

## **Saddam and al-Qaeda**

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In March 2008, the Pentagon released a document that details some of the classified documents from Saddam's regime. This document called the Iraqi Perspectives Project Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents Volume 1 (Redacted) is an overview of "more than 600,000 original captured documents and several thousand hours of audio and video footage archived in a US Department of Defense (DOD) database. As of August 2006, only 15 percent of the captured documents have English translations."<sup>1</sup> This document provides insight into how Saddam operated his regime and his ties to terrorism.

### **al-Qaeda**

Al-Qaeda is not a top-down hierarchical organization, but a mesh of organizations that work together to the same ends – destroying Zionists and Israelis by whatever means necessary. As described by Neil Patrick, a Middle East specialist, al-Qaeda is "a loose confederation with various assignments given to various groups."<sup>2</sup>

The Council on Foreign Relations states that al-Qaeda is affiliated with the following terrorist organizations: “

- [Egyptian Islamic Jihad](#)
- The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
- Islamic Army of Aden (Yemen)
- Jama'at al-Tawhid wal Jihad (Iraq)
- [Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad \(Kashmir\)](#)
- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
- Salafist Group for Call and Combat and the [Armed Islamic Group](#) (Algeria)
- [Abu Sayyaf Group](#) (Malaysia, Philippines)
- [Jemaah Islamiya](#) (Southeast Asia)”<sup>3</sup>

To show how interconnected these groups are, the Council on Foreign Relations states “bin Laden's terror network grew out of Egyptian extremist groups, and many of al-Qaeda's leaders are Egyptians. In recent years, bin Laden brought two leaders of Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), Ayman al-Zawahiri and the late Muhammad Atef, into the top echelons of al-Qaeda. In addition, some members of Jamaat al-Islamiyya have reportedly joined al-Qaeda. Overall, dozens of Egyptian militants passed through al-Qaeda training camps in Taliban-run Afghanistan.”

### **Who is the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ)?**

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<sup>1</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), Foreword.

<sup>2</sup> Ford, Peter, Miller Sara B, Walsh, Courtney, "Al Qaeda's Veil Begins to Lift", (Christian Science Monitor, 2001) 6.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Qaeda (a.k.a. Al-Qaida, Al-Qa'ida)" (Council on Foreign Relations, 7 July 2005).

The EIJ “assassinated president Anwar Sadat in 1981 and later teamed up with Osama Bin Laden in the Afghan war against the Soviet occupation.”<sup>4</sup> In 1998, the EIJ merged with al-Qaeda and "*is now a wholly owned subsidiary of al-Qaeda,*" says [Steven Cook](#), a Middle East expert and the Douglas A. Dillon fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. The group's leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, is widely regarded as [Osama bin Laden](#)'s chief deputy.”<sup>5</sup>

Now let’s look closely at what the Pentagon papers state on Saddam and terrorism. “Saddam's interest in, and support for, non-Iraqi non-state actors was spread across a wide variety of revolutionary, liberation, nationalist, and Islamic terrorist organizations. For years, Saddam maintained training camps for foreign "fighters" drawn from these diverse groups. In some cases, particularly for Palestinians, Saddam was also a strong financial supporter. *Saddam supported groups that either associated directly with al-Qaeda (such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, led at one time by bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri) or that generally shared al-Qaeda's stated goals and objectives.*”<sup>6</sup>

***Is the EIJ associated with al-Qaeda?*** According to the Council on Foreign Affairs, the EIJ is a “*wholly owned subsidiary of al-Qaeda.*”<sup>7</sup> Considering the September 11, 2001 attack on the US was conducted by both Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden, the facts support the Council on Foreign Affairs description of al-Qaeda. Ayman al-Zawahiri was the leader of the EIJ before it merged with al-Qaeda in 1998. Now let’s take a closer look at Saddam and his regime of terror.

On page 16 of the Pentagon papers, there is a memorandum that lists the many terrorist groups that Iraq was supporting. The memorandum was written by the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) and is labeled as Extract 10. The recipient of this memorandum was Saddam a decade before OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. In Extract 10 it lists the EIJ:

“Islamic Jihad Organization [Egyptian Islamic Jihad]

In a meeting in the Sudan we agreed to renew our relations with the Islamic Jihad Organization in Egypt. Our information on the group is as follows:

- It was established in 1979.
- Its goal is to apply the Islamic shari' a law and establish Islamic rule.
- It is considered one of the most brutal Egyptian organizations.
- It carried out numerous successful operations, including the assassination of Sadat.
- We have previously met with the organization's representative and we agreed on a plan to carry out commando operations against the Egyptian regime.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Jihad Leader's 'Conversion' Could Rattle Al-Qaeda" ([Irish Times](#),2007)

<sup>5</sup> Pan, Esther "EGYPT: Islamist Opposition Groups" ([Council on Foreign Relations](#), Aug. 2005)

<sup>6</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, [Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents](#) (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.48.

<sup>7</sup> Pan, Esther "EGYPT: Islamist Opposition Groups" ([Council on Foreign Relations](#), Aug. 2005)

<sup>8</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, [Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents](#) (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.14.

In Extract 12 on page 16 of the Pentagon papers, there is another memorandum that was drafted in Saddam's office which specifically shows that Saddam was directly financing and training the EIJ:

“Office of the President of the Republic - Secretary

Subject: Carrying out a directive

There has been agreement since December 24, 1990, with the representative of the Islamic Group organization in Egypt on a plan to move against the Egyptian regime by carrying out commando operations provided that we **guarantee them financing and training** and provide them with the requirements in accordance with the honorable order of the President [Saddam Hussein] which calls for carrying out commando operations against hostile alliance governments. Afterwards, the operations will cease immediately after the ceasefire.

With respect to the proposal of our special security agency [IIS] regarding calling a representative of the Islamic Group in Egypt to Iraq in our topsecret personal letter dated 11 March 1993. This letter was in response to the President directing that only financial support is available for now. *Intelligence operatives and contacts should be maintained in any movement in the Arab homeland, as indicated by the President in a top-secret letter, dated 25 March 1992.* [Emphasis added]<sup>9</sup>

## **Saddam and State Terrorism**

Saddam was in the business of terror. From the recruitment, training, financing, and support of terrorism, Saddam formed an alliance with terror. Of course Saddam obtained control of Iraq via his terrorist Baath party, but the Pentagon Papers on Saddam reveal much more to Saddam's terrorist ties. The UN sanctions imposed after the 1991 Gulf War, “reduced Saddam's ability to shape regional and world events, steadily draining his military, economic, and military powers. The rise of Islamist fundamentalism in the region gave Saddam the opportunity to make terrorism, one of the few tools remaining in Saddam's "coercion" toolbox, not only cost effective but a formal instrument of state power.”<sup>10</sup> The UN sanctions were working, but Saddam being resourceful saw the jihadist movement as a vehicle to carry out his anti-American and anti-Israeli actions.

### ***Terrorist Training Camps in Iraq***

Saddam had terrorist training camps within Iraq. The Pentagon report on Saddam goes on to say that “captured Iraqi archives reveal that Saddam was training Arab fighters (non-Iraqi) in Iraqi training camps more than a decade prior to OPERATION DESERT STORM (1991). A Saddam memorandum directed the IIS to submit a list of foreign nationals who were trained in Iraq and carried out operations during the 1991 war against the United States. In response, the IIS sent a list of one-hundred names of foreign national fighters, categorized by country”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.16.

<sup>10</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.45.

<sup>11</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.15.

“[Foreign national fighters by country]

- Palestine 38
- Lebanon 10
- Tunisia 8
- Egypt 4
- Libya 1
- Sudan 18
- Syria 10
- Eritrea 7
- Morocco 3
- Unknown 1”<sup>12</sup>

The Pentagon papers on Saddam state “under Saddam, the Iraqi regime used its paramilitary Fedayeen Saddam training camps to train terrorists for use inside and outside Iraq. In 1999, the top ten graduates of each Fedayeen Saddam class were specifically chosen for assignment to London, from there to be ready to conduct operations anywhere in Europe.”<sup>13</sup> Saddam was training non-Iraqi’s to carry out terrorist actions throughout Europe.

The Pentagon papers on Saddam go on to explain the following specific training that was supplied in Iraq:

- “Re-equipping and training Palestinian fighters in al-Quds training camps [in Iraq].
- Establishing and activating a course to train Arab Liberation Front fighters on martyrdom operations.
- Establishing fighter schools for Arab volunteers and later Iraqi volunteers.
- Re-establishing and re-equipping the military base of the Arab Liberation Front.
- Training groups from the occupied territories [Palestine] on light weapons and tanks in secret thirty-day courses.”<sup>14</sup>

## **Salman Pak**

Salman Pak deserves special attention because both biological WMD were being manufactured and terrorist training involving simulated airplane hijackings were carried out there. Salman Pak was a terrorist training camp located 20 miles South East of Baghdad. “Former Iraqi military officers have described a highly secret terrorist training facility at Salman Pak, where both Iraqis and non-Iraqi Arabs receive training on hijacking planes and trains, planting explosives in cities, sabotage, and assassinations.”<sup>15</sup> At Salman Pak, Saddam was “engaged in laboratory scale research on Anthrax, Botulinum toxin, Clostridium, perfringens (gas gangrene), mycotoxins, aflatoxins, and Ricin. Researchers at this site carried out toxicity evaluations of these agents and examined their growth characteristics and survivability. Iraq told UN inspectors that Salman Pak was an anti-terror training camp for Iraqi special forces. However, two defectors from Iraqi intelligence stated that they had worked for several years at the secret Iraqi government camp,

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<sup>12</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam, p.16

<sup>13</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.1.

<sup>14</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.19-20.

<sup>15</sup> “Salman Pak / Al Salman”, (Global Security, 31 Mar. 2008)

which had trained Islamic terrorists in rotations of five or six months since 1995. Training activities including simulated hijackings carried out in an airplane fuselage [said to be a Boeing 707] at the camp. The camp is divided into distinct sections. On one side of the camp young Iraqis who were members of Fedayeen Saddam are trained in espionage, assassination techniques and sabotage. The Islamic militants trained on the other side of the camp, in an area separated by a small lake, trees and barbed wire. The militants reportedly spent time training, usually in groups of five or six, around the fuselage of the airplane. There were rarely more than 40 or 50 Islamic radicals in the camp at one time.”<sup>16</sup>

### ***State Support of Terrorism***

Saddam provided support to terrorists that only a state could provide by issuing passports to known terrorists so they could move about freely. The Pentagon papers on Saddam state the “M8 annual report also notes that among the 699 passports, renewals, and other official documentation that the IIS issued, many were issued to known members of terrorist organizations.”<sup>17</sup>

A specific example of Saddam issuing passports to and harboring a known terrorist is Abu al-Abbas, a Palestinian Liberation Front leader. Saddam allowed Abu al-Abbas and his wife to live in Iraq under Saddam’s protection. Saddam went so far as to issue both Abu al-Abbas and his wife diplomatic passports so they could travel the Middle East freely. “Abu al-Abbas originally fled to Iraq to avoid an Italian warrant imposing five life terms for his part in the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise liner *Achille Lauro* and the murder of an American citizen.”<sup>18</sup>

### ***Funding of Terrorism***

Not only did Saddam provide training and support to terrorists, Saddam readily financed them. Saddam was financing the EIJ from at least 1990 and after based on the letter drafted by the Office of the President of the Republic - Secretary (Extract 12). A specific example is a memo that was “drafted in Saddam's office, it refers to an agreement with Islamic terrorists to conduct operations against the Egyptian regime during the first Gulf War (1991) and for **continued financial support for the terrorists after hostilities ended.**”<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, the Pentagon Papers clearly show that Saddam had direct ties to the EIJ. Saddam was both financing and training EIJ members from as far back as 1990. The support Saddam was providing was ongoing. According the Council on Foreign Relations, the EIJ merged with al-Qaeda in 1998. Therefore, Saddam was financing and training al-Qaeda.

For whatever reasons the Pentagon papers stated just the EIJ link, not al-Qaeda. The second in command of al-Qaeda and the person who masterminded 9/11 is Ayman al-Zawahiri. Ayman al-

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<sup>16</sup> "Salman Pak / Al Salman", (*Global Security*, 31 Mar. 2008)

<sup>17</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, *Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents* (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.19.

<sup>18</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, *Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents* (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.27.

<sup>19</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, *Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents* (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.16.

Zawahiri was the leader of the EIJ prior to its 1998 merging with al-Qaeda. This truth has been subverted by the media. In order to give the media a quick out, the Executive Summary of the document states that there is no “smoking gun<sup>20</sup>.” I think one of the authors of the Pentagon papers is purposely trying to dissuade people from the truth. All a reader has to do is read the whole document and do a simple investigation of the EIJ, and you can see there was a direct link between al-Qaeda and Saddam’s Iraq.

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<sup>20</sup> Woods, Kevin M., and James Lacey, Iraqi Perspectives Project: Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights From Captured Iraqi Documents (Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008), p.ES-1.

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