

Pentagon PSYOP: “Terror Mastermind” Abu Musab Al Zarqawi is “Incompetent”

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
Global Research, May 15, 2006
15 May 2006

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
Theme: [Terrorism](#)
In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

Modern psychological operations, or PSYOP,... is not unlike the public advertising that we are all exposed to wherever we go, every day, through all kinds of mass media. ([US Airborne, Psychological Operations/Warfare](#))

The Pentagon has released yet another mysterious video allegedly discovered in April by US forces in a hideout in the Al-Yusufiyah neighborhood of southern Baghdad. The video portrays “Terror Mastermind” Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi acting in a “foolish” and “incompetent” fashion. He appears “confused” on how to handle a US M-249 squad automatic weapon (SAW), which every US serviceman learns from day one.

Without further examination, the US media concurs in chorus: the video is authentic and the enemy is “incompetent”. Echoing the official Pentagon statement, the video, which portrays Zarqawi in US-style sneakers, mishandling a US produced machine gun, is casually categorized as “Al Qaeda propaganda”, apparently intended to boost Zarqawi’s image among his numerous followers. According to CBS Charles Osgood: “Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the most wanted terrorist in Iraq, **obviously** wanted to show his followers and the world what a fierce and fearsome warrior he is. So on one of his recent propaganda videotapes, he’s seen in the desert firing long bursts from a machine gun.” (CBS, 5 May 2006, emphasis added)

In the words of Major Rich Lynch, Commander of Coalition Forces in Iraq :

“He’s very proud of the fact that he can operate this machine gun. Here is Zarqawi, the ultimate warrior, trying to shoot his machine gun. He’s shooting single shots. He looks down, can’t figure it out. Calls his friend to come unblock the stoppage.... He’s wearing his black uniform and his New Balance tennis shoes, as he moves this white pickup truck, and his close associates around him, his trusted advisers, do things like grab the hot barrel of a machine gun and burn themselves.” (CNN, 5 May 2006)

Apparently the version of the video found by US forces in the safe house in the Al-Yusufiyah neighborhood is not the Al Qaeda “cleansed up propaganda version” meant for viewing by Al Qaeda sympathizers in the Middle East. The US military managed to get its hands on the complete unedited raw footage “showing what Zarqawi’s people apparently edited out, showing Zarqawi talking into the camera while fumbling and having trouble shooting the weapon in the automatic mode until somebody shouts for a soldier to go help him out” (CBS, op cit.). And this is the version which is also being aired on Iraqi television.

Who is Incompetent? Zarqawi or the US Military?

The video portrays “Enemy Number One” as “foolish” and unable to operate a machine gun. Zarqawi’s US made sneakers become a talking point on network television. The American media not only applauds, it expands at length on the ridicule surrounding Zarqawi without begging the “obvious” question: If terror mastermind Al Zarqawi is really incompetent, why is it that the US military and intelligence apparatus with its sophisticated weaponry and multibillion dollar budget is unable to defeat him? In the words of Britain’s Sunday Times: “[T]he most devastating American firepower cannot find, let alone suppress, Al-Qaeda’s Musab al-Zarqawi,…”

If you believe the Pentagon’s new line on how silly Zarqawi really is, does this not also point to “weaknesses” of the US military in waging an effective “war on terrorism” in Iraq?

Turning Point in Pentagon PSYOP

The “incompetence” of Zarqawi seems at odds with previous media reports where he is presented as the skillful mastermind, capable of deceiving US military and intelligence operatives, possessing dangerous weapons of mass destruction and capable of waging a second 911 attack on America using handmade chemical and biological weapons.

In Colin Powell’s historic presentation to the UN Security Council on 5 February 2003, Zarqawi is upheld as a *casus belli*, working in cahoots with Saddam. He is portrayed as leading an international network of terrorist operatives, involved in attacks in different parts of the World. He was allegedly coordinating a chemical weapons plant in Northern Iraq prior to the US invasion, he also had links to the Tehran government; he was said to be behind the 2005 Amman bombings as well as supporting Jemiah Islami, the Southeast Asian Islamic network accused of the 2002 Bali bombings in Indonesia. And now the Pentagon says, quoting the raw footage of an al Qaeda sponsored video: he is “incompetent” and unable to handle an automatic weapon. Meanwhile, the US has set up an elaborate military command structure (US Northern Command) to protect the homeland against Zarqawi and bin Laden..

Whose propaganda program are we dealing with? Zarqawi’s or the Pentagon’s? Or both?

The answer to this question was provided in a recent article in the Washington Post. Released barely a few weeks earlier, the article provides details on leaked internal military documents which confirm the existence of a PSYOP “Zarqawi program” at the Pentagon. ([WP. 10 April 2006](#)) The latter consists in creating a “Zarqawi Legend” by feeding disinformation into the news chain:

“The Zarqawi campaign is discussed in several of the internal military documents. “Villainize Zarqawi/leverage xenophobia response,” one U.S. military briefing from 2004 stated. It listed three methods: “Media operations,” “Special Ops (626)” (a reference to Task Force 626, an elite U.S. military unit assigned primarily to hunt in Iraq for senior officials in Hussein’s government) and “PSYOP,” the U.S. military term for propaganda work...” ([WP . 10 April 2006, further details](#))

In this regard, the senior commander entrusted with Pentagon’s PSYOP operation is General Kimmitt who now occupies the position of senior planner at US Central Command

(USCENTCOM), responsible for directing operations in Iraq and the Middle East confirms that

“There was clearly an information campaign to raise the public awareness of who Zarqawi was, primarily for the Iraqi audience but also with the international audience.”

A goal of the campaign was to drive a wedge into the insurgency by emphasizing Zarqawi’s terrorist acts and foreign origin, said officers familiar with the program. “Through aggressive Strategic Communications, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi now represents: Terrorism in Iraq/Foreign Fighters in Iraq/Suffering of Iraqi People (Infrastructure Attacks)/Denial of Iraqi Aspirations,” the same briefing asserts... (Ibid)

Is the recently released video, which consists in ridiculing rather than villainizing “Enemy Number One”, part of the Zarqawi PSYOP program?

According to US military sources, the purpose of psychological operations (PSYOP) is “to demoralize the enemy by causing dissension and unrest among his ranks, while at the same time convincing the local population to support American troops. ([U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command](#). See also [History of Psychological Operations/Warfare](#)).

The practice of “successful propaganda” in relation to the Iraq war has gone well beyond the official boundaries contained in military manuals. Propaganda creates an “outside enemy”. Al Qaeda led by Osama and Al Qaeda in Iraq led by Zarqawi. Al Qaeda is behind most news stories regarding the “war on terrorism” including the suicide attacks. What is rarely mentioned is that this outside enemy Al Qaeda is a CIA “intelligence asset”, used in covert operations.

There is evidence that the many of the “Al Qaeda in Iraq” sponsored suicide attacks on civilians are being conducted by US-UK special forces or by US sponsored paramilitaries.

In March, an American “security contractor” was found with explosives in his car. In September 2005, two British Special Forces disguised as Arabs, wearing wigs and traditional Arab headscarves were arrested by Iraqi police while driving a booby trapped car loaded with ammunition towards the center of Basra at the height of a major religious event. (Click [for further details](#)) These operations, which are now an integral part of war propaganda, serve to villainize the Iraqi resistance, as well as weaken the antiwar protest movement in the US and Western Europe.

Michel Chossudovsky is the author of the international best seller “[The Globalization of Poverty](#) ” published in eleven languages. He is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Center for Research on Globalization, at www.globalresearch.ca . He is also a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His most recent book entitled: [America’s “War on Terrorism”](#), Global Research, 2005, contains a detailed analysis of the role of Zarqawi in the Administration’s disinformation campaign.

For details on Chossudovsky’s book [America’s “War on Terrorism”](#), [click here](#).

To view the Zarqawi video clip (MSNBC) [click here](#)

<http://video.msn.com/v/us/msnbc.htm?f=00&g=83654578-ee66-45ff-9938-1b4b131b9e0e&t>

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#), Global Research, 2006

[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 undertaken field research in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific and has written extensively on the economies of developing countries with a focus on poverty and social inequality. He has also undertaken research in Health Economics (UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UNFPA, CIDA, WHO, Government of Venezuela, John Hopkins International Journal of Health Services (1979, 1983) He is the author of 13 books including The Globalization of Poverty and The New World Order (2003), America's "War on Terrorism" (2005), The Globalization of War, America's Long War against Humanity (2015). 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