

Al Qaeda and the Iraqi Resistance Movement

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You know, I hate to predict violence, but I just understand the nature of the killers. This guy, Zarqawi, an al Qaeda associate — who was in Baghdad, by the way, prior to the removal of Saddam Hussein — is still at large in Iraq. And as you might remember, part of his operational plan was to sow violence and discord amongst the various groups in Iraq by cold-blooded killing. And we need to help find Zarqawi so that the people of Iraq can have a more bright — bright future. (George W. Bush, Press Conference, 1 June 2004)

US forces are waging a major attack on the Northern city of Tal Afar directed against the Iraqi resistance.

The US siege on the city, which includes aerial bombardments has resulted in countless civilians deaths. The bombing raids have led to a humanitarian crisis marked by the mass exodus, at gun point, of a large part of Tal Afar's population of some 300,000 people.

Both within the city as well as in the refugee camps, US forces and their Iraqi counterparts have been involved in a "storming and searching operation", which has terrorized the civilian population.

Similar in nature to the 2004 siege of Fallujah, the attack on Tal Afar is casually identified as a US-Iraqi initiative to weed out terrorists. It involves some 6000 heavily armed US forces and some 4000 Iraqi troops (Kurdish Peshmerga and Shia Badr Army).

Tal Afar is portrayed by the media as an "Al Qaeda stronghold" under the leadership of terror mastermind Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. The city is close to the Syrian border and Syria is identified as facilitating the movement of "terrorists" into Iraq.

Iraqi and US troops are said to be "going after" so-called "foreign fighters", who are "mostly religious zealots and Sunni fanatics".

While the media reports focus on the presence of "foreign fighters", most of the resistance fighters in Tal Afar are Iraqis. There have been no reliable reports of mass arrests of foreign fighters. (See Statement of Colonel Robert Brown, US State Department, States News Services, 14 September 2005).

There are an estimated 400 to 500 Iraqi fighters. Reports suggest that most of the resistance fighters have abandoned the city:

It is estimated that 90% of the residents have left their homes because of the violence and destruction of the siege, as well as to avoid home raids and snipers.

The Fallujah model is being applied yet again, albeit on a smaller scale...

While the US military claims to have killed roughly 200 “terrorists” in the operation, reports from the ground state that most of the fighters inside the city had long since left to avoid direct confrontation with the overwhelming military force (a basic tenet of guerrilla warfare).

(See Dahr Jamail,
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=20050916&articleid=959>)

The US military has identified the Euphrates region as a “Zarqawi stronghold” and plans, according to The New York Times, to wage similar operations in other cities in the following weeks:

[S]enior officials at the Pentagon and in Iraq say they believe that Mr. Zarqawi and the insurgency’s “center of gravity” is now in the bends and towns of the Euphrates River valley near the Syrian border.

Commanders say they plan to squeeze the Zarqawi leadership and Iraqi insurgents in those areas. Throughout the spring and summer marines and Army forces staged raids into those same towns, confiscating weapons and killing scores of insurgents. But many fighters melted into the countryside, and there were not enough coalition troops to keep a sufficient presence in the villages.

Commanders say new offensives in Anbar Province in coming weeks will be modeled on the siege of Tal Afar, which used 8,500 American and Iraqi troops. (New York Times, 17 September 2005)

According to UPI, hundreds of families from Samara situated on the bank of the river Tigris, were fleeing the city (18 September) following an announcement by Iraqi Defense Minister Saadoun al-Duleimi of a planned military attack against the city to “cleanse it from the terrorists.”

Media Blackout

There has been a virtual blackout on what is actually happening in Tal Afar. The humanitarian crisis and the plight of civilians is not an object of media attention or debate. Moreover, there are no details on the precise nature of the military operation from the embedded newsman in the war theater. In fact, it would appear that the embedded media has also been excluded.

Most of the reports out of Iraq are focusing on the suicide bombings in Shia populated areas, which have led to some than 200 civilian deaths.

Without evidence, these suicide attacks are described as part of Musab Al Zarqawi’s “counter-offensive”, as “acts of revenge” for the attacks on Tal Afar.

In a text published on a mysterious website, Al Zarqawi is said to have pledged to wage an all out war against the Shia majority in retribution for the attacks against the Sunni in Tal Afar:

“Abu Musab al- Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, appeared to claim responsibility [for the suicide attacks], posting an announcement on a website that “the battle to avenge the Sunnis of Tal Afar has begun”

In a twisted logic, Tal Afar is being presented as part of “a sectarian war” between Shia and Sunni in which the US military and the “international community” are presented as mediators. Yet Tal Afar is a predominantly ethnic Turkomen city. Thirty percent of its Turkomen population are Shia, who are also the victims of the US led military operation. (See Irish Times, 14 September 2005).

Yet Zarqawi’s website postings which point to “the battle to avenge the Sunnis”, seems to be inconsistent with the demographic composition of the city, which includes a significant Shia population and where Sunni Arabs are a small minority.

Last year, the Turkish government had pressured the US not to intervene militarily in Tal Afar.

“Turkey will end cooperation with the United States in Iraq in case attacks on Turkomens continue,” said Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul (Anatolia news agency, Ankara, 15 September 2004).

And the planned 2004 US military operation directed against the Turkomen population of Tal Afar was consequently delayed. There are indications that the September 2005 operation has been accepted by the Turkish authorities.

Terrorist mastermind Al Zarqawi, which personifies the insurgency, is presented as a the main obstacle to democracy in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the role of US occupation forces and their countless atrocities receive little or no coverage. “The terrorists are still at large”. The task of the US-led “multinational force” is to “prevent and deter terrorism”.

“Able Danger” and “Al Qaeda in Iraq”

The media in chorus presents “Al Qaeda in Iraq” headed by Al Zarqawi as responsible for the recent suicide bombings, without ever mentioning that Al Qaeda is a creation of the US intelligence apparatus. This relationship is acknowledged by the CIA and documented in numerous studies. (See <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=20010912&articleId=368>)

A recent report concerning a secret Pentagon operation, now being discussed in the US Congress, casts serious doubt not only on the official 9/11 narrative, but on the entire “war on terrorism” construct. In the case of Iraq, this construct consists in presenting the resistance movement as “terrorists”:

“According to Army reserve Lieutenant-Colonel Anthony Shaffer, a top secret Pentagon project code-named Able Danger had identified Atta and three other 9/11 hijackers as members of an al-Qaida cell more than a year before the attacks.

Able Danger was an 18-month highly classified operation tasked, according to Shaffer, with “developing targeting information for al-Qaida on a global scale”, and used data-mining techniques to look for “patterns, associations, and linkages”. He said he himself had first encountered the names of the four hijackers in mid-2000.”

(See Daniele Ganser, Operation Able Danger,
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=20050827&articleId=867>

Al Qaeda operatives including 9/11 ringleader Mohamed Atta had been under the direct surveillance of the US military and intelligence at least one year prior to 9/11 as part of a top secret operation of the Pentagon’s Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

“Able Danger” confirms what is already known and documented: The official 9/11 narrative as outlined by the 9/11 Commission constitutes a cover-up.

“Blowback”

The revelations also refute the “blowback”, namely that Al Qaeda, created by the CIA during the Soviet-Afghan war, has somehow gone against its US sponsors. The latter are still actively involved in overseeing their intelligence asset in the context of a top secret Pentagon Operation.

Moreover, the revelations concerning Operation “Able Danger” have a direct bearing on our understanding of Al Zarqawi and the alleged Al Qaeda sponsored suicide bombings in Iraq.

Are these Al Qaeda operations in Iraq also under the surveillance of the Pentagon?

The numerous documented links regarding the relationship between the CIA to the Islamic Terror Network, cast doubt on the media reports, which present “Al Qaeda in Iraq” headed by Al Zarqawi as an independent paramilitary organization fighting US forces.

In other words, if Al Qaeda in Iraq, the intelligence asset, is (indirectly) controlled by the Pentagon and/or the CIA, it cannot reasonably constitute a real resistance movement directed against the US military occupation.

An intelligence asset, in the case of Iraq is an instrument of the occupying forces.

Is “Al Qaeda in Iraq” being used by the US military to weaken the real resistance movement, while creating divisions within Iraqi society?

The Suicide Bombings

What is the role of the Zarqawi sponsored suicide attacks?

They serve to present the resistance movement as terrorists. They undermine public support within Iraq for the resistance movement against US occupation. The latter, composed of several different groups, is characterized by a guerilla army involved in

targeted operations directed against the US military.

The media reports, which center on the role of Al Zargawi and bin Laden, serve to distort the nature of the resistance movement, presenting the insurgents as attacking civilians:

AL-QA'IDA had proved itself to be "a ruthless, sectarian gang" by declaring war on Iraq's Shias, the Lebanese daily said in response to Abu Musab al- Zargawi's recent call, which "illustrates that al-Qa'ida has lost any and every possible claim it may have had to moral, noble or rational objectives". (the Star, Beirut, 17 September 2005)

Al-Qa'ida's leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al- Zargawi, claimed responsibility for the latest wave of violence and declared all-out war on the Shi'ites.

Calling for international assistance, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said his country was "not hesitant to openly and frankly say we are in desperate need of ... your support for our efforts to fight terrorism" (The Australian, 17 Sept 2005)

In Iraq, four suicide bombers again struck in Baghdad, killing 31 and bringing the two-day death toll to 200, as al Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al- Zargawi sought to inflame the ethnic and religious divisions between Sunni and Shiite Arabs. However, the US military is confident its recent operations targeting Al Qaeda in Iraq have been successful despite the recent violence.

The CBS Evening News (9/15, story 6, 2:00, Martin) reported it was "gruesome evidence of Abu Musab Al- Zargawi's declaration of all-out war against the Shiites who control the government of Iraq. Zargawi's Website claims the carnage in Baghdad is revenge for an assault by US and Iraqi troops on the town of Tal Afar near the Syrian border, a hub for insurgent operations in northern Iraq, where the US military says it has scored dramatic successes." (Frontrunner, 16 September 2005)

The attacks came as Iraqi leaders claimed to have finalised a constitution, and as the Iraqi branch of al-Qaeda swore to avenge a recent US-Iraqi offensive on the north-eastern town of Tal Afar. The one-day death toll was possibly the highest in the capital since March 2003, and one of the attacks - a suicide car bomb in the predominantly Shia north Baghdad neighborhood of Kadhemiya that killed 117 people - was the second deadliest single blast.... Witnesses said that no US or Iraqi military or police targets were in the vicinity, suggesting that the attacker had aimed to cause as much civilian carnage as possible. (Financial Times, 15 September 2005)

Concluding Remarks

Has the US created, as part of a covert intelligence operation, a bogus "resistance movement" made up of its own Al Qaeda sponsored "terrorists"? Their suicide attacks target Iraqi civilians rather than the US military.

The suicide bombings tend to encourage sectarian divisions not only within Iraq, but throughout the entire Middle East. They serve Washington's interests. They contribute to undermining the development of a broader resistance movement uniting Shia, Sunni, Kurds and Christians against the illegal occupation of the Iraqi homeland. They also tend to create, at the international level, divisions within the antiwar and peace movements.

Moreover, the disinformation campaign also permeates the Iraqi and Middle East press. The

latter tend to take the alleged Al Zargawi's statements published on the internet at face value. The Zargawi threat to the Shia is seen as genuine. The links between Al Qaeda in Iraq and US intelligence is rarely mentioned.

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Who is Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi? by Michel Chossudovsky, 11 June 2004, <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO405B.html>

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