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Intelligence

P. Operational Cooperation Between Iraq and al-Qaida

(U) *Iraqi Support for Terrorism* contained the following summary regarding operational cooperation between Iraq and al-Qaida:

> We have no credible information that Baghdad had foreknowledge of the 11 September attacks or any other al-Qaida strike, but we continue to pursue all leads. We also are assessing Baghdad's possible role in the current al-Qaida related activity in Iraq.

The CIA expressed concern in its assessments regarding the grave threat posed to U.S. security by operational cooperation between Iraq and al-Qaida. Due to limited reporting on the subject, however, the CIA refrained from asserting that the Iraqi regime and al-Qaida were cooperating on terrorist operations. DCI Tenet, in his testimony before the Committee, summarized the intelligence reporting on Iraqi-al-Qaida operational cooperation stating, "These sources do not describe Iraqi complicity in, control over, or authorization of specific terrorist attacks carried out by al-Qaida."

(   ) As the DCI's statement indicated, the CIA did not have credible intelligence reporting which suggested Iraq had operational control over al-Qaida. The CIA had no DELETED credible reporting on the leadership of either the Iraqi regime or al-Qaida, which would have enabled it to better define a cooperative relationship, if any did in fact exist. As a result, the CIA refrained from asserting that Iraq and al-Qaida had cooperated on terrorist attacks. Instead, in *Iraqi Support for Terrorism*, the CIA judged, "al-Qaida, including Bin Ladin personally, and Saddam were leery of close cooperation," but that the "mutual antipathy of the two would not prevent tactical, limited cooperation."

(U) The CIA did provide assessments on certain instances in which the Iraqi regime and al-Qaida were alleged to have cooperated in terrorist attacks including:

-The 1993 World Trade Center bombing,
-The September 11th attacks, and
-The Foley assassination.

Although there are provocative elements in each instance, the CIA analysts also identified information that cast doubt on operational cooperation between Iraq and al-Qaida in these terrorist attacks.

1. 1993 World Trade Center Bombing

(U) In both *Iraqi Support for Terrorism* and *Iraq and al-Qaida: Interpreting a Murky Relationship*, the CIA reviewed the possible involvement by Iraq in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. The alleged involvement was based upon three connections to Iraq that surfaced during the investigation of individuals involved in the attack. First, Ramzi Yousef, the leader of the attack, entered the U.S. on a phony Iraqi passport and fled the U.S. with Kuwaiti documentation that Iraq may have been able to provide following its 1990-91 occupation of that country. The CIA found that stolen Iraqi passports were common at this time, however, and there was no indication that Iraq had used Kuwaiti documentation in any other intelligence operation. Second, Abdul Rahman Yasin, a fugitive from the attack, is of Iraqi descent, and in 1993, he fled to Iraq with Iraqi assistance. Iraq held Yasin in custody since that time, explaining that it feared the U.S. would misrepresent Yasin's role in the attack to implicate Iraq. The CIA has not provided any additional information to the Committee regarding Yasin or his involvement in this attack, and his whereabouts currently are unknown by the CIA. Third, convicted bomber Mohammed Salameh, had a maternal uncle who held a post in Palestinian Authority leader Yassir Arafat's Fatah organization while it had offices in Iraq. Iraq allowed Salameh's Palestinian uncle to emigrate to the West Bank in 1995, however, something the CTC analysts judged the regime would not have been expected to do if he had been involved in the 1993 World Trade Center attacks.

2. The September 11th Attacks

(   ) Two alleged Iraqi connections to the September 11, 2001, attacks were reviewed in all the analytical products concerning Iraq's links to terrorism and al-Qaida. The first connection to the attack involved Ahmed Hikmat Shakir, an Iraqi national, who facilitated the travel of one of the September 11 hijackers to Malaysia in January 2000.   SENTENCE DELETED   A foreign government service reported that Shakir worked for four months as an airport facilitator in Kuala Lumpur at the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000. Shakir claimed he got this job through Ra'ad al-Mudaris, an Iraqi Embassy employee.[50]   SENTENCE DELETED   Another source claimed that al-Mudaris was a former IIS officer.[51] The CIA judged in *Iraqi Support for Terrorism*, however, that al-Mudaris' DELETED that the Circumstances surrounding the hiring of Shakir for this position did not suggest it was done on behalf of the IIS.

(U) The CIA's reluctance to draw a conclusion with regard to Shakir was

reasonable based on the limited intelligence available and the analysts' familiarity with the IIS.

(   ) The second alleged Iraqi connection to the September 11 attacks was the widely-publicized report from the Czech government to the U.S. that meetings took place between September 11 hijacker Muhammed Atta and the IIS chief in Prague, Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim Samir al-Ani. The CIA judged that other evidence indicated that these meetings likely never occurred. According to *Iraqi Support for Terrorism*, "various reports put Atta in Prague DELETED between late 1994 and the spring of 2001."   SENTENCE DELETED   The CIA has provided the Committee no further information that Atta met with IIS officials DELETED

(   )   SENTENCE DELETED   . Photographs of the alleged October 1999 meeting were initially thought to be of Atta and al-Ani, but subsequent photo analysis by the CIA was inconclusive. Moreover, information DELETED and press interviews of Atta's family show that he was in Egypt visiting his family during this period in October 1999. SENTENCE DELETED   [52] Committee staff also interviewed FBI analysts regarding these alleged meetings, and the analysts stated that they agreed with the CIA assessment and had no further information suggesting or disproving that the meetings had taken place.

3. The Foley Assassination

(   ) The CIA also looked into the possibility that the Iraqi regime was involved in the al-Zarqawi network murder of US AID official Laurence Foley in Amman, Jordan in December 2002. DELETED two suspects in the Foley murder, indicated that Iraqi territory may have been used to facilitate travel and the supply weapons to the al-Zarqawi group in Jordan. But, neither of the two suspects provided any information on links between al-Zarqawi and the Iraqi regime. DELETED one of two suspects in the Foley murder stated that al-Zarqawi directed and financed the operations of the cell before, during, and after his stint in Baghdad between May and July 2002. The other suspect mentioned that weapons for their operations in Jordan had come from an unspecified place in Iraq. DELETED an associate of Foley's killer left Jordan to join al-Zarqawi in Iraq after the murder to obtain weapons and explosives for future operations. Both of the suspects DELETED mentioned that one member of the al-Zarqawi network traveled repeatedly between regime-controlled Iraq and Syria after March 2002.

(   ) The intelligence reporting on the Foley assassination available at the time of the January 2003 publication of *Iraqi Support for Terrorism* does not indicate Iraqi government complicity in this attack. A later intelligence report received on February 11, 2003, from a source DELETED[53] The CIA has not provided the Committee with any further information on whether the Iraqi regime was directly involved in this assassination.

footnotes

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