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## **Iraq and international terrorism**

### **Introduction**

Terrorism, most generally understood as killing in order to achieve political gain, has accompanied humanity since the dawn of history.<sup>1</sup> This simplified definition, which is only one of many, does not aim at explaining its essence. Over more than two centuries of attempts at fully explaining it, the idea has turned out to be very difficult to grasp and, to make matters worse, due to ideological reasons, has acquired contradictory connotations.<sup>2</sup> To date several hundred definitions have been formulated, definitions which, in all cases, do not describe the phenomenon satisfactorily.<sup>3</sup> For the sake of this article, however, it is worth making one more attempt. Terrorism is intimately connected with three matters: violence, terror and politics. If these elements are considered central to this phenomenon, then the definition proposed by Bruce Hoffman is fairly important and useful. According to his definition, terrorism is the conscious creation of terror and the use of violence or threats of violence when striving to attain political change. Terrorism is conceived purposefully so that it would have a long term psychological impact, going considerably beyond the immediate victim. By means of publicity, accomplished as a result of violence, terrorists hope to achieve influence and power in order to bring about changes at a local or international level.<sup>4</sup>

Across its existence, the phenomenon has gone through various evolutionary phases. One of the latest phases is the era of international terrorism. It is difficult to pre-

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<sup>1</sup> In Conor Gearty's opinion we can read about terrorists in historical legends, among others in Flavius who wrote about the so called sykariuses (assassins with daggers). The precursors of terrorists were also assassins (an Ishmael Shiite sect), who murdered the leaders and participants of crusades to the Holy Land (C. Gearty, *Terroryzm*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 11–12).

<sup>2</sup> Contemporary definitely negative connotations must be confronted with the views of French revolution leaders. Maximillian Robespierre claimed that "terror is only justice – quick, strict and steadfast, therefore it is the emanation of virtue" (B. Hoffman, *Oblicza terroryzmu*, Warszawa 1999, p. 14 quoted from R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, vol. 2: *The Struggle*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1970, p. 126).

<sup>3</sup> Alex P. Schmid claims that there are (in English literature) at least 109 definitions (*Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick 1988, p. X).

<sup>4</sup> B. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

cisely identify the point at which the internationalization process of terrorism began. Nevertheless the suggestion that the process refers particularly to the Near East and that it occurred during the 1990s might be agreed on.<sup>5</sup> The internationalization of terrorism came into being due to purely practical reasons. Palestinian terrorist organizations assembled within the framework of Palestine Liberation Organization wanted, especially through acts of terror against third country citizens, to make the international community aware of the existence of the Palestinian problem. The most well known and the most spectacular operation of Palestinian fighters was that of Black September on 5 September 1972 during the Olympic Games in Munich.<sup>6</sup> As a result of the operation 11 Israeli sportsmen were killed. Although it was immediately condemned, the act resulted in attracting interest to the Palestinian problem and the UN granting Special Observer status to the PLO several months afterwards. The activity of Palestinian formations, and tens of other formations created later which used *modus operandi* formed by the Palestinians, would not have been possible without strong backing by certain states. They have been named “sponsors of international terrorism” in the literature about this subject.

The connotations of this term seem to be obvious. However, when such a complicated phenomenon as terrorism is analysed, it is worth remembering, on one hand, the difficulties in defining the concept (especially as regards the latest evolutionary stage), and that on the other hand, attempts at marking clear borders between various types of terrorism fairly often prove to be arbitrary and ineffective. This is visible, for example, when considering domestic and international terrorism.

The former refers to terrorist attacks carried out on the territory and against the property and citizens of only one country and by citizens of this country based on its territory,<sup>7</sup> whereas the latter refers to situations in which terrorist attacks take place in a foreign country or in which the attack target is citizens of a country other than the perpetrators’ country and also these in which terrorists are stationed on foreign territory.<sup>8</sup> The border between these two forms of terrorist activity is currently becoming blurred because of the internationalization or globalization of terrorism. It has been noted on many occasions that a domestic terrorist organization which acted against its fellow countrymen had consulted its operations at an international level.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, pp. 64–65.

<sup>6</sup> More about this see: J. K. Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs*, Frank Class, London 1973.

<sup>7</sup> B. Bolechów, *Terroryzm w świecie podwubiegunowym*, Toruń 2002, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> In certain situations it is possible then to talk about the existence of domestic terrorism sponsored internationally, though this concept is not as formal as the above-mentioned two concepts. The best example here is al-Qaeda’s activity, which constitutes the so called *Salafid International* together with dozens of other terrorist organizations operating locally (for more see: Y. Alexander, M. S. Swetnam, *Stewcy Śmierci. Osama bin Laden i inni szefowie al-Qaeda*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 12–75; P. L. Williams, *Al-Kaida. Bractwo terroru*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 25–39).

A similar situation exists in the case of two further types of terrorism: state and state sponsored terrorism. State terrorism means that civil service officials are directly involved in terrorist operations, while state sponsored terrorism means commissioning and controlling or supporting selected terrorist organizations or terrorists acting in a given state authorities' name or interests. If the two above-mentioned criteria are combined, a series of subtypes can be distinguished. There is, for instance, domestic state terrorism or international state terrorism.<sup>10</sup>

It is worth asking the question here: Why have the members of contemporary terrorist formations decided that the most effective way of struggling for their goals is moving terrorist activity to the international plane? This new method of non-classic armed fighting has arisen from the fact of the confrontation of two highly unequal powers. They are represented, on the one hand, by contemporary modern countries, on the other hand, by sub national groups fighting for their particular interests.<sup>11</sup> The latter do not *de facto* have any effective instruments with which to exert pressure on the opponent or communications besides an escalation of violence on an unheard-of scale and using the power of contemporary media (satellite TV or the Internet). The goals which are to be achieved by such means seem to be of secondary importance in this situation. It is a fallacy that only terrorists motivated by religious beliefs (for example Islamic fundamentalists) function in this way. In the history of contemporary terrorism there have been, and there still are, many organizations referring to secular ideologies (including nationalistic ones), which more or less successfully (*vide*: Palestinian national independence organizations), operate on this basis.

In this context the following question seems to be justified and far more important: What is the purpose and how do the subjects of state authorities become involved in terrorism? One of the most important motives in taking this type of action is the desire to have an effective, even though illegal, influence on the international environment. The point here is, particularly, the intention to weaken militarily stronger opponents "from inside" or to have a powerful argument (for example referring to one's resignation from supporting terrorist formations<sup>12</sup>) during negotiations conducted in the international arena.<sup>13</sup> Other goals seem to be less significant, though not meaningless. The desire to extend regime influence (including ideological influence)<sup>14</sup> or suppression of opposition residing in third countries might belong to the goals. As far as the way in which states support international terrorism is concerned, practical methods have always varied. A given country may use its own state apparatus in the form of special or diplo-

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<sup>10</sup> More in: B. Bolechów, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–48.

<sup>11</sup> M. Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, The Free Press, New York 1991, p. 225; also see: D. Tucker, *Skirmishes at the Edge of Empire: The United States and International Terrorism*, Praeger, Westport, Connecticut 1997.

<sup>12</sup> The example of Lebanon, which resigned from supporting international terrorism and obtained many concessions on account of this, may be given here.

<sup>13</sup> M. Madej, *Międzynarodowy terroryzm polityczny*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 53–56.

<sup>14</sup> The question if it is a secular (the case of USSR) or a religious (the case of Iran) ideology seems meaningless.

matic services or might contact specific terrorist formations, which can be commissioned to carry out particular operations or be supported indirectly, particularly if that organization wants to achieve goals similar to the interests of the regime. In the practical sense the above mentioned activities can assume one or several of the following forms:

- planning, preparation and carrying out of specific terrorist operations;
- giving military help:
  - through military training of terrorists (in areas of weapon use, military tactics or espionage) provided by specific services of a given country in camps on the territory of that country or in third countries,
  - through supplying military equipment (weapons, explosives or ammunition);
- giving financial help:
  - via direct financial transfers,
  - facilitating financial transfers from third sources,
  - making fund raising possible;
- offering shelter (so-called *safe havens*) to members of terrorist organizations sought by “wanted” notice in other countries;
- securing the logistical activity of terrorist groups using the territory of such a country,<sup>15</sup> including facilitating criminal activity on its own territory performed by the terrorists, for example:
  - drug production,
  - forgery,
  - weapon transport;<sup>16</sup>
- giving access to diplomatic agencies in third countries.

### Means of Iraqi involvement in terrorism

#### 1. The Iraqi regime’s collaboration with terrorist organizations

In the case of international terrorism sponsored by the Iraqi regime, the activity was first of all related to support of particular terrorist formations.<sup>17</sup> The organizations, and they fill a large list, were supported in various ways, using the full spectrum of available means. The Iraqi diplomatic services were engaged in this aid.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Official agencies of terrorist groups are the evidence of sponsor-states political support.

<sup>16</sup> M. Madej, op. cit., pp. 55–58.

<sup>17</sup> It is worth reminding that, on the strength of UN Security Council No. 687 resolution, already at the beginning of 1990s Iraq was ordered to refuse admittance to any terrorist organizations to its territory.

<sup>18</sup> The former CIA director, William Webster, mentioned, in one interview, a case of terrorist capturing in south-east Asia. The terrorist demanded Iraqi embassy notifying (see: D. L. Byman, *Terrorism and War with Iraq*, The Brookings Institution, Iraq Memo#12, 3.03.2003).

Referring to the last type of aid, one incident is worth recalling: the extradition from the Philippines of one of the Iraqi embassy secretaries in Manila, Hisham al Hussein, who contacted and offered help to Abu Sayaff organization members, by the local authorities on 14 February 2003.<sup>19</sup> The Philippine organization came into being in the early 1990s as a result of a split in the Moro National Liberation Front.<sup>20</sup> The formation, which operates in the Sulu Archipelago region and in west Mindanao, inhabited mostly by Muslims, demands that an independent Muslim state be established in this region. It is best known for kidnappings (at least 21 people in 2000, 17 people in 2001). Abu Sayaff closely collaborates with al-Qaeda and receives help from Malaysia and, up to a point in the past, from Iraq as well. In February 2003 Hamisinaji Sali, one of the local group commanders, admitted receiving \$20,000 US support annually for the benefit of the formation from the Iraqi diplomat since the year 2000.<sup>21</sup> The money was mainly designated for the purchase of ammunition and bombs.

The list of organizations collaborating with Iraq, includes, among others, the Iranian Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK – The National Liberation Army of Iran or The People's Mujahedeen of Iran).<sup>22</sup> Iraq used this leftist organization<sup>23</sup> (set up in the 1960s by educated descendants of Iranian middle class representatives) for conducting terrorist operations on the territory of Iran and outside the country. It is estimated that there were 15 to 20 bases of this organization on Iraqi territory and it had thousands of members and followers.<sup>24</sup> In 1970 it was responsible for, among other things, carrying out a series of operations against American military and civil personnel working in Teheran. In 1979 its members took part in capturing the American embassy in the capital of Iran. One of the most notorious operations conducted at Iraq's behest was the planting of explosives in the Islamic Republican Party headquarters and in the Prime Minister's residence in 1981.<sup>25</sup> In the 1990s the formation was used by the Iraqi regime for obtaining counter-intelligence information. What is more, in April 1992, MEK con-

<sup>19</sup> Phillipine authorities have the knowledge of telephone conversations between al Hussein, Abu Madja and Hamsiraj Salim, who were the leaders of the group, just before the attacks in October 2002. A USA Special Forces sergeant, Mark Wayne Jackson was also killed in the attack (D. Murdock, *Saddam's Terror Ties*, "National Review Online", <http://nationalreview.com/murdock/murdock200310210934.asp>, of 22.04.2004).

<sup>20</sup> A considerable contribution to the founding of this organization was made by bin Laden's brother-in-law, Jamal Mohammad Khalif. The organization was directed by Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani until he was killed by police on 18 December 1998. He was replaced then by his younger brother, Kadaffy Janjalani.

<sup>21</sup> S. F. Hayes, *The Connection. How al-Qaeda's Collaboration with Saddam Hussein Has endangered America*, Harper Collins Publisher, New York 2004, p. 155.

<sup>22</sup> A lesser known name is Muslim Association of Iranian Students used always during fund raising for the formation's activity.

<sup>23</sup> MEK's ideology comprised an eclectic combination of Muslim and Marxist slogans.

<sup>24</sup> Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO) URL <http://www.ict.org.il/organization/orgdet.cfm?orgid=24>, of 07.06.2004.

<sup>25</sup> As a result of the operation, 70 prominent civil servants, including the chief of Ministry of Justice, ayatollah Mohammad Behesti, the President, Mohammad-Ali Rajaei and the prime minister, Mohammad Javad Bahonar, were killed.

ducted terrorist attacks against Iranian embassies in 13 countries at the regime's demand.

Other organizations supported by Iraq were the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), the Abu Nidal Organization, Hezbollah and Hamas.

The anti-Israeli PLF came into being in the 1970s as a faction of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Among the numerous different factions of the PLF the most famous one was Abu Abbas. The group's headquarters was in Iraq, where it had moved from Tunis.<sup>26</sup> Hussein's regime, including Iraqi government members, even up to the deputy-prime minister, maintained and developed political contact with the representatives of this organization, especially after the first intifada broke-out.<sup>27</sup> According to the Americans Mahmoud Zidan Abu el Abbas lived the last eighteen years of his life in Baghdad. The Iraqi regime offered a safe haven to him and approved of propaganda activity conducted by him.<sup>28</sup> Abu Abbas even appeared on Iraqi TV, where he encouraged Palestinian volunteers to intensify their struggle against Israel. Iraqi logistical and military support resulted in the Haifa (April 2001) and West Bank attacks (three months later). In July 2001 the Israelis arrested Mohammed Kandil (a PLF member) on the West Bank, accusing him of collaboration with the Iraqi secret service aimed at preparing a bomb attack on targets in Tel Aviv. The PLF leader was captured by American special services in Baghdad on 14 April 2003.<sup>29</sup>

As regards Hezbollah, the relations between this organization and Iraqi regime are not so clear. Iraq had only indirect connections with this formation through the Syrian authorities, with whom Iraq regulated relations in 1998. Afterwards, Syria participated in breaking the international embargo on oil and arms trade with Iraq.<sup>30</sup> The links between Hussein's regime and Hezbollah are evident in the fact that in 2002 a shipment of Iraqi missiles for Hezbollah was intercepted, and in the declaration of this formation to attack the American army in the case of an American attack on Iraq.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> It is this organization members that should be regarded responsible for Achille Lauro cruise ship hijacking in 1985 and the killing of at least several American citizens (e.g. Leon Klinghoffer) in many attacks. (see among others: B. Ganor, *Iraq and the Threat of International Terrorism*, Institute for Counter-Terrorism, <http://www.ict.org.il/article/cet.cfm.html>, of 10.04.2003).

<sup>27</sup> Americans mention here meetings in January and September 2001 which occurred in the capital of Iraq (cf., *Overview of State-Sponsored Terrorism, Iraq*, "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001", <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2001.html/10249.htm>, of 12.05.2004).

<sup>28</sup> In 1998 Israeli authorities agreed to Abu Abbas's return to the Gaza Strip but he did not take the opportunity fearing extradition to the USA, in relation to 1980s attacks.

<sup>29</sup> American military representatives stated fairly firmly that "Abu Abbas's capturing in Iraq eliminates a part of a terrorist network supported by Iraq and is another victory in the global war against terrorism" (*Mahmoud Abu Abbas captured in Baghdad*, <http://www.ict.org.il/spotlight/det.cfm?id=886>, of 10.04.2004). Abbas, however, died in an American house of detention soon after he had been captured.

<sup>30</sup> E. Zisser, *Syria and the War in Iraq*, "Middle East Review of International Affairs", vol. 7, no. 2, June 2003, pp. 47-49.

<sup>31</sup> See: Ze'ev Schiff, *Iraqi Rockets Sent to Syria for Use by Hezbollah*, "Haaretz English Edition", 26.12.2002.

The Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) came into being in 1974, after separating from the PLO and was controlled by Abu Nidal (Sabri al-Banna). It has been responsible for attacks in at least 20 countries and the assassinations of over 900 people (especially in the USA, Great Britain, France and Israel). Between 1974 and 1983 the ANO carried out a series of attacks, inspired from Baghdad, against representatives of the Syrian authorities, against al-Fatah members and on the territory of Israel and Jordan.<sup>32</sup> The most famous ANO operations are the attacks on Vienna and Rome airports in December 1985. The members of the organization received logistical, financial and military help from Iraq. It is an interesting fact that Abu Nidal was found dead in Baghdad in August 2002. Officially, he committed suicide.<sup>33</sup>

The Iraqis supported Hamas<sup>34</sup> in various ways. For example, they sent financial aid<sup>35</sup> and the weapons necessary for it to function; and trained its members. The most radical brigades of Hamas, Izz el-Din al-Qassam, responsible for the majority of suicide attacks in Israel since the beginning of 1990s, cooperated most closely with Iraq. In 1999 a Hamas office was officially opened in Baghdad, which operated till the start of the American invasion.

Apart from the above-mentioned forms of support of terrorist organizations, the Iraqi regime organized, at least after 1995, training for terrorists from all over the world on Iraqi territory. One of the most well-known training bases was the Salman Pak base, situated 30 km south of Baghdad. Iraqi oppositionists, including former members of the Iraqi secret service called Mukhabarat, claimed that Islamic radicals from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco were trained in the

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<sup>32</sup> Among these the most notorious were attempted assassinations of the then Foreign Affairs Minister, Abdul Halim Khaddam (see more in: E. Karmon, *Terrorist link of the Iraqi regime*, The Washington Institute, "Policywatch", no. 652, 29.08.2002).

<sup>33</sup> However, Mossad's and Hussein supporters' assassination activity is suspected here. One of the motives of his death might have been the desire to reveal the ways in which Iraq was involved in international terrorism.

<sup>34</sup> This word is the Arabic acronym of Islamic Resistance Movement (Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyya). It also means boldness and bravado. The ideological roots of Hamas are in Egyptian Muslim Fraternity, set up in 1920, it did not come into being before 1970s, though. It was founded owing to sheik Ahmed Yassin's efforts, who was the moral leader of the organization. The movement, legally registered in Israel in 1978, assumed then the name of Al-Mujamma Al Islami. In 1988 Hamas published the notorious Islam Convention, which, besides ideological credo, presented ideas of fighting against Israel and PLO.

<sup>35</sup> On the turn of 1980s and 1990s Saddam Hussein offered \$10,000 US reward to the members of suicide terrorists' families in the case of attacks against Israelis. The circumstances of the payment were specified. The highest rate was given to only these families whose members blew themselves up with an explosive and caused death casualties. They were regarded as real martyrs. In the case of causing only injuries or material damage the payment was correspondingly smaller. In April 2002 Hussein increased the reward amount to \$25,000 US. The aim of this aid was, according to Mahmoud Besharat, who was responsible for its distribution on the West Bank, to encourage the continuation of intifada. Generally till the end of March 2003 the sum of the transferred means crossed the threshold of \$35 million US. It was then a costly and successful encouragement (for more: *Iraq's Involvement in Palestinian Terrorist Activity against Israel*, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/go.asp.html>, of 11.06.2003).

above-mentioned camp. There, besides regular training, Iraqi scientists, supervised by Germans, passed on information on the subject of the production of chemical and biological substances to the trainees.<sup>36</sup> According to Sabah Khalif Khodad Alam, an Iraqi captain and instructor in the Salman Pak camp, who emigrated to the USA in May 2001, terrorists were encouraged in this camp to carry out attacks against American strategic targets all over the world.<sup>37</sup> In 1998, before UN inspectors were expelled from Iraq, the authorities claimed officially that Iraqi anti-terrorist squad training took place there. Apart from that, in Salman Pak Saddam's Fedain squads were trained in espionage techniques, in sabotage and in terrorist attacks. Another well known base where terrorists were trained was the base on lake Tharthar, known also as "Salman Pak sea." American intelligence services found out about the base from lieutenant Riadh Abdallah, who emigrated to the USA in 1999. The camp was used for training Arabs from outside Iraq in techniques of terrorism at sea.<sup>38</sup>

## 2. Iraqi authorities cooperation with al-Qaeda

Before the American invasion of Iraq there appeared a lot of information referring to Iraqi regime connections with al-Qaeda.<sup>39</sup> According to the CIA, al-Qaeda and Hussein's regime had reached a preliminary non-aggression agreement as early as in 1993, which resulted later in limited cooperation.<sup>40</sup> In this agreement bin Laden committed himself not to attack targets that were connected with the Iraqi regime.<sup>41</sup> Since then the representatives of both parties met at least 110 times.<sup>42</sup> The meetings took place on the territories of Sudan and Pakistan and they involved, among others, Faruq Hijazi, deputy director of the Iraqi secret service and Ajman al Zawahiri, one of al-Qaeda's leaders and a former Islamic Jihad leader.<sup>43</sup> There is evidence that on 3 February 1998 the latter personally contacted Iraqi representatives and that he received financial support for his orga-

<sup>36</sup> See: "New York Times", of 8.12.2001.

<sup>37</sup> The central place in the camp was Boeing 707 fuselage which was used for instructing how to take control of the plane without bloodshed (by means of plastic knives). The training took place in groups of 5–6 people. The number of terrorists trained never exceeded 50–60 people at a time.

<sup>38</sup> Abdallah was a member of Saddam Hussein's personal guard during the first war in the Persian Gulf and held a high post in the Republican Guard. However, because of his brother's, Abdul Alwhishah's, betrayal he was incarcerated. It was him who formulated the famous saying that Saddam Hussein was "terrorists' father and grandfather" (S. F. Hayes, op. cit., pp. 91–93).

<sup>39</sup> Obviously Iraqi regime denied all these reports: *Iraq Dismisses al-Qaeda Link – Says US Sponsored Taliban*, <http://www.rense.com/general34/ussp.htm>, of 21.05.2003.

<sup>40</sup> See also: M. Levitt, R. Cressey, A. Jorisch, *Special Policy Forum Report: A terrorist front in Iraq?*, The Washington Institute, "Policywatch", no. 745, 8.04.2003.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen F. Hayes claims that the basis of such an agreement was already formulated in 1992 (S. F. Hayes, op. cit., p. 10).

<sup>42</sup> D. Rose, *Saddam and al-Qaeda*, "The Evening Standard", 9.12.2002.

<sup>43</sup> S. F. Hayes, op. cit., pp. 65–66.

nization amounting to \$300,000 US.<sup>44</sup> The cooperation did not have ideological grounds, it was utilitarian, it was about fighting a common enemy, which was the USA.

Due to the efforts of Abu Abdullah al-Iraqi (pseudonym), Osama bin Laden's special envoy, the Iraqi regime agreed to provide al-Qaeda fighters with training in use of poison gases. In order to achieve this aim the members of Unit 999, a secret Iraqi military unit, were sent to training camps in Afghanistan. According to George Tenet the training<sup>45</sup> consisted of instruction in forgery and explosives construction. According to the CIA information the training was coordinated by Salim al Ahmed, an Iraqi intelligence brigade commander on the Iraqi side.<sup>46</sup> Apart from training, the Iraqis also supplied al-Qaeda with specific types of weapons. This was possible owing to the verbal request of Mohamed Atef, bin Laden's right hand man. According to the "Washington Post" of 12 December 2002 Iraq supplied al-Qaeda with VX gas.

According to intelligence service data (and Powell's statement in the UN), an al-Qaeda cell, consisting of at least 24 terrorists and named Jund al-Shams (Levant Soldiers), operated in Baghdad itself. It was controlled by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.<sup>47</sup> This Jordanian-born Palestinian, probably met bin Laden in Afghanistan during the period of the fight against the Soviet army.<sup>48</sup> In his native country he was the leader of a terrorist organization, which he had set up, called Tawhid (Union). In the year 2000 in Afghanistan he underwent very intensive military training in one of al-Qaeda's camps.<sup>49</sup> After American and allied forces had taken over the country, al-Zarqawi together with his collaborators moved to northern Iraq, which *de facto* offered a safe haven to them. Owing to Zarqawi's cell, and indirectly to Iraqi support, it was possible for al-Qaeda to function in most West-European countries. The existence of this cell was testified to by at least 116 people who were sent by the organization to Western Europe (including Great Britain) and who were captured there. Zarqawi seemed to be the main liaison officer between the Iraqi regime and al-Qaeda. It was him who transferred financial assis-

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<sup>44</sup> It is worth adding that it happened shortly before Islamic Jihad and al-Qaeda united and before "World Islamic Holy War Front against Jews and Crusaders", a new face of Islamic terrorist international, was brought into being (ibidem, pp. 103–104).

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, pp. 126–127.

<sup>46</sup> American intelligence service sources also informed, in mid-1990s, about direct contacts between Iraqi Intelligence service chief, Mani-abd-al-Rashid-al-Tikriti, and bin Laden himself which allegedly happened on a farm in Sudan. During this informal meeting, various aspects of collaboration and Iraqi regime aid for al-Qaeda were discussed (ibidem, p. 83).

<sup>47</sup> His full name is: Ahmad Fadeel Nazal al-Khalayleh (P. E. Tyler, *Intelligence Break Led U.S. to Tie Envoy Killing to Iraqi Qaeda Cell*, "The New York Times" 6.02.2003).

<sup>48</sup> He is a sunnit and comes from a Bedouin tribe called Beni Hassan. He was accused of attempts to overthrow Jordan authorities and after serving many-years' sentence he was forced to emigrate. He emigrated to Germany, where in 1999 he set up a terrorist cell, which was destroyed later on (P. Zychowicz, *Gorszy od bin Ladena*, "Rzeczpospolita" 3–4.07.2004).

<sup>49</sup> It is evident, e.g., from the account presented by the American Secretary of State, Collin L. Powell, during his pronouncement in front of UN Security Council on 5 February 2003 (see more Secretary of State C. L. Powell, *Excerpt from Remarks to the United Nations Security Council*, Appendix G: Iraq and Terrorism "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002", <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2002/html/1996.htm>, of 22.04.2004).

tance and weapons (including castor oil).<sup>50</sup> It was he who was responsible for preparations for the assassination of an American diplomat in Jordan in October 2002.<sup>51</sup> It was he who was identified by Abu Zubajdah (Zajn al-Abidin Mohammed Husajn) as his collaborator. Abu Zubajdah was one of the high-ranking al-Qaeda fighters captured by Pakistani counter-espionage services on 28 March 2002.<sup>52</sup>

Al-Qaeda's activity in Iraq is also evident because of the presence of Ansar al-Islam (Islam Helpers) in this country. The organization was founded on 1 September 2001, probably on bin Laden's orders, so as to secure al-Qaeda members safe haven. According to Barham Salih (and *New Yorker*), the Prime Minister on the behalf of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, who was the target of an assassination attempt by the group in April 2002.<sup>53</sup> Ansar al-Islam controlled several villages in the mountainous region surrounding Halabija city. The chief and the moral leader of this organization was Nejmeddin Faraj Ahmad (pseudonym Mulla Krekar), an Iraqi Kurd who had lived for at least a decade in Norway, where he was granted political refugee status. One of the former intelligence service officers claimed that Ansar al-Islam members (and there were from 700 to 2000) collaborated with the Iraqi government. One of the forms of this collaboration was waging a struggle in the name of the regime against Kurdish formations in opposition to the regime. The main person from the Iraqi intelligence service responsible for contacts with the organization was Saadam Mahmoud Abdul Latif al-Ani (pseudonym Abu Wael). The cooperation consisted of, for example, supplying poison gases (e.g. sarin). Besides Ansar al-Islam was suspected of collaborating with al-Zarqawi in the production of poisonous substances (e.g. castor oil) in northern Iraq.<sup>54</sup> In Abdul Rahman al-Shamari's opinion, an Iraqi special services agent of high rank (captured by the Kurds at the beginning of 2004), Ansar al-Islam received fairly considerable amounts of money for terrorist activities from secret Mukhabarat funds. According to Shamari this was about \$600,000 to \$700,000 US every one or two months. He also confirmed the existence of Abu Wael and described his relations with Krekar. He noted also that he was familiar with Abu Wael's contacts with terrorist groups sympathetic to bin Laden in countries like Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Yemen. It was he who was to hand over Iraqi passports and financial means to members of these groups and to organize training for them (sometimes with the help of al-Zarqawi) in the Salman Pak camp.<sup>55</sup> According to the "Washington Post" after the American attack on Afghanistan over 100 al-Qaeda terrorists found shelter in the hiding-places of the orga-

<sup>50</sup> Al-Zarqawi was regarded as a poison preparation specialist by American intelligence services (C. Cameron, *Administration: Al-Qaeda in Baghdad*, Fox News, "Friday", 31.01.2003).

<sup>51</sup> This is about Laurence Foley's assassination. In relation to this assassination Jordan authorities asked for Zaqawi's extradition. Soon after this request he disappeared from the hospital, where he had been staying at the time, and then probably went to the region of Ansar al-Islam activity.

<sup>52</sup> S. F. Hayes, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>53</sup> It only killed 5 bodyguards.

<sup>54</sup> See: A. Knapp, *Iraq and Terrorism, Part One & Part Two*, "Heretical Ideas", 19-20.03.2003.

<sup>55</sup> S. F. Hayes, op. cit., p. 173.

nization in Iraq. Beforehand Ansar al-Islam fighters were trained in camps in Afghanistan. In March 2003 Americans, jointly with Kurdish forces, after launching attacks on Ansar al-Islam bases, inflicted heavy losses to this organization. At least 259 terrorists were killed, a number of them, however, managed to escape.<sup>56</sup> A considerable number of the most notorious terrorist attacks in the following months was attributed by the Americans to the members of this formation who were still in hiding.<sup>57</sup>

The Iraqi connection with the WTC and Pentagon attack in the USA of 11 September 2001 is not entirely clear, however. Officially, the Iraqi regime denied any links between Iraq and al-Qaeda. It never condemned the actual attack, though; claiming that America was suffering the consequences of its crimes against humanity.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, however, according to the official statement of the Czech authorities, including the ambassador of this country to the UN, on 24 February 2003, one of the 11 September operation leaders, Mohammed Atta, contacted Iraqi embassy personnel at least twice while in that country on 9 April 2001. He got in touch with, among others, Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim Samir al-Anim (a high rank intelligence service specialist in sabotage), who was expelled from the Czech Republic on the grounds of going beyond the limits of diplomatic duties (espionage).<sup>59</sup> In the opinion of American special services in Prague, Atta received financial support from secret Iraqi special services funds.<sup>60</sup> One of the reasons why Iraq became involved in this aid might have been a reaction to the Radio Free Iraq broadcasting station launched in the Czech capital on 2 November 1998. The radio station was a thorn in Iraqi regime's side from the very start.<sup>61</sup> The means received by Atta were probably intended for the purpose of the preparation of an attack on the headquarters of the broadcasting station. However it has not been possible to find any evidence of direct Iraqi connection with the 11 September attack, it was not altogether unlikely, though. Photos of another terrorist, Khalid al-Mihdhar, talking to an Iraqi embassy worker in Kuala Lumpur in the year 2000 might represent the connection.<sup>62</sup> If then these connections were confirmed, it would only prove that the assumptions of US anti-terrorist activities in the 1990s were erroneous.

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<sup>56</sup> See more: J. Schanzer, *Ansar al-Islam: Postmortem or prelude to more attacks?*, The Washington Institute, "Policywatch", no. 740, 3.04.2003.

<sup>57</sup> These were, among others, the attack on the UN seat in Baghdad and the attack on the Shiite mosque in Najafa in August 2003.

<sup>58</sup> For the motives of such dissimilar ideologically partners collaboration see: F. Ajami, *Two faces, One Terror*, in: *The Iraq War Reader. History, Documents, Opinions*, M. L. Shifry, Ch. Cerfa (eds.), *A Touchstone Book*, New York 2003, pp. 387–391.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. D. Murdock, *Saddam's Terror Ties*, "National Review Online", <http://national-review.com/murdock/murdock200310210934.asp>, of 22.04.2004).

<sup>60</sup> S. F. Hayes, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>61</sup> By the way it is worth adding that already in 1998 Iraqis took steps, employing a fairly considerable amount of money (at least \$150,000 US) to eliminate this broadcasting station. This was fairly quickly discovered by local counter-espionage (*ibidem*, p. 137).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 177–178.

### 3. Direct involvement of the Iraqi regime in international terrorism

Many circumstances point to the fact that Iraqi regime was directly involved in terrorist operations.

One of the most notorious operations, in which the Iraqi regime was involved was attempted in Kuwait on 14 April 1993. Two Iraqi intelligence service workers, Wali al Ghazali and Raad Assadi, together with 16 other people (there were 11 Iraqis and 6 of these have since been sentenced to death) were then preparing the assassination of George Bush senior and the emir of Kuwait. The assassination was supposed to be carried out with a several-hundred-gram explosive device, which was to be planted in a car.<sup>63</sup> The Kuwaiti counter-espionage service thwarted the assassination and arrested all the suspects. The Americans, on the other hand, reacted to the attempt by bombing Mukhabarat headquarters in Baghdad with 23 Tomahawk missiles on 26 June 1993.<sup>64</sup>

In the opinion of Stephen F. Hayes, Iraqi special services were responsible for quite a few attacks on American targets in the Near East and in Africa and Asia. Many attacks, like one from the early 1990s on the American ambassador to Uganda, John Burroughs, were prepared and carried out incompetently, and therefore did not do much damage. Saddam Hussein, in S. F. Hayes's view, equipped and sent to Africa and Asia a dozen or so two-man squads consisting, as a rule, of a special service agent and a "professional" terrorist in this period.<sup>65</sup>

Iraqi special services were also responsible for the murders of a number of members of the opposition to Hussein's regime outside Iraqi borders. An example of such activity was Sheik Taleb al-Suhali's assassination by Abdel Hussein, pseudonym Ghost, later Salman Pak training camp chief, in Beirut on 12 April 1994. In the 1990s there was even a special unit dealing with political murders, called "The Lion's Den School", headed then by general Jassim Rashid al-Dulaim.

### Conclusions

The final chapter in the history of Iraq connected with this country's support of international terrorism was ended by the American President, George W. Bush, on 7 May 2003 by lifting the sanctions imposed by the United States in relation to this activity. During the transition stage, until new sovereign authorities are established in this country, terrorism related danger has undoubtedly risen due to, among other things, the American military presence in this country. American and coalition forces failed to destroy fully the Ansar al-Islam organization and al-Qaeda, as well as to capture

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem, pp. 56–59.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. S. M. Hersh, *Did Iraq Try to Assassinate ex-President Bush in 1993?*, in: *The Iraq War Reader*, op. cit., pp. 140–161.

<sup>65</sup> S. F. Hayes, op. cit., pp. 40–41.

al-Zarqawi. On the other hand the USA defeated an authoritarian regime which was well-disposed to terrorism, shifted the burden of the war against terrorism to the Near East, and also showed present and future states inclined to support terrorism that such a danger will be dealt with quickly, with determination and all available means. The acts, at least on some level, had deterrent value.<sup>66</sup> As for the latest conflict, the proliferation of the terrorist threat enveloped not only Iraq, but also spread to neighbouring countries and particularly to Saudi Arabia.<sup>67</sup> In the middle and long term, especially after power has been handed over to the Iraqis, opposite trends should be expected.

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<sup>66</sup> In view of this a seemingly surprising quick diplomatic relations regulation between Lebanon and western countries is not a coincidence.

<sup>67</sup> Cf., *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003*, Overview of State-Sponsored Terrorism, Iraq, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2003/31644.htm>, of 4.05.2004.