

Ex-Saddam Intelligence officer revealed as creator of ISIS Structure for Conquest of Syria and Iraq



ISIS fighter on captured Syrian Jet

Source : *Der Spiegel*

Der Spiegel published a report this weekend identifying the Ex-Saddam intelligence officer who created the strategy for the Islamic State the late Samir Abd Muhammad al-Khlifawi aka Haji Bakr killed by Syrian rebels in January 2014. *The Der Spiegel* report [The Terror Strategist: Secret Files Reveal the Structure of Islamic State](#), is based on papers of the late Haji Bakr who devised the draconic oppressive organization of the Islamic State that facilitated the conquest and control of large swaths of both Syria and Iraq. It demonstrates that ISIS made common cause with Ba'athist nationalists recreating the dystopian "Republic of Fear" that existed under the late Saddam Hussein under the veneer of apocalyptic Jihadist Islam. The Irony is that the cabal of former Saddam Ba'athist officers met the future Emir of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi while US prisoner at Camp Bucca in Iraq over the period from 2005 to 2008. After reading this *Der Spiegel* report one wonders whether self-appointed Emir of the Islamic State, al-Baghdadi is the real power behind the rise of the Islamic state and whether it is the operatives of the late Haji Bakr.

Der Spiegel wrote:

Not even those who shot and killed him after a brief

firefight in the town of Tal Rifaat on a January morning in 2014 knew the true identity of the tall man in his late fifties. They were unaware that they had killed the strategic head of the group calling itself "Islamic State" (IS). The fact that this could have happened at all was the result of a rare but fatal miscalculation by the brilliant planner.

Samir Abd Muhammad al-Khlifawi was the real name of the Iraqi, whose bony features were softened by a white beard. But no one knew him by that name. Even his best-known pseudonym, Haji Bakr, wasn't widely known. But that was precisely part of the plan. The former colonel in the intelligence service of Saddam Hussein's air defense force had been secretly pulling the strings at IS for years. Former members of the group had repeatedly mentioned him as one of its leading figures. Still, it was never clear what exactly his role was.

But when the architect of the Islamic State died, he left something behind that he had intended to keep strictly confidential: the blueprint for this state. It is a folder full of handwritten organizational charts, lists and schedules, which describe how a country can be gradually subjugated. SPIEGEL has gained exclusive access to the 31 pages, some consisting of several pages pasted together. They reveal a multilayered composition and directives for action, some already tested and others newly devised for the anarchical situation in Syria's rebel-held territories. In a sense, the documents are the source code of the most successful terrorist army in recent history.

For the first time, the Haji Bakr documents now make it possible to reach conclusions on how the IS leadership is organized and what role former officials in the government of ex-dictator Saddam Hussein play in it. Above all, however, they show how the takeover in northern Syria was planned, making the group's later advances into Iraq

possible in the first place. In addition, months of research undertaken by SPIEGEL in Syria, as well as other newly discovered records, exclusive to SPIEGEL, show that Haji Bakr's instructions were carried out meticulously.

Haji Bakr's Master Plan

When Iraqi national Haji Bakr traveled to Syria as part of a tiny advance party in late 2012, he had a seemingly absurd plan: IS would capture as much territory as possible in Syria. Then, using Syria as a beachhead, it would invade Iraq.

Bakr took up residence in an inconspicuous house in Tal Rifaat, north of Aleppo. The town was a good choice. In the 1980s, many of its residents had gone to work in the Gulf nations, especially Saudi Arabia. When they returned, some brought along radical convictions and contacts. In 2013, Tal Rifaat would become IS' stronghold in Aleppo Province, with hundreds of fighters stationed there.

[...]

What Bakr put on paper, page by page, with carefully outlined boxes for individual responsibilities, was nothing less than a blueprint for a takeover. It was not a manifesto of faith, but a technically precise plan for an "Islamic Intelligence State" – a caliphate run by an organization that resembled East Germany's notorious Stasi domestic intelligence agency.



Islamic State Master Plan by Haji Bakr former Saddam
Hussein Intelligence Officer

This blueprint was implemented with astonishing accuracy in the ensuing months. The plan would always begin with the same detail: The group recruited followers under the

pretense of opening a Da'wah office, an Islamic missionary center. Of those who came to listen to lectures and attend courses on Islamic life, one or two men were selected and instructed to spy on their village and obtain a wide range of information. To that end, Haji Bakr compiled lists such as the following:

- *List the powerful families.*
- *Name the powerful individuals in these families.*
- *Find out their sources of income.*
- *Name names and the sizes of (rebel) brigades in the village.*
- *Find out the names of their leaders, who control the brigades and their political orientation.*
- *Find out their illegal activities (according to Sharia law), which could be used to blackmail them if necessary.*

The spies were told to note such details as whether someone was a criminal or a homosexual, or were involved in a secret affair, so as to have ammunition for blackmailing later. "We will appoint the smartest ones as Sharia sheiks," Bakr had noted. "We will train them for a while and then dispatch them." As a postscript, he had added that several "brothers" would be selected in each town to marry the daughters of the most influential families, in order to "ensure penetration of these families without their knowledge."

[...]

Sharia, the courts, prescribed piety – all of this served a single goal: surveillance and control. Even the word that Bakr used for the conversion of true Muslims, *takwin*, is not a religious but a technical term that translates as "implementation".

[...]

Bakr was merely modifying what he had learned in the past: Saddam Hussein's omnipresent security apparatus, in which no one, not even generals in the intelligence service, could be certain they weren't being spied on.

[...]

The Ba'athist Nationalists link up with the AQ Iraq Prisoners held by the US

In 2010, Bakr and a small group of former Iraqi intelligence officers made Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the emir and later "caliph," the official leader of the Islamic State. They reasoned that Baghdadi, an educated cleric, would give the group a religious face.

Bakr was "a nationalist, not an Islamist," says Iraqi journalist Hisham al-Hashimi, as he recalls the former career officer, who was stationed with Hashimi's cousin at the Habbaniya Air Base. "Colonel Samir," as Hashimi calls him, "was highly intelligent, firm and an excellent logistician." But when Paul Bremer, then head of the US occupational authority in Baghdad, "dissolved the army by decree in May 2003, he was bitter and unemployed."

Although Iraq's dominant Baath Party was secular, the two systems ultimately shared a conviction that control over the masses should lie in the hands of a small elite that should not be answerable to anyone – because it ruled in the name of a grand plan, legitimized by either God or the glory of Arab history. The secret of IS' success lies in the combination of opposites, the fanatical beliefs of one group and the strategic calculations of the other.

Bakr gradually became one of the military leaders in Iraq, and he was held from 2006 to 2008 in the US military's Camp Bucca and Abu Ghraib Prison. He survived the waves of arrests and killings by American and Iraqi special units, which threatened the very existence of the IS precursor

organization in 2010, Islamic State in Iraq.

For Bakr and a number of former high-ranking officers, this presented an opportunity to seize power in a significantly smaller circle of jihadists. They utilized the time they shared in Camp Bucca to establish a large network of contacts

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