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Special Assessment of Ansar al-Islam (AI) planning attacks on Coalition Forces

Prepared for: CCJ3

Prepared by: (b)(6) senior analyst, TF1.4a

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Purpose

This assessment was prepared in response to a threat report indicating possible planning by AI to conduct attacks on US forces and PUK members in Kirkuk. CCJ3 requested an analysis of the likelihood of attacks against Coalition forces.

AI

AI's base of operation was decimated in a Coalition airstrike against the Khurma facility in northern Iraq in Mar. On 28 Mar 2003, a joint US/PUK ground offensive resulted in ~200 AI killed, including a number of al Aqsa Bn members. Large numbers fled to 1.4b Morocco and throughout the Middle East.

1.4b, 1.4d

According to a cooperative source with excellent access but lacks an established reporting record, AI members were planning attacks against US and PUK forces in Kirkuk as of 25 May. This planning is backed by the expressed intent of AI leadership and financial backers to attack Coalition forces as legitimate targets. Operational planning is being conducted by AI leaders in 1.4b and regional support personnel in Kirkuk. According to the source, AI members were identifying locations of US forces and reconnoitering crowded places to conduct a car bomb attack. A second group of AI members will likely travel from 1.4b to Chamchamal, Iraq (near Kirkuk) to execute the planned attack(s).

Conclusion

Although AI force-on-force attacks on Coalition forces cannot be totally discounted, it is more likely that their preferred target will be the PUK. 1.4b appears to have a certain level of influence on AI operations and is unlikely to support or give free license to attack Coalition forces at this time. However, should Coalition forces remain in Iraq for a period of time deemed unacceptable to 1.4b it is likely that 1.4b would support operations by AI and other terrorist groups.

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AI's forces at this time are widely dispersed and lacking organization below battalion level. This in conjunction with the expressed intent of their backers and leadership to identify Coalition forces as legitimate targets, paints a more likely scenario of individual suicide bombers, car bombs and other small scale hit-and-run guerrilla-type attacks in the near term. Attacks of this nature are in line with recent expressed intent of AI leadership and reporting, and would not be likely to upset the current relationship between AI and 1.4b The likelihood for this type of attack in the near term is assessed to be significant.

Approved for Release

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