
Subject: The WMD and terrorist ties that didn't exist...or did they?

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I wonder, if and when these documents are proven to be authentic, the "OMG THERE WAS NO WMD OR TIES TO AL-QAEDA BEFORE 9/11" folks will eat crow

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Exclusive: Saddam Possessed WMD, Had Extensive Terror Ties

By Scott Wheeler

CNSNews.com Staff Writer

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(CNSNews.com) - Iraqi intelligence documents, confiscated by U.S. forces and obtained by CNSNews.com, show numerous efforts by Saddam Hussein's regime to work with some of the world's most notorious terror organizations, including al Qaeda, to target Americans. They demonstrate that Saddam's government possessed mustard gas and anthrax, both considered weapons of mass destruction, in the summer of 2000, during the period in which United Nations weapons inspectors were not present in Iraq. And the papers show that Iraq trained dozens of terrorists inside its borders.

One of the Iraqi memos contains an order from Saddam for his intelligence service to support terrorist attacks against Americans in Somalia. The memo was written nine months before U.S. Army Rangers were ambushed in Mogadishu by forces loyal to a warlord with alleged ties to al Qaeda.

Other memos provide a list of terrorist groups with whom Iraq had relationships and considered available for terror operations against the United States.

Among the organizations mentioned are those affiliated with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Ayman al-Zawahiri, two of the world's most wanted terrorists. Zarqawi is believed responsible for the kidnapping and beheading of several American civilians in Iraq and claimed responsibility for a series of deadly bombings in Iraq Sept. 30. Al-Zawahiri is the top lieutenant of al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, allegedly helped plan the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist strikes on the U.S., and is believed to be the voice on an audio tape broadcast by Al-Jazeera television Oct. 1, calling for attacks on U.S. and British interests everywhere.

The source of the documents

A senior government official who is not a political appointee provided CNSNews.com with copies of the 42 pages of Iraqi Intelligence Service documents. The originals, some of which were hand-written and others typed, are in Arabic. CNSNews.com had the papers translated into English by two individuals separately and independent of each other.

There are no hand-writing samples to which the documents can be compared for forensic analysis and authentication. However, three other experts - a former weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), a retired CIA counter-terrorism official with vast experience dealing with Iraq, and a former advisor to then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton on Iraq - were asked to analyze the documents. All said they comport with the format, style and content of other Iraqi documents from that era known to be genuine.

Laurie Mylroie, who authored the book, "Study of Revenge: Saddam Hussein's Unfinished War against America," and advised Clinton on Iraq during the 1992 presidential campaign, told CNSNews.com that the papers represent "the most complete set of documents relating Iraq to terrorism, including Islamic terrorism" against the U.S.

Mylroie has long maintained that Iraq was a state sponsor of terrorism against the United States. The documents obtained by CNSNews.com, she said, include "correspondence back and forth between Saddam's office and Iraqi Mukhabarat (intelligence agency). They make sense. This is what one would think Saddam was doing at the time."

Bruce Tefft, a retired CIA official who specialized in counter-terrorism and had extensive experience dealing with Iraq, said that "based on available, unclassified and open source information, the details in these documents are accurate ..."

The former UNSCOM inspector zeroed in on the signatures on the documents and "the names of some of the people who sign off on these things.

"This is fairly typical of that time era. [The Iraqis] were meticulous record keepers," added the former U.N. official, who spoke with CNSNews.com on the condition of anonymity.

The senior government official, who furnished the documents to CNSNews.com, said the papers answer "whether or not Iraq was a state sponsor of Islamic terrorism against the United States. It also answers whether or not Iraq had an ongoing biological warfare project continuing through the period when the UNSCOM inspections ended."

Presidential campaign focused on Iraq

The presidential campaign is currently dominated by debate over whether Saddam procured weapons of mass destruction and/or whether his government sponsored terrorism aimed at Americans before the U.S. invaded Iraq last year. Democratic nominee Sen. John Kerry has repeatedly rejected that possibility and criticized President Bush for needlessly invading Iraq.

"[Bush's] two main rationales - weapons of mass destruction and the al Qaeda/September 11 (2001) connection - have been proved false ... by the president's own weapons inspectors ... and by the 9/11 Commission," Kerry told an audience at New York University on Sept. 20.

The Senate Intelligence Committee's probe of the 9/11 intelligence failures also could not produce any definitive links between Saddam's government and 9/11. And United Nations as well as U.S. weapons inspectors in Iraq have been unable to find the biological and chemical weapons Saddam was suspected of possessing.

But the documents obtained by CNSNews.com shed new light on the controversy.

They detail the Iraqi regime's purchase of five kilograms of mustard gas on Aug. 21, 2000 and three vials of malignant pustule, another term for anthrax, on Sept. 6, 2000. The purchase order for the mustard gas includes gas masks, filters and rubber gloves. The order for the anthrax includes sterilization and decontamination equipment. (See Saddam's Possession of Mustard Gas)

The documents show that Iraqi intelligence received the mustard gas and anthrax from "Saddam's company," which Tefft said was probably a reference to Saddam General Establishment, "a complex of factories involved with, amongst other things, precision optics, missile, and artillery fabrication."

"Sa'ad's general company" is listed on the Iraqi documents as the supplier of the sterilization and decontamination equipment that accompanied the anthrax vials. Tefft believes this is a reference to the Salah Al-Din State Establishment, also involved in missile construction. (See Saddam's Possession of Anthrax)

The Jaber Ibn Hayan General Company is listed as the supplier of the safety equipment that accompanied the mustard gas order. Tefft described the company as "a 'turn-key' project built by Romania, designed to produce protective CW (conventional warfare) and BW (biological warfare) equipment (gas masks and protective clothing)."

"Iraq had an ongoing biological warfare project continuing through the period when the UNSCOM inspections ended," the senior government official and source of the documents said. "This should cause us to redouble our efforts to find the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs."

'Hunt the Americans'

The first of the 42 pages of Iraqi documents is dated Jan. 18, 1993, approximately two years after American troops defeated Saddam's army in the first Persian Gulf War. The memo includes Saddam's directive that "the party should move to hunt the Americans who are on Arabian land, especially in Somalia, by using Arabian elements ..."

On Oct. 3, 1993, less than nine months after that Iraqi memo was written, American soldiers were ambushed in Mogadishu, Somalia by forces loyal to Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid, an alleged associate of Osama bin Laden. Eighteen Americans were killed and 84 wounded during a 17-hour firefight that followed the ambush in which Aidid's followers used civilians as decoys. (See Saddam's Connections to al Qaeda)

An 11-page Iraqi memo, dated Jan. 25, 1993, lists Palestinian, Sudanese and Asian terrorist organizations and the relationships Iraq had with each of them. Of particular importance, Tefft said, are the relationships Iraq had already developed or was in the process of developing with groups and individuals affiliated with al Qaeda, such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Ayman al-Zawahiri. The U.S. currently is offering rewards of up to \$25 million for each man's capture.

The documents describe Al-Jehad wa'l Tajdeed as "a secret Palestinian organization" founded

after the first Persian Gulf War that "believes in armed struggle against U.S. and western interests." The leaders of the group, according to the Iraqi memo, were stationed in Jordan in 1993, and when one of those leaders visited Iraq in November 1992, he "showed the readiness of his organization to execute operations against U.S. interests at any time." (See More Saddam Connections to al Qaeda)

Tefft believes the Tajdeed group likely included al-Zarqawi, whom Tefft described as "our current terrorist nemesis" in Iraq, "a Palestinian on a Jordanian passport who was with al Qaeda and bin Laden in Afghanistan prior to this period (1993)."

Tajdeed, which means Islamic Renewal, currently "has a website that posts Zarqawi's speeches, messages, claims of assassinations and beheading videos," Tefft told CNSNews.com. "The apparent linkages are too close to be accidental" and might "be one of the first operational contacts between an al Qaeda group and Iraq," he added.

Tefft said the documents, all of which the Iraqi Intelligence Service labeled "Top secret, personal and urgent" show several links between Saddam's government and terror groups dedicated not only to targeting America but also U.S. allies like Egypt and Israel.

The same 11-page memo refers to the "re-opening of the relationship" with Al-Jihad al-Islamy, which is described as "the most violent in Egypt," responsible for the 1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. The documents go on to describe a Dec. 14, 1990 meeting between Iraqi intelligence officials and a representative of Al-Jihad al-Islamy, that ended in an agreement "to move against [the] Egyptian regime by doing martyr operations on conditions that we should secure the finance, training and equipments." (See More Saddam Connections to al Qaeda)

Al-Zawahiri was one of the leaders of Jihad al-Islamy, which is also known as the Egyptian Islamic Group, and participated in the assassination of Sadat, Tefft said. "Iraq's contact with the Egyptian Islamic Group is another operational contact between Iraq and al Qaeda," he added.

One of the Asian groups listed on the Iraqi intelligence memo is J.U.I., also known as the Islamic Clerks Society. The group is currently led by Mawlana Fadhel al-Rahman, whom Tefft said is "an al Qaeda member and co-signed Osama bin Laden's 1998 fatwa (religious ruling) to kill Americans." The Iraqi memo from 1993 states that J.U.I.'s secretary general "has a good relationship with our system since 1981 and he is ready for any mission." Tefft said the memo shows "another direct Iraq link to an al Qaeda group."

Iraq had also maintained a relationship with the Afghani Islamist party since 1989, according to the memo. The "relationship was improved and became directly between the leader, Hekmatyar and Iraq," it states, referring to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an Afghani warlord who fought against the Soviet Union and current al Qaeda ally, according to Tefft.

Last year, American authorities in Afghanistan ranked Hekmatyar third on their most wanted list, behind only bin Laden and former Taliban leader Mullah Omar. Hekmatyar represents "another Iraqi link to an al Qaeda group," Tefft said. (See More Saddam Connections to al Qaeda)

The Iraqi intelligence documents also refer to terrorist groups previously believed to have had

links with Saddam Hussein. They include the Palestine Liberation Front, a group dedicated to attacking Israel, and according to the Iraqi memo, one with "an office in Baghdad."

The Abu Nidal group, suspected by the CIA of having acted as surrogates for Iraqi terrorist attacks, is also mentioned.

"The movement believes in political violence and assassinations," the 1993 Iraqi memo states in reference to the Abu Nidal organization. "We have relationships with them since 1973. Currently, they have a representative in the country. Monthly helps are given to them -- 20 thousand dinars - in addition to other supports," the memo explains. (See Saddam's Connections to Palestinian Terror Groups)

Iraq not only built and maintained relationships with terrorist groups, the documents show it appears to have trained terrorists as well. Ninety-two individuals from various Middle Eastern countries are listed on the papers.

Many are described as having "finished the course at M14," a reference to an Iraqi intelligence agency, and to having "participated in Umm El-Ma'arek," the Iraqi response to the U.S. invasion in 1991. The author of the list notes that approximately half of the individuals "all got trained inside the 'martyr act camp' that belonged to our directorate."

The former UNSCOM weapons inspector who was asked to analyze the documents believes it's clear that the Iraqis "were training people there in assassination and suicide bombing techniques ... including non-Iraqis."

Bush administration likely unaware of documents' existence

The senior government official and source of the Iraqi intelligence memos, explained that the reason the documents have not been made public before now is that the government has "thousands and thousands of documents waiting to be translated.

"It is unlikely they even know this exists," the source added.

The government official also explained that the motivation for leaking the documents, "is strictly national security and helping with the war on terrorism by focusing this country's attention on facts and away from political posturing.

"This is too important to let it get caught up in the political process," the source told CNSNews.com.

To protect against the Iraqi intelligence documents being altered or misrepresented elsewhere on the Internet, CNSNews.com has decided to publish only the first of the 42 pages in Arabic, along with the English translation. Portions of some of the other memos in translated form are also being published to accompany this report. Credentialed journalists and counter-terrorism experts seeking to view the 42 pages of Arabic documents or to challenge their authenticity may make arrangements to do so at CNSNews.com headquarters in Alexandria, Va.