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FLASHBACK: C.I.A. DEATH SQUADS

Allan Nairn



April 1995

The U.S. government has systematic links to Guatemalan Army death squad operations that go far beyond the disclosures that have recently shaken official Washington. The news that the C.I.A. employed a Guatemalan colonel who reportedly ordered two murders has been greeted with professions of shock and outrage. But in fact the story goes much deeper, as U.S. officials well know.

North American C.I.A. operatives work inside a Guatemalan Army unit that maintains a network of torture centers and has killed thousands of Guatemalan civilians. The G-2, headquartered on the fourth floor of the Guatemalan National Palace, has, since at least the 1960s, been advised, trained, armed and equipped by U.S. undercover agents. Working out of the U.S. Embassy and living in safehouses and hotels, these agents work through an elite group of Guatemalan officers who are secretly paid by the C.I.A. and who have been implicated personally in numerous political crimes and assassinations.

This secret G-2 / C.I.A. collaboration has been described by Guatemalan and U.S. operatives and confirmed, in various aspects, by three former Guatemalan heads of state. These accounts also mesh with that given in a March 28 interview by Col. Julio Roberto Alpirez, the C.I.A.- paid Guatemalan G-2 officer who has been implicated in the murders of Guatemalan guerrilla leader Efraim Bamaca Velasquez and a U.S. citizen, Michael DeVine.

One of the American agents who works with the G-2, a thin blond man in his 40s who goes by the name of Randy Capister, has been involved in similar operations with the army of neighboring El Salvador. Another, a weapons expert known as Joe Jacarino, has operated throughout the Caribbean, and has accompanied G-2 units on missions into rural zones.

Jacarino's presence in the embassy was confirmed by David Wright, a former

embassy intelligence employee who called Jacarino a "military liaison." Col. George Hooker, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency chief in Guatemala from 1985 to 1989, says he also knew Jacarino, though he says Jacarino was not with the D.I.A. When asked whether Jacarino was with the C.I.A. he replied, "I'm not at liberty to say."

Celerino Castillo, a former agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration who dealt with the G-2 and the C.I.A. in Guatemala, says he worked with Capister as well as with Jacarino. He showed photographs of himself and Capister at embassy events and in the field. Guatemalan sources say Capister meets regularly with Guatemalan Army chiefs. He has been seen in meetings in Guatemala City as recently as the spring of 1994.

When I reached Colonel Alpirez at the La Aurora base in Guatemala, he denied all involvement in the deaths of Bamaca and DeVine and said he was never paid by the C.I.A. But he discussed at length how the agency advises and helps run the G-2. He praised the C.I.A. for "professionalism" and close rapport with Guatemalan officers. He said that agency operatives often come to Guatemala on temporary duty, during which they train G-2 men and provide "advice and technical assistance." He described attending C.I.A. sessions at G-2 bases on "contra-subversion" tactics and "how to manage the factors of power" to "fortify democracy." He said the C.I.A. men were on call to respond to G-2 questions, and that the G-2 often consulted the agency on how to deal with "political problems." Alpirez said he was not authorized to give specifics on the technical assistance, nor would he name the North Americans the G-2 worked with, though he said they were "very good friends."

Other officials, though, say that at least during the mid 1980s G-2 officers were paid by Jack McCavitt, then C.I.A. station chief, and that the "technical assistance" includes communications gear, computers and special firearms, as well as collaborative use of C.I.A.-owned helicopters that are flown out of the Piper hangar at the La Aurora civilian air port and from a separate U.S. air facility. Through what Amnesty International has called "a government program of political murder," the Guatemalan Army has, since 1978, killed more than 110,000 civilians. The G-2 and a smaller, affiliated unit called the Archivo have long been openly known in Guatemala as the brain of the terror state. With a contingent of more than 2,000 agents and with sub-units in the local army bases, the G-2-under orders of the army high command-coordinates the torture, assassination and disappearance of dissidents.

"If the G-2 wants to kill you, they kill you," former army Chief of staff Gen. Benedicto Lucas Garcia once said. "They send one of their trucks with a hit squad and that's it." Current and former G-2 agents describe a program of surveillance backed by a web of torture centers and clandestine body dumps. In 1986, then-army Chief of Staff Gen. Hector Gramajo Morales, a U.S. protege, said that the G-2 maintains files on and watches "anyone who is an opponent of the Guatemalan state in any realm." A former G-2 agent says that the base he worked at in Huehuetenango maintained its own crematorium and "processed" abductees by chopping off limbs, singeing flesh and administering electric shocks.

At least three of the recent G-2 chiefs have been paid by the C.I.A., according to U.S. and Guatemalan intelligence sources. One of them, Gen. Edgar Godoy Gaitan, a former army Chief of Staff, has been accused in court by the victim's family of being one of the prime "intellectual authors" of the 1990 murder of the

noted Guatemalan anthropologist Myrna Mack Chang. Another, Col. Otto Perez Molina, who now runs the Presidential General Staff and oversees the Archivo, was in charge in 1994, when, according to the Archbishop's human rights office, there was evidence of General Staff involvement in the assassination of Judge Edgar Ramiro Elias Ogaldez. The third, Gen. Francisco Ortega Menaldo, who now works in Washington as general staff director at the Pentagon-backed Inter-American Defense Board, was G-2 chief in the late 1980s during a series of assassinations of students, peasants and human rights activists. Reached at his home in Florida, Jack McCavitt said he does not talk to journalists. When asked whether Ortega Menaldo was on the C.I.A. payroll, he shouted "Enough!" and slammed down the phone.

These crimes are merely examples of a vast, systemic pattern; likewise, these men are only cogs in a large U.S. government apparatus. Colonel Hooker, the former D.I.A. chief for Guatemala, says, "It would be an embarrassing situation if you ever had a roll call of everybody in the Guatemalan Army who ever collected a C.I.A. paycheck." Hooker says the agency payroll is so large that it encompasses most of the army's top decision-makers. When I told him that his friend, Gen. Mario Enriquez Morales, the current Defense Minister, had reacted to the Alpirez scandal by saying publicly that it was "disloyal" and "shameful" for officers to take C.I.A. money, Hooker burst out laughing and exclaimed: "Good! Good answer, Mario! I'd hate to think how many guys were on that payroll. It's a perfectly normal thing."

Other top commanders paid by the C.I.A. include Gen. Roberto Matta Galvez, former army Chief of Staff, head of the Presidential General Staff and commander of massacres in the El Quiche department; and General Gramajo, Defense Minister during the armed forces' abduction, rape and torture of Dianna Ortiz, an American nun. Gramajo also managed the early 1980s highland massacres. Colonel Hooker says he once brought Gramajo on a ten-day tour of the United States to speak at U.S. military bases and confer with the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

Three recent Guatemalan heads of state confirm that the C.I.A. works closely with the G-2. Last year, when I asked Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores (military dictator from 1983 to 1986) how the country's death squads had originated, he said they had been started "in the 1960s by the C.I.A." Gen. Efram Rios Montt (dictator from 1982 to 1983 and the current Congress President), who ordered the main highland massacres (662 villages destroyed, by the army's own count), said the C.I.A. did have agents inside the G-2. When I asked Rios Montt—a firm believer in the death penalty—if he thought he should be executed for his role in the slaughter, he leapt to his feet and shouted "Yes! Try me! Put me against the wall!" but he said he should be tried only if Americans were tried too. Specifically, he cited President Reagan, who, in the midst of the massacres, embraced Rios Montt and said he was getting "a bum rap" on human rights. Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo, civilian President from 1986 to 1991 (under whom the rate of killing actually increased), said "the C.I.A. often contracts with our military and G-2 people," and that from what he knew they "very probably" had people inside "who have participated with our G-2 in technical assistance and advice."

These C.I.A. operations are, of course, part of the larger U.S. policy. The Bush and Clinton State Departments, for example, in the midst of a much-touted "cutoff" of military aid to Guatemala after 1990, authorized—according to classified State Department records—more than 114 separate sales of U.S. pistols and rifles.

The killing of defenseless people has been state policy in Guatemala for thirty years. The question is not whether the U.S. government has known-it is obviously aware of its own actions. It is why, with overt and covert aid, it has helped commit the army's murders.

From the The Nation magazine, April 17, 1995

Indeed, so recently as January of 2003, the United States Air Force Academy hosted a conference with a session devoted specifically to torture (<http://www.usafa.af.mil/jscope/JSCOPE03/jscope03.html>). Here's an attention-getting paragraph from one of the papers (<http://www.usafa.af.mil/jscope/JSCOPE03/Arrigo03.html> :

"Routine participation of medical personnel in state-sponsored torture interrogation has been documented worldwide. Medical professionals determine the types of torture a person can endure, monitor the person for endurance under torture, resuscitate the person, treat the person to prepare for further torture, and administer non-therapeutic drugs. To cover up torture, physicians falsify health certificates, autopsy reports, and death certificates. Studies of survivors show medical participation in the range of 20% to 40% of cases, or even "the majority." Coercive interrogation manuals, such as the 1983 edition of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas manual, call for the services of physicians and psychiatrists."

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CIA Support of Death Squads

by Ralph McGehee

Posted on RemarQ, 9 October 1999

The information below is from CIABASE files on Death Squads supported by the CIA. Also given below are details on Watch Lists prepared by the CIA to facilitate the actions of Death Squads.

Angola	Bolivia	Brazil	Cambodia	Central America
Chile	Columbia	Costa Rica	Cuba	Dominican Republic
Eastern Europe	East Timor	Egypt	El Salvador	Europe
Georgia	Germany	Greece	Guatemala	Haiti
Honduras	Indonesia	Iran	Iraq	Israel
Italy	Latin America	Mexico	Nicaragua	Norway
Panama	Paraguay	Philippines	Puerto Rico	Russia
South Africa	South America	Syria	Thailand	Turkey
Uruguay	USSR	Vietnam		

Death Squads: Miscellaneous

CIA set up Ansesal and other networks of terror in El Salvador, Guatemala (Ansegat) and pre-Sandinista Nicaragua (Ansenic). The CIA created, structured and trained secret police in South Korea, Iran, Chile and Uruguay, and elsewhere — organizations responsible for untold thousands of tortures, disappearances, and deaths. Spark, 4/1985, pp. 2-4

1953-94 Sponsorship by CIA of death squad activity covered in summary form. Notes that in Haiti CIA admitted Lt. General Raoul Cedras and other high-ranking officials "were on its payroll and are helping organize violent repression in Haiti. Luis Moreno, an employee of State Department, has bragged he helped Colombian army create a database of subversives, terrorists and drug dealers." His superior in overseeing INS for Southeastern U.S., is Gunther Wagner, former Nazi soldier and a key member of now-defunct Office of Public Safety (OPS), an AID project which helped train counterinsurgents and terrorism in dozens of countries. Wagner worked in Vietnam as part of Operation Phoenix and in Nicaragua where he helped train National Guard. Article also details massacres in Indonesia. Haiti Information, 4/23/1994, pp. 3,4

CIA personnel requested transfers 1960-7 in protest of CIA officer Nestor Sanchez's working so closely with death squads. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, p. 294

CIA. 1994. Mary McGrory op-ed, "Clinton's CIA Chance." Excoriates CIA over Aldrich Ames, support for right-wing killers in El Salvador, Nicaraguan Contras and Haiti's FRAPH and Cedras. Washington Post, 10/16/1994, C1,2

Angola: Death Squads

Angola, 1988. Amnesty International reported that UNITA, backed by the U.S., engaged in extra-judicial executions of high-ranking political rivals and ill-treatment of prisoners. Washington Post, 3/14/1989, A20

Bolivia: Death Squads

Bolivia. Between October 1966-68 Amnesty International reported between 3,000 and 8,000 people killed by death squads. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 264

Bolivia, 1991. A group known as "Black Hand" shot twelve people on 24 November 1991. Killings were part of group's aim to eliminate "undesirable" elements from society. Victims included police officers, prostitutes and homosexuals. Washington Post 11/25/1991, A2

Bolivia: Watch List

Bolivia, 1975. CIA hatched plot with interior ministry to harass progressive bishops, and to arrest and expel foreign priests and nuns. CIA was particularly helpful in supplying names of U.S. and other foreign missionaries. The Nation, 5/22/1976, p. 624

Bolivia, 1975. CIA provided government data on priests who progressive. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 259

Brazil: Watch List

Brazil, 1962-64. Institute of Research and Social Studies (IPES) with assistance from U.S. sources published booklets and pamphlets and distributed hundreds of articles to newspapers. In 1963 alone it distributed 182,144 books. It underwrote lectures, financed students' trips to the U.S., sponsored leadership training programs for 2,600 businessmen, students, and workers, and subsidized organizations of women, students, and workers. In late 1962 IPES member Siekman in Sao Paulo organized vigilante cells to counter leftists. The vigilantes armed themselves, made hand-grenades. IPES hired retired military to exert influence on those in active service. From 1962-64 IPES, by its own estimate, spent between \$200,000 and \$300,000 on an intelligence net of retired military. The "research group" of retired military circulated a chart that identified communist groups and leaders. Black, J.K. (1977). United States Penetration of Brazil, p. 85

Brazil: Death Squads

Brazil, circa 1965. Death squads formed to bolster Brazil's national intelligence service and counterinsurgency efforts. Many death squad members were merely off-duty police officers. U.S. AID (and presumably the CIA) knew of and supported police participation in death squad activity. Counterspy 5/6 1979, p. 10

Brazil. Death squads began appear after 1964 coup. Langguth, A.J. (1978). Hidden Terrors, p. 121

Brazilian and Uruguayan death squads closely linked and have shared training. CIA on at least two occasions co-ordinated meetings between countries' death squads. Counterspy 5/6 1979, p. 11

Brazil, torture. After CIA-backed coup, military used death squads and torture. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 190

Cambodia: Watch List

Cambodia, 1970. Aided by CIA, Cambodian secret police fed blacklists of targeted Vietnamese to Khmer Serai and Khmer Kampuchea Krom. Mass killings of Vietnamese. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p. 328

Cambodia: Death Squads

Cambodia, 1980-90. U.S. indirect support for Khmer Rouge — U.S. comforting mass murderers. Washington Post, 5/7/1990, A10 editorial

Central America: Death Squads

Central America, circa 1979-87. According to Americas Watch, civilian non combatant deaths attributable to government forces in Nicaragua might reach 300, most Miskito Indians in comparison 40-50,000 Salvadoran citizens killed by death squads and government forces during same years, along with similar number during last year of Somoza and still higher numbers in Guatemala. Chomsky, N. (1988). The Culture of Terrorism, p. 101

Central America, 1981-87. Death toll under Reagan in El Salvador passed 50,000 and in Guatemala it may approach 100,000. In Nicaragua 11,000 civilians killed by 1968. Death toll in region 150,000 or more. Chomsky, N. (1988). The Culture of Terrorism, p. 29

Central America. See debate carried in Harpers "Why Are We in Central America? On Dominoes, Death Squads, and Democracy. Can We Live With Latin Revolution? The Dilemmas of National Security." Harpers, 6/1984, p35

Central America, 1982-84. Admiral Bobby Inman, former head of NSA, had deep distaste for covert operations. Inman complained that the CIA was hiring murderers to conduct operations in Central America and the Middle East — eventually Inman resigned. Toohey, B., and Pinwill, W. (1990). Oyster: the Story of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, pp. 215-6

Chile: Watch List

Chile, 1970-73. By late 1971 the CIA in near daily contact with military. The station collecting the kind of information that would be essential for a military dictatorship after a coup: lists of civilians to be arrested, those to be protected and government installations occupied at once. Atlantic, 12/1982, p. 58

Chile, 1970-73. CIA compiled lists of persons who would have to be arrested and a roster of civilian and government installations that would need protection in case of military coup against government. Corn, D. (1994). Blond Ghost: Ted Shackley and the CIA's Crusades, p. 251

Chile, 1972-73. Drew up lists those to be arrested immediately, or protected after a coup by military. Sergeyev, F.F. (1981). Chile, CIA Big Business, p. 163

Chile late 1971-72. CIA adopted more active stance re military penetration program including effort to subsidize anti-government news pamphlet directed at armed services, compilation arrest lists and its deception operation. CIA received intelligence reports on coup planning throughout July, August and September 73. U.S. Congress, Church Committee Report. (1976) v 7, p. 39

Chile. Chilean graduates of AIFLD, as well as CIA-created unions, organized CIA-financed strikes which participated in Allende's overthrow. In 1973 AIFLD graduates provided DINA,

Chile's secret police, with thousands of names of fellow unionists who were subsequently imprisoned and tortured and executed. Counterspy 4/1981, p. 13

Chile. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, 240

Chile, 1973-74. After 1973 coup, U.S. Embassy intelligence types gave their files on the Chilean and foreign left to the junta's military intelligence service (SIM). NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 8/74, p. 28.

Chile, 1973. The military prepared lists of nearly 20,000 middle-level leaders of people's organizations, scheduled to be assassinated from the morning of the coup on. The list of some 3,000 high-level directors to be arrested. Lists detailed: name, address, age, profession, marital status, and closest personal friends. It alleged U.S. military mission and the CIA involved in their preparation. Moa 186. From late June on plotters began to finalize lists of extremists, political leaders, Marxist journalists, agents of international communism, and any and all persons participating with any vigor in neighborhood, communal, union, or national organization. The Pentagon had been asked to get the CIA to give the Chilean army lists of Chileans linked to socialist countries. Names sorted into two groups: persons not publicly known but who important in leftist organizations; and, well-known people in important positions. 20,000 in first group and 3,000 in second. Second group to be jailed, the first to be killed. Sandford, R.R. (1975). The Murder of Allende, pp. 195-6

CIA provided intelligence on "subversives" regularly compiled by CIA for use in such circumstances. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 194

Columbia: Watch List

Colombia. Luis Moreno, an employee of State Department, bragged he helped Colombian army create a database of subversives, terrorists and drug dealers. Haiti Information, 4/23/94, pp. 3,4

Columbia: Death Squads

Colombia. MAS (Muerte A Secuestradores): "Death to Kidnappers," Colombian antiguerrilla death squad founded in December 1981 by members of Medellin cartel, Cali cartel, and Colombian military. Scott, P. and Marshall, J. (1991). Cocaine Politics, p. 261.

Colombia, 1993-94. Amnesty International called Colombia one of worst "killing fields." U.S. is an accomplice. William F. Schultz, human rights group's newly appointed Executive Director for the U.S., told a news conference that using fight against drugs as a pretext — Colombian government doesn't reign in [its forces]. About 20,000 people killed since 1986 in one of Latin America's most "stable democracies." only 2% political killings related to drug trafficking and 70% by paramilitary or military. U.S. probably a collaborator and much of U.S. aid for counternarcotics diverted to "killing fields." AI report said human meat is sold on black market and politicians gunned down along with children, homosexuals, and drug addicts. U.S. support because of Colombia's strategic position. No one is safe, people killed for body parts. Washington Times, 3/16/1994, p. a15

Costa Rica: Watch List

Costa Rica, 1955. Ambassador Woodward reported the government should be urged to maintain closer surveillance over communists and prosecute them more vigorously, and the government should be influenced to amend the constitution to limit the travel of communists, increase penalties for subversive activities and enact proposed legislation

eliminating communists from union leadership. Meanwhile USIA aka USIS programs "to continue to condition the public to the communist menace" should be maintained. Z Magazine, 11/1988, p. 20

Cuba: Watch List

Cuba, 1955-57. Allen Dulles pressed Batista to establish with CIA help, a bureau for the repression of communist activities. Grose, P. (1994). Gentleman Spy: the Life of Allen Dulles, p. 412

Cuba: Death Squads

Cuba, 1956-95 CIA's war against Cuba and Cuba's response. In 1956, CIA established in Cuba the infamous Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities, BRAC — secret police that became well known for torture and assassination of Batista's political opponents. Unclassified W/1994-1995 16-17

Dominican Republic: Watch List

Dominican Republic, 1965. CIA composed list of 55 communist ringleaders of projected takeover of government. Crozier, b. (1993). Free Agent, p. 58

Dominican Republic: Death Squads

Dominican Republic, cover, 1965. 18 public safety program advisers, 6 of whom CIA. Police organized La Banda, a death squad. Lernoux, P. (1982). Cry of the People, p. 187

Eastern Europe: Watch List

East Europe, USSR, 1952-93. Radio Free Europe researchers have hundreds of thousands of file cards on prominent east bloc citizens and a staff of 160 researchers. Washington Post, 4/4/1993, p. A19

East Timor: Death Squads

East Timor, 1975-76. Role of U.S. Government, CIA/NSA, and their Australian collaborators in East Timor is another example of support for genocide which joins a long list of similar cases. Carter and Ford administrations have been accomplices in the massacre of anywhere between one-in-ten (Indonesian foreign minister Mochtar's latest figure) and one-in-two Timorese. Counterspy, Spring 1980, p. 19

Ecuador: Watch List

Ecuador, 1962. Subversive control watch list. With agent from Social Christian party CIA will form five squads composed of five men for investigative work on subversive control watch list. Agee, P. (1975). Inside the Company: CIA Diary, pp. 240, 247

Ecuador, 1963. The CIA maintained what was called the lynx list, aka the subversive control watch list. This a file that might have 50 to 500 names. People on the list were supposed to be the most important left-wing activists whose arrest we might effect through the local government. Would include place and date of birth, wife's name, where they worked, and biological data on the whole family, including schools the children attended, etc. In Ecuador the CIA paid teams to collect and maintain this type information. Agee, (1981). White Paper Whitewash, p. 55

Egypt: Watch List

Egypt, Pakistan, 1993. 4/16/1993 2 teams from CIA and FBI to Peshawar to check information given them by Egyptian intelligence services. Egyptians reported terrorist groups based in Peshawar belong to "Arab Afghans" with ties to fundamentalist Muslims in U.S. CIA specialists met with officers of Mukhabarat Al-Amat who had list of 300 Egyptians believed to be hard inner core of Jihad led by Mohammed Sahwky Islambuli. Names of various terrorists. On request by CIA and others, 100 expulsions on 4/10. Intelligence Newsletter, 4/29/1993, pp. 1,5

El Salvador: Watch List

El Salvador, 1980-89. On TV D'Aubuisson, using military intelligence files, denounced teachers, labor leaders, union organizers and politicians. Within days their mutilated bodies found. Washington had identified most leaders of death squads as members Salvadoran security forces with ties to D'Aubuisson. Washington Post op-ed by Douglas Farah, 2/23/1992, p. C4

El Salvador, 1982-84. Significant political violence associated with Salvadoran security services including National police, National Guard, and Treasury Police. U.S. Government agencies maintained official relationships with Salvadoran security establishment appearing to acquiesce in these activities. No evidence U.S. personnel participated in forcible interrogations. U.S. Did pass "tactical" information to alert services of action by insurgent forces. Information on persons passed only in highly unusual cases. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, pp. 11-13

El Salvador: Death Squads

El Salvador, 1961-79. Vigilante organization called Democratic National Organization (Orden) created early 1960s to further control countryside. Created in 1961 but abolished in 1979. But quickly regained and even surpassed former vicious role. Today its members form the core of civil defense corps. White, R.A. (1984). The Morass, p. 133

El Salvador, 1961-84. During the Kennedy administration, agents of the U.S. government set up two security organizations that killed thousands of peasants and suspected leftists over the next 15 years. Guided by Americans, these organizations into the paramilitary units that were the death squads: in 1984 the CIA, in violation U.S. law, continued to provide training, support, and intelligence to security forces involved in death squads. Over the years the CIA and U.S. military organized Orden, the rural paramilitary and intelligence net designed to use terror. Mano Blanco grew out of Orden, which a U.S. ambassador called the "birth of the death squads;" conceived and organized Ansesal, the elite presidential intelligence service that gathered files on Salvadoran dissidents and gave that information to the death squads; recruited General Medrano, the founder of Orden and Ansesal as a CIA agent; supplied Ansesal, the security forces, and the General Staff with electronic, photographic, and personal surveillance of individuals who later assassinated by death squads; and, trained security forces in the use of investigative techniques, weapons, explosives, and interrogation with "instruction in methods of physical and psychological torture." The Progressive, 5/1984, pp. 20-29

El Salvador, 1963. U.S. government sent 10 special forces personnel to El Salvador to help General Jose Alberto Medrano set up Organizacion Democratica Nacionalist (Orden)--first paramilitary death squad in that country. These green berets assisted in organization and indoctrination of rural "civic" squads which gathered intelligence and carried out political assassinations in coordination with Salvadoran military. Now there is compelling evidence to show that for over 30 years, members of U.S. military and CIA have helped organize, train,

and fund death squad activity in El Salvador. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Summer 1990, p. 51

El Salvador, 1963. National Democratic Organization (Orden) formed as pro-government organization with assistance from CIA, U.S. military advisers, AID's police training program. Orden supervised by Salvadoran national security agency, intelligence organization of military. CIA chose "right hand man," Jose Medrano, to direct Orden. Orden served as base for death squad operations and sanctioned in 1970-79 all "above ground" unions. Barry, T., and Preusch, D. (1986). AIFLD in Central America, p. 33

El Salvador, 1965-85. For a report of CIA supporting death squad activities in El Salvador see "Spark," 4/1985, pp. 2-4

El Salvador, 1966. Developed death squads with help of green berets. Campaign used vigilantes to employ terror. Later called civil defense corps. White, R.A. (1984). The Morass, pp. 101-3

El Salvador, 1968. AIFLD creates Salvadoran Communal Union (UCS) which emphasized self help for rural farmers and not peasant organizing. Initially, UCS had support military government. By 1973 UCS seen as too progressive and AIFLD officially expelled. U.S. funding UCS continued through training programs and private foundations. UCS charged with ties to Orden, organization which carried out death squad activity. With failing pro-government union efforts, AIFLD called back to control UCS in 1979. Barry, T., and Preusch, D. (1986). AIFLD in Central America, p. 34

El Salvador, 1976-85. Attended conferences of World Anti-Communist League: Roberto D'Aubuisson, El Salvador. Former major in military intelligence; charged with being responsible for coordinating nation's rightist death squads. Established Arena political party with assistance of U.S. new right leaders. Anderson, J. L.. and Anderson, S. (1986). Inside the League

El Salvador, 1979-84. House Intelligence Committee investigation of U.S. intelligence connections with death squad activities concluded U.S. intelligence agencies "have not conducted any of their activities in such a way as to directly encourage or support death squad acts." House Intelligence Committee, annual report, 1/2/1985, pp. 16-19

El Salvador, 1979-88. Death squads recruited under cover of boy scouts. Boys operated as a death squad known as Regalados Armed Forces (FAR). They murdered union officials, student leaders and teachers accused of being guerrilla sympathizers. Herman Torres, a death squad member, learned that the scouts part of nationwide net based on the paramilitary organization known as Orden and coordinated from the main military intelligence unit known as Ansesal run by D'Aubuisson. After coup of 1979, Orden and Ansesal officially disbanded. In 1982, when Arena won control of the constituent assembly, the top legislative body was turned into a center for death squads. Another death squad called the secret anti-communist army (ESA). Bush and North in 12/11/1983 were sent to make it clear U.S. would not tolerate death squads. Perez Linares boasted he killed Archbishop Romero on 3/24/1980. Catholic Church's human rights office reports 1991 death squad and government killings in first half of 1988 double the number of 1987. Mother Jones, 1/1989, pp. 10-16

El Salvador, 1980-84. Colonel Roberto Santivanez, former chief of the Salvadoran Army's special military intelligence unit, testified before U.S. Senators and Congressmen. He charged that Roberto D'Aubuisson was the principal organizer of the death squads, along with Colonel Nicolas Carranza, the head of the country's Treasury Police. He said Carranza also serves as a

paid CIA informer. Other reports said Carranza received \$90,000 a year for providing intelligence to the CIA. Washington Post, 4/1/1984

El Salvador, 1980-84. Former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, said the Reagan administration covered up information that Salvadoran rightist Roberto D'Aubuisson ordered the killing of Archbishop Romero. Washington Post, 2/3/1984, 2/7/1984

El Salvador, 1980. Former U.S. Ambassador Robert White, said D'Aubuisson presided over a lottery to select which Salvadoran military officer would assassinate Archbishop Romero, gunned down on 3/24/1980. White said the U.S. Embassy received an eyewitness account of the 3/22 meeting that plotted Romero's murder. Washington Post from Associated Press, 3/1984

El Salvador, 1981-83. Colonel Carranza, leader of Salvador's infamous Treasury Police, oversaw the government reign of terror in which 800 people were killed each month. Carranza received \$90,000 a year from the CIA from 1979-84. Reportedly living in Kentucky. The Nation, 6/5/1988, p. 780

El Salvador, 1981-84. House Intelligence Committee concluded "CIA did not directly encourage or support death squad killings." Report added that "some intelligence relationships with individuals connected with death squads" may have given the impression that the CIA condoned, because it was aware of, some death squad killings. Washington Post, 1/14/1985, A20

El Salvador, 1981-84. Senate Intelligence Committee reported several Salvadoran security and military officials have engaged in death squads acts. Large numbers of low-level personnel also involved. Death squads have originated from the Treasury Police and the National Guard and police. Washington Post, 10/12/1984

El Salvador, 1981-84. The CIA and military advisers have helped organize, trained, financed and advised Salvadoran army and intelligence units engaged in death squad activities and torture. Information from two well-informed sources in Salvadoran government. Christian Science Monitor, 5/8/1984, p. 1

El Salvador, 1981-88. Discussion of the use of death squads in El Salvador (No indication of direct CIA participation). The Nation, 5/8/1989, p. 625

El Salvador, 1986. Despite extensive government labor clamp down (including National Guard raid of hospital workers strike), Irving Brown, known CIA and head AFL-CIO's Department of International Affairs, issues report claiming "a shift away from violent repression and an improvement in human rights." Statement incredible in light of death squad attacks on unionists. Barry, T., and Preusch, D. (1986). AIFLD in Central America, p. 35

El Salvador, 1987. Central American death squads reported operating in the Los Angeles area. NACLA (magazine re Latin America), 6/1987, pp. 4-5

El Salvador, 1988. Americas Watch in September said the military killed 52 civilians in first 6 months, compared with 72 in all of 1987. In 1988 the Salvadoran rebels have stepped up the war. Washington Post, 11/26/1988, A1&18

El Salvador. AID public safety advisors created the national police intelligence archive and helped organize Ansesal, an elite presidential intelligence service. Dossiers these agencies collected on anti-government activity, compiled with CIA surveillance reports, provided

targets for death squads. Many of 50,000 Salvadorans killed in 1981-85 Attributable to death squad activity. National Reporter, Winter 1986, p. 19

El Salvador. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly) 12:14-15;12:5-13.

El Salvador. Medrano "the father of the death squads, the chief assassin of them all," according to Jose N. Duarte. On 23 March 1985, Medrano was assassinated. Medrano in 1984 admitted he had worked for the CIA in 1960-69. The Progressive, 6/1985, p. 11

El Salvador. Administration sources said at height of rightist death squad activity, Reagan administration depended on commanders of right wing death squads. The U.S. shared some intelligence with them. U.S. intelligence officers developed close ties to chief death squad suspects while death squads killed several hundred a month and totaling tens of thousands. Washington Post, 10/6/1988, A 39 and 43

El Salvador. Article contrasting results of Senate Committee 1984 news accounts of official cooperation between CIA and Salvadoran security officers said to be involved in death squad activities. First Principles, 12/1984, pp. 2-4

El Salvador. CIA supplied surveillance information to security agencies for death squads. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, pp. 321, 327

El Salvador. Falange mysterious death squad comprising both active and retired members security forces. Conducts death squad activities. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), 4/1981, p. 14

El Salvador. Formation of Organisation Democratica Nacionalista Orden Formed in 1968 by Medrano. Forces between 50,000 and 100,000. From 1968-79, Orden official branch of government. First junta attempted to abolish, but group reorganized as National Democratic Front. Example of Orden death squad acts. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), 4/1981, p. 14

El Salvador. See Dickey article re slaughter in El Salvador in New Republic, 12/13/1983, entitled "The Truth Behind the Death Squads." fn Dickey, C. (1985). With the Contras, p. 286

El Salvador. The CIA and U.S. Armed forces conceived and organized Orden, the rural paramilitary and spy net designed to use terror against government opponents. Conceived and organized Ansesal, the presidential intelligence service that gathered dossiers on dissidents which then passed on to death squads. Kept key security officers with known links to death squads on the CIA payroll. Instructed Salvadoran intelligence operatives "in methods of physical and psychological torture." Briarpatch, 8/1984 p. 30 from the 5/1984 Progressive

El Salvador. UGB (Union Guerrilla Blanca) (white warriors union). Headed by D'Aubuisson, who trained at International Police Academy. D'Aubuisson claims close ties CIA. Former ambassador White called D'Aubuisson a "psychopathic killer." Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), 4/1981, p. 14

El Salvador, 1979-88. See "Confessions of an Assassin," article. Herman Torres Cortez is the assassin who was interviewed and tells of death squad operations in El Salvador. Mother Jones, 1/1989, p. 10

El Salvador, 1983. Vice President Bush delivered an ultimatum to Salvadoran military to stop death squad murders. Mother Jones, 8/1986, p. 64

El Salvador, 1987. Assassins, certainly sponsored by and probably members of Salvadoran security forces, murder Herbert Ernesto Anaya, head of Salvadoran civil rights commission and last survivor of commission's eight founders. Prior harassment of Anaya solicited neither protest nor protection from Duarte or U.S. administration. Contrary to popular opinion, death squad activity has not waned. "Selective killings of community leaders, labor organizers, human rights workers, rural activists and others have replaced wholesale massacres" since signing of Arias plan. Los Angeles organization "El Rescate" has compiled chronology of human rights abuses. The Nation, 11/14/1987, p. 546

El Salvador. CIA took more than two years 1980-83 begin seriously analyzing papers captured from D'Aubuisson. ICC 242. Papers said reveal death squad supporters, atrocities. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, p. 22

El Salvador, 1988. Death squad activity surged in El Salvador in 1988 after a period of relative decline. Amnesty International report "El Salvador: Death Squads- A Government Strategy," noted in NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 3/1989, p. 11

El Salvador, 1989. Although human rights monitors consistently link death squad acts to the Salvadoran government, many U.S. media report on death squads as if they an independent or uncontrollable force. Extra, Summer, 1989, p. 28

El Salvador, 1989 Member of Salvadoran army said first brigade intelligence unit army troops routinely kill and torture suspected leftists. First brigade day-to-day army operations carried out with knowledge of U.S. military advisers. CIA routinely pays expenses for intelligence operations in the brigades. U.S. has about 55 advisers in Salvador. Washington Post, 10/27/1989, A1,26

El Salvador, circa 1982-84. Ricardo Castro, a 35 year old Salvadoran army officer, a West Point graduate, said he worked for the CIA and served as translator for a U.S. official who advised the military on torture techniques and overseas assassinations. Castro personally led death squad operations. The Progressive, 3/1986, pp. 26-30

El Salvador, domestic, 1986-87. Article "The Death Squads Hit Home." For decades they terrorized civilians in El Salvador, now they are terrorizing civilians in the U.S. The FBI shared intelligence about Salvadoran activists in the U.S. with Salvador's notorious security services. The Progressive, 10/1987, pp. 15-19

El Salvador. Office of Public Safety graduate Colonel Roberto Mauricio Staben was, according to journalist Charles Dickey "responsible for patrolling — if not contributing to — the famous death squad dumping ground at El Payton a few miles from its headquarters." also, Alberto Medrano, founder of El Salvador's counterinsurgency force Orden, was an operations graduate. Finally, Jose Castillo, who was trained in 1969 at the U.S. International Police School, later became head of National Guard's section of special investigations which helped organize the death squads. The Nation, 6/7/1986, p. 793

El Salvador. Former death squad member Joya Martinez admitted death squad operations carried out with knowledge and approval 2 U.S. military advisers. LA Weekly, 1/25/1990

El Salvador. DCI report to House Intelligence Committee re CIA connections with death squads. National security archives listing.

El Salvador. FBI's contacts with the Salvadoran National Guard. Information in Senate Intelligence Committee Report, 7/1989, pp. 104-5

El Salvador. Former San Francisco police officer accused of illegal spying said he worked for CIA and will expose CIA's support of death squads if he prosecuted. Tom Gerard said he began working for CIA in 1982 and quit in 1985 because he could not tolerate what he saw. He and Roy Bullock are suspected of gathering information from police and government files on thousands of individuals and groups. Information probably ended up with B'nai B'rith and ADL. CIA refused to confirm Gerard's claim. Gerard said there is proof CIA directly involved in training and support of torture and death squads in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala during mid 1980s. Proof in his briefcase San Francisco police seized. Gerard said several photos seized by police show CIA agents attending interrogations, or posing with death squad members. Washington Times, 4/28/1993, A 6

El Salvador, 1963-90. In 1963 U.S. sent 10 Special Forces to help General Madrano set up Organizacion Democratica Nacionalista (Orden), a death squad. Evidence this sort activity going on for 30 years. Martinez, a soldier in First infantry brigade's department 2, admitted death squad acts. Said he worked with two U.S. Advisers. Castro, another soldier, talks about death squads and U.S. contacts. Rene Hurtado, former agent with Treasury Police, gives his story. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly) Summer 1990, pp. 51-53

El Salvador, 1973-89. El Salvador's ruling party, Arena, closed off fifth floor of National Assembly building to serve as HQ for national network of death squads following Arena's 20 March 1988 electoral victory. Hernan Torres Cortez, a former Arena security guard and death squad member, said he was trained and recruited by Dr. Antonio Regalado under orders of Roberto D'Aubuisson intelligence service, Ansesal, in 1973. Official network was broken up in 1984 following Vice President Bush's visit, but was reinstated in 1988. Intelligence Newsletter, 1/18/1991, p. 5

El Salvador, 1979-90. A detailed discussion of Salvador's death squads. Schwarz, B. (1991). American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador, pp. 41-3

El Salvador, 1980-84. Expatriate Salvadorans in U.S. have provided funds for political violence and have been directly involved in assisting and directing their operations. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, p. 15

El Salvador, 1980-84. Numerous Salvadoran officials involved in death squad activities — most done by security services — especially the Treasury Police and National Guard. Some military death squad activity. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, 15

El Salvador, 1980-89. D'Aubuisson kept U.S. on its guard. Hundreds of released declassified documents re relationship. Washington Post, 1/4/1994, A1,13

El Salvador, 1980-89. Declassified documents re 32 cases investigated by United Nations appointed Truth Commission on El Salvador reveal U.S. officials were fully aware of Salvadoran military and political leaders' complicity in crimes ranging from massacre of more than 700 peasants at El Mozote in 1981 to murder of 6 Jesuit priests in 1989, and thousands of atrocities in between. Lies of our Time 3/1994, pp. 6-9

El Salvador, 1980-89. President Reagan and Vice President Bush instituted policies re fighting communists rather than human rights concerns. From 11/1980 through 1/1991 a large number of assassinations — 11/27, 5 respected politicians; 12/4, rape and murder of 3 American nuns and a lay workers; 2 American land reform advisers on 1/4/1981. Archbishop Romero killed 3/1980. There clear evidence D'Aubuisson's involvement but Reagan administration ignored. On TV, D'Aubuisson, using military intelligence files, denounced teachers, labor leaders, union organizers and politicians. Within days their mutilated bodies found. Washington had identified most leaders of death squads as members Salvadoran security forces with ties to D'Aubuisson. With U.S. outrage at bloodshed, U.S., via Bush,

advised government slaughter must stop. Article discusses torture techniques used by security forces. Washington Post op-ed by Douglas Farah, 2/23/1992, C4

El Salvador, 1980-90. COL Nicolas Carranza, head of Treasury Police, on CIA payroll. Minnick, W. (1992). *Spies and Provocateurs*, p. 32

El Salvador, 1980-90. State panel found that mistakes by U.S. diplomats, particularly in probing 1981 massacre of civilians at El Mozote, undercut policy during Salvador's civil war. Findings in 67-page study ordered by Secretary of State Christopher. Sen. Leahy said report "glosses over...the lies, half-truths and evasions that we came to expect from the State Department during that period." Sen. Dodd said "report is sloppy, anemic and basically a whitewash..." Washington Times, 7/16/1993, A12 and Washington Post, 7/16/1993, A16

El Salvador, 1980-91. Truth Commission report says 19 of 27 Salvadoran officers implicated in 6 Jesuit murders were graduates of U.S. Army's School of Americas in Fort Benning, Ga. Almost three quarters of Salvadoran officers accused in 7 other massacres were trained at Fort Benning. It called school for dictators. Since 46 it has trained more than 56,000 Latin soldiers. Graduates include some of region's most despicable military strongmen. Now, when U.S. wants to build democracy, school an obstacle. Newsweek investigation turned up hundreds of less than honorable grads. At least 6 Peruvian officers linked to a military death squad that killed 9 students and a professor were graduates. Four of five senior Honduran officers accused in Americas Watch report of organizing a death squad, Battalion 316, were trained there. A coalition charged 246 Colombian officers with human rights violations; 105 were school alumni. Honored graduates include General Suarez, a brutal dictator of Bolivia; General Callejas Ycallegas, chief of Guatemalan intelligence in late 1970s and early 1980s, when thousands political opponents were assassinated; and Honduran General Garcia, a corrupt person; and, Hernandez, armed forces chief of Colombia suspected of aiding Colombian drug traffickers. Newsweek, 8/9/1993, pp. 36-7

El Salvador, 1980-92. "Secret of the Skeletons: Uncovering America's Hidden Role in El Salvador." Pathologists uncovered 38 small skeletons in El Mozote. In 1981 soldiers of ACRE, immediate reaction infantry battalion created by U.S., herded children into basement and blew up building. U.S. officials denied any massacre had taken place and kept on denying for years. About 800 residents killed. Armed service leaders said they conducted war on part of Reagan and Bush administrations with bi-partisan support Congress since 1984; received daily assistance from State Department, DOD and CIA. Truth Commission investigating via U.S. Government interagency committee. State and CIA not cooperating with commission. CIA not giving one document on formation of death squads, prepared in 1983 for congressional intelligence committees. Kidnap-for-profit ring against Salvadoran business community. With U.S. Encouragement, Salvadoran government arrested several members of ring. One was a death squad assassin, Rudolfo Isidro Lopez Sibrian, who implicated in deaths of 2 American labor advisers. Washington Post, 11/15/1992, C1,2

El Salvador, 1980-93. 11/5/1993 release of thousands pages of intelligence reports shows every U.S. diplomat, military officer, and intelligence operative who worked with El Salvador's military and political leaders in 1980s knew most of those involved in organizing death squads. State Department officials lied to Congress. Intelligence reports detailed precise information on murder, kidnapping, and coup plots, and death squad funding, involving people like VP Francisco Merino and current Arena candidate Armando Calderon Sol. At least 63,000 Salvadoran civilians — equivalent of 3 million Americans were killed — most by government supported by U.S. The Nation, 11/29/1993, p. 645

El Salvador, 1980-93. Approximately 50-page article on the massacres at El Mozote. Article by Mark Danner. New Yorker, 12/6/1993

El Salvador, 1980-93. Article by Jared Toller, "Death Squads Past, Present & Future." discusses recent cases of FMLN members being murdered by resurgent death squads. Only left is calling for full implementation of UN Truth Commission's recommendations — purging armed forces, full investigation into death squads, etc. Truth Commission had recommended U.S. make its files available. U.S. Had refused to turn over 1983 FBI report on death squads organization in Miami. Salvadoran government is the death squads. Member of a death squad now imprisoned and seeking amnesty, Lopez Sibrian, explained participation of Arena luminaries in kidnappings, bombings and attacks on National University. He implicated the mayor of San Salvador in various acts. Link between phone service, Antel, and national intelligence police. Antel records calls of left and passes them to police. (The secret anti-communist Army, a former death squad, were regulars of now-disbanded Treasury Police). Upcoming elections may have generated increase in death squad activity. Z magazine, 1/1994, pp. 14-5

El Salvador, 1980-93. Colman McCarthy comments of UN's Truth Commission report and the Reagan-Abrams "fabulous achievement." Washington Post, 4/6/1993, D22

El Salvador, 1980-93. Letter to editor by Thomas Buergenthal of law school at George Washington U., who was a member of the Truth Commission for El Salvador. He denies news story that there was a chapter in the report that dealt with the structure and finances of the groups was withheld. He bemoans the ability of the commission to thoroughly investigate all aspects. Washington Post, 11/30/1993, A24

El Salvador, 1980-93. Report of UN's Truth Commission re enormous crime of a government that killed upwards of 70,000 civilians between 1980-92. Report refutes official statements made by Reagan and Bush administrations — when officials denied leaders of Salvadoran armed forces were using execution, rape and torture to sustain their power — reports says they were. We need a truth report on our own government per Rep. Moakley. Truth report adds growing body evidence U.S. Government officials may have participated in perpetuation of atrocities in El Salvador. In 1960s, CIA advisers helped create a nationwide informant net. In 1981, team of military advisers led by Brig. Gen. Frederick Woener sent to determine "rightist terrorism and institutional violence." Salvadorans generally dismissed notion that terror was a bad idea. One of Colonels, Oscar Edgardo Casanova Vejar, was one covering up rape and murder of four churchwomen. Woener recommended U.S. proceed and give \$300-400 million aid. U.S. officials claimed churchwomen had run a roadblock and there was no massacre at El Mozote. Neil Livingstone, a consultant who worked with Oliver North at NSC concluded, "death squads are an extremely effective tool, however odious, in combating terrorism and revolutionary challenges." op-ed by Jefferson Morley, an Outlook editor. Washington Post, 3/28/1993, C1,5

El Salvador, 1980-93. Salvador's ruling party moved to declare amnesty for those named in United Nations.-sponsored Truth Commission. Investigators said 85% of complaints laid to government death squads. Discusses D'Aubuisson's implication in Archbishop Romero's assassination. Washington Post 3/17/1993 a25

El Salvador, 1980. Ten former death squad members were ordered killed in Santiago de Maria on 27 December 1980 by Hector Antonio Regalado, who felt they knew too much. Intelligence Newsletter, 10/4/1988, p. 6

El Salvador, 1981-84. There are two versions of first page of a CIA report, "El Salvador: Dealing With Death Squads," 1/20/1984. CIA released first version in 1987, among congressional debate over aid to El Salvador. Second version, which contradicts first, declassified by CIA in 11/1993. As recently as 10/1992, CIA continued to release censored version in response to FOIA requests. Redacted version implies death squad problem overcome — non censored version show this is not true. New York Times, 12/17/1993, A19

El Salvador, 1981-89. Salvadoran atrocity posed agonizing choice for U.S. COL Rene Ponce, chief of staff of Salvador's armed forces, has been accused of ordering murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter at Central American University. Newly available U.S. documents show U.S. knowingly and repeatedly aligned themselves with unsavory characters during 1980s while defending them to U.S. Public. Diplomatic cables found among more than 10,000 recently declassified State, Pentagon and CIA documents, reveal extent U.S. policy makers chose to overlook Ponce's brutality. U.S. officials long labeled Ponce a right-wing extremist tied to death squads. But documents make clear U.S. played down unsavory side of Ponce. Details from correspondence between Ambassador Walker and Baker. In 10/1983, CIA prepared a "briefing paper on right-wing terrorism in El Salvador" that described Ponce as a supporter of death squads. Impact Bush's visit in 1984 to push for human rights was minimal. By 7/1989, CIA reported that Ponce "espouses moderate political views." Ponce refused repeated requests to pursue those responsible for deaths of Jesuits. Washington Post, 4/5/1994, A13

El Salvador, 1981-90. Government operation at El Mozote consisted of Army, National Guard and the Treasury Police in operation rescue. By early 1992, U.S. spent more than 4 billion in civil war lasting 12 years and that left 75,000 dead. New Yorker, 12/6/1993, p. 53

El Salvador, 1981-90. In 1981 over 10,000 political murders committed by Salvadoran military and its death squads. In 1990 there were 108 such murders. Schwarz, B. (1991). American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador, p. 23

El Salvador, 1981-92. Article "Death-Squad Refugees," discusses case of Cesar Vielman Joya Martinez, extradited by Bush to El Salvador to face murder charges for being part of a death squad that he claims operated with knowledge of defense minister Ponce and other top officials. FOIA documents show U.S. helping prepare extradition request for Salvadoran government. Truth Commission's report vindicates Joya. Texas Observer (magazine), 3/26/1993, pp. 9-10

El Salvador, 1981-92. Some U.S. special operations soldiers in El Salvador during civil war want Pentagon to admit they more than advisers. They say they also fought. Army memo given Newsweek says, "most personnel serving in an advisory capacity were directly engaged in hostile action." Newsweek, 4/5/1993

El Salvador, 1981-92. Truth Commission report implicates top Salvadoran officials in ordering or covering up murders of four U.S. churchwomen and six Jesuit priests; and Salvadoran troops massacred many hundreds at El Mozote. Four Dutch journalists killed 3/17/1982 were deliberately ambushed by Salvadoran army. Denials by then top U.S. government officials now exposed. U.S. government supported war with \$6 billion. The Nation, 4/12/1993, p. 475

El Salvador, 1981-93. 12 years of tortured truth on El Salvador — U.S. declarations undercut by United Nations. Commission report. For 12 years, opponents of U.S. policy in Central America accused Reagan and Bush administrations of ignoring widespread human rights abuses by the Salvadoran government and of systematically deceiving or even lying to Congress and people about the nature of an ally that would receive \$6 billion in economic and military aid. A three-man United Nations.-sponsored Truth Commission released a long-awaited report on 12 years of murder, torture and disappearance in El Salvador's civil war. Commission examined 22,000 complaints of atrocities and attributed 85 percent of a representative group of them to Salvadoran security forces or right-wing death squads. It blamed remainder on guerrilla Farabundo Marti National Liberation front (FMLN). In May 1980, for instance, when Carter was still President, security forces seized documents implicating rightist leader D'Aubuisson in the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero. In Fall of 1981, Army Brig. Gen. Fred Woerner supervised preparation of a joint U.S.-Salvadoran

internal military "Report of the El Salvador Military Strategy Assistance Team," which noted that "the (Salvadoran) armed forces are reluctant to implement vigorous corrective actions for abuses in the use of force." One reason so many people found it hard to believe U.S. officials could not have known more about rights abuses and acted more aggressively to curb them is that the U.S. was deeply involved in running the war, from intelligence gathering to strategy planning to training of everyone from officers to foot soldiers. By 1982, U.S. military advisers were assigned to each of the six Salvadoran brigades, as well as each of 10 smaller detachments. The U.S. put tens of millions of dollars into developing the ultra-modern national intelligence directorate to coordinate intelligence gathering and dissemination. U.S. military and CIA officials participated in almost every important meeting. Most brigades had a U.S. intelligence officer assigned to them, as well as a U.S. liaison officer. U.S. advisers regularly doled out small amounts of money, usually less than \$1,000 at a time, for intelligence work. The U.S. was not informed of arrests or captures unless they specifically asked. "They never asked unless there was a specific request because someone in Washington was getting telegrams." El Mozote, the report said, was work of U.S.-trained Atlacatl battalion, part of a days-long search-and-destroy sweep known as "Operation Rescue." In fact, the report said, the soldiers massacred more than 500 people in six villages. In El Mozote, where the identified victims exceeded 200, "the men were tortured and executed, then women were executed and finally, the children" Washington Post, 3/21/1993

El Salvador, 1981-93. A discussion of the media's treatment of the El Mozote massacres and the U.S. media's treatment of that story. Lies of our Time, 6/1993, pp. 3-4

El Salvador, 1981-93. Thomas Enders, former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from 1981-83, writes op-ed defending U.S. officials' testimony re massacre at El Mozote as now confirmed by UN's Truth Commission report. Washington Post, op-ed 3/29/1993, A19

El Salvador, 1981-93. United Nations. Commission on Truth to release report on crimes committed against civilians in Salvador's 12-year civil war. Defense Minister Ponce already resigned. Washington Post Outlook, 3/14/1993, C1,2

El Salvador, 1981-94. Armando Calderon Sol considered shoo-in to win Presidency in impending elections. Calderon began his political career as a member of a seven-man, neo-fascist group under D'Aubuisson's guidance that supported death squad operations. Calderon has all worst elements of D'Aubuisson without any redeeming qualities. When D'Aubuisson running death squads out of his office, Calderon was his private secretary and a loyal soldier in a terrorist cell — Salvadoran National Movement (MNS). In 1981, D'Aubuisson unified MNS into Arena party. Washington Post, Outlook, 4/17/1994, C1,3

El Salvador, 1981. Detailed article on "The Truth of El Mozote," by Mark Danner. New Yorker, 12/6/1993, pages 51 and ending on page 103

El Salvador, 1981. Skeletons verify killing of Salvadoran children of El Mozote, El Salvador. Washington Times, 10/21/1992, A9 and Washington Post, 10/22/1992, A18

El Salvador, 1982-84. Significant political violence associated with Salvadoran security services including National police, National Guard, and Treasury Police. U.S. government agencies maintained official relationships with Salvadoran security establishment appearing to acquiesce in these activities. No evidence U.S. personnel participated in forcible interrogations. U.S. did pass "tactical" information to alert services of action by insurgent forces. Information on persons passed only in highly unusual cases. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, pp. 11-13.

El Salvador, 1982-84. "Recent Political Violence in El Salvador," Report of Senate Intelligence Committee. Committee found ample evidence that U.S. policy was to oppose political violence. U.S. government accorded high priority to gathering intelligence on political violence. President Bush and his demarche in 1983. P8. U.S. government Relationship with Robert D'Aubuisson — bio on him. U.S. Government contact with him limited. Roberto Santivanez, director of Ansesal 1978-79. He claimed he himself had engaged in death squad activity and had a relationship with U.S. through CIA and that COL Carranza had ties to CIA. Colonel Nicolas Carranza had extensive ties to Arena and National Conciliation (PCN) parties. He involved in various activities of interest to U.S. in various positions. Senate Intelligence Committee, October 5, 1984, pp. 1-11

El Salvador, 1983-90. Former Salvadoran army intelligence agent who applied for political asylum in U.S. convicted in court of entering country illegally. Joya-Martinez's request for political asylum still pending. Washington Post, 9/19/1990, A5

El Salvador, 1985. In 2/1985, CIA reported that behind Arena's legitimate exterior lies a terrorist network led by D'Aubuisson using both active-duty and retired military personnel..." main death squad was "the Secret Anti-communist Army," described by CIA as the paramilitary organization of Arena — from the National Police and other security organizations. These were funded directly from Washington. Death squads became more active as 1994, election approached. Columbia, possibly leading terrorist state in Latin America, has become leading recipient of U.S. military aid. Since 1986, more than 20,000 people have been killed for political reasons, most by Colombian authorities. More than 1,500 leaders, members and supporters of the Labor Party (UP) have been assassinated since party established in 1985. Pretext for terror operations is war against guerrillas and narcotraffickers. Former a partial truth, latter a myth concocted to replace the "communist threat." Works hand-in-hand with drug lords, organized crime, and landlords. National Police took over as leading official killers while U.S. aid shifted to them. Targets include community leaders, human rights and health workers, union activists, students, members of religious youth organizations, and young people in shanty towns. Sale of human organs. Case of Guatemala. Shift of 1962, under Kennedy administration from hemispheric defense to "internal security:" war against the internal enemy. Doctrines expounded in counterinsurgency manuals. Internal enemy extends to labor organizations, popular movements, indigenous organizations, opposition political parties, peasant movements, intellectual sectors, religious currents, youth and student groups, neighborhood organizations, etc. From 1984 through 1992, 6,844 Colombian soldiers trained under U.S. International Military Education and Training Program (MET). Z Magazine, 5/1994, 14 pages

El Salvador, 1986-87. See article "Death Squad Update, Investigating L.A.'s Salvadoran Connection." Los Angeles Weekly, 8/7/1987

El Salvador, 1986-89. Joya Martinez, former death squad member, who said two U.S. advisers attached to his unit and gave funds of 9500 month. Article names other Salvadoran death squad members. Unclassified, 7/1990

El Salvador, 1986. In 1986, Salvadoran authorities, with help of FBI, cracked a kidnap-for-hire ring in which death squads posing as leftist rebels kidnapped some of nation's wealthiest businessmen. Schwarz, B. (1991). American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador, p. 28

El Salvador, 1987-89. Jesuit labeled ardent communist two years before by Salvadoran, U.S. officials. Religious News Service, 5/9/1990, p. 1

El Salvador, 1987-89. Salvadoran woman defecting to U.S. said she worked for death squad and provided information on six people who killed. Her claims back up those of her

supervisor, Cesar Joya Martinez, who linked death squad acts to U.S. funding. Boston Globe, 3/16/1990, in First Principles, 4/1990, p. 10

El Salvador, 1988-89. Joya Martinez, former member intelligence department 1st army Brigade of Salvador's army. Said U.S. advisers funded their activity, but unaware of death squad. Washington Post, 11/19/1989, F2

El Salvador, 1988. Amnesty International report of 26 October 1988 noted "black list" are supplied to Salvadoran media by Salvadoran intelligence services. During first six months of 1988, number of murders by death squads tripled over same period of previous year. Most prominent victim was Judge Jorge Alberto Serrano Panameno who was shot in May 1988. Increase reflects rise to power of 1966 class from national military school. Class members include Colonel Rene Emilio Ponce, new chief of staff of armed forces as well as director of Treasury Police. They command five of country's six brigades, five of seven military detachments, three security forces as well as intelligence, personnel and operations posts in high command. Intelligence Newsletter, 11/16/1988, pp. 5,6

El Salvador, 1989-91. According to confidential Salvadoran military sources, decision to murder six Jesuit priests was made at a 15 November 1989 meeting of senior commanders (CO) at the Salvadoran military school. Those allegedly present were: Colonel Benavides, CO of the school; General Juan Rafael Bustillo, then CO of Salvadoran Air Force — in 1991 assigned to embassy in Israel; General Emilio Ponce, then chief of staff — in 1991 minister of defense; and Colonel Elena Fuentes, CO of 1st brigade. Initiative for murders came from Colonel Bustillo. For a listing of direct and circumstantial evidence supporting allegation, see statement of Rep. Joe Moakley, Task Force on El Salvador, 11/18/1991

El Salvador, 1989. CIA officer visited bodies of dead priests. Officer was senior liaison with (DNI) the national intelligence directorate. U.S. probably knew Salvadoran military behind assassinations but did not say anything for seven weeks. State Department panel did not review actions of CIA or DOD. Washington Post, 7/18/1993, C1,4

El Salvador, 1989. Congressman criticized a 11/ 1987 report in which Latin American and U.S. military leaders accused Rev. Ignacio Ellacuria and several other theologians of supporting objectives of communist revolution. Father Ellacuria, Rector of Jesuit university in San Salvador, was murdered on 11/16/ 1989. Religious News Service, 5/11/1990, p. 1

El Salvador, 1989. Joya Martinez and Jesuit murders. Martinez says his unit which played major role in 12/1989 murder of Jesuit priests had U.S. government advisors. INS trying to deport Martinez. Unclassified, 9/1990, p. 6

El Salvador, 1989. Salvadoran Archbishop Rivera accused U.S. officials of subjecting a witness to the slaying of 6 Jesuit intellectuals to brainwashing and psychological torment. Washington Post, 12/11/1989, A23,24

El Salvador, 1989. U.S. military adviser Benavides told FBI, later recanted, that Salvadoran army chief of staff and others knew of plan to kill six Jesuit priests. Washington Post, 10/29/1990, A17,21

El Salvador, 1990. Amnesty International reported a significant surge in number of killings by army-supported death squads this year. 45 people killed between January and August this year, compared with 40 reported in 1989. Washington Post, 10/24/1990, A14

El Salvador, 1990. Cesar Vielman Joya-Martinez, former member Salvadoran First brigade death squad, sentenced to 6 months in jail for illegally reentering U.S. 6 years after he deported. Washington Post, 12/8/1990, A22

El Salvador, 1991. Salvadoran minister of defense and other top generals attended 1989 meeting where decision was made to murder six Jesuit priests, according to confidential sources. Allegation was made by an attorney working for Rep. Moakley (D-MA), whose task force released a six page statement directly linking Salvadoran high command to slayings. Washington Times, 11/18/1991, A2

El Salvador, 1991. Summary executions continued in El Salvador despite the presence of Onusal, the UN observer mission monitoring human rights violations. In a 1991 report, Onusal noted government made few attempts to investigate slayings. Report also accused FMLN for recruiting fifteen-year-olds. Washington Times, 12/3/1991, A8

El Salvador, 1992. Cesar Vielman Joya Martinez, former Salvadoran death squad member, to be deported. Washington Post editorial, 10/23/1992, A20

El Salvador, 1993. Right-wing death squads undermining fragile peace per UN chief in campaign for March 1994 elections. Washington Times, 11/25/1993, A15

El Salvador, Central America, 1981-1993. Salvadoran death squads set up as a consequence of Kennedy administration decisions. Killers were Treasury Police and the military who were trained in intelligence and torture by U.S. U.S. personnel staffed military and intelligence apparatus. Generals selected and trained by U.S. were most notorious killers. 1984 FBI report on death squads never released. For savage expose of School of Americas' killers, see Father Roy Bourgeois's School of the Americas Watch, Box 3330, Columbus Ga. 31903; (706) 682-5369. The Nation, 12/27/1993, p. 791

El Salvador, 1989-1990. Joya Martinez testified role played by U.S. officials in death squad killings carried out by U.S. trained first infantry Brigade's intelligence unit. Two U.S. military advisers controlled intelligence department and paid for unit's operating expenses. His unit performed 74 executions between April and July 1989. Washington Post confirmed U.S. advisers work in liaison with First brigade and CIA pays expenses for intelligence operations in the brigades. Martinez said his first brigade unit attached to U.S.-trained Atlacatl battalion, which slaughtered the Jesuit priests. Member of his unit, Oscar Mariano Amaya Grimaldi has confessed to slayings. In These Times, 8/14/1990, p. 17

Europe: Watch List

Europe, 1945-92. Operation Gladio. First scandal was discovery of assassination teams in 1952 linked to Bundes Deutscher Jugend — a right-wing political organization in Hesse, Germany. They prepared list of German politicians who [might cooperate with Soviets]. BBC (1992). Gladio — Timewatch (Transcript of 3 part program), pp. 19-20

Georgia: Watch List

Georgia, 1993. Woodruff worked for 2 months as CIA's Tbilisi station chief posing as a State Department regional-affairs officer. He to help Guguladze upgrade Georgian intelligence service and to monitor factional struggle. Newsweek 8/23/1993, p. 18

Germany: Watch List

Germany, 1950-54. In about 1950 pacifist ideas to be eradicated. U.S. formed German youth league (Bund Deutscher Jugend (BDJ)) in Frankfurt. Psychological indoctrination given by Paul Luth. BDJ was a militant organization, a counterweight to communist-run free German youth (FDJ) run from East Berlin to infiltrate W. German youth. BDJ passed letters and brochures through Iron Curtain and pasted slogans on walls. Chancellor Adenauer wanted cold war and wanted to use the BDJ. Otto John told by State official Zinn that it had uncovered neo-Nazi unit BDJ run by Peters, that was organizing secret firing exercises and training for partisan warfare in the Odenwald. BDJ had drawn up a blacklist of left-wing socialists who were to be arrested or even murdered in event of attack from east. [early version of Gladio political and stay-behind operation]. John, O. (1969). *Twice Through the Lines: the Autobiography of Otto John*, pp. 210-15

Germany, 1950-90. Bonn officials said government to disband secret resistance net Operation Gladio. Section consisted of former Nazi SS and Waffen-SS officers as well as members of an extreme right-wing youth group that drew up plans to assassinate leading members of Socialist Democratic Party in event of USSR-invasion. "Statewatch" compilation filed June 1994, p. 11

Germany, 1952-91. CIA's stay-behind program caused scandal in 1952 when West German police discovered CIA working with a 2,000-member fascist youth group led by former Nazis. Group had a black list of people to be liquidated in case of conflict with the USSR. Lembke case. *The Nation*, 4/6/1992, p. 446

Germany, 1953. (Stay-behind operation Gladio?). In 1953 mass arrests of neo-Nazi militant organization within ranks of German youth fellowship (BDJ) discovered. Group held secret night maneuvers in Odenwald with CIA instructors. They preparing for war with East Germany and prepared lists of communists, left-wing sympathizers and pacifists who were to be arrested in case of emergency. Members encouraged to infiltrate East German youth league (FDJ). Operation exposed in press and scores of youths arrested in East Germany as spies, propagandists or provocateurs, and sentenced to terms of up to nine years of hard labor. Hagan, I. (1969). *The Secret War for Europe*, p. 78

Germany, 1953. U.S. Intelligence officer told Otto John, head of BFV, one of its agents in East Germany to defect with a list of East German agents in West. 35 Communist spies arrested after Easter. Later it found many of those arrested were innocent. Arrests followed with apologies. Disaster caused by over-zealous U.S. intelligence officer. West German businessmen as consequence afraid to do business with east. This a goal of U.S. Policy — was this a deliberate "mistake?" Hagan, I. (1969). *The Secret War for Europe*, p. 81

Greece: Watch List

Greece, 1967. After CIA-backed coup, the army and police seized almost 10,000 prisoners, mostly left-wing militants, though political leaders of all shades taken including prime minister Kanelopoulos and members of his Cabinet, trade union members, journalists, writers, etc. The lists had been provided by the sympathizers in the police and the secret service. Final lists kept up to date by COL George Ladas. Details of fate of the arrestees. Tompkins, P. (Unpublished manuscript). *Strategy of Terror*, pp. 13-8

Guatemala: Watch List

Guatemala, 1954. Death squads and target lists. Schlesinger, S., & Kinzer, S. (1983). *Bitter Fruit* 197, pp. 207-8, 221

Guatemala, 1954. Goal of CIA was apprehension of suspected communists and sympathizers. At CIA behest, Castillo Armas created committee and issued decree that established death penalty for crimes including labor union activities. Committee given authority declare anyone communist with no right of defense or appeal. By 11/21/1954 committee had some 72,000 persons on file and aiming to list 200,000. Schlesinger, S., & Kinzer, S. (1983). *Bitter Fruit*, p. 221

Guatemala, 1954. The U.S. Ambassador, after overthrow of Arbenz government, gave lists of radical opponents to be eliminated to Armas's government. NACLA 2/1983, p 4. The military continued up to at least 1979 to use a list of 72,000 proscribed opponents, drawn up first in 1954. NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 2/1983, p. 13

Guatemala, 1954. After Armas made president, labor code forgotten and worker organizers began disappearing from united fruit plantations. Hersh, B. (1992). *The Old Boys*, p. 353

Guatemala, 1954. Department of State Secretary Dulles told Ambassador Peurifoy to have the government scour the countryside for communists and to slap them with criminal charges. A few months later the government began to persecute hundreds for vague communist crimes. *The Nation*, 10/28/1978, p. 444

Guatemala, 1954 U.S. Ambassador Peurifoy, after Arbenz resigned, gave Guatemalan army's chief of staff a list of "communists" to be shot. The chief of staff declined. *The Nation* 6/5/1995, pp. 792-5

Guatemala, 1981-89. Israeli Knesset member General Peled said in Central America Israel is 'dirty work' contractor for U.S. Helped Guatemala regime when Congress blocked Reagan administration. Israeli firm Tadiran (then partly U.S.-owned) supplied Guatemalan military with computerized intelligence system to track potential subversives. Those on computer list had an excellent chance of being "disappeared." It was "an archive and computer file on journalists, students, leaders, leftists, politicians and so on." Computer system making up death lists. Cockburn, A. & Cockburn, L. (1991). *Dangerous Liaison*, p. 219

Guatemala, 1985-93. CIA collected intelligence re ties between Guatemalan insurgents and Cuba. CIA passed the information to U.S. military, which was assisting Guatemalan army extinguish opposition. *Washington Post*, 3/30/1995, A1,10

Guatemala, 1988-91. CIA station chief in Guatemala from 1988 to 1991 was a Cuban American. He had about 20 officers with a budget of about \$5 million a year and an equal or greater sum for "liaison" with Guatemalan military. His job included placing and keeping senior Guatemalan officers on his payroll. Among them was Alpirez, who recruited for CIA. Alpirez's intelligence unit spied on Guatemalans and is accused by human rights groups of assassinations. CIA also gave Guatemalan army information on guerrillas. *New York Times*, 4/2/1995, A11

Guatemala: Death Squads

Guatemala, 1953-84. For 30 years the CIA has been bankrolling a man reported to be behind right-wing terror in Central America. The CIA's protégé, Mario Sandoval Alarcon, former Vice President Of Guatemala, now heads the National Liberation Movement (NLM) founded in 1953 by CIA as a paramilitary force to overthrow Arbenz. By mid-1960s Sandoval emerged as head of the organization. The White Hand or La Mano Blanco with close ties to the NLM was responsible for as many as 8000 deaths in the 1960s plus more in the 1970s. Sandoval a pillar of the World Anti-communist League. The CIA still funds Sandoval. Jack Anderson, *Washington Post*, 1/30/1984

Guatemala, 1954-76. Effect of CIA coup organized labor all but wiped out. Union membership dropped 100,000 to 27,000 immediately and continued decline thereafter, in part due to death squad activity. Barry, T., and Preusch, D. (1986). AIFLD in Central America, p. 21

Guatemala. Police trained by AID public safety program murdered or disappeared 15,000 people. Lernoux, P. (1982). Cry of the People, p. 186

Guatemala, 1954-84. See Jack Anderson column "Links Reported Among Latin Death Squads." Washington Post, 1/12/1984, N. VA., p. 15

Guatemala, 1970-72. Under Arana presidency, with Mario Sandoval Alarcon and others involved in right-wing terrorism, Arana unleashed one of the most gruesome slaughters in recent Latin American history (only in Chile, following the coup against Allende was the degree of violence greater). The New York Times reported in June 1971 that at least 2000 Guatemalans were assassinated between 11/1970 and 5/1971; most corpses showed signs of torture. Most of killing attributed to the officially supported terrorist organizations Ojo Por Ojo (an eye for an eye) and Mano Blanca. Jones, S., and Tobis, D. (Eds.). (1974). Guatemala, pp. 202-3

Guatemala, 1970-87. Violence by security forces organized by CIA, trained in torture by advisors from Argentina, Chile. Supported by weapon, computer experts from Israel. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, p. 133

Guatemala. 1960-82. Trained military death squads who used "terror tactics" from killing to indiscriminate napalming of villages. Special Forces almost certainly participated in operations despite Congressional prohibition. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, p. 193

Guatemala, 1954. The U.S. ambassador, after overthrow of Arbenz government, gave lists to Armas of radical opponents to be eliminated. NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 2/1983, p. 4

Guatemala, 1985. The World Anti-communist League's point man, Mario Sandoval Alarcon, remains a League member even after exposed as a death squad patriarch who was on the CIA payroll. Jack Anderson, Washington Post, 8/9/1986

Guatemala, 1989. Climate of terror grips Guatemala. Killers, bombers said to target civilian rule. Washington Post, 9/29/1989, A 45

Guatemala, circa 1968-70. U.S. counterinsurgency program turned area into bloody war zone taking the lives of thousands of peasants. Formed Mano Blanca or White Hand. Plan used through out country in 1970. NACLA (magazine re Latin America), 3/74, p. 19

Guatemala. Article by Gary Bass and Babette Grunow on the Guatemalan counterinsurgency forces. Lies of our Time, 6/1993, pp. 11-13

Guatemala. At least three of recent G-2 chiefs were paid by CIA. Crimes are merely examples of a vast, systematic pattern; [the guilty] are only cogs in a large U.S. government apparatus. Colonel Hooker, former DIA chief for Guatemala, says, "it would be an embarrassing situation if you ever had a roll call of everybody in Guatemalan army who ever collected a CIA paycheck." Hooker says CIA payroll is so large that it encompasses most of Army's top decision-makers. Top commanders paid by CIA include General Roberto Matta Galvez, former army chief of staff, head of presidential General Staff and commander of massacres in

El Quiche department; and General Gramajo, defense minister during the armed forces' abduction, rape and torture of Dianna Ortiz, an American nun. Hooker says he once brought Gramajo on a tour of U.S. Three recent Guatemalan heads of state confirm CIA works closely with G-2. Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores (military dictator from 1983 to 1986) how death squads had originated, he said they started "in the 1960s by CIA." General Efraim Rios Montt (dictator from 1982 to 1983 and the current congress president), who ordered main high-land massacres (662 villages destroyed, by army's own count), said CIA had agents in the G-2. CIA death squads by Allan Nairn. The Nation, 4/17/1995

Guatemala. CIA works inside a Guatemalan army unit that maintains a network of torture centers and has killed thousands of Guatemalan civilians. G-2, since at least 60s, has been advised, trained, armed and equipped by U.S. undercover agents. One of American agents who works with G-2, is Randy Capister. He has been involved in similar operations with army of neighboring El Salvador. A weapons expert known as Joe Jacarino, has operated through out Caribbean, and has accompanied G-2 units on missions into rural zones. Jacarino [possibly a CIA officer]. Celerino Castillo, a former agent of DEA who dealt with G-2 and CIA in Guatemala, says he worked with Capister as well as with Jacarino. Colonel Alpirez at La Aurora base in Guatemala Denied involvement in deaths of Bamaca and Devine. He said CIA advises and helps run G-2. He praised CIA for "professionalism" and close rapport with Guatemalan officers. He said that agency operatives often come to Guatemala on temporary duty, and train G-2. CIA gives sessions at G-2 bases on "contra-subversion" tactics and "how to manage factors of power" to "fortify democracy." During mid-1980s G-2 officers were paid by Jack McCavitt, then CIA station chief. CIA "technical assistance" includes communications gear, computers and special firearms, as well as collaborative use of CIA-owned helicopters that are flown out of piper hangar at La Aurora civilian airport and from a separate U.S. Air facility. Guatemalan army has, since 1978, killed more than 110,000 civilians. G-2 and a smaller, affiliated unit called Archivo have long been openly known in Guatemala as the brain of the terror state. With a contingent of more than 2,000 agents and with sub-units in local army bases, G-2 coordinates torture, assassination and disappearance of dissidents. CIA Death Squads by Allan Nairn. The Nation, 4/17/1995

Guatemala, 1954-95. For at least five years, Colonel Alpirez was also a well-paid agent for CIA and a murderer, a U.S. Congressman says. Alpirez has been linked to the murder of Michael Devine, an American innkeeper who lived and worked in the Guatemalan jungle, and the torture and killing of Efraim Bamaca Velasquez, a leftist guerrilla who was the husband of Jennifer Harbury. CIA ties began in 1954, when Alpirez was about five years old. The CIA engineered a coup in Guatemala that overthrew a leftist president and installed a right-wing military regime. CIA's station in Guatemala began recruiting young and promising military officers who would provide information on the left-wing guerrillas, the internal workings of Guatemala's intertwined military and political leadership, union members, opposition politicians and others. Alpirez was sent in 1970 to School of the Americas (SOA), an elite and recently much-criticized U.S. Army academy at Fort Benning, Ga. Human-rights groups and members of congress point out that SOA's graduates include Roberto D'Aubuisson, leader of death squads in El Salvador; 19 Salvadoran soldiers named in the 1989 assassination of six Jesuit priests and three soldiers accused of the 1980 rape and murder of four U.S. church workers; Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedars and other leaders of the military junta that ran Haiti from 1991 to 1994; General Hugo Banzer, dictator of Bolivia from 1971 to 1978, and General Manuel Antonio Noriega of Panama, now imprisoned in U.S. In 1970s Alpirez was an officer in a counterinsurgency unit known as Kaibiles. Kaibiles became notorious in the early 1980s, known as scorched earth years, when tens of thousands of Indians were killed as military swept across rural Guatemala, systematically destroying villages. Guatemalan government's own count, campaign left 40,000 widows and 150,000 orphans. In late 1980s, Alpirez served as a senior official of an intelligence unit hidden within the general staff and became a paid agent of CIA who paid him tens of thousands of dollars a year. Intelligence unit, known as "Archivo," or archives, stands accused of assassination, infiltration of civilian agencies and

spying on Guatemalans in violation of the nation's Constitution. Archivo works like the CIA. "It was also working as a death squad." New York Times, 3/25/1995

Guatemala, 1954-95. U.S. Undercover agents have worked for decades inside a Guatemalan army unit that has tortured and killed thousands of Guatemalan citizens, per the Nation weekly magazine. "working out of the U.S. Embassy and living in safe houses and hotels, agents work through an elite group of Guatemalan officers who are secretly paid by CIA and implicated personally in numerous political crimes and assassinations "unit known as G-2 and its secret collaboration with CIA were described by U.S. and Guatemalan operatives and confirmed by three former Guatemalan heads of state. Colonel Julio Roberto Alpírez, Guatemalan officer implicated in murders of guerrilla leader Efraín Bamaca Velásquez — husband of an American lawyer — and rancher Michael Devine discussed in an interview how intelligence agency advises and helps run G-2. He said agents came to Central American country often to train G-2 men and he described attending CIA sessions at G-2 bases on "contra-subversion" tactics and "how to manage factors of power" to "fortify democracy" the Nation quoted U.S. and Guatemalan intelligence sources as saying at least three recent G-2 chiefs have been on CIA payroll — General Edgar Godoy Gatan, Colonel Otto Pérez Molina and General Francisco Ortega Menaldo. "It would be embarrassing if you ever had a roll call of everybody in Guatemalan army who ever collected a CIA paycheck," report quoted Colonel George Hooker, U.S. DIA chief in Guatemala from 1985 to 1989, as saying. Human rights group Amnesty International has said Guatemalan army killed more than 110,000 civilians since 1978 with G-2 and another unit called Archivo known as main death squads. Reuters, 3/30/1995

Guatemala, 1960-90. Human rights groups say at least 40,000 Guatemalans "disappeared" in last three decades. Most were poor Indians. Anthropologists, led by Clyde Snow, dug away at a village site. Maria Lopez had a husband and a son in one grave. She said on morning of Valentine's Day 1982, members of anti-guerrilla militia took her husband and others. They had refused to join militias known as civil self-defense patrols and were killed. Six unknown clandestine graves in San José Pacho. Human rights groups blame most disappearances on army-run civil self-defense patrols set up under presidencies of General Lucas García and Brig. Gen. Ríos Montt. There are hundreds of clandestine graves filled with victims of the militias, right-wing death squads and brutal counterinsurgency campaigns. Washington Times, 8/5/1992, p. A9

Guatemala, 1970-95. Jennifer Harbury's story. Time, 4/3/1995, p. 48

Guatemala, 1981-95. DIA reports re MLN particularly disturbing, as they raise grave questions about extent of U.S. knowledge of MLN activities in earlier years when MLN leader Mario Sandoval Alarcón was tied to Reagan Administration's efforts to support Contras. Having come to power in 1954 with the CIA-backed overthrow of Colonel Jacobo Arbenz, MLN leader Sandoval was accused in 1980 by Elias Barahona, former press secretary to the Guatemalan Interior Minister, of having worked for CIA. Head of National Congress from 1970 to 1974, at which time he was made vice president, a position he kept until his term expired in 1978, Sandoval is widely regarded as father of Latin America's "death squads." In 1970's, he had a close relationship with Roberto D'Aubuisson, deputy chief of El Salvador's national security agency (Anseal). D'Aubuisson reportedly was behind El Salvador's death squads. Sandoval was so close to Reagan administration that he was one of only two Guatemalans invited to attend Reagan's inauguration. Intelligence — a computerized intelligence newsletter published in France, 4/24/1995, p. 1

Guatemala, 1984-95. Article, "Murder as Policy." Washington was supporting Guatemalan army in a number of ways: green berets trained Kaibul massacre force, the army's self-proclaimed "messengers of death." U.S. openly sold weapons to Guatemala — used in

massacre in Santiago Atitlan. Hundreds of U.S. troops (mostly National Guard) helped civic action and road building in massacre zones. The Nation, 4/24/1995, pp. 547-8

Guatemala, 1985-93. CIA collected intelligence re ties between Guatemalan insurgents and Cuba — CIA passed the information to U.S. military, which was assisting Guatemalan army extinguish opposition. Washington Post, 3/30/1995, A1,10

Guatemala, 1985-95. Bombings against military-reformist Christian Democratic Party (DCG) of then President Vinicio Cerezo to topple Cerezo, who perceived as being too soft on rebels. A 10/1988 DIA intelligence report alerted American authorities that MLN, which was involved in "plotting a coup against Cerezo in the past," is "now apparently prepared to use violent tactics to undermine DCG government." MLN "is reportedly planning a bombing campaign directed against members of ruling DCG. MLN intends to use recently obtained explosives to target personal vehicles of DCG Congressional representatives in order to frighten them. After assessing their impact, MLN will consider initiating a second stage of its anti-DCG campaign that will include killing of various individuals. MLN has selected potential targets in Guatemala city. U.S. Army and DIA, getting regular, high-level intelligence from senior Guatemalan army officers and other sources about crimes, notably murder, being committed by Guatemalan army personnel. Source and depth of intelligence raises questions about what U.S. Government actually knew about Guatemalan army complicity in civilian murders in that country throughout the 1980s, including alleged involvement of Guatemalan Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, then a CIA agent, in 1990 and 1992 murders of American innkeeper Michael Devine and guerrilla fighter Efrain Bamaco Velazquez, husband of an American, Jennifer Harbury." Intelligence — a computerized intelligence newsletter published in France, 4/24/1995, p. 1

Guatemala, 1988-91. CIA station chief in Guatemala from 1988 to 1991 was a Cuban American. He had about 20 officers with a budget of about \$5 million a year and an equal or greater sum for "liaison" with Guatemalan military. His job included placing and keeping senior Guatemalan officers on his payroll. Among them was Alpirez, who recruited others for CIA. Alpirez's intelligence unit spied on Guatemalans and is accused by human rights groups of assassinations. CIA also gave Guatemalan army information on the guerrillas. New York Times, 4/2/1995, A11

Guatemala, 1989. 25 students in two years killed by squads. Entire university student association has been silenced. U.S. backed governments in virtual genocide have more than 150,000 victims. AI called this genocide a "government program of political murder." The Nation, 3/5/1990, cover, p. 308

Guatemala, 1990-95. Member of House Intelligence Committee, Robert G. Torricelli (D- NJ.) said, in letter to President Clinton, that a Guatemalan military officer who ordered killings of an American citizen and a guerrilla leader married to a North American lawyer was a paid agent of CIA. CIA knew of killings, but concealed its knowledge for years. Another member of House Intelligence Committee confirmed Torricelli's claims. Torricelli wrote in letter to President that the "Direct involvement of CIA in the murder of these individuals leads me to the extraordinary conclusion that the agency is simply out of control and that it contains what can only be labeled a criminal element." Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, Bamaca, and Michael Devine. Tim Weiner, New York Times, 3/23/1995

Guatemala, 1990-95. Article, El Buki's Tale — Murder of Michael Devine. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Summer 1995, pp. 32-37

Guatemala, 1990-95. Article, The Agency, Off Target. Two Deaths, a Rogue CIA Informant and a Big Pot of Trouble. Re deaths of Michael Devine and Efrain Bamaca Velasquez —

Harbury's husband. CIA paid Colonel Alpirez \$43,000 after it learned of cover up of deaths. U.S. News & World Report, 4/10/1995, p. 46

Guatemala, 1990-95. Assassin of Michael Devine and of the husband of Jennifer Harbury, Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, was on CIA's payroll and had attended School of Americas (SOA) on two separate occasions. In January 1995 when State and NSC pieced together what CIA knew, the ambassador demanded removal of CIA's station chief. CIA fought to stop disclosure of its relationship with the Colonel. Administration officials began to mistrust what CIA was saying about the case. The Colonel first came to U.S. In 1970 as an army cadet at SOA. He returned to SOA in 1989, to take year long Command and General Staff course when he was already on CIA payroll. In 1990, Michael Devine, who ran a hotel, apparently stumbled on a smuggling operation involving Guatemalan military. He was killed. New York Times, 3/24/1995, A3

Guatemala, 1990-95. CIA last month removed its station chief in Guatemala for failing to report promptly information linking a paid CIA informer to the slaying of a Guatemalan guerrilla fighter married to Jennifer Harbury. Guatemalan army Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, was paid \$44,000 by CIA in 1992 for secretly supplying intelligence on the civil war. At time of payment CIA had evidence linking him to the slaying of U.S. citizen Michael Devine (after he found about a military smuggling operation or because he had a weapon). Washington Post, 3/25/1995, A1,20

Guatemala, 1990-95. Clinton has threatened to fire anyone in CIA who withheld information from him about activities of its informant in Guatemala, Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez. What is more likely to be agency's undoing is its failure to tell congress that only six months after he graduated from command-level courses at School of Americas Colonel Alpirez, a member of military intelligence on agency's payroll, ordered murder of a U.S. citizen, William Devine, and then torture-murder of husband of an American woman. White House officials, and President Clinton in particular, were very angry about Guatemalan affair but NSC Anthony Lake was arguing that there is no evidence that CIA tried to deceive president. Los Angeles Times reported that late last year State Department found information about Devine murder in its files that appeared to have originated with CIA and had not been passed on to White House. This discovery prompted State Department and White House to ask CIA for more information. State initially asked CIA for information on rebel Commandante Efraim Bamaca Velasquez and received a few modest files. Several weeks later, State again asked CIA for information but this time on "Commandante Everardo," which was Commandante Bamaca's well-known nom de guerre. Only then did CIA produced incriminating data that it held solely under that name. CIA has tried to ease situation with a rare "leak" about itself to press. On 3/24, Los Angeles Times quoted "CIA sources" as saying Agency was only told after the fact that its Guatemalan informant, Colonel Alpirez, was present at killing in 1990 of Devine, a U.S. citizen who ran a popular tourist resort in Guatemala. CIA insisted to the paper that it cut ties with Colonel at that point, but, significantly, sources did not put a date on rupture. That gave it "wobble room" to say it didn't find out about Colonel's involvement in March 1992 torture-murder of Bamaca until early this year. CIA gave Colonel Alpirez a "final payment" of \$44,000 at about time of Bamaca's murder. Per National public radio commentator Daniel Schorr, CIA station chief in Guatemala has been fired for failing to relay information. But New York Times says he was reassigned to Langley in January, after U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala accused him of withholding information. CIA has assigned its inspector General, Fred Hitz, to investigate. CIA station chief in Switzerland, who held a top position at Department of Operations (DO) Latin American Division from 1990 to 1992, is now being questioned, as is Jack Devine, who headed division from January 1983 until last October. He was appointed Associate Deputy Director of Operations in October after John MacGaffin was removed from that post for secretly giving an award to a senior operative who had just been disciplined in Ames case. Devine's successor is a woman, first to direct a DO division. She is in her 50s, was previously station chief in El Salvador, and is said by officials

outside CIA to be very forthcoming about case. Intelligence — a computerized intelligence newsletter published in France, 3/27/1995, p. 30

Guatemala, 1990-95. Guatemalan soldiers killed Michael Devine under orders from Colonel Mario Garcia Catalan, per convicted soldier, Solbal. He killed as the army convinced he had bought a stolen rifle. They tortured him before killing him. Solbal says Colonel Alpirez gave food and shelter to the killers. Washington Times, 5/15/1995, A13

Guatemala, 1990-95. Letter from Congressman Torricelli to President Clinton about involvement of CIA in two murders in Guatemala. 3/22/1995

Guatemala, 1990-95. Rep. Robert Torricelli, D-NJ., who is on the HPSCI, has requested an investigation from the Justice Department on role of the CIA in the murder of Michael Devine and Efrain Bamaca Velasquez. Request was made in a letter to President Clinton. Guatemalan intelligence officer who ordered the murders, Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, was a paid agent of the CIA. Torricelli claims that the NSA, CIA, State Department., and NSC covered up the involvement of a paid agent in the murders. Devine, who was killed in 1990, was an American citizen and Velasquez, who was killed in 1992, was married to an U.S. Citizen. CNN Headline News, 3/23/1995 and AP, 3/23/1995

Guatemala, 1990-95. Revelations about a CIA informer linked to two murders (Devine and Bamaca) in Guatemala helped exhumate embarrassing relationship between U.S. military and intelligence personnel and a Central American regime notorious for human rights violations. Washington Post, 4/2/1995, A29

Guatemala, 1990-95. Tim Weiner article "A Guatemalan Officer and the CIA." Colonel is recalled as a "good soldier" and a murdering spy. New York Times, 3/26/1995

Guatemala, 1990-95. Two colonels suspended in Guatemala for covering up 1990 killing of Michael Devine. One was a paid CIA informant at time of killing. Colonel Mario Garcia Catalan also suspended. Washington Post, 4/27/1995, A29

Guatemala, 1990-95. Wife of Michael Devine discusses slaying of her husband. New York Times, 3/28/1995, A1,6

Guatemala, 1991-94. State Department reported in 1991, that "military, civil patrols and police continued to commit a majority of major human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings torture and disappearances." Guatemalan counterinsurgency campaign devised by U.S. counterinsurgency experts Caesar Sereseres and Colonel George Minas. Former served as a consultant to RAND Corporation and State Department's Office of Policy Planning. Minas served as military attache in Guatemala in early 1980s. Both encouraged population control such as Vietnam-style military-controlled strategic hamlets and civilian defense patrols. Today Guatemala is largest warehouse for cocaine transshipments to U.S. Drug trade run by military which tries to blame the leftists. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Spring 1994, pp. 28-33

Guatemala, 1991-95. U.S. Had information in 10/1991 linking a paid CIA informer in slaying of a U.S. citizen. Colonel Roberto Alpirez was dropped from CIA's payroll but remained a contact through 7/1992 — when he allegedly ordered another killing of Efrain Bamaca Velasquez — husband of Jennifer Harbury. Washington Post, 3/24/1995, A1,27

Guatemala, 1992. Rights abuses in Guatemala continue, paramilitary civilian patrols — self defense patrols — accused of campaign of terror, control rural areas. Patrols answer to military. Washington Post, 10/4/1992, A35

Guatemala, 1995. President Clinton said he would dismiss any CIA official who withheld information on death of Jennifer Harbury's husband. Rep Torricelli said CIA withheld information for years. Washington Times, 3/25/1995, A3

Guatemala, 1970-95. Discussion of Torricelli, Harbury, Devine, Bamaco, etc. The death of husband of Harbury not a rogue operation. This was standard operating procedure in El Salvador and Guatemala and elsewhere around the globe. CIA organized death squads, financed them, equipped them, trained them, etc. That's what the CIA does. Once in a decade the U.S. public hears about this. CIA should be abolished. The CIA mislead Congress about the Devine case. Getting rid of CIA is not enough — the CIA did not act alone. The National Security Agency and the Army may have been involved in Guatemala. The Progressive, 5/1995, pp. 8,9

Haiti: Watch List

Haiti, 1986-93. In 1986 the CIA funded the national intelligence service (SIN) under guise of fighting narcotics — but SIN never produced drug intelligence and used CIA money for political operations. Sin involved in spying on so-called subversive groups...they doing nothing but political repression...they targeted people who were for change. CIA used distorted data to discredit Aristide. NACLA (Magazine re Latin America), 2/1994, p. 35

Haiti, 1990-94. Emannuel Constant, leader of Haiti's FRAPH hit squad, worked for CIA and U.S. intelligence helped launch FRAPH. Haiti's dreaded attaches paid for by a U.S. Government-funded project that maintains sensitive files on Haiti's poor. The Nation, 10/24/1994, 458

Haiti, 1990-94. U.S. officials involved in refugee policy have backgrounds suggestive of Phoenix-like program activities. Luis Moreno, State Department, has background in counterterrorism. Gunther Wagner, senior intelligence officer at INS's southwest regional office, assigned to investigate repression against repatriated refugees. Wagner had served as public safety adviser to Vietnamese National Special Branch for 5 years and later advised Somoza's National Guard. INS database on all asylum interviews at Guantanamo. INS, on demand, gave State Department unrestricted access to all interview files. U.S. Officers hand Haitian authorities computer print-outs of names of all Haitians being repatriated. CIA funded service intelligence nationale (SIN), who's de facto primary function was a war against popular movement — including torture and assassination — a fact admitted by a CIA officer to an official in Aristide's government. U.S. shares "anti-narcotics intelligence" with Haitian military. The Progressive, 4/1994, p. 21

Haiti, 1991-94. Asylum-promoting project gets family information that fed into a computer project that could be used to target for repression. The Progressive, 9/1994, pp. 19-26

Haiti, 1991-94. Seven chief attaches arranged killings and brought victims to houses. Four of the seven worked for Centers for Development and Health (CDS), funded by U.S. AID. One was Gros Sergo, and other was Fritz Joseph who chief FRAPH recruiter in Cite Soleil. Two others are Marc Arthur and Gors Fanfan. CDS files track every family in Cite Soleil. The Nation, 10/24/1994, p. 461

Haiti, 1994. AID programs for Haitian popular groups; Immigration and Naturalization service, with computerized files on 58,000 political-asylum applicants and army intelligence S-2 section of 96th Civil Affairs Battalion assigned to monitor refugees at Guantanamo Bay. Per Capt. James Vick, unit develops networks of informants and works with marine corps counterintelligence in "identifying ringleaders of unrest and in weeding out troublemakers." 96th's files enter military intelligence system. Gunther Wagner, a former Nazi, served with U.S. In Phoenix operation in Vietnam, and in Nicaragua — now heads State Department's

Cuba-Haiti task force. Pentagon's Atlantic command commissioned Booz, Allen, Hamilton, to devise a computer model of Haitian society. Results of study given. Priority of study to build an "organized information bank...." no change expected in ruling clique of Haiti. Article by Allan Nairn. The Nation, 10/3/1994, pp. 344-48

Haiti: Death Squads

Haiti. CIA officer assigned 1973-75 Coordination with Ton-Ton Macoute, "Baby Doc" Duvalier's private death squad. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), 9/1980, p. 16

Haiti, 1985-93. CIA created an intelligence service in Haiti: National Intelligence Service, (SIN) from its initials in French, to fight cocaine trade, but unit became instrument of political terror whose officers engaged in drug traffic, killings and torture. Unit produced little drug intelligence. U.S. cut ties to group after 1991 military coup. New York Times, 11/14/1993 pp. 1,12

Haiti, 1986-93 INS database on all asylum interviews at Guantanamo. INS, on demand, gave State Department unrestricted access to all interview files. U.S. officers hand Haitian authorities computer print-outs of names of all Haitians being repatriated. CIA funded service intelligence nationale (SIN), who's de facto primary function was a war against popular movement — including torture and assassination — a fact admitted by a CIA officer to an official in Aristide's government. U.S. shares "anti-narcotics intelligence" with Haitian military. The Progressive, 4/1994, p. 21

Haiti, 1990-94. Clinton administration denied report CIA helped set up Haiti's pro-army Militia — FRAPH. Officials refused to comment whether FRAPH leader Emmanuel Constant was a paid CIA informant. "Nation" article said Constant worked for both the CIA and the DIA. Colonel Collins of DIA and Donald Terry of CIA were his contacts. Collins urged Constant to set up FRAPH. Mr. Constant, per Washington Times, was a paid U.S. Informant on Haitian political activities and assisting anti-drug efforts. Relationship broken off early this year. FRAPH has been linked to murders, public beatings and arson. CIA officers in past worked with Haiti's national intelligence service. Washington Times, 10/7/1994, A16

Haiti, 1990-94. Emmanuel Constant, leader of Haiti's FRAPH hit squad, worked for CIA and U.S. Intelligence helped launch FRAPH. Haiti's dreaded attaches paid for by a U.S. Government-funded project that maintains sensitive files on Haiti's poor. In 10/3/1994, issue of Nation carried Nairn's article "The Eagle is Landing," he quoted a U.S. official praising Constant as a young republican that U.S. Intelligence had encouraged to form FRAPH. Constant confirmed that account. He first said his handler was Colonel Patrick Collins, DIA attache in Haiti, and later claimed another U. S. official urged him to form FRAPH. Collins first approached Constant while he taught a course at HQs of CIA-run national intelligence service (SIN) and built up a computer data base at Bureau of Information and Coordination. FRAPH originally was called Haitian Resistance League. Constant was working for the CIA at SIN while it attacked the poor. The Nation, 10/24/1994, p. 458

Haiti, 1991-94. Emmanuel Constant (son of a Duvalier general), who had been on the CIA payroll since the mid-'1980s. With U.S. intelligence advice, formed FRAPH, a political front and paramilitary death squad offshoot of the Haitian army, that began to systematically target democratic militants and hold the country hostage with several armed strikes. On 10/11/1993, day U.S.S. Harlan County and U.S. and Canadian soldiers were to land, even though CIA had been tipped off, FRAPH organized a dockside demonstration of several dozen armed thugs. Ship turned around. U.S. asylum processing program hand-picked and exported almost 2,000 grassroots leaders. In three years after coup, 7,000-man army and its paramilitary assistants killed at least 3,000 and probably over 4,000 people, tortured

thousands, and created tens of thousands of refugees and 300,000 internally displaced people. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Winter 1994/1995, pp. 7-13

Haiti, 1991-94. Haitian paramilitary chief spied for CIA. Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, head of Haiti's notorious FRAPH, secretly provided information to U.S. intelligence while his group killed people. Constant paid by CIA for giving intelligence officers information about Aristide beginning shortly after Aristide ousted in 9/1991 coup. CIA dropped him last Spring. Constant's organization blamed for killing hundreds of supporters of Aristide — and organizing demonstration that drove off U.S. troop-carrying Harlan County last October. In "Nation" article, U.S. Defense Attache, Colonel Patrick Collins, had encouraged Constant to form FRAPH. U.S. intelligence agencies had extensive penetration of Haitian military and paramilitary groups. Using Constant as source may explain why CIA's reporting on Aristide was skewed. FRAPH not formed until 8/1993, 9 months after Collins left Haiti. Washington Post, 10/9/1994, A1,30

Haiti, 1993. Young men kidnapped by armed thugs seldom reappear. Under de facto government, as many as 3000 may have been killed. Aristide negotiating his return with UN. The Nation, 5/3/1993, p. 580

Haiti, 1995. Interview with Allan Nairn, April 1995 "Criminal Habits." Z Magazine 6/1995, pp. 22-9

Honduras: Death Squads

Honduras, 1981-87. Florencio Caballero, who served as a torturer and a member of a death squad, said he was trained in Texas by the CIA. He said he was responsible for the torture and slaying of 120 Honduran and other Latin American citizens. The CIA taught him and 24 other people in a army intelligence unit for 6 months in interrogation. psychological methods — to study fears and weaknesses of a prisoner, make him stand up, don't let him sleep, keep him naked and isolated, put rats and cockroaches in his cell, give him bad food, throw cold water on him, change the temperature. Washington Post, 6/8/1988, B3

Honduras, circa 1982-87. Army Battalion 3/16, a special counterinsurgency force which many considered a kind of death squad, was formed in 1980. Florencio Caballero, a former battalion member, described a clandestine paramilitary structure for repressing leftists. Caballero, who studied interrogation techniques in Houston, said the CIA was extensively involved in training squad members. NACLA 2/1988, p. 15, from New York Times, 5/2/1987

Honduras, March 1986. Apart from CIA training of a battalion implicated in death squad activities and torture, Honduran army defector said CIA arranged a fabricated forced "confession" by kidnapped prisoner that he headed a guerrilla front and had planned attacks against U.S. installations. This in operation truth. Chomsky, N. (1988). The Culture of Terrorism, p. 239

Honduras. General G. Alvarez Martinez, CIA-Contra point man in Honduras, had death squad operation run by Ricardo Lau. Alvarez godfather to new CIA Chief of Station's daughter. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, pp. 78-9

Honduras, 1982-86. Zuniga told congressional staffers about the 316 Battalion established with the knowledge and assistance of the U.S. Embassy. By 1984 more than 200 Honduran teachers, students, labor leaders, and opposition politicians had been murdered. The CIA had knowledge of the killings. Zuniga killed in 9/1985. Mother Jones, 4/1987, p. 48

Honduras. Capt. Alexander Hernandez, a graduate of U.S. International Police services training program, has played a central role in Honduran death squad activities and the war in Nicaragua. Early 1986 New York Times reports that CIA was providing "training and advice in intelligence collection" to Hernandez' unit "as part of a program to cut off arms shipments from Nicaragua to leftist rebels in Honduras and El Salvador." New York Times also says that CIA knew of the assassinations but "looked the other way." The Nation, 6/7/1986, p. 793

Honduras, circa 1981-84. Honduran government established a secret unit that seized, interrogated, tortured, and murdered more than 130 people between 1981-84. Unit named Battalion 316. Unit operated with CIA supervision and training and received U.S. instruction in interrogation, surveillance and hostage rescue. Commander of unit in first years was a graduate of International Police Academy. NA, 2/20/1988, pp. 224-5 The clandestine houses and command post of 316 were visited by CIA agents. NA, 1/23/1988, p. 85

Honduras, Nicaragua, 1982. A Contra commander with the FDN admitted he helped organize a death squad in Honduras with the approval and cooperation of the CIA. Honduran government agreed to host the death squad and provide it with cover, since the group would kill Honduran dissidents at the government's request. The commander admitted he participated in assassinations. CIA "Colonel Raymond" congratulated the squad. The Progressive, 8/1986, p. 25

Honduras, Nicaragua, 1984-85. Honduran army investigators report that Contras have been involved in death-squad killings in Honduras. At least 18 Hondurans and an unknown number of Salvadorans and Nicaraguans have been killed by the Contras. Washington Post, 1/15/1985, A12

Honduras, 1980-83. Agents of Battalion 316, a Honduran death squad, received interrogation training in Texas from CIA in 1980. CIA agents maintained contact with unit in early 1980's, visiting detention centers during interrogation and obtaining intelligence gleaned from torture victims. See Americas Watch "Human Rights in Honduras" (May 1987). Dillon, S. (1991). Commandos, p. 101

Honduras, 1980-83. Gustavo Alvarez, formerly head of police, in 1981 a general running entire armed forces. Worked closely with U.S. on Contras. Alvarez had organized military intelligence Battalion 316 — first Honduran death squad. Argentines sent 15-20 officers to work with Alvarez on Contras. Senior officer Osvaldo Riveiro. Garvin, G. (1992). Everybody Has His Own Gringo, p. 41

Honduras, 1980-89. CIA and State Department worked with a Honduran military unit called Battalion 316 during the 1980s. Unit was responsible for cracking down on dissidents. AP, 6/12/1995. Honduran special prosecutor for human rights asking the U.S. to turn over classified information on Ambassadors John Negroponte and Chris Arcos and several CIA agents connected to the disappearance of dissidents in the 1980s. AP, 6/13/1995

Honduras, 1980-89. Colonel Gustavo Alvarez Martinez shot to death in 1989. Alvarez spent years networking with fascists and ultra right terrorists who in World Anti-communist League and its sister organization, the Latin American Anti-communist Confederation, or CAL. He most famous for streamlining Honduras's death squads and uniting them under his control. Alvarez gathered together the National Front for the Defense of Democracy, the Honduran Anti-communist Movement (MACHO), and the Anti-communist Combat Army — death squads all — and combined them with several governmental forces, including the Fuerzas de Seguridad Publica (FUSEP), Departamento Nacional de Investigaciones (DIN), and Tropas Especiales Para Selva y Nocturnas (TESON). With Director of Central Intelligence Casey, Alvarez and Negroponte turned Honduras into a staging ground for Contra incursions into Nicaragua. Honduran Congress issued Decree 33, which declared terrorist anyone who

distributed political literature, associated with foreigners, joined groups deemed subversive by the government, damaged property, or destroyed documents. Alvarez's forces murdered upwards of 500 people. He ousted as Honduras's dictator in 1984 and became special consultant to RAND Corporation. *Lies of our Time*, 3/1994, pp. 3-5

Honduras, 1980-89. Eleven senior officers who are believed to have been involved with Battalion 316 have been convicted on charges of kidnapping, torturing and attempting to murder six students in 1982. Officers include one general, nine colonels, and one captain. AP, 7/25/1995

Honduras, 1980-89. See entry in *Liaison* from *Baltimore Sun*, 6/11-18/1995

Honduras, 1980-93. CIA-trained death squad issue in presidential campaign. In early 1980s, Battalion 3-16, of Honduran military whose members instructed by and worked with CIA "disappeared" scores of activists. Both candidates accusing other of connections to Battalion 3-16. In 1980 25-Honduran officers to U.S. for training per sworn testimony in International Court by Honduran intelligence officer who participated — Florencio Caballero. Group trained in interrogation by a team from FBI and CIA. Training continued in Honduras. U.S. Trainers joined by instructors from Argentina and Chile — sessions focused on surveillance and rescuing kidnap victims. Battalion 3-16 engaged in a program of systematic disappearances and murder from 1981 to 1984. By March 1984, 100-150 students, teachers, unionists and travelers picked up and secretly executed. Squads, according to Inter-American Court of Human Rights, belonged to 3-16. Squads modus operandi included weeks of surveillance of suspects followed by capture by disguised agents using vehicles with stolen license plates, interrogation, torture in secret jails followed by execution and secret burial. CIA's connection to 3-16 confirmed by General Alvarez, who created and commanded squad from 1980 through 1984. He later became chief of police and then head of the armed forces. Alvarez said CIA "gave good training, lie detectors, phone-tapping devices and electronic equipment to analyze intelligence." CIA men informed when 3-16 abducted suspected leftists. When bodies found, 3-16 put out story they killed by guerrillas. CIA looked other way. Ambassador Negroponte in 1982 denied existence of death squads. State Department was attacking as communist, anti-democratic and a terrorist group, Committee for Defense of Human Rights in Honduras that was exposing 3-16. In a barracks coup, Alvarez forced into exile in Miami and became paid consultant to Pentagon writing study on low-intensity conflict. Members of 3-16 still in positions of power in government. Congressional intelligence committee in 1988 looked into CIA's role with 3-16, but findings never published. Op-ed by Anne Manuel. *Washington Post*, 11/28/1993, C5

Honduras, 1982-83. Ex-guard Benito "Mack" Bravo reportedly killed dozens of Contra recruits at his La Ladosa training base near El Paraiso. Mack suspected many were Sandinista infiltrators. In one case, FDN ordered four ex-guardsmen executed for insubordination and allegedly selling arms to El Salvador's FMLN. They also had been accused of killing recruits. Honduran military participated in the execution. Dillon, S. (1991). *Commandos*, pp. 118-124

Honduras, 1988. Director human rights commission in Honduras and associate killed by assassins. *The Progressive*, 2/1990, p. 46

Honduras, 1988. Honduran human rights leader Ramon Custodio Lopez accused Battalion 3-16 of murdering a politician and a teacher on 14 January 1988. Custodio relied on testimony by former battalion member sergeant Fausto Caballero. In 11/30/1988. Honduras was condemned by Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 1988 for disappearance of Angel Manfredo Velazquez. Battalion 3-16, along with DNI (Directorate of National Intelligence), and FUSEP (National Police) were implicated, all of which have received training from CIA. *Intelligence Parapolitics*, 9/1988, p. 8

Honduras, 1988. Jose Isaias Vilorio, an intelligence officer and former death squad member, was shot dead on 1 January 1988. Isaias was to testify before Inter-American Court on Human Rights (New York Times, 20 January 1988). Human rights leader and legislator Miguel Pavon was killed on 14 January 1988 after testifying before Inter-American Court. Also killed was Moises Landaverde, a teacher who was riding in Pavon's car at the time of attack. Intelligence Parapolitics, 3/1988, p. 12

Honduras, Argentina, 1980-89. A survivor tells her story: treatment for a leftist — kicks and freezing water and electric shocks. In between, a visitor from CIA. CIA worked closely with the Honduran military while the military tortured and killed dissidents during the 1980s, human rights groups said. A government official also said Argentine military advisers, with U.S. support, were brought in to help monitor leftist activism. "At least nine Argentine military (officers), supported by the CIA, trained many Honduran officers to prevent communism from entering Honduras," said Leo Valladares of the government's human rights commission. Bertha Oliva, head of committee of relatives of the disappeared, claimed CIA knew of disappearances by Honduran security forces and that "the U.S. Embassy had absolute power in this country." in the first of a series of four articles, the Baltimore Sun reported Sunday that CIA and the State Department collaborated with a secret Honduran military unit known as Battalion 316 in the 1980s in cracking down on Honduras dissidents. Following a 14-month investigation. In order to keep up public support for Reagan administration's war efforts in Central America, U.S. officials misled congress and the public about Honduran military abuses. Collaboration was revealed in classified documents and in interviews with U.S. and Honduran participants. Among those interviewed by the Sun were three former Battalion 316 torturers who acknowledged their crimes and detailed the battalion's close relationship with CIA. Ramon Custodio, president of non-government human rights commission, said a former member of Battalion 316, Florencio Caballero, disclosed that CIA in early 1980s took 24 soldiers to the U.S. for training in anti-subversive techniques. At the time, Custodio said, "Honduras' policy was oriented to detaining and summarily executing those who did not please the government or the military." Battalion 316 was created in 1984 and its first commander was General Luis Alonso Discua, current armed forces chief. A government report subsequently blamed it in the cases of 184 missing people. Baltimore Sun, 6/15/1995

Honduras, Israel. During Contra war Honduran military intelligence officers on double salary from CIA and Colombian drug cartels, who saw advantage of using Honduran airstrips for transiting cocaine under cover of war effort. Israelis also trained Honduran death squads. Cockburn, A. and Cockburn, L. (1991). Dangerous Liaison, p. 225

Honduras, Assassinations, 1980-84. CIA and Contras accused of running Honduran death squads, killing over 200. CIA officials "looked the other way" when people disappeared. Violence tapered off after ouster of CIA backed military commander Alvarez. Ricardo Lau running Contra intelligence, also death squads. Accused arranging assassination Archbishop Romero in El Salvador. Marshall, J., Scott P.D., and Hunter, J. (1987). The Iran-Contra Connection, pp. 132-3

Indonesia: Watch List

Indonesia, 1963-65. U.S. trained unionist spies laid groundwork for post 1965 coup gestapu massacre of leftists by gathering intelligence on leftist unionists. Counterspy, Winter 1979, p. 27

Indonesia, 1965-66. "U.S. officials' lists aided Indonesian blood bath in '60s." U.S. officials supplied the names of thousands of members of Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to the army that was hunting them down and killing them in a crackdown branded as one of the century's worst massacres, former U.S. Diplomats and CIA officials say. Robert J. Martens,

Former member of embassy's political section said, "it really was a big help to the army.... They probably killed a lot of people..." Martens said. He headed an embassy group of state Department and CIA officials that spent two years compiling the lists. He said he delivered them to an army intermediary. The lists were a detailed who's who of the leadership of the PKI that included names of provincial, city and other local PKI members and leaders of mass organizations. Ambassador Marshall Green, his deputy Jack Lydman, and political section chief Edward Masters admitted approving the release of the names. Army intermediary was an aide to Adam Malik. The aide, Tirta Kentjana Adhyatman, confirmed that he had met with Martens and received lists of thousands of names...given to Sukarno's HQs. Information on who captured and killed came to Americans from Suharto's HQs, according to former CIA deputy chief of station Joseph Lazarsky. Lazarsky said "we were getting a good account in Jakarta of who was being picked up,"..."the army had a 'shooting list' of about 4,000 to 5,000 people." Lazarsky said the check-off work was also carried out at CIA's intelligence directorate in D.C. By end of January 1966, "the checked off names were so numerous the CIA analysts in Washington concluded the PKI leadership had been destroyed." Washington Post, 5/21/1990, A5

Indonesia, 1965-66. In response to Kathy Kadane's May 21 article in Washington Post, Robert J. Martens responds "it is true I passed names of PKI leaders and senior cadre system to non-communist forces during the six months of chaos between the so-called coup and the ultimate downfall of Sukarno. The names I gave were based entirely on Indonesian communist press and were available to everyone. This was senior cadre system of the PKI few thousand at most out of the 3.5 millions claimed party members. I categorically deny that I headed an embassy group that spent two years compiling the lists." Washington Post, 6/2/1990, A18

Indonesia, 1985. Indonesia: years of living dangerously. CIA's role in bloody coup in Indonesia in 1965. Utne Reader. 2/1991, p. 38, two pages

Indonesia: Death Squads

Indonesia, 1965-66 Indonesian generals approached U.S. for equipment "to arm Moslem and nationalist youths for use in central Java against the PKI." Washington responded by supplying covert aid, dispatched as "medicines." Washington Post, 6/13/1990, A 22

Indonesia, 1965-66. Kathy Kadane's story for States News Service disclosed part played by CIA and State Department officials in 1965-66 blood bath in Indonesia. Kadane reported that U.S. officials in Jakarta furnished names of about 5,000 communist activists to the Indonesian army and then checked off the names as the army reported the individuals had been killed or captured. The Nation, 7/9/1990, p. 43

Indonesia, 1965. CIA and State Department officials provided name lists to Indonesian army that killed 250,000. The Progressive, 7/10/1990, p. 9

Indonesia, 1965. Ex-agents say CIA compiled death lists for Indonesians. San Francisco Examiner, 5/20/1990

Indonesia, 1965-66. Article by Michael Vatikiotis and Mike Fonte; Rustle of Ghosts. (1965 Indonesian coup). Far Eastern Economic Review, 8/2/1990, 2 pages

Indonesia, 1965-85. Death squads roam at will, killing subversives, suspected criminals by thousands. Blum, W. (1986). The CIA A Forgotten History, p. 221

Iran: Watch List

Iran, 1953-54. CIA gave Shah intelligence on Tudeh party facilitate anti-Tudeh Campaign. Gasiorowski, M.J. (1990). "Security Relations Between the United States and Iran, 1953-1978," p. 150

Iran, 1953-64. CIA station chiefs in regular contact with Shah and working level liaison relationship with SAVAK established by 5-man training team and smaller unit in SAVAK HQs for several years after training team left. CIA and SAVAK exchanged intelligence including information on Tudeh party. Gasiorowski, M.J. (1990). "Security relations between the United States and Iran, 1953-1978," pp. 255-56

Iran, 1953. CIA prepared an arrest list for the overthrow operation. Copeland, M. (1989). The Game Player, p. 190

Iran, 1953. U.S. Army colonel working for CIA under cover of military attache worked to organize and train intelligence organization for Shah. Trained on domestic security, interrogation. Primary purpose of (Bakhtiar's intelligence unit later to become SAVAK) to eliminate threats to Shah. Gasiorowski, M.J. (1990). "Security Relations Between the United States and Iran, 1953-1978" p. 150

Iran, 1954. Year after coup American cryptographic experts and CIA agent played important part in rooting out conspiracy army officers linked to Tudeh Party. Kwitny, J. (1984). Endless Enemies, p. 165

Iran. During Shah's reign, thousands people killed. Many killed at Shah's directive. Rafizadeh, M. (1987). Witness, p. 134

Iran, 1983. CIA identifies to Iranian government 200 leftists who were then executed. The Nation, 12/13/1986, p. 660

Iran, 1983. In 1983, when the Tudeh party was closed down, the CIA gave the Khomeni government a list of USSR KGB agents operating in Iran. Two hundred suspects were executed, 18 USSR diplomats expelled and Tudeh party leaders imprisoned. Washington Post, 1/13/1987, A1,8

Iran, 1983. To curry favor with Khomeni, the CIA gave his government a list of USSR KGB agents and collaborators operating in Iran. The Khomeni regime then executed 200 suspects and closed down the communist Tudeh party. Khomeni then expelled 18 USSR diplomats, and imprisoned the Tudeh leaders. Washington Post, 11/19/1986, A28

Iraq: Watch List

Iraq, 1963. CIA supplied lists of communists to Baath party group that led coup so that communists could be rounded up and eliminated. Cockburn, A. and Cockburn, L. (1991). Dangerous Liaison, p. 130

Israel: Death Squads

Israel. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir headed a special hit squad during his ten years in Mossad. Shamir headed the assassination unit from 1955-64 that carried out attacks on perceived enemies and suspected Nazi war criminals. Shamir recruited former members of the Stern Gang. Washington Times, 7/4/1992, A8

Israel, 1992. Article, "How Israeli Commandos Are Waging an Undercover War In Occupied Territories." In January 1992, Israeli army launched all-out offensive to end "Red Intifadeh."

Undercover units "Arabized" produced a rash of deaths under controversial circumstances leading to claims commando units are death squads. Since Intifadeh began in 1987, 775 Palestinians killed; 680 more slain by their brethren mostly for collaboration. Human-rights organizations contend Sayarot shoot first and ask questions later. Time 8/31/1992, pp. 49-50

Israel, 1992. Israel's assassination squad, Duvdevan or Cherry has killed one of its own by mistake. Intelligence Newsletter, 7/23/1992, p. 5

Israel, 1992. Israeli army had discharged commander of undercover unit for issuing orders to shoot at Palestine activists. Unit code-named Samson has had three commanders fired or placed on trial within three years. More than 30 Palestinians killed this year by undercover troops, who usually dress as Arabs. Washington Post, 8/26/1992, A14

Israel, Honduras, 1981-89. In 1981 Leo Gleser, "co-owner" of International Security and Defense Systems (ISDS) — a leading Israeli "security" firm (Israeli Foreign Affairs 2/1987, 5/1987, /1987, 2/1988, 3/1989) identified repeatedly as an Israeli entity — began building Battalion 316, a unit of Honduran military intelligence which disappeared, tortured, then killed its victims. Honduran General Walter Lopez Reyes who C-I-C Honduran armed forces 1984-86, said "we had Israeli advisers in Special Forces. They seconded to Special Forces by Israeli mod, although they came officially as non-governmental." Their front [was] they [were] training security groups but [they really gave] special operations courses on how take over buildings, planes, hostages...Contras also taking courses... coordination between them and CIA. Israeli Foreign Affairs, 4/1989, p. 1,4

Israel, South Africa, 1986-91. Israel trained members of Inkatha hit squads aimed at African National Congress, a disillusioned former leader of Zulu organization has revealed. Israeli Foreign Affairs, 2/20/1992, p. 3

Israel. Ranks as fifth largest exporter of arms in world, according CIA estimates, and has become essential element global counterinsurgency business. "Hit lists" used by death squads in Guatemala have been computerized with Israeli assistance and Uzi machine guns the standard weapon of death squads. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Summer 1988, p. 5

Italy: Watch List

Italy, 1950-59. All Italian "SIFAR" counterespionage officers collected biographies on every deputy and senator. List increased to include Ecclesiastics: 45,000 dossiers on them alone, 157,000 altogether, 30,000 dealing with Italians in world of business and industry. Drop copies went to CIA. De Lorenzo's outfit to become a tool for CIA. Tompkins, P. (Unpublished manuscript). Strategy of Terror, pp. 8-12

Italy, 1959-67. Carabinieri drew up plan Piano Solo — for paramilitary to intervene in order to restore public order. Secret services had massive program of surveillance of Italian political and business figures. This partly intended to identify left-wing suspects who would be rounded up and imprisoned in concentration camps on Sardinia. Investigation revealed creation of personal intelligence dossiers began in 1959 and 157,000 files amassed. SIFAR (military intelligence) dossiers emphasized unfavorable significance. SIFAR dossiers routinely deposited at CIA HQs. SIFAR planed microphones in Papal apartments and President's Rome residence. Operation ordered by de Lorenzo at request of CIA station chief Colby. Some years earlier Rome CIA station chief Thomas Karamessines had asked General de Lorenzo, then head of SIFAR, for dossiers on [left-leaning] politicians and in particular for Moro's circle of collaborators. Willan, P. (1991). Puppetmasters, pp. 35-7

Italy, 1960-70. General de Lorenzo, whose SIFAR became SID, implemented new Gladio project to neutralize subversive elements. Known as parallel SID, it reached into nearly every institution. Group set up at request of Americans and NATO. Knights of Malta, as well as freemasonry, and its most notorious lodge — Propaganda Due, or P-2, far more influential. Licio Gelli, a knight. Joined U.S. Army's CIC. To ferret out dissidents, they prepared watch lists on thousands. 157,000 files found in Ministry of Interior. CIA obtained duplicates. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Summer 1994, p. 24

Italy, 1960-70. Operation Solo — a planned coup against a leftist government did not occur — but it was based on Operation Gladio. Giovanni de Lorenzo, as chief of secret services, compiled dossiers, including tapes and photos, on some 150,000 people — priests, politicians and unionists. He drew up plan to arrest many politicians, take over radio and TV, seize offices and newspapers of left-wing parties. De Lorenzo was organizing a duplicate of Operation Gladio in case left gained too much power. "Statewatch" compilation, filed June 1994

Latin America: Death Squads

Latin America, labor. AIFLD collected detailed information about Latin American labor leaders under pretext surveys necessary for AID-financed worker's housing projects. AIFLD able obtain personal and political history union members, with address and photos. Given CIA role in Chile, Uruguay and Brazil coups, among others, it probable this information passed to military regimes and their secret police. DL p. 238 from Lernoux, P. (1982). Cry of the People. pp. 212, 220

Liaison, 1960. Target lists maintained by all Western Hemisphere division stations. Maintain in case local government asks for assistance in preventive detention of dangerous persons. Agee, P. (1975). Inside the Company: CIA Diary, p. 114

Latin America. CIA organizes right wing terrorist organizations that attack and assassinate leftist politicians and others without implicating foreign governments. Groups include "La Mano Blanco" and "Ojo Por Ojo" (Guatemala), "La Banda" (Dominican republic), and "Death Squad" (Brazil). Counterspy, 3/1973, p. 4

Latin America. CIA trained assassination groups such as Halcones in Mexico, the Mano Blanca in Guatemala, and the Escuadron de la Muerte in Brazil. NACLA (magazine re Latin America) 8/1974, p. 11

Latin America, 1953-84. The activities of the death squads, formed under CIA sponsorship in 1954 Are loosely controlled by an international organization known as La Mano Blanco (the White Hand). The front group is the CAL, Latin American Anti-communist Federation, the Latin American affiliate of the World Anti-communist League. Jack Anderson, Washington Post, 1/13/1984

Latin America. Terrorist groups created in most countries. Groups such as "La Mano Blanco" attack and assassinate leftist politicians and others feared by military governments, doing so without implicating police or military. CIA implicated in attempts to organize the right into terrorist organizations. Counterspy, __/1973, p. 4

Latin America, 1960-95. Colonel Alpirez accused killer of American innkeeper and guerrilla leader, graduated from School of Americas in 1989. Other notable alumni include: Manuel Noriega and Omar Torrijos, former Panamanian strongmen; Roberto D'Aubuisson, leader of Salvadoran death squads; Roberto Viola and Leopoldo Galtieri, leaders of argentine dirty war; Michael Francois, former Haitian police chief; 19 of 27 Salvadoran officers cited for

murder of six Jesuit priests; 10 of 12 Salvadoran officers involved in El Mozote massacre; 105 of 247 Colombian officers cited for human rights violations in 1992; and, former dictators of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. Time. 4/10/1995, p. 20

Latin America, 1976. An Argentinean told Scherrer, legal attache (FBI) Santiago, that Operation Condor, a nascent program among military intelligence services of some Latin American countries designed to locate and eliminate one another's fugitive terrorists and exiled dissidents. Ambitious leader of Chilean DINA trying to institutionalize process. Branch, T. and Proper, E. (1983). Labyrinth, p. 123

Latin America, Operation Condor, Paraguay, 1970-92. 12/1992 a Paraguayan judge in a police station found documentary history of decades of repression and U.S. intelligence cooperation with Paraguay and other regional dictatorships. Archives detail fates of hundreds, possibly thousands, of Latin Americans secretly kidnapped by right-wing regimes of the 1970s. Paper trail revealing elusive conspiracy among security services of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay to eliminate foes without regard to borders. Sketchy outlines of Operation Condor, can be partially filled in. Some of documents already disappeared. Finders had unearthed jumbled mountain of papers outlining police and military intelligence activities during recently overthrown Stroessner regime. HQs of Paraguayan technical police revealed more documents. 4 tons records. Data confirmed arrest and killing of politicians and exchange of prisoners with Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. Discovered documents a bombshell that led to arrest of some of Stroessner's old regime. Southern Cone repression killed 50,000, disappeared 30,000 — the majority in Argentina and 400,000 imprisoned. U.S. gave inspiration, financing and technical assistance for repression. CIA's technical services division (TSD), provided electrical torture equipment. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Fall 1994, pp. 7-13

Latin America, 1993. James Carroll wrote editorial about U.S. Army's School of Americas in Fort Benning. It is "the U.S. school that teaches militaries how to torture." Among renowned alumni are various Latin American strongmen, including dictators in Bolivia, Argentina, El Salvador and Panama. In Peru 6 of army officers charged with recent murders of 9 students were School of Americas alumni. In Honduras, 4 of the high-ranking officers who helped create "Battalion 316" death squad graduated from the school. In Columbia, the list of officers designated by human rights organizations as worst offenders reads like an honor roll from Fort Benning. In El Salvador, 2 of 3 officers cited for the assassination of Archbishop Romero, 3 of 5 convicted of killing 3 Maryknoll nuns and their lay associate, and 19 of the 26 officers implicated by United Nations. "Truth Commission" investigation of murder of Jesuits, were graduates. "For decades alumni of the School of Americas have helped fill morgues and mass graves of an entire continent." Colonel Louis Michel Francois has been most closely linked to Haiti death squads, and he is an alumni of the school just as is General Raoul Cedars one of those CIA agents. Z Magazine, 2/1994, p. 24

Mexico: Death Squads

Mexico, 1957-89. The Mexican DFS (Federal Security Directorate) like many Western-hemisphere intelligence organizations was creation of CIA. DFS has state of the art computer and records systems. Through DFS CIA able to keep tabs on all embassies in Mexico City. DFS works closely with U.S. In the suppression of leftists and political parties. In early 1970s, Nazar created the Brigada Blanca, a right-wing death squad that killed hundreds, probably thousands of Mexican students and political activists. Zacaris Osorio Cruz, a member of death squad, testified in Canada that, between 1977-82, he part of team that killed between 60-150 people. Penthouse, 12/1989

Mexico, 1977-89. U.S. looked the other way when Nazar, head of DFS used his infallible (interrogation) techniques on behalf American agencies while he carried out hundreds,

perhaps thousands of political executions of Mexican leftists and political dissidents. DFS (Federal Security Directorate) administering drug traffic. Penthouse, 12/1989

Nicaragua: Watch List

Joseph Adams, a former Marine intelligence officer, who served as chief of security for Aldolfo Calero, helped maintain a list of civilians marked for assassination when Contra forces entered Nicaragua. The Progressive, 3/1987, p. 24

Nicaragua: Death Squads

Nicaragua, 1983-89. Enrique Bermudez, a Contra leader, said in Contra raids on economic targets in northern Nicaragua, particularly coffee plantations and farming cooperatives, any resistance brought brutal retribution. Commandantes in field authorized to select those to die. Bermudez ordered prisoners to have throats cut rather than waste bullets. Terrell, J., and Martz, R. (1992). Disposable Patriot, p. 149

Nicaragua, 1985-89. "Death squad" reports re Sandinistas first circulated by the CIA-funded Puebla Institute in 1991 as coming from the UN and OAS. When checked out, this proved to be not true. Unclassified, 9/1992, p. 14

Nicaragua, circa 1940-79. Under name Anti-Communist League Nicaragua. Conservative estimates say 30,000 died four decades prior 1978-79 civil war. Lernoux, P. (1982). Cry of the People. pp. 81, 94

Norway: Watch List

Norway, 1947-90. Operation Gladio, formed in 1947, kept track of communists and became part of intelligence service in 1948. Norwegian branch exposed in 1978, when an arms cache discovered. "Statewatch" compilation filed June 1994, p. 12

Panama: Watch List

Panama, 1989-90. U.S. says 90 prisoners now held in Panama. Most of those detained had been picked up by U.S. Forces based on wanted lists compiled by U.S. and Panamanian authorities. Washington Post, 1/19/1990, A16

Panama, 1989. Several hundred people on list Endarra government seeks to detain. They arrested by U.S. troops. Most political activists and labor leaders were wanted. The Nation, 1/29/1990, p. 115

Paraguay: Watch List

Paraguay, 1972-83. The Paraguayan government expelled an author and released a document supplied by the U.S. Embassy. The document, marked secret, includes the author among a list of Paraguayans said to have visited the USSR bloc. Washington Post 2/5/1983, A1,21

Philippines: Death Squads

Philippines. Article "Death Squads in the Philippines," by Doug Cunningham. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly), Winter 1988 pp. 22-3

Philippines. Military used hunter killer unit called scout rangers to find enemy and either attack or report back to battalion combat teams. Blaufarb, D.S. (1977). The Counterinsurgency Era, p. 28

Philippines. Probable U.S. support for vigilante death squads in the Philippines. Used in coordination with other programs making up a total low intensity conflict profile. National Reporter, Fall 1987, pp. 24-30

Philippines, 1950-54. Military man who helped Lansdale was Charles Bohannon and Lansdale's chief Filipino associate was Colonel Napoleon Valeriano whose "skull squadrons" beheaded suspected Huks. Karnow, S. (1989). In Our Image, p. 350

Philippines, 1969-83. Marcos' land reform failed and he approved creation of "Monkees" a group used to intimidate and even murder Marcos' rivals. Karnow, S. (1989). In Our Image. p.378

Philippines, 1973-83. In Philippines 1,166 persons were killed from 1972-83. Human rights groups say most of victims were opponents of President Marcos. Washington Post, 4/12/1984, A21

Philippines, 1986-87. "Vigilante Terror" a report of CIA-inspired death squads in the Philippines. National Reporter, Fall 1987, pp. 24-31

Philippines, 1986. See chapter "Direct U.S. Role in Counterinsurgency." includes psywar operations, vigilante and death squads. USIA anti-communist campaign of distributing films and written materials. Film "Amerika" shown. Use of Asian-American Free Labor Institute Operations. In 1985, AAFLI spent up to \$4 million on organizational efforts, the money coming from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Bello, W. (1987). U.S. Sponsored Low Intensity Conflict in the Philippines

Philippines, March 1986. Reagan signs finding increasing CIA involvement in Philippine counterinsurgency operations. New Aquino government is allegedly perpetrating a purge of opposition, carried out by more than 50 death squads. Ramsey Clark, who investigated death squad activity in 1987, wrote in June that "the victims of vigilante violence are overwhelmingly poor farmers, workers, slum dwellers, and others who are pushing for significant land reform, wage increases and protection workers' rights, as well as those who oppose U.S. military bases." Upsurge in death squad activities are coincident with increased CIA aid and was preceded by visit to Philippines by Maj. Gen. John Singlaub. The Nation, 9/19/1987, pp. 259-60

Puerto Rico: Watch List

Puerto Rico. FBI has institutionalized repression. It created "subversive" lists with names of more than 150,000 "independentistas" who often find themselves thrown out of work. FBI agents organized and trained death squads within the Puerto Rican police department NACLA (magazine re Latin America), 8/1990, p. 5

Puerto Rico: Death Squads

Puerto Rico, 1978. "Puerto Rico's Death Squad Requiem on Cerro Maravilla: the Police Murders in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Government Cover-up." A book by Manuel Suarez reviewed in the Progressive, 12/1988, pp. 40-42

Russia: Watch List

Russia, 1994. FBI to open Moscow office with an eye on nuclear trafficking. FBI has about 20 posts abroad at U.S. Embassies with its agents serving as legal attaches. They range in size from one agent to as many as eight, plus support staff. FBI director Freeh said the FBI working to set up joint police/intelligence data base with authorities in Russia and Germany. Washington Times, 5/26/1994, A3

South Africa: Watch List

South Africa, 1962. A tip from a paid CIA informant led to 1962 arrest of Nelson Mandela leader of the African National Congress. A CIA officer claimed "we have turned Mandela over to the South African security branch." Washington Post, 6/11/1990, A18

South Africa: Death Squads

South Africa. Article, "South African Death Squad Plot: A Missing Piece to a Puzzle the Media Won't Solve," by Jane Hunter. Extra, 11/1992, p. 26 South Africa. See article "South African Death Squads." Covert Action Information bulletin (Quarterly) Summer 1990, pp. 63-66

South Africa, 1980-89. Details of South Africa's death squads by a former police Captain Dirk Coetzee. Group tracked and killed ANC activists in Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho. Newsweek, 11/27/1989, p. 56

South Africa, 1980-90. Apartheid's fiercest warriors in 1980s were South Africa's army special forces, police force known as Koevoet (crowbar), and Portuguese-speaking "buffalo" battalion who ran a campaign of assassination and sabotage against the African National Congress. Newsweek, 9/14/1992, p. 45

South Africa, 1991-92. 75 COSATU (labor union) members killed during past two years by security forces. Many other attacks. Briarpatch magazine (Canada), 10/1992, pp. 55-6

South Africa, 1992. Slaughter in South Africa. Newsweek 9/21/1992, p. 57

South America: Watch List

South America, 1970-79. U.S. Legal attache Buenos Aires, FBI agent Robert Scherrer, sent cable to D.C. Describing operation. Operation Condor the code-name for collection, exchange and storage intelligence re leftists, communists and Marxists. Established between cooperating intelligence services in South America to eliminate Marxist activities. Operation provided for joint operation against targets in member countries...third and secret phase of operation involves formation of special teams from member countries who travel anywhere in world to carry out sanctions up to assassination against terrorists from member countries. Special team from Operation Condor could be sent to locate and surveil target. When located, a second team would be sent to carry out sanction. 1979 Senate Report, based on CIA files, says "such a phase three operation planned in 1974 and planned on killing 3 European leftists" — one Carlos. Plot foiled when CIA discovered it and warned host countries — France and Portugal. U.S. military officers sent under auspices of AID oversaw formation of technical police. One folder of archives has correspondence between Paraguayan ministers and U.S. Army Colonel Robert Thierry, who was serving as "public administration adviser," who supervised formation of the technical police. Letters from FBI agent Scherrer advising Paraguayan police re targets. CIA also worked with Paraguayans. Deputy DCI, Vernon Walters, visited country in 1976 who apparently approved abortive effort to get false passports for 2 Chilean DINA agents — Armando Fernandez and Michael Townley — who en route to U.S. To assassinate Orlando Letelier. The case of Eugenio Berios. Covert Action Information Bulletin (Quarterly) 12, 57, 8, 9

South America: Death Squads

South America, 1976. Letelier killed by right wing Cuban exiles called "Gusanos" who are paid and trained by CIA and "Chilean Gestapo" DINA. Gusanos regularly engage in terrorism against Cuba and Latin American and Caribbean countries. Tactics include blowing up airplanes, embassies, fishing boats, and kidnappings. Gusanos connected with police of other right wing governments such as Venezuela. Certain gusano operations directed by CIA; Other unilateral operations of DINA. Counterspy, 12/1976, p. 10

Syria: Watch List

Syria, 1949. Following CIA coup of March 1949 CIA officer reported over "400 Commies" arrested. Middle East Journal 57

Syria, 1949. The Husni Za'im coup of 30 March result of guarantee CIA that once firmly in power, the U.S. would give de facto recognition with de jure to follow in a few days and pointed out targets to be seized. Gave him a list of all politicians who might be able to rally resistance. Copeland, M. (1989). The Game Player, p. 94

Thailand: Death Squads

Thailand, 1965. Death squads. Lobe, T. (1977). United States national security policy and aid to the Thailand police 67-70

Thailand, 1973-76. General Saiyut Koedphon, deputy head of CSOC and close ally of CIA, admitted that CIA was collaborating with a variety of Thai security agencies, including CSOC. Similarly, deputy director of police, Withun Yasawat, said he was receiving CIA advice and reports as late as 1974. American indoctrination of CSOC and border patrol police during 1960's produced U.S. desired objectives. "Nawaophon" created ISOC officers who in turn has close contacts with CIA, employed covert tactics to search out "subversive elements" within the Thai population. Counterspy, Summer 1980, p. 14

Thailand, 1973-76. The Krathin Daeng (Red Gaurs), were groups of rightist students with police support that had over 100,000 members including government employees, soldiers, policemen, etc. Group received support and assistance from the internal security command (where CIA had a presence) and the Thai Santiban aka Special Branch. The Red Gaurs implicated in numerous bombings, killings, shooting and harassment of labor leaders, peasant leaders, etc. Indochina Resource Center Study, 1/1977

Thailand, 1976. A high-ranking official of Seni Pramroj government told a foreign visitor few weeks before October 6 coup, both Nawapon and the Red Gaurs were being financed by CIA. Counterspy, 12/1976, p. 52

Thailand, 1976. Over 10,000 students, professors, political figures, labor and farm leaders arrested since coup. U.S. military aid increased. New junta used CIA-trained forces to crush student demonstrators during coup. 2 right-wing terrorist squads suspected for assassinations tied directly to CIA operations. Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, v9 #3, 9/1977, p. 2

Thailand, 1976. Red Gaurs, an organization of the extreme right, staged provocations against progressive students and assassinations of activists of farmers' federation of Thailand. The number of assassinations by right wingers soared in April 1976 during parliamentary elections. Defense minister Pramarn Adireksan, leader of right wing Thai National party,

openly proclaimed the slogan "the right kill the left." Syrokonski. (1983). International Terrorism and the CIA, p. 117-118

Thailand, 1976. Thai border police, element of police most involved in counterinsurgency and which CIA concentrated most of its efforts, carried out an assault by fire against essentially unarmed students, killing at least 100. Counterspy, 12/1976, p. 52

Turkey: Watch List

Turkey, 1971. Coup carried out by counter-guerrilla, the CIA, the Turkey military and Turkish military intelligence (MIT). CIA solely interested in protecting American interests. CIA assisted MIT in 1960-69 in drafting plans for mass arrests of opposition figures similar to the pattern followed in Thailand, Indonesia and Greece. In single night generals ordered 4000 professors, students, teachers and retired officers arrested. They tortured. Counterspy, 4/1982, p. 25

Uruguay: Watch List

Uruguay. CIA agent associated with death squads. Every CIA station maintained subversive control watch list of most important left wing activists. Gave names families and friends. Frankovich, A. (1980). On Company Business. TV transcript, 5/9/1980, pp. 51-3

Uruguay, liaison, 1964. Biographical data and photos. Uruguay has national voter registration that effective identity card system. From liaison service CIA station gets full name, date and place of birth, parents names, address, place of work, etc. and id photos. Information invaluable for surveillance operations, for subversive control watch list and for a variety of other purposes. CID-361

Uruguay: Death Squads

Uruguay, 1970-72. CIA operations officer used cover of AID public safety advisor to help set up Department of Information and Intelligence (DII). DII served as a cover for death squad. Counterspy, 5/1979, p. 10

USSR: Watch List

USSR, 1990 KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov said KGB to protect against anti-Communist forces. Said western intelligence exploiting current instability in USSR. Certain radical movements being masterminded by foreign support. Certain groups had written "blacklists" of people who must be neutralized. Washington Post, 12/12/1990, A18,20

USSR, 1990. KGB's Kryuchkov accuses CIA and other western intelligence agencies of gathering information on workers' movements. Washington Post, 12/23/1990, A1,22

USSR, East Germany, 1949-57. League of Free Jurists (UFJ) kept a blacklist of offenders against justice — particularly lawyers and police — and published their activities. Named were marked men, whether they came to West as refugees or as accredited representatives of East Germans. Hagan, L. (1969). The Secret War for Europe, p. 200

USSR, Iran, 1982. Vladimir Kuzichkin, a senior KGB officer in Tehran, defected to the British. CIA had a sharing agreement with MI6 and became privy to contents of two trunks full of documents. From those documents CIA prepared name lists of more than one hundred people, mostly Iranians, working as secret agents in Iran for the USSR. Casey allowed this list be handed to the Iranians — who executed them. Persico, J. (1991). Casey, p. 301

Vietnam: Watch List

Vietnam, 1965-68. U.S./Government of Vietnam create list of active NLF for assassination. After 1968 Tet offensive, names centralized to Phoenix coordinators. Collect names of tens of thousands NLF suspects. Military operations such as My Lai use Phoenix intelligence. By 1973, Phoenix generates 300,000 political prisoners in South Vietnam. Counterspy, May 1973, p. 22

Vietnam, 1965-70. Details re Vietnam. From 1965-68 U.S. and Saigon intelligence services maintained an active list of Viet Cong cadre marked for assassination. Phoenix program for 1969 called for "neutralizing" 1800 a month. About one third of Viet Cong targeted for arrest had been summarily killed. Security committees established in provincial interrogation centers to determine fate of Viet Cong suspects, outside of judicial controls. Green Berets and Navy Seals most common recruits for Phoenix program. Green Beret Detachment B-57 provided administrative cover for other intelligence units. One was Project Cherry, tasked to assassinate Cambodian officials suspected of collaborating with North Vietnamese, KGB. Another was Project Oak targeted against South Vietnamese suspected collaborators. They controlled by Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities, which worked with CIA outside of General Abrams's control. Stein, J. (1992). A Murder In Wartime, pp. 360-1

Vietnam, 1967-73 CIA developed Phoenix program in 1967 to neutralize: kill, capture or make defect Viet Cong infrastructure. Viet Cong infrastructure means civilians suspected of supporting Communists. Targeted civilians not soldiers. Phoenix also called Phung Hoang by Vietnamese. Due process totally nonexistent. South Vietnamese who appeared on black lists could be tortured, detained for 2 years without trial or killed. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p. 13

Vietnam, 1967-73 District Intelligence Operations Coordination Center (DIOCC). Dien Ban center a model for all of Phoenix. Bldg 10' x 40'. Manned by two U.S. Soldiers, 2 Census Grievance, one Rural Development cadre, and one Special Branch. DIOCC intelligence clearinghouse to review, collate, and disseminate information. Immediate local reaction. Americans kept files of sources, Viet Cong infrastructure and order of battle. Reaction forces 100 police, 1 PRU unit, guides from census grievance. Marines screened civilian detainees using informants and DIOCC's blacklist. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p.126

Vietnam, 1968-69. Until late 1968, Saigon had run a program under which 500,000 ID cards were issued. Viet Cong made fake ones and many stolen. Viet Cong during Tet assigned teams to go door-to-door to collect them. Saigon reissued cards in 10/1968. By 1 May 1969, number of cards issued was 1.5 million. Adams, S. (1994). War of Numbers, p. 181

Vietnam, 1968. Phoenix program quota of 1800 neutralizations per month. Viet Cong Infrastructure System (VCIS) fed 3000 names Viet Cong infrastructure into computer at Combined Intelligence Center political order of battle section. Beginning of computerized blacklist. In Saigon DIA, FBI and CIA used computers. Until 1970 computerized blacklist a unilateral American operation. Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, 259

Vietnam, 1968. U.S. advisors worked with Government of Vietnam counterparts to establish a list of those who were active with the NLF and who were vulnerable to assassination. Counterspy, 5/1973, p. 21

Vietnam: Death Squads

Vietnam. Counterterror teams aka Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU). Six or dozen men carried out carefully planned forays, capturing or killing identified communists. Blaufarb, D.S. (1977). *The Counterinsurgency Era*, pp. 210-11

Vietnam, 1960-93. Montagnards recruited in early 1960s by Special Forces to fight Viet Cong. Did not surrender until 1992, when they yielded weapons to UN forces in Cambodia and brought to U.S. About 600 live in North Carolina. Paul Campbell, former SF who first American to recruit them. Kay Reibold head of Vietnam highlands assistance project. Montagnards live in small apartments around Raleigh with low-paying jobs. In 10/1961 Campbell, then a SF Sergeant, sent by CIA to recruit Montagnards. They to form village security, but soon being used for long-range reconnaissance and in highly mobile strike forces that hunted Viet Cong for weeks at a time. "We killed many Vietnamese." Article by W. Booth. *Washington Post*, 12/27/1993

Vietnam, 1965. CIA station helped create census grievance units. CIA funded, trained and guided counter terror teams who per Chief of Station de Silva, were "to bring danger and death to Viet Cong functionaries." Corn, D. (1994). *Blond Ghost: Ted Shackley and the CIA's Crusades*, p. 175

Vietnam, 1966-71. Phoenix operation designed to help U.S. military reach crossover point, where dead and wounded exceeded Viet Cong's ability to field replacements. In April 1967, President Johnson announced formation of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) for pacification. Robert Komer as deputy commander of MACV-CORDS. CORDS budget about \$4 billion from 1968-71. CORDS the management structure for pacification programs. Personnel both military and civilian. By 1971, 3000 servicemen, advisers to ARVN, placed under CORDS. 1200 civilians by 1971. U.S. AID responsible for material aid. State and USIA also provided personnel. But CIA played the crucial role. CORDS reinstated civic action teams under name Revolutionary Development cadre. RD program formed teams of 59 South Vietnamese, divided into 3 11-man security squads and 25 civic action cadres. Teams to spend 6 months in a village to fulfill "Eleven criteria and 98 works for pacification." 1. Annihilation of ...cadre; 2. Annihilation of wicked village dignitaries; etc. System placed 40,000 two-way radios in villages. Land reform failed. (Photos of Phoenix propaganda material). Teams helped create Regional and Popular Forces (RF/PFs). Ruff-puffs, suffered high casualties. They represented half of South Vietnamese government forces, they had 55-66% of casualties. They inflicted 30% of Communist casualties. Underground paramilitary effort called Phoenix, which included a "census grievance," stay-behind. He actually a spy. All information fed into intelligence coordination and exploitation program. Vietnamese at Komer's request set up staff that, with CIA, was responsible for coordinating intelligence reports on Viet Cong Infrastructure. Information from census grievance, military, police reports. paramilitary units, including CIA's Provincial Reconnaissance Units and ruff-puffs. Arrestees — those not killed when captured — taken to Provincial Interrogation Centers (PIC). Also regional prisons and a national center. All financed by CIA. Problems of coordination and jealousy. Numerical quotas created saying how many VCI to be eliminated each month. Torture used in questioning. Manning, R., (ed), (1988). *War in the Shadows: the Vietnam Experience*, pp. 55-65

Vietnam, 1966. In 1966 recycled counter terrorists called Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU) and managed by CIA officer in CORDS RDC/O Office. Valentine, D. (1990). *The Phoenix Program*, p. 117

Vietnam, 1968. CIA issued two handbooks in June 1968. One "the Viet Cong Key Organization From Central Level Down to Village and Hamlet Levels." Second a manual of procedures from Saigon to DIOCCs. One report said "as DIOCCs and PIOCCs have refined data bases, gained experience, and mounted more operations against targeted individuals, the neutralization rate... over 1000 per month for last 4 months." Gia Dinh "has more than

quadrupled monthly rate of killed, captured and rallied." Valentine, D. (1990). The Phoenix Program, p. 190

Vietnam, 1971. William E. Colby on July 19, 1971, before Senate Subcommittee testified that CIA's Operation Phoenix had killed 21,587 Vietnamese citizens between January 1968 and May 1971. Counterspy, December 1978, p. 6

Phoenix Rising

Tucked away in the Iraqi appropriation was \$3 billion for a new paramilitary unit. Vietnam similarities?

Robert Dreyfuss
January 1, 2004

With the 2004 electoral clock ticking amid growing public concern about U.S. casualties and chaos in Iraq, the Bush administration's hawks are upping the ante militarily. To those familiar with the CIA's Phoenix assassination program in Vietnam, Latin America's death squads or Israel's official policy of targeted murders of Palestinian activists, the results are likely to look chillingly familiar.

The Prospect has learned that part of a secret \$3 billion in new funds—tucked away in the \$87 billion Iraq appropriation that Congress approved in early November—will go toward the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. Experts say it could lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists—up to 120,000 of the estimated 2.5 million former Baath Party members in Iraq.

"They're clearly cooking up joint teams to do Phoenix-like things, like they did in Vietnam," says Vincent Cannistraro, former CIA chief of counter terrorism. Ironically, he says, the U.S. forces in Iraq are working with key members of Saddam Hussein's now-defunct intelligence agency to set the program in motion. "They're setting up little teams of Seals and Special Forces with teams of Iraqis, working with people who were former senior Iraqi intelligence people, to do these things," Cannistraro says.

The plan is part of a last-ditch effort to win the war before time runs out politically. Driving the effort are U.S. neoconservatives and their allies in the Pentagon and Vice President Dick Cheney's office, who are clearly worried about America's inability to put down the Iraqi insurgency with time to spare before November. They are concerned that President Bush's political advisers will overrule the national-security team and persuade the president to pull the plug on Iraq. So, going for broke, they've decided to launch an intensified military effort combined with a radical new counterinsurgency program.

The hidden \$3 billion will fund covert ("black") operations disguised as an Air Force classified program. According to John Pike, an expert on classified military budgets at www.globalsecurity.org, the cash, spread over three years, is likely being funneled directly to the CIA, boosting that agency's estimated \$4 billion a year budget by fully 25 percent. Operations in Iraq will get the bulk of it, with some money going to Afghanistan. The number of CIA officers in Iraq, now 275, will increase

significantly, supplemented by large numbers of the U.S. military's elite counterinsurgency forces. A chunk of those secret funds, according to Mel Goodman, a former CIA analyst, will go to restive tribal sheikhs, especially in Sunni-dominated central Iraq. "I assume there are CIA people going around with bags of cash," says Goodman.

But the bulk of the covert money will support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded, Iraqi security force. "The big money would be for standing up an Iraqi secret police to liquidate the resistance," says Pike. "And it has to be politically loyal to the United States."

Unable to quell the resistance to the U.S. occupation, the Pentagon is revamping its intelligence and special-operations task force in Iraq, a classified unit commanded by an Air Force brigadier general. It's also pouring money into the creation of an Iraqi secret police staffed mainly by gunmen associated with members of the puppet Iraqi Governing Council. Those militiamen are linked to Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress (inc), the Kurdish peshmerga ("facing death") forces and Shiite paramilitary units, especially those of the Iran-backed Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Technically illegal, these armed forces have been tolerated, even encouraged, by the Pentagon. Some of these militias openly patrol Baghdad and other cities, and in the south of Iraq, scores of Islamic-oriented paramilitary parties, with names like Revenge of God, are mobilized.

Because the militiamen who will make up the paramilitary force are largely from former Iraqi exile political groups, many have personal scores to settle. They will be armed with detailed lists, seized from government files, of Iraqi Baathists. Sporadic but persistent revenge killings against Hussein loyalists have already plagued Iraq. In Baghdad, Basra, and scores of smaller cities and towns, hundreds of former Iraqi officials and members of the Arab Baath Socialist Party have been gunned down, and the murderers have not been arrested or, in most cases, even pursued. Virtually signaling open season on ex-Baathists, Maj. Ian Poole, spokesman for the British forces controlling Basra, told The New York Times: "The fact is, these are former Baath Party officials. That makes it hard to protect them."

Chalabi's INC is promising to use its own intelligence teams to act forcefully against opponents of the United States. Chalabi, the darling of U.S. neoconservatives and the Pentagon's choice to be Iraq's first prime minister, is leading the charge for the "de-Baathification" of Iraq. When elements of the U.S. Army in Iraq seek to enlist the support of mid- and low-level Baath officials in trying to put a national bureaucracy back into place, Chalabi objects, often clashing with U.S. Army officers overseeing civil affairs.

Echoing Chalabi are various U.S. hawks and neo cons. "The Kurds and the Iraqi National Congress have excellent intelligence operations that we should allow them to exploit," read a Wall Street Journal editorial. "Especially to conduct counterinsurgency in the Sunni Triangle." More explicitly citing similar U.S. operations during the Vietnam War were Tom Donnelly, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), and Gary Schmitt, executive director of the Project for a New American Century. Schmitt wrote a paper calling for a counterinsurgency effort modeled on the so-called COORDS program in Vietnam, an umbrella effort that included the notorious Phoenix assassinations. And, over lunch at a Washington eatery, I asked a neoconservative strategist how to deal with Iraq. "It's time for 'no more Mr. Nice Guy,'" he said. "All those people shouting, 'Down with America!' and dancing in the street when Americans are attacked? We have to kill them."

The U.S. occupation of Iraq is beginning to resemble Vietnam in more ways than one. American forces under attack are reportedly responding with indiscriminate fire, often killing combatants and innocents alike. Body counts are disputed, including one prominent instance in Samarra when U.S. forces claimed 54 Iraqi rebels killed but angry townspeople said that the dead numbered less than a dozen (and included women and children). Houses of suspected insurgents are being blown up. The wife and child of Izzat Ibrahim, a fugitive Iraqi official thought to be coordinating the insurgency, were seized and held hostage. The entire village of Auja, Hussein's hometown near Tikrit, was surrounded by barbed wire and turned into a strategic hamlet, with ID cards issued by U.S. forces needed to enter and exit it.

In early November, the Pentagon civilians ordered the U.S. military in Iraq to launch a heavily armed offensive against suspected strongholds of the resistance, using fighter bombers, laser-guided missiles, gunships and helicopters against targets of questionable importance, such as empty factories and warehouses. "It's an absolutely insane strategy," says Bob Boorstin, who oversees national-security policy for the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank.

Until the offensive was launched, U.S. Army officers had been attempting, with uneven success, to rally local populations and adopt a hearts-and-minds approach. But in accordance with the neo cons' policy of no more Mr. Nice Guy, the Pentagon ordered the aggressive new stance that took shape as Operation Ivy Cyclone and Operation Iron Hammer. "I was astounded by the warmth and fuzziness of our generals," says Danielle Pletka, AEI vice president for foreign- and defense-policy studies, who just returned from a visit to Iraq. "Well, they got orders: 'You need to fight, and fight hard.' And it suddenly dawned on them that these were bad people, and maybe we need to go out and whomp the crap out of them."

Yet "whomping" is hardly a strategy, and in Iraq the United States is clearly flailing, with a trial-and-error approach that seems haphazard and rudderless. Underlying the neocons' worry is a nagging concern that Bush, who sided with the neo cons by launching the global war on terrorism and by going into Iraq, could abandon them for some form of cut-and-run strategy in order to protect his re-election efforts. Some say openly that the White House is "going wobbly," while others, like the AEI's Donnelly, believe in Bush's steadfastness but admit to having second thoughts. "For a neocon like me, having a member of the Bush family carrying the banner is a bit unnerving," says Donnelly, wryly.

But Boorstin, and many others in Washington, believe that Karl Rove, the White House's political guru, is losing patience with the bungled situation in Iraq. "I have no doubt that Karl Rove is ready to cut and run," says Boorstin. That sentiment is virtually seconded by Pletka, who maintains close contact with White House and Pentagon officials. "Some of the people around the president do want to cut and run," she says, "but not his foreign-policy advisers."

The latest offensives, combined with the counterinsurgency efforts, seem partly aimed at convincing Rove that there's no choice but to continue to gamble that the Iraqi venture will pay off. "This is an unusual president," says Richard Perle, an AEI fellow, member of the Defense Policy Board and perhaps the chief architect of U.S. Iraq policy. "He risked his presidency to do this in Iraq." But Perle is worried that politics could trump policy. "I hope it doesn't become a political issue, because that would encourage all of those who want us to fail, all of those arrayed against us," he says. "If we were to retreat, I shudder to think of the wave of terrorism it would unleash."

The Times

January 10, 2005

El Salvador-style 'death squads' to be deployed by US against Iraq militants

FROM ROLAND WATSON IN WASHINGTON



John Negroponte was in Honduras when American money was used to train Contras to fight Nicaragua's Sandinista regime. (AL-RAYA/AP)

THE Pentagon is considering forming hit squads of Kurdish and Shia fighters to target leaders of the Iraqi insurgency in a strategic shift borrowed from the American struggle against left-wing guerrillas in Central America 20 years ago.

Under the so-called "El Salvador option", Iraqi and American forces would be sent to kill or kidnap insurgency leaders, even in Syria, where some are thought to shelter.

The plans are reported in this week's *Newsweek* magazine as part of Pentagon efforts to get US forces in Iraq on to the front foot against an enemy that is apparently getting the better of them.

Iyad Allawi, the interim Iraqi Prime Minister, was said to be one of the most vigorous supporters of the plan.

The Pentagon declined to comment, but one insider told *Newsweek*: "What everyone agrees is that we can't just go on as we are. We have to find a way to take the offensive against the insurgents. Right now, we are playing defence. And we are losing."

Hit squads would be controversial and would probably be kept secret.

The experience of the so-called "death squads" in Central America remains raw for many even now and helped to sully the image of the United States in the region.

Then, the Reagan Administration funded and trained teams of nationalist forces to neutralise Salvadorean rebel leaders and sympathisers. Supporters credit the policy with calming the insurgency, although it left a bitter legacy and stirred anti-American sentiment.

John Negroponte, the US Ambassador in Baghdad, had a front-row seat at the time as Ambassador to Honduras from 1981-85.

Death squads were a brutal feature of Latin American politics of the time. In Argentina in the 1970s and Guatemala in the 1980s, soldiers wore uniform by day but used unmarked cars by night to kidnap and kill those hostile to the regime or their suspected sympathisers.

In the early 1980s President Reagan's Administration funded and helped to train Nicaraguan contras based in Honduras with the aim of ousting Nicaragua's Sandinista regime. The Contras were equipped using money from illegal American arms sales to Iran, a scandal that could have toppled Mr Reagan.

It was in El Salvador that the United States trained small units of local forces specifically to target rebels.

The thrust of the Pentagon proposal in Iraq, according to *Newsweek*, is to follow that model and direct US special forces teams to advise, support and train Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shia militiamen to target leaders of the Sunni insurgency.

It is unclear whether the main aim of the missions would be to assassinate the rebels or kidnap them and take them away for interrogation. Any mission in Syria would probably be undertaken by US Special Forces.

Nor is it clear who would take responsibility for such a programme — the Pentagon or the Central Intelligence Agency. Such covert operations have traditionally been run by the CIA at arm's length from the administration in power, giving US officials the ability to deny knowledge of it.

The Pentagon refused to be drawn on the issue yesterday. "We don't discuss specific future operations or specific tactics," a spokeswoman said.

This week Gary Luck, a retired four-star general, will arrive in Iraq to review American policy in the country, looking particularly at the recruitment and training of Iraqi forces. The key to Washington's exit strategy is the ability of Iraqi forces to take over security roles. The general has been asked by Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary, to deliver an "open-ended" review of how US aims can better be met.

His visit comes after two weeks of increased violence in Iraq in which scores of Iraqis and more than a dozen Americans have been killed in the run-up to the country's elections.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,11069-1433353,00.html>



Death-Squad Democracy

Are there parallels between El Salvador in the '80s and Iraq today? Maybe. But the 'lessons learned' by Washington are the wrong ones

WEB-EXCLUSIVE COMMENTARY

By **Christopher Dickey**

Newsweek

Updated: 6:42 p.m. ET Jan. 11, 2005

Jan. 11 - Among the many tools used to build and defend pro-American democracies, murder is among the trickiest. But murder—yes, let's insist on that word—is also quite common in the annals of nation-building, at least in my experience, and sometimes it's been very effective. Now we hear that some of the Bush administration's strategists are

talking about what they call “**The Salvador Option**”, which seems to imply “death squads” (as the murderers were called in El Salvador and Guatemala) or “hit teams” (as they’ve been called in Israel).

Having watched the slaughter in El Salvador first hand during the early 1980s, having lost many friends and acquaintances to the butchers there—among them nuns, priests and an archbishop who will someday be sainted—and having been targeted myself, I have something of a personal interest in this notion. I’m not about to forget the bodies lying unclaimed in the streets, the families of the victims too afraid to pick them up lest they become targets as well. When I hear talk of a Salvador Option, I can’t help but think about El Playón, a wasteland of volcanic rock that was one of the killers’ favorite dumping grounds. I’ve never forgotten the sick-sweet stench of carnal refuse there, the mutilated corpses half-devoured by mongrels and buzzards, the hollow eyes of a human skull peering up through the loose-piled rocks, the hair fallen away from the bone like a gruesome halo.

Still, I’m prepared to admit that building friendly democracies sometimes has to be a cold-blooded business in the shadowland of moral grays that is the real world. The Reagan administration was just doing—or, more often, allowing to be done—whatever it took to defeat a largely Communist insurgency. I’m even prepared to believe that Arena, the political party founded by the late death squad leader, Roberto D’Aubuisson, has long since cleaned up its act. Salvadoran voters returned Arena to power last year for the third time since 1992. Its presidential candidate, Tony Saca, beat former guerrilla leader Shafik Handal by a landslide. Would El Playón’s voters have made a difference? Well, we’ll never know.

The question of the moment is not the state of play in El Salvador, however, it’s the disaster in Iraq. The Bush administration has a dismal record learning the wrong lessons from the wrong paradigms when it comes to Iraq. This was not the liberation of France, nor the occupation of Germany or Japan, and America’s war on terrorists is not the same as Israel’s war with the Palestinians. So, let’s take a real close look at what we’re talking about here when we discuss the Salvador Option.

For starters, what’s been written about the NEWSWEEK report by Michael Hirsh and John Barry goes far beyond what the story says. It doesn’t suggest for a minute, as the BBC reported, that the Pentagon is looking to create “paramilitary” death squads. It’s about the possible training of elite units to snatch or kill very specific insurgent leaders.

In fact, the policy could be a formalization of what’s already taking place. “We are, of course, already targeting enemy cadres for elimination whether by capture or death in various places including Afghanistan and Iraq,” says Patrick Lang, former chief of Middle East analysis for the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. According to Lang, so many people in the Special Operations Forces have been caught up in efforts to do just that, there’s actually a shortage of Green Berets to do what they’re most needed for: training regular Iraqi troops. “Surely,” says Lang, “no one except the Jihadis thinks that we should not be hunting enemy leaders and key personnel.”

But that’s not the problem, quite. What those of us in El Salvador learned was that American policy might call for surgical action, but once the local troops are involved, they’re as likely to use a chain-saw as a scalpel. And that, too, can serve American ends. In almost any counter-insurgency, the basic message the government or the occupiers tries to get across to the population is brutally simple: “We can protect you from the guerrillas, but the guerrillas can’t protect you from us, and you’ve got to choose sides.” Sometimes you can win the population’s hearts and minds; sometimes you just have to make them more frightened of you than they are of the insurgents.

"That was part of the thinking behind Fallujah," says a well-informed Coalition official, referring to the ferocious offensive that re-took the city in November. "We have only one of the tools so far. That is, 'You can't protect your people from us.' In Fallujah they had a little Salafi state. Well, that's gone now." The city remains in ruins; at least 50 American soldiers lost their lives, as well as hundreds, perhaps thousands of insurgents and civilians. It was a mighty tough lesson to teach. In terms of toe-to-toe urban combat, "that was the heaviest fighting the U.S. has been involved in since 1968," says the same official. Yet the Americans have not managed to protect the Iraqi citizenry from terror and intimidation by the guerrillas. "That's not something we're good at," says the official.

His remarks were echoed by a senior U.S. embassy officer, who said the Americans just can't begin to out-intimidate the guerrillas. "It's a lesson we can't teach," says the embassy official. "We're not capable of that." Grabbing here and there for analogies, this guy started talking about what the late Syrian President Hafez Assad did to Sunni fundamentalists holed up in the city of Hama in 1982. Assad flattened a large section of the town. "Short of 'Hama rules,'" the official asked rhetorically, "what do you do?"

In Iraq, in fact, as in many other places where the United States has tried to train ethical armies to fight dirty wars, the Iraqi troops are tacitly expected to do what American troops won't. A fundamental purpose of the upcoming elections on January 30 is to create democratic legitimacy for whatever extreme measures the newly organized military decides to take.

Because we're talking about the supposed Salvador Option, I figured I'd get back in touch with Joaquín Villalobos, El Salvador's most brilliant **guerrilla leader**. Now at Oxford, he favored the Iraq war in 2003, but is dumbfounded by the direction the conflict has taken. Villalobos was dryly analytical, as ever. "The problem of repression and its possible effectiveness corresponds to five basic elements: proportionality, the scope of the conflict, time, a context that favors a multiplier effect or not, and the ability to control what you're doing." If so, a helluva lot more fine tuning is needed than we're likely to see in Iraq any time soon. "If the generals think that with the hatred against the United States that exists in the region, with the divisions in Iraqi society, with Syria, Iran and others around, starting a dirty war is something that will give them an edge, they are totally and absolutely lost and desperate," says Villalobos. "Invading Iraq without a post-war plan created chaos, subsequent mistakes converted the chaos into organized resistance, and if they keep blundering ahead blindly, they'll convert the resistance into a real civil war."

A U.S. official in Baghdad agrees. "We're bleeding from so many self-inflicted wounds," he told me the other day. The Salvador Option would be just one more.

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Bush's 'Death Squads'

By Robert Parry
January 11, 2005

Refusing to admit personal misjudgments on Iraq, George W. Bush instead is pushing the United States toward becoming what might be called a permanent “counter-terrorist” state, which uses torture, cross-border death squads and even collective punishments to defeat perceived enemies in Iraq and around the world.

Since securing a second term, Bush has pressed ahead with this hard-line strategy, in part by removing dissidents inside his administration while retaining or promoting his protégés. Bush also has started prepping his younger brother Jeb as a possible successor in 2008, which could help extend George W.’s war policies while keeping any damaging secrets under the Bush family’s control.

As a centerpiece of this tougher strategy to pacify Iraq, Bush is contemplating the adoption of the brutal practices that were used to suppress leftist peasant uprisings in Central America in the 1980s. The Pentagon is “intensively debating” a new policy for Iraq called the “Salvador option,” [Newsweek](#) magazine reported on Jan. 9.

The strategy is named after the Reagan-Bush administration’s “still-secret strategy” of supporting El Salvador’s right-wing security forces, which operated clandestine “death squads” to eliminate both leftist guerrillas and their civilian sympathizers, [Newsweek](#) reported. “Many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success – despite the deaths of innocent civilians,” [Newsweek](#) wrote.

Central America Veterans

The magazine also noted that a number of Bush administration officials were leading figures in the Central American operations of the 1980s, such as John Negroponte, who was then U.S. Ambassador to Honduras and is now U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

Other current officials who played key roles in Central America include Elliott Abrams, who oversaw Central American policies at the State Department and who is now a Middle East adviser on Bush’s National Security Council staff, and Vice President Dick Cheney, who was a powerful defender of the Central American policies while a member of the House of Representatives.

The insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala were crushed through the slaughter of tens of thousands of civilians. In Guatemala, about 200,000 people perished, including what a truth commission later termed a genocide against Mayan Indians in the Guatemalan highlands. In El Salvador, about 70,000 died including massacres of whole villages, such as the slaughter carried out by a U.S.-trained battalion against hundreds of men, women and children in and around the town of El Mozote in 1981.

The Reagan-Bush strategy also had a domestic component, the so-called “perception management” operation that employed sophisticated propaganda to manipulate the fears of the American people while hiding the ugly reality of the wars. The Reagan-Bush administration justified its actions in Central America by portraying the popular uprisings as an attempt by the Soviet Union to establish a beachhead in the Americas to threaten the U.S. southern border.

[For details about how these strategies worked and the role of George H.W. Bush, see Robert Parry’s [Secrecy & Privilege: Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq](#).]

More Pain

By employing the “Salvador option” in Iraq, the U.S. military would crank up the pain, especially in Sunni Muslim areas where resistance to the U.S. occupation of Iraq has been strongest. In effect, Bush would assign other Iraqi ethnic groups the job of leading the “death squad” campaign against the Sunnis.

“One Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Perhmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with discussions,” Newsweek reported.

Newsweek quoted one military source as saying, “The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving the terrorists. ... From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation.”

Citing the Central American experiences of many Bush administration officials, we wrote in November 2003 – more than a year ago – that many of these Reagan-Bush veterans were drawing lessons from the 1980s in trying to cope with the Iraqi insurgency. We pointed out, however, that the conditions were not parallel. [See Consortiumnews.com’s “[Iraq: Quicksand & Blood](#).”]

In Central America, powerful oligarchies had long surrounded themselves with ruthless security forces and armies. So, when uprisings swept across the region in the early 1980s, the Reagan-Bush administration had ready-made – though unsavory – allies who could do the dirty work with financial and technological help from Washington.

Iraqi Dynamic

A different dynamic exists in Iraq, because the Bush administration chose to disband rather than co-opt the Iraqi army. That left U.S. forces with few reliable local allies and put the onus for carrying out counterinsurgency operations on American soldiers who were unfamiliar with the land, the culture and the language.

Those problems, in turn, contributed to a series of counterproductive tactics, including the heavy-handed round-ups of Iraqi suspects, the torturing of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and the killing of innocent civilians by jittery U.S. troops fearful of suicide bombings.

The war in Iraq also has undermined U.S. standing elsewhere in the Middle East and around the world. Images of U.S. soldiers sexually abusing Iraqi prisoners, putting bags over the

heads of captives and shooting a wounded insurgent have blackened America's image everywhere and made cooperation with the United States increasingly difficult even in countries long considered American allies.

Beyond the troubling images, more and more documents have surfaced indicating that the Bush administration had adopted limited forms of torture as routine policy, both in Iraq and the broader War on Terror. Last August, an FBI counterterrorism official criticized abusive practices at the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"On a couple of occasions, I entered interview rooms to find a detainee chained hand and foot in a fetal position to the floor, with no chair, food or water. Most times they had urinated or defecated on themselves, and had been left there for 18-24 hours or more," the official wrote. "When I asked the M.P.'s what was going on, I was told that interrogators from the day prior had ordered this treatment, and the detainee was not to be moved. On another occasion ... the detainee was almost unconscious on the floor, with a pile of hair next to him. He had apparently been literally pulling his own hair out throughout the night."

Despite official insistence that torture is not U.S. policy, the blame for these medieval tactics continues to climb the chain of command toward the Oval Office. It appears to have been Bush's decision after the Sept. 11 attacks to "take the gloves off," a reaction understandable at the time but which now appears to have hurt, more than helped.

TV World

Many Americans have fantasized about how they would enjoy watching Osama bin Laden tortured to death for his admitted role in the Sept. 11 attacks. There is also a tough-guy fondness for torture as shown in action entertainment – like Fox Network's "24" – where torture is a common-sense shortcut to get results.

But the larger danger arises when the exceptional case becomes the routine, when it's no longer the clearly guilty al-Qaeda mass murderer, but it is now the distraught Iraqi father trying to avenge the death of his child killed by American bombs.

Rather than the dramatic scenes on TV, the reality is usually more like that desperate creature in Guantanamo lying in his own waste and pulling out his hair. The situation can get even worse when torture takes on the industrial quality of government policy, with subjects processed through the gulags or the concentration camps.

That also is why the United States and other civilized countries have long banned torture and prohibited the intentional killing of civilians. The goal of international law has been to set standards that couldn't be violated even in extreme situations or in the passions of the moment.

Yet, Bush – with his limited world experience – was easily sold on the notion of U.S. "exceptionalism" where America's innate goodness frees it from the legal constraints that apply to lesser countries.

Bush also came to believe in the wisdom of his "gut" judgments. After his widely praised ouster of Afghanistan's Taliban government in late 2001, Bush set his sights on invading Iraq. Like a hot gambler in Las Vegas doubling his bets, Bush's instincts were on a roll.

Now, however, as the Iraqi insurgency continues to grow and inflict more casualties on both U.S. troops and Iraqis who have thrown in their lot with the Americans, Bush finds himself facing a narrowing list of very tough choices.

Bush could acknowledge his mistakes and seek international help in extricating U.S. forces from Iraq. But Bush abhors admitting errors, even small ones. Plus, Bush's belligerent tone hasn't created much incentive for other countries to bail him out.

Instead Bush appears to be upping the ante by contemplating cross-border raids into countries neighboring Iraq. He also would be potentially expanding the war by having Iraqi Kurds and Shiites kill Sunnis, a prescription for civil war or genocide.

Pinochet Option

There's a personal risk, too, for Bush if he picks the "Salvador option." He could become an American version of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet or Guatemala's Efraim Rios Montt, leaders who turned loose their security forces to commit assassinations, "disappear" opponents and torture captives.

Like the policy that George W. Bush is now considering, Pinochet even sponsored his own international "death squad" – known as Operation Condor – that hunted down political opponents around the world. One of those attacks in September 1976 blew up a car carrying Chilean dissident Orlando Letelier as he drove through Washington D.C. with two American associates. Letelier and co-worker Ronni Moffitt were killed.

With the help of American friends in high places, the two former dictators have fended off prison until now. However, Pinochet and Rios Montt have become pariahs who are facing legal proceedings aimed at finally holding them accountable for their atrocities. [For more on George H.W. Bush's protection of Pinochet, see Parry's [Secrecy & Privilege](#).]

One way for George W. Bush to avert that kind of trouble is to make sure his political allies remain in power even after his second term ends in January 2009. In his case, that might be achievable by promoting his brother Jeb for president in 2008, thus guaranteeing that any incriminating documents stay under wraps.

President George W. Bush's dispatching Florida Gov. Jeb Bush to inspect the tsunami damage in Asia started political speculation that one of the reasons was to burnish Jeb's international credentials in a setting where his personal empathy would be on display.

Though Jeb Bush has insisted that he won't run for president in 2008, the Bush family might find strong reason to encourage Jeb to change his mind, especially if the Iraq War is lingering and George W. has too many file cabinets filled with damaging secrets.

Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. His new book, *Secrecy & Privilege: Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq*, can be ordered at secrecyandprivilege.com. It's also available at Amazon.com, as is his 1999 book, *Lost History: Contras, Cocaine, the Press & 'Project Truth'*.
<http://www.consortiumnews.com/2005/011105.html>

Death-squad style massacres

For Iraq, "The Salvador Option" Becomes Reality

by Max Fuller

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Abstract

The following article examines evidence that the 'Salvador Option' for Iraq has been ongoing for some time and attempts to say what such an option will mean. It pays particular attention to the role of the Special Police Commandos, considering both the background of their US liaisons and their deployment in Iraq. The article also looks at the evidence for death-squad style massacres in Iraq and draws attention to the almost complete absence of investigation. As such, the article represents an initial effort to compile and examine some of these mass killings and is intended to spur others into further looking at the evidence. Finally, the article turns away from the notion that sectarianism is a sufficient explanation for the violence in Iraq, locating it structurally at the hands of the state as part of the ongoing economic subjugation of Iraq.

Mounting evidence indicates that the 'Salvador Option' mooted for Iraq is already proceeding at full throttle

On 8 January this year, Newsweek published an article that claimed the US government was considering a 'Salvador Option' to combat the insurgency in Iraq (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6802629/site/newsweek/>). The Salvador Option is a reference to the military assistance programme of the 1980s, initiated under Jimmy Carter and subsequently pursued by the Reagan administration, in which the US trained and materially supported the Salvadoran military in its counter-insurgency campaign against popularly supported FMLN guerrillas. The Newsweek article was widely cited in the mainstream media but the allegations were rapidly dismissed by Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld. Though the reports mentioned human-rights violations, they generally made little of the fact that it was the very units that US military advisors had instructed that were frequently responsible for the most unspeakable crimes* and that there was at times a clear correlation between fresh bouts of training and subsequent atrocities (see Noam Chomsky, 'The Crucifixion of El Salvador', <http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/sam/sam-2-02.html>).

In an earlier interview on 10 January, retired General Wayne Downing, former head of all US special operations forces, took a very different line, stating that US-backed special units had been 'conducting strikes' against leaders of the so-called insurgency since March 2003 (cited in 'Phoenix Rising in Iraq' by Stephen Shalom, <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=7227>). However, Downing was careful to say that implementing a Salvadoran strategy would add an extra 'type' of unit to the occupation's arsenal. What neither the press, Donald Rumsfeld, nor General Downing pointed out was that the Salvador Option was already well underway in Iraq, and far more literally than might have been imagined.

According to an article recently published in New York Times Magazine, in September 2004 Counsellor to the US Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces James Steele was assigned to work with a new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, formed under the operational control of Iraq's Interior Ministry ('The Way of the Commandos', Peter Maass, http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/resources_files/TheWay_of_the_Commandos.html).

From 1984 to 1986 then Col. Steele had led the US Military Advisory Group in El Salvador, where he was responsible for developing special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. These forces, composed of the most brutal soldiers available, replicated the kind of small-unit operations with which Steele was familiar from his service in Vietnam. Rather than focusing on seizing terrain, their role was to attack 'insurgent' leadership, their supporters, sources of supply and base camps. In the case of the 4th Brigade, such tactics ensured that a 20-man force was able to account for 60% of the total casualties inflicted by the unit (Manwaring, *El Salvador at War*, 1988, p 306-8). In military circles it was the use of such tactics that made the difference in ultimately defeating the guerrillas; for others, such as the Catholic priest Daniel Santiago, the presence of people like Steele contributed to another sort of difference:

People are not just killed by death squads in El Salvador – they are decapitated and then their heads are placed on pikes and used to dot the landscape. Men are not just disemboweled by the Salvadoran Treasury Police; their severed genitalia are stuffed into their mouths. Salvadoran women are not just raped by the National Guard; their wombs are cut from their bodies and used to cover their faces. It is not enough to kill children; they are dragged over barbed wire until the flesh falls from their bones, while parents are forced to watch. (Cited by Chomsky, op cit.)

The Police Commandos are in large part the brainchild of another US counter-insurgency veteran, Steven Casteel, a former top DEA man who has been acting as the senior advisor in the Ministry of the Interior. Casteel was involved in the hunt for Colombia's notorious cocaine baron Pablo Escobar, during which the DEA collaborated with a paramilitary organization known as *Los Pepes*, which later transformed itself into the AUC, an umbrella organization covering all of Colombia's paramilitary death squads (<http://cocaine.org/colombia/pablo-escobar.html> ; <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/040105isac.htm>).

Like Colombia's death squads, Iraq's Police Commandos deliberately cultivate a frightening paramilitary image. During raids they wear balaclavas and black leather gloves and openly intimidate and brutalize suspects, even in the presence of foreign journalists (see the report by Peter Maass's). Significantly, many of the Commandos, including their leader, are Sunni Muslims.

Evidence of Massacres

In the last few weeks, with the discovery of several mass graves in and around Baghdad, evidence of multiple extra-judicial killings has started to become much more visible, but, in fact, even a cursory review of such archives as the one compiled by Iraq Body Count (<http://www.iraqbodycount.net/>) reveals that mass executions have been taking place commonly in Iraq over at least the last six months. What is particularly striking is that many of those killings have taken place since the Police Commandos became operationally active and often correspond with areas where they have been deployed.

The clearest correlation is in Mosul, where the Police Commandos began operating in late October (http://www.strykernews.com/archives/2004/10/29/special_iraqi_police_commandos_con

[tinue_operations.html](#)). In mid-November it was reported that insurgents were conducting an offensive and had managed to drive most of the (regular) police from the city. There followed what was described as a joint counter-offensive by US forces and Police Commandos. The Police Commandos conducted raids inside the old quarter starting on 16 November in which dozens of suspects were arrested. During one such raid on a mosque and a tea shop, detainees, blindfolded and with their hands tied behind their backs, were seen being taken away by commandos (<http://www.smh.com.au/news/After-Saddam/Iraqi-soldiers-found-murdered-in-Mosul/2004/11/21/1100972263000.html>). In the weeks and months that followed over 150 bodies appeared (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4105009.stm), often in batches and frequently having obviously been executed, usually with a bullet to the head (eg. <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/iraq/?id=12147>).

The victims are repeatedly stated to have belonged mostly to the security forces, with 'insurgents' blamed for conducting a campaign of intimidation. Yet, most of the bodies were dressed in civilian clothes with little in the way of identification. In the few instances in which positive identifications have been reported, these are based on flimsy evidence. For instance, in the case of nine victims described as soldiers that had been shot in the head, a US army lieutenant simply stated that a 'unit recently moved to one of the US bases' had 'some guys missing' (<http://www.smh.com.au/news/After-Saddam/Iraqi-soldiers-found-murdered-in-Mosul/2004/11/21/1100972263000.html>); photographs of the victims showed them wearing civilian clothes. A blatant case of disinformation regards a group of 31 bodies 'discovered' by the Police Commandos in March 2005 scattered around a cemetery in western Mosul. The bodies, described by an Interior Ministry spokesman as belonging to civilians, police officers and army soldiers, were said to have been the victims of a single policeman, Shoqayer Fareed Sheet, who confessed to these and numerous other killings on a special television show conceived by founder of the Police Commandos Adnan Thavit, called Terrorism in the Hands of Justice (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23448-2005Mar10.html>). Not only does this programme break every conceivable moral and legal standard, but it is notorious for parading obviously tortured detainees who are often forced to confess to being homosexuals or paedophiles as well as murderers. ([http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:OkQ0b9q9QbkJ:uniraq.org/documents/ArabicRegionalNews22 March2005.doc+quds+press&hl=en&client=safari](http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:OkQ0b9q9QbkJ:uniraq.org/documents/ArabicRegionalNews22+March2005.doc+quds+press&hl=en&client=safari))

Given the extreme paucity of evidence, the lack of secure identification and the disinformation put out by the Interior Ministry, there is at least a strong possibility that many, if not all, of the extra-judicial killings in Mosul have been carried out by the Police Commandos.

Police Commandos Directly Accused

A similar, though less complete pattern is emerging in other areas where the Commandos have been operating, notably Samarra, where bodies were recently found in nearby Lake Tharthar (<http://www.turkishpress.com/news.asp?id=41936>). However, the strongest case is currently starting to emerge in Baghdad, where a wave of killings over the last few weeks has resulted in accusations being made directly against the state security forces and specifically against the Police Commandos. The accusations revolve around three distinct massacres. On 5 May a shallow mass grave was discovered in the Kasra-Wa-Atash industrial area containing 14 bodies. The victims, all young men, had been blindfolded, their hands tied behind their backs and they had been executed with shots to the head. The bodies also revealed such torture marks as broken skulls, burning, beatings and right eyeballs removed. In this case family members were able to identify the bodies; the victims were Sunni farmers on their way to market. According to Phil Shiner of the British-based Public Interest Lawyers, the men had been arrested when Iraqi security forces raided the vegetable market

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1488096,00.html> ,
<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=760368>).

Less than two weeks later on 15 May, 15 more bodies were discovered at two sites in western Baghdad. Eight of the victims were found In the Al-Shaab area, while a further seven were discovered behind a mosque in Ore district

(<http://www.kuna.net.kw/home/Story.aspx?Language=en&DSNO=733276>). According to the Chicago Tribune, 'some had been blindfolded, most were found with their hands bound and all had been shot in the head' (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0505170030may17,0,3795261.story?coll=chi-newsopinionperspective-utl>). The Association of Muslim Scholars quickly responded to the wave of killings, accusing soldiers and Interior Ministry commandos of having 'arrested imams and the guardians of some mosques, tortured and killed them, then got rid of their bodies in a garbage dump in the Shaab district' (http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=238784&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__international_news/). 'This is state terrorism by the Ministry of Interior' said Hareth al-Dhari, secretary general of the Association (<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/47613c82-c804-11d9-9765-00000e2511c8.html>). Whilst al-Dhari also blamed the Badr brigades associated with the ruling Shia coalition, the emphasis of his denunciation was quickly shifted in the mainstream press to reinforce only this aspect of the accusation and the notion of sectarian tit-for-tat violence (eg http://newswww.bbc.net.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4569103.stm). The Iraqi government's riposte to the Association's accusations was predictably insidious, with the new defence minister blaming terrorists wearing military uniforms (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0505170030may17,0,3795261.story?coll=chi-newsopinionperspective-utl>). However, it should come as little surprise to discover that at the beginning of May the government had announced an imminent counter-insurgency crackdown, which they said was likely to unleash well-trained commandos in Baghdad and other trouble spots (<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article8725.htm>).

Wider Evidence of Massacres

With such accusations being made specifically against US-trained counter-insurgency forces it is worth briefly mentioning some of the other massacres that have occurred in Iraq over recent months. In October 2004 some 49 bodies were discovered on a remote road about 50km south of Baquba. The victims, who wore civilian clothes, had all been shot in the head. The Interior Ministry announced that they were off-duty soldiers. Some accounts by police said the rebels were dressed in Iraqi military uniforms, although details were far from clear (<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/news/archive/2004/10/24/international0921EDT0440.DTL> ; <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,136419,00.html>).

Similarly, in March of this year 26 bodies were discovered at Rumana, near Qaim, close to the Syrian border. According to the Interior Ministry, most of the victims were members of a rapid response team. The victims had been blindfolded, handcuffed and shot in the head. The bodies, which once again were dressed in civilian clothes, were found in an area where the US army had been conducting Operation River Blitz, a marine-led assault on insurgents in the Euphrates River valley (<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,136419,00.html> ; <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/03/09/iraq.main/>).

To further muddy the waters, the bodies of eight men from Sadr City were found in Yussufiah, 40km south of Baghdad, on 9 May this year. The victims, who had been tortured, then executed with a bullet to the back of the neck, were found wearing army uniforms, but relatives identified them as civilians. Army captain Ahmed Hussein suggested that the killers wanted people to believe they had executed soldiers (http://www.news24.com/News24/World/Iraq/0,,2-10-1460_1701988,00.html).

There are other similar cases of mass killings, as well as many more involving smaller numbers of bodies far too numerous to mention. Nonetheless, it is worth emphasising the many bodies (more than 100) gradually being dredged up from the River Tigris, especially around Suwayra, south of Baghdad. The bodies began to be noticed in late February of this year, surfacing at the rate of one or two a day, but began to increase in frequency in April; some of the victims, who were mostly men but included some women and children, were bound, others shot or beheaded. In April, president Talabani claimed the victims had been kidnapped by insurgents in the village of Madain, but, in fact, those identified to date hailed from a wide radius and could not be accounted for by a single episode of kidnapping. Police in Suwayra have stated that many of the victims are likely to have been stopped at impromptu checkpoints by masked men, while some Sunnis say that the victims may include people detained by the police (<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2005/04/22/MNG45CDDDBQ1.DTL>).

In light of these bodies in the Tigris, it may be significant to note a strange report on the website Jihad Unspun of US soldiers dumping body bags from helicopters in the Diali River in eastern Iraq during the early hours of the morning. The writer argues that the bags held the corpses of American soldiers or foreign mercenaries that the army wished to conceal from public knowledge (http://www.jihadunspun.com/intheatre_internal.php?article=100552&list=/home.php&). This implausible theory leaves a very large question mark over the identity of bodies that the US army wishes to conceal and recalls the report submitted to the Brussels Tribunal, 'Tarmiya: the Silent Agony'. This account contains first hand testimony from an agricultural worker who survived an attempted execution by a team of US special forces. He and a colleague were abducted from the farm where they worked, then taken to a secluded grove where their throats were cut. They were left for dead, but miraculously, one of them survived (<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/>). Whilst this account lacks corroboration and has remained anonymous to protect the identities of those involved, it remains a convincing description of the kind of long-range 'reconnaissance' missions that people like James Steele were conducting in Vietnam.

Modelling the Iraq War

Whilst much of the violence across Iraq appears chaotic, some lines are starting to emerge that follow the pattern and the logic of other counter-insurgency wars. In El Salvador, when the war finally came to an end, it became clear that the majority of its victims had been participants in progressive social movements as well as peasants who had been perceived as sympathising with or supporting the guerrillas. The object of the war was not to defeat an ideologically motivated rebellion, it was to prevent the possibility of progressive social change and to maintain the country within the US economic orbit in its traditional tributary role.

The same can be said of Colombia at present, where the long current phase of the internal conflict in which thousands of social activists have been murdered has butted seamlessly with the country's exposure to economic liberalisation. In short, legitimate social demands are violently suppressed in favour of allowing foreign capital to extract super profits from Colombia's rich natural resources and selling off its public assets for the same purpose. Much of the conflict takes place within the realm of so-called 'civil society', where progressive leaders are excluded or eliminated, whilst those who are prepared to throw in their lot with predatory foreign capital are rewarded and extolled.

In Iraq the war comes in two phases. The first phase is complete: the destruction of the existing state, which did not comply with the interests of British and American capital. The second phase consists of building a new state tied to those interests and smashing every dissenting sector of society. Openly, this involves applying the same sort of economic shock

therapy that has done so much damage in swathes of the Third World and Eastern Europe. Covertly, it means intimidating, kidnapping and murdering opposition voices.

The economic assault on Iraq is well underway. Visible unemployment stands at around the catastrophic level of 28%, large parts of the state sector have already been sold off and wages have fallen (often to less than half of their pre-war levels), thanks in part to the introduction of thousands of cheap workers from Pakistan, India and the Philippines. These workers are often tricked into coming and stripped of their passports, effectively working as slaves in order to undercut accustomed Iraqi living standards. Reconstruction projects are given almost exclusively to foreign (mainly US) companies, who pay a flat rate of 15% tax with no limits to repatriation of profits, while Iraq's state-owned companies are excluded (<http://www.antiwar.com/orig/shumway.php?articleid=3005>). In the countryside, Iraqi farmers are now obliged to buy a licence to grow genetically modified seed and are prohibited from resowing the seed developed by their ancestors in the cradle of civilisation (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/KHA501A.html>).

The covert assault has also begun. Attacks on workers and trade unionists are becoming increasingly common (<http://www.iraqitradeunions.org/archives/000200.html>) and it is instructive that the railway workers union, in an industry that has been slated for privatisation, seems to have been particularly targeted, with US administrators on the ground threatening to bring in Indian workers (<http://www.iraqitradeunions.org/archives/000117.html>). Whilst the IFTU, the dominant, state-sanctioned new trade-union umbrella organisation, may have endorsed the occupation, the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI) has not; in any case, ordinary Iraqi workers will find themselves increasingly at odds with the puppet government as they try to defend even rudimentary living standards. Industrial action is already widespread in Iraq, though little reported in the mainstream press.

An even more frightening picture is emerging within the sector of higher education, where, since the beginning of the occupation, some 200 Iraqi academics have been murdered, while control and intimidation has become systematic. Many of the victims worked in the social sciences, where overlap with progressive social movements is unavoidable (<http://www.newstatesman.com/200409060018>).

Unfortunately, in Iraq it is almost impossible to securely attribute any of the host of assassinations and extra-judicial killings, while the US-UK propaganda campaign has left many all too willing to believe in such bugbears as Al-Zarqawi (see Michel Chossudovsky's article 'Who is Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi?' (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO405B.html>). What we do know, however, is that hundreds of Iraqis are being murdered and that paramilitary hit squads of the proxy government organized by US trainers with a fulsome pedigree in state terrorism are increasingly being associated with them.

In the context of a country where good information is extremely scarce, disinformation and black propaganda are endemic and independent journalists and monitors are deliberately eliminated, it is vital to be able to model the situation in order to understand it and, hopefully, be effective. There are two principle dimensions to such modelling. In the first, Iraq has frequently been compared to Vietnam. The similarity is that the US has well over 100,000 soldiers on the ground. However, the analogy is misleading in that in Iraq conflict with a populous enemy state, as North Vietnam was, ended quickly. As a model, El Salvador is not wholly accurate either. In El Salvador US 'advisors' were few in number and prohibited from taking part in combat. Nevertheless, it is towards this model that the US is attempting to move, hoping to farm out the sordid business of occupation to Iraqi auxiliaries. But, in many ways it is contemporary Colombia that offers the closest analogy: not for the disposition of US forces, but because here the same process of asset-stripping,

impoverishment and conquistador-like plundering is both deeply entrenched and ongoing. It is here that is to be found that clearest pattern for the assaults on academics, independent trade unionists and peasant organisations that will increasingly characterise Iraq for those prepared to look beyond the fireworks. This is the second dimension that any model must address, but in essence the pattern is repeated time after time in every imperialist so-called counter-insurgency war; for behind each and every one lurks the reality of exploitation and class war, and, as successive imperialist powers have shown, the bottom line in combating the hopes and dreams of ordinary people is to resort to spreading terror through the application of extreme violence. In Iraq, the Salvador Option may mean returning home to find your entire family seated at table with their own severed heads served to them and a bowl of blood for relish.

*One of the worst atrocities was committed in December 1981 at the village of El Mozote in the department of Morazán by the Atlacatl Battalion, an elite counter-insurgency force trained by US advisors and regarded as one of El Salvador's best fighting units. Over 200 men, women and children (the entire village) were systematically tortured and murdered over the course of a day (http://www.usip.org/library/tc/doc/reports/el_salvador/tc_es_03151993_casesC.html).

Max Fuller has worked for some years as a member of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign in the UK and has read extensively on US policy and Latin America. He is the author of several reports published in the *Bulletin of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign*.

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'The Salvador Option'

The Pentagon may put Special-Forces-led assassination or kidnapping teams in Iraq

WEB EXCLUSIVE

By Michael Hirsh and John Barry

Newsweek

Updated: 8:59 p.m. ET Jan. 14, 2005

Jan. 8 - What to do about the deepening quagmire of Iraq? The Pentagon's latest approach is being called "the Salvador option"—and the fact that it is being discussed at all is a measure of just how worried Donald Rumsfeld really is. "What everyone agrees is that we can't just go on as we are," one senior military officer told NEWSWEEK. "We have to find a way to take the offensive against the insurgents. Right now, we are playing defense. And we are losing." Last November's operation in Fallujah, most analysts agree, succeeded less in breaking "the back" of the insurgency—as Marine Gen. John Sattler optimistically declared at the time—than in spreading it out.

Now, NEWSWEEK has learned, the Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success—despite the deaths of innocent civilians and the subsequent Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal. (Among the current administration officials who dealt with Central America back then is John Negroponte, who is today the U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Under Reagan, he was ambassador to Honduras. There is no evidence, however, that Negroponte knew anything about the Salvadoran death squads or the Iran-Contra scandal at the time. The Iraq ambassador, in a phone call to NEWSWEEK on Jan. 10, said he was not involved in military strategy in Iraq. He called the insertion of his name into this report "utterly gratuitous.")

Following that model, one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions. It remains unclear, however, whether this would be a policy of assassination or so-called "snatch" operations, in which the targets are sent to secret facilities for interrogation. The current thinking is that while U.S. Special Forces would lead operations in, say, Syria, activities inside Iraq itself would be carried out by Iraqi paramilitaries, officials tell NEWSWEEK.

Also being debated is which agency within the U.S. government—the Defense department or CIA—would take responsibility for such an operation. Rumsfeld's Pentagon has aggressively sought to build up its own intelligence-gathering and clandestine capability with an operation run by Defense Undersecretary Stephen Cambone. But since the Abu Ghraib interrogations scandal, some military officials are ultra-wary of any operations that could run afoul of the ethics codified in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. That, they argue, is the reason why such covert operations have always been run by the CIA and authorized by a special presidential finding. (In "covert" activity, U.S. personnel operate under cover and the U.S. government will not confirm that it instigated or ordered them into action if they are captured or killed.)

Meanwhile, intensive discussions are taking place inside the Senate Intelligence Committee over the Defense department's efforts to expand the involvement of U.S. Special Forces personnel in intelligence-gathering missions. Historically, Special Forces' intelligence gathering has been limited to objectives directly related to upcoming military operations—"preparation of the battlefield," in military lingo. But, according to intelligence and defense officials, some Pentagon civilians for years have sought to expand the use of Special Forces for other intelligence missions.

Pentagon civilians and some Special Forces personnel believe CIA civilian managers have traditionally been too conservative in planning and executing the kind of undercover missions that Special Forces soldiers believe they can effectively conduct. CIA traditionalists are believed to be adamantly opposed to ceding any authority to the Pentagon. Until now, Pentagon proposals for a capability to send soldiers out on intelligence missions without direct CIA approval or participation have been shot down. But counter-terrorist strike squads, even operating covertly, could be deemed to fall within the Defense department's orbit.

The interim government of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi is said to be among the most forthright proponents of the Salvador option. Maj. Gen. Muhammad Abdallah al-Shahwani, director of Iraq's National Intelligence Service, may have been laying the groundwork for

the idea with a series of interviews during the past ten days. Shahwani told the London-based Arabic daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat that the insurgent leadership—he named three former senior figures in the Saddam regime, including Saddam Hussein's half-brother—were essentially safe across the border in a Syrian sanctuary. "We are certain that they are in Syria and move easily between Syrian and Iraqi territories," he said, adding that efforts to extradite them "have not borne fruit so far."



Shahwani also said that the U.S. occupation has failed to crack the problem of broad support for the insurgency. The insurgents, he said, "are mostly in the Sunni areas where the population there, almost 200,000, is sympathetic to them." He said most Iraqi people do not actively support the insurgents or provide them with material or logistical help, but at the same time they won't turn them in. One military source involved in the Pentagon debate agrees that this is the crux of the problem, and he suggests that new offensive operations are needed that would create a fear of aiding the insurgency. "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving to the terrorists," he said. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

Pentagon sources emphasize there has been no decision yet to launch the Salvador option. Last week, Rumsfeld decided to send a retired four-star general, Gary Luck, to Iraq on an open-ended mission to review the entire military strategy there. But with the U.S. Army strained to the breaking point, military strategists note that a dramatic new approach might be needed—perhaps one as potentially explosive as the Salvador option.

With Mark Hosenball

EDITOR'S NOTE: This report, initially published on Jan. 8, was updated on Jan. 10 to include Negroponte's comments to NEWSWEEK.

And at a news conference on Jan. 11, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the idea of a Salvador option was "nonsense" and denied that U.S. Special Forces were going into Syria. But when asked whether such a policy was under consideration, he replied, "Why would I even talk about something like that?"

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The Rule, Not the Exception -- The "Salvador Option" in Context

By [Sean Donahue](#),

Posted on Thu Jan 13th, 2005 at 02:11:43 PM EST

Newsweek reports that the Pentagon is considering having U.S. Special Forces train death squads in Iraq, modeled on U.S. death squads in El Salvador.

What Newsweek fails to note is that:

1. This policy represents standard U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, employed around the world since the 1960's.

2. Two suspicious kidnappings in Iraq last year suggest that death squad activity may already exist in Iraq.
3. The "Salvador Option" is not an extreme option being considered by a few neo-cons at the Pentagon, rather it reflects a policy that could easily develop bipartisan support, and which John Kerry may have been hinting at during the presidential campaign.
4. The leak of the "Salvador Option" may be a conscious attempt to test the waters regarding public sentiment about Iraqi death squads and to pad the impact of later revelations about U.S. actions in Iraq.

Sometimes the problem isn't that the mainstream media misses a story, but rather that it missed the forest for the trees.

As [Andrew Grice and John Eden have noted](#), [Newsweek](#) reported last weekend that:

" the Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported 'nationalist' forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success—despite the deaths of innocent civilians and the subsequent Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal. (Among the current administration officials who dealt with Central America back then is John Negroponte, who is today the U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Under Reagan, he was ambassador to Honduras. [. . .] Following that model, one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions. It remains unclear, however, whether this would be a policy of assassination or so-called 'snatch' operations, in which the targets are sent to secret facilities for interrogation. The current thinking is that while U.S. Special Forces would lead operations in, say, Syria, activities inside Iraq itself would be carried out by Iraqi paramilitaries, officials tell NEWSWEEK."

These "revelations" certainly come as no surprise to anyone with even the most basic understanding of U.S. counter-insurgency actions in Latin America. But by failing to put the "Salvador Option" in context, Newsweek ignores the reality that this plan represents the rule and not the exception in U.S. counterinsurgency operations, and that rather than being a controversial and extreme proposal it reflects the bipartisan desire for a policy that can shift the burden of killing and dying from U.S. soldiers to Iraqis.

DEATH SQUADS, TOTALITARIANISM, AND COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE

As Michael McClintock documented in his seminal work [*Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940-1990* <http://www.statecraft.org>], during the Cold War the U.S. developed counterinsurgency policies based on the model of Nazi suppression of partisan insurgents that emphasized placing the civilian population under strict control and using terror to make the population afraid to support or collaborate with insurgents.

The legacy of this counterinsurgency doctrine is clear in the Army's new counterinsurgency manual, [FM 100-20 / AFP 3-20 Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict](#). The manual explains that "Population and Resources Control" (PRC) is essential to keep the civilian population from providing a base of support for an insurgency, while noting that such operations are highly controversial and wherever possible the U.S. should farm them out to troops from the "host country." According to the manual:

"PRC measures can include--

- Suspension of habeas corpus.
- Curfews and blackout.
- Travel restrictions.
- Excluded or limited access areas.
- Registration and pass systems.
- Declaration that selected items or quantities of items, such as weapons, food, and fuel, are contraband.
- Licensing, rationing, and price controls.
- Checkpoints, searches, and surveillance.
- Censorship."

Such tactics were developed as part of the "strategic hamlet" system in Vietnam, and have been widely implemented by U.S. client states -- most recently by Israel in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and by Colombia in areas such as Arauca and certain neighborhoods of Medellin.

In areas seen as hotbeds of resistance, such as Fallujah, the Army is toled to escalate from "Population and Resources Control" to "Consolidation Operations" which include:

"Destroying, dispersing, or clearing insurgent tactical forces from the area.

Locating and destroying elements of the insurgency's supporting base area system.

Identifying and apprehending members of the insurgency's political infrastructure. "

"The insurgences supporting base area system" includes networks of support the insurgents have built in the community. "Identifying and appeshending members of the insurgency's political infrastructure" suggests rounding up people who support the insurgency's political goals -- a slightly more politically correct way to discuss taking out labor organizers, community leaders, human rights workers, and independent journalists. Incredibly, the manual openly refers to the use of paramilitary forces in carrying out "Consolidation Operations."

The Nazis pioneered the use of indigenous paramilitary forces to root out insurgents and sympathizers through the creation of forces such as the Croatian Ustashe. The U.S. first implemented the tactic in Colombia in the early 1960's. According to McClintock, following a 1962 visit to Colombia, Gen. William Yarborough wrote:

"[A] concerted country team effort should be made now to select civilian and military personnel for clandestine training in resistance operations in case they are needed later. This should be done with a view toward development of a civil and military structure for exploitation in the event the Colombian internal security system deteriorates further. This structure should be used to pressure

toward reforms known to be needed, perform counter-agent and counter-propaganda functions and as necessary execute paramilitary, sabotage and/or terrorist activities against known communist proponents. It should be backed by the United States."

The Colombian military implemented Yarborough's suggestion under "Plan Lazo," creating the forerunners of today's AUC death squads. The tactic has become the hallmark of U.S.-backed counterinsurgency operations from El Salvador to Guatemala to El Salvador to East Timor.

The purpose of the strategy is outlined in a 1962 Army Psychological Operations manual quoted by McClintock:

"Civilians in the operational area may be supporting their own government or collaborating with an enemy occupation force. An isolation program designed to instill doubt and fear may be carried out, and a positive political action program designed to elicit active support of the guerrillas also may be effected. If these programs fail, it may become necessary to take more aggressive action in the form of harsh treatment or even abductions. The abduction and harsh treatment of key enemy civilians can weaken the collaborators' belief in the strength and power of their military forces."

The controversial nature of such operations requires that they be carried out covertly and that whenever possible they be carried out by surrogates -- such as local paramilitary groups.

Fr. Javier Giraldo wrote in his 1996 book, *Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy*, that:

"the keystone of a strategy of 'Dirty War,' where the 'dirty' actions cannot be attributed to persons on behalf of the State because they have been delegated, passed along or projected upon confused bodies of armed civilians. Those committing the crimes are anonymous and easily definable as common delinquents who act and thereafter disappear into the fog. This covers up responsibility for acts which have no legal justification or legitimacy, not even during times of warlike confrontations. The result is that they confound and complement two types of events: actions of military officers camouflaged as civilians and military action of civilians protected in a clandestine way by military personnel. Both types of procedures have the same objective: to provide impunity through cover ups."

Given this history and these doctrines how can anyone pretend to be surprised that the U.S. would use death squads to keep the population in Iraq?

THE BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS: FEWER US TROOPS, HARSHER CONTROL

Newsweek presents the "Salvador Option" as an extreme position being advocated and explored by neo-conservatives at the Pentagon. But in reality, the "Salvador Option" reflects a position long advocated by Democrats -- turning over more of the military operations to Iraqis in order to relieve the burden on U.S. troops. The Democrats have simply avoided discussing what kinds of forces and operations would really be necessary for the so-called "Iraqi government" to put down the insurgenc.

Indeed, there is reason to believe that a Kerry administration might have advanced a subtler version of the "Salvador Option." During the campaign, Kerry proposed a significant expansion of U.S. Special Forces. (See my [October 4 article in Counterpunch](#).) To the public this conjured up

images of crack battalions of Chuck Norris-like soldiers. But anyone familiar with the real mission and nature of U.S. Special Forces knows that essentially this would have meant leveraging military resources to use "trainers" and "advisors" to set up local forces that could engage in "dirty war" tactics too controversial for the U.S. to engage in directly.

ARE THERE ALREADY DEATH SQUADS IN IRAQ?

Indeed, reading the Newsweek report, I found myself asking -- is the Pentagon really just now beginning to implement a death squad strategy in Iraq? Unanswered questions about the abductions of Simona Torretta and Nicholas Berg in Iraq last year lead me to wonder whether the death squads are already up and running.

McClintock cites the following passage from a 1962 Psychological Operations manual:

"Civilians in the operational area may be supporting their own government or collaborating with an enemy occupation force. An isolation program designed to instill doubt and fear may be carried out, and a positive political action program designed to elicit active support of the guerrillas also may be effected. If these programs fail, it may become necessary to take more aggressive action in the form of harsh treatment or even abductions. The abduction and harsh treatment of key enemy civilians can weaken the collaborators' belief in the strength and power of their military forces. This approach, fraught with propaganda and political dangers, should be used only after all other appeal means have failed. And when used, they [sic] must be made to appear as though initiated and effected by the guerrillas themselves to reduce the possibility of reprisals against civilians."

He also cites an Army intelligence officer with experience in Vietnam who suggested in the following tactic in a 1966 study on counterinsurgency and psychological warfare:

"Using a pseudo-insurgent force, the government generates incidents among the population. These incidents are used to indicate to the people the need for government-sponsored population control for protection of the villagers."

There is an uncanny resonance between these passages and the circumstances surrounding the kidnapping of Simona Toretta. Toretta was a staff person for an Italian NGO that opposed the U.S. war in Iraq, and had done work in Baghdad during the sanctions and the bombing. In early September, Toretta and three colleagues were kidnapped by alleged Iraqi militants. But too many of the pieces of the story just don't fit. Jeremy Scahill and Naomi Klein, who had met Toretta in Iraq, [reported in the Guardian on September 16 2004 that:](#)

"Nothing about this kidnapping fits the pattern of other abductions. Most are opportunistic attacks on treacherous stretches of road. Torretta and her colleagues were coldly hunted down in their home. And while mujahideen in Iraq scrupulously hide their identities, making sure to wrap their faces in scarves, these kidnappers were bare-faced and clean-shaven, some in business suits. One assailant was addressed by the others as 'sir'

"Kidnap victims have overwhelmingly been men, yet three of these four are women. Witnesses say the gunmen questioned staff in the building until the Simonas were identified by name, and that Mahnouz Bassam, an Iraqi woman, was dragged screaming by her headscarf, a shocking religious transgression for an attack supposedly carried out in the name of Islam.

"Most extraordinary was the size of the operation: rather than the usual three or four fighters, 20 armed men pulled up to the house in broad daylight, seemingly unconcerned about being caught. Only blocks from the heavily patrolled Green Zone, the whole operation went off with no interference from Iraqi police or US military - although Newsweek reported that "about 15 minutes afterwards, an American Humvee convoy passed hardly a block away.

"And then there were the weapons. The attackers were armed with automatic rifles, pump-action shotguns, pistols with silencers and stun guns - hardly the mujahideen's standard-issue rusty Kalashnikovs. Strangest of all is this detail: witnesses said that several attackers wore Iraqi National Guard uniforms and identified themselves as working for Ayad Allawi, the interim prime minister.

"An Iraqi government spokesperson denied that Allawi's office was involved. But Sabah Kadhim, a spokesperson for the interior ministry, conceded that the kidnappers'were wearing military uniforms and flak jackets."

Aside from the names and locations it sounds like the story of a paramilitary kidnapping in Iraq.

They go on to explain that:

" [Toretta's organization,] A Bridge to Baghdad has been unapologetic in its opposition to the occupation regime. During the siege of Falluja in April, it coordinated risky humanitarian missions. US forces had sealed the road to Falluja and banished the press as they prepared to punish the entire city for the gruesome killings of four Blackwater mercenaries. In August, when US marines laid siege to Najaf, A Bridge to Baghdad again went where the occupation forces wanted no witnesses. And the day before their kidnapping, Torretta and Pari told Kubaisi that they were planning yet another high-risk mission to Falluja."

These details were reported in the Italian press but were ignored by the U.S. media. They provide strong circumstantial evidence that the kidnapping was an attempt to frighten groups like A Bridge to Baghdad out of sticking their noses into U.S. military business, and to scare other aid agencies into either collaborating more closely with security forces or pulling out of Iraq.

Several months earlier, in a widely publicized incident that drew attention away from the Abu Ghraib prison scandal (and was used by many commentators to tacitly support the torture of Iraqi prisoners,) Nicholas Berg, a 26 year old telecommunications contractor from Pennsylvania was kidnapped and beheaded. Before his kidnapping, Berg had been held and questioned by U.S. and Iraqi authorities. [update] Before his kidnapping, Berg had been held and questioned by U.S. and Iraqi authorities. The FBI offered Berg safe passage out of Iraq before releasing him, but Berg turned down the offer because he wanted to stay in the country a bit later. He was abducted several days later. .

This could just be a coincidence. On the other hand, from Alabama sheriffs with ties to the Ku Klux Klan to Colombian soldiers with the AUC, [update] there is a long history of security forces taking people into custody and then releasing them, giving paramilitary groups a chance to kidnap and murder them. The appearance of "guilt" can be a sufficient motive for a vigilante killing by death squads. .

Then there is the fact that, as numerous Bloggers have reported, [update] Berg's company was on an enemies list compiled by the right-wing hate group Free Republic, because Berg's father had signed a newspaper ad condemning the war in Iraq, and the ad had identified him as an employee of the company his son founded. Ironically, Nick Berg supported the U.S. occupation of Iraq. The same compassion for the Iraqi people that motivated his father, Michael's opposition to the war, motivated Nick to go to Iraq to attempt to take part in the reconstruction, working as a private telecommunications contractor. There are many Free Republic members in the U.S. military and the group is known for its violent, threatening rhetoric and its harrassment of its "enemies." There is also a long history of right wing paramilitaries deeming people "guilty by association" and committing reprisals against the family members of perceived dissidents.

The gruesome manner in which Nicholas Berg was murdered also reflects a mode of operation common to U.S. -backed death squads. death squads tend to use the most brutal and gruesome methods available to them in order to instill fear in others. McClintock cites Psychological Operations and Counterinsurgency training materials published by the Army in the mid 1960's that suggest that, by insurgents in order to increase people's fear of the insurgency and support for the government, in some cases death squads should make it look like their victimst were killed by insurgents. Given the erosion of trust in U.S. forces following the disclosure of the torture at Abu Ghraib prison it is entirely possible that Nick may have been killed in such a brutal and public way in order to create a deep fear of the insurgency that would tacitly justify the torture of suspected insurgents and in order to create the sense that when the media disclosed torture by U.S. forces they put U.S. nationals at risk. The confusion created by the mention of Nick's company's name on the Free Republic list might have helped the killers to justify their actions to themselves. The terror and outrage that Nick's murder caused may in turn have inspired actual insurgents to use the same method to carry out copycat crimes to create a similar effect for very different reasons.

There is not enough evidence to decisively pin the kidnappings of Toretta and Berg on paramilitaries -- but both cases raise disturbing questions. And if either of them was targeted by paramilitaries we can assume that there have been dozens of unknown Iraqi victims as well.

Which brings us back to the one other strange aspect of the Newsweek story. The reporters never asked why the Pentagon was giving them this information. Presumably they assumed that their sources were whistleblowers appalled by the proposal. But another possibility seems equally likely, if not more likely -- the Pentagon may already have implemented "the Salvador Option" and the leak may be part of a strategy to test the waters of public opinion regarding the strategy and to diffuse the impact of eventual revelations of U.S.-backed death squad activity in Iraq.

Once again, Newsweek has failed to do anything more than report a story handed to it on a silver platter.



<http://narcosphere.narconews.com/story/2005/1/13/141143/259>

Sick strategies for senseless slaughter

John Kaminski

The murderous fools are not trying to end the war;

they're trying to keep it going as long as they can

May 24, 2005

The cat is out of the bag now.

It happened quite by accident, as most revelations do. And it is seen by most of the world as the most revolting of the American/Israeli atrocities in the past few years, although it's hard to prioritize that claim because of the level and frequency of barbaric acts that are committed on a regular basis by those affluent automatons who call themselves the good guys.

Yet everyone but the comatose American populace — blinded by its Orwellian media and stupefied by its demented diet of physical and mental poisons — can see it.

So permit me to spell it out for those cowardly people who say they're living in the freest country on Earth, but absolutely refuse in their silent ignorance to see the blood they're spilling. No country that condones deliberate torture for any reason can ever be trusted.

The first hint came in Imad Khadduri's "A warning to car drivers" written in Arabic and posted on www.albasrah.net on May 11.

The dispatch was quickly picked up by two of the most realistic and reliable news sites on the Web, www.uruknet.info, which I try to read every day, and www.globalresearch.ca, which I try to read every week, since it offers less breaking and more analytical news. I consider these two sites essential to keeping up with the real news of the world, and highly recommend that you monitor them, too.

Khadduri recounted a scam that opens up a clear window to seeing who is perpetrating all this inexplicable violence in Iraq. Beyond the American attempt to pacify an outraged and abused nation through demonic destruction, and beyond the Iraqi attempt to resist this totalitarian takeover by a foreign conqueror, there are more than numerous acts of violence that simply can't be understood by straightforward explanations.

I mean, when a mosque blows up and Americans blame Islamic terrorists, whether Sunni or Shiite, it makes no sense. Muslims never blow up their own houses of worship. Or when reporters sympathetic to either the Iraqi cause of freedom, or even just general principles of international justice, are suddenly assassinated and the blame is placed on often imaginary Islamic extremists whose perspective is supported by these writers, how can anyone believe that Muslims did it, even though this is what the Zionist American press and government continue to insist.

So who's doing all these demented deeds? As if we didn't know

Khadduri's report went like this:

"A few days ago, an American manned check point confiscated the driver license of a driver and told him to report to an American military camp near Baghdad airport for interrogation and in order to retrieve his license. The next day, the driver did visit the camp and he was allowed in the camp with his car. He was admitted to a room for an interrogation that lasted half an hour. At the end of the session, the American interrogator told him: 'OK, there is nothing against you, but you do know that Iraq is now sovereign and is in charge of its own affairs. Hence, we have forwarded your papers and license to al-Kadhimiya police station for processing. Therefore, go there with this clearance to reclaim your license. At the police station, ask for Lt. Hussain Mohammed, who is waiting for you now. Go there now quickly, before he leaves his shift work'.

The driver did leave in a hurry, but was soon alarmed with a feeling that his car was driving as if carrying a heavy load, and he also became suspicious of a low flying helicopter that kept hovering overhead, as if trailing him. He stopped the car and inspected it carefully. He found nearly 100 kilograms of explosives hidden in the back seat and along the two back doors.

The only feasible explanation for this incident is that the car was indeed booby trapped by the Americans and intended for the al-Khadimiya Shiite district of Baghdad. The helicopter was monitoring his movement and witnessing the anticipated "hideous attack by foreign elements".

The same scenario was repeated in Mosul, in the north of Iraq. A car was confiscated along with the driver's license. He did follow up on the matter and finally reclaimed his car but was told to go to a police station to reclaim his license. Fortunately for him, the car broke down on the way to the police station. The inspecting car mechanic discovered that the spare tire was fully laden with explosives."

If this were the only example of this type I heard, I might have let it pass as just a story. But it wasn't.

There was also the sorry tale of the Iraqi man who saw American soldiers plant a bomb which shortly thereafter exploded, and when he said so out loud for all to hear, he was hauled away, never to be seen again.

This story was reported on arguably the most authentic and riveting source of news from Iraq, the heart-rending "Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq," which is compiled by someone known only as Riverbend or Iraqi Girl < <http://riverbendblog.blogspot.com/> >. Again, recommended reading.

She recounts, "the last two weeks have been violent

The number of explosions in Baghdad alone is frightening. There have also been several assassinations — bodies being found here and there. It's somewhat disturbing to know that corpses are turning up in the most unexpected places. Many people will tell you it's not wise to eat river fish anymore because they have been nourished on the human remains being dumped into the river. That thought alone has given me more than one sleepless night. It is almost as if Baghdad has turned into a giant graveyard.

The latest corpses were those of some Sunni and Shia clerics — several of them well-known. People are being patient and there is a general consensus that these killings are being done to provoke civil war. Also worrisome is the fact that we are hearing of people being rounded up by security forces (Iraqi) and then being found dead days later — apparently when the new Iraqi government recently decided to reinstate the death penalty, they had something else in mind.

But back to the explosions. One of the larger blasts was in an area called Ma'moun, which is a middle class area located in west Baghdad. It's a relatively calm residential area with shops that provide the basics and a bit more. It happened in the morning, as the shops were opening up for their daily business and it occurred right in front of a butcher's shop. Immediately after, we heard that a man living in a house in front of the blast site was hauled off by the Americans because it was said that after the bomb went off, he sniped an Iraqi National Guardsman.

I didn't think much about the story — nothing about it stood out: an explosion and a sniper — hardly an anomaly. The interesting news started circulating a couple of days later. People from the area claim that the man was taken away not because he shot anyone, but because he knew too much about the bomb. Rumor has it that he saw an American patrol passing through the area and pausing at the bomb site minutes before the explosion. Soon after they drove away, the bomb went off and chaos ensued. He ran out of his house screaming to the neighbors and bystanders that the Americans had either planted the bomb or seen the bomb and done nothing about it. He was promptly taken away.

The bombs are mysterious. Some of them explode in the midst of National Guard and near American troops or Iraqi Police and others explode near mosques, churches, and shops or in the middle of souqs. One thing that surprises us about the news reports of these bombs is that they are inevitably linked to suicide bombers. The reality is that some of these bombs are not suicide bombs — they are car bombs that are either being remotely detonated or maybe time bombs. All we know is that the techniques differ and apparently so do the intentions. Some will tell you they are resistance. Some say Chalabi and his thugs are responsible for a number of them. Others blame Iran and the SCIRI militia Badir.

In any case, they are terrifying. If you're close enough, the first sound is a that of an earsplitting blast and the sounds that follow are of a rain of glass, shrapnel and other sharp things. Then the wails begin — the shrill mechanical wails of an occasional ambulance combined with the wail of car alarms from neighboring vehicles... and finally the wail of people trying to sort out their dead and dying from the debris.

Then there was this one.

On May 13, 2005, a 64 years old Iraqi farmer, Haj Haidar Abu Sijjad, took his tomato load in his pickup truck from Hilla to Baghdad, accompanied by Ali, his 11 years old grandson. They were stopped at an American check point and were asked to dismount. An American soldier climbed on the back of the pickup truck, followed by another a few minutes later, and thoroughly inspected the tomato filled plastic containers for about 10 minutes. Haj Haidar and his grandson were then allowed to proceed to Baghdad.

A minute later, his grandson told him that he saw one of the American soldiers putting a grey melon size object in the back among the tomato containers. The Haj immediately slammed on the brakes and stopped the car at the side of the road, at a relatively far distance from the check point. He found a time bomb with the clock ticking tucked among his tomatoes. He immediately recognized it, as he was an ex-army soldier. Panicking, he grabbed his grandson and ran away from the car. Then, realizing that the car was his only means of work, he went back, took the bomb and carried it in fear. He threw it in a deep ditch by the side of the road that was dug by Iraqi soldiers in preparation for the war, two years ago.

Upon returning from Baghdad, he found out that the bomb had indeed exploded, killing three sheep and injuring their shepherd in his head. He thanked God for giving him the courage to go back and remove the bomb, and for the luck in that the American soldiers did not notice his sudden stop at a distance and his getting rid of the bomb.

"They intended it to explode in Baghdad and claim that it is the work of the 'terrorists', or 'insurgents' or who call themselves the 'Resistance'.

I decided to expose them and asked your reporter to take me to Baghdad to tell you the story. They are to be exposed as they now want to sow strife in Iraq and taint the Resistance after failing to defeat it militarily. Do not forget to mention my name. I fear nobody but God, as I am a follower of Muqtada al-Sadir."

The background and admission of guilt for such satanic shenanigans was clearly outlined in Frank Morales' piece on globalresearch.ca: "*The Provocateur State: Is the CIA Behind the Iraqi 'Insurgents' — and Global Terrorism*," by Frank Morales < <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MOR505A.htm> > clearly demonstrates how Donald Rumsfeld said he was going to do exactly what these three sorry episodes show he actually did.

Morales writes:

Back in 2002, following the trauma of 9-11, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld predicted there would be more terrorist attacks against the American people and civilization at large. How could he be so sure of that? Perhaps because these attacks would be instigated on the order of the Honorable Mr. Rumsfeld. According to Los Angeles Times military analyst William Arkin, writing Oct. 27, 2002, Rumsfeld set out to create a secret army, "a super-Intelligence Support Activity" network that would "bring together CIA and military covert action, information warfare, intelligence, and cover and deception," to stir the pot of spiraling global violence.

We never got the full story on those ghastly beheadings of Nick Berg and others. Nor have we ever understood who killed the American mercenaries in Fallujah that eventually precipitated one of the great slaughters in history. Nor have we ever been able to discern if Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is actually a real person or just another bin Ladenesque boogeyman. Nor if the al-Qaeda website which claims responsibility for various atrocities is not really run by the CIA.

Provoking this type of violence also further conceals the sinister genocide the Israelis continue to perpetrate on the hapless Palestinians, which is exactly its point, as is the entire Iraq invasion and destruction, and as was the inside job mass murder on 9/11 in New York City. The purpose of all these despicable acts is to conceal what the Israelis and the Americans have been doing all along to the entire Arab world, namely enslaving and destroying it.

There is not now nor ever was an Arab terror threat. That was all invented by Rothschild, Rockefeller, Kissinger, Brzezinski, Bush, Cheney, Sharon, Zakheim, Perle, Wolfowitz, Feith, Abrams and Warren Buffett. These people are all traitors to not only their countries but to humanity in general, and should all be slammed and RICOed into Guantanamo immediately.

And so should the government officials, media lackeys, and ordinary citizens who, by their complicity or their ignorance, support them.

The main point in understanding these deliberate provocations to prevent peace is to understand how the American capitalist system, now hijacked by billionaires with no trace of conscience, thrives on war and profits from the misery of others.

The neocon murder menace has been for months ratcheting up the hyperbole about why we need to invade Iran — which some predict will happen in June — and just this week, rumors of troop movements in the Caribbean and lockdowns at Florida military bases appear to augur an imminent invasion of oil-producing Venezuela.

The overall plan is to create hell on Earth, and we are succeeding. By our silent complicity and cowardly reluctance to oppose and stop this homicidal behavior in the name of profit, we are all accessories to mass murder and the destruction of human society, not to even mention the extinction of individual human freedom and the God-given right to be safe and secure in the homes of our choice.

So now that you know, what are you going to do about it? You know if you do nothing, these same things will one day happen to you.

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John Kaminski is a writer whose Internet essays are seen on hundreds of websites around the world. These stories have been compiled into two anthologies, "America's Autopsy Report" and "The Perfect Enemy." In addition, he has written "The Day America Died: Why You Shouldn't Believe the Official Story of What Happened on September 11, 2001," a booklet written for those who still believe the government's cynical lies about that tragic day. All three books are available at <http://www.johnkaminski.com/>

www.uruknet.info?p=15949

Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq

By Max Fuller

November 10, 2005

Abstract

The phenomenon of death squads operating in Iraq has become generally accepted over recent months. However, in its treatment of the issue, the mainstream media has zealously followed a line of attributing extrajudicial killings to unaccountable Shia militias who have risen to prominence with the electoral victory of Ibramhim Jafaari's Shia-led government in January. The following article examines both the way in which the information has been widely presented and whether that presentation has any actual basis in fact. Concluding that the attribution to Shia militias is unsustainable, the article considers who the intellectual authors of these crimes against humanity are and what purpose they serve in the context of the ongoing occupation of the country.

Shortly before dawn on 14 September 2005, just hours before a huge bomb exploded in Baghdad killing 88 labourers, around 50 men in army uniforms arrived at the village of Taji 16km north of Baghdad in military vehicles, bearing military identification. After searching the village, they seized 17 local men, described by one witness as vegetable sellers, ice sellers and taxi drivers. Handcuffed and blindfolded, the men were led from their homes before being shot in the head in the main square ([Newsday](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Juan Cole](#)).

Such killings represent a pattern of violence as frightening as and perhaps more systematic than the steady wave of bombings targeting civilians in occupied Iraq. Whilst the pattern of death-squad-style executions is broadly recognised, it remains badly understood and, in its representation, deeply distorted.

The appearance of death squads was first highlighted in May this year, when over a 10-day period dozens of bodies were found casually disposed of in rubbish dumps and vacant areas around Baghdad. All of the victims had been handcuffed, blindfolded and shot in the head and many of them also showed signs of having been brutally tortured. On 5 May 15 bodies were discovered in an industrial area called Kasra-Wa-Atash and subsequently identified as belonging to a group of farmers seized from a Baghdad market. The bodies revealed such torture marks as broken skulls, burning, beatings and right eyeballs removed. Witnesses claimed the men had been arrested by members of the security forces ([BBC](#), [Guardian](#)). Less than two weeks later, 15 more bodies were found at two sites ([KUNA](#)). According to the chairman of the Sunni Waqf court, Adnan Muhammad Salman, the victims were Sunnis who had been arrested at their homes or at mosques ([ArabicNews.com](#)).

The evidence was sufficiently compelling for the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS), a leading Sunni organisation, to issue public statements in which they accused the security forces attached to the Ministry of the Interior as well as the Badr Brigade, the former armed wing of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), of being behind the killings. They also accused the Ministry of the Interior of conducting state terrorism ([Financial Times](#)).

Since then, a steady stream of the victims of extrajudicial killings has flowed through the Baghdad morgue. Characteristically, the victims' hands are tied or handcuffed behind their backs and they have been blindfolded. In most cases they also appear to have been whipped with a cord, subjected to electric shocks or beaten with a blunt object and shot to death, often with single bullets to the head. Yasser Salihee, a journalist for Knight Ridder investigating the bodies, wrote that eyewitnesses claimed many of the victims were seized by men wearing commando uniforms in white Toyota Land Cruisers with police markings. ([Knight Ridder](#)). Salihee's last article was published on 27 June, three days after he was fatally shot by a US sniper at a routine checkpoint.

It is impossible to know exactly how many people are being killed in this way. Salihee reported that more than 30 examples occurred in less than a week, while Faik Baqr, director of Baghdad's central morgue, states that before the occupation of Iraq, the morgue handled 200 to 250 suspicious deaths a month, of which perhaps 16 had firearm injuries. Now the figure is between 700 and 800, with some 500 firearm wounds (*op. cit.*). The Independent's Robert Fisk adds that there are so many bodies that human remains are stacked on top of each other and unidentified bodies are rapidly disposed of ([Robert Fisk](#)).

The killings have not been confined to Baghdad. For example, on 24 June six farmers were taken from the village of Hashmiyat 15km west of Baquba by men in army uniform; their decapitated bodies were found soon afterwards a mile from their homes ([Associated Press](#)). More recently, on 8 September, 18 people were abducted from the town of Iskandriyah 40km south of the capital by men in National Guard Uniforms and executed in isolated open land ([Xinhuanet](#)). These few examples represent the tip of a rapidly expanding iceberg, with the majority of extrajudicial-style killings seriously under-investigated and underreported.

In response to the accusations of police involvement, drawing on eyewitness accounts, Iraq's new Ministry of the Interior claims that it is easy to get hold of police uniforms and that the killings are the work of 'insurgents' masquerading as security forces in order to create sectarian divisions ([BBC](#)). Such denials are echoed by US special advisor to the ministry Steven Casteel, who has stated that, 'The small numbers that we've investigated we've found to be either rumor or innuendo' (Salihee, *op. cit.*).

Despite such denials, few journalists have been able to dismiss what the Observer's foreign editor Peter Beaumont describes as the 'extraordinary sense of impunity with which these abductions and killings take place' as mere innuendo ([Observer](#)), or the consistent eye-witness accounts of the kidnappers appearing with expensive foreign equipment issued to the security forces, such as the Toyota Land Cruisers and the Glock 9mm pistols, as simply rumour (Salihee, *op. cit.*). The Interior Ministry's explanation of large, heavily armed groups of resistance fighters moving freely about the capital becomes even less plausible when one considers that many of the killings took place following the onset of Operation Lightning/Thunder in late May. This divisional-size operation saw the deployment of 40,000 Iraqi troops, who sealed Baghdad and installed 675 checkpoints around the city ([Associated Press](#)). Hundreds of arrests followed as the security forces began to 'hunt down insurgents' ([BBC](#)). According to the AMS, in one instance, on 13 July, dozens of Interior Ministry commandos stormed several houses in northern Baghdad and detained 13 people, before torturing and killing them in a nearby apartment ([Gulf Daily News](#)).

However, instead of placing the blame squarely on the apparatus of the new Iraqi state, the mainstream media has almost exclusively chosen to shift the emphasis away, resorting to a number of standardised literary devices. The first device is to frame extrajudicial killings in the context of a wider panoply of supposed retaliatory sectarian violence. For example, Francis Curta of the Associated French Press writes that 'A series of tit-for-tat killings has raised sectarian tension to boiling points' (eg. [Mail&Guardian Online](#)), Mohamad Bazzi writing for Newsday refers to a 'wave of retaliatory killings' ([Newsday](#)), and James Hider of the London Times believes that 'the only certainty is that once [the bodies] are identified, someone will want revenge' ([Times Online](#)). The second device is to state or imply that the security forces are closely associated with largely unaccountable Shia militias, especially the Badr Brigade. For instance, Patrick Cockburn of the UK Independent writes that 'Some carrying out the attacks appear to belong to the 12,000-

strong paramilitary police commandos', while, in almost the same breath he adds that 'Fear of Shia death squads, perhaps secretly controlled by the Badr Brigade, the leading Shia militia, frightens the Sunni' ([Independent](#)); in a similar vein, the BBC claims that 'Angry mourners at a funeral for some of those killed said they had died at the hands of police and Shia militiamen' ([BBC](#)).

Most importantly, reports variously stress that the government, Interior Ministry and police are under sectarian Shia control. Hence, Samir Haddad, a correspondent for Islam Online, refers to the 'dominant-Shiite newly-formed security forces' ([Islam Online](#)), the Chicago Tribune's Liz Sly states that Sunnis 'accused Iraq's security forces, now controlled by the Shiite-led government' ([Chicago Tribune](#)), Tom Lasseter, writing for the Inquirer, claims that 'Badr members have gained unprecedented authority' and that the Interior Minister, who controls the nation's police and commando forces, is a former Supreme Council official with close ties to Badr' ([Philadelphia Inquirer](#)), the Observer's Beaumont writes that 'Accountability has also become more opaque since the formation of the Shia-dominated government' (*op. cit.*), the BBC's Richard Galpin states that the 'Sunni community in particular claims it is being targeted by the Shia-dominated police force' ([BBC](#)), Anthony Loyd for the London Times talks of 'allegations of extensive extra-judicial killings of Sunnis by the Shia-dominated Iraqi security forces' ([Times Online](#)) and Sinan Salaheddin of the Associated Press, states 'The grisly finds have led Sunnis to believe that Shiite Muslims who dominate the government and the Interior Ministry are waging a quiet, deadly campaign against them' (eg. [Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#)).

Other devices include mentioning the Interior Ministry's claims of insurgents donning police or commando uniforms or implying that if the security forces are involved in torture and murder it is a reflection of the fact that it is composed of reconstituted members of the former state who know only a culture of violence and intimidation; this is clearly at odds with those reports that regard the security forces as entirely Shia dominated. Wilder devices talk about security forces' frustration or blame Zarqawi for attempting to inflame sectarian tensions. Whilst all of these devices are employed in various combinations, notably absent from every account is any serious examination of the new Iraqi state or, assiduously avoided, the role of the occupying powers, leaving the most thoughtful of journalist to wonder with Beaumont whether the Iraqi state is 'stumbling towards a policy of institutionalised torture' or whether human-rights abuses are conducted by 'rogue elements' within the security apparatus (Salihee's investigation represents the one exception, with the emphasis placed firmly on the organs of the state, supported by solid primary evidence).

Police Commandos and Disinformation Brigades

An instructive starting point for an examination of the prevailing media consensus is to consider some of the forces of the Iraqi state most closely associated with allegations of serious human rights abuses.

The majority of accusations are general. Journalists refer to the police, security forces, the National Guard or to poorly identified police commandos, but specific accusations have been made against a unit known as the Wolf Brigade. The identification of the Wolf Brigade with cases of abduction, torture and execution in Baghdad was first made on 16 May, when Mothana Harith Al-Dari, a spokesman for the AMS, stated that 'The mass killings and the crackdown and detention campaigns in north-eastern Baghdad over the past two days by members of the Iraqi police or by an Interior Ministry special force, known as the Wolf Brigade, are part of a state terror policy', in relation to the discoveries of the victims of extrajudicial executions noted above ([Islam Online](#)).

Within days a Knight Ridder journalist, Hannah Allam, had published under a variety of titles an article about the Wolf Brigade, highlighting their maverick tough-guy image and presenting their leader, who goes by the *nom de guerre* of Abul Waleed, as a devout Shiite, 'complete with a photo of Imam Ali and religious chants programmed into his constantly ringing cell phone.' ([Knight](#)

[Ridder](#)). Allam informed readers that Waleed regarded the AMS as infidels and tossed their accusations of torture and murder into the bin. Additionally, readers learned that the unit was formed as the brainchild of Waleed in October 2004, saw its first action in Mosul after nearly two months' training with US forces, and is behind the inhuman television programme *Terrorists in the Grip of Justice*, in which tortured detainees are forced to confess to a lurid array of crimes ([Associated Press](#)). However, whilst belittling charges of horrendous human-rights violations as 'the usual complaints', Allam made no reference to the Wolf Brigade being a special forces unit attached to the Interior Ministry.

On 9 June rightwing US think tank the Council for Foreign Relations published a paper devoted to Iraqi militias ([CFR](#)), simultaneously repeated in the *New York Times*. In a series of FAQ-type entries, the report reiterated many of Allam's insights about the Wolf Brigade, as well as offering some additional tidbits:

What is the Wolf Brigade?

The most feared and effective commando unit in Iraq, experts say. Formed last October by a former three-star Shiite general and SCIRI member who goes by the nom de guerre Abu Walid, the Wolf Brigade is composed of roughly 2,000 fighters, mostly young, poor Shiites from Sadr City.

However, the paper went further in emphasising the units' sectarian Shiite character, stating that 'One of Badr's recent offshoots is a feared, elite commando unit linked to the Iraqi Interior Ministry called the Wolf Brigade', and spelling out the distinction between it and other, Sunni militia-style units.

Are there any Sunni-led commando units?

Yes. At least one counterinsurgency unit is headed by a former officer of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. The Special Police Commandos, like the Wolf Brigade, have a reputation for brutality, but the group is also considered one of Iraq's most effective and well-disciplined counterinsurgency units.

Those familiar with Peter Maas's article '[The Way of the Commandos](#)', published by *The New York Times Magazine* just six weeks earlier, will recognise that, in fact, the Wolf Brigade bears a striking similarity to the unit he identifies as the Special Police Commandos. The Police Commandos, too, were formed in autumn 2004 and saw one of their first major commitments in Mosul in November; like the Wolf Brigade, their leader also founded an unspeakably vile television show called *Terrorism in the Grip of Justice*.

But there are fundamental distinctions between these units as well. The Police Commandos were founded on the initiative of then Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib, the son of a former Iraqi Chief of Staff, believed by many to have been a major CIA asset ([National Review Online](#)), under the command of his uncle, an ex-Baathist, Sunni military intelligence officer and CIA coup-plotter called Adnan Thabit. Its recruits are drawn from former members of the special forces and Republican Guard, with mixed ethnic and religious background ([Washington Post](#)), while its chain of command is said to be largely Sunni. Most importantly, the Police Commandos were formed under the experienced tutelage and oversight of veteran US counterinsurgency fighters, and from the outset conducted joint-force operations with elite and highly secretive US special-forces units ([Reuters](#), [National Review Online](#)).

A key figure in the development of the Special Police Commandos was James Steele, a former US Army special forces operative who cut his teeth in Vietnam before moving on to direct the US military mission in El Salvador at the height of that country's civil war. Steele was responsible for selecting and training the small units (or death squads) who were boasted to have inflicted 60% of the casualties caused in that 'counterinsurgency' campaign (Manwaring, *El Salvador at War*, 1988, p 306-8). Principally, the tens of thousands of victims were civilians.

Another US contributor was the same Steven Casteel who as the most senior US advisor within the Interior Ministry brushed off serious and well-substantiated accusations of appalling human

right violations as ‘rumor and innuendo’. Like Steele, Casteel gained considerable experience in Latin America, in his case participating in the hunt for the cocaine baron Pablo Escobar in Colombia’s Drugs Wars of the 1990s, as well as working alongside local forces in Peru and Bolivia (Maas *op. cit.*). Whilst Casteel’s background is said to be Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the operation against Escobar was a joint intelligence effort, involving the CIA, DEA, Delta Force and a top-secret military intelligence surveillance unit known as Centra Spike ([Marihemp](#), [SpecWarNet](#)). The operation had no impact on Colombia’s position as the world’s major source of cocaine (which, incidentally or not, owed much to the CIA, who had become heavily involved in the trade as part of their secret funding of Nicaragua’s Contra mercenary army; for a detailed account, read the series [Dark Alliance](#), originally published by the San Jose Mercury News), with the centre of gravity ultimately shifting to dozens of micro cartels ([Houston Chronicle](#)). However, the operation did lead to the formation of a death squad known as Los Pepes, which was to form the nucleus for Colombia’s present paramilitary death-squad umbrella organisation, the AUC, responsible for over 80 percent of the country’s most serious human-rights abuses ([Colombia Journal](#)). Whilst no official connection was ever admitted, Los Pepes relied on the intelligence data held in the fifth-floor steel vault at the US Embassy in Bogota that served as the operation’s nerve centre. Lists of the death squad’s victims rapidly came to mirror those of Escobar’s associates collated at the embassy headquarters ([Cocaine.org](#), [Cannabis News](#)).

Casteel’s background is significant because this kind of intelligence-gathering support role and the production of death lists are characteristic of US involvement in counterinsurgency programs and constitute the underlying thread in what can appear to be random, disjointed killing sprees. Probably the best-attested example of such an operation is Indonesia during the early years of the Suharto dictatorship, when CIA officers provided the names of thousands of people, many of them members of the Indonesian Communist Party, to the army, who dutifully slaughtered them ([Kathy Kadane](#)). Similar cases can be made for the CIA supplying death lists and/or overseeing operations in Vietnam ([OC Weekly](#)), Guatemala, where death lists are known to have been compiled but were supposedly never acted upon ([The Consortium](#)), and El Salvador, where former killers have come forward to describe sharing desk space with US advisors who collected the ‘intelligence’ from ‘heavy interrogation’ but were spared details of the subsequent murders ([Covert Action Quarterly](#)). For an extensive list of countries in which the CIA has supported death squads, see the database compiled by Ralph McGehee ([Serendipity](#)).

Such centrally planned genocides are entirely consistent with what is taking place in Iraq today under the auspices of crackdowns like Operation Lightning, which make use of so-called Rapid Intrusion Brigades to make widespread, well orchestrated arrests ([Financial Times](#)). It is also consistent with what little we know about the Special Police Commandos, which was tailored to provide the Interior Ministry with a special-forces strike capability ([US Department of Defense](#)). In keeping with such a role, the Police Commando headquarters has become the hub of a nationwide command, control, communications, computer and intelligence operations centre, courtesy of the US ([Defend America](#)). Interestingly, supplying a state-of-the-art communications network to coordinate mass murder was part of the plan in Indonesia as well (Pilger, *The New Rulers of the World*, p 30); it is doubtless common practice.

Finally, we know that by 30 January of this year, the Police Commandos had six functioning brigades and in early April the *Al-Nimr* (Tiger) Brigade took over from the *Al-Dhib* (Wolf) Brigade in Mosul ([UNAMI](#)). Interestingly, one of the Police Commandos’ first Brigade commanders was a Shiite, apparently called Rashid al-Halafi, but Maas noted that ‘he was regarded warily by other Shiites because he held senior intelligence posts under Saddam Hussein’.

Untangling the Web

Clearly, the Wolf Brigade, though commonly treated in media reports as an autonomous entity, is actually one component of the Interior Ministry’s Special Police Commandos. Abu Walid, identified occasionally as Brig. Gen. Mohammed Qureishi, is the brigade commander, under overall command of Adnan Thabit. Another figure linked with both the Wolf Brigade and Police Commandos is Major General Rashid Flayyih, variously identified as commander of the brigade

or the whole formation. If he can be identified with the brigade commander Rashid al-Halafi identified by Maas, it can be surmised that he has either been promoted or is another incarnation of Abu Walid.

Incredibly, I have not been able to find a single report written since accusations started to be made about the Wolf Brigade's involvement in the Baghdad killings that makes their identification with the Police Commandos clear, with journalists content to loosely refer to the unit as police commandos, as though there might be all sorts of police commando units. Though this might at first seem pedantic, the lack of clarity becomes even more incredible in the case of the 10 bricklayers suffocated in the back of a police van on 10 July ([San Diego Union Tribune](#)). To my knowledge, this remains the only case in which members of the security forces have been securely identified, with a survivor who had feigned death able to provide first-hand testimony. The unit responsible was the Wolf Brigade, but this information must be deduced from a reference in one article to the victims being taken to a police station at al Nisour Square ([Knight Ridder](#)) and Beaumont's mention that the Wolf Brigade is accused of running an interrogation centre as its Nissor Square headquarters (*op. cit.*). It seems that a nebulous Wolf Brigade linked to Badr, full of vengeful Shiite militiamen serves as a useful foil for allegations of 'state terrorism', but that when the accusations are sufficiently well-grounded, it is easier to keep it out of the spotlight for fear that a pattern of gross and systematic violations of human rights might start to emerge. The significance of this lies far beyond merely being able to expose sloppy journalistic practices, but actually reveals key characteristics of both the US imperial war machine and of the nature of their current occupation of Iraq.

With the finger of responsibility increasingly and inevitably pointing at well-organised counterinsurgency units operating from the Interior Ministry, one line of defence remains before intellectual authorship must be placed at the hands of the occupying powers. Since the election of 30 January and the transfer of office from the interim government of Ayad Allawi to the transitional one of Ibrahim Jafari in May, the mainstream media has unanimously chorused that power has fallen into the hands of Iraq's Shia majority. Most specifically, it is repeatedly claimed that the Interior Ministry and its security forces have come under the control of SCIRI and even that the Badr Brigades now wield considerable power within the ministry, with the new Interior Minister, Bayan Jabor, described as a former Badr member. The manifestation of this control lies in the policy of de-Baathification, a process that was halted under the interim government of Ayad Allawi, but that was considered fundamental by the incoming government. The policy was actively opposed by the US administration, which feared that experienced personnel (for which, read Washington's favourites) might be lost, especially within the security forces and intelligence apparatus ([Washington Post](#)).

According to Firas al-Nakib, a legal advisor at the Interior Ministry and a Sunni, 160 senior members of the Interior Ministry staff were rapidly dismissed and many police commanders were replaced with Shiites loyal to the Shiite bloc that won the elections ([Knight Ridder](#)). Yet, after speaking with Jabor, General Flayyih was reported to be reassured, with the former Badr member not only promising to support the Police Commandos ([Financial Times](#)), but calling for their rapid and more extensive deployment ([Los Angeles Times](#)). Flayyih's continuing tenure is particularly noteworthy, as, though a Shiite himself, Flayyih was in charge of the suppression of the Shia uprising in Nasiriya following the first Gulf War, and is, as such, a frontrunner in any serious Shia-led policy of de-Baathification. Like Flayyih, Adnan Thabit has retained a senior position, commanding all of the Interior Ministry's special forces ([Multi-National Force - Iraq](#)).

The issue of de-Baathification was recently addressed by Jabor, who explained that the discharge of personnel was handled by a general inspector and that recruitment was not influenced by sect ([Al Mendhar](#)). Backing up his statements, he pointed out that many senior security posts within the ministry were held by Sunnis, including that of deputy minister for intelligence affairs (also leader of the Interior Ministry's spy service), currently held by General Hussain Kamal.

In fact, the entire intelligence establishment is a creation of the Anglo-American secret services ([Los Angeles Times](#)), which began building at least as early as the beginning of the occupation ([Detroit Free Press](#)), although it may be suspected that the process was conceived long before.

The new Iraqi establishment was staffed by long-term CIA assets, such as General Mohammad Shahwani, who had been nurtured by the CIA since the late 1980s ([Asia Times Online](#)) and became director of the new National Intelligence Service (the *Mukhabarat*). Like Thabit and Flayyih, other old CIA hands, Shahwani had participated in attempted coups against the government of Iraq. Further agents (presumably existing intelligence assets for the most part) were recruited from Iraq's main political groups, consisting of SCIRI, the Dawa Party, the two main Kurdish parties, the Iraqi National Congress and the Iraqi National Accord. These agents became the Collection, Management and Analysis Directorate (CMAD), whose principal job was to 'turn raw intelligence into targets that could be used in operations' ([Detroit Free Press](#), *op. cit.*). Initially, 'operations' were carried out by a paramilitary unit composed of militia from the five main parties, who, under the supervision of US commanders, worked with US special forces to track down 'insurgents' ([Washington Post](#)). As the new Iraqi state apparatus developed, CMAD was split between the ministries of Defence and Interior, with an 'elite corps' creamed off to form the National Intelligence Service ([Detroit Free Press](#), *op. cit.*). To oversee all three bodies, the National Intelligence Coordination Committee was established, headed, as National Security Advisor (appointed in April 2004), by Mowaffak Rubaie. This 'leading Shiite moderate' had been a spokesman for the Dawa Party in the 1980s when it was a serious terrorist organisation targeting Iraq, before moving on to help coordinate the Iraqi opposition from London ([Asia Times Online](#), *op. cit.*). In London he worked with the Khoei Foundation, a pro-US charitable organisation that has distributed money for the CIA and is linked with the National Endowment for Democracy through Prime minister Jaafari's advisor Laith Kuba, another long-term CIA asset ([Village Voice](#)).

These new intelligence agencies supply the data for the Interior Ministry to make arrests. A graphic and harrowing account of such arrests on 27 June 2004 was provided by UPI's P. Mitchell Prothero, in what he describes as the 'welcome arrival of frontier-style law enforcement'. Prothero described how local residents 'seemed shocked' as their doors were broken in and 'men were dragged from their homes dishevelled and screaming' by members of a SWAT team in central Baghdad. The raid had been planned for months by General Kamal's intelligence agency within the Interior Ministry and the names of more than 100 detainees were checked against prepared lists ([Washington Times](#)). Prothero witnessed many of those detainees 'worked over' with metal batons and lengths of hose in the backs of vans, but the most serious abuse came later, within the Interior Ministry compound. On 29 June members of the Oregon National Guard swept into the grounds of the Interior Ministry and disarmed plain-clothed Iraqi policemen whom they had observed beating bound and blindfolded prisoners ([Oregonian](#)). The US soldiers began to administer first aid to the prisoners, who had also been starved of food and water for three days; many were clearly in a very serious condition. Steven Casteel was called to help deal with the situation ([Boston Globe](#)). After hours of negotiations, the soldiers unwillingly withdrew, leaving the victims in the hands of their torturers. Perhaps their ultimate fate will never be known, but as Casteel commented, 'There's always a pendulum between freedom and security'.

Like Thabit and Flayyih, Shahwani has retained his position under the transitional government and continues to report directly to the CIA ([Seattle Times](#)). Clearly, however, the purpose of stating or implying that unaccountable militias are behind the extrajudicial executions and/or that sectarian rivalries, especially Shia control of the Interior Ministry (which, as Beaumont correctly points out, is the centre of the horror), are to blame, is to distance the US from the almost unthinkable ongoing crimes against humanity. Comparable disinformation strategies have been employed in every counterinsurgency conflict with which the US has been involved; it is known as establishing 'plausible deniability'. For example, in Colombia, where the US has been deeply involved for decades, paramilitary death squads are invariably described in the media as a third force in the armed conflict, despite the fact that their victims are typically civilian opponents of the government, their members are drawn directly from serving members of the armed forces and they are only able to operate with the active complicity of the army ([Human Rights Watch: The "Sixth Division"](#)). In reality, they function as part of a shadow state, which exists to implement policies that must remain unaccountable.

More specifically, in the case of Iraq, this disinformation strategy not only seems to be designed to mask the real intellectual authors of genocidal crimes, but also, increasingly, appears to be

directed towards creating the very sectarian divisions that it hides behind.

Towards Balkanisation

In every country where US-backed counter insurgency operations have taken place with their attendant massacres and death squads, the conflict has existed as one dimension in a strategy of neo-colonisation. In Indonesia the communists were exterminated as part of the corporate takeover of the economy, setting the stage for the globalisation of Asia (Pilger, *op. cit.* p 15-44); in Colombia today, brutal death-squad massacres and the assassination of popular leaders exist to safeguard and extend the investments of foreign multinationals in oil and mining as well as as part of an ongoing process of privatisation.

In this respect, Iraq is no different. Over and above the desire to control Iraq's massive oil reserves, the country is being subjected to enforced neo-liberal shock therapy, with wages slashed and the extensive state sector rapidly offered up for sale. Corresponding with this, is a catastrophic level of unemployment and the abandonment of service provision for the majority of the population, in short a return to typical Third World conditions ([The New Standard](#)). Such a process of economic devastation is not only unpopular, it is intolerable and there can be no doubt that most people in Iraq will oppose cuts and sell-offs and demand a restoration of employment and services. This is not a sectarian issue. To the extent to which opposition becomes effective, the leaders and activists of the movement are likely to become military targets for the state death squads, whatever guise they take.

It is hard to know exactly who the victims of the present wave of assassinations are. Certainly they have included some trade union leaders ([Iraqi Federation of Workers' Trade Unions](#)), while in the period up to March 2004 more than 1000 leading professionals and intellectuals had already been killed and thousands more had fled the country ([Al Jazeera](#)). Many of these people would have been members of the Baath party and their murders are very likely to be part of the policy of de-Baathification, which, insofar as it exists, has not targeted CIA collaborators, but will undoubtedly have included those seen as potential opponents of the new state. In passing, it is worth noting that while thousands of former teachers have been sacked, thousands more are being recruited from outside Iraq ([Al Mendhar](#)), presumably because they are either cheaper to employ (denied by the Iraqi government) or because they are more malleable to the new educational regime, which works closely with the World Bank and provides lucrative contracts to the Washington-based Creative Associates Inc ([Education News](#)). Iraq's 30,000 new teachers have received just five days' training and must teach religion and a history that portrays Iraq's occupiers as saviours, rather than the former 'anti-Western propaganda' that might have served Iraqis better. Other victims of the death squads may be communists, the commentator Juan Cole noting that the Communist Party is so alarmed by the course of events that it is considering going underground; though he does not spell out the events that would force the party into hiding, they are not difficult to surmise ([Juan Cole](#)).

A further possibility, however, in addition to defeating a popularly backed resistance, is that the monstrous intelligence nexus created by the US in Iraq is orchestrating a strategy of ethnic cleansing as part of an effort to partition a country that might otherwise remain a regional pretender. Most of the military assaults have resulted in substantial civilian displacement (eg [Washington Times](#)), but, more worryingly, reports of families uprooting as the result of perceived sectarian violence are starting to become common. For example, in July, Mariam Fam of the Associated Press reported dozens of Shiites abandoned their homes in a poor farming community on the edge of Baghdad after receiving threats from Sunni militants that appeared in the form of typewritten flyers scattered on streets and doorsteps; prior to the Anglo-American invasion these people had shared their poverty, labour, food and intermarried with their Sunni neighbours ([North Country Times](#)). Similarly, Hala Jaber writing for the *Sunday Times* describes how Sunni families have fled Baghdad's majority-Shiite Iskan neighbourhood after the killings of 22 young Sunni men, taken away by men in police uniform who arrived in vehicles bearing police markings ([Times Online](#)). A similar situation is described in Baghdad's Ghalaliya district, where a spate of seemingly motiveless murders accelerated sharply over the summer, leaving more than 30 people, Sunnis and Shiites, dead ([Los Angeles Times](#)). The report claims that minority families there and

elsewhere are selling their homes and moving to areas where they are in the majority. A similar picture is starting to emerge from other parts of the country. Jaber notes that thousands of Shiites have fled the predominantly Sunni towns of Ramadi, Falluja and Latafiya, while, according to Juan Cole, Sunnis are leaving Iraq's deep south and Arabs, presumably of both denominations, are being forced from the Kurdish district of Kirkuk ([Juan Cole](#)).

While many in the mainstream media and Iraq's puppet government have argued that insurgents linked to Abu Musab Zarqawi and al-Qaida are behind much of the violence, deliberately hoping to inflame sectarian divisions and incite a civil war (eg. [News Day](#)), it is interesting to note how closely their dangerous schemes correspond with the avowed aims of one of the most powerful figures in present-day Iraq. Mowaffak Rubaie, the US-installed national security advisor, promotes a vision that he calls 'democratic regionalism', by which Iraq would be dismembered into a loose federal system of four to six distinct provinces, with at least two Shiite provinces to the south and Baghdad as a separate district as well as the seat of federal government, nominally responsible for national defence ([Newsweek](#)). Coincidentally, such a plan is well catered for by Iraq's new constitution ([NPR](#)), but would amount to the disintegration of the Iraqi state. A *de facto* civil war would undoubtedly advance this process.

The parallels with the break up of Yugoslavia are obvious. Ed Joseph of the highly establishment Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars notes that 'the likelihood of civil war increases if, after attacks targeting a community, other members of the minority population flee', in turn persecuting minorities in the area to which they fled ([Los Angeles Times](#), *op. cit.*). However, where he sees the situation in Iraq as comparable to Bosnia, in many ways the pattern is closer to that of Kosovo, where widespread ethnic cleansing against Serbs took place under the noses of NATO observers after the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces ([World Socialist Website](#)).

In view of mounting evidence of Anglo-American involvement in the bombing campaigns targeting Iraqi civilians, notably the brief arrest of two British SAS men found with a car packed with explosives ([William Bowles](#)), it is worth speculating a little on the implementation of their wider strategy. Discounting Al-Qaida and Zarqawi in Iraq as fabrications designed for easy media consumption ([Centre for Research on Globalisation](#)), we are left with a situation in which someone is targeting Shias, mainly through the planting of bombs around mosques and at religious ceremonies, and someone is targeting Sunnis, mainly through extrajudicial executions carried out by parties that look a lot like the police but have become linked with the Shiite Badr Brigade in the popular imagination. It is impossible that the Iraqi resistance could account for this pandemic of fratricidal violence, whatever Adnan Thabit might say about insurgents in police uniforms. It is equally impossible that SCIRI and the Badr Brigade could account for much of it in a milieu dominated by CIA assets and US military forces. What is possible is that both sides of the apparent sectarian violence are run as part of a huge CIA-lead intelligence operation designed to split Iraq at the seams. I tentatively suggest that the intelligence apparatus at the Interior Ministry is contriving attacks on Sunnis and that British and US special forces in conjunction with the intelligence apparatus at the Iraqi Defence Ministry are fabricating insurgent bombings of Shias. Overseeing the entire operation is the 'cream' of CMAD under the direction of top-level US intelligence asset Mowaffak Rubaie, a man already experienced at participating in bombing campaigns, undoubtedly working hand in glove with the CIA and the National Security Council in the US.

False Flags, Semiotics and Vulgar Marxists

The French theorist Jean Baudrillard famously once stated that the first Gulf War did not take place. By this he did not mean that nothing happened, but that its presentation in the media consisted of an overwhelming barrage of the *signs* of War, which bore essentially no relationship to the annihilation of a Third World army by the most advanced military power in history. In short it was a simulation of war. This was perhaps the most extreme example of what Baudrillard referred to as the 'ecstasy of communication', that in our Information Age, concepts spin at such a rate that their outlines become lost and their original meanings are replaced with empty alternatives.

Fifteen years later, the same charges can be levelled against the recent Iraq 'War' and the country's subsequent occupation. Most importantly, I believe that a process akin to that Baudrillard highlighted is being actively employed to simulate a civil war in Iraq. False-flag intelligence operations are aimed at sowing seeds of a sectarian strife that was largely non-existent prior to the invasion. Thus, even many Sunni Iraqis are coming to believe that the well-organised death squads run from the CIA-controlled intelligence hub are actually the Badr Brigade they often claim to be; and thus British SAS men in Arab disguise plant bombs at Shia religious festivals to be blamed on fanatical Wahabi Sunni 'insurgents'.

Whether such tactics succeed in provoking further, autonomous acts of violence directed against the civilian population is much less significant than the impact they are able to exert within the media. This Anglo-American intelligence operation acts as a factory churning out the *signs* of Civil War: a 'wave of tit-for-tat sectarian violence' and the consequent ethnic cleansing. The signs are produced to be picked up by the media and spun and spun until nothing is left but a nebulous Civil War with no internal logic or structure, with the occupying forces as powerless to intervene as they were in the Balkans while Iraq splits into Rubiaie's desired four to six autonomous provinces. Those few journalists, like Yasser Salihee and Steven Vincent, who break the mould and start to investigate the actual authorship of extrajudicial killings themselves become victims.

When one former CIA operative candidly claimed that 'Intelligence services are the heart and soul of a new country' ([Washington Post](#)), they were inadvertently expressing a position that Noam Chomsky might call 'vulgar Marxist'. What they were actually confessing is that the essence of a state is the organisation of violence as the ultimate coercive measure and that the intelligence apparatus functions as its brain. Little wonder then that the US is so closely involved with intelligence services the world over, or that both *coup d'états* and savage repressions of sectors of the population deemed opposed to US interests have emanated from the offices of these same services.

To penetrate the media smokescreen of spontaneous, uncontrollable violence and understand the role of intelligence operations in the creation of a beholden, occupied client state or series of statelets is fundamental to understanding the processes in Iraq today. It is also fundamental to recognising that the presence of Anglo-American forces in Iraq does not merely exacerbate the present violence; in Iraq we are the violence.

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Our Monsters In Iraq

Robert Dreyfuss

November 18, 2005

Robert Dreyfuss is the author of Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam (Henry Holt/Metropolitan Books, 2005). Dreyfuss is a freelance writer based in Alexandria, Va., who specializes in politics and national security issues. He is a contributing editor at The Nation, a contributing writer at Mother Jones, a senior correspondent for The American Prospect, and a frequent contributor to Rolling Stone. He can be reached at his website: www.robertdreyfuss.com.

It is time to start waving the bloody shirt. There is no longer any doubt that the men that the United States has installed in power in Iraq are monsters. Not only that, but they are monsters armed, trained and supported by George W. Bush's administration. The very same Bush administration that defends torture of captives in the so-called War on Terrorism is using 150,000 U.S. troops to support a regime in Baghdad for which torture, assassination and other war crimes are routine.

So far, it appears that the facts are these: that Iraq's interior ministry, whose top officials, strike forces and police commando units (including the so-called Wolf Brigade) are controlled by paramilitary units from Shiite militias, maintained a medieval torture chamber; that inside that facility, hundreds of mostly Sunni Arab men were bestialized, with electric drills skewering their bones, with their skins flayed off, and more; that roving units of death-squad commandos are killing countless other Sunni Arab men in order to terrorize the Iraqi opposition. Even the [Washington Post](#), that last-ditch defender of America's illegal and unprovoked assault on Iraq, says:

Scandal over the secret prison has forced the seven-month-old Shiite-led government to confront growing charges of mass illegal detentions, torture and killings of Sunni men. Members of the Sunni minority, locked in a struggle with the Shiite majority over the division of power in Iraq, say men dressed in Interior Ministry uniforms have repeatedly rounded up Sunni men from neighborhoods and towns. Bodies of scores of them have been found dumped by roadsides or in gullies.

The New York Times reports that the Iraqi interior minister isn't all that upset about the torture center. [Bayan Jabr](#), "speaking of the prison in an angry sarcastic tone, said, 'There has been much exaggeration about this issue.' And he added, 'Nobody was beheaded.'" So, apparently not beheading innocents is the standard of justice in the New Iraq. And, apparently there may be dozens, scores or hundreds of similar facilities.

This is not a surprise.

Nearly two years ago, writing in the [American Prospect](#), I wrote the following: "The *Prospect* has learned that part of a secret \$3 billion in new funds—tucked away in the \$87 billion Iraq

appropriation that Congress approved in early November—will go toward the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups...The bulk of the covert money will support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded, Iraqi security force." Except for a parallel story by Sy Hersh in the *New Yorker*, the story was ignored.

Over the past two years, writing for *TomPaine.com*, I have repeatedly written about [Shiite death squads](#) and about abuses by the paramilitary Badr Brigade, the secret army trained and run by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Iraqi Sunnis and opposition leaders, including Aiham Al Sammarae (as [I wrote for TomPaine](#)) have charged that the Iraqi government has been running assassination teams. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, have been killed already, including two attorneys for those accused in the kangaroo court set up to convict Saddam Hussein and other former Iraqi government officials. [The Post](#) suggests that the prison uncovered in Baghdad was a "secret torture center run with the help of intelligence agents from neighboring Iran." Read that again: intelligence agents from Iran.

Last week I had [a chilling encounter](#) with one of the monsters responsible for the Murder Inc. units run by Badr and by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). At a Washington think tank, I met Adel Abdul Mahdi, Iraq's so-called deputy president and a SCIRI official. When I asked Mahdi about reports that Iraqi police and interior ministry squads were carrying out assassinations and other illegal acts, he didn't deny it—but, he said, such acts were merely a reaction to the terrorism of the resistance. "There is terrorism on only one side," he said. "Inappropriate acts by the other side, by the police—this is something else. This is a reaction." As far as civilian casualties in Sunni towns, he had this to say: "You can't fight terrorism without attacking some popular areas."

I also asked him about the Badr Brigade, the Iranian-backed paramilitary force that is the main domestic army propping up Abdul Mahdi's Shiite coalition, he said "they are disarmed," which is patently absurd. He added: "They participate fully in the political process."

Abdul Mahdi had this to say about Fallujah, the city that was obliterated by the U.S. armed forces a year ago. "It is one of the most peaceful areas in Iraq. I don't know whether the people are happy or not. But it is one of the most peaceful cities."

Make no mistake. The gangsters now running Iraq are our creatures.

Earlier this week, I was speaking with someone who was involved in the pre-2003 war planning effort vis-à-vis Iraq. As I mentioned in [TPM Cafe](#), he told me that some of his colleagues realized that the New Iraq would probably be taken over not by Ahmed Chalabi, but by the Shiite fundamentalists. Those radical-right parties (along with the Kurds) were the real forces that took part in Chalabi's INC bloc. And the United States consciously supported the toppling of Saddam knowing that radical Shiites would be the chief beneficiaries. This was not an intelligence failure. We knew it. This was an explicit decision by the neocon-dominated cabal to replace Saddam with Shiite crazies. Now, we see that those crazies are running Saddam-like torture prisons where they use electric drills and flay the skin off Sunni captives.

The military in Iraq is scrambling to limit the damage from the stunning revelation about the men who are running Iraq today. We toppled Saddam—and in his place we've installed a hundred mini-Saddams.

The Salvadoran Option II

Whiskey bar



November 20, 2005

They really ought to send [John Negroponte](#) back to Iraq. It would be just like [old home week](#):

Baghdad's Medical Forensic Institute - the mortuary - is a low, modern building reached via a narrow street. Most days it is filled with families of the dead. They come here for two reasons. One group, animated and noisy in grief, comes to collect its dead. The other, however, returns day after day to poke through the new cargoes of corpses ferried in by ambulance, looking for a face or clothes they might recognise. They are the relatives and friends of the 'disappeared', searching for their men. And when the disappeared are finally found, on the streets or in the city's massive rubbish dumps, or in the river, their bodies bear the all-too-telling signs of a savage beating, often with electrical cables, followed by the inevitable bullet to the head.

It's apparent -- both from this story and from [reports](#) by human rights groups (note the date on that one) -- that the U.S. and U.K. embassies have been aware for some time that Iraq's Ministry of the Interior has been turned into what the old National Guard used to be in El Salvador, or the Presidential Intelligence Unit in Guatemala, or the National Directorate of Investigation in Honduras, which is to say: death squad central.

And it's more than a bit noteworthy that something like this was predicted -- [boasted about](#), really -- by anonymous Pentagon sources earlier this year:

The Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported "nationalist" forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. . . . One military source involved in the Pentagon debate . . . suggests that new offensive operations are needed that would create a fear of aiding the insurgency. "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving to the terrorists," he

said. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

One of Sy Hersh's sources was a little more [picturesque](#) about it:

"Do you remember the right-wing execution squads in El Salvador?" the former high-level intelligence official asked me, referring to the military-led gangs that committed atrocities in the early nineteen-eighties. "We founded them and we financed them," he said. "The objective now is to recruit locals in any area we want. And we aren't going to tell Congress about it." A former military officer, who has knowledge of the Pentagon's commando capabilities, said, "We're going to be riding with the bad boys."

Indeed. Not that the "bad boys" of SCIRI and the Badr Organization particularly needed any encouragement from Uncle Sam.

But now that the Salvadoran Option is up and running -- very smoothly, by all accounts -- one can wonder why the Americans suddenly changed their mind, and busted down the doors of one of SCIRI's secret prisons the other day.

Did things get out of hand, ala Abu Ghraib? (Ala the entire war, for that matter.) Or was the Death Squad Program-Related Activities Bureau ordered to switch gears, once the Finding a Political Solution to the Insurgency Department finally realized that sending Shi'a death squads out to torture and kill Sunni politicians, their bodyguards and their supporters was a bit counterproductive? These kind of bureaucratic snafus happen.

Personally, I think it probably just dawned on the architects of the Salvadoran Option that while they *thought* they were riding with the bad boys, the *real* bad boys were out riding with the Iranian secret police, who don't need any Spanish lessons on how to run a dirty war.

And so now we have Iranian-backed Shi'a death squads hunting their political enemies through the slums of Baghdad under the pretext of fighting the insurgency, while Sunni Baathists (and/or their jihadist allies) blow up Shi'a mosques at prayer time under the pretext of fighting the American occupation.

Meanwhile, back here in the good old U.S. of A (the A is for assholes) the ruling party is reliving Joe McCarthy's glory years, while the leaders of the so-called opposition party try to hide their worthless carcasses behind an ex-Marine congressman who finally saw one too many broken bodies warehoused at Walter Reed and suffered a temporary fit of sanity, causing him to blurt out the ugly truth that the war is hopelessly lost. For which crime he will now be the subject of an ethics investigation by the same people who made Jack Abramoff an honorary member of the House Republican Caucus.

Truly, to quote Leonard -- the [psychotic recruit](#) in *Full Metal Jacket* -- we are in a world of shit.

Posted by billmon at November 19, 2005 11:24 PM

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billmon.org/archives/002340.html

Torture and Extrajudicial Killings in Iraq

by Max Fuller

November 24, 2005

GlobalResearch.ca

For the last week the US government has been reeling both from the revelation that it employed white phosphorous in Fallujah and from the discovery that the government it helped install is running secret detention centres in which prisoners are subjected to serious abuse.

The detention facility in the Jadiriyah district of Baghdad was discovered on Sunday 13 November when US soldiers entered an Interior Ministry building in their hunt for a missing 15-year-old. What they discovered was a chamber of horrors. More than 170 prisoners were packed into a foetid underground bunker. They were half-starved and many of them had been seriously beaten. Torture instruments were found hidden above a false ceiling and reports stated that some prisoners had been flayed.

Predictably, the US embassy issued a statement denouncing the treatment and insisting that torture was unacceptable, while Iraqi prime minister Ibrahim Jafaari insisted there would be an enquiry and Hussein Kamal, deputy head of the Interior Ministry, downplayed the incident. Such denials failed to convince the intrepid western media, which cannily pointed to Shia domination of the government, especially the Interior Ministry. A number of reports also cited rumours that the facility had been used by the Badr Brigade, the former armed wing of The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. For the majority of western journalists, the incident is yet another example of what they claim is a wave of sectarian violence sweeping Iraq.

What the western media has so far failed to disclose is that a strikingly similar incident occurred just a day after the nominal handover of power to Ayad Allawi's Interim Government. On 29 June 2004, military police from the Oregon National Guard stormed the compound of the Interior Ministry itself to rescue dozens of detainees whom they had observed being tortured. As at Jadiriyah, the victims had been deprived of food and savagely beaten. Dozens more detainees were discovered in sheds, alongside instruments of torture. Some of the detainees were in a life-threatening condition and the guardsmen began to administer emergency medical care.

Most shockingly, when the guardsmen radioed for support, senior US officers ordered them to stand down. After hours of tense negotiations, the guardsmen reluctantly withdrew, leaving the prisoners with their abusers.

The incident demonstrates two extremely important points. Firstly, the latest discovery is not news for US authorities, who have been aware of serious abuse taking place inside Interior Ministry facilities for more than a year and taken no action to prevent it. Secondly, such abuse cannot simply be ascribed to sectarian Shia control of the Interior Ministry. In fact, many of the most senior posts at the Ministry continue to be filled by ex-Baathists, including some of those most associated with suppression of the Shia rising that followed the first Gulf War.

The practice of torture at Interior Ministry facilities is in many ways the tip of the iceberg.

For the last year hundreds of bodies - the apparent victims of extrajudicial executions - have been turning up across Iraq, especially Baghdad. Typically, the victims are bound and blindfolded and have been dispatched with shots to the head and chest. Many of them also bear the marks of brutal torture.

The only serious investigation to have been carried out within Iraq was by an Iraqi journalist, Yasser Salihee. He pointed to the hundreds of execution victims making their way through the Baghdad morgue and highlighted the fact that in many cases those victims are known to have been arrested by gunmen in police uniforms, sporting expensive police equipment, including vehicles, weapons and sophisticated radios. His final article was published on 27 June, three days after his own assassination at the hands of a US sniper, but his allegations echo those of Sunni groups, who have accused the government of state terrorism.

The majority of specific accusations have focused on a unit called the Wolf Brigade, attached to the Interior Ministry's Special Police Commandos. This unit, formed in autumn last year, saw its first major action in Mosul in November 2004 in what seems to have been a serious clash with resistance fighters. Dozens of bodies began to appear on the streets as the commandos conducted sweeps of the city.

More recently, in July, the Wolf Brigade is known to have been responsible for an incident in which 11 bricklayers were seized at a Baghdad hospital and locked in the back of a police vehicle in searing heat for 16 hours. Ten of the men died and doctors carrying out a post mortem concluded that the victims had also been subjected to torture, including by electrocution.

Whilst death-squad-style killings are now generally acknowledged, the perpetrators are almost always claimed to belong to Shiite militias, perhaps under the control of a Shiite-dominated Interior Ministry. Even the Wolf Brigade is linked with sectarian violence, but the reality is that the Special Police Commandos are composed of ex special-forces and Republican Guard personnel and were established by former Baathists with long histories of involvement with the CIA, under the supervision of US counterinsurgency experts. One advisor was the same James Steele who previously commanded the US military mission in El Salvador at the height of that country's unspeakably dirty civil war. There, Steele was responsible for creating the 'elite' squads that accounted for the bulk of the army's largely civilian casualties.

Another was Steven Casteel, the most senior US advisor within the Interior Ministry and the man who successfully negotiated the withdrawal of the Oregon National Guardsmen. Some of his experience was gained in Colombia, where he was involved in the Centra Spike operations, a data-collection exercise in which lists of the associates of cocaine baron Pablo Escobar were murdered by the Los Pepes death squads. Los Pepes went on to form the nucleus for the present murderous AUC.

The US, largely through the CIA, has a long history of involvement with genocidal intelligence operations, from Indonesia under Suharto, through Operation Phoenix in Vietnam, to present-day Colombia. The current mass arrests in Iraq and subsequent killings bear all the hallmarks of such an operation. By analogy, one can reasonably guess that the current flood of victims will include anyone opposing US hegemony, such as the hundreds of teachers and academics who have already been assassinated, as well as the human 'waste' generated through 'heavy interrogation'. A further possibility is that ordinary Sunni Iraqis are deliberately being victimised as part of a strategy of fomenting sectarian strife designed to engineer the Balkanisation of Iraq. With that in mind, it is time to start asking hard questions about the role of the two British SAS men caught with a car load of

explosives and accused by Iraqis of planning to attack a Shia religious festival.

According to The Guardian, one former Interior Ministry detainee claimed prisoners prayed to be transferred to Abu Ghraib. This is no commendation of US treatment of prisoners, but only highlights the fact that many of the worst crimes are reserved, as they have been in Latin America, for US proxies. In El Salvador Noam Chomsky noted that it was not enough for US-backed paramilitaries to kill someone; instead they might be decapitated and their head placed on a spike. In Iraq similar distinctions exist. The victims of US-trained death squads are not just humiliated; their eyes are gouged out, their skin is peeled off and electric drills are driven through their knees.

For more information about the role of death squads in Iraq and media disinformation relating to it, see the following articles by Max Fuller

<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/FUL506A.html>

<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/FUL506A.html>

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=FUL20051110&articleId=1230>

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Uncovering the Roots of American Terrorism in Iraq

Mike Whitney



December 2, 2005

Max Fuller has written the most important article of the year and perhaps the decade. In his ["Crying Wolf: Media Disinformation and Death Squads in Occupied Iraq"](#), Fuller painstakingly lays out the details and documentation to prove that the United States intelligence agencies are behind the vast incidents of murder and torture being carried out in Iraq today. If Fuller's thesis is correct, then the War on Terror, that mighty engine of imperial carnage, is nothing more than a public relations scam to enlist public support.

The war on terror is the "seminal lie" from which all the administration's criminal excesses are mere tributaries. America's unprovoked aggression in Iraq, as well as the appalling assault on civil liberties, has been carried out in the name of the war on terror. In fact, it has been used as to mask everything from police-state legislation at home to massive human rights violations abroad. The war on terror is an all-inclusive fraud that is the greatest threat to personal freedom and global security the world has ever seen. If unchallenged, we can expect the dictatorial-powers of the president to increase and the world plunged into another century of war.

Fuller's article sweeps away the illusions created by the war on terror. With laser-like intensity he focuses a steady beam of light on the most expansive clandestine intel-operation of all time; the terrorizing of an entire nation, pushing it inexorably towards civil war. The Interior Ministry is at the epicenter of Iraq's violent malaise. It is the headquarters for the Badr and Wolf Brigades; the American-trained death squads which are responsible for the massive assassination program directed at "alleged" Sunni resistance fighters. The torture chambers, death squads, and random bombings are not caused by foreign terrorists, nor are they the work of Iranian agents striving for a theocratic regime in Baghdad. They are, in fact, the nefarious activities of American puppet-masters, who matriculated in the terror wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Now, under Uncle Sam's benign gaze, they are plying their trade in Iraq; wreaking havoc and spreading suffering on an unimaginable scale.

What does this mean?

It means that the "central front in the war on terror" is a phantom; a specter; a chimera that cloaks itself in the dull braying of plutocrats who promise democracy, but only deliver greater deprivation, sorrow and fear. It means that the ideological headwaters of global terrorism is Washington and that behind the scratchy façade of Al Qaida videos and dubious accounts of suicide bombers, the insidious fist of the imperial master continues to pound away at its victims. It means that, as Martin Luther King said, "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own country."

The media has played a central role in trying to obfuscate the details of America's involvement in the terror-war by characterizing the hundreds of murder victims as the result of tit-for-tat sectarian violence or of rogue Shiite militias loosely connected to the Interior Ministry. But, as Fuller deftly demonstrates, the more likely explanation is that the Ministry is executing a clear strategy of gratuitous terror devised and directed by their American handlers.

The immense media disinformation campaign is designed to shift blame away from its American roots and promote the idea of massive sectarian unrest. This feeds the notion of an incipient civil war, which in turn achieves the American policy objective of Balkanizing the country to control its resources.

The one reporter who diverged from these fabrications was Yasser Salihee, reporter for Knight-Ridder news. Salihee had uncovered critical information about the weaponry, vehicles and origins of the death squads, and was expected to file reports on those topics. His coverage, however, was cut short when he was assassinated in a gangland style hit at a checkpoint outside Baghdad by an American sniper. With just one precision shot to the forehead, another unembedded journalist was removed from covering Bush's folly.

Fuller's research exposes the Interior Ministry as the hub of the clandestine death squad activity. The assumption that the ministry is manned exclusively by theocratic Shiites is just more misleading media gibberish. In fact, one of the more brutal counterinsurgency groups, the Sunni-led Special Police Commandos, is headed by a former officer in Saddam's Baath Party. (The Commandos were founded by the son of the former Iraqi Chief of Staff Falah al-Naqib, who many believed to be a CIA asset.) The connections of Interior Ministry chieftains to their CIA managers are deep and confusing but, as Fuller notes, "the Police Commandos were formed under the experienced tutelage and oversight of veteran US counterinsurgency fighters, and from the outset conducted joint-force operations with elite and highly secretive US special-forces units." ([Reuters](#), [National Review Online](#))

Fuller says: "A key figure in the development of the Special Police Commandos was James Steele, a former US Army special forces operative who cut his teeth in Vietnam before moving on to direct the US military mission in El Salvador at the height of that country's civil war.... Another US contributor was the same Steven Casteel who as the most senior US advisor within the Interior Ministry brushed off serious and well-substantiated accusations of appalling human right violations as 'rumor and innuendo'....Casteel's background is significant because this kind of intelligence-gathering support role and the production of death lists are characteristic of US involvement in counterinsurgency programs and constitute the underlying thread in what can appear to be random, disjointed killing sprees."

Needless, to say, the CIA does not move major assets like Steele and Casteel into a prickly situation like Iraq to shuffle papers by a water-cooler. These are the main gears in the machinery of the Iraqi death squads; the movable parts in Washington's apparatus of state terror. There is nothing either "random" or "disjointed" in the butchery produced by their labors.

Fuller adds: "The Police Commando headquarters has become the hub of a nationwide command, control, communications, computer and intelligence operations centre, courtesy of the US ([Defend America](#))."

The administration has provided a "state of the art" communications network to "coordinate mass murder".

"DeBaathification" is a sham. Many of the top-ranking officials in the Ministry are Sunnis, including "deputy Minister for Intelligence Affairs (also leader of the Interior Ministry's spy service) currently held by General Hussain Kamel".

So, too, the notion of rogue Iranian-supported militias carrying out random attacks on "alleged" Sunnis suspects is equally deceptive.

Nearly everything that appears in the corporate media has been intentionally misleading as part of the broader information war, to keep the American people from grasping the truth about the chief perpetrator of terrorism in Iraq today; the US intelligence agencies. [As the Los Angeles Times notes](#), "The entire intelligence establishment is a creation of the Anglo-American secret services, which began building at least as early as the beginning of the occupation."

You've been fooled; I've been fooled; and everything the Pentagon has said has been a lie. The fetid entrails of this terror-beast reside in Washington, not Baghdad or Tehran.

The recent revelations (carefully excluded from the American press) of two British commandos dressed in traditional Arab garb caught in Basra with a trunk-load full of explosives ([William Bowles](#)) has even cast doubt on the involvement of the intelligence agencies in the rash of terror bombings plaguing the country. Certainly, the ensuing anger generated from these attacks is more compatible with the administration's goals of sectarian division than they are with the nebulous theories about the apocryphal al-Zarqawi.

Fuller says:

"What is possible is that both sides of the apparent sectarian violence are run as part of a huge CIA-lead intelligence operation designed to split Iraq at the seams. I tentatively suggest that the intelligence apparatus at the Interior Ministry is contriving attacks on Sunnis and that British and US Special Forces in conjunction with the intelligence apparatus at the Iraqi Defense Ministry are fabricating insurgent bombings of Shias. Overseeing the entire operation is the 'cream' of CMAD under the direction of top-level US intelligence asset Mowaffak Rubaie, a man already experienced at participating in bombing campaigns, undoubtedly working hand in glove with the CIA and the National Security Council in the US."

"a huge CIA-lead intelligence operation designed to split Iraq at the seams".

Amen.

Given Fuller's thesis, it's likely that most of the alleged "suicide" bombings are nothing more than stationary vehicles set off by remote-control and reported as suicide attacks by the compliant media to perpetuate the racial stereotypes of crazed Muslim fanatics.

Fuller's article is a difficult read with hefty documentation that tends to have a mind-numbing effect. Never the less, the ponderous emphasis on facts and actual news reports serve his greater purpose of proving a very tenuous and thorny theory, that the US is overseeing a humongous clandestine operation that has fractured the country and destabilized the region. As Fuller says, "(The) presence of Anglo-American forces in Iraq does not merely exacerbate the present violence; in Iraq we are the violence."

The fictional War on Terror

The war on terror is a fabrication so large and all-encompassing that it includes both political parties, the Pentagon, the main-body of corporate and financial elites, and virtually the entire western media. It is the underlying myth that animates the American war-machine and breathes life into the coercive apparatus of state terror. Fuller's article uncovers a fissure in the block-wall of government secrecy and gives us a good look at the worm-infested core of imperial rule. Global terrorism flows from Washington like a toxic river that has breached its banks and threatens to flood everything in its path.

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Features

Who is controlling the death squads in Iraq?

It has become impossible for anyone with half an eye on Iraq over the last six months not to recognise the widespread presence of death squads, especially in Baghdad and the ring of towns surrounding it.

Typically, the victims of the death squads are found casually discarded — their eyes may be blindfolded, their hands are bound or handcuffed behind the back and they have been killed with shots to the head or chest.

The victims frequently bear the signs of horrific torture, including savage beatings, electrocution, cigarette and acid burns, gouged out eyes and even the use of electric drills.

In every case where evidence is available, the victims were arrested by uniformed members of the police or armed forces, or un-uniformed gunmen bearing interior ministry identification.

Such killings are not mere blips on the screen, but are considered to have reached epidemic proportions by human rights groups in Baghdad, who regard them and the associated disappearances as the most pressing problem in Iraq today.

One Baghdad mosque has documented the death or disappearance of around 700 Sunni Muslim civilians during the last four months.

In July the Iraqi journalist Yasser Salihee described hundreds of victims of extrajudicial killings passing through the Baghdad morgue.

Although his picture of the morgue is confirmed by other journalists, he remains the only one to have seriously investigated the allegations of involvement by the security forces.

His last article was published on 27 June, three days after his own assassination at the hands of a US army sniper at a routine checkpoint.

The most prominent allegations have come from Sunni groups, as the majority of victims seem to have been young Sunni men.

In May, the Association of Muslim Scholars accused the government of conducting a policy of state terror.

It pointed to what it believed to be the presence of members of the Badr Brigade, the armed wing of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, operating alongside interior ministry commandos.

The Iraqi government has responded by alleging that extrajudicial killings are the work of insurgents masquerading as police officers.

This leaves gaping questions hanging over how “insurgents” were able to obtain uniforms and expensive police equipment, as well as how they are able to operate freely in heavily curfewed areas.

The mainstream Western media, however, is not so easily outfoxed. They have seized on the allegations of Badr involvement and repeated the charge of sectarianism like a mantra. The pattern is consistent.

After every fresh revelation of torture or murder linked to Iraq’s new interior ministry, the media trots out much the same story.

It refers to uncontrollable militias, Badr infiltration of the security forces and Shia domination of the interior ministry.

It inevitably concludes that the incident in question is yet another example of the sectarian violence gripping Iraq.

Unspeakable

The pattern is visible in the most recent flurry of journalistic concern following the discovery on 13 November of an underground torture chamber in Baghdad, where around 170 prisoners were kept in unspeakable conditions.

Rumours that some of them had already been tortured to death remain unconfirmed.

The Observer’s Peter Beaumont writes that the roots of the human rights catastrophe that has enveloped the ministry are to be found in the simmering sectarian conflict of tit-for-tat assassinations.

The Independent’s Kim Sengupta states that the Badr militia controls part of the ministry.

No evidence is offered to support the contention that Badr controls the interior ministry, except perhaps the mention that the present minister is himself a former Badr member.

Almost no mention is made of the US and Britain's role in training the security forces beside the occasional "obviously knew nothing about it" comment.

No frame of reference of other US-backed counter insurgency campaigns is ever offered.

What the mainstream Western media neglects to remind us is that following the occupation of Iraq, British and US intelligence went into overdrive to establish a new Iraqi intelligence apparatus.

They rightly saw this as the linchpin of their puppet state. Recruits were drawn from existing intelligence agents (presumably CIA assets) within the main political parties, all of whom had returned to Iraq on the back of US tanks, and hammered into a new organisation known as the Collection, Management and Analysis Directorate (CMAD).

CMAD's first task was to draw up lists of opponents, who were to be the targets of a paramilitary unit drawn from the militias of the same political parties, working in collusion with US special forces.

Who these targets were is not known. It is known, however, that in the first year of occupation some 1,000 Iraqi professionals, including many teachers, were murdered, promoting a mass exodus.

While some reporters suggested that disgruntled students might be responsible for the massacre of academics, the pattern is better placed within the total levelling of Iraq's cultural and political life — an apocalyptic Year Zero.

This has, as journalist Felicity Arbuthnot describes in her article, Iraq's Year Zero, (www.globalresearch.ca/articles/arb504a.html), witnessed the destruction of written records, historical treasures, public monuments and, it seems, even people.

US experienced in fighting dirty wars

Far from being Shia fundamentalists, Iraq's new spy chiefs were former Baathists and long-term CIA assets like general Mohammad Shahwani, who became the director of the National Intelligence Service when CMAD was split in June 2004.

The US has been busy rebuilding the Iraqi interior ministry. The ministry was headed, until the notional transfer of power, by US Drug Enforcement Agency man Steven Casteel.

Casteel's experience was gained in Latin America, where he was involved in several of the drug wars that served as cover for the CIA in the 1980s and 1990s.

He was involved in the hunt for Colombia's cocaine baron Pablo Escobar.

This was an enormous covert intelligence operation that saw the creation of the Los Pepes death squad, which was to serve as the backbone for the country's present paramilitary organisation.

Alongside Casteel, came James Steele, who, as senior counsellor to US ambassador Paul Bremer for Iraqi security forces, was to systematise the establishment of paramilitary special forces units within the new interior ministry.

Steele's background runs from Vietnam and Cambodia to El Salvador and Panama. Steele was there to train the police and army just about anywhere murderous repression took place.

In Iraq, Steele was responsible for overseeing the establishment of the Special Police Commandos, including the notorious Wolf Brigade.

The Police Commandos are the most widely implicated of all the new formations in Iraq, but they are not commanded by religious fanatics.

Their leaders are drawn from former military personnel, including general Rashid Flayyih, who, though a Shia, is the man most closely associated with the suppression of the Shia rising following the first Gulf War, as well as being a CIA collaborator.

Neither the transfer of sovereignty to the interim government, nor the switching of regimes to the transitional one, made any impact on the careers of the carefully groomed assets within the new Iraqi state, quashing the media-cherished notion of de-Baathification.

The picture of mass murder and torture at the hands of US proxies emerging from Iraq is consistent with the experience of every other counter-insurgency war in which the US has been involved.

From Indonesia to El Salvador, hundreds of thousands of killings have been committed by US-backed and trained forces.

This is all to ensure continuing access to markets, cheap labour and raw materials, and to prevent the rise of economic and social alternatives that could deliver hope to the masses.

This multi-tiered operation means operatives like Steele select the most brutal accomplices they can find, while top-level planners direct dirty wars from lavish offices. Both sets are murderers.

But between them, and between the crimes and the public who would put an end to them, are the professional liars of the corporate media, who, in concealing the truth, are as complicit as the driller killers in the balaclavas.

For more from Max Fuller go to the Centre for Research on Globalisation website www.globalresearch.ca

» For Iraq, the Salvador Option becomes reality

» Crying Wolf: media disinformation and death squads in occupied Iraq

Iraq's death squads: On the brink of civil war

Andrew Buncombe and Patrick Cockburn



Most of the corpses in Baghdad's mortuary show signs of torture and execution. And the Interior Ministry is being blamed.

26 February 2006

Hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death or summarily executed every month in Baghdad alone by death squads working from the Ministry of the Interior, the United Nations' outgoing human rights chief in Iraq has revealed.

John Pace, who left Baghdad two weeks ago, told The Independent on Sunday that up to three-quarters of the corpses stacked in the city's mortuary show evidence of gunshot wounds to the head or injuries caused by drill-bits or burning cigarettes. Much of the killing, he said, was carried out by Shia Muslim groups under the control of the Ministry of the Interior.

Much of the statistical information provided to Mr Pace and his team comes from the Baghdad Medico-Legal Institute, which is located next to the city's mortuary. He said figures show that last July the morgue alone received 1,100 bodies, about 900 of which bore evidence of torture or summary execution. The pattern prevailed throughout the year until December, when the number dropped to 780 bodies, about 400 of which had gunshot or torture wounds.

"It's being done by anyone who wishes to wipe out anybody else for various reasons," said Mr Pace, who worked for the UN for more than 40 years in countries ranging from Liberia to Chile. "But the bulk are attributed to the agents of the Ministry of the Interior."

Coupled with the suicide bombings and attacks on Shia holy places carried out by Sunnis, some of whom are followers of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qa'ida's leader in Iraq, the activities of the death squads are pushing Iraq ever closer to a sectarian civil war.

Mr Pace said the Ministry of the Interior was "acting as a rogue element within the government". It is controlled by the main Shia party, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (Sciri); the Interior Minister, Bayan Jabr, is a former leader of Sciri's Badr Brigade militia, which is one of the main groups accused of carrying out sectarian killings. Another is the Mehdi Army of the young cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who is part of the Shia coalition seeking to form a government after winning the mid-December election.

Many of the 110,000 policemen and police commandos under the ministry's control are suspected of being former members of the Badr Brigade. Not only counter-insurgency units such as the Wolf Brigade, the Scorpions and the Tigers, but the commandos and even the highway patrol police have been accused of acting as death squads.

The paramilitary commandos, dressed in garish camouflage uniforms and driving around in pick-up trucks, are dreaded in Sunni neighbourhoods. People whom they have openly arrested have frequently been found dead several days later, with their bodies bearing obvious marks of torture.

Mr Pace, a Maltese-Australian who has now retired from his UN post to his home in Sydney, says the constant violence and utter lack of security in Iraq are creating a vicious circle in which ordinary citizens are turning to extremist sectarian groups for protection. Fear of anybody in official uniform inevitably strengthens the militias and the insurgents. In Sunni areas people will look to their own defences, and not to the regular army and police.

But ordinary Sunnis are caught between the death squads and the desire of some of the insurgents on their own side to start a civil war - an aim they are now not far from achieving. The so-called Salafi, Sunni fundamentalists, want not only to eject the Americans but also to build a pure Islamic state. They see Iraqi Shias, even though they are 60 per cent of the population, as heretics allied to the US who should be slaughtered.

Last week's attack on the Golden Mosque is only the latest in a long series of outrages against the Shia community. They started in August 2003 when Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim, then leader of Sciri, was killed, along with more than 100 of his followers by a suicide bomber in a vehicle outside the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf. There have been repeated massacres of the Shia ever since - some targeting the security forces, such as the attacks on queues of young men trying to join the police or army, but others, such as the slaughter of Shia day labourers waiting for a day's employment, for no other reason than that they are Shia.

Despite extending a 24-hour curfew into a second day yesterday in Baghdad and other major cities, the authorities were unable to prevent further revenge killings and outrages against holy sites. The current cycle of violence, which began with the bombing of the Azkariya shrine in Samarra on Wednesday, has claimed at least 200 lives so far, including those of 47 factory workers pulled from buses and shot on the outskirts of Baghdad.

This was the sort of killing that touched off Lebanon's civil war in 1975. Already an exchange of populations is taking place in Baghdad as members of each community move to districts in which they are in the majority.

The ability of the US occupiers to influence the situation is not only limited, but some of their actions are seen as making things worse. The Americans have been trying to dislodge Mr Jabr as Interior Minister, accusing him of turning his ministry into a Shia bastion. But the Shia believe that the US and its allies, the Kurds, simply want to prevent the majority community from gaining full power over security despite winning two parliamentary elections in 2005.

One important development over the past few days is that it is clearly becoming very difficult to use American or British troops to keep the peace, undermining the argument that they are the only bulwark against civil war. The occupation forces lack the legitimacy to play the role of UN peacekeepers; it is almost impossible to have US soldiers defend a Sunni mosque against a Shia crowd, because if they open fire they will be seen as having joined one side in a sectarian struggle.

In Mr Pace's view, the violence in Iraq is being made worse by the seizing of young Iraqi men by US troops and Iraqi police as they move from city to city carrying out raids. "The vast majority are innocent," he said, "but they very often don't get released for months. You don't eliminate terrorism by what they're doing now. Military intervention causes serious human rights and humanitarian problems to large numbers of innocent civilians ... The result is that such individuals turn into terrorists at the end of their detention."

In such circumstances, family members often contacted UN officials asking for help in getting a young man outside of the country and away from the influence of insurgents they had met in jail. They were among many Iraqi citizens fleeing the country as a result of the violence. "Those with money go

to Jordan. The poor go to Syria," he said.

Mr Pace, who first made his comments to The Times of Malta newspaper, said the situation in Iraq had "definitely, definitely" got worse over the two years in which he headed the UN human rights team. The interim government and the international community were trying to restart the country's crippled economy, but, he said, they would not succeed "until people are secure".

THE KILLERS

BADR BRIGADE:

Armed wing of the most powerful Shia party. Many police and paramilitaries 'still wear Badr T-shirts under their uniform,' a US general said.

MEHDI ARMY:

Loyal to the Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. Apart from open clashes with Sunnis, its members in the police are accused of death squad killings.

DEFENDERS OF KHADAMIYA:

Followers of Hussein al-Sadr, Moqtada relative. Among forces set up to guard Shia shrines, but having more sinister links.

SPECIAL POLICE

COMMANDOS:

Feared by Sunnis, despite having had some Sunni commanders.

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Iraq: The Death-Squad War

Seeking justice among corrupt cops, crooks and torturers.

Michael Hastings, Newsweek



Feb. 27, 2006 issue - They sat dejectedly on the floor in ill-fitting police uniforms, separated from the other inmates at Baghdad's Al Hakimiya detention facility. The 18 prisoners in blue were members of the highway patrol. Government investigators allege that the prisoners were also part of a roaming death squad and that they had been preparing to kill a Sunni prisoner when they were arrested at a checkpoint in Baghdad in late January. When NEWSWEEK encountered the detained cops during a visit to Al Hakimiya shortly after their arrest, one of them rose to his feet, gave his name as Maan Hadi and denied they had done anything wrong. He said he and his friends had captured a suspect who was wanted by U.S. authorities, but the Iraqi troops running the checkpoint decided to steal credit for the arrest. "They wanted our prisoner, and when we refused to give him up right away, they arrested us," Hadi said. "They beat the crap out of us."

U.S. and Iraqi officials are calling the group's arrest a breakthrough. "We have found one of the death squads," Maj. Gen. Joseph Peterson told the Chicago Tribune last week. "They are a part of the police force of Iraq." No one knows how many death squads are currently operating in Iraq, but in the past year hundreds of murdered bodies have been found, many of them with their wrists bound execution style and a single bullet through the head. Some death squads are killing Shiites; others are executing Sunnis. In many cases, witnesses tell of victims being abducted by unidentified men in police uniforms. Almost unnoticed amid the country's chaos, the dirty war is beginning to rival the insurgency in its deadliness and in its damage to national stability. "This is very dangerous," says Deputy Prime Minister Rowsch Shaways. "If it keeps up like this, it will lead us to civil war."

The patrolmen seemingly made no effort to disguise what they were doing when their five-car convoy pulled up at the checkpoint in northern Baghdad. They freely declared that they were taking their Sunni prisoner to a place where they could kill him, the Tribune reported. There were 22 officers in the group altogether. The four apparent ringleaders were taken into U.S. custody at Abu Ghraib, and the other 18 were sent to Al Hakimiya. Their prisoner was reportedly thrown in jail, too—on murder charges. The day after the general's interview hit the papers, Iraq's Ministry of Interior (MOI) hurriedly broke its long silence on the death squads, promising to launch a formal investigation. "Sunnis and Shiites are killing each other," the MOI official directing the inquiry, Hussein Ali Kamal, told NEWSWEEK. "Sunnis are attacking Shiite mosques. Shiites are attacking Sunni mosques. Both have death squads."

Can Iraqis trust the Ministry of Interior to put a stop to it? Interior is one of Iraq's most dishonest ministries, according to Judge Rahdi Hamza al-Rahdi, director of the government's top anti-corruption agency, the Commission on Public Integrity. Roughly 400 MOI officials are currently under the commission's scrutiny.

The fears are underscored by the way the MOI runs its detention facilities. Bribery is said to be so rampant that a standard list of under-the-table fees has apparently evolved. Mohammed Abid, a defense lawyer in Baghdad, says clients describe prices that range from 30,000 Iraqi dinar (about \$21) for one minute on a mobile phone to \$40,000 in U.S. currency for release from custody. Those rates are independently confirmed by an Iraqi police officer who has spent two years working at Al Hakimiya and does not wish to be named, out of fear and shame. "I'm coming forward for reasons that are

between me and Allah," he says. "I have done things. I needed to tell someone." He says torture and beatings are part of the daily routine, creating an eager market for guards who sell painkillers to the inmates.

Iraq's officer in charge at Al Hakimiya, Brig. Gen. Tha-mer Sadoon, denies that any serious abuses have taken place there since his arrival in September. The Ministry of Interior refused to talk to NEWSWEEK about conditions at other MOI-run facilities. Some of those detention centers may not even be known. "I can surely say there are secret prisons," says Aida Sharif, a deputy minister at Iraq's Ministry of Human Rights. And God only knows what goes on there.

With Babak Dehghanpisheh in Baghdad
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Police Tied to Death Squads

Solomon Moore, LATimes Staff Writer

U.S. military officials say they suspect Iraq's highway patrol, staffed largely by Shiites, is deeply involved in torture and killings.

BAGHDAD — A 1,500-member Iraqi police force with close ties to Shiite militia groups has emerged as a focus of investigations into suspected death squads working within the country's Interior Ministry.

Iraq's national highway patrol was established largely to stave off insurgent attacks on roadways. But U.S. military officials, interviewed over the last several days, say they suspect the patrol of being deeply involved in illegal detentions, torture and extrajudicial killings.

The officials said that in recent months the U.S. has withdrawn financial and advisory support from the patrol in an effort to distance the American training effort from what they perceived to be a renegade force.

"We don't train them, we don't give them equipment, we don't conduct site visits over there. They are just bad, criminal people," said a high-ranking U.S. military officer who advises the Interior Ministry. The officer was one of three who each spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they wanted to maintain relationships with Iraqi police officials and avoid retaliation by U.S. military superiors.

Last month, Iraqi army soldiers stopped a 22-member squad of uniformed highway patrol officers at a nighttime checkpoint in northern Baghdad and discovered a man in their custody who told them the police planned to kill him. His contention was supported by confessions of officers in the squad, U.S. advisors said.

U.S. officials have called 2006 "the year of the police" and have placed a

renewed emphasis on training officers. The Bush administration repeatedly has said the development of Iraq's security forces must occur before withdrawal of U.S. troops can begin.

The U.S. military works closely with Iraqi army units, conducting joint operations and sharing space on some military bases. By contrast, police forces have evolved far more independently in approximately 11,000 stations and outposts around the nation.

The result is a motley conglomeration of agencies under the Interior Ministry with overlapping jurisdictions and poorly defined functions.

"You've got the facilities protection service, the public order brigades, the commandos, the highway patrol, the regular police, the traffic police, patrol officers," said a second U.S. military official.

"Who knows who they all are? Nobody controls them but the minister," the officer said, referring to Interior Minister Bayan Jabr.

Jabr, a Shiite with close ties to the Badr Brigade, a paramilitary group, has been at the center of allegations of abuse at the hands of Iraqi security forces. The minister's notoriety rose last year as the bodies of hundreds of men — mostly Sunni Arabs — started appearing in sewage treatment plants, garbage dumps and desert ravines. Most of the bodies showed signs of torture and execution-style killings. Many families of the deceased said their kin had last been seen in the back of a police vehicle.

The Shiites, who constitute about 60% of the Iraqi population, were severely repressed under Saddam Hussein's regime, which favored the Sunni minority. The Shiites came to power in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion of March 2003. A Sunni-led insurgency has carried out a campaign of bombings and assassinations against the government.

Over the last two years, Shiite militias within Iraq's security forces have been accused of staging reprisals for the Sunni attacks. Leading Sunni figures have blamed the reprisals on Jabr. Sunni political parties have made his removal from office a key issue in negotiations over whether they will take part in Iraq's Shiite-led government.

In a recent interview, Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Peterson, who is leading the multibillion-dollar effort to train and equip Iraq's police forces, vigorously defended the minister and said he was heartened by Jabr's pledge to investigate the abuse fully.

"Death squads — they're a real issue," said Peterson. "I can tell you, we caught our first death squad," he said, referring to the unit that was apprehended last month. "The minister of Interior is elated that we caught them," he added.

Peterson said U.S. and Interior Ministry officials were investigating the highway patrol squad to determine "where these guys came from and how they were organized and who was leading them and what was their purpose."

Army Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, a U.S. military spokesman, said that the Interior Ministry was leading the investigation into the suspected death squad.

Ali Hussein Kamal, the Interior Ministry's intelligence chief, said in an interview Sunday that investigators were also trying to determine whether the Iraqi general in charge of the highway patrol was linked to the squad.

"If we find that these allegations that he is involved are true, we will be taking very firm measures against him," Kamal said. "But generally speaking, high-ranking officers are usually ignorant of what their lower-ranking officers are doing."

U.S. personnel who have been training Iraqi police officers said they long had suspected the highway patrol of conducting illegal raids and killings but had little oversight of the force.

The black-garbed highway patrol officers rarely attend U.S.-financed police academies aimed at improving professionalism and sensitivity to human rights within Iraq's security forces, police trainers said, and have refused to share information about their activities.

U.S. police advisors said the highway patrol was almost entirely Shiite and included a core of 400 to 800 Badr militia members who make up the patrol's 4th Company, which was created last year.

"The 4th Company is filled by people with unconventional militia ties," said the U.S. military officer who advises the Interior Ministry. "Minister Jabr is very supportive of them. The general in charge [of the highway patrol] is very supportive of them."

After the suspected death squad was stopped last month, U.S. police advisors said, four members of the squad confessed to several sectarian killings.

The highway patrol officers were asked, " 'Who are you doing this for?' " said a third U.S. military officer who is involved in training Iraqi troops and has knowledge of the interrogations of the suspected death squad. "And they're telling us, 'Jabr.' " The rest of the squad, said the advisor, has been released.

Sunni Arab leaders complain that an earlier investigation into alleged police abuse has yet to show results.

In November, a U.S. Army unit discovered a secret detention and torture facility run by police officers affiliated with the Badr militia. In all, 169 people had been detained at the secret prison, and photos showed that some inmates had been severely beaten and malnourished.

Jabr pledged to investigate the origin of the detention facility and the possible existence of other secret prisons, even as he downplayed the abuse that had taken place there.

"OK, there were signs of torture ... but there were no killings and no beheadings, as some have said," Jabr told reporters in November.

But inmates at the bunker compiled a list of 18 detainees who they said had been tortured to death.

Two U.S. Embassy officials said Monday that Iraqi authorities were conducting visits of Interior Ministry jails and prisons, but declined to release details about the facilities.

Kamal, the ministry's intelligence chief, said of the detention probe, "we are still investigating this, but it is better if we do this quietly, without any media."

Peterson, the U.S. officer in charge of Iraqi police training, said that so far, no other secret prisons had been discovered. U.S. officials were trying to help the Interior Ministry centralize and upgrade its detention system, he said, so that it would be more transparent and acceptable by international standards.

"I've seen all the reports that say there are secret prisons out there," Peterson said. "So where are they? We have not found them. We have gone out there and looked for them. Can they exist? Well, the bunker existed, so yeah, they can exist. Is the ministry trying to find these things? Well, yes, they are."

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Ex-Envoy: Execution Victims Spike at Baghdad Morgue

Ellen Knickmeyer, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, March 2 -- Nearly three years into a war epitomized by car bombs and suicide attacks, executions -- many of them following torture -- now account for up to three-fourths of the hundreds of corpses coming in to Baghdad's main morgue each week, the former U.N. human rights chief for Iraq said Thursday.

John Pace, who headed the U.N. human rights mission here until Feb. 13, said that between two-thirds and three-fourths of the victims brought to Baghdad's main morgue are recorded as casualties of gunshot wounds. Nearly all showed signs of having been executed, tortured or both, Pace said by telephone from his home in Sydney.

Pace said he held one of Iraq's factional militias principally responsible -- the Badr Organization, the armed faction of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a Shiite Muslim religious party that is one of the most powerful members of Iraq's governing coalition.

"They have caused havoc," Pace said of the Badr group in a separate interview with the Associated Press. "They do basically as they please. They arrest people, they torture people, they execute people, they detain people, they negotiate ransom, and they do that with impunity."

Since the middle of last year, Shiite militias -- private armies that are sometimes closely integrated with the Shiite-dominated Interior Ministry -- have been accused of operating as death squads and of carrying out extrajudicial killings. The accusations have increased sharply over the past week, with the killing of hundreds of Sunni Arabs in retaliation for the Feb. 22 bombing of a Shiite shrine, the Golden Mosque in Samarra. Spokesmen for several factions have denied involvement in retaliatory killings.

An international official in Baghdad who is familiar with the tabulation of the death toll said Thursday that roughly 1,000 people were killed between the day of the bombing and Monday, when the government lifted a curfew imposed to stem the violence.

The international official, who spoke on condition he not be identified further, said the figure came from morgue officials and others before the government announced a much lower toll.

He said morgue officials and others acceded to the reduced official count because they feared the militias, the death squads and the government. "They're afraid," the official said.

Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari said on Tuesday that 379 people had been killed since Feb. 22, and he described as inaccurate and exaggerated a Washington Post report that put the death toll at 1,300. The Post's tally was provided by a morgue worker, and an international human rights official who spoke on condition of anonymity said the source's job entailed close familiarity with the number of bodies the facility received.

The acting director of the morgue, Qais Hassan, also denied The Post's figure. "That's a lie," he said of the number on Thursday.

Hassan began running the morgue when the director, Faik Bakir, fled the country a few months ago after being threatened over the release of morgue information seen as linking many killings to death squads, officials said.

Another morgue official declined to comment, and the spokesman for the Health Ministry, which oversees the facility, did not answer his telephone Thursday. The Health portfolio is held by the party of the Shiite cleric and militia leader Moqtada al-Sadr.

The number of bodies processed by the Baghdad morgue has overtaken the toll from suicide and car bombings, most of which are blamed on Sunni Muslim insurgents. Morgue statistics are one way to measure cause of death in the cases of Iraqi victims of violence, because those killed by gunfire are taken to the city morgue, while victims of bombings are taken to hospital morgues because the cause of death is considered clear.

At the Baghdad morgue and in neighborhoods throughout the capital this week and last, families spoke of abductions by men wearing the black shirts and pants of the Mahdi Army, Sadr's militia.

In one Baghdad neighborhood Thursday, a widow draped in black said black-clad gunmen had burst into a mosque on Feb. 23 and abducted her husband and other men as they were finishing afternoon prayers. The captured men were subjected to a one-hour mock trial in a detention center near Sadr City, the heart of Baghdad's Shiite population and Sadr's base in the city, the widow said.

Some of the men were released, but her husband and three others were executed, she said. His family found his corpse in the Baghdad morgue on Saturday, shot in the face and chest, with his hands cuffed behind his back.

Fearful, the widow hesitated to say who she believed killed her husband. "Who is running the country?" she finally responded. "The Americans. The

Mahdi Army. The Badr Brigade. They are responsible."

She hushed her daughters and granddaughter when they assigned blame more specifically. "Mahdi Army," her 8-year-old granddaughter whispered into her ear. "Darling," the widow said, frowning and quieting the girl.

Sadr officials have rejected responsibility for the killings. Sadr aides said other factions' militiamen were adopting black clothes to deflect blame onto the Mahdi Army.

The explosion of slayings and resulting accusations unleashed by the mosque bombing follow nearly a year of charges by Sunni leaders that Shiite fighters in militias and in the Interior Ministry were carrying out widespread killings of Sunni men. The bodies of hundreds of Sunnis have been found dumped in various places around Iraq, after the men were abducted from Sunni or mixed neighborhoods and communities.

After numbering in the dozens each month before the U.S. invasion and roughly 500 a month in the first half of 2005, bodies processed at Baghdad's morgue peaked at about 1,100 last July.

In November, 555 of the 886 bodies brought to the morgue bore gunshot wounds, as did 479 of the 787 brought to the morgue in December, according to the U.N. mission in Iraq, which tracks deaths reported by Baghdad's morgue.

The figures "are believed to underrepresent the actual number of casualties," the United Nations said in a report.

While violent crime has surged in Iraq in the upheaval following the U.S. overthrow of President Saddam Hussein, and while Sunni insurgents use guns as well as bombs, public suspicion with regard to the spike in execution-style deaths has centered on the Shiite militias and security forces.

Jafari's government has denied the existence of death squads within the Interior Ministry. U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Peterson said last month, however, that American troops in January arrested a group of Interior Ministry police commandos on the verge of executing a detained Sunni man.

The international human rights official said workers were under growing pressure to minimize anything seen as linking killings to death squads. Even before the past nine days' sectarian violence, the official said morgue officials were reluctant "to give even the most basic information on the number of victims."

"You can see that, over time, attitudes have changed," the official said, citing "a mix of pressure not to divulge and fear that there will be repercussions."

Militiamen and insurgents alike had threatened morgue workers against conducting autopsies or doing other investigations that would link the killers to their crimes, Pace said. "They are told it is not necessary and not in their interests," he said.

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Iraq's death squads make the rules

Paul McGeough

Baghdad, March 11, 2006

THE Sunni imam in Baghdad's al-Salam City clings to sanity but his mixed community is a sectarian tinder-box and, increasingly, Sheikh Fadal Kalaf Jasam struggles to maintain his grip.

He has been working tirelessly to hold the community together, shuttling between Shiite and Sunni mosques and the offices and compounds of the US military, Iraqi security forces and the religious-backed militias that make up their own rules in the new Iraq.

But now he is tortured by indecision. The 42-year-old cleric fears information he is sitting on could spark the sort of sectarian violence not previously seen in his pocket of north-west Baghdad. There are about 3000 working-class families in the area — half Shiite, half Sunni.

Local gossip is filled with speculation about the fate of more than 50 locals who, two weeks ago, were dragged from their beds in the dead of night by masked gunmen.

All were carted away handcuffed and blindfolded. But Sheikh Fadal has been able to confirm that 12 were later shot in the head and their bodies dumped in nearby suburbs and on the other side of the city. Three of the bodies have been brought back to al-Salam City.

Hassan al-Rahami, a 50-year-old grain merchant, was punished for his membership of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. Two other bodies were found on a garbage tip on Wednesday.

Sheikh Fadal has confirmed the other nine deaths from pictures filed at the central morgue where, he said, he was informed that the bodies had already been taken to Najaf, in the Shiite south, to be buried in a mass grave because their relatives had not claimed them.

The imam cannot decide if he should risk an explosion of Sunni anger by informing the community that so many of their brothers and fathers have been executed, or if he should just sit tight, leaving them to stew in a cauldron of suspicion and faltering hope.

"What can I tell them? I fear how they will respond."

The timing of the abductions meant they received little attention. In the midst of the crisis sparked by the bombing of the Shiites' revered Golden Mosque in Samarra on February 22, the unexplained disappearances in the early hours of the next day hardly rated as news.

As the country erupted in Shiite fury, al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya news channels ran ticker-tape reports of official denials of any involvement by

Iraq's US-trained security forces in the abductions. But chilling as it was, the story quickly died for want of detail and an explanation.

Now the finger of suspicion is falling on the Wolf Brigade, an Iraqi Interior Ministry commando unit that is frequently accused of running — or protecting — groups of freelance killers. These are the death squads that haunt liberated Iraq.

The mass abductions and killing of Sunni men, often by a signature gunshot to the back of the head, happen with increasing and disturbing frequency.

Members of Shiite religious militias loyal to the parties that control government, or units made up of their fighters who have been folded into the ranks of Iraq's security forces, are accused of using their government-issued weapons, uniforms, vehicles and licences to move during curfew as they take revenge against Sunnis for three years of the insurgency and 30 years of Saddam.

In January, US troops caught one of the squads red-handed, and 22 police commandos under the control of the Interior Ministry were arrested as they set about executing a Sunni hostage.

Observers were struck most by what was presumed to be US Army General Joseph Peterson's deliberate use of the plural when he told reporters: "We have found one of the death squads and we believe there's more of them out there."

The director of the Baghdad morgue, Fakir Bakir, recently estimated that the squads were responsible for as many as 7000 summary executions and the UN's outgoing human rights officer in Baghdad, John Pace, last week laid blame for most of the deaths at the feet of the Badr Badr Brigade, the militia wing of SCIRI, the Iranian-backed Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which is one of the biggest Shiite parties.

In a series of interviews this week, several people who witnessed or claimed to have direct knowledge of the February 23 round-up in al-Salam City claimed it was the work of the much-feared Wolf Brigade and, in the case of one well-informed source, that all the prisoners had been executed.

A man who was in a good position during the dawn raid is Commander Hytham Aboud al-Ameer, the leader in al-Salam City of the Mahdi Army, a militia run by the young firebrand Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The Mahdi Army competes with the Badr Badr Brigade for turf and loyalty.

Commander Hytham was on guard duty on the roof of his house when a convoy of white, late-model vehicles, like those supplied to government agencies, swept into his street.

"Five vehicles without numberplates came into our street — four Chevrolets and a Nissan pick-up. There were many men with new-looking weapons. They had a list of names and a masked guide who pointed to houses and then to individuals when they were brought out.

"Ishmail Aghedi tried to put up a fight — he was in his bathroom with a gun, but they killed him. His brother, Uday, was killed in a separate attack on their real estate office 48 hours before this attack."

Such was the dawn show of Badr Badr force that the Mahdi Army commander made no effort to protect his turf. Admitting that he was afraid, he said that he opted to remain in the shadows and watch the Badr Badr boys at work: "They were very professional."

"They wore Iraqi police uniforms and I'm sure they were policemen because a few days later I saw some of the same vehicles with a US patrol when they returned to our neighbourhood to arrest Ibrahim al-Jabouri and his brother," Commander Hytham said.

"The Sunnis I saw being piled onto the Nissan pick-up were bad people — mostly from the al-Ghadi tribe. One of them worked with the insurgency and some of the others made two attacks on Shiite mosques. In the first they injured Akiel, the muezzin, and sent him to hospital for three weeks; the next time they sent him to his grave."

Commander Hytham explained that he had his own working relationship with the Wolf Brigade: "When our units captured criminals we used to give them to the Americans — but they were always released and came back to cause trouble; now we give them to the Wolf Brigade and they never come back."

"The al-Ghadi tribe accuses the Mahdi Army of these abductions, but I swear it was not us — it was the Badr Badr Brigade."

Another who observed the raid at close quarters was Abdul Latif Kathan, who was among those rounded up. The 30-year-old electrician is utterly confused — he was given no reason for his detention and no explanation for his release within a few hours of his capture.

"When they took us away, the Nissan drove for about 15 minutes and then pulled up at an office building where they switched us to a Landcruiser."

He said that nine prisoners were squeezed into the vehicle and, importantly, he remembered seeing the now dead grain merchant Hassan al-Rahami among those in the vehicle.

"After 10 more minutes we stop at a building where they locked us in a room. We are not blindfolded now, but they said anyone who opens his eyes is dead. Myself and three others were taken from the room — they swapped our handcuffs for plastic wire, made new blindfolds from strips of blanket and drove us to al-Waizeriah, where we were dumped at the back of the al-Bakir Military College."

On Thursday, Baghdad was taking a whipping from the tourab, a violent dust storm that strikes at this time of year. And in the still air of the National Security Ministry bunker deep inside the Green Zone, Abdul Karim Al-Enzey was whipping up his own storm of denial at The Age's suggestion that death squads were at work in Iraq.

"This is all the work of the residue of the Baath Party trying to start civil war," the Security Minister insisted. "These allegations against our security forces are an attempt to divide us. Never!"

Did the security forces give cover to killers from the Badr Badr Brigade or the Mahdi Army? "The Interior Ministry would not allow it. As a minister I'm fully

aware of what is happening — and what you claim is not happening. It's the duty of the Interior Ministry to attack terrorists. The local and foreign media are trying to stir sectarian violence but we're building the new Iraq on human rights and democracy."

The Shiite minister, a member of the Dawa religious party, explained that just because killers wore police uniforms it did not mean that they were policemen. He added, helpfully: "A lot of thieves in Australia wear police uniforms — that doesn't mean that all policemen in your country are thieves."

It has been a bad week in Iraq. Inevitably, the Sunni families of al-Salam City will hear of the fate of their men, and in the meantime Sheikh Fadal will wrestle with his limited options.

Publicly, the local Shiites sympathise.

But one man was quick to justify the actions of the death squads and what he saw as a shift in the balance of power.

He said: "We have a saying, 'If a man is not scared of the punishment he might get, he'll do anything.' The Sunnis in our district will not respond now — they know the punishment and they are scared. Look into their eyes — you can see it."

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Death Squads in Iraq

Robert Dreyfuss



March 9, 2006

I've been writing for more than two years on Iraq's Shiite-led death squads (see "[Phoenix Rising](#)," in *The American Prospect*). It's been an open secret at least that long. Since that time, the number of Iraqis kidnapped, bound and gagged, and executed — or simply gunned down in the streets — by pro-government Shiite gangs is incalculable. But it is likely to be in the range of

25,000 in two years.

Ellen Knickmeyer, writing in the *Washington Post*, has been doggedly following the story lately, and her [latest piece](#) slams the Iraqi government and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which controls the Interior Ministry, for trying to suppress information about the number of dead. The piece notes this stunning fact: that Shiite death squads are killing more people than the insurgents. Here's the relevant paragraph:

Execution-style killings of the kind frequently blamed on police or Shiite militias allied with the government appear to be killing more Iraqis than bombings of government and civilian targets by Sunni Arab insurgents.

She goes on to quote the cynical nonsense from a spokesman for the prime minister, who has the gall to blame "Baathists" for the killings, even though the overwhelming majority of those murdered are pro-insurgency Sunnis:

Abdul Razzaq Kadhum, the prime minister's spokesman, declined Wednesday to give a breakdown of the figure of 379 execution-style killings given by Jafari. "These are obviously terrorist, Saddamist and Baathist acts against civilians, and they all go under victims of terrorism," he said.

The scale of the torture-murders is staggering. Here's John Pace, the former UN human rights chief in Iraq, whose sober claims on this topic have been widely reported (but with little investigative followup):

"The Baghdad morgue received 1,100 bodies in July alone, about 900 of whom bore evidence of torture or summary execution. That continued throughout the year and last December there were 780 bodies, including 400 having gunshot wounds or wounds as those caused by electric drills."

Pace has charged that uncounted torture-murders and executions have been in the range of 500-1,000 a month for a long time. You can read about Pace [here](#), and [see the transcript](#) of his interview on Democracy Now! with Amy Goodman.

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Iraq: Thousands Killed By Government Death Squads

Doug Lorimer, Green Left Weekly

March 15, 2006

Faik Bakir, the director of the Baghdad morgue, has fled Iraq in fear of his life after reporting that more than 7000 people have been killed by Iraqi interior ministry death squads in recent months, John Pace, the outgoing head of the UN human rights office in Iraq, told the March 2 British Guardian.

Pace said the Baghdad morgue has been receiving 700 or more bodies a month. The figures peaked at 1100 last July — many showing signs of torture.

"The vast majority of bodies showed signs of summary execution — many with their hands tied behind their back. Some showed evidence of torture, with arms and leg joints broken by electric drills", said Pace. The killings had been happening long before the recent spate of sectarian killings following the February 22 bombing of a Shiite mosque in Samarra.

The Guardian reported that "Pace, whose contract in Iraq ended last month, said many killings were carried out by Shia militias linked to the interior ministry run by Bayan Jabr, a leading figure in the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)". SCIRI is the main party in the coalition of Shiite religious parties that heads the US-backed Iraqi government.

"The Badr brigade [SCIRI's militia] are in the police and are mainly the ones doing the killing", said Pace. "They're the most notorious."

While, most of those killed were Sunnis, the attacks were also directed against Shiites who joined with Sunnis to protest the mosque bombing. The February 24 British Independent reported that "gunmen at a makeshift checkpoint south of Baghdad murdered 47 people who had been demonstrating against the destruction of the Shia shrine at Samarra, bringing Iraq close to a sectarian bloodbath".

"The victims were Shia and Sunni returning from a demonstration in the town of Kanaan, when they were dragged from their cars and killed. Their bodies were left in a ditch by the side of the road."

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The March 4 Washington Post reported that an "international official in Baghdad, speaking on the condition of anonymity", had told it that "about 1000 people had been killed" between the day of the Samarra mosque bombing and March 3, according to Iraqi morgue figures.

The Western corporate media seized upon the upsurge of killings that followed the Samarra mosque bombing to claim that Iraq is on the verge of "civil war" between its Shiite Muslim majority and its Sunni Muslim minority. The implicit and often explicit message that has accompanied the "Iraq-is-on-the-brink-of-civil-war" stories is that only the presence of the US and other foreign occupation troops is preventing Iraqi Shiites and Sunnis from massacring each other.

During the US war in Vietnam, supporters of the war also claimed that the withdrawal of US troops would lead to a "bloodbath" — while the US war machine slaughtered at least 3 million Vietnamese. The Western media claims that a "premature" withdrawal of the US occupation troops from Iraq will lead to a religious civil war there serve the same purpose — attempting to discourage domestic support for the immediate withdrawal of all those troops.

According to an ABC News/Washington Post poll released on March 6, "eight in 10 Americans believe that recent sectarian violence in Iraq has made civil war likely", Reuters reported on March 7. The poll found that "fewer than 20 percent of respondents support an immediate withdrawal of all US troops". However, 52% support a phased withdrawal over the coming year.

While the official White House line is to deny that Iraq is on the brink of a sectarian civil war, in the wake of the Samarra bombing at least one high-

ranking US official has publicly given it credence.

In testimony to the US Senate armed services committee on March 3, John Negroponte, the US national intelligence director, warned that "if chaos were to descend upon Iraq or the forces of democracy [i.e., the US occupation forces] were to be defeated in that country ... this would have implications for the rest of the Middle East region and, indeed, the world".

Negroponte was Washington's ambassador in Iraq from June 2004 to April 2005 — precisely at the time that the recruitment of local deaths squads was being considered in Washington.

In January 2005, Newsweek magazine reported that the "Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the US government funded or supported 'nationalist' forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers."

According to the Newsweek report, Pentagon chiefs were considering the recruitment of death squads from among SCIRI's Badr militia, which had been incorporated into the US-recruited Iraqi security forces, to target Sunni resistance fighters and their sympathisers.

Negroponte would have been the man most qualified to supervise the implementation of such a death-squad program. While US ambassador to Honduras from 1981 to 1985, he supervised the recruitment by the CIA of local death squads from the Honduran army and police, and the arming of Nicaragua's anti-government contras.

Negroponte wasn't the only veteran of Washington's "dirty wars" in Central America to be brought into Iraq while the "Salvador option" was being considered. The November 16 New York Newsday reported that the interior ministry's commando units had been built up "over the past year under guidance from James Steele, a former [US] Army Special Forces officer who led US counterinsurgency efforts in El Salvador in the 1980s. Salvadoran army units trained by Steele's team were accused of a pattern of atrocities."

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Death Squads Terrorize Baghdad

Erwin Decker, Spiegel Online



Baghdad, March 16, 2006

Shiite death squads are spreading fear in Baghdad's Sunni neighborhoods. Meanwhile, politicians and police are growing powerless as the outbreak of a civil war becomes ever more likely in Iraq.

Death squads are stalking Sunnis in Shiite-dominated Baghdad neighborhoods.

When the men in black drive down his street, Ali Hasan al-Mahawish calls out to his playing children to come into the house immediately. He bolts the door, scared. This time it might be his family's turn. The men drive past at walking speed, clutching their guns. It's obvious they know exactly which houses the Sunnis live in. Mahawish is an engineer and a Sunni -- a potential victim of the death squads.

Death squads are becoming part of everyday life in Baghdad's Sunni neighborhoods. Sunnis living in the Khadamiya neighborhood are terrorized daily. Sometimes the men in black shoot randomly into their houses and backyards. Sometimes they give the residents five minutes to leave, then set fire to the house. Those Sunni's who aren't simply executed by their neighbors are being systematically driven out of the city's Shiite neighborhoods.

"Ethnic cleansing" in Baghdad?

According to a recent United Nations report, this type of "ethnic cleansing" has spread dramatically in Baghdad, a city of 6 million. And no one can stop the death squads, least of all the police. Six neighborhoods have already fallen prey to organized terror. Weeks have passed since the police was last seen in these neighborhoods, and Sunnis are now more afraid of the men in black than of the daily air raids.

You can protect yourself from bombs by not leaving the house, but the black-clad men come into your home. They claim to be avenging their murdered Shiite brothers. And there is no escape for their victims. Sunni politicians and clerics are their main targets. In the western suburb Abu Ghraib, a Sunni cleric was found shot in front of a mosque. Eye witnesses have identified the

killers as members of one of the death squads.

Ali Hasan al-Mahawish lives right next to Al Aemma bridge, which connects his neighborhood with that of Adhamiya, on the other side of the Tigris River. The bridge acquired notoriety when more than 500 pilgrims died on it during a mass panic last year. "My house is sitting right on the border between Sunnis and Shiites. Every day I'm reminded of the dangerous frontier that's been drawn right in the middle of Baghdad. It's already become a genuine front line."

A few days ago, sandbags were placed at the foot of the bridge, which has become a kind of shooting range for the Shiite militias. In the afternoon, civilians position themselves behind the sandbags, and gun barrels point in the direction of the Sunni neighborhood. Sometimes shots are fired. No car drives over the bridge after five in the afternoon. "It's worse than during the war three years ago," Hasan al-Mahawish says.

A Sunni, he once lived peacefully among his Shiite neighbors until about six months ago. "All of a sudden my neighbors have become suspicious," he complains, "even though they know I was never even in the Baath Party and was constantly harassed under Hussein." Ever since the black-clad men have started shooting through windows at night, Mahawish's family of nine has moved to the back of the house.

The family, which has access to water and electricity for only an hour a day, regularly spends this hour watching television to find out about the situation in Iraq. "If I want to have reliable information about my country, I watch foreign TV channels or go to an Internet café," the engineer says. There are now more than 170 newspapers, but none of them report independently. Every newspaper and every radio and TV channel depends on funds from the United States or from a political party. None of them criticize the occupation, and the Iraqi press has yet to report on the death squads.

The death squads

The death squads are well organized, and it's believed that some of the men may be renegade troops of the Interior Ministry. Kamal Hussein, an official at the Interior Ministry, has stated that the black-clad men are not acting on the orders of the government. But Interior Minister Bayan Jabr has long ceased to control his subordinates. The failure to create a new cabinet after the Dec. 15, 2005 elections has resulted in genuine power vacuum. General Rasheed Flayih, the commander of the Shiite-dominated Interior Ministry forces, claims they are independent of the Iraqi army. He doesn't deny the existence of death squads. Instead, he euphemistically refers to them as "Field Intelligence Units."

What is certain is that large parts of the death squads were recruited out of the Mahdi Militia of Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr. For several months in 2004, al-Sadr's militia conducted a guerrilla war against the Americans in the holy city of Najaf, from where they were eventually forced to retreat.

During a vehicle check in the neighborhood of New Baghdad, Americans recently found a hit list with the names of several hundred Iraqi ministry officials. The hit list was being carried by a policeman who is also a member of al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia.

Things don't look much different on the Sunni side. There, too, citizens are taking up arms. After several of their mosques were destroyed last week, the Sunni militias have attracted many new members, including a number of former soldiers. Help and support have been promised from the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah. Large numbers of weapons and fighters are said already to have arrived.

And there's no shortage of recruits. "I'll be the first to go to Baghdad and help my fellow Sunnis make sure there won't be any more attacks on mosques," says Mustapha Adnan, a 27-year-old engineering student from Fallujah. Sunni clerics claim that more than a hundred of their Baghdad mosques have already been damaged or destroyed.

The Sunni minority ruled Iraq for more than thirty years before Saddam Hussein was overthrown. But the balance of power has shifted since the elections. The Shiites -- who make up 60 percent of the Iraqi population -- control the new government. Human rights organizations and the US Army have criticized the crass human rights violations of the Interior Ministry. The situation in Iraq is becoming harder and harder to control. According to the Americans, the police and the army have been infiltrated by insurgents. Often terrorists force members of the police and the army to cooperate with them -- by kidnapping their children, for example.

With each incident, the authority of the state dwindles, and people no longer trust it to protect them. Every party and every organization -- no matter how small -- has its own militia. Every Iraqi is legally permitted to keep a Kalashnikov in his home. Even the US ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, said recently that the US and its coalition partners have opened a "Pandora's box" by overthrowing Saddam. Ethnic tensions, he added, could not only cause a civil war in Iraq, they could also ignite the entire region.

Mahawish, the engineer, doesn't care what the politicians say. What he cares about is survival for himself and his family. The black-clad men on the frontline between Sunnis and Shiites have already achieved their main goal. Everyone is afraid, every day.

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Death Squad Democracy

Mike Whitney



*Some of the 48 corpses found in a ditch at Nahrawan.
Photo: Paul McGeough*

March 19, 2006

"I constantly read the analyses of foreigners or Iraqis who've been abroad for decades talking about the divide that has always existed between Sunnis and Shia in Iraq...That is simply not true". ["Baghdad Burning"](#); [girl blogger](#)

The notion that Iraq is now consumed by civil war depends on a number of assumptions that are inherently false. First of all, it assumes that the Pentagon is ignoring the fundamental principle which underscores all wars: "Know your enemy". In this case, there's no doubt about who the enemy is; it is the 87% of the Iraqi people who want to see an immediate end to the American occupation. Therefore, the greatest threat to American objectives of permanent bases and occupation is the camaraderie that manifests itself in the form of Arab solidarity or Iraqi nationalism.

To this end, the Pentagon, through its surrogates in the media, has created a "self-fulfilling" narrative that civil war is already under way. Most of the war coverage now makes it appear as though the violence is generated from ethnic tensions and sectarian hatred. But is it? Some of the more astute observers have noticed that other parts of the propaganda war, (like references to the "imaginary" al-Zarqawi) have vanished from the newspapers, as government spin-doctors are now devoting all their time to promoting their latest product-line; civil war.

In fact, if any of us were involved in the Pentagon's "pacification" plans we'd probably be doing the same thing. After all, the War Department is already overextended, so a plan had to be devised to divert attention from the occupation forces and get Iraqis to kill each other. The only reasonable choice is to incite "sectarian violence" and make civil war inevitable. That, of course,

is the task of the American trained death squads. (The New York Times has confirmed that the Interior Ministry death squads were trained by American forces)

For three years the Iraqi resistance has successfully kept American troops on the defensive; gradually taking control of more area, destroying pipelines and oil facilities at will, discouraging enlistment in the Iraqi Security Forces, and undermining public support among Americans (63% of who now believe the war was "a mistake")

These are the goals of every guerilla movement; a gradual erosion of public support, deflating morale, surprise attacks, and eliciting greater support from the general population.

It is clear that this has been a winning strategy for the resistance, and not one that they would abandon to pursue an ethnic/religious war.

So, where does the violence originate? Could it be that the independent militias are engaged in sectarian war without help from the greater resistance?

It could be, but it's not likely. Again, the only one who benefits from civil war is the US military; and it's clear that the military has no other option but to follow a "divide and rule" strategy. They simply don't have the human resources for any other plan.

In a larger sense, the "alleged" sectarian violence is consistent with what we have seen in previous CIA-run operations in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Negroponte are alumna of those conflicts (which, according to Cheney, succeeded quite admirably) so it's probable that they would apply what they have learned about counterinsurgency to the ongoing war in Iraq. The El Salvador-experiment proved that the masses can eventually be terrorized into compliance.

Isn't that what is taking place in Iraq?

In Iraq, terror is being used as a substitute for security, because the United States has no intention of providing the manpower or funding needed to maintain order.

Death Squad Democracy

Video footage of a massacre outside of Nahrwan, east of Baghdad, has appeared on the Internet showing the bodies of Shiite laborers who were allegedly killed by Sunni death squads. Journalist Paul McGeough was given the tapes and is planning to report on their content in the "Sydney Morning Herald". <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article12376.htm> In one incident, four adults were pulled from their vehicle and either shot or stabbed to death in front of a 5 year old boy whose father was one of the victims. When the townspeople came to investigate the scene, they discovered the bodies of 48 men and women who had been dumped in a ditch. The corpses showed the signs of having been "systematically murdered. Most were shot but some appear to have been stabbed and mutilated".

It is the "stabbed and mutilated" part that should interest us. After all, the

intention of the Iraqi resistance is to gather greater support for their cause, not to alienate ordinary Iraqis through gratuitous acts of murder. If, however, this was the work of American-backed death squads, then the alternate goal of "governing through terror" has been achieved.

Journalist McGeough sticks with the same, feeble mantra as the establishment-media to explain the tragedy: "The current round of tit-for-tat sectarian violence was sparked by the bombing of the Samarra mosque—a holy site for Shiites. In the immediate aftermath, there were reports of many killings and fears that Shiite reprisals could see the country descend into a civil war."

Isn't this the official narrative?

The media insists that the destruction of the Golden-dome mosque was a "9-11-type event" which caused an up-tick in the bloodshed. But, was it? Or was it merely part of a broader (covert) strategy to foment civil war?

There's evidence that the plan to divert attention from the occupation forces is succeeding. In February the military reported less servicemen killed (31) than in any month in the last year.

Isn't this the goal?

In Max Fuller's seminal article "For Iraq, the 'Salvador Option' becomes Reality" the author disproves the idea "that sectarianism is a sufficient explanation for the violence in Iraq". Instead, Fuller says it is "structurally at the hands of the state as part of the ongoing economic subjugation of Iraq." <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/FUL506A.html>

It is simply impossible to grasp what is taking place in Iraq without reading Fuller's well-documented article. His clear-eyed analysis is invaluable in making sense of the apparent chaos:

"In Iraq the war comes in two phases. The first phase is complete: the destruction of the existing state, which did not comply with the interests of British and American capital. The second phase consists of building a new state tied to those interests and smashing every dissenting sector of society. Openly, this involves applying the same sort of economic shock therapy that has done so much damage in swathes of the Third World and Eastern Europe. Covertly, it means intimidating, kidnapping and murdering opposition voices."

Fuller backs up his observations with ample evidence; citing open-source material he has compiled in his research:

"What we do know, however, is that hundreds of Iraqis are being murdered and that paramilitary hit squads of the proxy government organized by US trainers with a fulsome pedigree in state terrorism are increasingly being associated with them."

The objective of the death squads is not simply to target one particular group or ethnicity, but to direct the violence outwards creating as much fear as possible in order to pacify the population.

Fuller winds up his polemic with a summary statement that confirms the long and bloody history of colonial wars:

"The pattern is repeated time after time in every imperialist so-called counter-insurgency war; for behind each and every one lurks the reality of exploitation and class war, and, as successive imperialist powers have shown, the bottom line in combating the hopes and dreams of ordinary people is to resort to spreading terror through the application of extreme violence."

The secretary general of the Association of Muslim Scholars, Hareth al-Dhari, said it even more succinctly than Fuller; "This is state terrorism."

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Human Rights Report

1 January– 28 February 2006

UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

Summary

1. The human rights situation in the country remains a matter of serious concern. Following the events of 22 February 2006, which included, the destruction of Al Askari Shrine in Samarra, there has been a marked deterioration in the security environment, resulting in hundreds of cases of killings, torture, illegal detention and displacement.
2. Serious allegations have been received by UNAMI Human Rights Office regarding the actions of some segments of the security forces, in particular the police and special forces, and their apparent collusion with militias in carrying out human rights violations. Allegations that "death squads" operate in the country grew stronger following the discovery by the Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNF-I) and the Iraqi Security Forces of a suspicious group, acting within the structures of the Ministry of Interior. This re-affirms the urgent need for the Government to assert control over the security forces and all armed groups. Throughout the reporting period, insurgent activities, including terrorist acts, intensified after 22 February and continue to affect the civilian population.
3. The legality and the conditions of detention in Iraq, under the authority of the MNF-I and the Government of Iraq continue to warrant attention. UNAMI has repeatedly expressed concerns to relevant members of the Government about allegations of systematic human rights violations in detention centers under the direct or indirect control of the Ministries of Interior and Defense.
4. Minorities groups, including Palestinians, continue to be the victims of discrimination, labeling, detention and torture because of their alleged association with foreign Arabs supporting the insurgency. During the reporting period, specific religious groups have also been targeted.

Situation of human rights following 22 February 2006

5. On Wednesday 22 February 2006, following the destruction of the Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra, which was strongly condemned by the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq Ashraf Qazi, serious incidents of violence erupted in and around Baghdad, in Basra as well as in other parts of the country, following the destruction of the Shia Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra by unknown perpetrators. Numerous killings reportedly took place, including public executions by militias, in Al-Baldiat, Saddr City and Al-Sha'ab areas of Baghdad. Street clashes and assaults by armed groups continued for days. Many individuals were reportedly detained at improvised checkpoints, or were abducted from homes and mosques. Several of those illegally detained were later found dead, often bearing signs of severe torture. The Human Rights Office received information that some were released after being severely tortured.

6. In retaliation for the Samarra bombing, a significant number of Sunni mosques were reportedly attacked, destroyed or damaged and clerics were among those assassinated[1]. Such attacks did not seem to have been spontaneous but rather revealed a degree of organization and the fact that the perpetrators had readily access to resources and equipment.

7. While the initial violence randomly targeted the Arab Sunni community, allegedly for their unproven association with the destruction of Al Askari Shrine, members of all communities were negatively affected by the unleashed violence and tit-for-tat attacks. There are no reliable means to accurately assess the number of casualties, the whereabouts of those missing, or the number of persons detained.

8. Serious abuses were also reported in Basra with many reported killings and attacks at local mosques. In one of the most serious incidents, inmates accused of terrorism detained inside the Basra's port authority were extra-judicially executed, reportedly, on 22 February by a group of approximately 70 armed men wearing bullet-proof vests. The men entered the detention facility and separated Shi'a and Sunni inmates, taking away five Iraqis, two Tunisians, two Egyptians, one Libyan, one Saudi, and one Turkish national. Ten of the twelve detainees were killed, while two survived the attack. On the same day, the headquarters of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) in Basra was attacked by armed militias. Two IIP members were injured in the attack. Several hours later, men wearing black clothing reportedly took the two injured IIP members from the hospital and executed them.

Security Forces / Police operations

9. Following the destruction of the Samarra Shrine, the security forces faced formidable challenges and in most cases acted generally with professionalism to defend the Iraqi population from terrorist, sectarian or revenge attacks. For example, the security forces provided protection to mosques and funeral processions of those who were killed in the violence. UNAMI, however, remains concerned at reports that, on occasions, militias and elements of the Ministry of Interior would have colluded in the violence against civilians or would not have acted to stop or deter further bloodshed.

10. Over the last year, there have been persistent allegations that militia elements have joined the security forces and formed clandestine parallel structures. Police officers and members of the security forces, who were also previously militia members, tend to retain original loyalties or affiliations. Militias are being empowered throughout the country: in the North with the recruitment of thousands of former Kurdish militias (Peshmerga) in the police and armed forces. In other parts of the country, former members of militias

are also said to have joined the police and armed forces. Furthermore, existing militias are allegedly responsible for systematic acts of violence against members of the Sunni community and for carrying out illegal policing often in collusion with local security forces. It has been recently reported that Sunni Arabs have now formed their own militia, allegedly to counter Shi'a and Kurdish forces, and that neighbourhoods are forming armed "watch patrols" to cope with rising insecurity. Such developments undermine the effectiveness of the security forces in dealing with the security environment and may weaken their ability to maintain the rule of law. It is imperative that all armed forces maintain the trust of Iraqis by ensuring that its ranks are representative of all communities and that their actions work to reinforce the authority of the Government in line with its international obligations. Corruption is also reportedly endemic among the security forces.

Extra-judicial executions

11. The reporting period was also marked by numerous reports of summary executions and torture in and around Baghdad. A large number of extrajudicial killings, kidnappings and torture were reportedly perpetrated mainly by members of armed militias linked to political factions or criminal gangs. The same methods of execution-style killings are usually used: mass arrests without judicial warrant and extrajudicial executions with bodies found afterwards bearing signs of torture and killed by a shot to the head. Such extrajudicial executions are further fueling sectarian tensions.

12. During January and February 2006, many bodies continued to appear in and around Baghdad and in other places as a result of extrajudicial executions. In January 2006, MNF-I and Iraqi forces allegedly uncovered the existence of at least one possible death squad operating within the Ministry of Interior. Twenty-two men, dressed as special police commandos, were detained when driving with a man who was allegedly about to be executed. UNAMI welcomes the announcement of the Ministry of Interior regarding an inquiry into the alleged existence of such illegal factions inside the institution.

Ongoing military operations

13. Military operations conducted by the Multinational Force and Iraqi security forces, especially in the al-Anbar Governorate, have raised a number of human rights concerns as allegations of restrictions to freedom of movement, excessive use of force, mistreatment and theft during raids of private homes, evictions and demolitions of houses have been received by UNAMI. Such reports were reiterated during visits by UNAMI to Ramadi and Fallujah on 20 and 21 February 2006. UNAMI is following up on these allegations with the MNF-I and the relevant Iraqi authorities.

Population movements

14. UNAMI finds it encouraging that many reports in the aftermath of the Samarra bombing indicated acts of solidarity among the Iraqi citizens and communities, in the face of actions clearly intended to disrupt inter-communal relations. In addition, Friday prayers calling for national unity seemed to reflect the overwhelming desire of the Iraqi population, horrified by the upsurge in violence, for peace and security.

15. However, the Human Rights Office received reports that a number of Sunni and Shi'a families living in mixed neighborhoods were forcibly evicted

from their homes or left voluntarily because of threats of violence from militias, insurgents and other armed groups. Indiscriminate mortar attacks reportedly targeted civilian neighborhoods. Real concerns for their safety prompted some residents to move to areas where they constitute a majority. Such movements divide communities further, add innumerable socio-economic problems to the already significant displaced population in Iraq, and harden the consolidation of communities along sectarian lines. The return of those who were forcibly displaced from their homes due to the recent violence should be considered a matter of priority in order to help alleviate sectarian tensions. The calls for peace and respect for human rights expressed by political and community leaders should be accompanied by renewed efforts to ensure that such commitments are adhered to by their followers and that priority consideration is given to the creation of a strong national human rights protection systems – including the establishment of an independent national human rights commission as foreseen by the Constitution.

Attacks on civilians

16. The current level of conflict constitutes a major source of violation of human rights for the population of Iraq. General insecurity in the streets due to fighting often makes it too dangerous for civilians to access basic public services, such as schools or medical facilities.

17. The Ministry of Interior announced on 25 February that some 249 people were killed in the period 22-25 February[2]. Those figures reflect a new high in a trend that has been steadily increasing and provide an important indicator of the absence of protection of the right to life which still prevails at this time in Iraq. Women and children are also increasingly affected by the current security situation in Iraq.

Situation of minorities

18. UNAMI continues to receive disturbing reports that minorities, including Palestinians living in Iraq, are victims of human rights violations because of their perceived association with the insurgency. Palestinian refugees, a community estimated at 34,000 individuals who arrived in Iraq over the past three decades, suffer the same discrimination, labeling, stigmatization and profiling affecting other communities of foreign Arabs residing in Iraq (e.g. Syrians and Sudanese). Following the destruction of Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra, militias attacked Palestinians living in the neighbourhood of Baladiyat in Baghdad with mortars and indiscriminate fire on several occasions. The intervention of the MNF-I, assisted in stopping further violence. Since then, other attacks have taken place. Up to 10 Palestinians have been reported killed; others have been illegally detained and tortured or have disappeared.

19. The Christians of Iraq, among other religious groups, have also been targeted and continue to live in fear. On 29 January, car bombs targeted the Catholic Church of the Virgin Mary and the Orthodox Church in Kirkuk, the Saint Joseph's Catholic Church and an Anglican Church in Baghdad, killing at least three people and wounding nine. A car bomb also exploded outside the residence of the Apostolic Nunzio, without causing any casualties. Political and religious leaders from all communities condemned the attacks. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, condemned the explosions and called on Iraqi authorities and political leaders to commit themselves to the safety of all worshipers, and preserve the

sanctity of places of worship. In the days following the attack of 22 February, militias fired shot towards a church near Al Sadr City, lightly wounding a priest. The Human Rights Office also received reports that in the course of February, 150 Christian families moved from Mosul city to other areas in Ninewa Governorate where Christians constitute a majority because of increasing concerns for their security.

Freedom of expression

20. Journalists and other media professionals continue to suffer greatly due to insecurity, violence and harassment including, at times, by the authorities and the MNF-I. On 8 January 2006, in Baghdad the home of an Iraqi journalist was reportedly searched by the MNF-I and Iraqi forces, allegedly, without a warrant. He was reportedly hooded and taken for questioning and released hours later. An American female journalist, Ms. Jill Carroll, who was kidnapped on 7 January 2006 is still being kept hostage. The Iraqi interpreter working with Ms. Carroll was murdered during the kidnapping. On 22 February 2006, Ms. Atwar Bahjat, a well respected and well-known Iraqi journalist, was killed with two other media workers when reporting from Samarra.

21. UNAMI continues to follow attentively the case of Mr. Kamal Sayid Qadir, an Austrian citizen of Kurdish origin, who has been in prison in Erbil since 26 October 2005. Mr. Qadir was initially sentenced to 30 years in prison on 19 December 2005 for "endangering national security". On 26 February 2006, the Supreme Court of the Kurdish Region rejected the conviction and ordered a retrial under a lesser charge.

22. The Human Rights Office has also received reports of assassinations of and intimidation against students and academics in cities around the country. UNAMI HRO is verifying these reports and expresses its concern about any violation of human rights in the context of the right of freedom of opinion and expression.

Rule of law

Detention

23. The conditions and the legality of detention in Iraq remain a matter of particular concern. Overcrowding and the lack of judicial oversight remain problematic. According to the Ministry of Human Rights, as of 28 February 2006, there were total of 29,565 detainees -- 14,229 in the custody of the MNF-I; 8,391 in the custody of the Ministry of Justice; 488 juveniles under the custody of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs; 5,997 held by the Ministry of Interior and 460 by the Ministry of Defense. These figures are higher than in previous months as the overall number of detainees continues to increase often as a result of mass arrests.

24. Internment for imperative reasons of security by MNF-I should be used sparingly and in full conformity with international law. Hundreds of detainees have been released by the administrative Release and Review Board, composed of members of the Iraqi Government and MNF-I. As MNF-I envisage transferring detainees to local authorities, there is a need to ensure that any legislation pertaining to detainees will be consistent with international law and best practice. Specifically, detainees have rights to due process within a reasonable period of time.

25. According to Coalition Provisional Authority Memorandum No. 3[3], individuals detained since 30 June 2004, should be either released or transferred to Iraqi criminal jurisdiction. Internment can be prolonged upon the approval of the Joint Detention Committee (JDC) aimed at reviewing the cases of individuals that have been held for 18 months (after 30 June 2004). The duration of the additional period of internment should be specified. The Human Rights Office hopes that the creation of the JDC, in late December 2005, will address the most urgent concerns of the internees and lead to their release or to a judicial review of their case.

26. The application of humanitarian law and human rights law is not mutually exclusive but complementary as stated by the Human Rights Committee in general comment No. 31 (2004) and UNAMI continues to hope that this situation with regard to detentions is swiftly addressed in a manner consistent with international human rights standards.

27. The Human Rights Office continues to receive accounts of arbitrary detentions by the Iraqi security forces despite marked improvements in detention practices, as reported by the Ministry of Human Rights, and regular public assurances by the Ministry of Interior that all detentions will be handled in accordance with the law. The Human Rights Office also continues to receive regular allegations and evidence of torture in detention centres, particularly not operated or controlled by the Ministry of Justice. Inspections are being carried out in places of detention under the control of the Ministry of Interior, Defense and Special Forces throughout the country. The inspections are led by Iraqi representatives of relevant Iraqi Ministries and supported by the MNF-I. According to credible information received, 5 places under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of Interior and Defense, or run by the Special Forces have been inspected so far. More inspections are underway. UNAMI encourages this process and calls for the reports resulting from those inspections to be made public.

Al-Jadiryia

28. UNAMI continues to remain interested in the work of the investigative committee formed after the discovery of Al-Jadiryia abuses in November 2005. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights sent a letter to the Prime Minister on 10 February 2006 expressing concern at the delay in publishing the results of the investigative committee and in bringing the perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice. In this respect, UNAMI welcomes the statements of the Acting Minister of Human Rights, Ms. Nermin Othman, requesting that charges are pressed against all those found to be responsible for the human rights abuses committed in the case of Al Jadiriya. UNAMI supports the calls for an international involvement in this investigation as well as and for a thorough review of all the conditions of detention in Iraq and stands ready to assist the Government of Iraq in these endeavours.

Impunity

29. The United Nations welcomes the decision of the Government of the United Kingdom to carry out a thorough investigation into the alleged abuse of Iraqi citizens in Basra, which allegedly took place during street protests in early 2004. All such allegations against either Iraqi or foreign forces should be thoroughly investigated and those found to be responsible be brought to

justice.

Trial of Saddam Hussein

30. UNAMI continues to closely follow the trial of Saddam Hussein and seven co-defendants accused for the 1982 killings of 148 residents in Al Dujail village. Following the resignation of the Presiding Judge Rizgar Hamad Amin and the appointment of Judge Raouf Rasheed Abdul-Rahman as his replacement, the defense team questioned the impartiality of the Iraqi Higher Tribunal. Disquiet was fuelled when certain Government officials blocked the promotion of the Deputy-Presiding judge Sae'ed Al-Hamashy due to his alleged membership of the Ba'ath Party.

31. The defendants' rights were at the core of the proceedings on 29 January after the ejection from the courtroom of Barzan Tikriti by the presiding judge following the former's outburst amounting to contempt. Subsequently, Saddam Hussein walked out of the courtroom followed by his team of privately-retained Iraqi and foreign counsel. The defense counsel for Saddam and the other accused then failed to appear in the courtroom, on 1 February. Demonstrating the non-absolute character of the right of the defendants to have the legal counsel of their choice, the court-appointed defense counsels were designated to ensure the continuation of the proceedings in accordance with Iraqi law. Those of the accused who appeared in court, on 1 February, signaled their disquiet with the replacement of their counsel. On 2 February, the accused refused to appear before the court but, on 13 February and on the order of the presiding judge, the defendants were compelled to appear. This gave rise to protests, in particular on the part of Saddam Hussein and Barzan Tikriti. All but one member of the privately-retained counsel were reinstated on 1 March. The prosecution has called all its witnesses to testify before the court and begun submitting documentary evidence to the presiding judge.

Institutional Capacity-Building Activities

32. The Human Rights Office continues to work towards strengthening Iraqi human rights institutions and build capacity for Iraqi Ministries and civil society organizations in order to develop a strong national human rights protection system and promote a culture of human rights and respect for the rule of law.

33. The Rule of Law Sectoral Working Group (ROL-SWG) met on 15 and 23 February in Baghdad under the chairmanship of the President of the Supreme Judiciary Council, Mr. Medhat Mahmood. The ROL-SWG process is intended as a tool to ensure coordination by various Iraqi ministries and the donor community through the facilitation of the Human Rights Office. Representatives of the ministries of Justice, Defense, Interior and Human Rights and the donor community participated in the meeting, chaired by the Chief Justice. The areas to be covered by the group include: support for the administration of justice (Police, Prisons Administration, Justice system); implementing human rights provisions in the Constitution; establishing a national human rights commission; ensuring human rights education and support for civil society organizations. The meetings were an opportunity to map out Iraqi needs and take stock of current donor assistance in the rule of law sector and to formulate an overall strategic plan for strengthening the administration of justice and the rule of law in Iraq in close cooperation with all UN agencies and programs as well as the World Bank.

33. Similar initiatives have been made in Basra where the Human Rights Office co-chairs the Informal Coordination Group on Rule of Law and Human Rights (RoLHR) together with a member of the Basra Council member. The first meeting was held on 20 January.

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

34. The new civil society law regulating non-governmental organizations (NGOs), drafted by the Ministry of Civil Society, is a major source of concern. The draft law imposes harsh restrictions on both national and international civil society organizations. If approved, such law would hinder the work of NGOs and weaken their role. UNAMI finds encouragement in the commitment of many civil society organizations, particularly human rights organizations. They have approached the Human Rights Office and asked for support in strengthening the rule of law and the human rights situation in the country. In February, a group of eight local human rights NGOs launched an initiative under the motto "Deliver all weapons to the State" based on article 9 of the new Iraqi Constitution, which stipulates that: "The formation of military militia outside the framework of the armed forces is prohibited". The NGOs main demand is that all militias are disarmed and that the experience of the United Nations in disarming militias in Africa, Yugoslavia and Latin America be also used in Iraq.

[1] According to the Iraqi Islamic Party, about 96 Sunni mosques were damaged in Baghdad, 8 in the Lower South (Diwaniya, Basra and Nassariya); 2 in Babil and 2 in Diyala. At least 20 Imams and Sheiks were assassinated in Baghdad and Basra and about 9 detained according to the same source.

[2] These official figures correspond to the bodies brought to the Medico Legal Institute in Baghdad during the period 22-26 February. They are not inclusive of many victims who were not taken to the Institute. Some commentators mentioned that those were conservative estimates.

[3] CPA Memorandum No. 3 "Criminal Procedures", dated 27 June 2004.

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Death Squads in Iraq: A Timeline

Daisy Cutter, Daily Kos



March 23, 2006

Recently [Think Progress](#) made a timeline of major events in the Iraq war. It is very informative, but I noticed that one of the most disturbing aspects of the Iraq war was missing. There is absolutely no mention of the existence of Shiite death squads that work within the Iraqi government that the U.S. is currently arming and training. Ever since the 'Salvador Option' story broke I've been keeping track of numerous news stories about these allegations. I've put together all my findings in timeline form. If you have any informative articles about death squads in Iraq please submit them in your comments.

January 14, 2005: Newsweek breaks the "Salvador Option" story.
([Newsweek](#))

January 25, 2005: Human Rights Watch releases a damning report alleging torture and mistreatment of detainees by the new Iraqi government.
([Human Rights Watch](#))

April 28, 2005: The new Iraqi government is approved. The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution wins control of the Interior Ministry. The new minister is Bayan Jabr.
([Juan Cole](#))([PBS](#))

May 1, 2005: Many of the same men in charge of training El Salvador's right-wing counter-insurgency forces during its bloody civil war are revealed to be advisors to Iraqi security forces.
([NYT Magazine](#))

May 16, 2005 55 dead bodies are discovered in Iraq.
([CNN](#))

May 22, 2005: An elite group of commandos known as the Wolf Brigade is profiled by Knight Ridder. The group is notorious for its brutal treatment of detainees.

[\(Knight Ridder\)](#)

June 12, 2005: 20 bodies are found around Baghdad. Many of them show signs of torture.

[\(CNN\)](#)

June 28, 2005: Numerous Sunni males turn up dead after being detained by men wearing police uniforms.

[\(Knight Ridder\)](#)

July 7, 2005: Horrifying descriptions of torture by Iraqi security forces emerge.

[\(The Observer\)](#)

September 8, 2005: The U.N. expresses concern over abuses by pro-government forces in Iraq.

[\(Reuters\)](#)

September 16, 2005: CBS reports on the torture and execution of numerous Sunnis.

[\(CBS News\)](#)

October 7, 2005: At least 537 bodies have been found since April, many of them Sunnis.

[\(Associated Press\)](#)

October 12, 2005: Sectarian hatred extends itself into the Iraqi military.

[\(Knight Ridder\)](#)

November 15, 2005: U.S. Forces discover a secret torture center run by Iraq's Interior Ministry.

[\(Washington Post\)](#)

November 27, 2005: Former Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi claims that the human rights situation in Iraq is just as bad, if not worse, than it was under Saddam.

[\(CNN\)](#)

November 28, 2005: Abuse of prisoners in Iraq is called routine.

[\(Knight Ridder\)](#)

Interior Minister Bayan Jabr defends the alleged torture camp.

[\(CNN\)](#)

November 29, 2005: The NY Times and LA Times both run stories about allegations of Shiites running death squads that target Sunnis.

[\(Los Angeles Times\)](#)[\(New York Times\)](#)

December 11, 2005: Torture is discovered at a second Interior Ministry run prison in Iraq.

[\(Washington Post\)](#)

December 27, 2006: US refuses to handover jails and prisons to Iraqis until conditions improve

[\(Times Online\)](#)

January 22, 2006: Iraqis attempt to find officials without ties to militias.
[USA Today](#)

January 25, 2006: Sunni leaders urge followers to defend against deadly house raids.
[\(Knight Ridder\)](#)

February 5, 2006: 14 blindfolded tortured bodies found in Baghdad, called common occurrence.
[\(Washington Post\)](#)

February 16, 2006: Iraq's government launches investigation into death squad claims after US general catches Iraqi policemen about to execute a Sunni.
[\(BBC News\)](#)

February 22, 2006 Powerful blast destroys Golden Mosque in Samarra. Shiites swear revenge.
[\(New York Times\)](#)

February 23, 2006: 47 predominantly Sunni workers are stopped at a checkpoint and massacred outside Baghdad.
[\(Knight Ridder\)](#)

February 26, 2006: Andrew Buncombe and Patrick Cockburn report that hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death every month by Interior Ministry death squads.
[\(The Independent\)](#)

February 28, 2006: Violence since mosque explosion kills more than 1,300 Iraqis.
[\(Washington Post\)](#)

March 2, 2006: Director of the Baghdad morgue claims that up to 7,000 people have been killed by death squads in the past several months.
[\(The Guardian\)](#)

March 8, 2006: the State Department criticizes the Iraqi government's human rights violations in its annual report.
[\(State Department\)](#)

Gunmen dressed up as Interior Ministry commandos raid a private security company and abduct 50 people. A US Military patrol comes across a bus with the bodies of 18 men piled up inside.
[\(Washington Post\)](#)

March 12, 2006: Iraqi officials admit to the existence of death squads operating from inside the government.
[\(Knight Ridder\)](#)

March 14, 2006: Iraqi authorities find 80 dead bodies over the course of two days.

(BBC News)

March 20, 2006: The US continues to arm and train the same Iraqi security forces accused of having a sectarian bent and committing numerous massacres.

(Time)

March 22, 2006: The U.N. demands that the Iraqi government reign in their abusive security forces.

(UN News Centre)

March 23, 2006: A gay rights group run by Iraqi exiles claims that the Badr Brigade is launching a campaign of "sexual cleansing" against Iraqi homosexuals..

(Gay City News)

I will continue to update this page as more stories about death squads emerge.

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Iraq: Neocon Strategy Is One of Civil War

John Walsh

Arab News, March 24, 2006

One of the abiding myths about the war on Iraq is that the neocons were too stupid to realize that they would confront an unrelenting, indigenous resistance to their occupation of Iraq. Unwittingly, the story line goes, they led the US into a conflict which has now produced a civil war.

But this simply does not fit the facts. The neocons clearly anticipated such an outcome before they launched their war as Stephen Zunes documents in Antiwar.com: "Top analysts in the CIA and State Department, as well as large numbers of Middle East experts, warned that a US invasion of Iraq could result in a violent ethnic and sectarian conflict. Even some of the war's intellectual architects acknowledged as much: In a 1997 paper, prior to becoming major figures in the Bush foreign policy team, David Wurmser, Richard Perle, and Douglas Feith predicted that a post-Saddam Iraq would likely be "ripped apart" by sectarianism and other cleavages but called on the United States to "expedite" such a collapse anyway."

Yet the line persists that the neocons had no idea what they were getting into. This cannot be correct as they think a lot about what they do and they plan carefully. Not only is that charge absurd on the face of it, but it is arrogant on the part of those who level it. And it is the worst political mistake possible — underestimating your adversary.

Now the neocons are beginning to advocate for civil war in Iraq quite openly. The clearest statement of this strategy as yet comes from pre-eminent neocon and ardent Zionist Daniel Pipes. In a recent piece in the Jerusalem Post, Pipes spills the beans. He writes: "The bombing on Feb. 22 of the

Askaria shrine in Samarra, Iraq, was a tragedy, but it was not an American or a coalition tragedy. Iraq's plight is neither a coalition responsibility nor a particular danger to the West. Fixing Iraq is neither the coalition's responsibility, nor its burden. When Sunni terrorists target Shiites and vice versa, non-Muslims are less likely to be hurt. Civil war in Iraq, in short, would be a humanitarian tragedy, but not a strategic one."

As ever Pipes's anti-Arab racism is simply too rabid to be hidden. If Muslims are busy killing other Muslims, then "non-Muslims" are less likely to be hurt!! What does that say about Muslim lives? And of course both Sunnis and Shiites must be labeled "terrorists." Pipes is doing nothing more endorsing than the oldest of colonial strategies: Divide et impera.

Pipes envisions other "benefits" to the civil war "strategy," such as inhibiting the spread of democracy in the Middle East. Pipes again: "Civil war will "terminate the dream of Iraq serving as a model for other Middle Eastern countries, thus delaying the push toward elections. This would have the effect of keeping Islamists from being legitimated by the popular vote, as Hamas was just a month ago."

And finally Pipes declares that a civil war "would likely invite Syrian and Iranian participation hastening the possibility of confrontation with these two states, with which tensions are already high." It is no secret that the neocons have been aching for the US to strike at Iran and Syria, so here too the civil war strategy of the neocons makes good sense to them. Of course the added death and destruction is not their problem since the victims will be Muslims and some unwitting American soldiers.

There seems to be only one fly in this neocon ointment. That is, will it be possible to control the flow of oil in the midst of turmoil in Iraq. Here I suspect the neocons who put Israel first might have their differences with the oil barons, presently their allies. But the neocons have certainly given a lot of thought to that, and it probably explains why the location of the large and permanent US bases in Iraq is not known. It would seem, however, that there are great uncertainties in this and it may cause some trouble among the neocons and their allies over the longer term.

The only real question is whether the civil war emerged spontaneously as Wurmser, Perle and Feith predicted or whether the Iraqis had to be goaded into it by the US. Given all the intrigues and mysteries in Iraq, including the bombing of the Askaria shrine in Samarra and the shadowy death squads and torture chambers which the US claims to know nothing about, the latter seems more likely as of now.

It certainly fits the civil war strategy, and it is quite reminiscent of the Iran-Iraq war in which the US and Israel fanned the flames that consumed over 1 million Muslim lives

The fact is that the neocons who control US strategy have no interest in preventing a civil war but only in inciting one. Sectarian tensions were virtually unknown in Iraq before the US invasion.

And in fact the Iraqi Shi'is fought loyally as Iraqis against Iranian Shi'is in the disastrous Iran-Iraq war. So to avoid an Iraqi civil war, the most important step is to get all the US troops home and thus to terminate US provocations. For it is now crystal clear that the neocon strategy is one of civil war to divide

and destroy Iraq; and such a strategy amounts to a crime against humanity.

— John Walsh can be reached at jvwalshmd@gmail.com .

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Saddam's pilots hunted down by death squads

Ali Rifat and Hamoudi Saffar, The Sunday Times

April 8, 2006

IRAQI pilots who flew in Saddam Hussein's air force are being targeted by armed militias in an apparent witch-hunt against veterans who fought in the war against Iran two decades ago.

According to official military statistics, 182 former pilots and 416 senior military officers had been killed by the beginning of January 2006 as part of the campaign. At least 836 pilots and high-ranking military officials have fled to neighbouring Arab states.

Many of the assassinations have been blamed on militias from the Shi'ite Badr Brigade who were trained and financed by Iran and who now form the backbone of Iraq's police and special forces.

A delegation of more than 1,000 members of the former military elite — mainly from the Sunni minority — appealed recently to President Jalal Talabani to intervene to end the attacks.

The officers and their families have accused Iran of inciting Iraq's Shi'ite militias to carry out acts of vengeance. The organised nature of the attacks has reinforced their claims that elements within the Iranian-backed government are behind the attacks.

"Anyone who participated in the former war against Iraq is now a target, not knowing when the death sentence will be carried out against him," said the brother of Imad Mohammed Marhoon, a pilot assassinated last December. "We cannot escape and we are unable to defend ourselves. We are the walking dead."

The attacks have occurred against the backdrop of worsening sectarian strife between the Shi'ite majority and the Sunnis who dominated Iraq under Saddam.

Shi'ite religious leaders issued an appeal for calm after at least 85 people died in an apparent triple suicide bomb attack on an important Shi'ite mosque in Baghdad on Friday. As their funerals were held yesterday, another six people were killed by a car bomb near a Shi'ite shrine in Musayyib, 40 miles south of the capital.

The problem has been exacerbated by the continued political vacuum in Iraq, caused by the refusal of Ibrahim Jaafari, the interim prime minister, to step

down, despite pressure from America and Britain for the formation of a permanent government of national unity.

The individual killings, meanwhile, continue. A 57-year-old man, who declined to be named, described last week how he and two former pilots, Major-Generals Qathem Chaloob and Suad Bahaa al-Deen, were kidnapped last month during late afternoon prayers when 30 men, dressed in black, raided a mosque in Baghdad.

In front of a police checkpoint, the three men were dragged away by the armed kidnappers. According to the man, he and his companions were beaten, abused and tortured before the pilots were separated from other civilian captives.

"They beat us with electric cables and logs all over our bodies and we could hear them receiving telephone calls in the interrogation room next door. Sometimes they were told to release people, other times to kill others," he said.

"When Major-General Suad demanded that he speak to the man in charge, they beat him continuously for 15 minutes and after that none of us dared utter another word."

The man was eventually released when his captors were convinced he was not linked to Saddam's former military forces. A day later the bodies of his two pilot friends were found near the mainly Shi'ite Sadr City. Suad's hands had been cut off, his head had bullet and axe wounds and a hole had been drilled into his neck.

In another incident last month, gunmen wearing uniforms of Iraq's interior ministry commandos raided a private security company in the centre of Baghdad, kidnapping more than 35 employees.

At least 20 of those abducted were former high-ranking Sunni pilots in Saddam's air force. Witnesses said the kidnappers were armed and they arrived in a large convoy of military vehicles, backed up by two trucks mounted with heavy machineguns. They have not been seen since.

The interior ministry has denied involvement in the daylight raid, but ministry sources alleged that the gunmen were from its major crimes unit.

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Iraqi death squads 'not police'

Bayan Jabr interview

Iraq's interior minister has admitted death squads and other unauthorised armed groups have been carrying out sectarian killings in the country.

But in a BBC interview, Bayan Jabr denied allegations that these groups were linked to his ministry.

Mr Jabr blamed the proliferation of civilian security companies and licensed protection agencies used by other government ministries.

Sunni Muslims say government-backed Shia militias are behind many attacks.

The BBC's Andrew North in Baghdad says that every day more victims of Iraq's sectarian strife turn up. Corpses bound and shot are dumped at the roadside.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Very little can be done to stop sectarian violence if to sides are determined to carry it out

Steve Smith

The US military says more than 1,300 civilians were victims of sectarian violence last month alone.

Some analysts believe the real figure is much higher, as many bodies are never found.

'Out of order'

In his interview with the BBC, Mr Jabr said despite appearances, those involved in recent attacks were not genuine police officers.

"Terrorists or someone who support the terrorists... are using the clothes of the police or the military," he said.

[Attackers] are using the clothes of the police or the military - Now you can go to the shop and buy it

Bayan Jabr

Iraqi Interior Minister

"Now you can go to the shop and buy it."

He said problems also stemmed from the existence of non-governmental security agencies like the Facility Protection Service, an armed force set up during the US-led administration of Iraq in 2003 to guard official buildings.

Mr Jabr called the 150,000-strong FPS "out of order, not under our control". He also implicated the involvement of about 30,000 civilian security guards operating in Iraq.

Sectarian tensions have been high since the bombing of a Shia shrine in Samarra in February.

In the latest violence on the ground:

- A suicide car bomber strikes in the northern city of Talafar, killing two shoppers at a vegetable market
- Three civilians die in a roadside bombing in Baghdad
- Three government employees are gunned down in different attacks in the capital
- A car bomb explodes in Khalis, north of Baghdad, killing two
- Two US soldiers die in a roadside bomb, with a third reported killed in Baghdad.

A delay in reaching agreement on a new government is thought to be partly responsible for fuelling the violence.

Parliament is due to convene next Monday - for only the second time since elections four months ago.

"There are signs that there will be agreement on all problems concerning formation of the government," the speaker, Adnan Pachachi, told reporters.

Arab foreign ministers are due to meet in Cairo on Wednesday to discuss the violence in Iraq. The Baghdad government is not taking part.

Last week Egypt's Hosni Mubarak suggested that a civil war was imminent in Iraq.

Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari - who has the support of the Shia bloc - on Sunday dismissed the claim.

Story from BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/4901786.stm

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US allies are behind the death squads and ethnic cleansing

Iraq's American overlords at last seem to have grasped the danger posed by their friends' militias. But it may be too late

Jonathan Steele in Baghdad
Friday April 14, 2006
[The Guardian](#)

Much ink, as well as indignation, is being spent on whether Iraq is on the verge of, in the midst of, or nowhere near civil war. Wherever you stand in this largely semantic debate, the one certainty is that the seedbed for the country's self-destruction is Iraq's plethora of militias. In the apt phrase of Zalmay Khalilzad, the US ambassador in Baghdad, they are the "infrastructure of civil war".

He is not the first US overlord in Iraq to spot the danger. Shortly before the formal transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis, America's then top official Paul Bremer ordered all militias to disband. Some members could join the new army. Others would have to look for civilian work.

His decree was not enforced and now, two years later, this failure has come back to haunt Iraq. "More Iraqis are dying from militia violence than from the terrorists," Khalilzad said recently. "The militias need to be under control."

His blunt comment came in the wake of over 1,000 abductions and murders in a single month, most of them blamed on Shia militias. Terrified residents of Baghdad's mainly Sunni areas talk of cars roaring up after dark, uninhibited by the police in spite of the curfew. They enter homes and seize people, whose bodies turn up later, often garotted or marked with holes from electric drills - evidence of torture before assassination.

Khalilzad's denunciation of the militias was an extraordinary turnaround, given that the focus of US military activity since the fall of Saddam Hussein has been the battle against foreign jihadis and a nationalist Sunni-led insurgency. Suddenly the US faces a greater "enemy within" - militias manned by the Shia community, once seen by the US as allies, and run by government ministers.

The new line, if it sticks, marks an end to previous ambiguity. Under Bremer there was a tendency to see some militias as good, that is on the US side, such as the peshmerga fighters that belong to the two large Kurdish parties, and others as bad, such as the Mahdi army of the Shia cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr, who opposes the occupation.

A third militia, the Badr organisation, was also tolerated. It is the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a leading Shia political party which supported the invasion and is Washington's main interlocutor in the Shia coalition.

US officials paid lip service to the need to disband the militias, but never showed any sense of urgency. As a Pentagon report to Congress put it last year: "The realities of Iraq's political and security landscape work against completing the transition and reintegration of all Iraq's militias in the short term."

Iraqi leaders praised the militias, claiming they were subordinate to the defence and interior ministries, and therefore in no way a rogue element. The Badr organisation has even been put in charge of defending the home of the Shias' revered religious leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

The prime minister, Ibrahim Jaafari, described the Badr organisation last summer as a "shield" defending Iraq, while the president, Jalal Talabani, claimed the Badr organisation and the peshmerga were patriots who "are important to fulfilling this sacred task, establishing a democratic, federal and independent Iraq".

The flaw in the picture was that while the Kurds and Shias had two militias each, the Sunnis had none. Sunni chiefs could rustle up a few gunmen from extended family ranks, when necessary, as had been done for centuries, but there was nothing on the scale of Badr, the Mahdi, or the peshmerga. Many Sunnis welcomed the anti-occupation insurgents as a kind of surrogate militia.

Sunni anger increased with evidence of secret prisons, run by the interior ministry, where hundreds of men and boys, mainly Sunnis, were tortured, and of "death squads" operating against Sunnis. In response, Baghdad's Sunni neighbourhoods have started to form vigilante groups to defend their turf.

US officials now view the militias differently. Phasing them out by integrating their members into the official forces of law and order is seen as risky, unless the leadership changes. In February this year the new Pentagon line was that integration could result in security forces that "may be more loyal to their political support organisation than to the central Iraqi government", according to a new study, *Iraq's Evolving Insurgency and the Risk of Civil War* by Anthony Cordesman, an Iraq expert at Washington's Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Now the US is trying to

ensure that political control over the interior and defence ministries is jointly managed by an all-party security council.

The encouraging signs are that Iraqi leaders are denouncing sectarian violence. Provocations such as last week's suicide attack on a Shia mosque in Baghdad appear to be the work of "outsiders". No one has claimed responsibility, but they were probably planned by agitators, foreign or Iraqi, who want to split Iraq's fragile society for their own political ends. There is also comfort in the fact that sectarian street murders stem from militias who are controllable rather than from unorganised mobs.

Just as generals do, diplomats and journalists tend to refight the last war. Schooled in Bosnia and Kosovo, Washington's officials came to Iraq with the notion that because some Iraqis were Shia and others Sunni, these identities were bound to clash. This simplification was accepted by much of the media, influenced by their own Balkan experiences. It gathered weight when people watched the sectarian behaviour of Iraq's religious leaders, particularly among the Shia. They had led the resistance to Saddam and saw no reason to retreat from politics once he was gone.

In fact Iraq has no history of Balkan-style pogroms where neighbour turns against neighbour, burning homes and shops. But it could develop now. The rampaging by Shia militias and the rise of defensive Sunni vigilantes have launched a low-intensity ethnic cleansing. Up to 30,000 people have left their homes in the last few weeks.

The crucial question is whether the militias can be rolled back at this late stage. Having allowed them to defy their initial banning orders, as well as Iraq's new constitution, which outlawed them, can the US persuade or force its Iraqi allies to disband them? Confronting the Sunni insurgency means, in crude terms, confronting an enemy. Confronting the biggest militias, Badr and the Kurdish peshmerga, means the US must confront its friends.

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Who wants civil war in Iraq?

Workers World

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It is normal for capitalist governments to lie through their teeth to justify war and aggression. Even allowing for this normal deception, the Bush administration suffers from a wider than usual credibility gap. If Bush says "It's a beautiful day," one's first impulse is to scan the sky for clouds and check that you've brought your umbrella.

So when George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, the Pentagon generals and the U.S. ambassador to Iraq say they are trying their hardest to avoid "civil war" in that occupied oil-rich country, it's even more normal to suspect that U.S. agencies are provoking that civil war, creating incidents that encourage different parts of the Iraqi population to fight each other and in general using

"divide and conquer" tactics that British imperialism, now a U.S. junior partner, used in the heyday of the Empire.

The suspicious bombing of the golden dome mosque in Samarra in February began a rapid increase in the killings of civilian Iraqis. Even worse for the Iraqis, many of the killings appeared to be pitting members of the Sunni Moslem religious group against members of the Shiite group. No organization ever took public responsibility for the bombing, and the killings were carried out by private militias, often masked and of unclear origin.

What arouses greater suspicions is that some U.S. strategists began at the end of 2004 to suggest the U.S. occupation adopt the "Salvador option." The headline in a Jan. 14, 2005, Newsweek article was: "The Pentagon may put Special-Forces-led assassination or kidnapping teams in Iraq," just as it did in El Salvador to kill Salvadoran progressives, unionists and any civilians in the way, and just as it did with the "Phoenix Program," another death-squad venture in Vietnam. Once it became clear that "shock and awe" had failed to subdue the Iraqis, this bloody option started gaining support in U.S. imperialist circles.

To add substance to these suspicions, the Iraq puppet government's interior minister, up to now someone who cooperated with the U.S. occupation, has admitted that death squads and unauthorized armed groups have been carrying out sectarian killings in the country. In a BBC interview on April 11, Bayan Jabr denied these groups were his responsibility. He added that there are non-governmental armed groups called the Facility Protection Service, set up in 2003 by the U.S. occupation, that number 150,000 effectives. Jabr said these 150,000 hired guns are "out of order, not under our control," along with another 30,000 private security guards.

This total of armed agents is even more than the number of regular U.S. troops operating in Iraq. Whatever ax Jabr has to grind, his comments mean the U.S. has a wide supply of mercenary personnel capable of carrying out provocations and acting as death squads—in other words, executing the "Salvador option." The Bush administration has certainly proved capable of lying about such a strategy. Anyone born earlier than yesterday can only assume it is lying once again.

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