

Breaking News: Americans caught with Iranian Weapons in Iraq

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United States officials in Baghdad were reported to be in possession of Iranian made weapons. In a brazen display of “intelligence”, the Americans proudly showed off their Iranian-made weapons to reporters:

The BBC’s Jane Peel attended the briefing in Baghdad, at which all cameras and recording devices were banned.

Examples of the allegedly smuggled weapons were put on display, including EFPs, mortar shells and rocket propelled grenades which the US claims can be traced to Iran.

“The weapons had characteristics unique to being manufactured in Iran... Iran is the only country in the region that produces these weapons,” an official said.

Someone call [Michael Gordon](#).

At a briefing today in Baghdad, US officials accused Iran of arming al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army in Iraq:

The defense analyst said Iran was working through “multiple surrogates” — mainly “rogue elements” of the Shiite Mahdi Army — to smuggle the EFPs into Iraq. He said most of the components are entering the country at crossing points near Amarah, the Iranian border city of Meran and the Basra area of southern Iraq.

The US officials also neatly tied Iran into the 1983 bombing of the US embassy in Kuwait *and* the trafficking in arms in Iraq:

Last week, U.S. officials said they were investigating allegations that Shiite lawmaker Jamal Jaafar Mohammed was a main conduit for Iranian weapons entering the country. Mohammed has believed to have fled to Iran.

The “evidence” against Iran and the Mahdi Army continues to pile up. But there is something fishy here.

The Bush Administration claims that Iranians caught in recent raids buttress claims of Iranian

involvement. The targets of American ire appear to be Iran and the Mahdi Army. However, the Iranians were captured in Kurdish held Erbil and in Abdul Aziz al-Hakim's compound in Baghdad. In both instances, the Iranians were working with American allies in Iraq - the Kurds and the SCIRI. In the Erbil case, Kurdish leaders protested the American operation and in the curious case of the raid on al-Hakim's compound, pressure from SCIRI forced the US to release their prize.

Now we come to Mr. Jamal Jaafar Mohammed. Most reports of his involvement in the 1983 bombing gloss over his political affiliation. Mr. Mohammed was at the time of the bombing a member of SCIRI, the same group that is now an ally of Mr. Bush, and is currently a member of the Badr Organization, which is the current incarnation of the military wing of SCIRI:

An engineering graduate from Basra University in southern Iraq, he was active in the Shiite opposition to Saddam and was affiliated with the political and military wing of the Badr Brigade. He served as a top commander in the militia in the 1980s.

The brigade was organized and trained by the Iranians to fight against Iraq in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and was led by Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, a key political figure here. Shiite officials say the Badr Brigade gave up its weapons and was transformed into a political movement after Saddam's regime collapsed in 2003.

Mohammed ran for parliament on the Badr ticket. The organization is part of the Shiite alliance that also includes al-Maliki. Mohammed served as a political adviser to al-Maliki's predecessor, Ibrahim al-Jaafari.

I should also note that the attack on the American and French embassies in Kuwait in 1983 were conducted by the Dawa Party and the SCIRI, which are both now our allies in Iraq. The Dawa Party is also conveniently the party that helped set up Hezbollah in Lebanon:

There are at least five such groups here, known as Al Fajr, Jihad, Jundullah, Hizbullah and Harisullah.

According to Shiite political sources, they are linked with the Iraqi Shiite underground organization Ad Dawa, which has been working to set up Iranian-style Islamic republics in Iraq and other Persian Gulf countries.

It is possible, the analysts and diplomats said, that the pro-Iranian groups have abducted Americans to exchange them for the 22 Dawa members who have been tried and convicted in Kuwait for the bombing Dec. 12 of the American and French embassies.

The Bush Administration has indeed made a fine bed with terrorists in Iraq.

There is very little doubt that Iran is supporting the Shia factions and the Kurds in Iraq. However, the factions Iran is supporting are the *same* factions that the Bush Administration is supporting. The Shia faction that gets the *least* support from Iran, and that is ideologically the *least* aligned with Iran is the Mahdi Armyé [1]. Yet, the Administration's plan, as laid out in the [Hadley memo](#), appears to be to isolate the Mahdi Army and empower the very factions, Dawa and SCIRI, that Iran has been helping.

The Bush Administration is spinning a story about Iran that is full of contradictions. The Bush Administration cannot claim to target Iran for arming the same groups that the United States itself is arming, without addressing its own behavior and alliances in Iraq. It has been clear from the start that the United States has put in power terrorists and thugs (Dawa and SCIRI) in Iraq. To support its drumbeat to war against Iran, it cannot now cry foul without addressing its own hypocrisy in Iraq. To the extent that they have both sponsored the same actors in Iraq, the Bush Administration and Iran have been allies.

So, when the Bush Administration claims that some Iranian arms have been found in the hands of Shia militia in Iraq, I am unimpressed. The United States has, over the last four years, armed the Shia militias to the teeth by equipping the SCIRI and Badr Brigade controlled Iraqi [Interior Ministry](#). In the contest of arms shipments to Iraqi Shia militias, the United States wins the arms race hands down. Having armed, equipped and trained a party to a civil war, the Bush Administration has been the driving force of instability in Iraq. When the Bush Administration accuses Iran of fomenting sectarian violence in Iraq, it ignores the elephant in the room, that is, the United States.

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