

~~SECRET//NOFORN//20170121~~



## Attack on Karbala PJCC

21 January 2007



(U) The purpose of this paper is to explain the conditions that precipitated the 20 January attack on the PJCC, describe what we assess to have been the target and it's intended effect.

~~(S//REL TO USA, MCFI)~~ Summary: The target is assessed to have been Coalition Forces, with the intended effect to intimidate those that would stand against or pose a threat to OMS's authority in Karbala. The purpose of the meeting 20 January was to discuss the security and stability conditions in Karbala as well as the security for the upcoming Ashura commemoration. OMS most likely perceived this meeting as a direct threat to their influence. Given the current pressure OMS is under, it's assessed they used Jaysh al Imam aka Jaysh al Hawza; a secret cell that performs assassinations, kidnappings, and Extra Judicial Killings (EJKs) to perform this mission.

### (U) Key Findings:

- ~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~ The PJCC attack is an attempt to reassert OMS's influence locally in Karbala as well as nationally. The strike against CF was a message to those perceived as trying to marginalize OMS.
- ~~(S//REL USA, MCFI)~~ Jaysh al Imam, a covert cell that conducts assassinations, kidnapping, and EJKs, was responsible for the 20 January 2007 attack on the PJCC.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Jaysh al Imam receives training in [1.4b] which is why their TTPs resemble QF; they are Sadr's elite force whose leaders are also [1.4b] [1.4b]
- ~~(S//REL USA, MCFI)~~ The equipment used by the attackers matches equipment reportedly received by Jaysh al Imam in Dec 06.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ It is assessed that Jaysh al Imam receives it's orders from either Sadr himself or his closest advisors.
- The attack MO was consistent with previous Jaysh al Imam operations.
- Due to the high risk nature of the operation, it is likely that any QF involvement was limited to an advisory role.

### (U) Jaysh al Imam Background:

~~(S//NF)~~ The Jaysh al-imam, is an elite group of Individuals serving as Muqtada al-Sadr special forces. They conduct kidnappings and assassinations of influential Sunnis in Baghdad or any other individuals or groups that are perceived to pose a threat to Sadr's agenda. It is believed they are advised, trained and equipped by the [1.4b] Jaysh al-Imam is not part of Jaysh al-Mahdi and reporting indicates the group receive their direction directly from Sadr or ,his closest advisors one of which is identified as a close childhood friend NFI. We assess that these advisors are [b)(6)] [b 6] Jaysh al Imam is reported to be composed of 120-150 and is based out of Sadr city. Jaysh al Imam is considered a stronger, more organized, and more militant group than Jaysh al-Mahdi. Jaysh Al Imam

~~SECRET//NOFORN//20170121~~



~~SECRET//NOFORN//20170121~~

members were also considered more loyal to Sadr and Sadr reportedly trusted Jaysh al Imam more than he trusted Jaysh al-Mahdi.

~~(S//NF)~~ Husayn al Zahawi oversees the group and reports directly to Muqtada al Sadr. Jaysh al Imam is reportedly led by Arkan al-Hasnawi, an Iraqi individual who recently arrived from Iran where he spent several years in exile during the Saddam Husayn regime. [redacted] (b)(6) are reported to be his deputies.

~~(S//NF)~~ **Jaysh al Imam Modus Operandi:** Jaysh al Imam often uses the uniforms of IP, IA, or CF to conduct their attacks. They have also used U.S. Military vehicles and equipment, and some of them speak English. Below are some examples of their operations.

~~(S//NF)~~ On 31 July 2006, unidentified gunmen stormed the Iraqi-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry in al Karradah, Baghdad. The gunmen arrived on the scene in 11 GMC vehicles and were wearing Iraqi Army Uniforms. The gunmen abducted 12 people from the building while Iraqi Police stood by. Amongst the kidnapped was [redacted] b 6

[redacted] b 6  
During an interview with the media following the incident, a Baghdadi police officer claimed that the IPs did nothing because they thought that the gunmen were conducting official business for the Gol.

~~(S//NF)~~ On 09 October 2006, Jaysh al Imam members wearing U.S. Marine uniforms and traveling in eight sport utility vehicles kidnapped and assassinated Amir al-Hashimi, the brother of Sunni Vice President al Hashimi. In another recent example, Jaysh al-Imam conducted for the attack on Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education that killed 45 of the hostages. It is reported that Hasnawi ordered and participated in the execution of the 45 kidnap victims.

~~(S//NF)~~ On 14 December 2006, Jaysh al Imam kidnapped 64 Sunni citizens from the al Mada'in area of Baghdad. Hasnawi's group wore Iraqi National Guard uniforms during the kidnapping and two HMMWV's were in the vehicle convoy in the kidnapping operation. Jaysh al Imam planned to kidnap staff Major General Daham al-'Asal, an advisor to the Iraqi Minister of Defense, and Husayn Ali (Kamal), the Iraqi Ministry of Interior deputy minister for intelligence affairs. The group planned to use Land cruisers and GMCs for the operation. They wore blue camouflage uniforms and older U.S. issued camouflage uniforms.

~~(S//NF)~~ In mid-December 2006, Jaysh al-Imam leader Arkan al-((Hasnawi)) traveled to al Basrah, Iraq, in order to receive a shipment of four HMMWV's from [redacted] 1.4b

~~(S//NF)~~ On 19 December 2006, Jaysh al-Imam leader Arkan al-Hasnawi had received MOI badges, uniforms, and vehicles to conduct operations on behalf of Jaysh al-imam.

~~(S//NF)~~ On 24 December 2006, Jaysh al-Imam planned to forge Iraqi army identification cards using the names of legitimate Iraqi army officers but pictures of Jaysh al-Imam members.

~~SECRET//NOFORN//20170121~~



~~SECRET//NOFORN//20170121~~

~~(S//NF)~~ Jaysh al Imam is able to obtain this type of equipment from local markets such as Babel Sharji in Baghdad where, Army Combat Uniforms (ACUs) sell for 75,000 Iraqi Dinar and an M-4 rifle costs 3,000 USD. Many of the accessories that American Soldiers carry are also available at the markets. The vehicles are more difficult to obtain but recently Shi'a insurgents captured nineteen SUVs in a raid in southern Iraq.

~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~ **Attack on Karbala PJCC:** On 20 January 2007, at approximately 1800C unknown attackers raided the Karbala PJCC. The attackers used TTPs consistent with those used by Jaysh al Imam. In particular, the attackers wore American uniforms, drove American-looking SUVs, and spoke English. The attackers took four prisoners, but after an unsuccessful effort to exfil the area, they killed the prisoners and abandoned the vehicles. Additionally, one CF member who was present during the kidnapping stated that a CF Soldier made eye contact with one of the kidnapers and recognized his face as that of a man he talked to the day prior.

~~(S//NF)~~ **Jaysh al Imam Assistance:** Various facts suggest that at least some of the IPs in Karbala were complicit in the attack. For instance, an IO campaign blaming American forces for the attack circulated throughout Karbala less than two hours after the attack occurred. This implies that the IO campaign was prearranged. Moreover, it is widely understood that Sadr wields significant authority over the area – especially at night. In fact, reporting indicates that after curfew, JAM establishes check points and assumes responsibility for the security of various areas in Karbala. Nevertheless, Jaysh al Imam did not act alone. Outsiders, possibly 1.4b helped them by providing training. It is unlikely however, that 1.4b instructors took part in the actual raid. The attackers committed a number of errors during the operation as well as during exfil that probably would not have happened had experienced cadre been with them. At one point, the attackers left behind multiple explosive devices in the JOC, but only detonated one of them. This suggests that they were unfamiliar with the explosives. More significantly, the attackers apparently did not plan alternate escape routes. Ultimately, it seems, they panicked and got disoriented as they tried to escape. Consequently, they took off their uniforms, killed their prisoners, abandoned their vehicles, and fled.

~~(S//NF)~~ In Late December, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki allegedly gave a letter to Muqtada al-Sadr. It stated that the Iraqi Government would hold Sadr himself responsible if any insurgent or criminal confessed to carrying out orders given by MAS or his OMS office. This was a threatening letter and was a departure from Sadr's previous relationship with Maliki. Taken with (b)(6) detainment by CF, the letter was particularly poignant.

~~(S//REL TO USA, MCFI)~~ At a 7 January meeting between Sadr and Grand Ayatollah Sistani, Sadr alleged that the Americans were colluding with the Sunnis against the Shi'a. He also complained about SCIRI behavior in the South and about Nuri al Maliki's performance on services. Sistani urged Sadr to reach an understanding with Maliki. Sistani had repeated that he thought well of Maliki. On the question of the information of new blocs, Sistani had said that he saw no virtue in them.

~~SECRET//NOFORN//20170121~~



~~SECRET//NOFORN//20170121~~

~~(S//REL TO USA, MCFI)~~ Made impotent by the Maliki letter and anxious by the perception that groups were conspiring to marginalize him, Sadr pined to send a clear message that he is still a dominant force in Karbala.

~~(S//REL TO USA, MCFI)~~ The Karbala governor, the Police Chief and other political leaders met with CF to discuss security plans for the Ashura in Karbala. Sadrist were not in attendance. The meeting was most likely perceived as a direct threat to his position an influence.

~~(S//REL TO USA, MCFI)~~ The 20 January 2007 attack was most likely an attempt by Sadr's to save face under growing pressure from CF, intra Shia rivals and the Gol. This provided him an opportunity to reestablish his dominance in the area and send a message to those attempting to stand against him. The use of his covert force to accomplish the mission allows him plausible deniability with CF, and was probably because he wanted to be able to deny any allegations of wrong doing which might further imperil his standing with Gol. However, since the Shia community know he was responsible, Sadr is able to save face and show strength.

~~(S//NF)~~ **Conclusion:** The attack of the Karbala PJCC station was meant to serve as a warning to provincial leaders and the GOI that Karbala belongs to Sadr and that his remains firm despite the recent detainments of JAM members. The use of Jaysh al Imam allows Sadr to elude Coalition blame while at the same time reminding the Gol that he is a key member of the Karbala community and cannot be ignored. QF probably did not participate in the attack, but their training and advisory role was significant. The sophisticated nature of the attack combined with mistakes due to inexperience demonstrates that the two groups worked to accomplish this operation. Jaysh al Imam provided the fighters, equipment and motive while QF provided the training and will probably provide the retraining. We can expect the effectiveness and professionalism of the Jaysh al Imam to continue to improve with each subsequent operation.

Prepared by: ~~MNC I CAGE~~; DSN:  / SVOIP:

Sources:	1.4c
	1.4c

~~SECRET//NOFORN//20170121~~