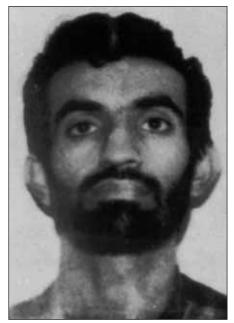
# International Relations

## Saddam Hussein's Philanthropy of Terror



Emergency workers treat one of the 1,042 individuals injured in the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing. This attack also killed six people. Abdul Rahman Yasin (inset), indicted for mixing the chemicals in that bomb, fled to Baghdad after the attack and lived there for years afterward.



Iraqi Ramzi Yousef, architect of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, arrived in America on an Iraqi passport before fleeing after the attack on Pakistani papers.



Abu Abbas masterminded the 1985 hijacking of the ocean liner *Achille Lauro* during which American retiree Leon Klinghoffer was murdered. U.S. troops captured Abbas in Baghdad last April 14.



Abu Nidal's terrorist gang killed 407 people, including 10 Americans, and wounded 788 more. He lived in Baghdad between 1999 and his mysterious shooting death in August 2002.

Many critics of the war in Iraq belittle claims of Saddam Hussein's ties to terrorism. In fact, for years, he was militant Islam's Benefactor-in-Chief.

#### **Deroy Murdock**

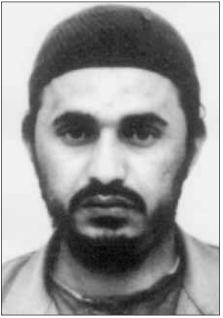
never believed in the link between Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, and Islamist terrorism," former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright flatly declared in an October 21 essay published in Australia's Melbourne Herald Sun.<sup>i</sup>

"Iraq was not a breeding ground for terrorism. Our invasion has made it one," said Senator Ted Kennedy (D–Massachusetts) on October 16. "We were told Iraq was attracting terrorists from al Qaeda. It was not."

As President Bush continues to lead America's involvement in Iraq, he increasingly is being forced to confront those who dismiss Saddam Hussein's ties to terrorism and, thus, belittle a key rationale for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bush's critics wield a flimsy and disingenuous argument that nonetheless enjoys growing appeal among a largely hostile press corps. Hussein did not personally order the September 11 attacks, the fuzzy logic goes, hence he has no significant ties to terrorists, especially al Qaeda. Consequently, the Iraq war was launched under bogus assumptions, and, therefore, Bush should be defeated in November 2004.

West Virginia's Jay Rockefeller, the Senate Intelligence Committee's ranking Democrat, exemplified this thinking recently when he told the *Los Angeles Times* that Iraq's alleged al Qaeda ties were "tenuous at best and not compelling."<sup>iii</sup> In a September 16 editorial, the *L.A. Times* slammed Vice President Dick Cheney for making "sweeping, unproven claims about Saddam Hussein's connections to terrorism." On August 7, former vice president Albert Gore stated flatly, "The evidence now shows clearly that Saddam did not want to work with Osama bin Laden at all."<sup>iv</sup>

All of these claims about a lack of ties between Hussein and terrorists, however, are untrue, and it is important that debate on this vital issue be informed



After running an al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan, Abu Musab al Zarqawi received medical care in Baghdad once the Taliban fell. He opened an Ansar al-Islam camp in northern Iraq and reportedly arranged the October 2002 assassination of U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley in Jordan. Zarqawi is at large.

by facts. The president and his national security team should devote entire speeches and publications—complete with names, documents, and visuals, including the faces of terrorists and their innocent victims-to remind Americans and the world that Baathist Iraq was a general store for terrorists, complete with cash, training, lodging, and medical attention. Indeed, this maga-



September 11 hijackers Nawaz al-Hamzi (left) and Khalid al-Midhar (right) were on American Airlines Flight 77 when it slammed into the Pentagon and killed 216 people. The two terrorists reportedly met Iraqi VIP airport greeter Ahmad Hikmat Shakir in Kuala Lampur, Malaysia, on January 5, 2000, whereupon he escorted them to a 9-11 planning summit with other al Qaeda members.

zine article could serve as a model for the kinds of communications that the administration regularly should generate to set the record straight about Hussein and terrorism and reassert the reasons behind the Iraq mission.

Such an effort to reinvigorate U.S. public diplomacy on Iraq should be easy. After all, the evidence of Hussein's cooperation with and support for global terrorists is abundant and increasing, to wit:

#### Saddam Hussein's Habitual Support for Terrorists

Both supporters and opponents of Islamic terror have provided abundant evidence of Hussein's aid for a wide array of terrorists. Consider the following.

• Hussein paid bonuses of up to \$25,000 to the families of Palestinian homicide bombers.

"President Saddam Hussein has recently told the head of the Palestinian political office, Faroq al Kaddoumi, his decision to raise the sum granted to each family of the martyrs of the Palestinian uprising to \$25,000 instead of \$10,000," Iraq's former deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, announced at a Baghdad meeting of Arab politicians and businessmen on March 11, 2002, Reuters reported two days later."

Mahmoud Besharat, who the White House says disbursed these funds across the West Bank, gratefully said, "You would have to ask President Saddam why he is being so generous. But he is a revolutionary and he wants this distinguished struggle, the intifada, to continue."<sup>vi</sup>

Such largesse poured forth until the eve of the Iraq war. As Knight-Ridder's Carol Rosenberg reported from Gaza City last March 13: "In a graduation-style ceremony Wednesday, the families of 22 Palestinians killed fighting Israelis received checks for \$10,000 or more, certificates of appreciation and a kiss on each cheek—compliments of Iraq's Saddam Hussein." She added: "The certificates declared the gift from President Saddam Hussein; the checks were cut at a Gaza branch of the Cairo-Amman bank."



Delaware exchange student John Buonocore, age 20, was among those killed when the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) used guns and grenades to attack a TWA ticket counter at Rome's Leonardo Da Vinci airport in December 1986. The ANO maintained offices in Baghdad until U.S. troops liberated the Iragi capital. This festivity, attended by some 400 people and organized by the then-Baghdad-backed Arab Liberation Front, occurred March 12, just eight days before American-led troops crossed the Iraqi frontier.<sup>vii</sup>

Hussein's patronage of Palestinian terror proved fatally fruitful. Between the March 11, 2002, increase in cash incentives to \$25,000 and the March 20, 2003, launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 28 homicide bombers injured 1,209 people and killed 223 more, including 12 Americans.<sup>viii</sup>

- According to the U.S. State Department's May 21, 2002, report on *Patterns of Global Terrorism*,<sup>ix</sup> the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO), the Arab Liberation Front, Hamas, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization, and the Palestine Liberation Front all operated offices or bases in Hussein's Iraq. Hussein's hospitality toward these mass murderers directly violated United Nations Security Council Resolution 687, which prohibited him from granting safe haven to or otherwise sponsoring terrorists.
- Key terrorists enjoyed Hussein's warmth, some so
- recently that Coalition forces subsequently found them alive and well and living in Iraq. Among them:
- U.S. Special Forces nabbed Abu Abbas last April 14 just outside Baghdad. Abbas masterminded the October 7–9, 1985, Achille Lauro cruise ship hijacking in which Abbas's men shot passenger Leon Klinghoffer, a 69-year old Manhattan retiree. then rolled him, wheelchair and all, into the Mediterranean. Abbas briefly was in Italian custody at the time, but was released that October 12 because he possessed an Iraqi diplomatic passport. Since 2000, Abbas



American Abigail Litle, the 14year-old daughter of a Baptist minister, was killed by a Palestinian homicide bomber while riding a bus in Haifa, Israel, on March 5, 2003. Saddam Hussein paid bonuses of up to \$25,000 to the families of terrorists who killed at least 223 people, including 11 other Americans.



Khala Khadar al-Salahat, a top deputy to Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, reportedly furnished Libyan agents the bomb that demolished Pan Am Flight 103 in December 1988. That attack killed all 259 on board and 11 on the ground in Lockerbie, Scotland. Baghdad resident al Salahat surrendered to U.S. Marines last April.

resided in Baghdad, still under Saddam Hussein's protection.<sup>x</sup>

- Khala Khadr al Salahat, a member of the ANO. surrendered to the First Marine Division in Baghdad on April 18. As the Sunday Times of London reported on August 25, 2002, a Palestinian source said that al Salahat and Nidal had furnished Libyan agents the Semtex bomb that destroyed Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988, killing 259 on board and 11 on the ground. The 189 Americans murdered on the sabotaged Boeing 747 included 35 Syracuse University students who had spent the fall semester in Scotland and were heading home for the holidays.xi
- Before fatally shooting himself in the head with four bullets on August 16, 2002, as straight-faced Baathist officials claimed, Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal (born Sabri al Banna) had lived in Iraq since at least 1999. As the Associated Press's Sameer N. Yacoub reported on August 21, 2002, the Beirut office of the ANO said that he entered Iraq "with the full knowledge and preparations of the Iraqi authorities."xii Nidal's attacks in 20 countries killed 407 people and wounded 788 more, the U.S. State Department calculates. Among other atrocities, an ANO-planted bomb exploded on a TWA airliner as it flew



Iraqi diplomat Hisham al Hussein was expelled from the Philippines last February after cellphone records showed he was in contact with leaders of Abu Sayyaf, an al Qaeda-allied terrorist group. An October 2002 Abu Sayyaf bomb injured 23 and killed three, including U.S. soldier Mark Wayne Jackson.

from Israel to Greece on September 8, 1974. The jet was destroyed over the Ionian Sea, killing all 88 people on board.  $x^{xiii}$ 

• Coalition troops have shut down at least three terrorist training camps in Iraq, including a base approximately 15 miles southeast of Baghdad, called Salman Pak.<sup>xiv</sup> Before the war, numerous Iraqi defectors had said that the camp featured a passenger jet on which terrorists sharpened their air piracy skills.<sup>xv</sup>

"There have been several confirmed sightings of Islamic fundamentalists from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Gulf states being trained in terror tactics at the Iraqi intelligence camp at Salman Pak," said Khidir Hamza, Iraq's former nuclearweapons chief, in sworn testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 31, 2002. "The training involved assassination, explosions, and hijacking."<sup>xvi</sup>

"This camp is specialized in exporting terrorism to the whole world," former Iraqi army captain Sabah Khodada told PBS's *Frontline* TV program in an October 14, 2001 interview.<sup>xvii</sup> Khodada, who worked at Salman Pak, said, "Training includes hijacking and kidnapping of airplanes, trains, public buses, and planting explosives in cities . . . how to prepare for suicidal operations." Khodada added, "We saw people getting trained to hijack airplanes. . . . They are even trained how to use utensils for food, like forks and knives provided in the plane." A map of the camp that Khodada drew from memory for *Frontline* closely matches satellite photos of Salman Pak, further bolstering his credibility.<sup>xviii</sup> These facts clearly disprove the above-quoted statements by Senator Kennedy and the *Los Angeles Times* and similar claims made by others. The Bush administration could advance American interests by busing a few dozen foreign correspondents and their camera crews from the bar of Baghdad's Palestine Hotel to Salman Pak for a guided tour. Network news footage of *that* might open a few eyes.

#### Saddam Hussein's al Qaeda Connections

As for Hussein's supposedly imaginary ties to al Qaeda, consider these disturbing facts:

- The Philippine government expelled Hisham al Hussein, the second secretary at Iraq's Manila embassy, on February 13, 2003. Cell phone records indicate that the Iraqi diplomat had spoken with Abu Madja and Hamsiraji Sali, leaders of Abu Sayyaf, just before and just after their al Qaeda-allied Islamic militant group conducted an attack in Zamboanga City. Abu Sayyaf's nail-filled bomb exploded on October 2, 2002, injuring 23 individuals and killing two Filipinos and U.S. Special Forces Sergeant First Class Mark Wayne Jackson, age 40. As Dan Murphy wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor* last February 26, those phone records bolster Sali's claim in a November 2002 TV interview that the Iraqi diplomat had offered these Muslim extremists Baghdad's help with joint missions.<sup>xix</sup>
- *The Weekly Standard*'s intrepid reporter Stephen F. Hayes noted in the magazine's July 11, 2003, issue that the official *Babylon Daily Political Newspaper* published

by Hussein's eldest son, Uday, had revealed a terrorist connection in what it called a "List of Honor" published a few months earlier.<sup>xx</sup> The paper's November 14, 2002, edition gave the names and titles of 600 leading Iraqis and included the following passage: "Abid Al-Karim Muhamed Aswod, intelligence officer responsible for the coordination of activities with the Osama bin Laden group at the Iraqi embassy in Pakistan." That name, Hayes wrote, "matches that of Iraq's then-ambassador to Islamabad."

Carter-appointed federal appeals judge Gilbert S. Merritt discovered this document in Baghdad while helping rebuild Iraq's legal system. He wrote in the June 25 issue of the *Tennessean* that two of his Iraqi colleagues remember secret police agents removing that embarrassing edition from newsstands and confiscating copies of it from private homes.<sup>xxi</sup> The paper was not published for the next 10 days. Judge Merritt theorized that the "impulsive and somewhat unbalanced" Uday may have showcased these dedicated Baathists to "make them more loyal and

supportive of the regime" as war loomed.

- Abu Musab al Zarqawi, formerly the director of an al Qaeda training base in Afghanistan, fled to Iraq after being injured as the Taliban fell. He received medical care and convalesced for two months in Baghdad. He then opened an Ansar al Islam terrorist training camp in northern Iraq and arranged the October 2002 assassination of U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley in Amman, Jordan.
- Although Iraqi Ramzi Yousef, ringleader of the February 26, 1993, World Trade Center (WTC) bombing plot, fled the United States on Pakistani papers, he came to America on an Iraqi passport.
- As Richard Miniter, author of this year's bestseller *Losing bin Laden*, reported on September 25, 2003, on the Tech Central Station webpage, "U.S. forces recently discovered a cache of documents in Tikrit, Saddam's hometown, which shows Iraq gave [al Qaeda

member] Mr. [Abdul Rahman] Yasin both a house and a monthly salary." The Indiana-born, Iraqi-reared Yasin had been charged in August 1993 for mixing the chemicals in the bomb that exploded beneath One World Trade Center, killing six and injuring 1,042 individuals.<sup>xxii</sup> Indicted by federal prosecutors as a conspirator in the WTC bomb plot, Yasin is on the FBI's Most-Wanted Terrorists list.<sup>xxiii</sup> ABC News confirmed, on July 27, 1994, that Yasin had returned to Baghdad, where he traveled freely and visited his father's home almost daily.<sup>xxiv</sup>

- Near Iraq's border with Syria last April 25, U.S. troops captured Farouk Hijazi, Hussein's former ambassador to Turkey and suspected liaison between Iraq and al Qaeda. Under interrogation, Stephen Hayes reports, Hijazi "admitted meeting with senior al Qaeda leaders at Saddam's behest in 1994."<sup>xxv</sup>
- While sifting through the Mukhabarat's bombed ruins last April

26, the *Toronto Star*'s Mitch Potter, the *London Daily Telegraph*'s Inigo Gilmore, and their translator discovered a memo in the intelligence service's accounting department. Dated February 19, 1998, and marked "Top Secret and Urgent," the document said that the agency would pay "all the travel and hotel expenses inside Iraq to gain the knowledge of the message from bin Laden and to convey to his envoy an oral message from us to bin Laden, the Saudi opposition leader, about the future of our relationship with him, and to achieve a direct meeting with him." The memo's three references to bin Laden were obscured crudely with correction fluid.<sup>xxvi</sup>

These facts directly refute the claims of Senator Rockefeller and Secretary Albright men-

#### Terrorist Organizations Given Funds, Shelter, and/or Training by Saddam Hussein

| Organization                  | Total<br>killed | Total<br>wounded | Americans<br>killed | Americans<br>wounded |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Abu Nidal Organization        | 407             | 788              | 10                  | 58                   |
| Ansar al-Islam                | 114             | 16               | 1                   | —                    |
| Arab Liberation Front         | 4               | 6                | _                   | _                    |
| Hamas                         | 224             | 1,445            | 17                  | 30                   |
| Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) | 44              | 327              | _                   | 2                    |
| Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK)       | 17              | 43               | 7                   | 1                    |
| Palestine Liberation Front    | 1               | 42               | 1                   | _                    |
| Total                         | 811             | 2,667            | 36                  | 91                   |

Sources:

U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "1968 - 2003: Total Persons Killed/Wounded—International and Accepted Incidents." Figures prepared for author November 17, 2003.

Statistics on Ansar al-Islam:

Jonathan Landay, "Islamic militants kill senior Kurdish general." Knight-Ridder News Service, February 11, 2003.

Catherine Taylor, "Saddam and bin Laden help fanatics, say Kurds." *The Times of London*, March 28, 2002.

tioned at the top of this article. The ties between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda are clear and compelling.

### Saddam Hussein's Ties to the September 11 Conspiracy

Despite the White House's inexplicable insistence to the contrary, tantalizing clues suggest that Saddam Hussein's jaw might not have dropped to the floor when fireballs erupted from the Twin Towers two years ago.

- His Salman Pak terror camp taught terrorists how to hijack passenger jets with cutlery, as noted earlier.
- On January 5, 2000, Ahmad Hikmat Shakir-

an Iraqi VIP facilitator reportedly dispatched from Baghdad's embassy in Malaysia—greeted Khalid al Midhar and Nawaz al Hamzi at Kuala Lampur's airport, where he worked. He then escorted them to a local hotel, where these September 11 hijackers met with 9-11 conspirators Ramzi bin al Shibh and Tawfiz al Atash. Five days later, according to Stephen Hayes, Shakir disappeared. He was arrested in Qatar on September 17, 2001, six days after al Midhar and al Hamzi slammed American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon, killing 216 people. Soon after he was apprehended, authorities discovered documents on Shakir's person and in his apartment connecting him to the 1993 WTC bomb plot and "Operation Bojinka," al Qaeda's 1995 plan to blow up 12 jets simultaneously over the Pacific.xxvii

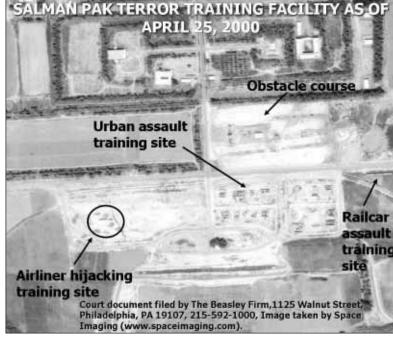
Although the Bush administration has expressed doubts, the Czech government stands by its claim that September 11 leader Mohamed Atta met in Prague in April 2001 with Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim al Ani, an Iraqi diplomat/intelligence agent. In a February 24 letter to James Beasley Jr., a Philadelphia lawyer who represents the families of two Twin Towers casualties, Czech UN Ambassador Hynek Kmonicek embraced an October 26, 2001, statement by Czech Interior Minister Stanislav Gross:

In this moment we can confirm, that during the next stay of Mr. Muhammad [sic] Atta in the Czech Republic, there was the contact with the official of the Iraqi intelligence, Mr. Al Ani, Ahmed Khalin Ibrahim Samir, who was on 22nd April 2001 expelled from the Czech Republic on the basis of activities which were not compatible with the diplomatic status."xxviii

Al Ani was expelled two weeks after the suspected meeting with Atta for apparently hostile surveillance of Radio Free Europe's Prague headquarters. That building also happened to house America's anti-Baathist station, Radio Free Iraq. The Czech government continues to claim, in short, that the 9-11 mastermind Atta met with at least one Iraqi intelligence official in the months during which the attacks were orchestrated.

• A Clinton-appointed Manhattan federal judge, Harold Baer, ordered Hussein, his ousted regime, Osama bin Laden, and others to pay \$104 million in damages to the families of George Eric Smith and Timothy Soulas (clients of Beasley, the aforementioned attorney), both of whom were killed in the Twin Towers along with 2,750 others. "I conclude that plaintiffs have shown, albeit barely, 'by evidence satisfactory to the court' that Iraq provided material support to bin Laden and al Qaeda," Baer ruled. An airtight case? Perhaps not, but the court found that there was sufficient evidence to tie Saddam Hussein to the September 11 attacks and secure a May 7 federal judgment against him.<sup>xxix</sup> If one takes the time to connect these dots—as is the

professional duty of journalists and politicians who address



Just 15 miles from Baghdad, Salman Pak served as a Baathist training facility for terrorists. According to numerous defectors, foreign Islamic militants at Salman Pak used an actual jet fuselage to learn how to hijack airliners using knives and forks from their in-flight meals.

this matter—a clear portrait emerges of Saddam Hussein as a sugar daddy to global terrorists including al Qaeda and even the 9-11 conspirators. As Americans grow increasingly restless about Washington's continuing military presence in Iraq, to say nothing of what people think overseas, the administration ought to paint this picture. So why won't they?

#### Bush Administration Needs to Educate the World on Hussein and Terror

One Bush administration communications specialist told me that the government is bashful about all of this because these links are difficult to prove. And indeed they are. But prosecuting the informational battle in the War on Terrorism is not like prosecuting a Mafia don, which typically requires rock-solid exhibits such as wiretap intercepts, hidden-camera footage, DNA samples, and the testimony of deep-cover "Mob rats." On the contrary, it is important to emphasize, as strongly as possible, that the United States need not—and in fact should not—hold itself to courtroom standards of evidence except when appearing before domestic or international judges. The administration merely has to demonstrate its claims and refute those of its opponents, not convict Saddam Hussein before a jury of his peers.

Moreover, those who argue that Hussein was no terror master do not hold themselves to such lofty standards of proof, as the examples noted earlier demonstrate. The appropriate standard of evidence, then, to be entirely fair to both sides in this controversy, is not that of a trial, but rather that of a hearing on whether a criminal suspect should be indicted. In this respect, the "prosecution" definitely has a *prima facie* case that Hussein's Iraq indeed was a haven for terrorists until the moment U.S. troops invaded.

Terrorist attacks, of course, are meant to be at least as shadowy as Cosa Nostra hit jobs. Although this makes

metaphysical proof elusive, it is possible to reach reliable conclusions about such matters, even conclusions solid enough to justify military intervention. Hence, the White House and its relevant agencies owe it to the American people to highlight what they know about Saddam Hussein and terrorism, even if some (though not all) of this damning evidence is only circumstantial.

Assuming that he wishes to influence domestic and global opinion, President Bush and his administration immediately should guide Americans and the world through these sometimes-murky specifics and identify the patterns and conclusions that have arisen. Although the former Iraqi dictator never may endure a courtroom cross-examination, plenty of evidence clearly exists in the public record (and more should be declassified) to confirm that Saddam Hussein's ouster, Iraq's liberation, and its current rehabilitation were and are vital phases of the continuing War on Terrorism. An American failure in Iraq, conversely, could reinstate the *ancien regime* and restore Iraq's status as Terror Central Station.

President Bush and his top advisers urgently need to present this case, not haphazardly, but systematically and in as comprehensive, well-documented, and well-illustrated a fashion as their vast resources will allow.

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