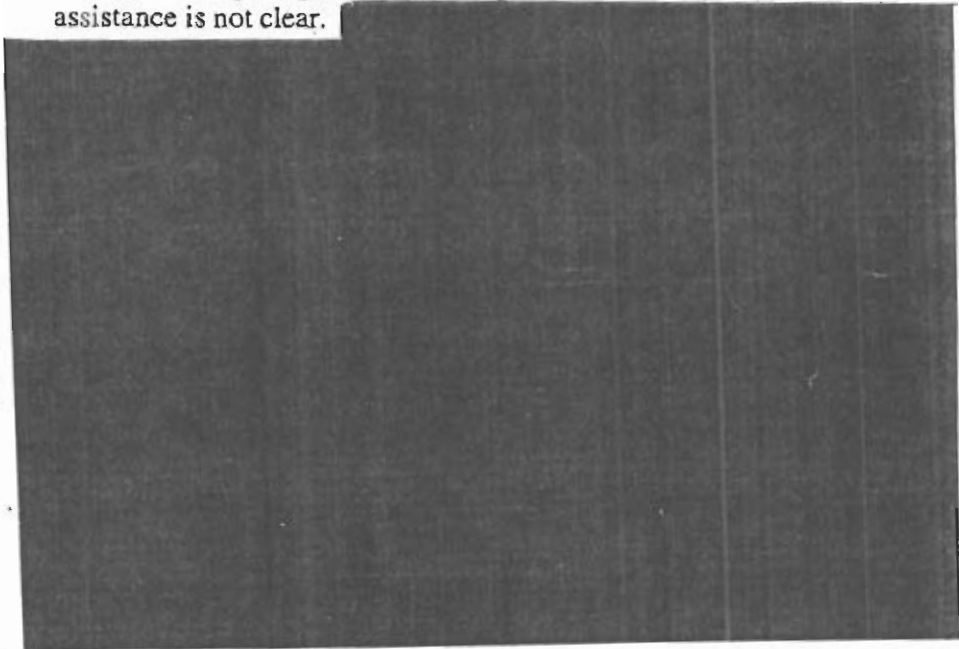


- In the past several years, Iraq reportedly has provided specialized training to al-Qa'ida in explosives and assistance to the group's chemical and biological weapons program, although the level and extent of this assistance is not clear.



- [REDACTED]
- Ahmad Hikmat Shakir, an Iraqi national in Malaysia, [REDACTED] facilitated the arrival in January 2000 of Khalid al-Mihdhar—one of the 11 September hijackers—to Kuala Lumpur for a key operational meeting before Mihdhar traveled to the US. Reporting is contradictory on hijacker Mohammad Atta's alleged trip to Prague and meeting with an Iraqi intelligence officer, and we have not verified his travels [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Scope Note (U)

This Intelligence Assessment responds to senior policymaker interest in a comprehensive assessment of Iraqi regime links to al-Qa'ida. Our approach is purposefully aggressive in seeking to draw connections, on the assumption that any indication of a relationship between these two hostile elements could carry great dangers to the United States.

- We reviewed intelligence reporting over the past decade to determine whether Iraq had a relationship with al-Qa'ida and, if so, the dimensions of the relationship.
- Our knowledge of Iraqi links to al-Qa'ida still contains many critical gaps because of limited reporting [REDACTED] and the questionable reliability of many of our sources. [REDACTED]

Some analysts concur with the assessment that intelligence reporting provides "no conclusive evidence of cooperation on specific terrorist operations," but believe that the available signs support a conclusion that Iraq has had sporadic, wary contacts with al-Qa'ida since the mid-1990s, rather than a relationship with al-Qa'ida that developed over time. These analysts would contend that mistrust and conflicting ideologies and goals probably tempered these contacts and severely limited the opportunities for cooperation. These analysts also do not rule out that Baghdad sought and obtained a nonaggression agreement or made limited offers of cooperation, training, or safehaven (ultimately uncorroborated or withdrawn) in an effort to manipulate, penetrate, or otherwise keep tabs on al-Qa'ida or selected operatives. [REDACTED]

guarded secrets.

of Iraq or Iraqi nationals in al-Qa'ida CBRN efforts, but we cannot determine which, if any, of these Iraqi nationals Baghdad directed.

The CBRN Angle. The most ominous indications of Iraqi-al-Qa'ida cooperation involve Bin Ladin's chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) ambitions. Although Iraq historically has tended to hold closely its strategic weapons experts and resources, Baghdad could have offered training or other support that fell well short of its most closely