

Who is Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi? From Al-Zarqawi to Al-Bagdahdi: “The Islamic State” is a CIA-Mossad-MI6 “Intelligence Asset”

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Introductory Note

*The following article first published 15 years go in June 2004 pertains to **Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi**, the legendary leader and alleged founder of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).*

*The name of this mysterious jihadist organization was later renamed the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and in 2013 it became the **Islamic State of the Iraq and the Levant (ISIS, ISIL, Daesh)**, largely involved in terrorist attacks inside Syria.*



*In June 2014, the ISIL became **The Islamic State (IS)**. The present leader and cleric of the Islamic State’s Caliphate is another mysterious figure called **Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi**, formerly also known as Dr. **Ibrahim and Abu Du’a***

Both Al-Zarqawi and Al-Baghdadi are fabricated bogeymen.

While Al Qaeda leaders are routinely presented to World public opinion as “terrorist masterminds” threatening the “Free World”, what the media invariably fails to mention is that they were recruited and trained by the CIA, Mossad, Britain’s MI6 and Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) acting in liaison with its Western counterparts.

Al Zarqawi had been recruited by the CIA to fight in the Afghan war. This was confirmed by Secretary of State Colin Powell in his historic presentation to the UN Security Council on 5 February 2003.

Our concern is not just about these illicit weapons [WMDs]; it’s the way that these illicit weapons can be connected to terrorists and terrorist organizations...

But what I want to bring to your attention today is the potentially much more **sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network, a nexus that combines classic terrorist organizations and modern**

methods of murder. Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network, headed by Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi, an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda lieutenants.

Zarqawi, a Palestinian born in Jordan, **fought in the Afghan War more than a decade ago [recruited by the CIA]**. Returning to Afghanistan in 2000, he oversaw a terrorist training camp. One of his specialties and one of the specialties of this camp is poisons.

When our coalition ousted the Taliban, the Zarqawi network helped establish another poison and explosive training center camp, and this camp is located in Northeastern Iraq. You see a picture of this camp. Graphic, above. [there were no WMDS at this camp according to ABC report, see below] Colin Powell, UN Security Council, February 5, 2003)

And now a new legendary terrorist leader of the Islamic State has emerged: *Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi*.

Let us be under no illusions, the Islamic State is a CIA-Mossad creation. It is an intelligence asset.

The incursion of IS brigades into Iraq in June 2014 was part of a carefully planned military-intelligence operation supported covertly by the US, NATO and Israel. In Syria, the ISIL is said to be part of "opposition" fighting government forces. The Israeli military is directly supporting the ISIL out of bases in the occupied Golan Heights.

It is worth noting that the same strategy of using jihadist death squads to destabilize and foment violence in Iraq (including the numerous suicide attacks) was implemented by Washington from the outset of the US led occupation.

George W. Bush (June 2004 press Conference) candidly admits that the purpose of Al-Zarqawi's "operational plan" was to sow "cold blooded killing":

You know, I hate to predict violence, but I just understand the nature of the killers. This guy, Zarqawi, an al Qaeda associate — who was in Baghdad, by the way, prior to the removal of Saddam Hussein — is still at large in Iraq. And as you might remember, **part of his operational plan was to sow violence and discord amongst the various groups in Iraq by cold-blooded killing.** And we need to help find Zarqawi so that the people of Iraq can have a more bright — bright future. (George W. Bush, Press Conference, 1 June 2004, emphasis added)

✘ What GWB does not mention is that Al Zarqawi is not "this guy", he is "our guy".

Paraphrasing president Bush, "[our] guy Zarqawi, [a CIA sponsored intelligence asset]... **his operational plan, [acting on our behalf], was to sow violence and discord amongst the various groups in Iraq by cold- blooded killing.**"

In 2004, the aggressor nations, namely the US and Britain "came to the rescue of the people of Iraq" "so that they can have a brighter future" under a counter-terrorism mandate at "the request" of the Iraqi interim government, in an agreement sanctioned by the UN. **What is rarely mentioned by the media is that the US led military alliance has been supporting the Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists.**

Washington's unspoken objective remains "to sow violence and discord by cold blooded killing".

And in late June 2014, the same scenario has emerged: the Islamic State (IS) has "invaded Iraq" and **America -which is covertly supporting the Islamic State- is called to rescue.**

The Islamic State rebels are America's foot soldiers, generously funded by Qatar and Saudi Arabia:

The "War on Terrorism" consists in creating Al Qaeda terrorist entities as part of an intelligence operation, as well as also coming to the rescue of governments which are the target of the terrorist insurgency. This process is carried out under the banner of counter-terrorism. It creates the pretext to intervene.

ISIS is a caliphate project of creating a Sunni Islamist state. It is not a project of the Sunni population of Iraq which is broadly committed to secular forms of government. The caliphate project is part of a US intelligence agenda.

In response to the advance of the ISIS rebels, Washington is envisaging the use of aerial bombings as well as drone attacks in support of the Baghdad government as part of a counter-terrorism operation. It is all for a good cause: to fight the terrorists, without of course acknowledging that these terrorists are the "foot soldiers" of the Western military alliance. [Michel Chossudovsky, The Engineered Destruction and Political Fragmentation of Iraq](#), Global Research, July 01, 2014

Al Qaeda is "Made in America" ... lest we forget with the support of Israel. And this includes the entire network of Al Qaeda affiliates in a large number of countries.

The alleged links of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi to the Mossad, not to mention the overt support of ISIL by the Israeli military and the Netanyahu government should serve to refute the absurd proposition that Al Qaeda (including its ISIS affiliate) is an "independent entity" which threatens America and the Western World.

A revised version of the June 2004 article below was incorporated as a chapter in my book, [America's War on Terrorism](#), Global Research, 2005.

Michel Chossudovsky, July 17, 2014, minor update October 18, 2015

Who is Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi?

by Michel Chossudovsky

Global Research, June 11, 2004



The US intelligence apparatus has created its own terrorist organizations. And at the same time, it creates its own terrorist warnings concerning the terrorist organizations which it has itself created. In turn, it has developed a cohesive multibillion dollar counterterrorism program “to go after” these terrorist organizations.

Counterterrorism and war propaganda are intertwined. The propaganda apparatus feeds disinformation into the news chain. The terror warnings must appear to be “genuine”. The objective is to present the terror groups as “enemies of America.”

The underlying objective is to galvanize public opinion in support of America’s war agenda.

The “war on terrorism” requires a humanitarian mandate. The war on terrorism is presented as a “Just War”, which is to be fought on moral grounds “to redress a wrong suffered.”

The Just War theory defines “good” and “evil.” It concretely portrays and personifies the terrorist leaders as “evil individuals”.

Several prominent American intellectuals and antiwar activists, who stand firmly opposed to the Bush administration, are nonetheless supporters of the Just War theory: “We are against war in all its forms but we support the campaign against international terrorism.”

To reach its foreign policy objectives, the images of terrorism must remain vivid in the minds of the citizens, who are constantly reminded of the terrorist threat.

The propaganda campaign presents the portraits of the leaders behind the terror network. In other words, at the level of what constitutes an “advertising” campaign, “it gives a face to terror.” The “war on terrorism” rests on the creation of one or more evil bogeymen, the terror leaders, Osama bin Laden, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, et al, whose names and photos are presented ad nauseam in daily news reports.

Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi is presented to World public opinion, as the upcoming terrorist mastermind, overshadowing “Enemy Number One”, Osama bin Laden.

The U.S. State Department has increased the reward for his arrest from \$10 million to \$25 million, which puts his “market value” at par with that of Osama. Ironically, Al Zarqawi is not on the FBI most wanted fugitives list. (<http://www.fbi.gov/mostwant/topten/fugitives/fugitives.htm>)

Al Zarqawi's Links to Al Qaeda

Al Zarqawi is often described as an "Osama associate", the bogymen, allegedly responsible for numerous terrorist attacks in several countries. In other reports, often emanating from the same sources, it is stated that he has no links to Al Qaeda and operates quite independently. He is often presented as an individual who is challenging the leadership of bin Laden.

His name crops up on numerous occasions in press reports and official statements. Since early 2004, he is in the news almost on a daily basis.

Osama belongs to the powerful bin Laden family, which historically had business ties to the Bushes and prominent members of the Texas oil establishment. Bin Laden was recruited by the CIA during the Soviet-Afghan war and fought as a Mujahideen. In other words, there is a longstanding documented history of bin Laden-CIA and bin Laden-Bush family links, which are an obvious source of embarrassment to the US government.

In contrast to bin Laden, Al-Zarqawi has no family history. He comes from an impoverished Palestinian family in Jordan. His parents are dead. He emerges out of the blue.

He is described by CNN as "a lone wolf" who is said to act quite independently of the Al Qaeda network. Yet surprisingly, this lone wolf is present in several countries, in Iraq, which is now his base, but also in Western Europe. He is also suspected of preparing a terrorist attack on American soil.

He seems to be in several places at the same time. He is described as "the chief U.S. enemy", "a master of disguise and bogus identification papers". We are led to believe that this "lone wolf" manages to outwit the most astute US intelligence operatives.

According to The Weekly Standard -which is known to have a close relationship to the Neocons in the Bush administration:

"Abu Musab al Zarqawi is hot right now. He masterminded not only Berg's murder but also the Madrid carnage on March 11, the bombardment of Shia worshippers in Iraq the same month, and the April 24 suicide attack on the port of Basra. But he is far from a newcomer to slaughter. Well before 9/11, he had already concocted a plot to kill Israeli and American tourists in Jordan. His label is on terrorist groups and attacks on four continents." (Weekly Standard, 24 May 2004)

Al-Zarqawi's profile "is mounting a challenge to bin Laden's leadership of the global jihad."

In Iraq, he is said to be determined to "ignite a civil war between Sunnis and Shiites". But is that not precisely what US intelligence is aiming at ("divide and rule") as confirmed by several analysts of the US led war? Pitting one group against the other with a view to weakening the resistance movement. (See Michel Collon, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/COL312A.html> , See also <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/RAD308A.html>)

The CIA, with its \$30 billion plus budget, pleads ignorance: they say they know nothing about him, they have a photograph, but, according to the Weekly Standard (24 May 2004), they apparently do not know his weight or height.

There is an aura of mystery surrounding this individual which is part of the propaganda ploy. Zarqawi is described as “so secretive even some operatives who work with him do not know his identity.”

Consistent Pattern

What is the role of this new mastermind in the Pentagon’s disinformation campaign, in which CNN seems to be playing a central role?

In previous propaganda ploys, the CIA hired PR firms to organize core disinformation campaigns, including the Rendon Group. The latter worked closely with its British partner Hill and Knowlton, which was responsible for the 1990 Kuwaiti incubator media scam, where Kuwaiti babies were allegedly removed from incubators in a totally fabricated news story, which was then used to get Congressional approval for the 1991 Gulf War.

What is the pattern?

Almost immediately in the wake of a terrorist event or warning, CNN announces (in substance): we think this mysterious individual Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi is behind it, invariably without supporting evidence and prior to the conduct of an investigation by the relevant police and intelligence authorities.

In some cases, upon the immediate occurrence of the terrorist event, there is an initial report which mentions Al-Zarqawi as the possible mastermind. The report will often say (in substance): yes we think he did it, but it is not yet confirmed and there is some doubt on the identity of those behind the attack. One or two days later, CNN may come up with a definitive statement, quoting official police, military and/or intelligence sources.

Often the CNN report is based on information published on an Islamic website or a mysterious Video or Audio tape. The authenticity of the website and/or the tapes is not the object of discussion or detailed investigation.

Bear in mind that the news reports never mention that Al Qaeda is a creation of the CIA and that Al Zarqawi had been recruited to fight in the Soviet-Afghan war (This is in fact confirmed by Sec. Colin Powell in his presentation to the UN Security Council on 5 February 2003) (see details below). Both Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi are creations of the US intelligence apparatus. The recruitment of foreign fighters was under the auspices of the CIA.

The press usually present the terrorist warnings emanating from the CIA as genuine, without acknowledging the fact that US intelligence, has provided covert support to the Islamic militant network consistently for more than 20 years.

Amply documented, the training camps in Afghanistan established during the Reagan Administration had been set up with the support of the CIA. In fact, several members of the current Bush administration including Richard Armitage and Colin Powell were directly involved in channeling support to Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, where bin Laden and Al Zarqawi received specialized training. (See Michel Chossudovsky, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO109C.html> and <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO303D.html>)

History of Al Zarqawi

The first time Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi's name is mentioned was in relation to the thwarted attack on the Radisson SAS Hotel in Amman, Jordan, during the millennium celebrations (December 1999). According to press reports, he had previously gone under another name: Ahmed Fadil Al-Khalayleh, (apparently among other aliases).

According to the New York Times, Al Zaraqawi fled Afghanistan to Iran in late 2001, following the entry of US troops. Official US reports suggest that he was protected at the highest levels of the Tehran government.

“United States intelligence officials say they are increasingly concerned by the mounting evidence of Tehran’s renewed interest in terrorism [and support to Al Zaraqawi], including covert surveillance by Iranian agents of possible American targets abroad. American officials said Iran appeared to view terrorism as deterrent against possible attack by the United States.

Since the surprise election of reformer Mohammad Khatami as president of Iran in 1997 and his wide public support, Washington has been counting on a new moderate political majority to emerge. But the hard-line faction has maintained its grip on Iran’s security apparatus, frustrating American efforts to ease tensions with Tehran.

Now, Iranian actions to destabilize the new interim government in Afghanistan, its willingness to assist Al Qaeda members and its fueling of the Palestinian uprising are prompting a reassessment in Washington, officials say.” (NYT, 24 March 2002)

In 2002, his presence in Tehran, allegedly “collaborating with hardliners” in the Iranian military and intelligence apparatus, is part of an evolving disinformation campaign which consists in presenting Iran as a sponsor of the “Islamic terror network”:

In February 2002, he was allegedly involved in planning terror attacks inside Israel.

Colin Powell’s Address to the UN Security Council



In the months leading up to the war on Iraq, Al Zaraqawi’s name reemerges, this time almost on daily basis, with reports focusing on his sinister relationship to Saddam Hussein.

A major turning point in the propaganda campaign occurs on February 5, 2003. Al-Zarqawi was in the spot light following Colin Powell’s flopped WMD report to the UN Security Council. Powell’s speech presented “documentation” on the ties between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda, while focusing on the central role of Al-Zarqawi: (emphasis added):

Our concern is not just about these illicit weapons; it’s the way that these illicit weapons can be connected to terrorists and terrorist organizations...

But what I want to bring to your attention today is the potentially much more sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network, a nexus that combines classic terrorist organizations and modern methods of murder. Iraq

today harbors a deadly terrorist network, headed by Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi, an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda lieutenants.

Zarqawi, a Palestinian born in Jordan, fought in the Afghan War more than a decade ago. Returning to Afghanistan in 2000, he oversaw a terrorist training camp. One of his specialties and one of the specialties of this camp is poisons.

When our coalition ousted the Taliban, the Zarqawi network helped establish another poison and explosive training center camp, and this camp is located in Northeastern Iraq. You see a picture of this camp. Graphic, above. [there were no WMDS at this camp according to ABC report, see below]

The network is teaching its operative how to produce ricin and other poisons. Let me remind you how ricin works. Less than a pinch — imagine a pinch of salt — less than a pinch of ricin, eating just this amount in your food would cause shock, followed by circulatory failure. Death comes within 72 hours and there is no antidote. There is no cure. It is fatal.

Those helping to run this camp are Zarqawi lieutenants operating in northern Kurdish areas outside Saddam Hussein's controlled Iraq, but Baghdad has an agent in the most senior levels of the radical organization Ansar al-Islam, that controls this corner of Iraq. In 2000, this agent offered Al Qaeda safe haven in the region. After we swept Al Qaeda from Afghanistan, some of its members accepted this safe haven. They remain there today.

....

We know these affiliates are connected to Zarqawi because they remain, even today, in regular contact with his direct subordinates, including the poison cell plotters. And they are involved in moving more than money and materiel. Last year, two suspected Al Qaeda operatives were arrested crossing from Iraq into Saudi Arabia. They were linked to associates of the Baghdad cell, and one of them received training in Afghanistan on how to use cyanide.

From his terrorist network in Iraq, Zarqawi can direct his network in the Middle East and beyond. [Note he is present in several countries at the same time]

....

According to detainees, Abu Atiya, who graduated from Zarqawi's terrorist camp in Afghanistan, tasked at least nine North African extremists in 2001 to travel to Europe to conduct poison and explosive attacks. Since last year, members of this network have been apprehended in France, Britain, Spain and Italy. By our last count, 116 operatives connected to this global web have been arrested. The chart you are seeing shows the network in Europe.

We know about this European network, and we know about its links to Zarqawi, because the detainee who provided the information about the targets also provided the names of members of the network.

...

We also know that Zarqawi's colleagues have been active in the Pankisi Gorge, Georgia, and in Chechnya, Russia. The plotting to which they are linked is not mere chatter. Members of Zarqawi's network say their goal was to kill Russians with toxins.

We are not surprised that Iraq is harboring Zarqawi and his subordinates. This understanding builds on decades-long experience with respect to ties between

Iraq and al Qaeda.

....

As I said at the outset, none of this should come as a surprise to any of us. Terrorism has been a tool used by Saddam for decades. Saddam was a supporter of terrorism long before these terrorist networks had a name, and this support continues. The nexus of poisons and terror is new; the nexus of Iraq and terror is old. The combination is lethal.

With this track record, Iraqi denials of supporting terrorism take their place alongside the other Iraqi denials of weapons of mass destruction. It is all a web of lies. When we confront a regime that harbors ambitions for regional domination, hides weapons of mass destruction, and provides haven and active support for terrorists, we are not confronting the past, we are confronting the present. And unless we act, we are confronting an even more frightening future.”

(US Secretary of State Colin Powell to the UN Security Council, Excerpts, 5 February 2003)

The statement of Secretary Powell regarding Al-Zarqawi consisted in linking the secular Baathist regime to the “Islamic terror network,” with a view to justifying the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The Alleged Al-Zarqawi Sponsored Chemical and Biological Attacks

Powell’s UN statement with regard to Al Zarqawi rested on the existence of a chemical-biological weapons plant in Northern Iraq producing ricin, sarin and other biological weapons, allegedly to be used in terror attacks on the US and Western Europe.

With reference to the North Iraqi facility where the ricin was allegedly produced, The London Observer’s correspondent in Northern Iraq (9 February 2003) blatantly refutes Colin Powell’s statement:

” There is no sign of chemical weapons anywhere – only the smell of paraffin and vegetable butter used for cooking. In the kitchen, I discovered some chopped up tomatoes but not much else. The cook had left his Kalashnikov propped neatly against the wall. Ansar al-Islam – the Islamic group that uses the compound identified as a military HQ by Powell – yesterday invited me and several other foreign journalists into their territory for the first time. ‘We are just a group of Muslims trying to do our duty,’ Mohammad Hasan, spokes-man for Ansar al-Islam, explained. ‘We don’t have any drugs for our fighters. We don’t even have any aspirin. How can we produce any chemicals or weapons of mass destruction?’”

Barely a few weeks later, at the height of the military campaign, US Special Forces, together with their “embedded” journalists, entered the alleged chemical biological weapons facility in Northern Iraq:

“What they found was a camp devastated by cruise missile strikes during the first days of the war. A specialized biochemical team scoured the rubble for samples. They wore protective masks as they entered a building they suspected was a weapons lab. Inside they found mortar shells, medical

supplies, and grim prison cells, but no immediate proof of chemical or biological agents. For this unit, such evidence would have been a so-called smoking gun, proof that it has banned weapons. But instead, this was a disappointing day for these troops on the front line of the hunt for weapons of mass destruction here. Jim Sciutto, ABC News, with US Special Forces in Northern Iraq " (ABC News, 29 March 2003)

The Ricin Threat

On February 8th 2003, three days after Colin Powell's UN speech, the ricin threat reemerges this time in the US. Al Zaqwari was said to be responsible for "the suspicious white powder found in a letter sent to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist which contained the [same] deadly poison ricin."

In a CIA report which was apparently "leaked" to Newsweek, a group of CIA analysts predicted that there was

"a 59 percent probability that an attack on the U.S. homeland involving WMD would occur before 31 March 2003"... It all seems so precise and frightening: a better than 90 percent chance that Saddam will succeed in hitting America with a weapon spewing radiation, germs or poison. But it is important to remember that the odds are determined by averaging a bunch of guesses, informed perhaps, but from experts whose careers can only be ruined by underestimating the threat." (Newsweek, 24 February 2003, <http://newsmin.org/archive/propoganda/terror-threats/2003/terror-alert-assumptions-hints.txt>)

The picture of Al Zaraqawi, the mastermind is featured prominently in the Newsweek feature article.

In the National Review (February 18, 2003), Al Zaraqawi was described as Al Qaeda's "chief biochemical engineer":

"It is widely known [from where, what evidence] that Zaraqawi, al Qaeda's chief biochemical engineer, was at the safe house in Afghanistan where traces of Ricin and other poisons were originally found. What is not widely known-but was briefly alluded to in Sec. Powell's U.N. address-is that starting in the mid-1990s, Iraq's embassy in Islamabad routinely played host to Saddam's biochemical scientists, some of whom interacted with al Qaeda operatives, including Zaraqawi and his lab technicians, under the diplomatic cover of the Taliban embassy nearby to teach them the art of mixing poisons from home grown and readily available raw materials."

Radioactive Dirty Bombs

There were rumors of attacks within the US also using ricin, sarin and other poisonous gases. In the immediate aftermath of Powell's speech, there was an orange code alert. Official statements also pointed to the dangers of a dirty radioactive bomb attack in the US.

Again Al Zaraqawi was identified as the number one suspect.

The various ricin and dirty bomb terror alerts proved to be fabricated. A fabricated story emanating from the CIA on so-called 'radioactive dirty bombs' had been planted in the news

chain (ABC News, 13 Feb 2003). A few days following his address to the UN, Sec. Powell warned that:

“it would be easy for terrorists to cook up radioactive ‘dirty’ bombs to explode inside the U.S. ... ‘How likely it is, I can’t say... But I think it is wise for us to at least let the American people know of this possibility.’”(ABC This Week quoted in Daily News (New York), 10 Feb. 2003).

Meanwhile, network TV had warned that “American hotels, shopping malls or apartment buildings could be al Qaeda’s targets as soon as next week...”. Following the announcement, tens of thousands of Americans rushed to purchase duct tape, plastic sheets and gas-masks.

It later transpired that the terrorist alert was fabricated by the CIA, in all likelihood in consultation with the State Department (ABC News, 13 Feb. 2003). The FBI, for the first time had pointed its finger at the CIA. While tacitly acknowledging that the alert was a fake, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge decided to maintain the ‘Orange Code’ alert:

“Despite the fabricated report, there are no plans to change the threat level. Officials said other intelligence has been validated and that the high level of precautions is fully warranted.” (ABC News, 13 Feb. 2003).

A few days later, in another failed propaganda initiative, a mysterious Osama bin Laden audio tape was presented by Sec. Colin Powell to the US Congress as ‘evidence’ that the Islamic terrorists “are making common cause with a brutal dictator”. (US official quoted in The Toronto Star, 12 Feb. 2003). Curiously, the audio tape was in Colin Powell’s possession prior to its broadcast by the Al Jazeera TV Network. (Ibid.)

Meanwhile, Al Zarqawi had been identified as the mastermind behind the (thwarted) ricin attacks in several European countries including Britain and Spain.

In London, in January 2003, there was a ricin terror alert, which had apparently also been ordered by Al Zarqawi. The ricin had allegedly been discovered in a London apartment. It was to be used in a terror attack in the London subway.

British press reports, quoting official statements claimed that the terrorists had learnt to produce the ricin at the camp in Northern Iraq. Yet when US Special Forces in March 2003 raided the camp in Northern Iraq, nothing resembling biological or chemical weapons was found (see ABC report quoted above).

It is worth mentioning, in this regard, that news stories on the chemical weapons plant in Northern Iraq, have continued to be churned out, despite the fact that US Forces said that it did not exist. In a recent story in the Washington Times:

Zarqawi stands as stark evidence of a link between Saddam Hussein’s autocratic regime and bin Laden’s al Qaeda terror network. Zarqawi, 38, operated a terrorist camp in northern Iraq that specialized in developing poisons and chemical weapons.(Washington Times, 8 June 2004)

The Spanish Connection

Meanwhile in Spain, Bush's coalition partner, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar had initiated his own disinformation campaign, no doubt in liaison with US officials.

Perfect timing! While Colin Powell was presenting the Al-Zarqawi dossier to the UN, on the very same day, February 5, 2003, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar was busy briefing the Spanish parliament on an alleged chemical terror attack in Spain.

According to Aznar, Al Zarqawi was apparently linked to a number of European Islamic "collaborators" including Merouane Ben Ahmed, "an expert in chemistry and explosives who visited Barcelona" (reported in El Pais, February 6 2003).

Prime Minister Aznar's speech to the Chamber of Deputies (Camera de diputados) intimated that the 16 alleged Al Qaeda suspects, who apparently were in possession of explosives and lethal chemicals, had been working hand in glove with Al Zarqawi.

The information had been fabricated. The Spanish Ministry of Defense report confirmed that the "lethal chemicals" turned out to be "harmless and some were household detergent..." (quoted in Irish News, 27 February 2003, emphasis added):

A defence ministry lab outside Madrid tested the substances - a bag containing more than half a pound of powder and several bottles or containers with liquids or residues- for the easy-to-make biological poison ricin...The Spanish defence ministry, which carried out the tests, and the lab itself declined to comment " (Ibid)

The Link to Ansar al-Islam

Following Powell's February 2003 presentation to the UNSC, Al-Zarqawi immediately gained in public notoriety.

Since early 2004, his name appears almost daily in CNN reports. All in all, his name is linked to some 25 "terrorist attacks" in Iraq, not to mention numerous terrorist warnings, threats or alerts. Already before the war in Iraq, he was presented in media reports as an ally of Saddam Hussein.

The press reports, which quoted Colin Powell's UNSC 5 Feb 2003 speech, confirmed that Al Zarqawi was back in Iraq, working hand in glove with Ansar Al-Islam, which was held responsible for the attack on the UN in Baghdad. In August 2003, Zarqawi was identified, without supporting evidence, as having played a role in the attack on the UN, which led to the death of the UN head of mission and 24 other people.

Bear in mind Ansar was also said to be behind the alleged ricin plant in Northern Iraq, which was confirmed to be a fake.

It is useful to recall that Ansar al-Islam, which constituted a pre-existing Islamist group, developed into a paramilitary organisation, only after the 9/11 attacks. Ironically, it was allowed to develop in a region of Iraq, which was already under US military control, namely Kurdish held Northern Iraq.

Ansar was largely involved in terrorist attacks directed against the secular

institutions of the Kurdish regional governments. It was also involved in assassinations of members of the Kurdish PUK. And the US military and intelligence were present in the region.

In other words, prior to the war, Northern Iraq -which was in "the no fly zone"- was already a US protectorate. According to one report «Al Qaida affiliates coordinating the movement of people, money and supplies for Ansar al-Islam have been operating freely in the [regional] capital.» (Midland Independent, 6 February 2003).

Responding to Colin Powell's February 2003 UN address, an Iraqi foreign ministry spokesman had stated at the time that:

"the Iraqi government helped the [PUK] Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani against the Ansar al-Islam group. He [the spokesman] accused Ansar al-Islam of carrying out acts of sabotage inside Iraq...[and] that the United States had turned down an Iraqi offer to cooperate on the issue of terrorism." (News Conference by Lieutenant-General Amir al-Sa'di, adviser at the Iraqi Presidency; Dr Sa'id al-Musawi, head of the Organizations' Department at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry; and Major-General Husam Muhammad Amin, head of the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate. BBC Monitoring Service, 6 February 2003).

The Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal

Was it a coincidence? At the very outset of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, there were rumors of an Al Zarqawi terrorist attack on American Soil, in Jordan as well as in Iraq.

Al Zarqawi identified by CNN as "the lone wolf" was, according to these reports, planning terrorist attacks simultaneously in several countries. Then there was the mysterious video on the Nicholas Berg execution.

The Attacks in Jordan

A mysterious tape released by CNN pointed to Al Zarqawi's plan to attack the Jordanian intelligence headquarters in an attack using chemical weapons which could have been more deadly than 9/11. Again the evidence is based on a mysterious tape.

CNN 27 APRIL 2004

JOHN VAUSE, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Jordanian special forces raiding an apartment house in Amman in the hunt for an al Qaeda cell. Some of the suspects are killed, others arrested, ending what Jordanian intelligence says was a bold plan to use chemical weapons and truck bombs in their capital; targets including Jordanian intelligence headquarters, the prime minister's office and the U.S. embassy. The Jordanian government fears the death toll could have run into the thousands, more deadly even than 9/11.

For the first time the alleged plotters were interviewed on videotape, aired on Jordanian TV. CNN obtained copies of the tapes from the Jordanians. This man revealing his orders came from a man named Azme Jayoussi, the cell's alleged ringleader.

HUSSEIN SHARIF (through translator): The aim of this operation was to strike Jordan and the Hashemite royal family, a war against the crusaders and infidels. Azme told me that this would be the first chemical suicide attack that al Qaeda would execute.

VAUSE: Also appearing on the tape, Azme Jayoussi, who says his orders came from this man, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the same man the U.S. says is behind many of the violent attacks in Iraq.

AZME JAYOUSSI, ACCUSED PLOTTER (through translator): I took advanced explosives course, poisons, high level, then I pledged allegiance to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, to obey him without any questioning, to be on his side. After this Afghanistan fell. I met Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq.

VAUSE: Al Jayoussi was only shown in profile. He had marks on his hand, neck and face. The Jordanians who taped the confessions say the suspect suffered the injuries during the arrest. CNN was not allowed access to any of those arrested. The Jordanian government says this plot is only the latest attempt by al Qaeda to destabilize this country.

ASMA KHADER, JORDANIAN MINISTER OF STATE: Jordan was fighting this type of plans years now, and the security forces were able to confront them.

VAUSE (on camera): The Jordanians say the alleged terrorist plot was just days away from execution. If successful, Jordan's King Abdullah told a U.S. newspaper it could have decapitated his government.

John Vause, CNN, Amman, Jordan.

The press reports which followed the original CNN report, often quote CNN as the sole source for their information.

Al-Zarqawi's plans for Amman scale the heights of horror. CNN quoted Jordanian authorities as saying that the attack involved a combination of 71 lethal chemicals, including blistering agents to cause third-degree burns, nerve gas and choking agents, which would have formed a lethal toxic cloud over a square mile of the capital, Amman. Many thousands would have died in what would have been al-Qaida's deadliest terrorist attack.

The Associated Press reported Monday that four of the men arrested said on Jordanian television that they had been recruited by al-Zarqawi to carry out "the first suicide attack to be launched by al-Qaida using chemicals ... striking at Jordan, its Hashemite (royal family) and launching war on the Crusaders and nonbelievers." One of the conspirators, Azmi al-Jayoussi, said he received about \$170,000 from al-Zarqawi to finance the plot and used part of it to buy 20 tons of chemicals. Images of vans packed with chemicals and explosives were shown on television. (Charleston Post Courier, 28 April 2004)

Alleged Al Zarqawi "Attack on America"

Two days later, following the alleged terrorist threat on Jordanian intelligence,

the State Department announced that Al Zaraqawi was planning an attack on America (29 April 2003, CNN Report). Note that the rumours of an attack on America and the attack in Jordan took place virtually at the same time.

The State Department today said the number of terrorists attacks around the world declined last year, but the government's annual report on terrorism includes a chilling warning about the year ahead.

Kitty Pilgrim reports.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

KITTY PILGRIM, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): The State Department says terrorists are planning an attack on U.S. soil. High on their anxiety list, terrorist Abu Musab al-Zaraqawi.

AMB. COFER BLACK, COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM: He is representative of a very real and credible threat. His operatives are planning and attempting now to attack American targets, and we are after them with a vengeance.

Bear in mind that the Attack on America report, focusing on "We are after them with a vengeance", was published on day following the CBS 60 minutes program on torture at the Abu Ghraib prison. (Complete transcript at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CBS405A.html>).

The Nicholas Berg Video

Barely a couple of weeks later (11 May 2004), Al Zaraqawi is reported as being the mastermind behind the execution of Nicholas Berg on May 11, 2004.

Again perfect timing! The report coincided with calls by US Senators for Defense Sec Donald Rumsfeld to resign over the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. It occurs a few days after President Bush's "apology" for the Abu Ghraib prison "abuses" on May 6.

The Nicholas Berg video served to create "a useful wave of indignation" which served to distract and soften up public opinion, following the release of the pictures of torture of Iraqi prisoners. (See the intelligence assumptions underlying Operation Northwoods, a secret Joint Chiefs of Staff plan to kill civilians in the Cuban community in Florida, and blame it on Fidel Castro. (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/NOR111A.html>)).

CNN coverage of the Nicholas Berg execution was based on a mysterious report on an Islamic website, which CNN upholds as providing "evidence" of Al-Zaraqawi's involvement:

ENSOR: The Web site claims that the killing was done by Abu Musab al-Zaraqawi, a Jordanian terrorist whose al Qaeda affiliated group is held responsible by U.S. intelligence for a string of bombings in Iraq and for the killing of an American diplomat in Amman. CNN Arab linguists say, however, that the voice on the tape has the wrong accent. They do not believe it is Zaraqawi. U.S. officials said the killers tried to take advantage of the prison abuse controversy to gain attention.

...

BROWN: So, the administration said today we'll track these people down. We will get them beyond, I guess, this belief that Zarqawi somehow was involved. Are there any clues out there that we heard about?

ENSOR: This is going to be very, very difficult. They've been looking for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi for several years now. There's a large price on his head. He's been blowing up a lot of things in Iraq according to him and according to U.S. intelligence. They don't know where he is, so it's — I don't think they have any clues right now, at least none that I know of — Aaron.

A subsequent more definitive report by CNN was aired 2 days later on 13 May 2004

The CIA confirms that Nicholas Berg's killer was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi; The CIA acknowledges sticking to strict rules in tough interrogations of top al Qaeda prisoners." (CNN)

BLITZER Because originally our own linguists here at CNN suspected that — they listened to this audiotape and they didn't think the it sounded, the sounded like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. But now definitively, the experts at the CIA say it almost certainly is Abu Musab al-Zarqawi?

ENSOR: They say it almost certainly is. There's just a disagreement between the CNN linguists and the CIA linguists. The U.S. Government now believes that the person speaking on that tape and killing Nick Berg on that tape is the actual man, Abu Musab al- Zarqawi.

Did the US officials check the mysterious website or was it CNN?

The video footage published on the website was called «Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi shows killing of an American». " Then the CIA experts released a statement saying that Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi was the man in the mask who beheaded the US citizen Nick Berg in front of a camera." (See <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/SAT405A.html>). Yet several reports question the authenticity of the video. (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CAR405A.html>).

Al Zarqawi is Jordanian. Yet the man in the video "posing as Jordanian native Zarqawi does not speak the Jordanian dialect. Zarqawi has an artificial leg, but none of these murderers did. The man presented as Zarqawi had a yellow ring, presumably a golden one, which Muslim men are banned from wearing, especially so-called fundamentalists." (See Was Nick Berg killed by US intelligence? by Sirajin Sattayev, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/SAT405A.html>

Another report states that Zarqawi was dead.

Immediately when the issue of his artificial leg was mentioned in relation to the video, US officials revised their story, stating they were not sure whether he actually lost a leg: "U.S. intelligence officials, who used to believe that Zarqawi had lost a leg in Afghanistan, recently revised that assessment, concluding that he still has both legs." (News and World Report, 24 May 2004).

There were a number of other aspects of the video, which suggest that it was a fraud: there was no blood when Nicholas Berg was beheaded. The audio was not in synchrony with the video, indicating that the film might have been manipulated.

3/11 The Madrid 11 March 2004 Train Bombing

While the press dispatches provide no evidence of Al Zarqawi's involvement in the Madrid 3/11 bombing, several of the reports implied, without supporting evidence, that he was involved. According to the CIA, the Moroccan group which allegedly "supervised the bombings in Madrid, [were] acting as a link between al- Zarqawi and a cell of mostly Moroccan al-Qaeda members." (The Australian, 27 May 2004)

A CNN statement two days after the 3/11 Madrid bombing states that Al Zarqawi may be planning attacks on "soft targets" in Western Europe:

LISOVICZ: And Jonathan, specifically, Abu Musaab al Zarqawi is someone you have described as al Qaeda 2.0, which is pretty scary.

SCHANZER: Yes. Abu Musaab al Zarqawi is the man we caught; we intercepted his memo last month. U.S. intelligence officials found this memo. It indicated that he was trying to continue to carry out attacks against the United States. He was seeking help from the larger al Qaeda network and was seeking to foment internecine violence inside Iraq. This is a man dangerous; he's been linked to attacks in Riyadh, Istanbul and Morocco. This is essentially a freelancer. This is a lone wolf, someone that's acting alone in the name of al Qaeda.

CAFFERTY: Where do we stand in your opinion on this war on terrorism? We have got this terrible situation in Madrid. We've got this fellow, Zarqawi, you are talking about, the lone Wolf that is active, some think inside Iraq. We have got terrorist attacks happening there. There is discussion all over Western Europe of fear of terrorism, possibly being about to increase there. Are we winning this war or are we losing it? What is your read?

SCHANZER: I think we're winning it. We've certainly — I mean counterterrorism at its core is just restricting the terrorist environment. So we've cut down on the amount of finances moving around in the terrorist world. We have arrested a number of key figures. So we are doing a good job.(CNN,13 March 2004)

For details on the Madrid bombing see, Madrid 'blueprint': a dodgy document by Brendan O'Neill at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/ONE404A.html>

Extending the War on Terrorism

Are "we winning or losing" the war on terrorism. These statements are used to justify enhanced military operations against this illusive individual, who is confronting US military might, all over the World. Al Zarqawi is used profusely in Bush's press conferences and speeches in an obvious public relations ploy.

You know, I hate to predict violence, but I just understand the nature of the killers. This guy, Zarqawi, an al Qaeda associate — who was in Baghdad, by the way, prior to the removal of Saddam Hussein — is still at large in Iraq. **And as you might remember, part of his operational plan was to sow violence and discord amongst the various groups in Iraq by cold- blooded killing.** And we need to help find Zarqawi so that the people of Iraq can have a more bright — bright future. (George W. Bush, Press Conference, 1 June 2004, emphasis added)

And with a new interim Iraqi government, US and British troops would be in Iraq at “the request” of the interim government, in an agreement sanctioned by the UN.

“The terrorists are still at large”: The tasks of the so-called “multinational force” would include “preventing and deterring terrorism”, namely going after Al Zarqawi, as a means to “establishing democracy” under G-8’s “political and economic reform in the Middle East and North Africa.”

Annex:

Selected Alleged Al Zarqawi Terrorist events

Assassination of Iraqi Governing Council President Izz-al-Din Salim (17 May 2004)

According to a mysterious website the Islamic Renewal Organization’s (IRO) forum at www.tajdeed.net and www.lajnah22.co.uk , Salim was executed by a Abu-Mus’ab al-Zarqawi affiliated group, the so-called “Military Wing of the Jama’ah al-Tawhid wa-al-Jihad,”. (quoted in BBC Monitoring, May 19 2004)

Bomb Attacks in Baghdad (6 May 2004)

Well, coalition officials say that this car bomb, which went off at about 7:30 in the morning, bears all the hallmarks of Abu Musab al- Zarqawi, that Jordanian national who, coalition officials have consistently said, they believe is behind many of the car bombs that have rocked this country in recent months.

He also has ties, it is believed, with Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda network.

Now this bomb, as I said, went off at a time when many workers were headed towards the Green Zone. That’s the headquarters of the U.S.-led coalition.

Went off at a checkpoint. And when that happened, five Iraqi civilians were killed. A U.S. soldier, as well as the suicide bomber. Now, his nationality is not clear.

A claim of responsibility for the bombing has been put on a web site by a rather shadowy group that claims Zarqawi is its amir or its leader. The statement indicated that the bomber was from Saudi Arabia and that the car was packed with 600 kilograms or about 1,300 pounds of TNT

The Attack on the Basra Oil Facility (27 April 2004)

Responsibility for this attack by Zarqawi was based on information from the same mysterious website. No substantiating evidence based on police reports was presented:

BLITZER: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is now being blamed for the attack against the oil facilities near Basra. He’s being blamed for what happened , the near terrorist attack in Amman, Jordan. Dan Senor, first to you, then I’ll bring General Kimmitt in. Is he to blame for all of this?

SENROR: Well, it certainly looks to be that way, Wolf. But it’s too early to tell. He is a very bad guy. He’s an international terrorist. Zarqawi has very direct ties to al Qaeda. He’s been involved with al Qaeda for a number of years. Several months ago, we

discovered a document that was drafted by Mr. Zarqawi, headed for the senior al Qaeda leadership in Afghanistan that outlined his battle plan for Iraq. And in there were very specific operations that he had taken credit for that occurred in the past and he described the sorts of operations that he would like to be involved with going forward.

Another CNN report on the 27th of April 2004 states without evidence that Zarqawi was responsible for the bombing of an oil facility in Basra.

BLITZER: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is now being blamed for the attack against the oil facilities near Basra. He's being blamed for what happened , the near terrorist attack in Amman, Jordan. Dan Senor, first to you, then I'll bring General Kimmitt in. Is he to blame for all of this?

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Suicide bombing in Baghdad

Bombings in Baghdad and Basra, March 17-18 , 2004

Basra's car bomb attack has remarkable similarities to what happened here in Baghdad last night. The Basra bombing, the target was a Alzeiten (ph), a small residential hotel out of the way. Again, the modus operandi, the way of delivering the bomb was a vehicle.

The attack took place just a little over an hour ago. Basra is in the British sector of Iraq and we're told British troops rushed to the scene immediately. Again, similarities between what happened in Baghdad last night, where the target was the Mount Lebanon Hotel. Now it's the Alzeiten in Basra. The Iraqi police are saying, in the context of the Basra attack, that anywhere between three and five people were killed. Always the early indications of casualties and fatalities will fluctuate. You can be sure of that — Soledad.

O'BRIEN: Walt, you know, you just mentioned, you said specifically remarkable similarities. Right now there is a suspect in the Baghdad bombing. Al- Zarqawi has been named as a suspect.

I know it's early yet in the Basra bombing, but is there anything so far that is connecting this man to the bombing in Basra?

RODGERS: Yes, there is. But remember, what the U.S. military is saying at this point is that they believe this bombing here in Baghdad and the one in Basra will have the same hallmarks, which is to say, it's an Islamist group. The car bomb, the way of detonating it, when the forensic experts go through what they're expecting to find is similarities between what happened here in Baghdad last night and what happened last August 19th, when the United Nations compound was attacked here, killing 22 people.

What they are saying is that Abu Musab Al- Zarqawi is one of the leading suspects in

the war on terror here in Iraq. They believe he's spearheading the attacks here. But they're also saying another Islamist group, Ansar al-Islam, could be responsible. In truth, what they're saying is they're not really sure who did it, but they just have a hunch — Soledad.

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