



TRC TWW Report

Terror Web Watch Report



August 25, 2006 ed. 2 vol. 34

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Introduction: *Terrorists have made increasing use of the Internet. Insurgent attacks in Iraq are regularly followed with postings of specific group claims of responsibility, descriptions of details of the operations, and sometimes videos of the operations themselves along with biographies or interviews with the "martyrs" who carry out attacks. Supporters worldwide offer back feedback, praise, and sometimes criticism. Analyses of international politics are also offered up by terrorists groups and supporters, allowing an insight into their world view, beliefs, and strategies. Discussion boards fill with targeting advice and justifications - both religious and strategic - of striking various targets. Leaders and visionaries in among the international al-Qaeda and Mujahideen movement have seen their traditional, secure communication lines disrupted by the Global War on Terror and will, therefore, turn increasingly to the Internet as a way to disseminate advice and instructions to entrepreneurial cells with terrorist ambitions. The weekly Terror Web Watch service monitors these very issues for TRC's client base.*

Sniper Manual and IED Videos Appear on Mahdi Army Blog

The Mahdi Army blog, affiliated with Muqtada al-Sadr's Shiite organization ([Group Profile](#)) in Iraq ([Country Profile](#)), has recently posted a sniper manual and videos of Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and mortar attacks. The sniper manual appears to be copied from a site affiliated with the Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa Brigade, a militant wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine ([Group Profile](#)). The videos show attacks predominately attributed to the 'Partisans of the People of Truth, Imam Ali Brigades,' potentially a fringe militant group linked to the Mahdi Army.

Iraqi National and Coalition forces have targeted Sadr's organization, particularly elements responsible for persistent sectarian killings, as part of a new security enforcement campaign in Baghdad. Cumulatively, these blog postings could indicate a direction of tactics for the Mahdi Army and affiliated cells in response to the government crackdown.

Blog Content

Posted to the Mahdi Army blog on July 21, 2006, "How to Become a Sniper" is a fairly organized document that addresses the following sub-categories: the importance of the sniper, beneficial skills, appropriate positioning, method of the lay-down position, and supporting the rifle. The manual includes tactical advice: "avoid appearing above a hill or a high position while the sun is behind you" and offers practice exercises to help with "breathing, control, and mastery of the hammer."

Multiple videos of IED attacks occurring in Iraq and attributed to the Imam Ali Brigade have also appeared on the Mahdi Army blog. In most cases, the targets are described as either armored vehicles or tanks without providing a national or ethnic identification. The exception is a filmed attack that claims to destroy an Israeli pick-up truck in "Babel" (modern-day Iraq). Regardless of its veracity, this claim does illustrate a common anti-Israeli/ pro-Hezbollah ([Group Profile](#)) theme threaded through Mahdi blog postings. Indeed, the background music to the attack videos includes lyrics praising Hezbollah and its leader Hassan Nasrallah, and several attacks are described as operations "in support of Hezbollah in Lebanon ([Country Profile](#))."

Indicator of Future Tactics

Over the past year, the Mahdi Army and similar Shiite militias have been tied closely to the sectarian strife plaguing Baghdad and other sections of Iraq. The Iraqi government has responded with arrests and attempts to



curtail their militant capabilities. Elements within the Mahdi Army could respond by targeting Iraqi National and Coalition forces and employ tactics highlighted in the Mahdi Army blog.

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