

# British “Undercover Soldiers” Caught driving Booby Trapped Car

"They refused to say what their mission was."

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

Global Research, September 20, 2005

20 September 2005

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

Theme: [Terrorism](#)

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

The following Reuters report raises some disturbing questions.

Why were undercover British “soldiers” wearing traditional Arab headscarves firing at Iraqi police?

The incident took place just prior to a major religious event in Basra.

The report suggests that the police thought the British soldiers looked “suspicious”. What was the nature of their mission?

Occupation forces are supposed to be collaborating with Iraqi authorities. Why did British Forces have to storm the prison using tanks and armoured vehicles to liberate the British undercover agents?

“British forces used up to 10 tanks ” supported by helicopters ” to smash through the walls of the jail and free the two British servicemen.”

Was there concern that the British “soldiers” who were being held by the Iraqi National Guard would be obliged to reveal the nature and objective of their undercover mission?

A report of Al Jazeera TV, which preceded the raid on the prison, suggests that the British undercover soldiers were driving a booby trapped car loaded with ammunition. The Al Jazeera report (see below) also suggests that the riots directed against British military presence were motivated because the British undercover soldiers were planning to explode the booby trapped car in the centre of Basra:

[Anchorman Al-Habib al-Ghuraybi] We have with us on the telephone from Baghdad Fattah al-Shaykh, member of the Iraqi National Assembly. What are the details of and the facts surrounding this incident?

[Al-Shaykh] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. There have been continuous provocative acts since the day before yesterday by the British forces against the peaceful sons of Basra. There have been indiscriminate arrests, the most recent of which was the arrest of Shaykh Ahmad al-Farquqi and two Basra citizens on the pretext that they had carried out terrorist operations to kill US soldiers. This is a baseless claim. This was confirmed to us by [name indistinct] the second secretary at the British Embassy in Baghdad, when we met with him a short while ago. He said that there is evidence on this.

We say: You should come up with this evidence or forget about this issue. If you really want to look for truth, then we should resort to the Iraqi justice away from the British provocations against the sons of Basra, particularly what happened today when the sons of Basra caught two non-Iraqis, who seem to be Britons and were in a car of the Cressida type. It was a booby-trapped car laden with ammunition and was meant to explode in the centre of the city of Basra in the popular market. However, the sons of the city of Basra arrested them. They [the two non-Iraqis] then fired at the people there and killed some of them. The two arrested persons are now at the Intelligence Department in Basra, and they were held by the National Guard force, but the British occupation forces are still surrounding this department in an attempt to absolve them of the crime.

[Al-Ghuraybi] Thank you Fattah al-Shaykh, member of the National Assembly and deputy for Basra.

Text of report by Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV on 19 September (emphasis added)

Is this an isolated incident or is part of a pattern?

More significantly, have the occupation forces been involved in similar undercover missions? Syrian TV (Sept 19, 2005) reports the following:

Ten Iraqis - seven police commandos, two civilians and a child - were killed and more than 10 others wounded in the explosion of two car bombs near two checkpoints in Al-Mahmudiyah and Al-Latifayah south of Baghdad while hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were heading towards the city of Karbala to mark the anniversary of a religious event.

And in a significant incident in the city of Basra, which is also marking the same religious event, Iraqi demonstrators set fire to two British tanks near a police station after Iraqi police had arrested two British soldiers disguised in civilian clothes for opening fire on police. Eight armoured British vehicles surrounded the police station before the eruption of the confrontations. A policeman at the scene said the two detained Britons were wearing traditional Iraqi jallabahs [loose cloaks] and wigs.

[Italics added]

An indepth independent inquiry should be ordered by Britain's House of Commons into the circumstances of this event.

**Michel Chossudovsky**

**Global Research Editor, 20 Sept 2005**

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**UK denies storming Iraqi jail to free soldiers**

Reuter, 20 September 2005

British forces have freed two undercover soldiers from jail in Basra after a day of rioting in the Iraqi city that was sparked when the soldiers fired on a police patrol.

An Iraqi Interior Ministry official says British forces stormed the jail using six tanks and that dozens of Iraqi prisoners escaped during the raid.

But Britain's Ministry of Defence says the release of the two soldiers had been negotiated and it did not believe the prison had been stormed.

"We've heard nothing to suggest we stormed the prison," a ministry spokesman said.

"We understand there were negotiations."

Lisa Glover, spokeswoman for the British embassy in Baghdad, says three people have been wounded in the operation to free the soldiers.

She did not give further details of how the soldiers were freed.

The events in the mainly Shiite city are likely to worsen relations between British forces responsible for security in southern Iraq and the local population.

Police and local officials say the two undercover soldiers were arrested after opening fire on Iraqi police who approached them.

They say the men were wearing traditional Arab headscarves and sitting in an unmarked car.

"They were driving a civilian car and were dressed in civilian clothes when shooting took place between them and Iraqi patrols," an official in Basra said.

Mohammed al-Abadi, an official in the Basra governorate, says the two men looked suspicious to police.

"A policeman approached them and then one of these guys fired at him. Then the police managed to capture them," Mr Abadi said.

"They refused to say what their mission was. They said they were British soldiers and (suggested) to ask their commander about their mission."

## **Tank ablaze**

Furious crowds pelted British armoured vehicles with rocks and petrol bombs after the shooting incident.

A British soldier was engulfed in flames as he scrambled out of a burning tank during the rioting.

He was pelted with stones by the crowd.

The tank tried to reverse away from trouble after it was attacked by Iraqis flinging petrol bombs, burning furniture and tyres.

Iraqis had driven through the streets with loudhailers demanding that the undercover Britons remain in jail.

Basra, capital of the Shiite south, has been relatively stable compared with central Iraq, where Sunni Arab insurgents have killed thousands of Iraqi and US troops, officials and civilians with suicide attacks, roadside bombs and shootings.

But relations remain tense between the British military and some local groups.

British Defence Secretary John Reid confirms in a statement that the two undercover soldiers are back with British forces, but sheds no light on their mission or how they were released.

“The situation in Basra is currently calmer after a day of disturbances,” he said.

“At this stage it is not possible to be certain why these disturbances began.”

The main ally of the United States, Britain said on Sunday it would if necessary increase the number of troops in Iraq, where it has about 8,500 soldiers.

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