

Analysis of the 12 Months of Military Occupation of Iraq by the US and Coalition Forces May 2004, Ramzaj Group

It is no secret today that the US owe their victory over Saddam Hussein primarily to some of the Iraqi military command who entered into negotiations with the Coalition command and, in fact, betrayed their country. Unfortunately, the fact and the subject of these negotiations were not disclosed at the time. Besides, we had no means to influence development of the situation. In the circumstances any further activity of the group became senseless, and the group ceased its work.

During the whole year the group thoroughly reviewed the information coming from Iraq. Today, a year after completion of the active phase of Operation Iraq Freedom, the group believes it is possible to sum up some of the results and to draw certain conclusions based on the 12 months of the military campaign in Iraq.

We think there is no need to focus on the current operational data, since it would take too much time and is of little relevance to assessment of the situation as a whole. The purpose of this report is to present our view on the events in Iraq and around it, and to disclose the plans of the US and their allies in the region.

GEOPOLITICAL OUTCOME

The situation between May and October 2003 was of critical importance for determining further developments in Iraq. The people of Iraq, demoralized by the treason of the high brass, took the capture of Baghdad and occupation of the whole country rather indifferently. The psychological shock caused by the internal political crisis and treason of some of the country's top officials paralyzed the will of Iraqis for some time.

In the increasing political and economical chaos part of the population was ready to accept the occupational forces as their liberators, provided that the Americans and their Allies bring law and order back to the country, restore the public services and social infrastructure, revive the economy.

And for about 6 months the Americans had a unique opportunity to establish long-term control over Iraq. But the US failed to capitalize on this chance.

Facing the paralysis of resistance in 2003, the Americans failed to give adequate assessment of the situation and recognize that the Iraqi people give little credit to them. What the US regarded as vigorous support from the Iraqi people was in fact nothing but the emotional shock in the face of the chaos engulfing the country.

Instead of struggling for revival of the economy and for restoration of the public services in Iraq, the Americans got down to sharing the Iraqi pie. During the first 4 months no efficient measures were taken to bring Iraq out of collapse. The US and their allies would rather spend this time apportioning the spheres of influence and oil contracts.

As a result, the Iraq restoration plan proposed by the US was based on the assumption that Iraq would have to self-restore using its own oil resources. At the same time, even the most optimistic forecasts predicted that it would only be possible in rather a distant future. The policy of slow and gradual restoration of Iraq assumed by the US Administration was a first-rate blunder from the Americans.

In fact, the US suggested shock therapy to the war-torn Iraqi economy.

Rapid lumpenization of the population started. The political chaos encouraged spontaneous self-organization of individuals around new leaders. Already in May and June the Coalition HQ started receiving reports, stating that armed parties and local defence groups started forming in almost every town or settlement. At first they were mostly aimed to protect the population from bandits and marauders, but gradually most of these groups started to put claims for control over the territory of their operations. It lead almost immediately to clashes with the Coalition forces obliged to support the Temporary Administration authorities formed by the US and staffed usually with low-ranking officials from the former Hussein administration.

The Americans nearly mirrored the mistake the Soviet Union made in spring and summer 1980 in Afghanistan, when troops brought in to prevent external aggression became engaged in action against local leaders under the pretence of assisting the pro-Soviet administration.

The war-jaded people of Iraq, seeing that the invaders do not seem eager to restore the ruined country, started regarding them as the primary cause of their sufferings. Already by September 2003 uprisings and attacks against the Coalition forces become countrywide.

The Americans were unable to solve any single problem of post-war Iraq.

Most of the Iraqi people still lack access to clear potable water, electricity, skilled medical assistance and food. The Iraqis are prevented from moving freely around Iraq, from leaving the country. The living standards in the country are more than 5 times lower than in March 2003.

Today, a year after the occupation of Iraq, we are able to assert that the US failed to become liberators to the Iraqi people. This is the main and the most dramatic outcome for the US.

Till the last day of their stay in Iraq they will remain invaders with all that it implies.

The fact that now the Iraqi Resistance changed its direction from supporting Saddam to national liberation is at least as fatal to the Americans. While during the first months of occupation all the uprisings against the US and their allies were regarded as the results of scheming by Saddam Hussein and his immediate supporters, now, after Hussein's sons Uday and Qusay were killed in Mosul on July 22nd, 2003 and Hussein himself was captured in December 2003, it makes no sense to insist that Saddam Hussein is the mastermind behind the Resistance.

(The data in possession of Ramzai group still gives us grounds to believe that the person resembling Saddam Hussein, who was arrested in December 2003, is merely one of his doubles. It is highly probable that Saddam Hussein himself was killed between April 4th and 7th.)

However, even the brief review of Hussein's arrest makes it clear that an exhausted and demoralized man taken out of a narrow hole being his main hiding-place could not be in command and control of resistance.

Apparently realizing this, the US Command made a number of statements regarding capture or elimination of various key leaders or organizers of the resistance, but the statistics of casualties and attacks shows that the US are not able to destroy the brain centre of the resistance.

It is now clear to anyone, that the Iraqi guerrillas are not fighting for Saddam or BAATH, but they are just struggling against the invaders who took over their country.

Therefore the US are now forced to invent new terms to identify the Iraqi resistance. Now the US Command describes the Iraqi militants as criminal gangs and anti-Iraqi extremists.

But, despite all the evident success of Iraqi rebels, it is yet too early to assert that the resistance is organized. The parties and groups attacking the Coalition garrisons are still isolated and loosely coordinated. Judging by radio intercepts and reports made by American commanders, an average resistance party in the Sunni areas of Iraq comprises 15 to 30 individuals, usually coming from the same area or settlement and often related to each other. Such a group usually includes three to five individuals with military background from the previous wars or from professional military training. They are the backbone of the party, its planning and commanding core. The typical armament for such groups includes: anti-tank rocket launchers, assault rifles, machineguns, sniper rifles. Most of the small arms are of Soviet types. The engagement tactics are fire assaults and ambushes.

Shiites are more organized. Their regiments are larger - up to 100-150 men (even up to 500 men in Mehdi Army) - and are usually grouped around the local religious leaders. In addition to small arms Shiites possess some heavier weapons: anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank guided missiles, mortars, heavy machineguns, grenade machineguns and a number of shoulder-fired air-defence weapons. These weapons were left over in Basra and Kerbela by the Iraqi Army and Republican Guards.

Shiites are not satisfied with fire assaults and ambushes. After engagement they try to destroy the enemy, force them out of the area, establish total control of the settlement, and hold it for as long as possible.

This tenacity X resoluteness of Shiites is based on the fact that their link to the area where they live is stronger, than that of the Sunnis. Shiites live in religious communities drawn to their religious and spiritual centres and relics. As a result, when they decide to fight they gain wide support from the inhabitants of their town or settlement and spiritual support from their religious leader. For Shiites in most cases fighting has strong religious foundation and is full of fanaticism and religious ecstasy. For a Shiite dying in a town of Imam Ali's tomb fighting infidels is the peak of spiritual ascesis.

Operations aimed to establish control over Shiite centres are always extremely violent and bloody. However, it is certain today that the actions of Iraqi guerrillas still are spontaneous and have no common plan. Iraqi Resistance has not yet produced a common leader capable of waging a war against the invaders. It has no ideological centre capable of forming an ideology and defining the aim of this fight.

Still it is obvious, that resistance in Iraq ceased to be fragmentary and sporadic, but becomes a massive phenomenon, reaction to sanctions and economical chaos brought about by the Americans. Today 10,000 to 13,000 Iraqis are engaged in action against the Coalition troops, and the number of guerrillas has been steadily rising so far. The Resistance is becoming more structured and involves greater parts of the population. The image of the Resistance becomes increasingly attractive. The Resistance is being heroicized, romanticized and is gradually becoming the idea that cements the Iraqi society.

The fact that in the traditionally secular Iraqi society the religious aspect is gaining dominance is an ominous sign for the US and their allies. Today the resistance is rallied around religious leaders or commanders openly speaking of the religious nature of their struggle against the US and their allies. For the indigent people of Iraq the religious slogans of struggle against the invaders become a clear and understandable basis for rally. Since Iraq has borders with Shiite Iran and fundamentalist Saudi Arabia, it would be reasonable to suppose that this religionization of the war will gain strong external support.

A guerrilla war waged with Allah Akbar! battle cry in a country where the society was mostly secular merely a year ago is more than a serious blow for the US.

The campaign in Iraq loses its attraction to outsider participants. The economical prospects of being a part of this war are increasingly ephemeral. The political cost of participating in an unholy war is becoming more and more evident. By the end of June the Coalition may lose three more members. Norway declared its decision to withdraw the troops from Iraq by the end of July. The Netherlands may make a similar announcement in the coming few weeks. El Salvador, Denmark and Dominican Republic informed the US in private of their wish to leave the Coalition.

The US face the prospect of being stuck in Iraq only with the NATO's New Wave - Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined by Ukraine. The Bush Administration is now actively trying to persuade South Korea into sending troops to Iraq.

CASUALTIES

Casualties are the most painful subject for the US in the Iraq war. Only after the active hostilities were over, the Americans admitted death of 138 servicemen (according to the daily reports by Ramzaj group, at that moment the casualties were about 160-250 servicemen) and injury of 350 (according to the reports, 380 to 500 servicemen were injured).

Today we have the data confirming that at least 165 US soldiers were killed during the active phase of hostilities. Thus, the documents we now possess reveal that at least 28 special force soldiers died during the operation, and the information regarding their death was not made public or included into the official casualty report.

During the hostilities the American Command thoroughly concealed the losses. Thus, the daily number of casualties admitted by the Coalition HQ did not exceed 1 to 3 soldiers, while the actual losses were at least 5-7 soldiers a day with up to 30 servicemen KIA on certain days (like 23.03).

The US staked on quick victory expecting it to compensate for the moral cost of concealing the information. But almost immediately after the active phase was over, the US and their allies faced armed resistance of the population of the occupied areas.

The Pentagon was forced to admit death of 36 American soldiers in May 2003, 29 in June, 46 in July, 36 in September, 42 in October, 82 in November, 40 in December. And by January 2004 the US casualties in Iraq after completion of the active phase totalled 340.

In these circumstances the Pentagon and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were forced by the President's Administration to take certain measures to conceal the real level of casualties. Now we are able to assert that the Pentagon misinforms the American society and uses a sophisticate system to conceal the casualties.

From the beginning of the war to the present day the US have officially acknowledged 706 servicemen KIA and over 4,500 wounded. The actual number of killed and wounded is much greater. The casualty reports published by the Pentagon do not include servicemen who died in hospitals or committed suicide. Besides, the casualties taken by the Special Forces usually are not disclosed.

Thus, a US Special Force UH-60A Blackhawk helicopter evacuating an SF unit was downed on April 14th, 2004 near Al Qaim. Downing of the helicopter was confirmed by radio intercepts. In addition, a message from the Air Force command centre in Iraq was intercepted stating that the airbase at Baghdad airport was alerted and search & rescue mission was launched.

In the evening of the same day the information regarding the loss of a UH-60A Blackhawk was mentioned in the daily report on Iraq for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The same evening Special Operations Command (SOCOM) released the information that one of the Special Force units in Iraq lost 5 soldiers dead and 9 wounded. This was also confirmed by an e-mail message sent by a Special Force soldier to his fellow at Fort Lewis.

Yet there was no official confirmation of the loss of this helicopter. Moreover, the next day the media representatives were misinformed that the information regarding downing of a helicopter at Al Qaim on April 14th was actually a misinterpretation of loss of a CH-53 Sikorski helicopter near Al Fallujah on April 13th. No data regarding death of Special Forces soldiers on April 14th was published. At the same time, the available information gives grounds to assert that during the past year at least 58 Special Force servicemen were killed and at least 160 were wounded in Iraq.

The official casualty reports do not include servicemen who died in hospitals. According to Army Medical Command, as of March 30th, 2004 at least 110 servicemen died in hospitals or after being discharged. At least 25 soldiers of the American troops in Iraq committed suicide. Nine more cases of suicide were registered among the soldiers returning from Iraq. The total number of the US soldiers who were killed or died of wounds is 960 to 1,040.

The number of wounded servicemen is also significantly underestimated. According to the guidelines issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, only servicemen physically injured by an enemy attack and in accidents are included in the wounded category. As of April 15th the Pentagon acknowledged 3,600 soldiers wounded. Such narrowing of the wounded category completely ignores the American guidelines and instructions to account for both direct action casualties and for any facts of damage to the health of soldiers in the combat area.

At the same time, the Army Medical Command indicates that as of March 30th, 2004 at least 10,840 servicemen were withdrawn from the troops in Iraq for medical reasons in addition to the 3,600 servicemen mentioned above. The major reasons were: infectious diseases, limb damage, urgent surgery, brain damage, cardiac deficiency, mental problems, and other reasons not related to the enemy actions. The total number of servicemen injured during the year of war, including the non-combat losses, is in excess of 14,400. At least 140 more servicemen were arrested for various offences and are currently awaiting trials or already convicted.

In addition, over 500 soldiers deserted from the US Army units stationed in Iraq or being transferred to Iraq. The main form of desertion is failure to return from a leave or duck-out (in the

US territory). About 1,200 more servicemen rejected transfer to Iraq for various reasons, 300 of them by way of disgraceful termination of the contract.

The total losses of the US Army in Iraq from March 2003 to mid-April 2004, including killed, wounded, injured, ill, suffering from mental disorders, as well as offenders, convicts and deserters already exceed 16,000. Over 40 more persons killed and up to 180 wounded are the casualties suffered by the US civilian personnel employed by the US companies working under logistics and infrastructural contracts in Iraq.

The situation regarding casualty reporting in the British troops is the same. Thus, according to the official sources the British troops lost 58 servicemen killed and about 400 wounded for the past year. But the payments made by the U.K. Ministry of Defence as compensation for death of servicemen killed in action indicate that at least 90-95 servicemen were killed, and the number of wounded supported by the Ministry of Defence exceeds 800. The total number of servicemen quitting the ranks of the British troops in Iraq since March 20th, 2003 is about 2,200.

As of April 15th, 2004 the total Coalition losses in Iraq including all categories of casualties are at least 1,200 killed and about 17,000 wounded. This impressive number of casualties clearly demonstrates the scale of resistance to the Coalition in Iraq, and there are still no encouraging trends towards reduction of the number of casualties.

COMBAT

The 12 months of combat in Iraq revealed both strengths and major weaknesses of the American war machine. One of the main advantages of the US Army is the large number of state-of-the-art communications, reconnaissance and target designation (TD) systems.

E-3 AWACS distant early warning (DEW) airplanes, E-8 Joint STARS DEW&TD planes, and various unmanned aerial vehicles conducted continuous survey of the land and the air. In addition, mobile recon radar units, automatic data processing, fire control and targeting systems were deployed and active in the land units. All these elements were combined in recon/strike and recon/fire support complexes. The greatest achievement of the US was in tight integration of weapons with the reconnaissance systems at the battlefield.

Already at the company/battalion level American troop leaders receive real-time intelligence, processed by advanced IT systems, from dozens of various systems continuously monitoring the situation in the air and on the ground, which allows them to assess the situation on the battlefield and in the adjacent areas with a high level of reliability. Such top-notch coordination between recon and combat units allows for organizing the elements of different combat arms acting at the battlefield into a single real-time recon and strike complex. This is the greatest technological advantage of the US Army at the time being.

The concept of fighting the second echelons developed in the early 80s allows the US Army to control the situation in the advancement zone as far as 50-80 km in the Iraqi desert (25-30 km at the European battlegrounds).

Another evident advantage of the American forces is a high level of interaction between different combat arms at the battlefield, especially with regards to air support. This was achieved by introduction of advanced communication and target designation systems, integrating airborne targeting and navigation systems of strike planes and ground fire control systems.

However, certain drawbacks of these systems shall be noted. The experience of their use in Serbia already showed that the results are poor for operations in highlands and in rugged terrain due to a large number of radar shadow zones. These systems are also not suited for recon in woodlands and settlements. This was confirmed by continuous fighting in Baghdad, Fallujah, Najaf, and in other towns, where the technological advantage of the US soldiers diminished in the urban environment.

Besides, so far the US used all these systems in almost test ground situation against a technologically inferior enemy, where no radio-electronic countermeasures and surgical strike

weapons capable of destroying the elements of this system located deep in the American formations were used.

Despite predictions of some analysts, the US soldiers and commanders rather quickly adapted to severe conditions of the desert, and the climate as such had no significant impact on their operations.

The outfit of an American soldier is usually corresponding to the modern requirements and allows the soldier to act confidently at any time of the day. Almost every soldier in the shock troops had a personal night-vision set, a night sight, and a man-portable radio set. At the same time the command introduced strict requirements with regards to wearing the uniform, outfit and protection equipment.

The US infantry units possess a large number of extra weapons, like various single-shot grenade launchers and guided missile systems. The ability of the US troops to conduct operations at any time of the day undoubtedly is to their advantage.

The approach of the top military command to combat has not changed. They are still focused on inflicting maximum damage to the enemy before engaging in close combat, and they've made a good progress in developing this concept.

The above means that understanding the exceptional roles of camouflage and radio-electronic countermeasures not as a kind of battle support, but as one of the major components of modern warfare would be one of the most important lessons learned from this war.

But, while the concept of quick war has generally proven its efficiency during the active phase of this war (March - April 2003), the lengthy guerrilla war that started in the country, showed a number of significant weaknesses of this concept and revealed many problems. The US Army turned out to be poorly prepared for waging a long counter-guerrilla war, and this affects combat readiness of the troops and their morale.

The wear of materiel in Iraq has already exceeded all the forecasts. According to the statement made by Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez at a conference in Baghdad on March 24th, the US has actually buried their weapons in Iraq. Up to 70% of the materiel and weapons operated here require major repairs. The assessment made by the US military shows that at the current rate of hostilities at least 50% of the combat equipment, mostly tanks, helicopters and APCs, will turn to scrap metal within six months and require replacement.

Even so Iraq attracts the most combat-ready units of the US Army. The troop rotation planned for March and April has been stopped. So far part of the 18th Airborne Corps still remains there, though the Joint Chiefs of Staff planned to start transferring the core of its troops (82nd Airborne Division, 101st Air Assault Division, 3rd Mechanized Division) closer to the Syrian border back in mid-August 2003.

The troop movement was cancelled. Now these divisions were bound to return to the US to be replaced by the units of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and the 81st National Guards Brigade, but this rotation was only partially completed. Part of the 1st Armor Division (was to be replaced by the 1st Cavalry Division), and the 4th Mechanized Division (was to be replaced by the 1st Infantry Division) still remain in place. There are about 160,000 American troops in Iraq in total.

Despite the statements made by American military with regards to natural dissimilarity between Iraq and Vietnam, lack of the jungle does not make the task any easier. Desert conditions and hot weather prevent Americans and their allies from setting up their garrisons away from the cities. At the same time the lines of communication between the garrisons are extremely stretched out and vulnerable. War in Iraq is gradually transforming into two major types of combat: fight for the cities and fight for the lines of communication. These types of combat are the most bloody and costly ones.

According to the military experts of the Main Operational Branch of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, urban warfare has all the features typical for mountain and woodland warfare:

- The fighting is actually taking place in three dimensions;

- The ability to detect enemy using recon equipment is very limited;
- Hardly passable terrain with a vast number of artificial obstacles;
- Inability to use the troops in units and formations and, consequentially, reliance on small strike force tactics;
- Limited use of heavy weapons.

The fact that all types of American combat materiel are vulnerable to conventional anti-tank weapons became a troublesome discovery for the US military. Thus, the M1A1 Abrams main battle tank, designed to withstand hits from most of the modern ant-tank weapons, turned out to be surprisingly vulnerable to conventional RPG-7 and SPG-9 rocket launchers. Rocket-propelled grenades used against Abrams tanks have 55% probability of successfully hitting turret side and hull side above the wheels, and 70% probability of success when hitting the turret from above.

During the year at least 25 US tanks were irretrievably lost (took catastrophic hits) in Iraq. About 60 more tanks took serious damage, which could only be removed in the repair shops or by sending the tanks to the US for major repairs.

Combat viability of APCs was even worse. Half of rocket-propelled grenade hits resulted in armoured vehicle breakdown, injury or death of part of the crew. At least 15% of the hits caused fires followed by complete loss of the armoured vehicle. The total number of APCs and other armoured vehicles lost during the year was at least 110. About 150 more were damaged. The Americans had to rely on the Soviet combat experience of welding various splitter grates to APCs and covering tank turrets and sides with various reinforcements.

Helicopter losses were also quite painful. During the year of war the Coalition lost at least 30 helicopters of different types. Up to 150 Coalition servicemen were lost onboard. The American military command in Iraq expressed their dissatisfaction with the results of combat use of AH-64 Apache and AH-64D Apache Longbow gunships. The gunship turned out to be too expensive and too poorly protected from conventional firearms.

The concept of a long-range gunship failed under the conditions of Iraq. Reliance on target detection and destruction at the maximum distance from the average altitude revealed its inefficiency in Iraq. Poor visibility, urban environment, and close combat conditions forced the Apache pilots into operating at the altitudes between 100m and 500m at distances rarely exceeding 800-1500m.

This resulted in the helicopters coming into the effective range of the small arms, primarily - machineguns and anti-aircraft guns. The Iraqis quickly learned the methods of ambushing helicopters by opening fire from several machineguns from the rear. As a result, at least 10 Apache helicopters were lost in Iraq during the year.

According to Mj. Gen. David Petreus, ex-commander of 101st Air Assault Division, what the US Army needs is a battlefield helicopter able to stay above the enemy lines, an inexpensive and well-protected craft, and Apache doesn't suit this purpose. As a result, at least 10 Apache helicopters were lost in Iraq during the year.

At the same time, unmanned aerial vehicles proved their high efficiency and are now performing most of visual and radar reconnaissance tasks. Organization of protected radio communications at company/battalion level and navigation support should also be appreciated.

While the active phase revealed no significant moral and psychological problems, a number of problems showed up during a lengthy counter-guerrilla operation.

Psychologists in most of the units indicate general moral depression of the soldiers, their undisguised fear of being sent to Iraq and disappointment with the war waged there. According to a classified poll conducted by military psychologists in the Marine Corps, only 15 out of 100 polled servicemen of the Marine battalion at Camp Pendelton were unconditionally ready to go to Iraq. 55 marines stated that they would undoubtedly avoid this assignment if they had a chance. 20 marines stated that the prospect of being sent to Iraq is a severe stress. 10 marines referred to their state before being sent to Iraq as uncontrolled fear.

It should be noted, that a year ago the percentage of soldiers unconditionally ready to go to Iraq was up to 65%. Only 5 out of every 100 servicemen returning from Iraq would like to go there again. 71 serviceman stated that they will take any chance to avoid another assignment there.

To prevent the leak of information regarding the moral condition of the troops the Coalition command was forced to limit the use of the Internet and telephones. Since August 2003 American soldiers may only send e-mail messages from the official servers of their units; they are banned from using free mailboxes on other servers. Each serviceman received an instruction listing all the types of classified data, and disclosure of such data entails severe disciplinary punishment.

The classified data includes any references to death or injury of their fellows before they are officially confirmed by the Pentagon, any evaluations of morale of units and specific servicemen, information on unfriendly attitude and uprisings of Iraqis, and quite a number of other items.

The same order bans the officers from providing any emotional appraisals of the situation in Iraq, disclosing the number of casualties, mentioning the names of casualties, and generally exceeding the limits of official discussion when talking on the telephone to the people outside Iraq. According to the US Military Police, during the first three months of 2004 in Iraq eleven officers were severely reprimanded for violating the telephone conversation guidelines.

US PLANS FOR SUMMER AND AUTUMN 2004

The information we possess shows that the top American political leaders and the US military command are well aware of the scale of problems facing the US in Iraq and are looking for the ways to overcome the crisis.

The data coming from various sources shows that October 2003 to March 2004 the US special services conducted a number of covert operations to spark the confrontation between the Shi-ah and the Sunni communities in Iraq.

They staked on passionarity of the Iraqi Shiites who were persecuted and subjected to repressions during Hussein's rule. According to the American analysts, this conflict would transform into an open armed confrontation of the two religious communities, where the US and the UK would act as mediators and peacekeepers. In this case Shiites would stronger support.

The American analysts thought that Iraqi Shiites are more inclined to cooperation with the Coalition command, since they had been oppressed by Hussein's regime in every way. Besides, the largest oil fields in the south of Iraq are located in the areas with predominantly Shiite population, and tolerance of Shiites would speed up restoration of the oil industry in the South.

To achieve this, the American agents eliminated several Shiite religious leaders. Then, in early March 2003, a series of explosions killing over 180 Shiites were organized by the Americans during a Shiite religious festival at Kerbela.

But the intervention of Iran's spiritual leaders and the intelligence data timely delivered by Iran's intelligence service helped to keep the situation at Kerbela under control. The Iraqi Shiites laid the responsibility for the explosions on the Americans.

The Americans failed to stage a conflict between Shi-ah and Sunni communities, but this setback did not force them to reject the plans of using the internal conflicts in the Iraqi society. This plan has been altered significantly by now.

The British, who had warned the Americans of extremely low probability of success of any attempts to provoke a fight between Shiites and Sunnites in Iraq from the very beginning, proposed a plan of their own after the Kerbela operation failed. The leading role in this plan is allocated to the British Secret Intelligence Service having strong ties among the Shiite community in Iraq since mid-50s and a rather efficient ring of agents in Iran.

The essence of this plan is in attempting to contact the secular political leaders of Iran who already are in a permanent state of cold war against the top religious leaders in Iran. Through the contacts these leaders might be persuaded to use their authority and abilities to influence the Iraqi Shiites towards pacification.

In response the British and the Americans would in their turn use the long and rather unprotected border between Iran and Iraq to provide financial, organizational and other support for the secular leaders in Iraq to remove the Islamists from power.

These mutually beneficial contacts would later become a firm ground for re-establishing relationships with the renewed Iran. Besides, such coordinated actions are also aimed to foil any attempts of the fundamentalist groups in Iran to influence the situation in Iraq.

This plan, referred to as the "Iran swing" in a private conversation between a high-rank American diplomat and Silvan Shalom, the Israeli Foreign Minister, is already being implemented.

Thus, Elliot Abrams, a high-ranking specialist in the Middle East problems, went to Switzerland in March to meet a number of Iranians, one of whom introduced himself as a person close to Mohammad Hatami, the President of Iran. All the parties were satisfied with the results of this meeting, and further contacts involving a high-ranking representative of the American Administration may be expected in the weeks to follow.

In Iraq the Americans are trying to reach an agreement with the rebel leaders. The US are extremely concerned about low support to the Temporary Administration of Iraq and lack of personalities recognized by majority of the Iraqi society in it.

The Coalition HQ prepared a report stating that considerable reorganization of the Temporary Administration is required in the nearest future, and attempts are needed to involve some of the rebel warlords in it in the name of democratization of Iraq government, expansion of the local government, and federalization of Iraq.

The military see the way out in gradual withdrawal of the Coalition forces to the secondary role, and presenting them to the Iraqi people as the guarantors of integrity of Iraq and protection from any external aggression.

Close attention is paid to the British experience of controlling the southern part of Iraq, including the second largest city of Basrah, where the British meet a lot less resistance than the troops of the other countries in the central and northern parts of the country.

The investigation of terrorist attacks in Madrid has not yet revealed any link between the terrorists who attacked the trains and the notorious Al Qaeda. On the contrary, the pattern and, first of all, the strange coincidences between the terrorist attacks in New York and Madrid, like left over vehicles with conclusive evidence of Arab terrorist participation found in both the cities, suggest that the attacks in Madrid were staged by the US special services rather than by Bin Laden.

Some of the available data suggests that the organizers' aim was not to terrorize the Spanish, but, on the contrary, to convince them of the need to vote for the government of Jose Maria Aznar, who unconditionally supported the US actions in Iraq. The unexpected reaction of the Spanish who denied support to Aznar and his policy forced the US special services to change their operational plans.

Opinion polls in the countries, the citizens of which were taken hostages in March and April 2004, show that the people in these countries react sensitively to any losses and are reluctant to give any commitments to their alliance with the US. Therefore CIA units in the Coalition countries received order to maximize counteraction to any attempts of any groups to destabilize the public opinion on the problem of Iraq.

At this time, as the public protest against the war in Iraq spreads, new terrorist attacks can be expected against the US citizens, embassies and companies outside the US, and during the Olympics in Greece, which may rally the American society around the current President and ensure his victory at the coming elections.

The American analysts warn the US Administration of the fact that abuse of the loyalty of New Wave NATO members may adversely affect the internal situation in these countries. As the elections draw nearer and the casualties among the Coalition troops mount, the Iraqi factor would become a major political factor. The analysts warn that there's a great likelihood that some of the governments in the former Warsaw Pact countries will lose electoral support for participating in this war. But even more alarming result of the analysis of the current situation is the fact that as the war

in Iraq is getting overextended, the US are squandering their 9/11 credit, that actually let the US loose for a new global redistribution.

According to the world's leading political scientists, like Zbigniew Bzezinski, this credit was to ensure the right of non-discussed decision-making with regards to the major global problems for the US for at least 10 years.

But today, stuck in Iraq, entangled in guerrilla war, America is rapidly losing its right to be regarded as a victim of aggression and looking more and more like an aggressor to the whole world. If this process continues, the campaign in Iraq would ruin the US plans for further global redistribution in 7 to 9 months.