

as per 11 Mar 05

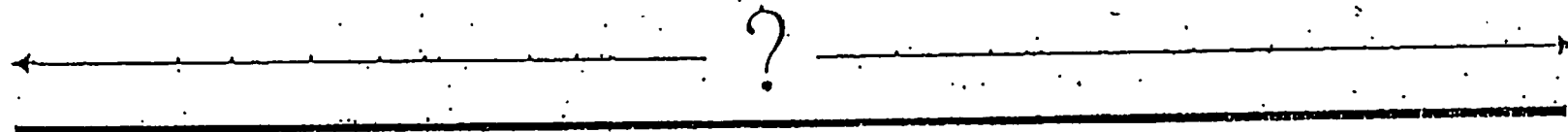
# Assessing the Relationship Between Iraq and al Qaida

NSC/OVP  
BRIEFING

# Fundamental Problems with How Intelligence Community is Assessing Information

- Application of a standard that would not normally obtain
  - IC does not normally require juridical evidence to support a finding
- Consistent underestimation of importance that would be attached by Iraq and al Qaida to hiding a relationship
  - Especially when operational security is very good, “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence”
- Assumption that secularists and Islamists will not cooperate, even when they have common interests.

# Spectrum of Possibilities Characterizing Relationship between Iraq and al Qaida



Open hostility;  
no contacts or  
cooperation

Non-Aggression

Senior-Level  
Contacts

Cooperation

Coordination

Formal,  
acknowledged  
close  
relationship

*Relationship may change over time*

## Key Questions

- What is the probability that there are contacts between Iraq and al Qaida?
- What is the probability that there is cooperation regarding such support functions as finances, expertise, training and logistics?
- What is the probability that Iraq and al Qaida actually coordinate on decisions or operations?
- What is probability that if a relationship existed, Iraq and al Qaida could conceal its depth and characteristics from the United States?

# High-Level Contacts, 1990-2002

- 1990: UBL sends emissaries to Jordan to meet with Iraqi government representatives to avert US attack; [REDACTED]
- 1993: National Islamic Front leader Hassan al-Turabi helps UBL develop relationship with Iraq according to CIA reporting; Iraqi defector later confirms information; UBL "understanding" with Saddam is reached (non-aggression pact and agreement to cooperate on unspecified activities); no al-Qaida attacks against Iraqi regime's interests after that; UBL forbade Iraqi dissidents to attack Iraq
- 1994-1998: [REDACTED] senior Iraqi IIS official Faruq Hijazi met at least twice with UBL [REDACTED]
- 1996: Deputy IIS Director Faruq Hijazi meets with UBL [REDACTED] shortly after UBL returns from Qatar [REDACTED]
- 1996: Director of IIS, Mani'abd al-Rashid al-Tikriti met privately with UBL at one of his farms in Sudan [REDACTED] - several weeks after Khobar Towers attack; used Iraqi delegation travelling to Khartoum as "cover"
- 1995-1996: [REDACTED] UBL requests Iraqi assistance with bombmaking [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- 1998: [REDACTED] Hijazi meets with UBL in Afghanistan in late 1998
- 1998: [REDACTED] Zawahiri visits Baghdad and meets with Iraqi Vice President [REDACTED]
- 1998: Senior al Qaida official Zawahiri meets with 2 IIS officers in Afghanistan [REDACTED]
- 1998-1999: Flurry of reported meetings following al Qaida's successful East Africa attacks and [REDACTED]; discussions of safe haven following bombings; Iraq reportedly promises al Qaida training
- 1999: al Qaida established operational training camp in northern Iraq; also reports of Iraq training terrorists at Salman Pak
- 1999: IIS officials meet UBL in Afghanistan; additional contacts through Iraq's embassy in Pakistan
- 2001: Prague IIS Chief al-Ani meets with Mohammed Atta in April [REDACTED]
- 2002: Large number of al Qaida reported operating in northern Iraq; [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- 2002: Zarqawi located in Iraq; [REDACTED]

# Summary of Known Iraq - al Qaida Contacts, 1990-2002

cont'd

1998: [redacted] Zawahiri visited Baghdad and met with Iraqi Vice President [redacted]

1999: [redacted] Iraq offers safe haven to UBL [redacted]

2000: [redacted] Malaysian-based Iraqi Shakir facilitated the arrival of one of the 9/11 hijackers for an operational meeting in Kuala Lumpur

2000: According to CIA "fragmentary reporting points to possible Iraqi involvement" in bombing of USS Cole in October

2001: Prague IIS Chief al-Ani meets with Mohammed Atta in April

2001-2002: Growing number of al-Qaida operatives fleeing Afghanistan to Iraq as safe haven or transit route to Saudi Arabia

2002: [redacted] Zarqawi still in Iraq after fleeing Afghanistan [redacted]

2002: [redacted] bin Laden viewed any entity that hated Americans or was willing to kill them as an ally.

## Basis of Cooperation: "Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend"

Motive: Shared objectives and animus toward the US

- For Saddam, Gulf War never ended
- For UBL, Gulf War reversed the dangers he perceived (US strong and entrenched in Saudi Arabia while Iraq had become weak)
  - He also may believe US intentionally left Saddam in power at end of Gulf War as pretext to maintain large military presence in the Gulf
- Unlike most other rogue states and Middle East terrorist organizations, attacking Israel is not primary focus of either Iraq or al Qaida

Quid Pro Quo: Iraq would receive willing surrogate to attack US; al Qaida would receive critical support

Complementary Interests Regarding Publicity: Iraq would enjoy plausible deniability while publicity would aid al Qaida with recruiting and fundraising

# What Would Each Side Want From a Relationship?

## Iraq's Objectives:

- ✓ Operational surrogate to continue war
- ✓ Means to subvert/intimidate enemies
- ✓ Deniable mechanism to threaten US and others
- ✓ Fireproofing against extremism

## Al Qaida's Objectives:

- ✓ Expertise
- ✓ Training
- ✓ CBRN
- ✓ Financing/Procurement
- ✓ Documentation/Facilitation
- ✓ Safe haven of last resort

*Intelligence indicates cooperation in all categories;  
mature, symbiotic relationship*



# Iraqi Agenda for Cooperation

## Operational surrogate

- Al Qaida attacks US in ways that serve Iraqi interests
  - Fragmentary reporting points to possible Iraqi involvement not only in 9/11 but also in previous al Qaida attacks

## Means to subvert/intimidate neighbors

- [REDACTED] Iraq is using Sunni extremist elements to subvert them

## Deniable mechanism to threaten US

- 1998 UBL Fatwa, a call to kill Americans, links the presence of US forces in Saudi Arabia and Islamic solidarity with Iraq

## Fireproofing against Sunni extremism

- 1993 "understanding" helps protect Saddam regime from internal radical Islamic uprising

# Al Qaida Seeks Expertise from Iraq

- UBL makes request for bombmaking assistance — ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

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## Al Qaida Seeks Training

- [REDACTED] IIS/Fedayeen Saddam training facility at Salman Pak used to train non-Iraqi terrorists [REDACTED]
- Abu Nidal Organization, which has close ties to Iraq, also trained al Qaida [REDACTED]
- Al Qaida training camp located in northern Iraq operational in 1999

# Al Qaida Seeks Chem-Bio Weapons

[REDACTED]

- Unconfirmed reports of Iraqis assisting al Qaida in establishment of microbial laboratories in Afghanistan

- [REDACTED] couriers transporting an alleged poison [REDACTED] were intercepted [REDACTED]

# Financial and Procurement Cooperation

- Through cheating in Oil for Food program, CIA estimates Iraq had earned \$325 million by March 2000
  - Some of the funds could be used to finance terrorist organizations
- Intertwined front companies linked to al Qaida and involved with circumventing sanctions against Iraq
  - In 1996, senior UBL business official Salah al-Tamimi conducted large amount of business with Iraq in violation of UN sanctions; al-Tamimi was director of UBL's Khartoum tannery
  - UBL's al-Hijra Company had contacts with Holland based Vlemmo N.V. which was a front company for Iraqi military procurement
  - Senior UBL official Abu Sa'ad in Khartoum linked to al-Eman Commercial Investment Establishment, which is lynchpin of Iraqi front company network

Report that Iraqi IIS Chief of Station instructed IIS finance officer to provide funds to Muhammad Atta during one of his visits to Prague

[REDACTED] Iraqi regime provided at least \$100,000 to terrorist group in northern Iraq, Anisar al-Islam, that has close links to al Qaida

# Iraq Provides Documentation/Facilitation

- Abdul Rahman Yasin, a fugitive in the 1993 WTC bombing, fled to Iraq in 1993 [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] Iraq has provided logistical support to large number of terrorist organizations over past several decades, including Abu Nidal Organization, Fatah, and the Japanese Red Army.
  - Iraq welcomed fundamentalist groups for the first time in the wake of the Gulf War
- Al Qaida associate involved with travel facilitation stated during [REDACTED] debriefing that he had multiple contacts with Iraqi officials in Islamabad

## Facilitation: Atta Meeting in Prague

- [REDACTED] Atta visited IIS office in Prague at least twice
  - Despite press reports of conflicting information, [REDACTED] stands by previous [REDACTED] reporting
  - No other intelligence reporting contradicts that [REDACTED] report
  - CIA has corroborated June 2000 Prague visit by Atta; Atta also confirmed to have visited Prague in 1994
- Atta reportedly held meetings with Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim Samir al-Ani, IIS Chief of Station in June 2000 and again 8-9 April 2001
  - Atta also reportedly met with Iraqi Charge d'Affaires Hussein Kanaan
  - During one visit, al-Ani ordered IIS finance officer to issue funds to Atta
  - [REDACTED]
- Several workers at Prague airport identified Atta following 9/11 and remember him traveling with his brother Farhan Atta

## Facilitation: Key Meeting in Kuala Lumpur

- Former Malaysia-based Iraqi national, Ahmed Hikmat Shakir, facilitated arrival of 9/11 hijacker Khalid al-Mihdhar for an operational meeting in Kuala Lumpur in January 2000
- Shakir worked for 4 months as airport facilitator in Kuala Lumpur
- He claims he obtained job through Iraqi embassy employee
  - Employee believed to be Ra'ad al-Mударis, a former IIS officer
- Shakir's travels and past contacts link him with Sunni extremist network, including 1993 WTC bombing suspects



# Iraq Has Provided Safe Haven for Key Terrorists

• Abu Musab al Zarqawi

- Senior al Qaida planner fled to Iraq with entourage [REDACTED]; underwent surgery in Baghdad; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
with Iraq

Zarqawi was a leading advocate of al Qaida relations

[REDACTED] requested Zarqawi's extradition [REDACTED]; Iraqi regime did not respond to request; Zarqawi assessed to have departed Iraq [REDACTED] following extradition request; current location unknown

## Iraq Providing Safe Haven for Key Terrorists (cont.)

### Ahmad Hikmat Shakir

- Iraqi national who facilitated airport transit of 9/11 hijacker Khalid al-Mihdhar for key planning meeting in January 2000 in Kuala Lumpur
- Received job at airport, which he held for only 4 months, through employee of Iraqi embassy
  - ▷ Embassy employee, Ra'ad al-Mударis, believed to be a former Iraqi intelligence officer
- Also linked to 1993 World Trade Center bombing conspirators
- Arrested by Jordanian authorities but released under pressure from Iraqi intelligence and then fled to Iraq

### Abdul Rahman Yasin

- Iraqi national born in US; 1993 World Trade Center conspirator
- Fled to Iraq after 1993 attack via Jordan
- [REDACTED]

# Safe Haven: Jund al-Islam/Ansar al-Islam

Reporting that approximately 750 al Qaida operatives relocated to northern Iraq following 9/11 and joined forces with Ansar al-Islam

- Iraq reportedly sent group weapons, [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- IIS has close relationship with Ansar al-Islam and especially with Abu Wa'il according to [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED] regime and Ansar al-Islam [REDACTED] developing ties between Iraqi

- [REDACTED] IIS provides \$100K to Ansar /

- [REDACTED] Ansar al-Islam attempts to assassinate Jordanian [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] official [REDACTED]

September 13, 2002; Leader of Ansar al-Islam, Mullah Krekar, arrested in Amsterdam

# Findings

- More than a decade of numerous contacts
- Multiple areas of cooperation
- Shared anti-US goals and common bellicose rhetoric
  - Unique in calling for killing of Americans and praising 9/11
- Shared interest and pursuit of WMD
- Some indications of possible Iraqi coordination with al Qaida specifically related to 9/11
- Relationship would be compartmented by both sides; closely guarded secret; indications of excellent operational security by both parties