
Ansar al-Islam Dossier

**CENTER FOR POLICING TERRORISM
“CPT”**

July 30, 2004

PREPARED FOR THE CPT BY DAN DARLING
EDITED BY ROHAN GUNARATNA

Table of Contents

<u>Chapter Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	4
Chapter 1: Background	7
1.1: Ansar al-Islam Overview	7
1.2: Ansar al-Islam and Salafism	7
1.3: Origins of Ansar al-Islam	8
1.4: Ansar al-Islam Ideology	10
1.5: Ansar al-Islam Organization	11
1.5a: Consultative Council	11
1.5b: Shar'iah Board	11
1.5c: Media Council	12
1.6: Ansar al-Islam Operations	12
1.7: Ansar al-Islam Leadership	13
1.7a: Abdullah al-Shafei	13
1.7b: Abu Wael	13
1.7c: Ayoub Afghani	13
1.7d: Hemin Benishari	14
1.7e: Aso Hawleri	14
1.8: Mullah Fatah Krekar	14
1.9: Mujahideen Military Council and Local Ansar al-Islam Cells	15
1.10: Ansar al-Islam and Criminal Activity	15
1.11: Ansar al-Islam and State Support	16
1.11a: Iran	16
1.11b: Iraq (pre-OIF)	16
1.12: Ansar al-Islam's Transnational Reach	17
<i>Caucasus</i>	17
<i>Europe</i>	18
<i>Middle East</i>	18
<i>Iraq</i>	18
Chapter 2: Fundraising	19
2.1: Checkpoints and Customs Fees	19
2.2: Islamist Financing	19
Chapter 3: Modes of Attack	20
3.1: Suicide Bombing	20
3.2 Non-Conventional Weaponry	20
Chapter 4: Ansar al-Islam and Other Terrorist Groups	21
4.1: Al Qaeda	21
4.2: Jaish Ansar al-Sunnah	21

<u>Chapter Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Chapter 5: Ansar al-Islam and Operations in the United States	22
5.1: Ansar al-Islam and the United States	22
5.2: Impact of the Iraq War	23
5.3: U.S. Cities as an Ansar al-Islam Target	23
Chapter 6: Recruiting	25
6.1: Overview of Recruiting	25
Endnotes	27

Executive Summary

Ansar al-Islam (Supporters of Islam) is a radical Islamist organization composed of Iraqi Kurds and Arabs who have vowed to establish an independent Islamist state in Iraq. Formed in December 2001 out of a conglomeration of Kurdish Islamist groups, it is closely allied with and receives both ideological and strategic inspiration from al Qaeda. A number of Ansar members trained at al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, and the group provided safe haven to al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist groups until its operations were disrupted during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Since the compromise of its stronghold, many of the organization's leaders have managed to escape into Iranian Kurdistan (Kordestan), from where they have been planning anti-Coalition attacks.

Ansar adopts a revolutionary Salafist worldview similar to al Qaeda. Members of Ansar think of themselves as latter-day Companions of the Prophet (*Salafists*). As such, they deem themselves to be the revolutionary vanguard, which will usher in the creation of an Islamist state, both locally in Iraqi Kurdistan, as well as throughout the entire Muslim world. Despite the Islamist bent of the organization, a great deal of information has surfaced regarding the ties between Ansar and the former secular government of Saddam Hussein. Another apparent relationship exists between Ansar and radical elements of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), which seeks to use Ansar as a proxy force against the Coalition in Iraq.

Unlike other Islamist movements, Ansar has very little popular support among its supposed base (Iraqi Kurds). This is due to the brutality Ansar employed during its war against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) from late 2001 to spring 2003. Another source of popular dissatisfaction with Ansar stems from its role in the February 2004 bombings in Irbil that killed 109, including numerous high-ranking members of PUK and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

Through its ties to al Qaeda, al Tawhid, and other member organizations of the International Islamic Front, Ansar has been able to establish connections with a network of Islamist cells spanning from Sweden to the Caucasus. These Sunni extremist networks have been partially disrupted through the efforts of European law enforcement, but are likely to remain a ready source of fighters for Ansar and related groups for the near future.

Possibility of Attack in the Next Five Years: High

As part of the larger International Front headed by al Qaeda, Ansar is likely to remain a potent threat to the United States for as long as it remains intact. The International Front believes that "the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies ... is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."¹ Accordingly, it would be unwise to simply regard Ansar as a threat to Coalition forces in Iraq. This assessment is echoed in the State Department's 2002 publication of the *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, which plainly states that "in the past year, al-Qaida operatives in northern Iraq concocted suspect chemicals under the direction of senior al-Qaida associate Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and tried to smuggle them into Russia, Western Europe, and the United States

for terrorist operations."²

While the Ansar strongholds in northern Iraq have been disrupted, the organization and many of its key leaders continue to fight. Presumably, they have not given up on their goal of perpetrating a mass casualty terrorist attack on the US homeland. Keeping this in mind, it is entirely likely that the organization will attempt to attack the continental United States in the future, either under the direction of al Qaeda or operating on its own accord.

Moreover, it is important to note that the literature favored by Ansar frequently describes the events of September 11 as "the raids (*ghazwah*) of New York and Washington." This language is meaningful to Ansar and other organizations that share al Qaeda's ideology and view themselves as the modern successors to the original Companions of the Prophet Mohammed. During the early battles that characterized the initial struggle between Mohammed and the Meccan polytheists, *ghazwah* characterized the opening stages of the military campaign - conquest (*fatah*) came later. The use of such language indicates that al Qaeda and allied groups such as Ansar will attempt to attack the United States in general and New York City in specific for as long as they are able to do so.

In short, Ansar's leadership is both ideologically and strategically tied to that of the broader al Qaeda network on multiple levels. Among other places, this is reflected in *Iraq al-Jihad Aamal wal Akhtar* (Iraqi Jihad - Hopes and Risks), an al Qaeda strategy document that posted online during the summer of 2003.³ According to that document, al Qaeda stands the best chance of achieving victory over Coalition forces in Iraq by broadening the field of battle and attacking Coalition nations on their own soil. While the document does not directly refer to attacks inside the United States, it would be consistent with the basic strategy to attempt attacks on American soil, particularly as the November 2004 US elections draw closer. One other possibility is that radical elements in Iran who are currently hosting Ansar's surviving leadership, may attempt to employ the group as a proxy force to attack the United States in the event that the war on terror is expanded to encompass Iran.

An Ansar attack on the U.S. would likely consist of:

- Coordinated truck/car bombings at major targets in cities, particularly densely populated areas or at prominent public landmarks, possibly augmented by suicide bombings
- Attempts to poison water or food supplies with ricin, arsine, phosgene, botulinum, or alfatoin
- Assassination attempts on prominent local and national officials
- Chemical attacks aimed at achieving mass casualties using chlorine, cyanide, mustard, or sarin gas

In its operations in Iraq, Ansar has displayed a complete disregard for human life to degree not previously seen, even among al Qaeda affiliates, since the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in the mid-1990s. As a result, there is little doubt that Ansar would

not hesitate to participate in mass casualty terrorist attacks with the specific intent of killing large numbers of civilians. Given the complete lack of restraint the group has exhibited with regard to violence towards its fellow Kurds, it is highly unlikely that it would have any misgivings about killing large numbers of American civilians.

Chapter 1: Background

Section 1.1: Ansar al-Islam Overview⁴

Ansar al-Islam (Supporters of Islam) is a radical Islamist terrorist organization that was founded in December 2001 in a merger between the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK) (led by Mullah Krekar and Abdulrahman Abdulrahman) and Jund al-Islam (an Iraqi Kurdish al Qaeda associate group). Ansar gained international attention in February 2003 when Secretary of State Colin Powell made allegations of ties between Ansar and the Iraqi government during his presentation to the UN Security Council.⁵ Since the disruption of its bases in northern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Ansar al-Islam has emerged as one of the leading anti-Coalition organizations within the broader Iraqi insurgency. In fact, other than Abu Musab Zarqawi's Tawhid Wal Jihad group, Ansar is the most active terrorist group in Iraq.

Since its inception, Ansar has fought against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of the two major Kurdish factions in northern Iraq. Ansar fighters have killed hundreds of PUK *peshmerga*, assassinated or attempted to assassinate PUK leaders, and desecrated Sufi and Kaka'i shrines.

Ansar's symbols, which have appeared on the organization's websites at various points in time, appear to mirror those found on various al Qaeda counterparts. These include the use of the black flag with the white Arabic words *La Ilaha Illa Allah* ("There is no God but Allah") and the white horseman raising a rifle towards the heavens. Like al Qaeda, Ansar relies upon this apocalyptic religious imagery to legitimize the organization's ideology by claiming that it is dictated by God rather than by man.

Section 1.2: Ansar al-Islam and Salafism

In order to understand Ansar better, it is necessary to understand the broader Salafist ideology that drives them. Salafism is one of the major movements within contemporary Sunni Islam. There is some debate as to whether the movement constitutes both a religious and a political movement, given its broad outlook and call for sweeping changes in both religion and society to reflect the correct teachings of the Prophet Mohammed.

The contemporary Salafist movement grew out of the Wahhabi *madhhab* (school) of Sunni Islam. The Wahhabists became increasingly influential following World War I, with the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Wahhabi control over the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Events in the broader Muslim world, such as the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish banning of the caliphate, characterized the turbulence surrounding the rise of Wahhabism. One response to this societal disorder was the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood by Hasan-al Banna, an Egyptian school teacher. The Brotherhood espoused the ideals of Islam, not just as a religion, but also as a comprehensive way of life. Basing their teachings on the tenets of Wahhabism, al-Banna and his fellow travelers believed themselves to be the

contemporary equivalents of the Companions (*Salafi*) of the Prophet Mohammed.⁶

The Brotherhood has since established over seventy different branches worldwide, each one spreading the Salafist ideology. An important tenant of this ideology is the revivalist belief that traditional Islam had been corrupted several centuries after the death of Mohammed, and that it had to be purified and returned to the original teachings of the Prophet. In the decades since the Iranian Revolution, this process of purification has frequently resulted in the sanctioning of violence, both against Westerners who are seen as being a corrupting influence on Islam, as well as fellow Muslims who are deemed to be insufficiently pure.⁷

The influence of Sayyid Qutb on contemporary Salafism should also be noted. Qutb, another Egyptian revivalist, was the first Salafist ideologue to propagate the belief that Westerners and Jews were engaged in a conspiracy against Muslims through their support for dictatorships in the Islamic world. As such, by targeting the West, Salafists see themselves as attacking the true source of their own domestic woes.⁸

Two other Salafist ideologues are also noteworthy. The first is Abdullah Azzam, who led the Arab mujahideen in the Afghan War and first developed the idea of a solid base (*al-qaeda al-sulbah*) from which to establish the rule of Islam on Earth.⁹ The second is Hassan Turabi, the former chief ideologue of the Sudanese National Islamic Front who advocated a pragmatic anti-Western approach, even to the point of allying across sectarian lines with the rival Khomeinist Shi'ites who shared their worldview.¹⁰ All of these ideological strands, particularly Turabi's more pragmatic approach, are reflected within contemporary Salafist groups like Ansar.

Section 1.3: Origins of Ansar al-Islam

Ansar has its roots in the circumstances that led to the formation of its predecessor Jund al-Islam. The decade following the First Gulf War saw violent struggle for political control of Kurdistan among the following groups:

1. **PKK**. The Kurdistan Workers Party is known for waging a violent separatist campaign against Turkey. It has often taken refuge in the mountains and caves of Kurdistan to hide from both Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish armies.¹¹
2. **PUK**. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan is a pro-Western party holding power in the southern and eastern portions of Kurdistan (i.e., northern Iraq).¹²
3. **KDP**. The Kurdistan Democratic Party holds power in the north and west of Kurdistan, including the entire border region between Iraq and Turkey.¹³
4. **IMK**. The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan is a minority party of radical Islamists, created after Saddam gassed the Kurds in Halabjah. It was part of a coalition with the PUK and had power in a small enclave along the Iranian border. Some of its factions included Kurdish Hamas, Kurdish al Tawhid, the Second

Soran Unit, and the Islamic Unity Movement.¹⁴



To complicate matters, Turkey, Iran, and the Saddam Hussein regime facilitated the violence to achieve their own political objectives. Additionally, al Qaeda was lurking in the background, bent on taking advantage of Kurdistan's remote location and mountainous terrain to establish a base of operations.¹⁵

Before 2001, Al Qaeda was probably involved with at least two IMK factions, al Tawhid and the Second Soran Unit. The Second Soran Unit, led by Asad Muhammad Hasan (a.k.a., Aso Hawleri), was the best equipped of all of the Kurdish Islamist groups. It boasted the presence of between 50-60 Afghan Arabs among its 350-400 militants. It is worth noting that the Second Soran Unit had a multi-ethnic makeup among its leadership, including several Arabs and an Iraqi Turkoman.¹⁶ Such diversity is unique among Kurdish groups.

The Kurdish al Tawhid appears to have formed in the KDP capital of Irbil. Al Tawhid were adherents to the teachings of the radical UK-based cleric Abu Qatada, whose has been described as "bin Laden's ambassador in Europe." The KDP expelled al Tawhid from Irbil after a failed campaign of violence against women. Al Tawhid then went on to establish an enclave at Hajji Umran (a town in northeast Iraq which is situated on the Iran-Iraq border) and sent several key leaders to al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan in July 2001.¹⁷

Under the auspices of al Qaeda, al Tawhid and The Second Soran Unit would combine on

September 1, 2001 to form Jund al-Islam. Evidence of al Qaeda's role was revealed in a document recovered in Kabul, Afghanistan in August 2001, which noted the existence of the "Iraqi Kurdistan Islamic Brigade" and listed details of Kurdish al Tawhid members who had received terrorist training in Afghanistan. The al Qaeda document also noted the presence of various Kurdish Islamist groups in the villages beneath Iraq's Shinerwe Mountain and urged them to unite in order to establish an Islamist enclave modeled after the Taliban in northern Iraq.¹⁸

Al Qaeda emissary Abu Abdul Rahman and two Afghan Arabs were present to commemorate the merger. As a token of al Qaeda's support for the new organization, Abu Abdul Rahman supplied it with \$300,000 from bin Laden as well as satellite phones with which to communicate with other al Qaeda cells operating in Jordan.^{19,20} Ironically, there are indications that the Iraqi government was also involved in uniting these Islamist groups: one of the Afghan Arabs who accompanied Abu Abdul Rahman was Abu Wael, described by a number of sources as the liaison between Ansar and the Mukhabarat (Iraqi intelligence service); in addition, the non-Kurdish contingents of Jund al-Islam reportedly included a group of Sunni Arabs from the Baathist-controlled city of Mosul.²¹

Led by Abdullah al-Shafei (a.k.a., Mullah Wurja Hawleri), an Iraqi Kurd from the village of Gwer, Jund al-Islam's estimated 600 fighters carried out their first major attack a few weeks later. They succeeded in massacring 43 PUK *peshmerga*, in a direct challenge not only to PUK rule of Iraqi Kurdistan, but also to the idea of a secular Kurdish government. The PUK counter-attacked in early October, killing al Qaeda emissaries Abu Abdul Rahman and Abu Yassir.^{22, 23}

With the apparent inability of the PUK to defeat Jund al-Islam, the latter's stock rose dramatically among Kurdish Islamists. In December 2001, IMK leaders Mullah Krekar and Abdulrahman Abdulrahman agreed to merge their followers with Jund al-Islam to create the Ansar al-Islam fi Kurdistan ("Supporters of Islam in Kurdistan").²⁴ Under this second merger, al-Shafei would retain his position as military commander, while Mullah Krekar would serve as the new organization's spiritual leader.

Section 1.4: Ansar al-Islam Ideology

In remarks to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, CIA Director George Tenet stated, "One of the most immediate threats is from smaller international Sunni extremist groups who have benefited from al-Qaida links ... these groups increasingly set the agenda, and are redefining the threat we face."²⁵ Ansar is one such group and as such adheres to four key doctrines of al Qaeda:

1. Subscription to an ideology of global jihad
2. Goal rather than rule-based ideology that encourages pragmatism and cooperation even across sectarian lines
3. Apocalyptic worldview that divides humanity along religious lines into *Dar al-*

Islam (abode of Islam) and *Dar al-Harb* (abode of war)

4. Reverence for its parent terrorist network and Osama bin Laden as the vanguard for the eventual establishment of *Nizam-e-Mustafa* ("Rule of the Righteous") over the entire world.²⁶

The destruction of Kurdish secular parties, particularly the PUK, is seen as necessary step in this struggle due to the PUK's alliances with the United States and its belief in a secular form of government. Unlike other al Qaeda affiliates such as the International Islamic Peacekeeping Brigade in Chechnya or the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines, neither neither Ansar nor its predecessor Jund al-Islam have made much of an effort to conceal their ties to al Qaeda. In fact, Jund al-Islam openly boasted of having Afghan Arabs in its ranks, and captured bases contain graffiti and poems glorifying both bin Laden and the September 11 attacks.^{27, 28}

It is precisely because of the close ideological and operational ties between Ansar and al Qaeda that the group should be regarded as more than willing to act on behalf of the perceived goals of its parent organization both inside Iraq and abroad.

Section 1.5: Ansar al-Islam Organization

Unlike many "traditional" terrorist organizations (e.g. the IRA and Hezbollah), Ansar does not maintain any kind of political wing or even a political representative to justify the actions of the group. In aftermath of OIF, what propaganda Ansar does disseminate is done online. Information on the internal structure of the group is limited to what US and PUK sources have disseminated to the international media or what captured Ansar members have divulged in interviews. It appears that the organizational structure of Ansar increasingly mirrors the structure of a typical Islamist group.

Section 1.5a: Consultative Council

The Consultative (*Majlis Shura*) Council consists of the senior leadership of Ansar. It meets on a regular basis to discuss financial, military, judicial, social, and political issues. Known members include Mullah Krekar, Abdullah al-Shafei, Abu Wael, and Ayoub Afghani.²⁹

Section 1.5b: Shar'iah Board

The Shar'iah Board is comprised of a court, a committee to issue legal rulings, a committee for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, and a committee to supervise the implementation of Islamic law. It was set up to see to the day-to-day administration of the estimated 4,000 inhabitants of the Ansar enclave in Iraq using a religious code modeled after the one the Taliban used. According to Kurdish refugees in Norway, Mullah Krekar was the ultimate source of these policies.³⁰

Section 1.5c: Media Council

The Media Council supervises Ansar's media outreach, which presumably includes the various websites known to be affiliated with the group. Prior to OIF, Ansar operated the Jund al-Islam radio station at Darga Shekhan.³¹ The Media Council also supervised the printing of leaflets and other publications and handled Ansar's relations with foreign governments and other factions operating in Iraqi Kurdistan.³²

Section 1.6: Ansar al-Islam Operations

Ansar (and its predecessor Jund al-Islam) has shown itself to be one of the most ruthless and enterprising terrorist groups in Iraqi Kurdistan. Most of the international media attention on the group has focused on US allegations that it was carrying out chemical weapons experiments at Sargat and Khormal. Far less attention has been paid to the combination of ruthlessness and ingenuity that have enabled a once-obscure Kurdish group near the Iranian border to become a force to be feared throughout all of the Iraq.

After the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003, Ansar was able to maintain some of its infrastructure inside Iraq. The members of the organization who survived the US-PUK assault on the group's enclave headed south into the Sunni Triangle and linked up there with al Qaeda and other Islamist foreign fighters.³³ Since Ansar possesses greater knowledge of Iraq than their foreign counterparts, Coalition intelligence reports that it is currently running a network of safe houses and other logistics operations for foreign jihadis inside Iraq.³⁴

Two captured members of Ansar have also suggested that it has formed an accommodation with the Baathist faction led by Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri. US officials have described al-Douri as the mastermind behind the Baathist element of the Iraqi insurgency.³⁵ If true, this would appear to strengthen other reports of an alliance between Ansar and the remnants of the Iraqi Baathists.³⁶ The diary of Mohammed Kadir Hussen, a Saudi national who traveled to Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein to kill Americans and was assisted in his struggle against Coalition forces by a network of Baathist and jihadi facilitators, adds additional weight to these claims.³⁷ According to these sources, the current Ansar structure is cell-based like al Qaeda's and is organized into small units of ten to fifteen members, each led by an emir.³⁸ Thus, even with government intelligence service penetration, it will be difficult to disrupt and destroy a rigidly compartmentalized structure like Ansar.

Following OIF, most of the Ansar's leadership appears to have relocated to the Iranian province of Kordestan. More specifically, Ansar leaders Abdullah al-Shafei, Ayoub Afghani, and Abu Wael reconstituted their organization in the Iranian border town of Sanandaj and are believed to be under the protection of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.^{39, 40} Ravansar, Meriwan, Sina, and Marakhel are other Iranian border towns where Ansar is believed to have a presence.⁴¹ While the level of official support within the Iranian hierarchy for Ansar is limited, Kurdish intelligence suggested in June 2003 that between 20 and 30 members of the group were taken to Tehran for special

training.⁴² In addition, representatives of Ansar are believed to have been invited to attend the "Ten Days of Dawn" terrorist summit in Tehran in February 2004.⁴³

Section 1.7: Ansar al-Islam Leadership

Because of the sketchy information publicly available on the internal structure of Ansar, little is known about the organization's leadership. However, a few members still manage to stand out. In addition to the five individuals discussed in this section, various accounts have also listed a number of al Qaeda operatives as active within Ansar. These include Abu Bahkir, Abu Yasir, and Abu Muzaham.^{44, 45} It is unclear whether or not any of these individuals are the same as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi deputy Abdul Hadi Daghlas, who is believed to have been killed on the second day of OIF.⁴⁶ Because of his central importance to Ansar, Mullah Krekar, its spiritual leader, will be discussed in a separate section.

Section 1.7a: Abdullah al-Shafei

Also known as Mullah Wuria Hawleri, al-Shafei is an Iraqi Kurd from the village of Gwer.⁴⁷ He was the leader of Jund al-Islam, prior to its merger with The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan.⁴⁸ He initially joined the Iraqi army in the 1980s, but traveled to Afghanistan in 1993, where he is believed to have undergone terrorist training. He has since returned to Iraqi Kurdistan three times.⁴⁹ In addition to his time in Iraq and Afghanistan, al-Shafei is said to have fought in Chechnya.⁵⁰

Section 1.7b: Abu Wael

Kurdish prisoners Abdul Rahman al-Shamari, Abu Iman al-Baghdadi, and a captive Ansar leader known only as "Quds" (Jerusalem) have identified Abu Wael as a member of the Iraqi Mukhabarat. He is the most controversial member of Ansar's leadership.^{51,52} According to al-Baghdadi, Abu Wael was one of the Mukhabarat agents sent to Afghanistan in 1995 by Saddam Hussein to infiltrate al Qaeda. Al-Shamari identifies Abu Wael as Colonel Saadan Mahmoud Latif al-Aani, the leader of a special intelligence branch within the Mukhabarat. Qassem Hussein, another Iraqi intelligence officer now in Kurdish custody, has stated that Abu Wael is the true leader within Ansar.⁵³ It should be noted, however, that Rohan Gunaratna believes that Qassem Hussein is likely to be a penetration agent with hidden loyalties to Saddam. As Ansar was anti-PUK and the PUK was supported by the U.S. Saddam was very interested to use Ansar against the PUK. Therefore, Qassem may have been providing Abu Wael with a cover story.⁵⁴ According to US intelligence, an Iraqi intelligence agent, presumably Abu Wael, did indeed succeed in penetrating Ansar's ruling council.⁵⁵

Section 1.7c: Ayoub Afghani

Also known as Ayoub Hawleri, Afghani is reputed to be one of Ansar's senior explosives experts, as well as the group's security chief.^{56, 57} Said to be an Iraqi Kurd, Coalition forces apprehended Afghani was apprehended in Baghdad in March 2004.⁵⁸

Section 1.7d: Hemin Benishari

Also known as Abu Darda'a, Benishari is reputed to be Ansar's top specialist in tactics and assassination. He escaped into Iran following the start of OIF.⁵⁹

Section 1.7e: Aso Hawleri

Also known as Asad Muhammad Hasan, Aso Hawleri has served as the commander of the Second Soran Unit and a member of the IMK's central council since 1997.⁶⁰ He was described as the third-in-command of Ansar upon his capture by Coalition forces in Mosul in October 2003.⁶¹

Section 1.8: Mullah Fatah Krekar

One of the reasons for the popularity of Ansar among European Muslims is the charismatic personality of Faraj Ahmad Najmuddin, better known by his *kuniyat* (assumed name) of Mullah Fatah Krekar. He is 46 years old and perhaps best known within the Scandinavian press for his legal battles with Norwegian immigration officials. Krekar studied Islamic jurisprudence under bin Laden's late mentor Abdullah Azzam in Pakistan, and claims that he first met bin Laden in Peshawar in 1990.^{62, 63} At the time, Mullah Krekar claims that he was seeking funding for the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan but that bin Laden rejected his overtures.⁶⁴



Following the 1991 Gulf War, Mullah Krekar received refugee status in Norway and was later allowed to bring his brother and family to the country under the Norwegian immigration agency's reunification program.⁶⁵ While living in Oslo, he led a state-funded Islamic congregation with an estimated 350 members. He disappeared from Norway following the September 11 attacks, was expelled from Iran in September 2002, and deported to the Netherlands, where Dutch authorities promptly arrested him.⁶⁶ The Netherlands deported him back to Norway in January 2003, rather than to Jordan, where he is wanted on charges of heroin smuggling.⁶⁷ As it is not against Norwegian law to lead violent or military resistance in one's homeland, Krekar was allowed to go free after returning to Norway.⁶⁸

After arriving in Norway, Krekar quickly began a media campaign, denying American claims that Ansar was tied to Iraq or to al Qaeda, while continuing to praise bin Laden. As the invasion of Iraq drew closer, Norway claimed that it would expel Krekar and had him arrested following his threat that US troops would face suicide bombers if they entered northern Iraq.⁶⁹ A Norwegian appeals court ordered his release in April 2003, citing lack of evidence.⁷⁰ Given Italian police reports citing Ansar recruiting efforts in Norway, Mullah Krekar's influence should not be underestimated.⁷¹

Based upon a December 2003 appearance on al-Jazeera, where he was billed as the leader of Ansar, and evidence linking Krekar to suicide attacks in Iraq, Norwegian authorities re-detained him.^{72, 73} Norway once again released him in February 2004, after learning that the PUK had tortured several witnesses into making claims against Krekar.⁷⁴ Since that time, he has remained a free man in Norway and has recently earned EUR 45,000 in damages from the Dutch government.⁷⁵

1.9: Mujahideen Military Council and Local Ansar al-Islam Cells

Ansar's organizational and internal operational structure resembles the post 9/11 structure of al Qaeda. That said, it is reasonable to assume that the group has retained at least some of its pre-war structure. Currently, members of the organization active inside Iraq are believed to have dispersed into cells of between ten to fifteen members, each led by an emir.⁷⁶

Prior to OIF, Ansar was formed in *kateebats* (battalions). Each *kateebat* consisted of between 60 and 100 fighters, with a total end strength between 400 and 2,000, depending on the estimate.^{77, 78} Ansar's six initial battalions, which retained their old organizational structure from Jund al-Islam, were Nasr, Fatah, Badr, Quds, Fedayeen, and Salahuddin.⁷⁹ Later battalions, which include al-Aqsa, Ghurba, and Mujahideen, were possibly comprised of additional al Qaeda fighters seeking to do battle with the US inside Iraq.^{80, 81}

1.10: Ansar al-Islam and Criminal Activity

Ansar has a presence in a dozen countries in the West as its recruiting wing in Europe, is widely engaged in a number of criminal activities that are intended to serve the following needs of the organization:

1. Create a diverse and independent fund-raising network in an effort to evade international sanctions against the organization
2. To utilize existing security gaps within European nations in order to facilitate the movement of jihadi recruits to Iraq to fight coalition forces there
3. To help weaken the social fabrics of European societies through the international opium and heroin trades

1.11: Ansar al-Islam and State Support

While conventional wisdom holds that traditional rivalries between Iraq and Iran would prevent the two nations from cooperating on most issues, dealing with Ansar in Iraqi Kurdistan appears to have created a curious convergence of interests for both states. In the case of Iraq, Saddam Hussein had long played various Kurdish factions off against one another as a means of preventing them from unifying against his Baathist regime. Iran feared the rise of nationalist sentiments among Iranian Kurds as well as the secular form of government advocated by the PUK and KDP. As a result, the two rivals found themselves in the unlikely role of supporting Ansar as a means of achieving their own ambitions with respect to Iraqi Kurdistan.⁸²

Yet to characterize Ansar as either an Iraqi (pre-OIF) or an Iranian proxy would be extremely misleading. Allegations of Abu Wael's stature within the group notwithstanding, Ansar is very much its own organization. It has adopted al Qaeda's pragmatic goal, rather than rule-based ideology, with respect to its relations with state actors. To put it as simply as possible, Ansar hated the PUK and their American backers and was therefore willing to accept help from anyone, even Iranian Shi'ites or secular Baathists in its fight against the PUK. In short, the acceptance of such support more likely signified a relationship of convenience, as opposed to outright sponsorship.

1.11a: Iran

Iran appears to have regarded Ansar as the proxy force of choice to use against the secular PUK. It is therefore likely that in its fight against the PUK, Ansar had the tacit approval of Iranian authorities to resupply its forces from Iran.⁸³ This support continued post-OIF, when hardline elements within Iran are believed to have sheltered Ansar. Additionally, Ansar reportedly maintained offices in Tehran in August 2002, and most intelligence analysts believe it to be highly improbable that the al Qaeda contingent active within Ansar would have been able to move from Afghanistan into Iran without the knowledge of the Iranian security forces.⁸⁴

As noted, since OIF, senior leaders of Ansar have been regrouping in Iranian Kordestan under the protection of hardline elements within the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Since August 2003, suspected Ansar members have been streaming back across the Iranian border into Iraq.⁸⁵ According to captured members of Ansar, the Iranian military provided them with weapons, medical treatment, provisions, and sanctuary before they went into Iraq to carry out terrorist operations.⁸⁶ Also, over a dozen Ansar members were taken to Tehran for training, and the organization was invited to participate in a terrorist summit in Tehran in February 2004.⁸⁷

1.11b: Iraq (pre-OIF)

In August 2002, Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, who has described Ansar as a "very important" group within the larger framework of bin Laden's World Islamic Front for Jihad Against

the Jews and Crusaders stated, "[Ansar] has received limited support from Iraq, and I stress limited."⁸⁸ According to Dr. Gunaratna, Ansar received support from Iraqi agents with the specific intention of infiltrating the anti-PUK group and not to strengthen the Islamist group; Ansar remains an anti-Saddam and an anti-Western group.⁸⁹

It should be noted that some commentators would draw a different conclusion with respect to the nature of Ansar's relationship with Saddam, especially in the period immediately prior to OIF. According various reports, as well as claims made by US and PUK officials prior to OIF, the Iraqi regime helped to smuggle weapons to Ansar from Afghanistan.⁹⁰ According to another report, PUK explosives experts believe that the Iraqi military intelligence supplied Ansar with TNT, which was in addition to other weaponry that was supplied to Ansar from areas under Baathist control.^{91, 92} Another indication of links between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime, which the Bush administration cited, are the activities of Abu Musab Zarqawi, who is believed to have run one of Ansar's terrorist training camps in northern Iraq prior to OIF.⁹³

1.12: Ansar al-Islam's Transnational Reach

Apart from pre-OIF Iraqi and current Iranian support, Ansar also maintains ties to numerous Sunni extremist networks, including those used by al Qaeda, al Tawhid, Turkish Hezbollah, and the Great Islamic Eastern Raiders' Front. This gives Ansar an extensive infrastructure throughout the Middle East as well as in much of Western Europe.⁹⁴ In the aftermath of OIF, Ansar relied extensively on these networks in order to replenish its ranks with fresh fighters recruited from Western Europe. In December 2003, for example, European law enforcement disrupted recruiting nodes for Ansar in Germany, France, Spain, Britain, and Norway that had already assisted "hundreds" of foreign fighters in traveling to Iraq to fight the US.⁹⁵ Ansar is also known to have infiltrated its members into Turkey with the intention of carrying out terrorist operations there.⁹⁶

The Italian daily *Il Nuovo* recently published transcripts of Italian police wiretaps of a suspected Ansar cell in Milan. These transcripts provide one of the best examinations of Ansar's infrastructure in Europe, as well as how it interacts with other members of the larger al Qaeda network.⁹⁷

1. *Caucasus*. Given the role of Ansar in helping to set up the poison network run by Abu Musab Zarqawi in late 2002, it should not be at all surprising to learn that it appears to have a presence in the Caucasus republic of Georgia's lawless Pankisi Gorge.^{98, 99} According to the *Il Nuovo* transcripts, Chechnya is currently the primary training ground for Ansar, suggesting at the very least a tacit alliance with elements of the Chechen rebel hierarchy. The late Chechen rebel commanders Amir al-Khattab, Abu Walid, and even top Chechen Islamist leader Shamil Basayev are all known to maintain ties to the larger al Qaeda network¹⁰⁰, so Chechen complicity with Ansar in training and support issues is extremely likely.

2. *Europe.* The *Il Nuovo* transcripts are particularly valuable in detailing the internal organization of Ansar in Europe. Of particular note within the European network are Sheikh Adel and Sheikh Abd al-Wahab, who are described as overseeing the organization of those fighters who have completed their training in Chechnya. The internal organization of Ansar in Europe is an illustration of a classic cell structure, with the duties of training and information dissemination kept entirely separate. Each city has its own leader (*qaid*) to run the organization on a local level, while internationally the group seems to be divided into transnational blocs similar in form to Jemaah Islamiyah's node (*mantiqi*) structures. The Italian bloc is run from Austria, Germany from the Netherlands, and the Netherlands from London, with London serving as the ultimate nerve center for the entire network in Europe. While none of the London-based leadership is discussed, a man named Ismail is identified as the top leader in the Netherlands and is said to have lived there since 1979.
3. *Middle East.* In addition to its documented presence in Iran noted in Section 1.11a, Ansar also appears to have maintained at least some infrastructure in Syria. Italian investigators believe that two of the group's leaders, Mullah Fuad and Abderrazak, were active in Syria prior to OIF.¹⁰¹ These Syria-based leaders are believed to have been working to coordinate the travel of European extremists to the Ansar enclave in Iraqi Kurdistan for training.¹⁰² There also appear to have been ties between Ansar and al Qaeda cells based in Jordan, possibly the same al Tawhid network that would later assassinate a US diplomat in October 2002 and attempt to use chemical agents against five targets in April 2004.¹⁰³
4. *Iraq.* Upon the fall of Saddam's regime, Ansar leader Abdullah al-Shafei issued the following communique on the group's website: "300 jihad martyrs renewed their pledge to Allah, the strong and the sublime, in order to be suicide bombers in the victory of Allah's religion."¹⁰⁴ More detailed reports soon appeared, including claims that Pakistani terrorist groups had traveled to northern Iraq via Iran on orders from bin Laden, and that Ansar had established ties to the surviving pre-OIF Islamist foreign fighters in Fallujah, Tikrit, Bayali, and Baghdad.¹⁰⁵ These fighters, said to exist in the hundreds, continue to pose a potent threat to Coalition forces in Iraq.¹⁰⁶

Given US claims of links between Ansar and the Iraqi Baathists led by Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, it is reasonable to conclude that the al-Douri Baathists have integrated themselves with Ansar in the wake of the December 2003 capture of Saddam Hussein.¹⁰⁷ Certainly there have been indications of this, such as the al Qaeda literature and videotapes that were recovered among a weapons cache in Samarra.¹⁰⁸ While most Baathists do not adhere to the radical brand of Islam favored by Ansar (and even include Iraqi Christians in their ranks), the anti-American bent of the organization would certainly make it attractive for Iraqi Sunnis, who are concerned more with their hatred of the Coalition and fear over Shi'ite nationalism than anything else.

Chapter 2: Financing

Section 2.1: Checkpoints and Customs Fees

The main source of Ansar funding comes from European contributions.¹⁰⁹ Pre-OIF, al Qaeda is believed to have provided \$300,000 worth of "seed money" to Ansar's predecessor, Jund al-Islam. However, it is highly unlikely that such funding would have lasted from 2001 until the beginning of OIF in the spring of 2003.¹¹⁰ As such, the organization sought to raise revenue by setting up checkpoints along the main road between Halabja and the Iranian border and charging "customs fees" to transiting vehicles.¹¹¹ Trade and smuggling between the Iranian border and the independent Kurdish factions remains quite lucrative in Iraqi Kurdistan. Additionally, it is among the likely reasons why the PUK was so quick to move against Jund al-Islam, apart from the September 2001 attack by the group that killed 43 *peshmerga* and initiated the hostilities between the two organizations.¹¹² While it is unknown exactly how much money that Ansar was able to raise through this method, the fact that the group was able to sustain and substantially expand the resources of its Mujahideen Military Council indicates that its finances were in order.

Section 2.2: Financing

The other aspect of Ansar's financing that has not received as much detailed coverage as its initial al Qaeda seed money is the role of Islamic charities. In a conversation recorded in the *Il Nuovo* transcripts (See Section 1.12), an unidentified visitor to the mosque summarized Ansar's worldview in this regard to the imam, "Never worry about money, because Saudi Arabia's money is your money; the important thing is not to rush ahead, because it is all new; there are old things too, but the training is completely new. The man who wanted to set up the plan is close to Emir Abdullah and we are grateful to Emir Abdullah. Get prepared."¹¹³ In context, the unidentified speaker appears to be referring to the poison attacks attempted by the Zarqawi network in Europe during late 2002 and early 2003. Emir Abdullah is al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden within al Qaeda terminology. "The man who wanted to set up the plan" would seem Abu Musab Zarqawi.

Journalist Stephen Schwartz has also documented the activities of the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) in Iraq, noting how many Wahhabi activists have entered Iraq with the intention of spreading the teachings of their sect.¹¹⁴ With the IIRO being identified as an al Qaeda front organization in the past, the role of the charity in financing Islamist groups in Iraq, including Ansar, should not be ruled out.¹¹⁵ Further evidence of support from international groups was contained in documents found in the rubble of an Ansar enclave in Iraq, which outlined the details of relationships with a Kuwaiti cleric as well as the Yemeni minister of religion.¹¹⁶

Chapter 3: Modes of Attack

The preferred tactic for Ansar's terrorist attacks appears to be the suicide bomber, either acting independently or augmented by a car bomb.

Section 3.1: Suicide Bombing

Aside from suicide attacks conducted by the PKK in Southern Turkey, this tactic was previously not used in Iraqi Kurdistan. Ansar's use of the suicide bombing is very much in keeping with its tactical and ideological affinity with al Qaeda. Al Qaeda and affiliated extremists regard suicide bombing as martyrdom (*istishad*), and those who carry out such actions as martyrs (*shaheeds*) for their willingness to sacrifice their own life for the holy cause of Allah within the context of a military campaign against the enemies of God. Given apocalyptic worldview of many Islamists, the necessity of martyrdom is regarded as even more glorious as it is assumed within Islamist circles that there is very limited amount of time within which to carry out such activities.

In fitting with the al Qaeda modus operandi, however, Ansar does not immediately claim credit for suicide attacks that it perpetrates, creating some question over just how many suicide bombings that it has been able to perpetrate inside post-OIF Iraq. In noted contrast to other jihadi websites and periodicals (such as Azzam Publications or Jihad Unspun) Ansar rarely if ever provides internet accounts of the purported exploits of its members inside Iraq. Instead it typically supplies only video footage of Ansar members in combat during their 2001-2003 conflict with the PUK. As a result, it is unclear how many of the suicide bombings since the end of major combat operations in Iraq that Ansar has conducted, as opposed to those that al Qaeda or other affiliates have conducted. The letter to the al Qaeda leadership, which Zarqawi is believed to have authored, stated that he has overseen as many as 25 suicide bombings as of January 2004. However, since Zarqawi is believed to command a coalition of Islamist groups inside Iraq (including but by not limited to Tawhid, al Qaeda, Ansar al-Islam, Jaish Mohammed Iraq, the GIA, and Salafi Jihad), it is unclear how many of these that Ansar conducted.¹¹⁷

Section 3.2: Non-Conventional Weaponry

Prior to OIF, one of the most serious charges of the US and PUK was that Ansar had established nascent chemical weapons facilities at Khurmil and Sargat.¹¹⁸ What is most interesting, however, is that Ansar did not deny the charges, but rather claimed that the chemical weapons that it possessed were spoils left over from the Iraq-Iran War. Other sources, however, have claimed that Abu Wael provided the chemicals.¹¹⁹

While the exact nature of Ansar's non-conventional arsenal are not known, German reporters recovered a handbook detailing experiments in chemical and biological weapons after the fall of an Ansar base camp in Iraq. Based on the handbook, the reporters concluded that Ansar had carried out successful experiments with ricin and cyanide gas, although attempts to produce mustard gas and VX appear to have failed.¹²⁰ Other sources have also listed botulinum and alfatoxin among Ansar's arsenal.^{121, 122}

Chapter 4: Ansar al-Islam and Other Terrorist Groups

Section 4.1: Al Qaeda

Ever since the inception of Jund al-Islam, the Kurdish Islamist movement has been indebted to al Qaeda in terms of ideology, training, and financing. Indeed, al Qaeda representative Abu Abdul Rahman provided the initial \$300,000 of "seed money" following the establishment of Jund al-Islam in September 2001.¹²³ An al Qaeda memorandum discovered in Afghanistan also supports Kurdish claims that bin Laden was instrumental to the founding of the group, including training several key members in Afghanistan.¹²⁴ At least three journalistic sources have also stated that Abu Qatada, an al Qaeda cleric based in London, helped finance Ansar.¹²⁵

After the fall of the principle al Qaeda stronghold in Afghanistan, it made use of Ansar's training camps as a means to train new recruits.¹²⁶ In September 2002, Israeli radio stations reported the arrest of 3 Palestinian al Qaeda members who had received training in Iraq, presumably from Ansar.¹²⁷ By December 2002, at least 150 of Ansar's fighters were reputed to have received al Qaeda training in Afghanistan.¹²⁸

According to the *Daily Telegraph*, it was an influx of al Qaeda fighters that increased Ansar's fighting strength from 600 to more than 2,000 just prior to OIF.¹²⁹ While these figures cannot be independently confirmed, a pre-war report by the CIA stated that al Qaeda fighters had traveled to Iraq in order to bolster Ansar in the event that the United States attacked it.¹³⁰ Documents discovered in the aftermath of OIF likewise demonstrate clear ties between Ansar and al Qaeda.¹³¹ Since OIF, the group appears to have reemerged as part of the coalition of al Qaeda associates active inside Iraq under the operational leadership of Abu Musab Zarqawi.

Section 4.2: Jaish Ansar al-Sunna

Jaish Ansar al-Sunna (sometimes referred to simply as Ansar al-Sunna) is an offshoot organization of Ansar al-Islam that announced its formation in November 2003 in a fax to the Arab newspaper *al-Quds al-Arabi*.¹³² The group is said to be more extreme than Ansar al-Islam, and it is unknown whether or not it is connected to the Jund al-Haq al-Muntaqim offshoot from Ansar al-Islam that formed in August 2002.¹³³ Another source for Jaish Ansar al-Sunna's origins may be found in the al-Jamaa al-Islamiya group to which some 150 Ansar al-Islam members defected in October 2002 following the arrest of Mullah Krekar.¹³⁴

Believed to operate under the umbrella of the larger al Qaeda network in Iraq together with the Iraqi Jaish Mohammed, Jaish Ansar al-Sunna is said to be part of a cluster of smaller al Qaeda affiliated groups that are inspired rather than controlled by al Qaeda.¹³⁵ According to senior Iraqi intelligence officials, the Syrian and Iranian intelligence agencies have granted the group shelter and allowed the safe passage of its members in and out of Iraq.¹³⁶ According to press reports, Abu Abdullah Hasan bin Mahmud is the

leader of Jaish Ansar al-Sunna, but little else is publicly known about bin Mahmud or his organization.¹³⁷ According to Paul Bremer, Jaish Ansar al-Sunna is either a subset of or a successor organization to Ansar al-Islam.¹³⁸

Chapter 5: Operations in the United States

Section 5.1: Ansar al-Islam and the United States

While most of Ansar's pre-2002 rhetoric was directed against the secular PUK and non-Islamist Kurds, during the run-up to the Iraq War, it gradually increased its level of anti-American rhetoric.¹³⁹ This is likely the result of the influence of al Tawhid Wal Jihad and al Qaeda members on Ansar. A recent pamphlet distributed by Ansar supporters in Baghdad in April 2004 refers to American soldiers in Iraq as "mean, terrorist, and lying."¹⁴⁰

Ansar regards the United States as the principle enablers of its Kurdish enemies, as well as an imperialist power that has defiled Muslim holy land through the presence of American troops in Baghdad, the one-time center of the Caliphate and the crown jewel of Arab culture.¹⁴¹ Drawing from al Qaeda literature by Ayman al-Zawahiri and the late Yousef al-Ayyeri, the author of al Qaeda's blue-print for fighting in Iraq, Ansar regards OIF as part of a long-term American plan to conquer the Muslim world at the behest of Israel, culminating with the conquest of Saudi Arabia and the seizure of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. As a result of these beliefs, Ansar justifies its actions through the same rationale stated by bin Laden in his December 1998 interview with ABC News: "Any thief or robber who enters the countries of others in order to steal should expect to be exposed to murder at any time."¹⁴²

It is unclear how many operations Ansar has carried out inside Iraq. The group has been blamed for perpetrating the following major attacks as Ansar operates with al Tawhid Wal Jihad:

- 2/26/03 suicide bombing at a checkpoint between Halabja and Sayyid Sadiq¹⁴³
- 8/7/03 suicide bombing of the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad¹⁴⁴
- 8/19/03 car bombing of the UN Headquarters in Baghdad¹⁴⁵
- 9/9/03 car bombing of a CIA building in Irbil¹⁴⁶
- 10/27/03 car bombings in Baghdad¹⁴⁷
- 11/12/03 suicide bombing of the Italian military headquarters in An Nasiriyah¹⁴⁸
- 2/1/04 suicide bombings in Irbil¹⁴⁹
- 2/10/04 suicide bombing in Iskandariyah¹⁵⁰
- 2/11/04 suicide bombing of the Iraqi Army Recruiting Center¹⁵¹
- 3/2/04 suicide bombings on the Shi'ite holy sites during the festival of Ashura¹⁵²
- 4/21/04 car bombings in Basra¹⁵³

Combined with Tawhid Wal Jihad, these attacks have killed over 700 Iraqis and Coalition troops since the end of major combat in Iraq. Accordingly, Ansar poses more of a threat to the United States than most other Islamist terrorist organizations. Given that Ansar's stronghold contained a list of suspected supporters and sympathizers living in the United States, its pattern of attacking American soldiers inside of Iraq must not be seen as a reluctance to broaden the field of battle by attacking the US homeland.¹⁵⁴



Kurdish fighters inspect the KDP headquarters in Erbil after the February 1 suicide bombing.

Section 5.2: Impact of the Iraq War

The impact of OIF on Ansar has been something of a paradox. It suffered a catastrophic defeat during the war, losing its enclave, training camps, and many of its veteran fighters to Coalition operations. However, Ansar has been able to regroup inside of Iran. With the assistance and leadership of Abu Musab Zarqawi, it has been able to broaden its appeal beyond its Kurdish origins to other Iraqis.¹⁵⁵

Whether or not Ansar will become as integrated to the al Qaeda core network as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and al-Gamaa al-Islamiyyah did during the 1990s remains to be seen, but its apparent decision to adhere to the direction of al Qaeda associate Abu Musab Zarqawi with respect to Iraq certainly suggests that this process has already begun. Another possible future for Ansar is that the group's apparent patronage from hardliners within the Iranian regime may lead it to become something analogous to an Iraqi equivalent of the Great Islamic Eastern Raiders Front or the Turkish Hezbollah. These two Turkish Sunni groups have acted as proxy forces for the Iranian military-intelligence apparatus and used in the past to attack Iran's Kemalist rival. Given that Iran is widely believed to harboring senior al Qaeda leaders, both of these two possibilities could occur simultaneously.

Section 5.3: U.S. Cities as an Ansar al-Islam Target

As part of the larger International Front headed by al Qaeda, Ansar is likely to remain a potent threat to the United States for as long as the former organizations remain intact. The International Front believes that "the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies ... is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."¹⁵⁶ As such, to simply regard Ansar as a threat to Coalition forces in Iraqi Kurdistan is naive.

The nature of Ansar's threat is well represented in the State Department's 2002

publication of the *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, which plainly states that "in the past year, al-Qaida operatives in northern Iraq concocted suspect chemicals under the direction of senior al-Qaida associate Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and tried to smuggle them into Russia, Western Europe, and the United States for terrorist operations."¹⁵⁷ While the Ansar strongholds in northern Iraq have been destroyed, the organization has spread to the rest of Iraq. Many of its key leaders remain and presumably have not given up on their goal. With time, Ansar is likely to attempt to attack Europe and the continental United States in the future, either under the direction of al Qaeda or operating on its own accord.

Moreover, literature favored by Ansar and other al Qaeda affiliates frequently describe the events of September 11 as "the raids (*ghazwah*) of New York and Washington." This is an important point to be noted, as those organizations that share al Qaeda's ideology view themselves as the modern successors to the original Companions of the Prophet Mohammed. During the early battles that characterized the initial struggle between Mohammed and the Meccan polytheists, *ghazwah* were the opening stages of the military campaign - conquest (*fatah*) came later. As a result, it is extremely likely that al Qaeda and allied groups will attempt to attack the United States in general and New York City in specific for as long as member groups within the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders remain able to do so. The allegations surrounding Iyman Faris and Uzair Paracha must be seen as an indication of the global al Qaeda network's continued interest in New York City as a target for mass casualty terrorist attacks. Faris was arrested in connection with a plot to attack the Brooklyn Bridge¹⁵⁸, while Paracha was identified by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed as an agent of his spending time in his father's office located in New York City's garment district.¹⁵⁹

Ansar's leadership is both ideologically and strategically tied to that of the broader al Qaeda network on multiple levels. One indicator of the common strategy is reflected in *Iraq al-Jihad Aamal wal Akhtar* (Iraqi Jihad - Hopes and Risks), an al Qaeda strategy document that posted online at the Global Islamic Media website during the summer of 2003 and received international media attention following the March 11 bombings in Madrid.¹⁶⁰ According to that document, al Qaeda stands the best chance of achieving victory over Coalition forces in Iraq by broadening the field of battle and attacking Coalition nations on their own soil. While the document does not directly refer to attacks inside the United States, this basic strategy may drive the organization to perpetrate mass casualty attacks on American soil, particularly as the November 2004 US elections draw closer. One other possibility to be noted is that Iran, radical elements of which are currently hosting Ansar's surviving leadership, may attempt to employ the group as a proxy force to attack the United States in the event that the war on terror is expanded to encompass Iran. An Ansar al-Islam attack would likely consist of:

- Coordinated truck/car bombings at major targets in a city, particularly densely populated areas or at prominent public landmarks, possibly augmented by suicide bombings
- Attempts to poison water or food supplies with ricin, arsine, phosgene, botulinum, or alfatoxin

- Assassination attempts on prominent local and national officials
- Chemical attacks aimed at achieving mass casualties using chlorine, cyanide, mustard, or sarin gas

One note of caution with regard to Ansar's non-conventional weapons capabilities. According to recent investigations, al Qaeda prefers to train cells to create the needed weaponry for their attacks using materials available within the target country, rather than smuggling those materials in from outside. As a result, any non-conventional attack by Ansar may well be anticipated through careful monitoring of the purchasing of the materials needed to create such weaponry.

During its attacks in Iraq, Ansar has displayed a complete disregard for human life to a degree not previously seen, even among al Qaeda affiliates, since the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in the mid-1990s. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that Ansar will not hesitate to engage in mass casualty terrorist attacks with the specific intent of killing large numbers of civilians. Given the complete lack of restraint that Ansar has exhibited with regard to violence towards its fellow Kurds, it is unthinkable that it will have any hesitation to killing large numbers of American civilians.

Chapter 6: Recruiting

Section 6.1: Overview of Recruiting

Through its ties to al Qaeda and other member organizations of the International Front, Ansar possesses a very sophisticated recruiting system both within its base of operations in Iraqi Kurdistan as well as among the Sunni extremist networks of Western Europe. In the wake of OIF, Ansar appears to have recruited from among the Muslim populations of several European countries.¹⁶¹ If reports of Ansar's regrouping in the northwestern Iranian province of Kordestan are accurate, one may reasonably assume that it has found a following among the Sunni Iranian Kurds living near the border.

Non-Iraqi Ansar recruits have been trained in the Pankisi Valley in Georgia and in Chechnya, where it is likely that the Islamist Chechen field commanders would have welcomed them. Given credible reporting of ties between the al Qaeda leadership and radical Chechen rebel elements located in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge, in all likelihood any training of prospective Ansar members took place there. This would also seem to fit with claims that al Qaeda associate Abu Musab Zarqawi was said to be "given responsibility for rotating Al-Qaeda troops between Chechnya and Afghanistan, through the mountains of northern Iraq."¹⁶²

As for Ansar al-Islam members recruited inside Iraq, the London-based Arab newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awsat* recently provided some insight through an interview with Kaywan Qader, an 18 year-old who had previously been a failed suicide bomber for Ansar.¹⁶³ According to Qader, he was recruited in a Suleimaniya mosque by a man who convinced him to join the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK) after persuading him as to the infidel nature of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the reigning Kurdish faction in

Suleimaniya. A member of the IMK faction led by Mullah Krekar, Qader was taken to a training camp with 400 other IMK members after the merger between Krekar's IMK faction and Jund al-Islam. He was paid \$22 a month to attend religious lectures and paramilitary training. After being sufficiently indoctrinated by the Ansar al-Islam clerics, Qader sent a message to the group's leadership in Beyara volunteering to serve as a suicide bomber. Based on information obtained from KDP security sources, *al-Sharq* reported that Ansar creates its suicide bombers out of groups of 3-8 youths between the ages of 15 and 25. These recruits are then separated from the rest of the organization to receive special religious indoctrination before being sent to carry out attacks.

ENDNOTES

-
- ¹ World Islamic Front Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders, February 23, 1998.
- ² *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, Section K.
- ³ Global Islamic Media is no longer online, but *Iraq al-Jihad Aamal wal Akhtar* can be accessed in text form at http://www.e-prism.org/images/book_-_Iraq_al-Jihad.doc
- ⁴ Note on Terminology: Due to the somewhat erratic nature of media reporting, there have been a number of unfortunate errors with respect to what Ansar al-Islam is, with some accounts using the organization as more or less a synonym for Abu Musab Zarqawi's Jamaat al Tawhid wal Jihad group, better known simply as al Tawhid. For the purposes of this dossier, however, the term Ansar al-Islam refers only to the organization formed on 12/10/2001 through a merger between the Mullah Krekar and Abdulrahman Abdulrahman factions of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK) and Jund al-Islam.
- ⁵ Colin Powell, remarks to the U.N. Security Council, Feb. 5, 2003, at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2003/17300.htm>; Stephen F. Hayes, "Saddam's al-Qaeda Connection," *The Weekly Standard*, Sept. 1-8, 2003
- ⁶ Muslim Brotherhood Movement Homepage <http://www.ummah.org.uk/ikhwan/>
- ⁷ Ron Leshem and Amit Cohen "Islamic Terror: A History of the Muslim Brotherhood," Jewish Defense League Sept. 2001
- ⁸ Laurence Wright "The Man Behind Bin Laden," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 16, 2002
- ⁹ Rohan Gunaratna, Remarks before the Commonwealth Club, June 25, 2002
- ¹⁰ William Langewiesche, "Turabi's Law," *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1994
- ¹¹ Rubin, Michael, "The Islamist Threat in Iraqi Kurdistan," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, December 2001.
- ¹² *ibid.*
- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*
- ¹⁸ Chivers, CJ, "Kurds Face a Second Enemy: Islamic Fighters on Iraq Flank," *New York Times*, January 12, 2003.
- ¹⁹ al-Badri, Abbas, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 28, 2001.
- ²⁰ Zayir, Ismail, *al-Hayat*, October 5, 2001.
- ²¹ Salih, Barhim, "Iraq and Counterterrorism: The Role of the Kurdistan Regional Government," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, PolicyWatch No. 575*, October 18, 2001.
- ²² "PUK Requests KIG to vacate the areas under their control," *Kurdishmedia.com*, September 13, 2001.
- ²³ Salih, Barhim, "Iraq and Counterterrorism: The Role of the Kurdistan Regional Government," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, PolicyWatch No. 575*, October 18, 2001.
- ²⁴ "Jund al-Islam become 'Supporters of Islam in Kurdistan,'" *Hawlati*, December 10, 2001.
- ²⁵ Tenet, George, "The Worldwide Threat 2004: Challenges in a Changing Global Context," February 24, 2004. http://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/2004/dci_speech_02142004.html
- ²⁶ Reuel Marc Gerecht, "The Gospel According to Osama Bin Laden," *The Atlantic*, Jan. 1, 2002
- ²⁷ Rubin, Michael, "The Islamist Threat in Iraqi Kurdistan," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, December 2001.
- ²⁸ Taylor, Catherine, "Taliban-style group grows in Iraq," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 15, 2002.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*
- ³⁰ Berglund, Nina, "Terrorist suspect spreads fear in Iraqi villages," *Aftenposten*, August 26, 2002.
- ³¹ Rubin, Michael, "The Islamist Threat in Iraqi Kurdistan," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, December 2001.
- ³² Rubin, Michael, "The Islamist Threat in Iraqi Kurdistan," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, December 2001.
- ³³ *Al-Hayat*, August 7, 2003.
- ³⁴ *New York Times*, August 13, 2003.
- ³⁵ Associated Press, October 31, 2003.
- ³⁶ *Newsweek*, October 13, 2003.

-
- ³⁷ *Arizona Republic*, February 10, 2004.
- ³⁸ *Newsweek*, October 13, 2003.
- ³⁹ Blanche, Ed, "Ansar al-Islam takes on the USA," *Jane's*, March 8, 2004.
- ⁴⁰ Schanzer, Jonathan and Philips, Ryan, "Iraqi Violence: Shi'i-Sunni Collision or Collusion?" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *PolicyWatch* No. 860, April 20, 2004.
- ⁴¹ Daraghani, Borzou, "Kurds warn that al-Qaida linked militia may be returning to northern Iraq," Associated Press, June 21, 2003.
- ⁴² *ibid.*
- ⁴³ "Iran Hosts Leading Insurgency Groups," Middle East Newline, February 2, 2004.
- ⁴⁴ "Al Qaeda's hideaway," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 26, 2002.
- ⁴⁵ Goldberg, Jeffrey, "The Great Terror," *The New Yorker*, March 25, 2002.
- ⁴⁶ *Wall Street Journal*, February 10, 2004.
- ⁴⁷ Rubin, Michael, "The Islamist Threat in Iraqi Kurdistan," Middle East Intelligence Bulletin, December 2001.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ Steavenson, Wendell, "Saddam's agents launch bloodbath against West's allies," *Daily Telegraph*, December 23, 2002.
- ⁵⁰ Jaff, Harem, "Shadow of Usama Bin Laden in South Kurdistan," *Kurdishmedia.com*, September 12, 2001.
- ⁵¹ Schanzer, Jonathan, "Saddam's Ambassador to al Qaeda," *Weekly Standard*, March 1, 2004.
- ⁵² Jaff, Harem, "Shadow of Usama Bin Laden in South Kurdistan," *Kurdishmedia.com*, September 12, 2001.
- ⁵³ Goldberg, Jeffrey, "The Great Terror," *The New Yorker*, March 25, 2002.
- ⁵⁴ Comments written by Rohan Gunaratna during review of this dossier
- ⁵⁵ Ware, Michael, "How al-Qaeda's Ally Came Back," *Time Magazine*, August 18, 2003.
- ⁵⁶ Associated Press, February 8, 2003.
- ⁵⁷ Peterson, Scott, "The rise and fall of Ansar al-Islam," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 16, 2003.
- ⁵⁸ Moore, Matt, "Two US Civilians, Translator Killed In Iraq," Associated Press, March 10, 2004.
- ⁵⁹ Fleishman, Jeffrey, "Frostbitten militants give up struggle," *The Age*, April 8, 2003.
- ⁶⁰ Rubin, Michael, "The Islamist Threat in Iraqi Kurdistan," Middle East Intelligence Bulletin, December 2001.
- ⁶¹ Burns, Robert, "US Forces in Iraq Capture Terror Leader," Associated Press, October 14, 2003.
- ⁶² Ram, Sunil, "The Enemy of My Enemy: The odd link between Ansar al-Islam, Iraq, and Iran," Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, April 2003.
- ⁶³ Mellgren, Doug, "Militant Book Describes Meeting Bin Laden," Associated Press, April 22, 2004.
- ⁶⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁶⁵ Berglund, Nina, "Kurdish refugee under investigation," *Aftenposten*, August 22, 2003.
- ⁶⁶ Osman, Hiwa, "Kurdish Islamic Leader Held," BBC News, September 13, 2004.
- ⁶⁷ "Dutch deport 'Islamic militant,'" BBC News, January 14, 2003.
- ⁶⁸ "Norway halts extradition of terror suspect to Jordan," *al-Bawaba*, January 16, 2004.
- ⁶⁹ "Oslo Says Will Expel Founder of Iraqi Islamic Group," Reuters, February 19, 2003.
- ⁷⁰ Reuters, "Norwegian Court Releases Ansar al Islam Founder," April 2, 2003
- ⁷¹ Tisdall, Jonathan, "Arabs recruited from Norway to fight in Iraq," *Aftenposten*, December 18, 2003.
- ⁷² Solholm, Rolliev, "Mullah Krekar appeared on TV as leader of Ansar al-Islam," *The Norway Post*, January 9, 2004.
- ⁷³ <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/040103/2004010312.html>
- ⁷⁴ "Norwegian Cops Release Founder of Ansar al-Islam," Associated Press, February 17, 2004.
- ⁷⁵ http://www.expat.com/source/site_article.asp?subchannel_id=19&story_id=6804
- ⁷⁶ *Newsweek*, October 13, 2003.
- ⁷⁷ "General: Ansar al-Islam Key Threat to US in Iraq," Associated Press, October 23, 2003.
- ⁷⁸ McElroy, Damien, "US to back Kurd assault on Ansar base," *Sunday Telegraph*, February 10, 2003.
- ⁷⁹ Salih, Barhim, "Iraq and Counterterrorism: The Role of the Kurdistan Regional Government," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *PolicyWatch* No. 575, October 18, 2001.
- ⁸⁰ Contenta, Sandro, "Canadian man called key in Iraqi terror cell," *Toronto Star*, February 26, 2003.
- ⁸¹ Peterson, Scott, "The rise and fall of Ansar al-Islam," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 16, 2003.

-
- ⁸² Comments written by Rohan Gunaratna during review of this dossier
- ⁸³ "Jund al-Islam receives external logistical aid," *Kurdishmedia.com*, October 4, 2001.
- ⁸⁴ "Al-Qaida running new terror camp, say Kurds," *The Guardian*, August 23, 2002.
- ⁸⁵ *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 18, 2003.
- ⁸⁶ Dehghanpisheh, Babak, "Inside Al Ansar," *Newsweek*, October 7, 2003.
- ⁸⁷ Amir Taheri, "Tehran TerrorFest," *New York Post*, Jan. 26, 2004
- ⁸⁸ "Al-Qaida running new terror camp, say Kurds," *The Guardian*, August 23, 2002.
- ⁸⁹ Comments written by Rohan Gunaratna during review of this dossier
- ⁹⁰ Goldberg, Jeffrey, "The Great Terror," *The New Yorker*, March 25, 2002.
- ⁹¹ "Al-Qaida running new terror camp, say Kurds," *The Guardian*, August 23, 2002.
- ⁹² Comments written by Rohan Gunaratna during review of this dossier. According to Dr. Gunaratna, it is very likely that Ansar members were able to move with *corrupt* elements of the Iraqi army and intelligence to build their capabilities. Within Ansar, there was no affection for the Saddam regime.
- ⁹³ *Washington Times*, July 30, 2002.
- ⁹⁴ Mike Boettcher, "Tracing the Trail of Radical Turks," *CNN.com* Dec. 12, 2003
- ⁹⁵ "Trail of Anti-US Fighters Said to Cross Europe to Iraq," *New York Times*, December 6, 2003.
- ⁹⁶ Cagaptay, Soner, "The War on Terror Arrives in Istanbul: Implications for Turkey, Europe, and the United States," *Zaman*, December 3, 2003.
- ⁹⁷ Cipriani, Gianni, "I Will Be a Martyr - This Is How the Islamists in Handcuffs Speak," *Il Nuovo*, December 5, 2003.
- ⁹⁸ MacVicar, Sheila and Schuster, Henry, "European terror suspects got al Qaeda training, sources say," February 6, 2003.
- ⁹⁹ Comments written by Rohan Gunaratna during review of this dossier. With respect to Zarqawi, French and UK authorities were able to disrupt preparations to use unconventional agents in Paris and London in December 2002 and January 2003 by the Zarqawi network.
- ¹⁰⁰ Associated Press, "Abu Walid: Saudi-Born Leader of Chechen Rebels," Feb. 9, 2004
- ¹⁰¹ "Italian police uncover al-Qaeda link in Syria," *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 17, 2003.
- ¹⁰² Rotella, Sebastian, "3 Terror Network Suspects Arrested," *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 2003.
- ¹⁰³ Zayir, Ismail, *al-Hayat*, October 5, 2001.
- ¹⁰⁴ The original communique was located at <http://www.nawend.com/ansarislam.htm>, which is no longer accessible.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Al-Hayat*, August 7, 2003. According to the Pentagon, the first major sign that Ansar had returned to Iraq in force was the August 2003 bombing of the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad. "Iraqis Mystified at Bombing of Jordanian Embassy," *Financial Times*, August 8, 2003.
- ¹⁰⁶ Agence France-Presse, August 14, 2003.
- ¹⁰⁷ "Saddam aide linked to al-Qaida, claims US," *The Guardian*, October 30, 2003.
- ¹⁰⁸ "Al Qaeda videos found in Iraq weapons raid," *CNN*, December 30, 2003.
- ¹⁰⁹ Comments written by Rohan Gunaratna during review of this dossier
- ¹¹⁰ Al-Badri, Abbas, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 28, 2001.
- ¹¹¹ "Jund al-Islam establish custom points in its areas," *Kurdishmedia.com*, October 30, 2001.
- ¹¹² Owen Bowcott, "Bin Laden Disciples Terrorise Kurds," *The Guardian*, Jan. 10, 2002
- ¹¹³ Cipriani, Gianni, "I Will Be a Martyr - This Is How the Islamists in Handcuffs Speak," *Il Nuovo*, December 5, 2003.
- ¹¹⁴ Schwartz, Stephen, "Saudi Mischief in Fallujah," *Weekly Standard*, June 16, 2003.
- ¹¹⁵ Levitt, Matthew, "The Network of Terrorist Financing," *PolicyWatch* No. 646, August 6, 2002.
- ¹¹⁶ Associated Press, March 31, 2003.
- ¹¹⁷ http://www.cpa-iraq.org/transcripts/20040212_zarqawi_full.html
- ¹¹⁸ Schanzer, Jonathan, "Ansar al-Islam: Back in Iraq," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2004, pp. 41-50.
- ¹¹⁹ McElroy, Damien, "Chemical war threat by Iraq's 'Taliban,'" *Daily Telegraph*, December 1, 2002.
- ¹²⁰ http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?click_id=123&art_id=qw1049878263603B262&set_id=1. After the capture of alleged Ansar chemical facilities by US and PUK forces, General Richard Meyers cited them as the ultimate source of the ricin that later turned up in London in January 2003. See Kelley, Matt, "Myers says US controls Iraqi compound, source of London's ricin," *Associated Press*, March 30, 2003.
- ¹²¹ Mendenhall, Preston, "Positive test for terror toxins in Iraq," *MSNBC*, April 4, 2003.
- ¹²² <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/ansar.htm>

-
- ¹²³ Al-Badri, Abbas, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 28, 2001.
- ¹²⁴ Chivers, CJ, "Kurds Face a Second Enemy: Islamic Fighters on Iraq Flank," *New York Times*, January 12, 2003.
- ¹²⁵ Schanzer, Jonathan, "Ansar al-Islam: Back in Iraq," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2004, pp. 41-50.
- ¹²⁶ Rotella, Sebastian, "3 Terror Network Suspects Arrested," *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 2003.
- ¹²⁷ Al Bawaba "Three Palestinians Trained by al Qaeda Arrested in Iraq," Sept. 23, 2002
- ¹²⁸ *New York Times*, December 6, 2002.
- ¹²⁹ McElroy, Damien, "Chemical war threat by Iraq's 'Taliban,'" *Daily Telegraph*, December 1, 2002.
- ¹³⁰ "Report: Iraq based terrorists wait for US," UPI, March 9, 2003.
- ¹³¹ Scott Peterson, "The Rise and Fall of Ansar al-Islam," *Christian Science Monitor* Oct. 16, 2003
- ¹³² http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/Investigation/Insider_DTR_031104.html
- ¹³³ *Al-Mutamar*, August 8-15, 2002.
- ¹³⁴ "Hardline Ansar al-Islam militants have defected," Agence France-Presse, October 6, 2002.
- ¹³⁵ Nasrawi, Salah, "Al-Qaida Recruiting Made Web of Militants," Associated Press, March 15, 2004.
- ¹³⁶ Howard, Michael, "Syria and Iran aiding militants, Iraq says," *The Guardian*, February 20, 2004.
- ¹³⁷ http://www.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,4057,8588875%255E1702,00.html
- ¹³⁸ http://www.cpa-iraq.org/transcripts/20040219_Feb19_Bremer.html
- ¹³⁹ "Report: Four Groups Carry out Operations in Northern Iraq, Baghdad," *Al-Watan*, Nov. 11, 2003
- ¹⁴⁰ "Statement No. 1," *Al-Muahjirin wa al-Ansar*, Baghdad Branch, April 2004.
- ¹⁴¹ Rubin, Michael, "The Islamist Threat in Iraqi Kurdistan," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, December 2001.
- ¹⁴² http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/transcript_binladen1_981228.html
- ¹⁴³ Ware, Michael, "Kurdistan: Death in the Afternoon," February 26, 2003.
- ¹⁴⁴ Gordon, Michael R., "New, Soft Targets in Iraq: Bombing Shifts the Focus," *New York Times*, August 8, 2003.
- ¹⁴⁵ "Pentagon: Possible al Qaeda link in Baghdad blast," CNN, August 20, 2003.
- ¹⁴⁶ "Three Killed in Irbil suicide bombing," Associated Press, September 10, 2003.
- ¹⁴⁷ "Saddam aide linked to al-Qaida, claims US," *The Guardian*, October 30, 2003.
- ¹⁴⁸ Telegraph News UK "There were dead bodies everywhere, it seemed like the end of the world," Nov. 13, 2003
- ¹⁴⁹ "Statement No. 1," *Al-Muahjirin wa al-Ansar*, Baghdad Branch, April 2004.
- ¹⁵⁰ Associated Press "Iraq Truck Bomb Kills Up to 53," Feb. 10, 2004
- ¹⁵¹ Jeffrey Gettleman "Iraq Bombings Seem to Aim at Voting Plan," *New York Times*, Feb. 12, 2004
- ¹⁵² Associated Press "Blasts Kill 125 at Iraq Shiite Shrines," March 2, 2004
- ¹⁵³ Associated Press "Blasts Rip Through 3 Iraq Police Stations," April 21, 2004
- ¹⁵⁴ Associated Press, March 31, 2003.
- ¹⁵⁵ Comments written by Rohan Gunaratna during review of this dossier
- ¹⁵⁶ World Islamic Front Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders, February 23, 1998.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, Section K.
- ¹⁵⁸ Pressman, Gabe, interview with Police Commissioner Ray Kelly aired on WNBC on January 18, 2004, <http://www.wnbc.com/news/2773900/detail.html>.
- ¹⁵⁹ Dan Eggen, "U.S. to File Terrorism Charges Against Pakistani Detainee," *Washington Post*, Aug. 6, 2003
- ¹⁶⁰ Global Islamic Media is no longer online, but *Iraq al-Jihad Aamal wal Akhtar* can be accessed in text form at http://www.e-prism.org/images/book_-_Iraq_al-Jihad.doc
- ¹⁶¹ "Trail of Anti-US Fighters Said to Cross Europe to Iraq," *New York Times*, December 6, 2003.
- ¹⁶² Levitt, Matthew, "USA Ties Terrorist Attacks in Iraq to Extensive Zarqawi Network," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, April 1, 2004.
- ¹⁶³ <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP68604>