



**THE  
LAND  
WARFARE  
PAPERS**

No. 46W SEPTEMBER 2004

**Suicide Bombings  
in Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Dr. Robert J. Bunker

and

John P. Sullivan

A National Security Affairs Paper  
Published on Occasion by

**THE INSTITUTE OF  
LAND WARFARE**

ASSOCIATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
Arlington, Virginia



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### **LAND WARFARE PAPER NO. 46W, SEPTEMBER 2004**

#### **Suicide Bombings in Operation Iraqi Freedom**

**by Dr. Robert J. Bunker and John P. Sullivan**

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## Foreword

Three years have passed since the 11 September 2001 attacks by al Qaeda suicide-bomber strike teams on the United States homeland. Since that attack U.S. military forces have engaged in battles against radical Islamic (jihadi) networks and their allies globally. Suicide bombings continue to be one of the dominant techniques encountered by U.S. Army and allied forces when engaging these opponents. In fact, these bombings are being used with increasing frequency.

According to the authors, “Suicide bombing can be defined as a ‘criminal-warfighting’ technique because it almost always falls within the ‘not crime and not war overlap’ of nonstate [opposing force] operations.” Prior to the events of 11 September 2001, this operational environment, and the nonstate forces that flourish within it, were considered to fall within the domain of Operations Other Than War (OOTW) and, more recently, Stability and Support Operations (SASO). The realization now exists that a new form of warfare has arisen between nation-states and opposing nonstate entities. Suicide bombings waged against U.S. forces and the public that they are sworn to defend will be a key component of this emerging form of warfare.

Based on these perceptions the value of this paper lies in the fact that it provides highly relevant information and analysis concerning suicide operations and military traditions, suicide bombings in operational and strategic context, suicide bombings during the pre-, trans- and postmajor combat phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and the future potentials of these bombings.



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September 2004



# **Suicide Bombings in Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Suicide bombing is the act of blowing oneself up in order to kill (destroy) or injure (damage) a target. The target may be military or civilian or both. Typically, the killing or physical destruction of the target is less important than the terror generated by undertaking the act. This ultimately makes suicide bombing a “disruptive firepower” capability (based on Bond-Relationship Targeting) utilized by opposing forces (OPFORs) which lack traditional destructive firepower.<sup>1</sup>

Suicide bombing can be defined as a “criminal-warfighting” technique because it almost always falls within the “not crime and not war overlap” of nonstate OPFOR operations. When conducted by state forces, such as the Iraqi military, those forces violated the rules of war by taking off their uniforms in an attempt to appear as noncombatants (thus mimicking nonstate OPFORs) for stealth-masking purposes. The Japanese use of Kamikaze aircraft in World War II would be considered a legitimate use of military force against military force, but that early-prototype form of suicide bombing has not been used for almost 60 years.

Persistent suicide bombings in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)—pre-, trans- and postmajor combat operations—promote the perception that this “criminal-warfighting” technique will be used with increasing frequency against U.S. Army and allied forces deployed for combat and humanitarian missions in and around Islamic lands.<sup>2</sup> This will require Army, Marine and constabulary personnel to develop appropriate intelligence, countermeasure and force protection capabilities to interdict, mitigate and respond to what has become a threat against U.S. forces in the global war against radical Islamic terrorism and insurgency.

To support this need, this essay will first provide historical baseline information by discussing suicide operations in the world’s dominant military traditions. Second, it will place suicide bombings in operational context and compare and contrast groups that engage in suicide bombings. Third, it will provide a chronology of suicide bombings that took place just prior to and during the major combat phase of OIF. Fourth, it will cover suicide bombings that occurred postmajor combat OIF up to 20 March 2004. Finally, it will look at the future potential of suicide bombing and provide information on emergent trends for indications and warning purposes.

## **Suicide Operations and Military Traditions**

Suicide operations (bombings and attacks) fall within three dominant philosophical military traditions: Western, Oriental and Islamic. Each of these traditions holds varying views on this offensive technique at both the individual and unit levels of doctrinal employment.

**Western tradition.** At the individual level, the Western tradition does not advocate suicide operations. Soldiers or pilots may, on their own initiative and typically when mortally wounded, take as many opposing soldiers with them as possible. In this instance, the combatant has nothing to lose, as in the case of a dying U.S. torpedo-bomber pilot ramming his aircraft into a Japanese warship during World War II. In rare instances uninjured individuals heroically sacrifice their lives against hopeless odds in defense of their comrades; one example is the two Delta snipers in Mogadishu in 1993 choosing to come to the aid of a downed Black Hawk crew.<sup>3</sup>

At the unit level, desperation in war can result in suicidal or near-suicidal operations. The holding action of King Leonidas and his Spartan bodyguards at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 B.C. forms the basis of what at times can be considered a “heroic” activity. More than a millennium and a half later the battles of Verdun and The Somme in World War I were clearly suicidal operations as the opposing forces repeatedly attempted to break the trench stalemate with massed human wave attacks. In the early days of the Korean War, the hasty blocking action provided by Task Force Smith was also near-suicidal in nature but required by dire circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

Still, within this tradition, soldiers do not strap explosive vests to their bodies or purposefully ram cars or trucks laden with explosives into buildings.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, the suicide bombings taking place in Iraq are totally alien to a Western military tradition, which in no way views such action as heroic in nature.

**Oriental tradition.** Suicide operations within this tradition are found sporadically across different cultures. References to Mongol light cavalry “suicide troops” (*mangudai*) date back to the 13th century. These troops were used as bait to charge the enemy and then retreat, hoping the enemy would break ranks and pursue them into a well-coordinated trap.<sup>6</sup> However, Mongol suicide or near-suicide operational concepts did not extend into the modern world as did those of the Japanese.

The Japanese military drew upon principles of Bushido, “the way (*do*) of the warrior (*bushi*).” These ideas were based on a fusion of Zen Buddhism and later Confucianism and were described in such works as the *Hagakure* written in 1716 and Inazo Nitobe’s *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, translated into English in 1900. This warrior code contained within it the provision for ritual suicide (*seppuku*) and made death preferable to the dishonor of being taken prisoner by enemy forces.<sup>7</sup> This tradition resulted in the prevalence of suicide operations as Japan went on the defensive during World War II. Examples were suicide charges led by sword-wielding officers and the emergence of Kamikaze (“divine wind”) suicide bomber aircraft units, midget submarine units and explosive motorboat units.<sup>8</sup>

Later, suicide bombings took place in the Vietnam War. The Viet Cong utilized sappers (demolition commandos) who would carry or wear satchel charges. These individuals would purposefully blow themselves up to destroy U.S. and Republic of Vietnam equipment and fortifications.

Suicide bombings were also undertaken in Sri Lanka and India by the special commando “Black Tiger” units of the Tamil Tigers (LTTE). The Tamils are a unique group because they possess a hybrid of Western and Oriental traditions that “advocate a Tamil nationalism that is expressed by its leaders in religious terms referring to the cult of martyrs.”<sup>9</sup> This group also is innovative, having copied Hezbollah suicide bombing concept of operations (CONOPS) in 1987—years before non-Shi’ia Palestinian terrorist groups used such methods. About 200 Tamil suicide bombings occurred from 1987 to late 2001, resulting in this group’s status as preeminent users of the technique. Currently, this terrorist group is in a state of “strategic pause” with regard to suicide bombings but is capable of starting them up again at any time.

**Islamic tradition.** This tradition is of specific interest because it is in this philosophical context that suicide bombings within Iraq are being conducted. Raphael Israeli has written the best overview of suicide bombing’s Islamic philosophical origins. The conceptual basis for the Shi’ia (Shi’ite) cult of martyrdom is a tradition that originates with the legendary suffering of Hussein ibn Ali, grandson of the prophet Muhammad. According to the Ashura story, Hussein sacrificed himself for Allah when he and his followers were annihilated by the army of Caliph Yazid at Karbalah in 680. The idea of individual “selfless sacrifice” was used during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s when units of Iranian children with the “keys to Paradise” hanging on their necks cleared Iraqi minefields with their bodies. These Shi’ia sacrifices were immortalized with the blood-red colored water in the fountain dedicated to martyrs in Tehran.<sup>10</sup>

In 1982 the Iranian revolution under the Ayatollah Khomeini was exported to Lebanon, where the Islamic Resistance, a precursor of *Hezbollah* (Party of God), launched a series of suicide attacks against U.S., French and Israeli targets. Thus, Hezbollah, created in 1982 as a counter to the Israeli invasion, provided the impetus for modern suicide operations. Hezbollah exploited the images of the cult of Hussein to inculcate self-sacrifice and “martyrdom” as an ideal for its fighters. This Shi’ia group, which utilizes both terrorist and guerilla techniques, conducted its first large suicide bombing in April 1983 against the U.S. embassy in Beirut. That bombing was directly influenced by the first documented vehicular suicide bombing (in December 1981) against the Iraqi embassy in Lebanon. The 1981 bombing was conducted by the Shi’ia Amal group, which had links with Hezbollah upon the latter’s formation.

Suicide bombings remained solely a Shi’ia activity for a decade until *Hamas* (Islamic Resistance Movement), a Sunni terrorist group, conducted a suicide bombing within Israel in April 1993 against Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers. This ideological transference from Shi’ia to Sunni came about through two circumstances. The first was Israel’s exiling of more than 400 Islamic activists, many of them Hamas members, to southern Lebanon in December 1992. These activists were befriended by Hezbollah based on the simple rationale that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” While in exile the Hamas members were influenced by Hezbollah’s suicide bombing CONOPS and took these techniques back to the West Bank when they were repatriated. The second event was the *fatwas* (religious edicts) created by fundamentalist Sunni scholars to rationalize how Shi’ia concepts of “selfless sacrifice” could fit

into Sunni thinking about martyrdom and the punishing of one's enemies. Suicide bombings spread to other fundamentalist Sunni terrorist groups and then to more secular and nationalistic terrorist organizations such as the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. The Brigades emerged in 2000 as an offshoot of Yassar Arafat's Fatah faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

This migration of suicide bombings from the religious to the secular set the stage for Saddam Hussein's attempts to use this technique against allied invasion forces in OIF.<sup>11</sup> It also explains why suicide bombings could be conducted by any combination of former Iraqi Ba'ath party loyalists (to a limited extent) and fundamentalist Shi'ia and Sunni terrorists now operating in Iraq.

From the perspective of individual and unit-level doctrinal employment, radical Islamic elements advocated suicide bombers at both levels. Suicide bombers look forward to death because, as *shuhada* (singular *shahid*), or martyrs, they expect to be rewarded by Allah in paradise while they and their families gain social status within their societies. Economic benefits, such as monetary payments, may also come to family members as an additional bonus for the completion of a successful operation. For example, Saddam Hussein provided cash payments of \$25,000 to the families of Palestinian insurgents killed in suicide attacks against Israeli targets during the Second Intifada.<sup>12</sup> Suicide operations range in organizational sophistication as well. A single suicide bomber may act individually against a target, two or three may coordinate the bombings, or a larger number of suicide bombers may participate, as exemplified by the 19 al Qaeda members who hijacked four U.S. airliners on 11 September 2001, coordinating their activities as part of a strike force against multiple targets.

## **Suicide Bombings in Operational and Strategic Context**

As previously noted, suicide operations, which are more inclusive than suicide bombings, have historically taken place in all three dominant military traditions. However, only in the Islamic tradition are suicide bombings currently employed. The Tamil Tigers, representative of the mystical Western-Oriental tradition, have not engaged in suicide bombings for the past few years.

As noted earlier, modern suicide bombings were first operationally employed in the early 1980s in southern Lebanon by the terrorist Amal and Hezbollah groups. The technique spread to the Tamil Tigers in 1987 and to Hamas in 1993. Over the ensuing decade, an increasing number of terrorist groups have engaged in suicide bombings: Palestine Islamic Jihad in 1994, Kurdistan Workers Party in 1996, al Qaeda in 1998, Chechens in 2000 and al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in 2002.<sup>13</sup> Since 1993 this pattern, with the exception of the Kurdistan Workers Party, is derived from radical Islamic groups netting together in a global insurgency against the United States and her allies.

Major groups engaging in suicide bombings can be analyzed by delivery modes (see table 1) and target set (see table 2). The Tamil Tigers and al Qaeda top the list in suicide bombing sophistication, followed by the Chechens and Hezbollah. Less sophisticated groups are Hamas,

Palestine Islamic Jihad and al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, though they have engaged in a greater number of suicide bombings than some of the other major groups. The Kurdistan Workers Party is at the bottom of the sophistication scale.

**Table 1**

<b>Major Groups by “Suicide Bomber” Delivery Mode</b>				
<b>Group</b>	<b>Personnel (Human)</b>	<b>Vehicular</b>	<b>Aircraft</b>	<b>Vessel</b>
<b>al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>al Qaeda</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Chechens</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Hamas</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Hezbollah</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Tamil Tigers (LTTE)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>

Source: Counter-OPFOR Program, NLECTC-West©2003

**Table 2**

<b>Major Groups by “Suicide Bomber” Target Set</b>							
<b>Group</b>	<b>Civilian (Personnel)</b>	<b>Military/LE* (Personnel)</b>	<b>VIP</b>	<b>Transit</b>	<b>Aircraft</b>	<b>Vessel</b>	<b>Buildings/ Infrastructure</b>
<b>al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>al Qaeda</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Chechens</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Hamas</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Hezbollah</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Tamil Tigers (LTTE)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

Source: Counter-OPFOR Program, NLECTC-West©2003

More sophisticated groups use larger and higher-order explosive devices. They engage in simultaneous (multiple suicide bombers or targets) or sequential attacks (secondary and tertiary suicide bombers at the same target) and often combine the attack with other weaponry. They have the ability to engage “hard” rather than solely “soft” targets, partially as a result of larger bombs and better explosives, and can draw upon more delivery methods. Triggering methods (fuses, pull cords, cell phones) also increase with sophistication, as does the lessened detection of explosive devices by sensors (x-rays, metal detectors, dogs, soldiers).<sup>14</sup>

Operational advantages of suicide bombings over normal terrorist bombings include the following:

- *The device is precisely delivered to the target.* The suicide bomber functions as a “precision weapon” taking the explosive device right to the target. This is a dimension of a standoff attack in the sense that the terrorist is “invisible” (stealth-masked) until the device is detonated, which helps overcome the Western advantage of standoff targeting based on physical distance.
- *Harder targets can be attacked.* Targets which cannot normally be attacked can now be reached. Heavily fortified compounds with proper standoff distances will not be damaged by normal terrorist bombings whereas suicide bombers can crash through the front gate of a fortified compound and reach the desired target. Such gate crashing has taken place repeatedly in vehicular suicide bombings.
- *The device has no window of vulnerability.* The explosive device cannot be found and moved or rendered safe prior to detonation.
- *No planned egress is required.* The explosive charge simply has to be delivered to the target. Escape routes and avoidance of capture afterward are not a consideration.
- *No one is left alive to interrogate.* Because suicide bombers are not typically captured, operational security (OPSEC) of the terrorist group is better maintained. The Tamil Tigers use poison capsules as a fail-safe method in this regard. Some of the Palestinian groups use a redundant, cell phone-activated detonator that can be set off by calling the cell phone number in case the bomber attempts to back out of his or her mission.
- *No burden of wounded comrades exists.* Injured comrades create a logistical strain on a group.
- *The “horror factor” increases the psychological impact.* Suicide bombers are blown to pieces with their heads (as in the case of wearing a bomb vest) typically being separated from their bodies. Individuals also eye one another with suspicion in areas where suicide bombings frequently take place. This can create higher levels of anxiety for U.S. troops when dealing with locals. Everyone in a crowd now has to be scanned for bulky clothing and unusual behavior.

- *Blood-borne pathogens can be delivered.* Suicide bombers infected with hepatitis and HIV can create a “hazmat” incident by spreading disease to targeted personnel. Bone fragments and blood-covered bolts and nails may directly transmit pathogens from the bomber to nearby victims. While this is less commonly used and of questionable utility, some Palestinian terrorist groups have used infected bombers.

Another strategic consideration: suicide bombings create martyrs for the society from which the group recruits. As more suicide bombers kill themselves and gain prestige and heavenly rewards in the eyes of their society, the cycle of violence can escalate into a “religious movement” among the faithful. Already, Palestinian society is taking on characteristics of a death cult with young children preferring to grow up to be suicide bombers rather than engineers and doctors. Recruitment of new suicide bombers is no longer difficult as the movement grows.

Radical Islamic networks, which include al Qaeda, are engaging in a global insurgency against the West. Martyrdom is one of the common bonds that hold this insurgency together, and it is increasing in strength as more terrorist groups engage in suicide bombings. The Roman Empire faced a similar strategic dilemma with Christian martyrs. The radical Islamic link to martyrdom, now more than 20 years long, must be broken before it becomes too fully entrenched. Failure to do so has the potential to create a strategic dilemma for the United States.

## **Suicide Bombings in Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Suicide operations have become emblematic of postmodern terrorism and war. As a tactic, human-, vehicle- and vessel-borne suicide bombers are a continuing concern to military, police and security forces. This concern extends to Iraq and has been seen in all phases of operations in the Iraqi theater. The account of “major combat” operations presented in David Zucchino’s *Los Angeles Times Magazine* article “The Thunder Run” mentions suicide bombers during that phase of operations.<sup>15</sup> “The Thunder Run” covers the prelude to the fall of Baghdad from 4 April to 8 April 2003. In his account, Zucchino, embedded with Task Force 4-64 of the 2d Brigade, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), describes attempted suicide attacks against U.S. forces.

For example, while traversing Highway 8 toward Baghdad on 5 April, a mechanized column encountered small arms and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire. Intermingled with Iraqi military vehicles were “civilian” cars, taxis, buses and motorcycles. Some Iraqi combatants wore military uniforms, some wore civilian clothes, and others wore the black attire of the Fedayeen Saddam. During this encounter, while Task Force 1-64, a battalion known as Rogue, was taking heavy fire, “Two suicide vehicles packed with explosives speed down the offramps”<sup>16</sup> toward U.S. forces. These vehicles were destroyed before they could complete their attack. Later in the article, Zucchino describes suicide vehicles, including an orange-and-white taxi loaded with explosives—intermingled with Fedayeen, Arab volunteers and Republican

Guards—attempting to ram a mechanized U.S. column.<sup>17</sup> Such events would become increasingly familiar to U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq as the conflict matured.

This section attempts to place these suicide operations in context by describing them in the premajor combat buildup, during major combat operations (transmajor combat) and during the postmajor combat phase of Iraqi Freedom. In addition, the postmajor combat phase is divided into two segments: pre- and postcapture of Saddam Hussein. We also identified those attacks occurring during Ramadan 2003. Our analysis is based exclusively on open sources (known as open source intelligence, or OSINT). We relied primarily upon media reporting from multiple sources, including wire services, news websites and newspapers. Several chronologies and databases also were consulted. In all cases, attempts were made to deconflict varying reports and casualty figures. Not all sources agreed upon details, but the major trend is consistent.<sup>18</sup>

For example, on 19 March 2004, one day before the one-year anniversary of the end of major combat, the Associated Press (AP) reported that at least 660 persons were killed in 24 suicide bombings over that year. The AP report started its tally on 29 March 2003 and ended it on 18 March 2004, recounting 18 vehicular and six human-borne bombings. The AP article noted that this frequency was greater than the Israel-Palestinian toll over the past three and one-half years.<sup>19</sup> We recorded 49 entries for the same time period (some being potential incidents, some attempts, other multiple strikes). Our results are provided in appendix 1, “Chronology of Suicide Bombings in Operation Iraqi Freedom.” Capabilities of potential “suicide operations sponsors” are provided in table 3. These capabilities are described in the narrative below as well as in the specific entries in appendix 1.

**Table 3**

<b>“Suicide Bomber” Delivery Modes in Operation Iraqi Freedom</b>				
<b>Actor/Group</b>	<b>Personnel (Human)</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Aircraft</b>	<b>Vessel</b>
<b>Ansar al-Islam</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No
<b>Jihad/al Qaeda</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Fedayeen/Iraqi</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>

Source: Counter-OPFOR Program, NLECTC-West©2003

Overall, we identified a total of 54 entries. Some of these accounted for multiple attacks during a single coordinated assault. The 54 entries yielded total casualties of approximately 813 killed and 2,154 injured. Our numbers are approximations given the discrepancies among reports. The figures include the suicide bombers in the totals. When we divided by phase we found two events during the premajor combat phase (five killed in one vehicle and one human-borne assault), nine events during the transmajor combat phase (17 killed, 33 injured in five vehicle and four human-borne assaults) and 43 events during the postmajor combat phase

(791 killed, 2,121 injured in 35 vehicle, eight human-borne and one unknown-mode assaults). When we subdivided the postmajor combat phase into periods taking place before and after the capture of Saddam Hussein, we documented 18 events before capture (totaling 274 killed and 749 injured in 16 vehicular and two human-borne attacks) and 25 events postcapture (517 killed, 1,372 injured in 18 vehicular attacks, six human-borne and one unknown mode). We observed six events occurring during the so-called “Ramadan Offensive” in 2003 which yielded 102 deaths and 354 injured.

Our first entry occurred on 26 February 2003 during the buildup to the war. The combat phase started on 20 March 2003 with President Bush’s announcement of the war’s start, and our first entry in this phase was recorded on 22 March 2003. We begin the postmajor combat period on 2 May 2003—the date of President Bush’s announcement that major combat operations had ended. Our last entry is on 18 March 2004 because our analysis ends on 20 March 2004, one year from the start of major combat. Suicide attacks have continued, however, and we envision a follow-on analysis to document those attacks.

## **Premajor Combat**

The premajor combat phase includes entries on 26 February 2003 and 13 March 2003. Both of these events involved Ansar al-Islam attacking Kurdish interests. In addition to these attacks, this time frame is notable for calls for suicide attacks against U.S. and coalition forces should war begin as Islamists started the buildup to suicide operations in Iraq. For example, Iranian hard-liners, including Hosein Shariatmadari in a 21 January 2003 editorial in *Kayhan*, called for Palestinian suicide bombers to target U.S. forces in the region.<sup>20</sup> By 11 February, Iraqi officials also were threatening suicide operations should the war commence, with Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan asserting that Iraq would deploy thousands of suicide attackers.<sup>21</sup>

On 11 February, global jihadi Osama bin Laden joined the information campaign with an audiotape aired on Qatar’s Al-Jazeera television network calling on Iraqis to carry out suicide attacks against U.S. forces. This call was echoed on 23 February by Afghani warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who urged Iraqis and Muslims worldwide to carry out suicide attacks against the United States. By 12 March, Saddam Hussein was calling for martyrdom-seeking Arabs to join the struggle and conduct suicide bombings against the U.S. military. Meanwhile, British naval leadership expressed concerns about potential Iraqi suicide vessels, and reports of Iraqi suicide training camps began to surface.

## **Transmajor Combat**

The declared war beginning 20 March 2003 initiated the transmajor combat phase. The first attack in this phase also occurred in Kurdistan and was directed against a Kurdish military checkpoint at Khurmali. In addition to the suicide bomber, at least three Kurds and an Australian news cameraman were killed. By 21 March Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad had joined

the call to employ suicide bombings, with the late Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi urging Iraqis to prepare suicide belts and confront America with all possible means, including martyrdom operations. In response, U.S. forces were advised to strip prisoners of war to counter potential suicide bombings.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Iranian naval forces reportedly intercepted an explosive-laden Iraqi fast boat, claiming that at least four additional suicide vessels had been spotted.<sup>23</sup> On 26 March, expatriate Ansar leader Mullah Krekar told Dutch television that Ansar suicide commandos would attack U.S. troops, a claim that had to be taken seriously given the Ansar attacks in Kurdistan. Information began to surface that foreign fighters, including Hezbollah in an expedition organized by Hassan Nasrallah, were en route to join the war.<sup>24</sup>

The first successful attack against U.S. forces occurred on 29 March in Najaf when four U.S. Soldiers were killed in an Iraqi vehicle-borne suicide attack. Iraqi leaders claimed this was the beginning of a “routine military policy,” and the attacker, junior army officer Ali Hammadi al-Namani, was posthumously awarded two medals by Saddam Hussein.<sup>25</sup> In the immediate aftermath of this attack, information operations supporting Iraqi and jihadi use of suicide operations increased. These propaganda actions were supported by an “affinity” attack in Netanya, Israel, on 30 March, injuring 49 Israelis in what Islamic Jihad called “Palestine’s gift to the heroic people of Iraq.”<sup>26</sup> Other indicators of foreign suicide bomber potentials also surfaced, including claims that the al-Quds Brigades had deployed suicide operatives to Baghdad. Islamic leaders, websites and newspapers across the Middle East and elsewhere amplified the call to jihad and encouraged suicide martyrs to defend Iraq.<sup>27</sup>

U.S. Marines found a cache of suicide vests in a Baghdad school on 13 April 2003. The vests, lined with C4 plastic explosive and containing ball bearings, were believed to have been secreted by paramilitary fighters associated with the Fedayeen Saddam. Additional vests and evidence of suicide training and recruitment by Iraqis and foreign jihadis were also found during this period.

Suicide attacks during the transmajor combat phase were limited in scope and sophistication. Most assaults were directed against U.S. military convoys, columns or checkpoints. While suicide attacks during major combat had little military significance, they were an emerging force protection concern. Their inherent symbolic component appears to have served as a precursor for suicide operations in the insurgency that followed.

## **Postmajor Combat**

Suicide operations gained momentum during the postmajor combat phase with at least 43 suicide events occurring after the end of major combat. These yielded a higher level of casualties and, in some cases, demonstrated increased sophistication in terms of targeting and coordination. Attacks during this phase continued to focus on U.S. military targets but added other targets of increasing strategic importance. New targets included Italian Carabinieri, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Iraqi police, Shi’ia

religious venues, political figures and diplomatic sites such as the Jordanian and Turkish Embassies and United Nations (UN) facilities.

The first attack documented in this phase was the 7 August truck bombing of the Jordanian Embassy. Coming after a lull in operations, this appeared to signal the start of concerted suicide bombings in support of an Iraqi insurgency. It was followed by the 19 August attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad. Employing a suicide-initiated vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED), the truck-borne assault targeted the front of the headquarters located in the former Canal Hotel. The UN attack killed 25 and injured 100 others; among those killed was the head of mission, UN Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello. This attack was clearly intended to erode public and international support for the U.S. reconstruction of Iraq, and a result of the attack was the severe curtailing of UN operations. A second attack against the UN was initiated on 22 September in what appeared to be a reinforcing action aimed at eroding coalition stability efforts.

The start of Ramadan resulted in the apparent resurgence of anticoalition suicide attacks. Called a “Ramadan Offensive” in the media, the time period of 26 October to 24 November 2003 accounted for six suicide events. Two of these were of major symbolic and strategic importance: the 27 October attack on the Red Cross offices, which was coordinated with attacks at five Iraqi police stations (40 killed and more than 200 injured), and the 12 November attack against the Italian Carabinieri base in Nasiriya (31 killed and 80 injured). These attacks are believed to be the work of jihadis with al Qaeda influence. They resulted in the suspension of humanitarian operations by many nongovernmental relief organizations and political discussions worldwide on the presence of coalition forces. Attacks on Shi’ia religious leaders, mosques and shrines also occurred in this period, fueling lack of confidence in the coalition’s reconstruction plans.

During this phase, suicide bombings were increasingly used as a tool to stimulate insurgency. Sophistication also increased, with larger bombs, the use of fuel tankers, the perfidious use of ambulances and police cars, combination assaults employing twin suicide operations, and suicide operations augmenting armed assaults. During this phase foreign jihadi fighters apparently played a crucial role. The premajor combat information operations seems to have resonated. Some accounts suggest al Qaeda links, including the infusion of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Chechen members of bin Laden’s International Islamic Front (IFF), as well as Pakistanis, Saudis and Jordanians.<sup>28</sup>

As noted in a 14 December 2003 *Los Angeles Times* account, insurgents demonstrated increasing sophistication in terms of tactics, strategy and intelligence operations supporting a multipronged insurgency. Suicide operations were central to this mix: “A menacing wild card in the war is the corps of suicide bombers, mostly believed to be foreign born *jihadis*, whom the insurgent forces appear to be able to call on for precision attacks, such as the bombings at the United Nations’ headquarters in Baghdad and a strike at Italian military police headquarters in the southern city of Nasiriyah.”<sup>29</sup>

By 29 November media reports detailed al Qaeda links to the Iraqi insurgency, noting that Iraq had become central to its global insurgency efforts. European jihadis were being recruited for Iraq, and the importance of Abu Musab Zarqawi's network, as well as the role of a Zarqawi-Ansar alliance in the staging of suicide operations against military, diplomatic and humanitarian targets in Iraq, emerged.<sup>30</sup> In early February 2004 Islamist leaders were proclaiming that martyrdom operations were a religious obligation in Palestine and Iraq.<sup>31</sup> By 29 February 2004, media reports suggested that the jihadi suicide bombing imperative had "taken root in the ravaged landscape of postwar Iraq."<sup>32</sup> This phase of operations is significant for the increased employment of suicide attacks within an increasing insurgent operational tempo. The gains in sophistication demonstrated in the attacks on the UN, Red Cross and Carabinieri prior to Saddam's capture carried into the postcapture period, with an increase in events, casualties and sophistication. Suicide bombings had become firmly embedded in the Iraqi insurgent armamentarium.

## **Future Potentials**

Suicide bombings during OIF started with a series of low-key, preconflict indicators. A couple of successful bombings took place in Kurdistan and were followed by calls from the Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein to use martyrdom operations to thwart U.S. intentions. These indicators gained steam as Islamist leaders made Saddam's call their own to stimulate their vision of an anti-United States and anti-Western global jihad while fueling their own global insurgency. During major combat operations, a relatively small number of tactically insignificant suicide attacks were directed against U.S. military forces. These attacks did not forestall the collapse of Saddam's regime or affect the outcome of combat operations.

These attacks—like any attack employing suicide operations by irregular forces cloaked in civilian attire—were clear violations of international law, specifically Article 37 of Protocol 1 to the Geneva Conventions of 1977.<sup>33</sup> As such they constitute perfidy or "acts inviting the confidence of an adversary to lead him to believe that he is entitled to, or is accorded, protection under the rules of international law." While the United States did not ratify the 1977 additional protocols, customary prohibitions of such conduct still apply. In addition, the targeting of civilians is clearly terrorism and constitutes a war crime. International humanitarian law absolutely prohibits intentional targeting of civilians (including police).

While traditional Islamic law explicitly proscribes suicide and the targeting of innocent civilians, the jihadi movement, exemplified by Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda and International Islamic Front, Palestinian insurgents and "secular" groups such as Fatah and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, sidesteps these prohibitions. These groups do so by referring to suicide bombers as martyrs and interpreting their actions as a religious duty. The tactic of "extreme revenge"<sup>34</sup> has been transported to Iraq and—perhaps in the future—elsewhere.

The suicide bombings in Iraq, particularly their use against first U.S. troops, then their extension to UN, Red Cross, police and civilian targets, demonstrated a new chapter in the struggle against global terrorism and insurgency. *Istishad*, or martyrdom operations, signal an

escalation in conflict since they seek maximum casualties and destruction. Suicide attacks are low-cost precision means that yield a high symbolic return. At the tactical level, suicide operations allow precision targeting through manipulation of organic stealth: the bomber is masked until the operation occurs, barring accurate tactical intelligence derived from human sources within the combatant cell.

Because many suicide operations—at least among sophisticated adversaries, as is the case in Israel and Palestine—involve secondary or twin attacks, an awareness of secondary attack potentials must be ingrained in all military and constabulary forces involved in counterinsurgency, peacemaking, peacekeeping, stability and support operations. Once the first bomb goes off, forces must always look for the secondary or tertiary potentials. Tactical response should include separating suspicious actors from crowds and massed forces. This is a “police” type operation and, as such, requires that increased training in constabulary operations and a higher number of constabulary forces be integrated into future military force structures. Because checkpoints are frequently targeted, solid standoff distances at checkpoints and during intervention with suspicious actors are key. Countering suicide attacks demands enhanced intelligence, appropriate offensive military and constabulary operations, effective defensive and force protection measures and a force structure tailored to the counterinsurgency environment.

As seen in this short analysis, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) employed by suicide bombers evolve. The best solution for dissecting evolving TTPs is through real-time intelligence collection, assessment and dissemination. As soon as a suicide operation occurs or an attempt is interdicted, the TTP needs to be documented and an advisory on the equipment used and behavioral attributes of the human bomber (i.e., actions before detonation) should be disseminated to friendly forces immediately. This quick tactical assessment must not be delayed because the OPFOR will evolve its tactics to get on subsequent targets.

Suicide bombers in Iraq (or in any other theater, for that matter) will conduct operations based upon local conditions and capabilities. For example, vehicle-borne attacks frequently rely upon high-speed approach to circumvent tactical security measures while multiple attacks are designed to overwhelm operational-level coordination and force allocation. TTPs used in Palestine and by the LTTE in the Indian subcontinent provide good background information, as do the events recounted here. However, the current and future OPFOR will adapt its TTPs to local context, capabilities and countermeasures.

Strategically, suicide bombings erode the confidence of the public in the affected region and the home audience of expeditionary forces. In Iraq, attacks appear to have stimulated the insurgency and undermined attempts to build a secure civil society. International organizations, such as the UN, Red Cross and humanitarian entities, become reluctant to operate in the contested theater, and that hinders attempts to restore stability. The UN attack, for example, led to the withdrawal of nearly all UN personnel from Iraq, retarding progress toward transfer of sovereignty and political evolution.

Perhaps most important, the experience of suicide bombings and their role in nurturing and sustaining a serious insurgency provides key strategic lessons. Iraq, perhaps like much of the Arab world with little historical tolerance for occupation (especially by non-Muslims) in combination with the contemporary appeal of radical jihad, finds itself in an incendiary political mixture that provides Iraqi insurgents motivation, legitimacy and a global support network. Adding to this the infusion of foreign jihadi fighters and the influence of transnational organized crime makes paramount the need for intelligence and law enforcement components in the military counterinsurgency.<sup>35</sup> The jihadi-criminal-insurgent mix challenges civil governance and the rule of law. Military forces cannot reconstruct civil society alone. The Iraqi experience demonstrates the need for expanded constabulary forces and the integration of military units, intelligence, police forces, planning and operations in concert with (or supporting the formation of) civil authorities.

As the United States seeks stability in Iraq and, potentially, in other states captured by radical Islamists, such interaction is essential. Suicide bombings have continued in Iraq beyond the time frame covered by this paper. As we write this conclusion, additional attacks are taking place with regularity, fueling insurgency and stimulating jihadi support. U.S. Soldiers and Marines continue to find indicators of future suicide potentials, including new caches of bomb belts and jihadi propaganda promoting suicide tactics. We hope to capture those lessons learned as the United States continues its struggle against extremists who use the suicide of their warriors as the ultimate sign of their resolve and rejection of global civil society built upon the rule of law.

## Appendix

### Chronology of Suicide Bombings in Operation Iraqi Freedom

Date	Location	Mode	Target	Suspected Actor	Approximate Casualties (includes SB)
<b><i>Pre-Major Combat Phase</i></b>					
26 Feb 03	Zamaqi	Vehicle (car)	Kurdish military HQ	Ansar al-Islam	4 killed
13 Mar 03	Northern Iraq	Human	Kurdish political leadership	Ansar al-Islam	1 killed
<b><i>Trans-Major Combat Phase</i></b>					
22 Mar 03	Khormal	Vehicle (car)	Kurdish military checkpoint/ journalist	Ansar al-Islam	5 killed 24 injured
25 Mar 03	Faw <i>unconfirmed</i>	Possible human	British military (tank)	Iraqi military/ paramilitary	Unknown
29 Mar 03	Najaf	Vehicle (car)	U.S. military checkpoint	Iraqi military/ paramilitary	5 killed
29 Mar 03	Central Iraq	Attempt Vehicle (car)	U.S. military convoy	Unknown	Unknown
03 Apr 03	NW of Baghdad	Vehicle (car)	U.S. military checkpoint	Unknown (2 females)	5 killed
04 Apr 03	Baghdad	Attempt Vehicles (car/bus)	U.S. military convoy/column	Iraqi military/ paramilitary	Unknown
06 Apr 03	Baghdad	Attempt Human	U.S. military convoy/column	Iraqi military/ paramilitary	Unknown
10 Apr 03	Baghdad	Human	U.S. military checkpoint	Unknown	1 killed 4 injured
12 Apr 03	Baghdad	Human	U.S. military checkpoint	Unknown	1 killed 5 injured
[R] signifies attacks during Ramadan; [C] signifies coordinated attacks.					

## Appendix (continued)

Date	Location	Mode	Target	Suspected Actor	Approximate Casualties (includes SB)
<b><i>Post-Major Combat Phase</i></b>					
07 Aug 03	Baghdad	Vehicle (truck)	Jordanian Embassy	Unknown	19 killed 50 injured
19 Aug 03	Baghdad	Vehicle (car)	United Nations HQ	Unknown	25 killed 150 injured
29 Aug 03	Najaf	Vehicle (car)	Mosque	Unknown	95 killed
03 Sep 03	Ramadi	Human	U.S. military base	Unknown	2 killed 2 injured
09 Sep 03	Ibril/Abril	Vehicle (car)	U.S. military checkpoint	Unknown	2 killed 17 injured
22 Sep 03	Baghdad	Vehicle (car)	United Nations HQ	Unknown	2 killed 19 injured
09 Oct 03	Baghdad/ Sadr City	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Unknown	10 killed 30 injured
12 Oct 03	Baghdad	Vehicle (car)	Hotel	Unknown	8 killed 38 injured
14 Oct 03	Baghdad	Vehicle (car)	Turkish Embassy	Unknown	2 killed 13 injured
27 Oct 03 [R]	Baghdad	Multiple vehicles (truck, ambulance, police car) [C]	ICRC and Iraqi police (5 stations)	Jihadis/al Qaeda	40 killed 200+ injured
28 Oct 03 [R]	Fallujah	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Unknown	6 killed 4 injured
12 Nov 03 [R]	Nasiriya	Vehicle (lorry/truck + car) [C]	Italian Carabinieri	Jihadis/al Qaeda	31 killed 80 injured
20 Nov 03 [R]	Kirkuk	Vehicle (lorry/truck)	Kurdish political leadership	Ansar al-Islam	5 killed 40 injured
22 Nov 03 [R]	Khan Bani Sa'ad	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Unknown	10 killed 10 injured

[R] signifies attacks during Ramadan; [C] signifies coordinated attacks.

## Appendix (continued)

Date	Location	Mode	Target	Suspected Actor	Approximate Casualties (includes SB)
<b><i>Post-Major Combat Phase</i></b>					
22 Nov 03 [R]	Baquba	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Unknown	1 killed 2 injured
09 Dec 03	Husseiniya	Human	U.S. military base	Unknown	1 killed 2 injured
11 Dec 03	Tal Afar	Vehicle (car)	U.S. military base	Unknown	1 killed 60 injured
<b><i>Post-Major Combat Phase/Capture Phase</i></b>					
14 Dec 03	Khalidiyah	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Unknown	17 killed 33 injured
15 Dec 03	Ameriyah	Vehicle (car) [C]	Iraqi police (2 attacks, 1 thwarted)	Unknown	1 killed 12 injured
15 Dec 03	Husseiniya	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Unknown	9 killed 15 injured
16 Dec 03	Baghdad	Vehicle (lorry/truck) fuel tanker	Iraqi police	Unknown	11 killed 15 injured
16 Dec 03	Tikrit	Unknown	Iraqi police	Unknown	1 killed 2 injured
24 Dec 03	Ibril/Abril	Vehicle (lorry/truck)	Kurdish political leadership	Unknown	5 killed 50+ injured
27 Dec 03	Kerbala/Karbala	Vehicle (lorry/truck +car) [C]	Coalition military and city hall	Unknown	17 killed 117 injured
31 Dec 03	Baghdad	Possible vehicle (car)	Restaurant	Unknown	8 killed 30 injured
09 Jan 04	Baquba	Human/bicycle	Mosque	Unknown	5 killed 37 injured
[R] signifies attacks during Ramadan; [C] signifies coordinated attacks.					

## Appendix (continued)

Date	Location	Mode	Target	Suspected Actor	Approximate Casualties (includes SB)
<b><i>Post-Major Combat Phase/Capture Phase</i></b>					
14 Jan 04	Baquba	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Unknown	5 killed 12+ injured
18 Jan 04	Baghdad	Vehicle (lorry/truck)	Coalition Political Authority/U.S. military check-point	Unknown	31 killed 60 injured
24 Jan 04	Khalidiya	Vehicle (car/SUV)	U.S. military checkpoint	Unknown	4 killed 14 injured
28 Jan 04	Baghdad	Vehicle (ambulance)	Hotel	Unknown	6 killed 9 injured
31 Jan 04	Mosul	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Ansar al-Sunna Army	10 killed 50 injured
01 Feb 04	Ibril/Abril	Human (x2) [C]	Kurdish political leadership	Ansar al-Islam/al Qaeda	111 killed 133 injured
09 Feb 04	Ramadi	Human	Political leadership	Unknown	1 killed 3 injured
10 Feb 04	Iskandariya	Vehicle (lorry/truck)	Iraqi police	Al Qaeda	53 killed 150 injured
11 Feb 04	Baghdad	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi Army Recruitment Center	Al Qaeda	47 killed 50 injured
18 Feb 04	Hilla	Vehicle (car, x2) [C]	Coalition military base	Unknown	10 killed 65 injured
23 Feb 04	Kirkuk	Vehicle (car)	Iraqi police	Unknown	8 killed 35 injured
02 Mar 04	Baghdad	Human (x3) [C]	Shi'ite shrine	Unknown	61 killed 200 injured
02 Mar 04	Kerbala/Karbala	Combo-assault with Human (x1) [C]	Shi'ia pilgrims	Unknown	None
[R] signifies attacks during Ramadan; [C] signifies coordinated attacks.					

## Appendix (coninued)

Date	Location	Mode	Target	Suspected Actor	Approximate Casualties (includes SB)
<b><i>Post-Major Combat Phase/Capture Phase</i></b>					
17 Mar 04	Baghdad	Vehicle (car)	Hotel	Al Qaeda	7 killed 35 injured
18 Mar 04	Basara	Possible vehicle (car)	Hotel	Unknown	4 killed 15 injured

[R] signifies attacks during Ramadan; [C] signifies coordinated attacks.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See the bond-relationship targeting [BRT] section of Robert J. Bunker, “Higher Dimensional Warfighting.” *Military Review*, Vol. 79, No. 5. September-October 1999, pp. 57–59.
- <sup>2</sup> Suicide bombings are known by different terms based upon the orientation of the group in question. Jihadi and other radical Islamic groups term these bombings as “martyrdom operations” and those who blow themselves up as a “martyr” (*shahid*). Many officers in U.S. law enforcement commonly use the imprecise term “homicide bombers.” Some academics, such as Raphael Israeli, refer to suicide bombers as “Islamikazes” (Islam + the suffix “-kazes” derived from the Japanese term “Kamikazes”). For purposes of simplicity we will use the dominant terms “suicide bombings” and “suicide bombers.”
- <sup>3</sup> Sergeant First Class Randy Shughart and Master Sergeant Gary Gordon were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. For more on their heroic actions, see Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999.
- <sup>4</sup> Task Force Smith was viewed by General Douglas MacArthur as an “arrogant display of strength.” It was initially thought that this ad hoc 540-man force might fool the North Koreans into thinking a larger force was present or even make them retreat when they found out they were engaging American soldiers—neither occurrence took place. After two valiant tactical engagements at the Battle of Osan on 5 July 1950, what was left of the small task force had to withdraw in the face of advancing KPA (Korean People’s Army) units. See Maurice Matloff, ed., *American Military History*. Vol. 2: 1902–1996 (Conshohocken, Pa.: Combined Books, 1996), p. 207.
- <sup>5</sup> Fringe behavior still existed in this regard. Some members of the anarchist movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (the terrorists of their day) conducted suicide attacks. In 1892 Russian anarchist Alexander Berkman tried to ignite an explosive capsule in his teeth while being subdued by police in the botched assassination attempt of industrialist Henry Clay Frick (Caleb Carr, *The Lessons of Terror* [New York: Random House, 2002], p. 148). This means that even in Western tradition terrorists have the potential to engage in suicide attacks. In fact, early Christianity considered suicide for God as lawful—“He who knows it is unlawful to kill himself may never the less do so if he is ordered by God,” wrote Bishop Augustine in the 4th Century. See *City of God*, Book I, Sections 18-26. *Summa Theologica* 2-2, q. 64,5.
- <sup>6</sup> James Chambers, *The Devil’s Horsemen: The Mongol Invasion of Europe* (Edison, N.J.: Castle Books, 2003), p. 63.
- <sup>7</sup> Robert J. Bunker, “Bushido,” in Stanley Sandler, ed., *World War II in the Pacific: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), pp. 134–135.
- <sup>8</sup> For an extensive list of Japanese suicide units, see Richard O’Neill, *Suicide Squads* (Sydney: Lansdowne Press, 1981).
- <sup>9</sup> Peter Schalk, “The Revival of the Martyr Cults,” *Temenos*, Vol. 33, 1997, p. 151.
- <sup>10</sup> Raphael Israeli, “A Manual of Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*,

Vol. 14, No. 3, Winter 2002, pp. 23–40.

- <sup>11</sup> While suicide bombings spread to the secular socialist Kurdistan Workers Party years prior to Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, it was probably too early to directly influence Iraqi thinking.
- <sup>12</sup> See "Iraq continues paying Palestinian suicide bombers families," *Iraqi Kurdistan Dispatch*, 20 June 2002, <http://www.ikurd.info/news-20jun-p2.htm>; and "Saddam stokes war with suicide bomber cash," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 March 2002, <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/03/25/10174766310.html>.
- <sup>13</sup> These initial incident dates are derived from open source information (OSINT).
- <sup>14</sup> More specific information on tactics and techniques are outside the scope and venue of this work. OSINT documents which can be referenced are The International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya; *Countering Suicide Terrorism*, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai, 2002; Human Rights Watch, *Erased in a Moment: Suicide Bombing Attacks Against Israeli Civilians*, New York, 2002, [www.hrw.org/reports/2002/isrl-pa/](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/isrl-pa/). U.S. military and law enforcement should see the unclassified but restricted Technical Support Working Group, *Suicide Bombing in World Terrorism*, 26 June 2003.
- <sup>15</sup> David Zucchino, "The Thunder Run," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, 7 December 2003, pp. 19–38.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* While Zucchino's account chronicles several attempted suicide attacks against U.S. forces on 5 and 7 April during the battle for Baghdad, our OSINT chronology contains several others. Needless to say, media reporting of the situation in Iraq is clouded by the "fog of war." Undoubtedly, accounts of these attacks vary, some are not reported, and details are often sketchy. All of these events should therefore be viewed as representative rather than definitive.
- <sup>18</sup> Media reports surveyed included the wire services Reuters, Agence France Press, Associated Press and United Press International. Websites including BBC, CNN, Fox News, Reuters Alertnet, "The Agonist" and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Iraq Information Portal. Print media (including online versions) consulted included the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Times of London*, *Asia Times*, *Times of India*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Manchester Guardian*. The Terrorism Research Center's premium Content Terrorist attack database and Counter-OPFOR Program, NLECTC-West, Suicide Bomber Webbase were also reviewed. We sought to use the most recent and corrected reports when available; yet, ambiguity remains.
- <sup>19</sup> Tarek al-Issam, "Suicide attacks ravage Iraq," Associated Press, as carried in the *Toronto Star*, 19 March 2004.
- <sup>20</sup> "Iran and Threats to U.S. Forces in Middle East," Strategic Forecasting, Inc. (Stratfor), 21 January 2003, [http://www.stratfor.com/coms2/page\\_home?referid=1290](http://www.stratfor.com/coms2/page_home?referid=1290).
- <sup>21</sup> "Iraq Threatens Suicide Attacks Against U.S. Troops," Reuters, 1 February 2003.
- <sup>22</sup> Oliver Poole, "PoWs to be stripped in suicide bomb fears," *The Telegraph* (UK), 22 March 2003.
- <sup>23</sup> "Four Iraqi suicide speedboats spotted, one intercepted," *World Tribune.com*, 27 March 2003, found at [http://216.26.163.62/2003/me\\_terror\\_03\\_27.html](http://216.26.163.62/2003/me_terror_03_27.html); and "Suicide boats 'major threat' to Australian ships," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 March 2003, found at <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/31/1048962669205.html>.

- <sup>24</sup> “Hundreds of Hizbullah enroute to northern Iraq,” *The World Tribune* (online), 28 March 2003.
- <sup>25</sup> “Suicide Bombing Kills Four U.S. Troops, 3/30/03,” PBS, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/jan-june03/suicide\\_3-27.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/jan-june03/suicide_3-27.html).
- <sup>26</sup> Jason Keyser, “Suicide Bombing Injures 30 in Israel,” *The Washington Post*, 30 March 2003.
- <sup>27</sup> Numerous reports detail the extent of Islamist extremist support and recruitment to engage in jihadi activity in Iraq. A representative account is found in Philip Smucker and Dan Murphy, “A broad call for ‘martyrs’ for Iraq,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 April 2003.
- <sup>28</sup> B. Raman, “Jihadi anger: After Italy, Australia?” *Asia Times*, 14 November 2003.
- <sup>29</sup> Patrick J. McDonnell and John Hendren, “U.S. Officials and Iraqis Agree That Conflict Will Get Worse,” *Los Angeles Times*, 14 December 2003.
- <sup>30</sup> Sebastian Rotella, “3 Terror Network Suspects Arrested,” *Los Angeles Times*, 29 November 2003.
- <sup>31</sup> “New Muslim Brotherhood Leader: Resistance in Iraq and Palestine is Legitimate; America is Satan: Islam will Invade America and Europe,” *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Special Dispatch Series—No. 655*, 4 February 2004.
- <sup>32</sup> Patrick J. McDonnell and Sebastian Rotella, “Making Bombers in Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, 29 February 2004.
- <sup>33</sup> Text available online at <http://www.icrc.org/IHL.nsf/1595a804df7efd6bc125641400640d89/f6c8b9fee14a77fdc125641e0052b079?OpenDocument>.
- <sup>34</sup> See Avishai Margalit, “The Suicide Bombers,” *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 16 January 2003, for a discussion of suicide operations in Palestine and their motivation.
- <sup>35</sup> See Steven Metz, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Winter 2003–04), pp. 25–35 for an excellent analysis of the current insurgency in Iraq and the need to develop integrated security structures to address the insurgent, criminal, jihadi nexus.