

New 2025 addendum to the 2010 Paper Below

When this paper was written in 2010, the importance of Saddam's fall to the security of Israel mostly was ignored. But given today's situation, it is worth revisiting the issue.

Today, our opponents in the region (Iran, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Hamas) are in state of despair.

Their fortunes would not be so glum in Saddam still ruled over Iraq. He possessed immense cash resources and large ground and air forces. If still present today, the situation in the Middle East would be very different.

He was a close ally of Bashir Assad. That likely means Assad would still be in power. Saddam also was a close ally of Russia – another obstacle to today's favorable situation.

And Saddam was an intractable enemy of Israel. His removal ended a powerful threat to Israel that is still being felt today.

Omitting the discussion in the following paper, let it suffice to note two points: (1) Saddam funded terrorism against Israel and (2) In 2003 we captured the Iraqi-Syrian War Plan against Israel which laid out his scheme of destruction.

Saddam was to send a large mechanized army into Syria and join in the attack of Israel along the Golan Heights and through the Beqaa Valley.

His air forces also would strike Israel and the plan further called for the use of "special weapons" missile attacks based in Syria against Israel.

None of that is possible today because Saddam's funding for terrorism ended in 2003 as did his military machine.

Today, the Middle East is on the verge of a brighter future and the removal of Saddam advanced that goal.

The War against the Terror in Iraq

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I. Going to War

The casus belli that led to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) was built on three arguments. The first and primary cause was the threat from Saddam’s Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Programs. Second was the liberation of the Iraqi people through the forced removal of Saddam’s regime. The third was to remove the Saddam Regime as an enemy in the war on terrorism. It can be well argued that all three justifications have stood the test of time.

A. Saddam’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs

The Iraq Survey Group (ISG) did not find large stockpiles of chemical or biological weapons in Iraq. The ISG did not find nuclear weapons. What did the ISG find? It found out too much. It proved that on the day Coalition Forces crossed the border into Iraq, the Saddam Regime was still maintaining what probably was one of the “top ten” most advanced WMD programs in the world.¹ It uncovered a comprehensive failure of the international community, acting principally through the United Nations, to rein in the WMD activities of the Saddam Regime. It showed that Iraq’s WMD programs did not end until the Saddam Regime was forcefully removed from power and driven to ground.

The failed actions taken to eliminate Saddam’s WMD capabilities before the war revolved around a long and progressive series of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR’s). The most relevant being 687, 707, 1051, 1284, and 1441 with UNSCR 687 being the centerpiece. UNSCR 687 (3 August 1991) established a United Nations Special Commissioner (UNSCOM) responsible for:

1. Disarming Iraq’s Chemical Weapons (CW), Biological Weapons (BW), and Ballistic Missiles, to include destruction, removal, and rendering harmless the weapons associated programs, stocks, components, research, and facilities.
2. Ensuring that the above operations be conducted under international supervision.

¹ Based on open source reporting, Russia, North Korea, China, France, the United States, and the United Kingdom were clearly superior to Iraq. That left India, Pakistan, Iran and Israel as having had a possibly greater WMD potential than Iraq in early 2003.

Additionally, UNSCR 687 charged the UN International Atomic Energy Agency with the responsibility for the abolition of Iraq's nuclear program.

When hostilities began in March 2003, Saddam's regime had an active WMD program in direct violation of UNSCR 687. The Saddam Regime had not disarmed all its Chemical Weapons, Biological Weapons, or Ballistic Missiles. It had not destroyed, removed or rendered harmless all its associated CW/BW/Ballistic Missile programs, stocks, research, and facilities. In fact, rather than finding that there was no credible WMD program in Iraq, the ISG proved that the opposite was true. What follows is information primarily drawn from the ISG Final Report of 30 September 2004.

The Nuclear Weapons Program in 2003

This was the only program that was critically degraded. Virtually all of the research had stopped and the facilities eliminated before the war began. There were still some 550 metric tons of uranium yellowcake in Iraq but it was held under UN seal at the time of the invasion.² The only other meaningful remnant of the program was the people who were not allowed to leave Iraq. Saddam kept his nuclear scientists and technicians on the payroll and while they conducted a very limited amount of research, his nuclear weapons program was almost extinct by March 2003.³

The Chemical Weapons Program in 2003

On the eve of hostilities in March of 2003, the Saddam regime had retained a limited stockpile of "sarin" nerve agent and mustard gas munitions dating from the Iran-Iraq war despite a decade of repeated claims that these munitions had been completely destroyed.⁴ The Saddam regime still had a cadre of CW researchers, CW producers, and, most importantly, CW "weaponizers." It maintained the ability to produce large quantities of sulfur mustard agent within six (6) months and nerve agents within two (2) years. The regime still maintained prototype experimental CW munitions in March 2003. Further, in March 2003, the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) was still producing and storing limited quantities of sulfur mustard and nitrogen mustard agents as well as sarin gas. The IIS had tested the efficacy of their sarin agent on human subjects.⁵ The Saddam regime had no intention of abiding by the CW prohibitions of UNSCR 687.

² Yellowcake uranium can be enriched in centrifuges for use in nuclear weapons. *AFP* reported that all the uranium yellowcake had been secretly shipped to Canada in mid-2008.

³ For example, in the summer of 2003 the ISG recovered a single centrifuge used in making weapons-grade uranium buried in the back yard of a Ba'athist nuclear weapons expert.

⁴ *Washington Post* reporting in June 2006 stated that LtGen Maples, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, testified before Congress that Coalition Forces had recovered approximately **500 WMD munitions** (mortar and artillery rounds as well as rockets) containing either the "Sarin" nerve agent or "mustard" gas since the 2003 invasion.

⁵ The difficulty in identifying CW lies in their dual nature. Sarin is basically an OrganoPhosphate (OP). So are many insecticides. For example, in April 2003, Coalition Forces found nearly 3,000 liters of an OP in bunkers at a site recently used by the Iraqi Army. Military field tests detected OP signifying a nerve agent. Further advanced testing labeled it as OP's related to insecticide. Thus, if one can produce OP insecticides, one can produce CW nerve agents. The IIS case was unambiguous due to the record of its gruesome application.

The Biological Weapons Program in 2003

As the ISG reported, the Saddam regime never lost the scientific “know how” to produce Biological Weapons. In March of 2003, the Saddam regime still retained a BW-related “seed” stock that gave them the potential to start up the limited production of Biological Weapons within two months in complete violation of UNSCR 687.⁶ The regime actually expanded its BW capability from 1992 through 1994 in spite of UNSCR 687, UNSCR 707, and UNSCR 715. It was only due to the collapse of the state-run sector of the economy, resulting from the sanctions put in place under UNSCR 661, that Saddam’s regime abandoned the major components of its BW program as unsupportable in 1995. Still, the Saddam regime maintained its BW potential from 1996 onward by continuing a declared and undeclared dual-use capability, a direct violation of UNSCR 1051.

The Ballistic Missile Program in 2003

Saddam’s ballistic missile program was active and productive right up to the day that the war began. As with the CW and BW programs, Iraqi missile technologies had their roots in the old Soviet Union cold war weapons inventory. Saddam’s regime conducted extensive work in delivery systems through the Al Samid Surface-to-Surface Missile (SSM) as well as the Iskandar SSM, amongst others. The international scope of Saddam’s ballistic missile program that was kept secret from the UN was dizzying. They obtained technology from Syria who used false “end user” documents to thwart UN sanctions. They illegally obtained ballistic missile guidance and control systems from North Korea as well as Russian, Serbian, and Belarus companies.⁷ Saddam’s regime formed front companies to allow them to produce liquid fuel propellants banned by the UN Resolutions. They illegally conducted advanced research on solid propellants, improperly obtaining Aluminum Powder (AP) from companies in India, China, France and others, and by secretly exploiting carbon fiber technologies for the Al Fatah SSM in violation of UNSCR 687 and 1051.⁸

The record shows that the Saddam Regime blatantly and systematically violated every meaningful UNSC Resolution passed until the bitter end. They violated UNSCR 687 by maintaining BW, CW, and Ballistic Missile programs. They violated UNSCR 707 by, amongst other things, continuously attempting to conceal facilities and move or conceal materials related to their weapons of mass destruction programs. They violated UNSCR 1051 by deliberately failing to report shipments of dual-use items related to weapons of mass destruction to the UN and IAEA. And this extended well beyond violating “dual use reporting.” In order to keep their WMD programs active, they relied

⁶ The ISG recovered biotoxins in vials hidden under the bed of a Ba’athist CW researcher in Baghdad in July 2003. Had the vials been deliberately released in an urban center like Baghdad, thousand could have been sickened and/or died.

⁷ The ISG Final Report documents a continuous top-level Iraqi dialogue with North Korea in 1999 and 2000 in an unverified attempt to transfer N Korean technology to extend the range of Iraqi SSM’s to 1,300km.

⁸ Coalition Forces experienced first hand this particular violation when six of these missiles were fired at them. All were on trajectories that exceeded the 150 Km maximum range allowed when they were successfully intercepted by Coalition anti-missile defense systems. They were also intended for use against Israel in the event of war with them.

on smuggling operations of all manner and type, falsifying “end user” documentation, disguising shipments, and presenting false final destinations.

Perhaps the most egregious WMD related violations dealt with UNSCR 1284. This resolution created the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspections Commission (UNMOVIC) to replace UNSCOM. The Saddamists never fully allowed UNMOVIC “immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access” to Iraqi officials and facilities. They never fulfilled the commitment to return Gulf War prisoners, because, as we learned after the war began, they had all been executed years earlier.

While the resolution had little effect on curbing the bad behavior of the Saddam Regime it had a disastrous outcome for the Iraqi people by creating the Oil-For-Food Program. In the most Machiavellian and heartless tactic of all, the Saddamists used Oil-For-Food (OFF) vouchers and “kickbacks” worth hundreds of millions of dollars to pay for their WMD program and other illicit activities.⁹ This, despite the resolution’s requirement for the Saddam Regime to distribute humanitarian goods and medical supplies to its people and address the needs of vulnerable Iraqis without discrimination.

In a chillingly parallel move, a move that would have drawn the admiration of Hitler and Josef Goebbels, the Saddam Regime continuously spewed forth a stream of false propaganda stating that the sanctions resulted in an insufficiency of medicines and humanitarian supplies thus causing the deaths of thousands of Iraqi children.¹⁰ They did this in order to hide the truth that the regime was stealing hundreds of millions of OFF dollars needed to care for these people in order to maintain their army, prop up the dictatorship, and support their WMD program.

Thus it was inevitable that war would ensue when UNSCR 1441 was passed in November 2002. Eleven long years after UNSCR 687, the UN provided one final opportunity for the Saddam Regime to comply. The Saddam Regime never complied. For Saddam’s apologists, the ISG found out too much indeed.

To understand the importance of this truth recall the 26 January 2008 CBS “60-Minutes” interview of FBI Special Agent George Piro by correspondent Scott Pelley regarding the interrogations of Saddam and Saddam’s WMD goals:

CBS Correspondent Pelley:	“What weapons of mass destruction did he intend to pursue again once he had the opportunity?”
Special Agent Piro:	“He wanted to pursue all of WMD. So he wanted to reconstitute his entire WMD program.”
CBS Correspondent Pelley:	“Chemical, biological, even nuclear?”
Special Agent Piro:	“Yes.”

Only through Operation Iraqi Freedom was Saddam’s WMD Program finally ended.

⁹ Edith Lederer of the AP reported in “UN: 2000 Companies Gave Iraq Illicit Funds (27 Oct 2005) that the UN directed Volker Investigation put the figure at \$1.8 Billion. *The Wall Street Journal* on 9 September 2005 editorialized that figure could be as high as \$10.2 billion.

¹⁰ Primarily UNSCR 661 and UNSCR 1284

B. The Liberation of the Iraqi People

The liberation of the Iraqi people was always a clear objective of the war. To state the obvious, Coalition actions were conducted under “Operation Iraqi Freedom” not “Operation Maximum UNSCR Compliance.” To argue that the liberation of the Iraqi people was not a major goal of the war is to beggar the truth. The March 2003 Coalition military operation against Saddam was universally referred to as the liberation by the Iraqis we met; not just by the Kurds, Shi’a, and progressive Sunni’s but even by the Sunni’s who were unrepentant Ba’athists and strongly opposed to the presence of Coalition Forces after the end of the convention battle.¹¹

Saddam ran a cruel police state. A 2004 article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that half of the families in southern Iraq had “directly experienced violent human rights abuses.”¹² During the sixteen years prior to the liberation hundreds of thousands of civilian men, women, and children were murdered by the state. Additionally, by the close of 2002, over three million Iraqis had fled the Saddam Regime (+15% of the population) and close to another million Iraqis were internally displaced. The internally displaced were predominantly the Marsh Arabs. The attack on them, what some have called an ecological genocide, began in 1992 with the destruction of nearly five million acres of marshlands between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.¹³ Following the liberation, the new Iraqi government has begun the long process of trying to restore the marshlands.

Although precise numbers are still not available, according to *Human Rights Watch* 290,000 Iraqis were murdered by the Saddam Regime.¹⁴ The deadliest years being 1987-88 (when genocidal attacks killed approximately 100,000 Kurds) and 1991 (when an estimated 165,000 Shi’a and Kurds were put to death); that averages to over 15,000 victims per year or an average over 1,200 civilian deaths per month during the later half of Saddam’s era of power.¹⁵

How did life end for the hundreds of thousands of Saddam’s victims? Thousands died through the use of WMD in chemical warfare (CW) attacks. For example, in September 1988 Ali Hassan al-Majid, AKA “Chemical Ali,” began the Anfal Operation against the Kurds. In those regions spared the horrors of chemical attacks, he specifically issued orders to execute all Kurdish civilians between 15-70 years of age after any information of intelligence value was “extracted” from them.¹⁶ Many Iraqis died through the

¹¹ During my two tours in Iraq (2003, 2004), the term “Liberation” was universally used whether in Baghdad or Irbil and even when dealing with Sunnis in the volatile al Anbar governorate.

¹² Matthew Bogdanos, *Thieves of Baghdad* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2005), p. 257.

¹³ Bogdanos, *Thieves of Baghdad*, p. 257.

¹⁴ Bogdanos, *Thieves of Baghdad*, p. 257. *The Documental Centre for Human Rights in Iraq* cites a higher figure, over 600,000 civilian executions in Iraq during this period.

¹⁵ The U.S. Agency for International Development reported on July 22, 2004 that 53 mass grave sites had been confirmed in Iraq with well over 100 more identified potential sites. Some graves contained six bodies; some a score or more. Others are trenches, hundreds of meters long, densely packed with thousands of victims. Hundreds of white bundles contain the bones exhumed from these sites and they line warehouse floors row upon row. Some were fresh victims; others had laid in their graves for over 35 years.

¹⁶ William Langewiesche, “The Accuser,” *Atlantic Monthly*, March 2005

accepted state means of execution, hanging, firing squad, beheading, etc. More died through torture that extended far beyond beatings and electric shocks but branched out into sodomy, eye gouging, acid baths, the drilling holes through hands with power tools and other terrible means.¹⁷ Victims were found with blackened genitals, blown into gaping pieces of raw flesh from grenades inserted into shirt pockets after being bound, arms and legs. Other victims had their tongues ripped out during interrogations and bled to death.¹⁸

And Saddam's henchmen did not differentiate between men and women or even children. During a "retribution campaign" against the Shi'a, Saddam's operatives killed babies by smashing their bodies against walls. One Saddam loyalist "fighter" had his occupation listed as a violator of women's honor, a full-time rapist on the government payroll. Nor were the victims limited to traditional anti-government opponents. Hazani Oraha owned an art gallery. He showed art works that were deemed "controversial" by the Saddam Regime. In addition to losing his gallery and having the art confiscated, he was hung from a ceiling fan, with his legs bound. The fan was then tuned on, twisting him until his back was broken.¹⁹ A female doctor who criticized corruption in the Ministry of Health was arrested, charged with prostitution and beheaded.²⁰ These are a few examples of hundreds of thousands of people who died under the Saddam Regime.

Is it any wonder then that Martti Ahtisaari, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and author of the 1991 UN report on humanitarian needs in Iraq, defended Operation Iraqi Freedom from a humanitarian standpoint? This former UN diplomat and President of Finland stated, "*Since I know that about a million people have been killed by the government of Iraq, I do not need much those weapons of mass destruction,*" The liberation that resulted from Operation Iraqi Freedom was too late for the victims mentioned above but thousands of Iraqi men, women, and children are alive today because the Coalition Forces put an end to this madness.

Regretfully, the one thing that remained unchanged in the years immediately following the liberation was the determination of Saddam's remaining henchmen, in alliance with al Qaeda, to continue to murder innocent Iraqi civilians. Although they can no longer kill in the large numbers seen before the war and have largely lost the ability to conduct their murderous business outside the harsh glare of humanity, they are still killing as best they can. Putting a final end to that and allowing the Iraqi people to move forward in creating a new and peaceful Iraq is the task at hand.

C. The Saddam Regime and Terrorism

Bloody Beginnings

¹⁷ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Saddam Hussein: crimes and human rights abuses, London, UK, November 2002

¹⁸ Interview with ISG document exploitation personnel, June 2003, Baghdad Iraq

¹⁹ *The History Channel*, "The Horrors of Hussein," 2003

²⁰ Op Cit., Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, UK, November 2002

The Saddam Regime had a long history of working with terrorist organizations. In fact, the Saddam Regime's connections read like a virtual "Who's Who" in international terrorism. Saddam dealt with terrorist organizations not because he necessarily shared their world vision, it was not always to gain allies or partners, but it was always good business for Saddam. Saddam would work with almost any terrorist group if it served his ends. He aided and abetted the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO).²¹ Besides carrying out a number of infamous attacks at airports, ANO was responsible for assassinating a Jordanian diplomat, PLO Chairman Arafat's Second-in-Command, and an attack on a synagogue in Israel where 22 worshipers were killed. They carried out the hijacking of Pan Am Flight 73 on 5 September 1986 in Pakistan where 20 people were killed. ANO actively participated in the planning of the 21 December 1988 Pan Am 103/Lockerbie Scotland terrorist attack where 270 people were killed, 180 of them Americans.

The Saddamists provided a base of operations in Iraq for Muhamed al Umari AKA Abu Ibrahim AKA "The Bomb Man." Al Umari led the "15 May" terrorist organization in the 1980's.²² Supported by the IIS, it carried out attacks in Europe to include the bombing of an Israeli-owned restaurant in Berlin that left an infant dead and 24 wounded. Al Umari also directed the bombing of Pan Am flight 830 on 11 August 1982. The explosion failed to bring down the 747 jet over the Pacific Ocean as planned but still managed to sever the leg and rip open the chest of the 16-year-old boy seated over the device. He died of his wounds on the aircraft and 15 others were injured. That murderous attack help inspire the placement of another bomb on a 747, Philippines Airlines flight 434 in 1994, an act of terrorism by al Qaeda operative Ramzi Yousef that led directly to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 9/11 attacks.

From his Baghdad headquarters in 2003, Al Umari joined the fight against the Coalition Forces. Al Umari is believed to have been active in Iraq with the Saddamists/AQI as late as 2004.²³ Umari is still considered at large and the United States upped the reward for his capture from \$200,000 to \$500,000. It is highly probable that he was killed in Iraq by Coalition Forces.

Support of Terrorist Operations in 2003

The Saddam Regime backed the terrorist organization Hamas to include providing a "Blessing from Saddam" in the form of a \$25,000 payout to families of suicide bombers. Hamas is not simply an enemy of Israel but a potent threat to the Palestinian Authority but is evolving into a terrorist threat to the peoples of the Middle East. Saddam's Intelligence Services also had contacts with terrorist Chechen organizations although these were limited for fear of alienating Saddam's most important ally, Russia. And the IIS needed to be circumspect in regards to Russia:

²¹ Abu Nidal died in Baghdad, Iraq on 16 August 2002. Some reports claim Saddam Hussein ordered his execution.

²² May 15th is the anniversary date for the birth of Israel, the "Bomb Man's" lifelong enemy.

²³ AP reporters Adam Goldman and Randy Herschaft reported on 24 November 2009 that "In 2004, the military raided a bomb-making factory in Mosul and found telltale signs of Ibrahim and his devices, suggesting that he or his pupils were supporting the insurgency. Federal law enforcement officials also confirmed they had had no reason to believe Ibrahim had given up his deadly trade."

In recent months, radical Islamist Chechen leaders such as Shamil Basayev, along with Osama bin Laden, have been "clear" about wanting to "set Russia on fire," says Michael Radu, a terrorism expert at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia.²⁴

In 2003, Saddam was the chief supporter of the Mujahedeen-e Khalq (MEK), a paramilitary terrorist force made up of Iranians operating in Iraq dedicated to violently seizing power in Iran. This Marxist-oriented organization targeted and killed a number of Americans in Iran during the 1970's and actively supported the seizure of the US Embassy in Iran in 1980. In 1991, it assisted the Saddam Regime in suppressing the Shi'a rebellion in southern Iraq and the Kurdish uprisings in the north. In April 1992, the MEK, headquartered in Iraq, conducted near-simultaneous attacks on Iranian Embassies and installations in thirteen countries. After the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Coalition Forces seized and destroyed MEK munitions and weapons, and about 4,000 MEK operatives were detained, disarmed, and screened for any past terrorist acts.²⁵

Aiding and Abetting Al Qaeda in 2003

While Saddam's IIS was in frequent contact with various al Qaeda operatives, there is no evidence that the Saddam Regime had any direct connection to the al Qaeda attacks on the United States on 9/11. But the regime was linked to terror attacks on the United States by al Qaeda followers. It was often a relationship based upon the maxim that my enemy's enemy is my friend. If the war on terrorism is limited to fighting al Qaeda and its supporters, then in March 2003, the Saddam Regime was certainly involved by having granted asylum to al Qaeda operative Abdul Rahman Yasin as well as its support to the Ansar al Islam (Aal) terrorist group.

The 1993 attack on the World Trade Center was funded and masterminded by al Qaeda's Khalid Sheikh Mohammed who chose Abdul Rahman Yasin, an Iraqi and naturalized U.S. Citizen, to lead the attack in the United States. Following the 26 February 1993 bombing that killed six and injured 1,042 Americans Yasin was listed on the FBI's most wanted list.²⁶ He fled to Iraq where the Saddam regime initially provided a safe haven and later put him into protective custody despite repeated attempts by the United States to have Yasin released into FBI custody. Yasin is still at large.

The case of Saddam's support for Ansar al Islam²⁷ terrorist organization in Iraq is disputed by some. To support that claim some cite a statement by a key Aal leader, Mullah Krekar, that he was a sworn enemy of Saddam. But the evidence shows that Aal was operating inside Iraq in support of, not against, the Saddam regime.

What is not in dispute is that Aal provided a sanctuary in Iraq for low/middle ranking al Qaeda foot soldiers forced to flee Afghanistan after the October 2001 invasion by

²⁴ Scott Peterson, *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 September 2004. Basayev was killed in an explosion on 10 July 2006.

²⁵ Richard Sale, *UPI Intelligence Correspondent*, New York (UPI) Jan 26, 2005

²⁶ John Diamond, *USA Today*, 17 September 2003

²⁷ Dargahi, Borzou, "Jihad offered escape but not sanctuary," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 March 2007. The article described Ansar al Islam as "an extremist group with links to al Qaeda" which "subscribed to the extremist strain of Islam that drives Osama Bin Laden."

Coalition Forces. What also is not disputed is that Aal fought with the Saddamists after the Coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Ansar al Islam operated bases in northern Iraq along the Iranian border beginning in the 1990's. Aal initially drew its strength, like al Qaeda, from veterans of the Soviet-Afghan War plus some radicalized Sunni Kurds. It conducted terrorist attacks²⁸ against Iraqi Kurds under the control of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)/Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) after the UN established the "no-fly zone" in 1991. These attacks furthered the goals of Saddam's regime. Aal also opposed the revolutionary Shi'a theocracy in Iran, another enemy of Saddam.

After the 2001 Coalition invasion of Afghanistan the Aal camps in Iraq began to serve as a refuge for fleeing al Qaeda fighters. Following the 2003 invasion, Aal's camps, along with its weapons and munitions caches were destroyed, its operations against the Kurds and Iran greatly reduced, its leaders forced underground, and many of its members killed or captured.²⁹ Regrettably, some of the al Qaeda foreign fighters from Afghanistan escaped, providing a cadre of fighters that formed al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) to include its leader, Abu Musab al Zarqawi.

In 2003, the Saddamists and al Qaeda were following a complementary policy in their pursuit of terror. This is clearly demonstrated by the Saddam Regime's support for Abdul Rahman Yasin, and the Ansar al Islam terrorist organization.

The facts cannot allow one's eyes to be closed to the reality that in March 2003 Saddam was providing active and bloody support to a number of terrorist organizations that were and are still our enemies in the war on terrorism. The destruction of the Saddam Regime removed what was and had been for decades one of the most potent and dangerous forces in world terrorism.

II. Conclusions on Going to War

The evidence would allow a reasonable person to conclude that the war was and is justified. The WMD argument boils down to an old saying, one usually used in a far more positive context; if you give someone a fish they eat for a day, if you teach someone how to fish they can eat for a lifetime. If you allow a tyrant to horde a stockpile of WMD he can only use it once, if you allow him to maintain a WMD program, he can potentially use the weapons forever and that was the exact aim of Saddam.

By going to war we liberated an oppressed people. By destroying the Saddam Regime we ended, once and for all, both its WMD programs and its long established and very active support of world-wide terrorist organizations. For this author, who served two tours in Iraq, those were and are honorable and worthwhile objectives to pursue.

²⁸ Eleven Aal members were executed in Irbil in September 2006 for carrying out terrorist attacks against the Kurds.

²⁹ One key leader, Abu Abdullah al-Shafi'i, got away and was not captured until May 2010 in a Sunni neighborhood of Baghdad. Al-Shafi'i is noted for a 2009 message describing President Obama as "...the runaway apostate."