with terrorists like the SRR and JSG who were the FRU and 'Det' of the dirty war in Northern Ireland. To employ these people is to continue human rights abuses against guilty and innocent alike. Iraqis are not safer with them operating in Iraq with the immunity from prosecution held by all coalition forces there - and the killing of Jean Charles De Menezes showed that people in Britain aren't safe from them either.

It's time that people with a record of collaborating in terrorist murders were out of the military and in front of the courts so that we can eliminate the additional dangers of their 'counter-terrorism' operations and replace them with people who can be trusted. In Northern Ireland they were neither right nor effective – their collusion in UDA terrorist murders helped create a surge in recruitment and support for IRA terrorists in the 80s. The De Menezes case showed that they are just as much of a liability now.

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## **Countless My Lai Massacres in Iraq**

**By Dahr Jamail**

**05/30/06 "[truthout](#)"** -- The media feeding frenzy around what has been referred to as "Iraq's My Lai" has become frenetic. Focus on US Marines slaughtering at least 20 civilians in Haditha last November is reminiscent of the media spasm around the "scandal" of Abu Ghraib during April and May 2004.

Yet just like Abu Ghraib, while the media spotlight shines squarely on the Haditha massacre, countless atrocities continue daily, conveniently out of the awareness of the general public. Torture did not stop simply because the media finally decided, albeit in horribly belated fashion, to cover the story, and the daily slaughter of Iraqi civilians by US forces and US-backed Iraqi "security" forces had not stopped either.

Earlier this month, I received a news release from Iraq, which read, "On Saturday, May 13th, 2006, at 10:00 p.m., US Forces accompanied by the Iraqi National Guard attacked the houses of Iraqi people in the Al-Latifya district

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south of Baghdad by an intensive helicopter shelling. This led the families to flee to the Al-Mazar and water canals to protect themselves from the fierce shelling. Then seven helicopters landed to pursue the families who fled ... and killed them. The number of victims amounted to more than 25 martyrs. US forces detained another six persons including two women named Israa Ahmed Hasan and Widad Ahmed Hasan, and a child named Huda Hitham Mohammed Hasan, whose father was killed during the shelling."

The report from the Iraqi NGO called The Monitoring Net of Human Rights in Iraq (MHRI) continued, "The forces didn't stop at this limit. They held an attack on May 15th, 2006, supported also by the Iraqi National Guards. They also attacked the families' houses, and arrested a number of them while others fled. US snipers then used the homes to target more Iraqis. The reason for this crime was due to the downing of a helicopter in an area close to where the forces held their attack."

The US military preferred to report the incident as an offensive where they killed 41 "insurgents," a line effectively parroted by much of the media.

On that same day, MHRI also reported that in the Yarmouk district of Baghdad, US forces raided the home of Essam Fitian al-Rawi. Al-Rawi was killed along with his son Ahmed; then the soldiers reportedly removed the two bodies along with Al-Rawi's nephew, who was detained.

Similarly, in the city of Samara on May 5, MHRI reported, "American soldiers entered the house of Mr. Zidan Khalif Al-Heed after an attack upon American soldiers was launched nearby the house. American soldiers entered this home and killed the family, including the father, mother and daughter who is in the 6th grade, along with their son, who was suffering from mental and physical disabilities."

This same group, MHRI, also estimated that between 4,000 and 6,000 Iraqi civilians were killed during the November 2004 US assault on Fallujah. Numbers which make those from the Haditha massacre pale in comparison.

Instead of reporting incidents such as these, mainstream outlets are referring to the Haditha slaughter as one of a few cases that "present the most serious challenge to US handling of the Iraq war since the Abu Ghraib prison scandal."

Marc Garlasco, of Human Rights Watch, told reporters recently, "What happened at Haditha appears to be outright murder. The Haditha massacre will go down as Iraq's My Lai."

Then there is the daily reality of sectarian and ethnic cleansing in Iraq, which is being carried out by US-backed Iraqi "security" forces. A recent example of this was provided by a representative of the Voice of Freedom Association for Human Rights, another Iraqi NGO which logs ongoing atrocities resulting from the US occupation.

"The representative ... visited Fursan Village (Bani Zaid) with the Iraqi Red Crescent Al-Madayin Branch. The village of 60 houses, inhabited by Sunni families, was attacked on February 27, 2006, by groups of men wearing black clothes and driving cars from the Ministry of Interior. Most of the villagers escaped, but eight were caught and immediately executed. One of them was the Imam of the village mosque, Abu Aisha, and another was a 10-

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year-old boy, Adnan Madab. They were executed inside the room where they were hiding. Many animals (sheep, cows and dogs) were shot by the armed men also. The village mosque and most of the houses were destroyed and burnt."

The representative had obtained the information when four men who had fled the scene of the massacre returned to provide the details. The other survivors had all left to seek refuge in Baghdad. "The survivors who returned to give the details guided the representative and the Red Crescent personnel to where the bodies had been buried. They [the bodies] were of men, women and one of the village babies."

The director of MHRI, Muhamad T. Al-Deraji, said of this incident, "This situation is a simple part of a larger problem that is orchestrated by the government ... the delay in protecting more villagers from this will only increase the number of tragedies."

Arun Gupta, an investigative journalist and editor with the New York Independent newspaper of the New York Independent Media Center, has written extensively about US-backed militias and death squads in Iraq. He is also the former editor at the Guardian weekly in New York and writes frequently for Z Magazine and Left Turn.

"The fact is, while I think the militias have, to a degree, spiraled out of US control, it's the US who trains, arms, funds, and supplies all the police and military forces, and gives them critical logistical support," he told me this week. "For instance, there were reports at the beginning of the year that a US army unit caught a "death squad" operating inside the Iraqi Highway Patrol. There were the usual claims that the US has nothing to do with them. It's all a big lie. The American reporters are lazy. If they did just a little digging, there is loads of material out there showing how the US set up the highway patrol, established a special training academy just for them, equipped them, armed them, built all their bases, etc. It's all in government documents, so it's irrefutable. But then they tell the media we have nothing to do with them and they don't even fact check it. In any case, I think the story is significant only insofar as it shows how the US tries to cover up its involvement."

Once again, like Abu Ghraib, a few US soldiers are being investigated about what occurred in Haditha. The "few bad apples" scenario is being repeated in order to obscure the fact that Iraqis are being slaughtered every single day. The "shoot first ask questions later" policy, which has been in effect from nearly the beginning in Iraq, creates trigger-happy American soldiers and US-backed Iraqi death squads who have no respect for the lives of the Iraqi people. Yet, rather than high-ranking members of the Bush administration who give the orders, including Bush himself, being tried for the war crimes they are most certainly guilty of, we have the ceremonial "public hanging" of a few lowly soldiers for their crimes committed on the ground.

In an interview with CNN on May 29th concerning the Haditha massacre, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace commented, "It's going to be a couple more weeks before those investigations are complete, and we should not prejudge the outcome. But we should, in fact, as leaders take on the responsibility to get out and talk to our troops and make sure that they understand that what 99.9 percent of them are doing, which is fighting with honor and courage, is exactly what we expect of them."

This is the same Peter Pace who when asked how things were going in Iraq by Tim Russert on Meet the Press this past March 5th said, "I'd say they're going well. I wouldn't put a great big smiley face on it, but I would say they're



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going very, very well from everything you look at ..."

Things are not "going very, very well" in Iraq. There have been countless My Lai massacres, and we cannot blame 0.1% of the soldiers on the ground in Iraq for killing as many as a quarter of a million Iraqis, when it is the policies of the Bush administration that generated the failed occupation to begin with.

Dahr Jamail is an independent journalist who spent over 8 months reporting from occupied Iraq. He presented evidence of US war crimes in Iraq at the International Commission of Inquiry on Crimes Against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration in New York City in January 2006. He writes regularly for TruthOut, Inter Press Service, Asia Times and TomDispatch, and maintains his own web site, [dahrjamailiraq.com](http://dahrjamailiraq.com).

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article13427.htm>

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## **"Victory"? Forget it**

**Bush is trying to keep Americans from abandoning his disastrous war by claiming victory is at hand. But even his own generals know that's a lie.**

**By Sidney Blumenthal**

**05/25/06 "Salon"** -- -- When new Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Kamel al-Maliki unveiled his government last week, five months after his country's elections, and was unable to appoint ministers of defense and interior, President Bush hailed it as a "turning point." And that was just one month after Maliki's mentor, former Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafaari, to whom he had been loyal deputy, installed in the position through the support of radical Shiite cleric [Muqtada al-Sadr](#), was forced to relinquish his office through U.S. pressure.

Bush has been proclaiming Iraq at a turning point for years. "Turning point" is a frequent and recurring talking point, often taken up by the full chorus of the president ("We've reached another great turning point," Nov. 6, 2003; "A turning point will come in less than two weeks," June 18, 2004), vice president ("I think about when we look back and get some historical perspective on this period, I'll believe that the period we were in through 2005 was, in fact, a turning point," Feb. 7, 2006), secretary of state and secretary of defense, and ringing down the echo chamber.

This latest "turning point" reveals an Iraqi state without a social contract, a government without a center, a prime minister without power and an American president without a strategy. Each sectarian group maintains its own militia. Each leader's influence rests on these armed bands, separate armies of tens of thousands of men. The militias have infiltrated and taken over key units of the Iraqi army and local police, using them as death squads, protection rackets and deterrent forces against enemies. Reliable statistics are impossible, but knowledgeable reporters estimate there are about 40 assassinations a day in Iraq. Ethnic cleansing is sweeping the country. From Kirkuk in the north to Baghdad in the middle to Basra in the south, Kurds are driving out Turkmen and Arabs, Shiites are killing Sunnis, and the insurgency enjoys near unanimous support among Sunnis. Contrary to Bush's blanket rhetoric about "terrorists" and constant reference to the insurgency as "the enemy," "foreign fighters are a small component of the insurgency," according to Anthony H. Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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Patrick Cockburn, one of the most accurate and intrepid journalists in Iraq, wrote last week in the Independent of London that "the overall security situation in Iraq is far worse than it was a year ago. Baghdad and central Iraq, where Shia, Sunni and Kurd are mixed, is in the grip of a civil war fought by assassins and death squads. As in Bosnia in 1992, each community is pulling back into enclaves where it is the overwhelming majority and able to defend itself."

While Prime Minister Maliki has declared his intention to enforce an unused militia-demobilization decree proclaimed by the now disbanded Coalition Provisional Authority in 2004, he has made no gesture beyond his statement, and no Iraqi leader has volunteered to be the first test case of demobilization. The New York Times Wednesday cited an American official on the absence of action on this front: "'They need to begin by setting examples,' an American official in Baghdad said of the Iraqi government. 'It is just very noticeable to me that they are not making any examples.' 'None,' the official said. 'Zero.'"

Maliki's inability to fill the posts of minister of defense and minister of the interior reflects the control of the means of violence by factions and sects unwilling to cede it to a central authority. Inside the new government, ministries are being operated as sectarian fiefdoms. The vacuum at the Defense and Interior ministries represents a state of civil war in which no one can be vested with power above all.

In his speech on Monday referring to another "turning point," President Bush twice spoke of "victory." "Victory" is the constant theme he has adopted since last summer, when he hired public opinion specialist Peter Feaver for the National Security Council. Feaver's research claims that the public will sustain military casualties so long as it is persuaded that they will lead to "victory." Bush clings to this P.R. formula to explain, at least to himself, the decline of his political fortunes. "Because we're at war, and war unsettles people," he said in an interview with NBC News last week. To make sense of the disconcerting war, he imposes his familiar framework of us vs. them, "the enemy" who gets "on your TV screen by killing innocent people" against himself.

In his Monday speech, Bush reverted yet again to citing Sept. 11, 2001, as the ultimate justification for the Iraq war. Defiant in the face of terrorists, he repeated whole paragraphs from his 2004 campaign stump speech. "That's just the lessons of September the 11th that I refuse to forget," he said. Stung by the dissent of the former commanders of the U.S. Army in Iraq who have demanded the firing of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Bush reassured the audience that he listens to generals. "I make my mind up based not upon politics or political opinion polls, but based upon what the commanders on the ground tell me is going on," he said.

Yet currently serving U.S. military commanders have been explicitly telling him for more than two years, and making public their view, that there is no purely military solution in Iraq. For example, Gen. John Abizaid, the U.S. commander, said on April 12, 2004: "There is not a purely U.S. military solution to any of the particular problems that we're facing here in Iraq today."

Newsweek [reported](#) this week that the U.S. military, in fact, is no longer pursuing a strategy for "victory." "It is consolidating to several 'superbases' in hopes that its continued presence will prevent Iraq from succumbing to full-blown civil war and turning into a failed state. Pentagon strategists admit they have not figured out how to move to superbases, as a way of reducing the pressure -- and casualties -- inflicted on the U.S. Army, while at the same time remaining embedded with Iraqi police and military units. It is a circle no one has squared. But

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consolidation plans are moving ahead as a default position, and U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad has talked frankly about containing the spillover from Iraq's chaos in the region."

Yet Bush continues to declare as his goal (with encouragement from his polling expert on the NSC) the victory that the U.S. military has given up on. And he continues to wave the banner of a military solution against "the enemy," although this "enemy" consists of a Sunni insurgency whose leadership must eventually be conciliated and brought into a federal Iraqi government and of which the criminal Abu Musab al-Zarqawi faction and foreign fighters are a small part.

Bush's belief in a military solution, moreover, renders moot progress on a political solution, which is the only potentially practical approach. His war on the Sunnis simply agitates the process of civil war. The entire burden of progress falls on the U.S. ambassador, whose inherent situation as representative of the occupying power inside the country limits his ability to engage in the international diplomacy that might make his efforts to bring factions together possible. Khalilzad's tentative outreach to Iran, in any case, was shut down by Washington. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, for her part, finds herself in Bulgaria, instead of conducting shuttle diplomacy in Amman, Jordan; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Ankara, Turkey; and Tehran. The diplomatic vacuum intensifies the power vacuum in Iraq, exciting Bush's flights of magical thinking about victory: I speak, therefore it is.

Bush doesn't know that he can't achieve victory. He doesn't know that seeking victory worsens his prospects. He doesn't know that the U.S. military has abandoned victory in the field, though it has been reporting that to him for years. But the president has no rhetoric beyond "victory."

Bush's chance for a quick victory in Iraq evaporated when the neoconservative fantasy collapsed almost immediately after the invasion. But the "make-believe" of "liberation" that failed to provide basic security set in motion "fratricidal violence," as Nir Rosen writes in his new book, "In the Belly of the Green Bird: The Triumph of the Martyrs in Iraq," based on firsthand observation of the developing insurgency in the vacuum created by U.S. policy.

Indeed, Bush's nominee for director of the CIA, [Gen. Michael Hayden](#), former director of the National Security Agency, in his confirmation hearings, acknowledged the neoconservative manipulation of intelligence to make the case for the Iraq war and disdained it. Asked by Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., about the administration's efforts to tie Saddam Hussein to al-Qaida, Hayden replied: "Sir, I -- as director of NSA, we did have a series of inquiries about this potential connection between al Qaeda and the Iraqi government. Yes, sir."

The exchange continued:

Levin: Now, prior to the war, the undersecretary of defense for policy, Mr. [Douglas] Feith, established an intelligence analysis cell within his policy office at the Defense Department. While the intelligence community was consistently dubious about links between Iraq and al Qaeda, Mr. Feith produced an alternative analysis, asserting that there was a strong connection. Were you comfortable with Mr. Feith's office's approach to intelligence analysis?

Hayden: No, sir, I wasn't. I wasn't aware of a lot of the activity going on, you know, when it was contemporaneous with running up to the war. No, sir, I wasn't comfortable.

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Hayden then explained at length the difference between working from the facts and trying to cherry-pick data to support a hypothesis. He made clear that the administration had engaged in the latter. Levin asked: "Now, I believe that you actually placed a disclaimer on NSA reporting relative to any links between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. And it was apparently following the repeated inquiries from the Feith office. Would you just tell us what that disclaimer was?" Hayden answered: "Yes, sir. SIGINT neither confirms nor denies -- and let me stop at that point in the sentence so we can stay safely on the side of unclassified. SIGINT neither confirms nor denies, and then we finished the sentence based upon the question that was asked. And then we provided the data, sir." In the language of the agency, in other words, Hayden would not lend support to the Bush's administration's twisting of intelligence.

On May 15, Karl Rove, Bush's chief political advisor, gave a speech revealing one of his ideas about politics. "I think," he said, "there's also a great utility in looking at game changers. What are the things that will allow us to fundamentally change people's behavior in a different way?" Since Sept. 11, Rove has made plain that terrorism and war are the great game changers for Bush.

But while war may be the game changer for Bush's desire to put in place a one-party state, forge a permanent Republican majority, redefine the Constitution and the relationships of the branches of the federal government, and concentrate power in the executive, Bush has only the rhetoric of "victory." He has not stated what would happen the day after "victory." Although a victory parade would be his political nightmare, now the absence of victory is his nightmare. With every proclaimed "turning point," "victory" becomes ever more evanescent. He has no policy for victory and no politics beyond victory.

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article13182.htm>

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### **Sacred Terror**

**By Chris Floyd**

**12/08/05** "[Moscow Times](#)" -- -- The much-belated, poll-prompted outcry of a few U.S. elected officials against the widespread use of torture by the Bush administration -- following years of silent acquiescence in the face of incontrovertible evidence of deliberate atrocity -- is a welcome development, of course. But it has left an even more sinister aspect of Bushist policy untouched, one that likewise has been hidden in plain sight for years.

On Sept. 17, 2001, President George W. Bush signed an executive order authorizing the use of "lethal measures" against anyone in the world whom he or his minions designated an "enemy combatant." This order remains in force today. No judicial evidence, no hearing, no charges are required for these killings; no law, no border, no oversight restrains them. Bush has also given agents in the field carte blanche to designate "enemies" on their own initiative and kill them as they see fit.

The existence of this universal death squad -- and the total obliteration of human liberty it represents -- has not provoked so much as a crumb of controversy in the American establishment, although it's no secret. The executive order was first bruited in The Washington Post in October 2001. We first wrote of it here in November 2001. The New York Times added further details in December 2002. That same month, Bush officials made clear that the edict also applied to U.S. citizens, as The Associated Press reported.

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The first officially confirmed use of this power was the killing of a U.S. citizen in Yemen by a CIA drone missile on Nov. 3, 2002. A similar strike occurred in Pakistan this month, when a CIA missile destroyed a house and purportedly killed Abu Hamza Rabia, a suspected al-Qaida figure. But the only bodies found at the site were those of two children, the houseowner's son and nephew, Reuters reports. The grieving father denied any connection to terrorism. An earlier CIA strike on another house missed Rabia but killed his wife and children, Pakistani officials reported.

But most of the assassinations are carried out in secret, quietly, professionally, like a contract killing for the mob. As a Pentagon document unearthed by The New Yorker in December 2002 put it, the death squads must be "small and agile" and "able to operate clandestinely, using a full range of official and non-official cover arrangements to ... enter countries surreptitiously."

The dangers of this policy are obvious, as a UN report on "extrajudicial killings" noted in December 2004: "Empowering governments to identify and kill 'known terrorists' places no verifiable obligation upon them to demonstrate in any way that those against whom lethal force is used are indeed terrorists. ... While it is portrayed as a limited 'exception' to international norms, it actually creates the potential for an endless expansion of the relevant category to include any enemies of the State, social misfits, political opponents, or others."

It's hard to believe that any genuine democracy would accept a claim by its leader that he could have anyone killed simply by labeling them an "enemy." It's hard to believe that any adult with even the slightest knowledge of history or human nature could countenance such unlimited power, knowing the evil it is bound to produce. Yet this is what the great and good in America have done. Like the boyars of old, they not only countenance but celebrate their enslavement to the ruler.

This was vividly demonstrated in one of the most revolting scenes in recent U.S. history: Bush's State of the Union address in January 2003, delivered to Congress and televised nationwide during the final frenzy of war-drum beating before the assault on Iraq. Trumpeting his successes in the war on terror, Bush claimed that "more than 3,000 suspected terrorists" had been arrested worldwide -- "and many others have met a different fate." His face then took on the characteristic leer, the strange, sickly half-smile it acquires whenever he speaks of killing people: "Let's put it this way: They are no longer a problem."

In other words, the suspects -- and even Bush acknowledged they were only suspects -- had been murdered. Lynched. Killed by agents operating unsupervised in that shadow world where intelligence, terrorism, politics, finance and organized crime meld together in one amorphous mass. Killed on the word of a dubious informer, perhaps: a tortured captive willing to say anything, a business rival, a personal foe, a bureaucrat looking to impress his superiors, a paid snitch in need of cash, a zealous crank pursuing ethnic, tribal or religious hatreds -- or any other purveyor of the garbage data that is coin of the realm in the shadow world.

Bush proudly held up this hideous system as an example of what he called "the meaning of American justice." And the assembled legislators applauded. Oh, how they applauded! They roared with glee at the leering little man's bloodthirsty, B-movie machismo. They shared his contempt for law -- our only shield, however imperfect, against the blind, ignorant, ape-like force of raw power. Not a single voice among them was raised in protest against this

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tyrannical machtpolitik: not that night, not the next day, not ever.

Not even now, when the U.S. people's growing revulsion at Bush's bloody handiwork has emboldened a few long-time enablers of atrocity to criticize the "excesses" of his gulag and his "mishandling" of the war in Iraq. A few nips at the flank of the beast have been permitted. But the corroded heart of Bush's system of state terror -- officially sanctioned murder by presidential fiat -- remains curiously sacrosanct.

## **Annotations**

[U.S. Missile Kills Two Children in Pakistan: Report](#)

Reuters, Dec. 5, 2005

[Guant namo and beyond: The continuing pursuit of unchecked executive power](#)

Amnesty International, May 13, 2005

[Wrongful Imprisonment: Anatomy of a CIA Mistake](#)

Washington Post, Dec. 3, 2005

[War Crimes Made Easy](#)

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[CIA Holds Terror Suspects in Secret Prisons](#)

Washington Post, Nov. 2, 2005

[Seized, held, tortured: six tell same tale](#)

The Guardian, Dec. 6, 2005

[A Weak Defense](#)

Washington Post, Dec. 6, 2005

[Bush's State of the Union Speech](#)

CNN, January 29, 2003

[Manhunt](#)

The New Yorker, Dec. 16, 2002

[Bush Has Widened Authority of CIA to Kill Terrorists](#)

New York Times, Dec. 15, 2002

[Special Ops Get OK to Initiate Its Own Missions](#)

Washington Times, Jan. 8, 2003

[Coward's War in Yemen](#)

Spiked, Nov. 11, 2002

[Drones of Death](#)

The Guardian, Nov. 6, 2002

[Gonzales Excludes CIA from Rules on Prisoners](#)

New York Times, Jan. 20, 2005

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## **From El Salvador To Iraq: Why All Of This Repression?**

**By Steven Jonas**

**06/28/05 "ICH"** -- According to an article by Peter Maas entitled ["The Way of the Commandos"](#) that appeared



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in The New York Times Magazine on May 1, 2005, US authorities in Iraq have organized an Iraqi "counter-insurgency" force that looks and acts much like the "counter-insurgency" force that the Reaganites organized in El Salvador in the 1980s. Funnily enough, it is made up of Sunni Moslems who were among Saddam Hussein's crack troops, going after other Sunni Moslems who may or may not have been in the same commands. However, money does buy loyalty, especially when there are not too many jobs to be had by ex-Saddamite soldiers.

The tactics? According to Maas very similar to those used in El Salvador: summary execution, torture, indefinite imprisonment without specific charges and certainly without trial, holding family members responsible, destroying homes, and so on and so forth. On whose watch was this effort organized? Why on none other than that of the third American Pro-Counsel in Iraq, John Negroponte. He just happened to be the US Ambassador in El Salvador when the "dirty war" against the "leftists" (which led to an estimated 70,000 deaths, mainly civilian) was being carried out there.

There was the scathing report from Human Rights Watch on the Abu Ghraib-Guantanamo-Afghanistan-"secret locations" U.S. international gulag (<http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=usa>), followed by the equally scathing report from Amnesty International (<http://www.amnestyusa.org/>) that focused principally on Guantanamo Bay. The HRW report came out, to little notice in the US, just after most of the top chain-of-command officers connected with the Abu Ghraib horror had been exonerated by the Army. (The Amnesty report received much more attention, because, quite unusually for them, the White House with their attack dog Cheney leading the way, chose to respond to it.)

The one exception to the exoneration of the senior Abu Ghraib commanders was Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, the only female in the group, who got off sometime earlier with a relative slap on the wrist. Of course the top, top officials responsible for setting the overall policy, the current US Secretary of Defense and the Attorney General and the President who signed off on their directives, never even were investigated in this country. The Republican Congress is, after all, much too busy investigating the UN "oil-for-food scandal" and steroid use in Major League Baseball. (Talk about WMD, Weapons of Mass Distraction.) The Human Rights Witch report also appeared at the time a group of grunts directly involved with Abu Ghraib have confessed to or been convicted of participation in abuses. One wonders if some future Secretary of State will have on his/her resume participation in the cover-up, as did a recent occupant of the first in relation to the My Lai Massacre.

An outcry has occurred, even in major media sources in the US (see the Amnesty International website) over the Guantanamo Bay scandal of the denial of any rights at all to those prisoners held there (to say nothing of how they are being treated, starting with routine sensory deprivation (Newsday, June 15 2005, cover), many of whom seemed to have been rounded up randomly. In response, Sec. of Defense Himmler, I mean Rumsfeld, had this to say (News day, June 15, 2005, p. A5): "[The United States] does not want to be in the position of holding suspected terrorists any longer than is absolutely necessary. But as long as there remains a need to keep terrorists from striking again, a facility [Guantanamo] will continue to be needed." You think that I am going over the top in using the words Rumsfeld and Himmler in the same sentence? It is just the term that the Nazis used as they rounded up political opponents from the git-go of their regime.

And why will Guantanamo Bay in particular be needed? Listen to Deputy Attorney General J. Michael Wiggins, who works for "The Geneva-Conventions-are-Quaint-and-We-Can-Just-Ignore-Them-Even-Though-They-Are-

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Part-of-the-Constitution" Attorney General Gonzalez: "It's our position that they [the prisoners at Guantanamo] can be held in perpetuity." He makes this statement because, dear readers, under the U.S. equivalent of the German Nazi Enabling Act, the Patriot Act, it is all perfectly legal in these United States at this time. They can be held in perpetuity because the President has designated them as "terrorists." Under the Patriot Act, which the President is so desperate to have made permanent, once that designation is made, persons held have no legal rights. That the Supreme Court said a year ago that they do is meaningless. The Georgites just ignore that ruling. But then again, doing such things is part of the Georgite definition of "freedom and democracy."

By the way, the whole library records thing and the Patriot Act is a smokescreen. The Georgites just gave Republicans in Congress something to hide behind, to "compromise on." The real stuff in the Act is the destruction of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments by the President, acting on his own authority.

Why, then, is all of this going on? Why is torture being developed to a fine art among US forces? Why is the US involved in organizing and supporting death squads once again? Does it have anything to do with fighting terrorism, a worthy fight indeed? Well, there does not seem to be any evidence of that. Other countries, like Spain, are reeling in terrorists without resorting to these kinds of tactics. As for death squads, they may have worked well, after the 70,000 deaths, primarily against civilians in El Salvador. However, in Iraq, against other former Saddamite thugs, when most of the non-Kurdish people of the country just want the U.S. to leave, could the Death Squad strategy be useful? Not likely.

My guess is that there is a long-range plan in operation here. I think that the neo-reactionaries/theocratic fascists know what they are doing. The bulk of the Georgite program for constant war abroad, destruction of all government at home except for the instruments of repression and support of corporate power, and religious oppression at home is being kept secret from the American people. They could hardly win elections on their real platform. However, as their program becomes more and more obvious, opposition and then resistance to it, even given the totally gutless DLC-dominated Democratic Party, is going to become more widespread.

Eventually they are going to have to employ some very violent, very vicious tactics at home to suppress it. What is going on here, against a group of poor Muslims, some of whom may have been terrorists (who could be dealt with, of course, by the conventional US civilian anti military justice systems which provide legal rights), but many of whom simply seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time? In my view, strategy development, technique perfection, target practice, facilities design experiments, and training for personnel, for what they will eventually turn on us here, on a much larger scale. There is simply no other explanation for what the Georgites are doing.

The Patriot Act has given them the legal tools to do this, as I have said more than once in this space. The attack on the independent judiciary, led by the likes of DeLay, Frist, and their close comrades-in-arms like James Dobson and Pat Robertson, becomes stronger every day. A recent Act of Congress has given the Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, unprecedented and totally unconstitutional powers to violate Federal statutes in a whole variety of areas from the awarding of contracts to voiding child labor and civil rights laws pertaining to his responsibilities, on his own volition. And so, prepare for Georgite violence.

To undertake that kind of violence you have to have the systems and personnel in place, ready and able to carry it out. Ergo, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, "detention in perpetuity" (without charges, without access to legal counselor

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the courts), and the Iraqi Death Squads. In addition, who is running the "intelligence" side of the operation? None other than John Negrofonte of El Salvador and Iraqi Death Squad fame, who now just happens to be the top dog for all US intelligence forces, domestic and foreign.

I must say that I think that the charge that the presently foreign U.S. international prison system for people held in this manner constitutes a "gulag" is totally unfair. "Concentration camps" would be a much more accurate description. In pre-war Nazi Germany the concentration camps were set up (starting on the night of January 30, 1933 just after Hitler had become Chancellor, even before the passage of the Enabling Act) precisely to imprison "terrorists" (as the Nazis called them in the beginning) in perpetuity, without legal rights. The Nazis used the concentration camp system, on German territory, to spread their terror and consolidate their power, long before they added the Death Camp (mainly outside of Germany) and Slave labor (both inside and outside of Germany) features to it.

It is so ironic. In the Time magazine article on the new Star Wars movie, it says, "Under Darth Sidious, the Sith Empire will shred and swallow up the fragile Republic .... Over the galaxy, the silence of repression will fall." Why is it that we are so good at talking about repression when it is in the past or in the movies, but not when it is staring us in the face?

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<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article9308.htm>



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**The Salvador Option exposed.**

**Who's Blowing Up Iraq? Evidence shows that bombs are planted by occupation forces.**

**[Basra Shadowlands](#) - [Big Trouble for British Occupation of Southern Iraq](#) - [Al-Sadr Official](#)**

# ***BRussells* Tribunal Dossier**

## Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - ***PART 2*** -



[Says Staged Bombings Aimed at Starting Ethnic War - Pictures from the Basra "incident"](#) - [Were British Special Forces Soldiers Planting Bombs in Basra?](#) - [What was the British SAS doing in Basra?](#) - [Basra: another milestone in war on terror](#) - [British Terrorism in Iraq](#) - [Iraqi border guards arrest British national in desert](#) - [Cars stolen in US cities used in Iraqi suicide attacks](#) - [British military investigator found hung in Basra](#)

### **The British Bombers**

Splid.com

September 20, 2005

*More details emerge on the most outrageous story from the Iraq occupation since Abu Ghraib.*



The last remaining public justification for the U.S./U.K. occupation of Iraq is *terrorism*: The foreign forces cannot leave until Iraq is somewhat peaceful and the *terrorists* have been defeated.

That threadbare reasoning was ripped apart on Monday as the world -- other than the United States, where broadcast media avoided the story -- was shown two [agents provocateurs](#) employed by the British government. Their exact mission will never be proven. The evidence, however, is damning.

The two commandoes -- alternately identified as members of Britain's notorious SAS or a [newer offshoot, the SRR](#) -- were driving around a demonstration in Basra when their suspicious behavior attracted the attention of Basra police.



The Scotsman [now reports](#) that the men are members of the SRR, or Special Reconnaissance Regiment. The insignia shows a Greek helmet with a sword thrust through the mouth and up through the back of the skull.

The police attempted to stop the men, who were disguised as Arabs in local garb over their T-shirts and trousers. The men wore black-hair wigs and, according to some reports, typical headresses.

[And they also carried a whole lot of weapons, including explosives and other bomb-making materials. They began firing at the police and passers-by.](#)

At least one Basra policeman was shot dead. At least one person in the crowd was shot dead. An undetermined number of others were injured in the gunfight.

The British pair was jailed. Arab television showed the beaten men with bandages on their heads, and their [huge collection of weaponry](#). Basra -- a relatively peaceful city compared to the rest of bloodsoaked Iraq -- had [suddenly lost patience with the British occupiers](#), caught red-handed with all the tools necessary to launch "suicide bombs" against the people.

And then the [British tanks rolled in ... and destroyed the jail, releasing 150 "terrorists" in the process](#). Whether the British commandoes were inside the jail [is now disputed](#), as are most parts of the story, with Britain in damage-control mode and [Iraq officials universally condemning the "barbaric" destruction of the jail and the suspected terrorist goals of the captured duo](#).

The city rioted against the tanks and troops, [setting fire to at least one of the tanks](#).

U.K. media is now desperately backpedaling from the version of events reported by at least a dozen independent reporters working in Iraq, after reporting the same general events as other world media on Monday.



# ***BRussells* Tribunal Dossier** **Introduction to the "Salvador option"** **and Iraq's "Death squads" - *PART 2* -**



\* \* \*

A spokesman for rebel Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr said [the British commandoes were trying to pass themselves off as members of Sadr's rebel militia.](#)



Sheikh Hassan told Socialist Worker that the two undercover soldiers seized by Iraqi police last Monday were armed with explosives and a remote control detonator. The soldiers were disguised as members of Sadr's militia, the Mehdi Army.

The trouble started when a senior Sadr official was arrested on Sunday. "We called a protest outside the mayor's office on Monday demanding the Sheikh be released," Sheikh Hassan said. "This protest was

peaceful."

"But events in our city took a sinister turn when the police tried to stop two men dressed as members of the Mehdi Army driving near the protest. The men opened fire on the police and passers-by. After a car chase they were arrested."

"What our police found in their car was very disturbing — weapons, explosives and a remote control detonator," Sheikh Hassan said. "These are the weapons of terrorists. We believe these soldiers were planning an attack on a market or other civilian targets, and thanks be to God they were stopped and countless lives were saved."

There are about 8,500 British troops in and around Basra. Four Iraqis died in the riots against the jailbreak mission. Also, a [local reporter who wrote for the New York Times and The Guardian was found murdered after being abducted by mysterious gunmen.](#)

Following the lead of its American partners, the British Ministry of Defense [denied all wrongdoing, called the destruction of the jail "absolutely right,"](#) and blamed everything on a "civil war" developing ([or Iran, depending on the mouthpiece](#)) in southern Iraq.

[www.sploid.com/news/2005/09/the\\_british\\_bom.php](http://www.sploid.com/news/2005/09/the_british_bom.php)

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## **British bombs in Basra**

Xymphora

September 21, 2005

I find myself increasingly becoming the old fogey of the conspiracy field. While the youngsters continue to come up with new and exciting conspiracies, *xymphora* slowly deteriorates into a lousy debunking blog. Witness the latest revelations from Basra. To [summarize](#), two British soldiers, disguised as Arabs and with a car full of explosives, somehow find themselves in a contretemps with an Iraqi policeman, shoot him dead, are arrested by local authorities, refuse to explain what they were doing, end up in detention, and finally become the subject of negotiations between the British and Iraqis concerning their release, 'negotiations' apparently meaning to the British driving up to the prison with tanks and knocking the walls down (a fact which the British finally, but grudgingly, admitted), causing a riot which results in civilian deaths and the escape of other prisoners (and the soldiers [weren't](#) even in the prison!). Everybody has come to the obvious conclusion that this is the first

# ***BRussells* Tribunal Dossier**

## **Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - PART 2 -**



documented proof of the fact that much of the sectarian violence in Iraq is the work of coalition *agents provocateurs*, attempting to cause a civil war in Iraq. While I have no doubt that this [intentional process](#) is going on elsewhere in Iraq (and largely to fit the Israeli agenda, described here many times before, of breaking the country up into small, unthreatening statelets, with the additional motive of leading to the new Israeli ally, the [Shi'ite](#) Empire, to counter the largely Sunni opposition to Israeli imperial plans), I doubt that the Basra case is an example of it. There seems to be another conspiracy afoot.

The British have made a big deal of how much better they are than the Americans at shouldering the 'white man's burden' of policing their portion of Iraq. Of course, the Americans are so arrogant, culturally insensitive, and generally stupid, it is not difficult to do a better job. As well, the South is easier to police just because it is majority Shi'ite, and not interested in causing trouble for the central government. Nevertheless, it is true that the British have done a much better job than the Americans, and have some right to feel superior. And yet, *just recently*, everything has gone sideways. Here is the timeline:

1. In the early Spring, British officials [anticipated](#) that British troops would soon be withdrawing from Iraq.
2. In July, [plans are leaked](#) of a British plan to withdraw almost all British troops from Iraq (sending some of them to Afghanistan). This withdrawal would have started next month. Almost immediately, the deaths of British contractors is said to '[threaten](#)' these plans.
3. In early August, journalist Steven Vincent, who worked for the *New York Times*, is found [murdered](#) outside of Basra. He had been shot and was found with his hands bound. Days before his death, he "[had](#) written an Op-Ed piece for The Times in which he criticized British security forces for failing to act against the Shiite militias' growing power in the local police force." It's unlikely, even given the ubiquity of the internet, that local militias would be on top of very recently published *New York Times* Op-Eds (although Vincent had written previously on the matter).
4. Normally quiescent Basra starts to become dangerous for British troops, and three are actually killed. While there has been a constant [series](#) of British deaths in Iraq, these most recent deaths seem to cause a new type of overreaction. On Sunday, September 18, the British arrest local leaders Sheik Ahmed Majid Fartusi and Sayyid Sajjad, arrests that almost certainly will lead to more trouble (Juan Cole has the [timeline](#)).
5. The British plans to withdraw are indefinitely [cancelled](#), as conditions have worsened.
6. The two British soldiers are arrested [near](#) a protest arranged against the arrest of Sheik Ahmed Majid Fartusi, and rescued with a completely [unnecessary](#), show of lethal violence.
7. Journalist Fakher [Haider](#), who also worked for the *New York Times*, is found murdered on the same day as the British soldiers were arrested. He also had his hands bound and was shot. He had been taken away for 'questioning' by people claiming to be Iraqi police, a claim backed up by the fact they arrived in a *police car* (!). He "[had](#) recently reported on the growing friction and violence among Basra's rival Shiite militias, which are widely believed to have infiltrated the police." Now there are two murdered journalists in Basra, each of whom wrote about the growing power of Shi'ite militias in Basra (scuttlebutt that Steven Vincent's murder was related to his relationship with his Iraqi female translator seems to be disproved by the nature of the second murder). Local militia leaders would almost certainly have been unaware of the writings of these journalists (and you have to wonder why they would care if they did know). Somebody wants to remove Western journalists with good local contacts from Basra.

What I see here is an attempt to sabotage the British withdrawal, and the murders of both journalists may well be associated with this.

Creating sectarian violence doesn't really make sense in Basra, as the Zionist planners intend to keep the South whole, and part of the Shi'ite Empire. Causing trouble in Basra will only mess up those plans. On the other hand, setting a bomb off in Basra would have continued the campaign, started right after the announcement of withdrawal was made, to ensure that the British troops cannot be withdrawn from the South. Who benefits from non-withdrawal?:

1. the Americans, who would have been all alone in their battle against Islam once the British left;
2. elements in the British military, who so rarely get to be in a real war these days, are probably loathe having to go back to more endless marching drills in the rain (or, at best, in Afghanistan);
3. the international cadre of war financiers, who still derive considerable income from the British presence in Iraq; and
4. Tony Blair, who works for the financiers and has this extremely weird relationship with the United States (he seems to be under the misapprehension that he is Prime Minister of the United States).

I think there is a conspiracy here, but not necessarily the obvious one.

[xymphora.blogspot.com/2005/09/british-bombs-in-basra.html](http://xymphora.blogspot.com/2005/09/british-bombs-in-basra.html)



# ***BRussells* Tribunal Dossier** **Introduction to the "Salvador option"** **and Iraq's "Death squads" - PART 2 -**



## **Fake Terrorism Is a Coalition's Best Friend**

Matt Hutaff

September 20, 2005



**Iraqi police recently caught two terrorists with a car full of explosives. Would it surprise you to learn they were British Special Forces?**

The story sounds amazing, almost fantastical.

A car driving through the outskirts of a besieged city opens fire on a police checkpoint, killing one. In pursuit, the police surround and detain the drivers and find the vehicle packed with explosives – perhaps part of an insurgent's plan to destroy lives and

cripple property. If that isn't enough, when the suspects are thrown in prison their allies drive right up to the walls of the jail, [break through them](#) and brave petroleum bombs and burning clothes to rescue their comrades. *150 other prisoners break free in the ensuing melee.*

Incredible, no? Yet this story took place in the southern Iraqi city of Basra recently. Violence continues to escalate in the breakout's aftermath... just not for the reasons you think.

You see, the drivers of the explosive-laden car were not members of an insurgency group – they were **British Special Forces**. Their rescuers? British soldiers driving British tanks.

That's right – two members of the British Armed forces *disguised as Arab civilians* [killed a member of the Iraqi police](#) while evading capture. When the people of Basra rightfully refused to turn the murderers over to the British government, per Coalition "mandate," they sent their own men in and released over 100 prisoners in the process.

Winning the hearts and minds, aren't we?

Sadly, this story is really not all that surprising. After hearing countless accounts of using napalm and torture against innocent civilians in addition to the other daily abuses dished out by American overseers, the thought of British scheming seems perfectly reasonable.

So what we have here is a clear instance of a foreign power attempting to fabricate a terrorist attack. Why else would the soldiers be dressed as Arabs if not to frame them? Why have a car laden with explosives if you don't plan to use them for destructive purposes? Iraq is headed towards civil war, and this operation was meant to accelerate the process by killing people and blaming others. Nothing more, nothing less. That the British army staged an over-the-top escape when it could rely on normal diplomatic channels to recover its people proves that.

Such extreme methods highlight the need to keep secrets.

There have been a number of insurgent bombings in Iraq recently. Who really is responsible for the bloodshed and destruction? The only tangible benefit of the bombings is justification for Coalition forces maintaining the peace in Iraq. Who benefits from that? Certainly not the Iraqis – they already [believe most suicide bombings](#) are done by the United States to prompt religious war. After reading about this incident, I'm not inclined to disagree.

Even though this false-flag operation was blown wide open, I'm afraid it might still be used in the mainstream media to incite further violence in the Middle East. Judging by the coverage that has emerged after the incident, my fears seem warranted.

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## **Introduction to the "Salvador option" and Iraq's "Death squads" - PART 2 -**



Several articles have already turned the story against the angry Iraqis who fought the British tanks as they demolished the jail wall, painting them as [aggressive Shia militia](#) attacking the doe-eyed, innocent troops responding to the concern that their comrades were held by religious fanatics. A photograph of a troop on fire comes complete with commentary that the vehicles were under attack during a "bid to recover arrested servicemen" that were *possibly* undercover. All criminal elements of British treachery are downplayed, the car's explosive cache is never mentioned and the soldiers who instigated the affair are [made victims](#) of an unstable country they are defending.

Hilariously, all of this spin has already landed Iran [at the top of the blame game](#). Because when the war combine botches its own clandestine terrorist acts, what better way to recover than by painting the soulless, freedom-hating country you'd love to invade next as the culprit? In a way, I almost admire the nerve of officials who are able to infer that Basra's riots have nothing to do with fake insurgent bombing raids and everything to do with religious ties to a foreign country. It's a sheer unmitigated gall that flies in the face of logic and reason.

"The Iranians are careful not to be caught," a British official said as the UK threatened to refer Iran to the UN Security Council for sanctions. Too bad the British aren't! Maybe then they'd be able to complete their black-ops mission without looking like complete fools in the process!

Make no mistake – any and all violence to erupt from Basra over this incident lands squarely on the shoulders of the British army and its special forces. Instead of stoking the flames of propaganda against a nation it has no hope of ever conquering, maybe Britain should quit trying to intimidate the Iraqis with fear and torture and start focusing on fixing its mistakes and getting out of the Middle East.

These actions are inexcusable and embarrassing; however, they should make you think. If a country like the United Kingdom is willing to commit acts of terror, what kind of false-flag operations do you think the United States is capable of?

If you thought the U.S. wouldn't blow up people it claims to support in the hopes of advancing its agenda, think again. Use this incident as your first reference point.

*Canon Fodder is a weekly analysis of politics and society.*

[www.thesimon.com/magazine/articles/canon\\_fodder/0961\\_fake\\_terrorism\\_coalition\\_best\\_friend.html](http://www.thesimon.com/magazine/articles/canon_fodder/0961_fake_terrorism_coalition_best_friend.html)

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### **Who's Blowing Up Iraq? New evidence that bombs are being planted by British**

Mike Whitney, September 20, 2005



*"The Iraqi security officials on Monday variously accused two Britons they detained of shooting at Iraqi forces or TRYING TO PLANT EXPLOSIVES." Washington Post, Ellen Knickmeyer, 9-20-05; ["British Smash into Jail to Free Two Detained Soldiers"](#)*

In more than two years since the United States initiated hostilities against Iraq, there has never been a positive identification of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Never. That doesn't mean that he doesn't exist; it simply suggests that prudent people will challenge the official

version until his whereabouts and significance in the conflict can be verified.

At present, much of the rationale for maintaining the occupation depends on this elusive and, perhaps, illusory figure. It's odd how Al-Zarqawi appears at the precise coordinates of America's bombing-raids, and then,

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miraculously vanishes unscathed from the scene of the wreckage. This would be a remarkable feat for anyone, but especially for someone who only has one leg.

Al-Zarqawi may simply be a fantasy dreamed up by Pentagon planners to put a threatening face on the Iraqi resistance. The Defense Dept has been aggressive in its effort to shape information in a way that serves the overall objectives of the occupation. The primary aim of the Pentagon's "Strategic Information" program is to distort the truth in a way that controls the storyline created by the media. Al-Zarqawi fits perfectly within this paradigm of intentional deception.

The manipulation of information factors heavily in the steady increase of Iraqi casualties, too. Although the military refuses "to do body counts"; many people take considerable interest in the daily death toll. Last week, over 200 civilians were killed in seemingly random acts of violence purportedly caused by al-Zarqawi. But, were they? Were these massive attacks the work of al-Zarqawi as the western media reports or some other "more shadowy" force?

One member of the Iraqi National Assembly. Fatah al-Sheikh, stated, "It seems that the American forces are trying to escalate the situation in order to make the Iraqi people suffer.. There is a huge campaign for the agents of the foreign occupation to enter and plant hatred between the sons of the Iraqi people, and spread rumors in order to scare the one from the other. The occupiers are trying to start religious incitement and if it does not happen, then they will try to start an internal Shiite incitement."

Al-Sheikh's feelings are shared by a great many Iraqis. They can see that everything the US has done, from the forming a government made up predominantly of Shi'ites and Kurds, to creating a constitution that allows the breaking up to the country (federalism), to using the Peshmerga and Badr militia in their attacks on Sunni cities, to building an Interior Ministry entirely comprised of Shi'ites, suggests that the Pentagon's strategy is to fuel the sectarian divisions that will lead to civil war. Al-Zarqawi is an integral facet of this broader plan. Rumsfeld has cast the Jordanian as the agent-provocateur; the driving force behind religious partition and antagonism.

But, al-Zarqawi has nothing to gain by killing innocent civilians, and everything to lose. If he does actually operate in Iraq, he needs logistical supporting all his movements; including help with safe-houses, assistants, and the assurance of invisibility in the community. ("The ocean in which he swims") These would disappear instantly if he recklessly killed and maimed innocent women and children.

Last week the Imam of Baghdad's al-Kazimeya mosque, Jawad al-Kalesi said, that "al-Zarqawi is dead but Washington continues to use him as a bogeyman to justify a prolonged military occupation. He's simply an invention by the occupiers to divide the people." Al-Kalesi added that al-Zarqawi was killed in the beginning of the war in the Kurdish north and that "His family in Jordan even held a ceremony after his death." (AFP)

Most Iraqis probably agree with al-Kalesi, but that hasn't deterred the Pentagon from continuing with the charade. This is understandable given that al-Zarqawi is the last tattered justification for the initial invasion. It's doubtful that the Pentagon will ditch their final threadbare apology for the war. But the reality is vastly different from the spin coming from the military. In fact, foreign fighters play a very small role in Iraq with or without al-Zarqawi. As the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) revealed this week in their report, "Analysts and government officials in the US and Iraq overstated the size of the foreign element in the Iraqi insurgency.. Iraqi fighters made up less than 10% of the armed groups' ranks, perhaps, even half of that." The report poignantly notes that most of the foreign fighters were not previously militants at all, but were motivated by, "revulsion at the idea of an Arab land being occupied by a non-Arab country."

The report concludes that the invasion of Iraq has added thousands of "fresh recruits to Osama bin Laden's network;" a fact that is no longer in dispute among those who have studied the data on the topic.

The al-Zarqawi phantasm is a particularly weak-link in the Pentagon's muddled narrative. The facts neither support the allegations of his participation nor prove that foreigners are a major contributor to the ongoing violence. Instead, the information points to a Defense establishment that cannot be trusted in anything it says and that may be directly involved in the terrorist-bombings that have killed countless thousands of Iraqi civilians.

Regrettably, that is prospect that can't be ignored. After all, no one else benefits from the slaughter.

(Note: Since this article was written, the Washington Post has added to our suspicions. In an Ellen Knickmeyer article "[British Smash into Iraqi Jail to free 2 detained Soldiers](#)" 9-20-05, Knickmeyer chronicles the fighting between British forces and Iraqi police who were detaining 2 British commandos. "THE IRAQI SECURITY OFFICIALS ON MONDAY VARIOUSLY ACCUSED THE TWO BRITONS THEY DETAINED OF SHOOTING AT IRAQI FORCES or TRYING TO PLANT EXPLOSIVES."



# ***BRussells* Tribunal Dossier** **Introduction to the "Salvador option"** **and Iraq's "Death squads" - PART 2 -**



Is this why the British army was ordered to "burst through the walls of an Iraqi jail Monday in the southern city of Basra". followed by "British armored vehicles backed by helicopter gun-ships" ending in "hours of gun battles and rioting in Basra's streets"? (Washington Post)

Reuters reported that "half a dozen armored vehicles had smashed into the jail" and the provincial governor, Mohammed Walli, told news agencies that the British assault was "barbaric, savage and irresponsible."

So, why were the British so afraid to go through the normal channels to get their men released?

Could it be that the two commandos were "trying to plant explosives" as the article suggests?

An [interview on Syrian TV](#) last night also alleges that the British commandos "were planting explosives in one of the Basra streets".

*"Al-Munajjid] In fact, Nidal, this incident gave answers to questions and suspicions that were lacking evidence about the participation of the occupation in some armed operations in Iraq. Many analysts and observers here had suspicions that the occupation was involved in some armed operations against civilians and places of worship and in the killing of scientists. But those were only suspicions that lacked proof. The proof came today through the arrest of the two British soldiers while they were planting explosives in one of the Basra streets. This proves, according to observers, that the occupation is not far from many operations that seek to sow sedition and maintain disorder, as this would give the occupation the justification to stay in Iraq for a longer period. [Zaghbur] Ziyad al-Munajjid in Baghdad, thank you very much. Copyright Syrian Arab TV and BBC Monitoring, 2005"*

And then there was this on [Al-Jazeera TV, Doha, 9-19-05: Interview with Fattah al-Shayk](#), member of the National Assembly and deputy for Basra.

*."the sons of Basra caught two non-Iraqis, who seem to be Britons and were in a car of the Cressida type. It was a booby-trapped car laden with ammunition and was meant to explode in the centre of the city of Basra in the popular market. However, the sons of the city of Basra arrested them. They [the two non-Iraqis] then fired at the people there and killed some of them. The two arrested persons are now at the Intelligence Department in Basra, and they were held by the National Guard force, but the British occupation forces are still surrounding this department in an attempt to absolve them of the crime."<*

Copyright Al Jazeera TV and BBC Monitoring, 2005 (Thanks to Michel Chossudovsky at [Global Research](#) for the quotes from Al Jazeera and Syrian TV)

Does this solve the al-Zarqawi mystery? Are the bombs that are killing so many Iraqi civilians are being planted by British and American Intelligence?

We'll have to see if this damning story can be corroborated by other sources.)

*Courtesy and Copyright © Mike Whitney*

[www.uruknet.info?p=15926](http://www.uruknet.info?p=15926)

## **British Special Forces Caught Carrying Out Staged Terror In Iraq?**

Paul Joseph Watson



September 20, 2005

Media blackout shadows why black op soldiers were arrested

**Paul Joseph Watson | September 20 2005**

In another example of how the Iraqi quagmire is deliberately designed to degenerate into a chaotic abyss, British SAS were caught attempting to stage a terror attack and the media have dutifully shut up about the real questions surrounding the incident.

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What is admitted is that two British soldiers in Arab garb and head dress drove a car towards a group of Iraq police and began firing. According to the Basra governor Mohammed al-Waili, one policeman was shot dead and another was injured. Pictured below are the wigs and clothing that the soldiers were wearing.

The Arab garb is obviously undeniable proof that the operation, whatever its ultimate intention, was staged so that any eyewitnesses would believe it had been carried out by Iraqis.

This has all the indications of a frame up.



This is made all the more interesting by the fact that early reports cited as originating from BBC World Service radio stated that the car used contained explosives. Was this another staged car bombing intended to keep tensions high? As you will discover later, the plan to keep Iraq divided and in turmoil is an actual policy directive that spans back over two decades.

The **BBC reports** that the car did contain, "assault rifles, a light machine gun, an anti-tank weapon, radio gear and medical kit. This is thought to be standard kit for the SAS operating in such a theatre of operations."

And are fake bushy black wigs and turbans standard kit for the SAS? What happened to the early reports of explosives? Why has the media relentlessly reported on the subsequent rescue effort and failed to address these key questions?

The soldiers were arrested and taken to a nearby jail where they were confronted and interrogated by an Iraqi judge.

The initial demand from the puppet authorities that the soldiers be released was rejected by the Basra government. At that point tanks were sent in to 'rescue' the terrorists and the 'liberated' Iraqis started to riot, firebombing and pelting stones at the vehicles injuring British troops as was depicted in this dramatic Reuters photo.



As the SAS were being rescued 150 prisoners escaped from the jail. Was this intentional or just a result of another botched black op?

From this point on media coverage was monopolized by accounts of the rescue and the giant marauding pink elephant in the living room, namely why the soldiers were arrested in the first place, was routinely ignored.

The only outlet to ask any serious questions was Australian TV news which **according to one viewer** gave, "credibility to the 'conspiracy theorists' who have long claimed many terrorist acts in Iraq are, in fact, being initiated and carried out by US, British and Israeli

forces."

Iran's top military commander Brigadier General Mohammad-Baqer Zolqadr pointed the finger at the occupational government last week by **publicly stating**,

"The Americans blame weak and feeble groups in Iraq for insecurity in this country. We do not believe this and we have information that the insecurity has its roots in the activities of American and Israeli spies," Zolqadr said.

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"Insecurity in Iraq is a deeply-rooted phenomenon. The root of insecurity in Iraq lies in the occupation of this country by foreigners".

"If Iraq is to become secure, there will be no room for the occupiers".



That explanation has a lot of currency amongst ordinary Iraqis who have been direct witnesses to these bombings.

In the past we've asked questions about why so-called car bombings leave giant craters, in addition with eyewitness reports that helicopters were carrying out the attacks.

Throughout history we see the tactic of **divide and conquer** being used to enslave populations and swallow formerly sovereign countries by piecemeal. From the British stirring up aggression between different Indian tribes in order to foment division, to modern day Yugoslavia where the country was rejecting the IMF and world bank takeover before the Globalists broke it up and took the country piece by piece by arming and empowering extremists.

And so to Iraq, **New York Times November 25th 2003**, Leslie Gelb of the Council on Foreign Relations writes,

"To put most of its money and troops where they would do the most good quickly - with the Kurds and Shiites. The United States could extricate most of its forces from the so-called Sunni Triangle, north and west of Baghdad.... American officials could then wait for the troublesome and domineering Sunnis, without oil or oil revenues, to moderate their ambitions or suffer the consequences."

Gelb argues for allowing the rebellion to escalate in order to create a divided Iraq.

**And in 1982, Oded Yinon**, an official from the Israeli Foreign Affairs office, wrote: "To dissolve Iraq is even more important for us than dissolving Syria. In the short term, it's Iraqi power that constitutes the greatest threat to Israel. The Iran-Iraq war tore Iraq apart and provoked its downfall. All manner of inter-Arab conflict help us and accelerate our goal of breaking up Iraq into small, diverse pieces."

So if the plan is to keep the different sects at each others' throats then who benefits from the chaos created by the endless bombings? President Bush's **slip of the tongue** when he stated, "it'll take time to restore chaos and order -- order out of chaos, but we will" seems less farcical in this light.

**Plans for 4,000 NATO troops to replace US troops** in Afghanistan will likely be mirrored in Iraq and the country will be used as a launch pad for the coming invasions of Syria and Iran.

It is certain that any reports coming out of Iraq accusing occupational forces of being behind car bombings will be brutally censored.

**The Pentagon admitted** before the war that independent journalists would be military targets and since then we've seen more journalists killed in Iraq over two and a half years than the entire seven year stretch of US involvement in Vietnam.

In many cases, **such as that of Mazen Dana**, an acclaimed hero who was killed after filming secret US mass graves, journalists are hunted down and executed because they record something that the occupational government doesn't want to reach the wider world.



# ***BRussells* Tribunal Dossier** **Introduction to the "Salvador option"** **and Iraq's "Death squads" - PART 2 -**



Italian journalist **Giuliana Sgrena's car was fired upon** and an Italian secret service agent killed after Sgrena was told by the group that kidnapped her that a threat to kill her if Italian troops didn't pull out of Iraq wasn't made by them. This means that Rumsfeld's Ministry of Truth in Iraq is putting out false statements by fake Jihad groups to try and maintain the facade that the resistance is run by brutal terrorists under the direction of Al-Qaeda/Iran/Syria or whoever else they want to bomb next.

Every high profile kidnapping brings with it eyewitness reports of white men in suits and police carrying out the abductions.

Many will find it hard to believe that ordinary soldiers would have it in them to carry out such brutal atrocities. The people carrying out these acts are not ordinary soldiers, they are SAS thugs who have been told that they have to be 'more evil than the terrorists' to defeat the terrorists. This is how they morally justify to themselves engaging in this criminal behavior.

We will update this story as and when new developments take place.

[www.prisonplanet.com/articles/september2005/200905stagedterror.htm](http://www.prisonplanet.com/articles/september2005/200905stagedterror.htm)

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## **Were the British Soldiers Engaged in Counter-Insurgency Operation in Basra?**

Yamin Zakaria

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For certain, the 'free', 'independent' and embedded Anglo-US mass media would have tried to spin the evidences surrounding the events in Basra to suit the interests of their governments. However, in this case it was too late, as the facts seemed to have already been reported by various other media outlets. Let us examine what cannot be denied, on the basis of what has been reported and corroborated by the Iraqi police and Interior Ministry officials, who are allies of the coalition forces.

- a) British undercover soldiers were on a mission wearing traditional Arab dress, driving a civilian car. What was their mission in Basra, considering that we have hearing how happy and peaceful Shi'ite-dominated Basra is. According to the earlier embedded media reports, resistance is almost negligible in the region.
- b) When the Iraqi soldiers (not the Sunni Insurgents), approached the suspicious looking car at a check point, carrying the British soldiers in question, they were fired upon. Clearly, the British Soldiers did not fire in fear but to avoid capture and/or interrogation by the Iraqi police. Therefore, they must have had something significant to hide from the Iraqi police who are their allies in the region. It would be safe to assume that the 'legitimate' Iraqi government installed by the coalition forces were also ignorant of the facts; so far they have been quiet about the whole affair.
- c) According to the Italian press, when the British soldiers fired, two Iraqi police were shot and one of them died later. But that matters little for the mass media and no one seems to even know their names. The benevolent liberators are not perturbed by such small details of killing an Iraqi here and there! However, the event raised the temperature even more, after the earlier arrests of two prominent members of the Mehdi army militia (led by the radical Shi'ite cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr), carried out by the British forces.
- d) After capture of the undercover British soldiers, they refused to state what their mission was. Iraqis in the mean time had been driving through the streets, with loudhailers demanding that the undercover Britons remain in jail

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for their crimes. It was then reported through numerous sources that the British forces with Tanks surrounded the prison, where the two British soldiers in question were detained. This led to the protest developing into a riot and pictures were aired showing the British soldiers being attacked by the mob.

e) An Iraqi Interior Ministry official said British forces stormed and demolished the walls of the jail using six tanks and that dozens of Iraqi prisoners escaped. Basra's governor said the demolition was a "barbaric act of aggression".

f) However, Britain's Ministry of Defence disputed that the prison had been stormed, on the contrary, stated that the release of the two soldiers was negotiated. Contradicting the statement of the Basra governor and the numerous reports (point d), that clearly alluded to the British forces action to release the British prisoners sparked of the riot. Why was there no statement from the so-called new Iraqi government?

Whatever the case, the British forces were not happy with two of their soldiers kept in an Iraqi prison, controlled by their Iraqi allies. Inside the prison, their lives were not under any threat. But what the two soldiers concealed as regards to their mission must have really worried the British government. Thus, they moved quickly to get the undercover soldiers out of the prisons by storming it with Tanks and demolishing the walls.

Now, what has been deliberately avoided by the mainstream TV and Satellite stations is the reference [1] to allegation from the Iraqi police, that the British soldiers were planting bombs. Turkish and a few other media outlets also reported that the Iraqi police allegedly found bombs in unidentified cars owned by Britons.

So the facts are, the British soldiers were caught wearing Arab dress in a civilian car, armed, may have been carrying bombs, shot the Iraqi soldiers when approached by them, later the British government in desperation stormed the prison to get them out; clearly they were on a secret mission. It was secret because it would be too embarrassing to conduct openly in an area that is supposed to be the calmest with no insurgency. Given the facts, the only plausible explanation is that the undercover soldiers were engaged in counter-insurgency operations. This incident may well prove to be another Abu-Ghraib, confirming the strong rumours of counter-insurgency operations, particularly the bombs exploding in the markets and mosques, away from coalition and Iraqi forces that would benefit no one, except the coalition forces.

Without a shadow of doubt, a full scale sectarian war would help the coalition forces; they would be the primary beneficiary. In fact from the very beginning of the conflict the media has been constantly stoking sectarian tensions, the language employed was crafted accordingly. They kept on repeating minority Sunni Arabs of 20%, who become minority Sunnis of 20%! The majority Shi'ites became the oppressed Shi'ites, as if the hearts of the Anglo-US government bleeds for them! The Arab nationalist Baath party became a Sunni party, as if religion defined it!

But the sectarian conflict failed to ignite, and then the coalition forces engaged in counter-insurgency activities by exploding bombs in markets, mosques and churches. There have been earlier reports and independent eyewitness accounts of coalition soldiers caught planting bombs. However, like hurricane Katrina, this time they were caught and exposed, the world can now see their fork-tongue and insidious nature.

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[1] <http://www.iraqwar.mirror-world.ru/article/63808>

[iraqwar.mirror-world.ru/article/63926](http://iraqwar.mirror-world.ru/article/63926)

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