

Fabricated Iraq War WMD Pretext: Who was behind the “Terrorist Network” in Northern Iraq, Baghdad or Washington?

Colin Powell's Accusations at the United Nations Security Council

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

Global Research, March 19, 2013

[Global Research](#) 15 February 2003

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

First published by Global Research on 5 February 2003

“What we’re giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence...” (Colin Powell, 5 February 2003)

The plagiarized British “intelligence report” cited by Powell in his UN address is part of a war propaganda campaign, which went disastrously wrong in the weeks leading up to the planned invasion of Iraq. Yet the matter of political deceit and disinformation, not to mention the incompetence of the CIA and Britain’s MI6 is but the tip of the iceberg.

While Colin Powell points a finger at Saddam Hussein, there is firm evidence that “Enemy Number One”, namely Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda is a creature of the US military-intelligence establishment.

Secretary of State Powell in his February 5 2003 address to the United Nations Security Council accused Saddam Hussein of collaborating with Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda.

Powell accused Baghdad of supporting Ansar al-Islam, a “deadly terrorist network” based in the ethnic Kurd controlled region of Northern Iraq. According to Powell, Ansar al-Islam has been responsible for plotting terror attacks in a number of countries including France, Britain, and Germany. US officials have also pointed to the role of Iraq’s embassy in Islamabad, which was allegedly used as a liaison between Al Qaeda operatives and representatives of the Iraqi government.

Baghdad has no jurisdiction in the ethnic Kurd controlled region of Northern Iraq. In fact, the region is in the US sphere of influence. “But the picture is neither complete nor conclusive. Ansar al-Islam has its bases in the Kurdish-controlled area of Iraq, beyond the control of Saddam Hussein.” (NYT, 14 February 2003)

There are two regional governments in “liberated Kurdistan”, both of which are supported by Washington. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) controls the West, whereas the eastern part is under the jurisdiction of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The two rival governments have separate administrations and Armed Forces, which are financed by US military aid under Clinton’s 1998 “Iraq Liberation Act” of 1998.

Ansar al-Islam, a pre-existing Islamist group, developed into a small yet significant paramilitary organisation, shortly after the 9/11 attacks. It was largely involved in terrorist attacks directed against the secular institutions of the Kurdish regional governments. It was also involved in assassinations of members of the Kurdish PUK. In the days following Colin Powell's statement, a senior military leader of PUK forces General Shawkat Haj Mushir was murdered allegedly by Ansar al-Islam. (The Australian, 11 February 2003) Surrounded in mystery, the assassination of Shawkat was barely mentioned in the US press.

Since September 2001, Ansar al-Islam has grown in size, incorporating Al Qaeda fighters who fled Afghanistan in the wake of the US bombings. (Christian Science Monitor, 15 March 2002) Revealed by Seymour Hersh, "an unknown number" of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters "were flown to safety" in a US sponsored airlift organised by Pakistan's Military and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). These Mujahideen fighters were apparently evacuated to Kashmir, where they joined Al Qaeda and ISI supported Islamic terrorist groups. While there is no firm evidence, one suspects that some of the Mujahideen fighters may also have fled from Afghanistan to other countries (eg. Northern Iraq), with the tacit approval of the Pentagon.

Northern Iraq -which falls in "the no fly zone"- is virtually a US protectorate. US military and intelligence observers stationed in the Kurdish region have turned a blind eye to the influx of Al Qaeda fighters from Afghanistan, as well as to the various acts of terrorism committed in the Kurdish region. According to one report «Al Qaida affiliates coordinating the movement of people, money and supplies for Ansar al-Islam have been operating freely in the [regional] capital." (Midland Independent, 6 February 2003). In all likelihood, Ansar al-Islam, which is also integrated by Afghan-Arabs, is supported through the same covert US intelligence channels as other Al Qaeda related organisations in Central Asia and the Middle East.

Responding to Colin Powell's UN address, an Iraqi foreign ministry spokesman stated that "the Iraqi government helped the [PUK] Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani against the Ansar al-Islam group. He [the spokesman] accused Ansar al-Islam of carrying out acts of sabotage inside Iraq...[and] that the United States had turned down an Iraqi offer to cooperate on the issue of terrorism." (News Conference by Lieutenant-General Amir al-Sa'di, adviser at the Iraqi Presidency; Dr Sa'id al-Musawi, head of the Organizations' Department at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry; and Major-General Husam Muhammad Amin, head of the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate. BBC Monitoring Service, 6 February 2003).

The presence and activities of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Northern Iraq largely serve US interests. These groups are committed to the establishment of a Muslim theocracy. In other words, they trigger political instability and contribute to weakening the institutions of the two dominant secular Kurdish parties, both of which have on occasion been involved in negotiations with Baghdad. In the wake of the war, the US is intent upon establishing a US military occupation government. The Northern region would be transformed into a US controlled protectorate.

US Backed Terror Group?

According to Powell, the head of the Kurdish terrorist group is a person by the name of Abu Musab Al Zarkawi who "fought in the Afghan war more than a decade ago". (Colin Powell's Address to the UNSC, 5 February 2003). Ironically, this statement points to the complicity of Washington rather than Baghdad. What it actually means is that Al-Zarkawi fought in the US

sponsored Afghan wars as part of a CIA led operation. What Colin Powell's statement suggests is that their "main suspect" Abu Musab Al Zargawi was in all likelihood trained and indoctrinated in a CIA sponsored training camp in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

While Colin Powell points at Iraq, piles of official documents, press and intelligence reports confirm unequivocally that successive US administrations have supported and abetted the Islamic militant network. Amply documented Al Qaeda is an "intelligence asset" which was created by the CIA. Quoting a "top secret British document, the BBC revealed on the 5th of February (the day Powell made his presentation to the UN) "that there is nothing but enmity between Iraq and Al Qaeda. The BBC said the leak came from [British] intelligence officials upset that their work was being used to justify war." (quoted in Daily News, New York, 6 February 2003).

The spiritual founder of Ansar al-Islam Mullah Krekar, says that "like most militant Islamists, [he] hates Saddam." (Ibid) Mullah Krekar is "currently living freely in Norway, where he has refugee status. The US has not requested his arrest. If Iraq is guilty of occasional meetings with second-level Al Qaeda operatives, then what is the Norwegian government guilty of?" (Glen Rangwala <http://www.traprockpeace.org/firstresponse.html>).

Ironically, the powerful Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) which plays a behind the scenes role in US military planning also refutes the substance of Colin Powell's UN statement:

"The question of Iraqi links to al-Qaeda remains murky, although senior Bush administration officials insist such ties exist... [M]any experts and State Department officials note that any al-Qaeda presence in Iraq probably lies in northern regions beyond Saddam's control. Many experts say there is scant evidence of ties between al-Qaeda and Iraq, noting that al-Qaeda's loathing for "impious" Arab governments makes it an unlikely bedfellow for Saddam's secular regime." <http://www.cfrterrorism.org/groups/alqaeda3.html>

The original source of this article is [Global Research](#)

Copyright © [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#), [Global Research](#), 2013

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

About the author:

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has taught as visiting professor in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. He has served as economic adviser to governments of developing countries and has acted as

a consultant for several international organizations. He is the author of 13 books. He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia. He can be reached at crgeditor@yahoo.com

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca