

THE FOLLOWING ARE BBC TRANSCRIPTS OF SWEDISH BROADCASTING'S INVESTIGATIVE SERIES ON IRAQI ESPIONAGE IN SWEDEN AND OTHER COUNTRIES. THE BBC PRODUCED OWN FOLLOW-UP STORIES ON THE TOPIC, AND SEVERAL OTHER EUROPEAN MEDIA OUTLETS ALSO FOLLOWED UP ON SWEDISH BROADCASTING, INCLUDING REUTERS AND THE AP.

REACTIONS INCLUDED A STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, LAUNCHING A GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION FOLLOWING THE REVELATIONS MADE BY SWEDISH BROADCASTING.

SEVERAL STORIES ARE STILL ON THE SWEDISH BROADCASTING WEBSITE:
<http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=343302>

PRESS RELEASE: <http://www.sr.se/omsr/press/press2003/1218.stm>

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December 18, 2003, Thursday

LENGTH: 531 words

HEADLINE: Saddam Husayn had at least six spies in Sweden

SOURCE: Sveriges Radio Ekot web site, Stockholm, in Swedish 18 Dec 03

BODY:

Text of report by Swedish radio Ekot web site on 18 December; subheadings as published:

At least six Swedes with Iraqi backgrounds have acted as spies for Saddam Husayn's Iraq for many years. One of them worked as an interpreter and then went on to work for the Swedish Migration Board for almost 10 years.

Ekot Swedish radio news has read documents from the secret Iraqi intelligence service Al-Mukhabarat which came to light after the fall of the regime. They show how Saddam Husayn spied on people of Assyrian origin in Sweden.

Spies lived a double life for many years in order to monitor Swedish-Assyrian movements.

Sixty thousand Assyrians in Sweden

Around 60,000 Swedes are of Assyrian origin. Assyrians are the indigenous people of the former Mesopotamia, an area which is now partially in Iraq, and they are also called Syrians or Chaldeans.

The Iraqi eagle, spreading its wings, appears at the top of the document and it lists the names of Swedes throughout the country.

Ekot has gained access to documents, which are marked top secret, from the Iraqi intelligence service. They come from one of Qusay Husayn's old headquarters in Baghdad.

Teachers and journalists detailed

Swedish doctors, teachers, politicians and journalists are described in detail. Their personalities, associates and views are described.

A report from Sweden to Baghdad is neatly written on Workers' Education Association paper.

The document is genuine, says Younadem Kana, one of the 25 members of Iraqi Governing Council, the transitional administration appointed by the USA.

"Nobody gave us these documents. They were hidden here when we moved in. They are 100 per cent genuine. It is their handwriting and their signatures," he says.

Spied on Assyrians

The people he is talking about are Swedes who were agents for Iraq. Their job was to spy on Swedes with Assyrian backgrounds.

Ethnic group not recognized

Saddam Husayn did not recognize Assyrians as an ethnic group, referring instead to Christian Arabs, and therefore viewed Assyrians in Sweden as a threat.

Assyrian organizations in Sweden fight for their ethnic and national rights.

Ekot has met one of the people identified as an Iraqi spy in Sweden. He works at the Swedish Migration Board and documents about him state that he is "a particularly important agent" as he could provide information on Iraqi asylum seekers in Sweden.

He admits that the Iraqi intelligence service attempted to recruit him through the embassy in Stockholm.

"When I went there they put a piece of paper on the table. It was a list of all my relatives in Iraq. One of them then produced a pistol. He put it on the piece of paper and let it spin round on top of the names," he says.

Still has his job

However, despite this threat he says he never became a spy for them. He also denies reporting details of asylum seekers which he gained through his work at the Swedish Migration Board.

He was interviewed by the Swedish security police a week ago and has now been excluded from the Swedish National Assyrian Association.

But he still has his job at the Swedish Migration Board.

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December 18, 2003, Thursday

LENGTH: 534 words

HEADLINE: Swedish subjects of Iraqi spies shocked by revelations

SOURCE: Sveriges Radio Ekot web site, Stockholm, in Swedish 18 Dec 03

BODY:

Text of report by Swedish radio Ekot web site on 18 December; subheadings as published:

Swedes with Iraqi backgrounds spied for Saddam Husayn by collecting details of other Swedes with links to Iraq and Assyrian organizations. Ekot Swedish radio news has read documents from the Iraqi intelligence service in which Sara is one of those whose details are featured.

Sara is a former municipal politician who has also been active in the Assyrian democratic movement in Sweden. She is described in detail in the documents which are in Ekot's possession.

"Having to know that someone like Uday or Saddam Husayn has information about you is obviously a little frightening and offensive because these are people who have no limits and lack human feeling in their conduct," Sara says.

The document, which was marked secret by the Iraqi intelligence service just six months ago, contains details of Sara's family background and her political career here in Sweden.

Shaking with indignation

When Sara found out that she was included in Saddam Husayn's archive of people he wanted to check on she became worried that she might once have said or done something which could harm someone else - something which could have been used against that person.

When she talks about this she shakes with indignation and disappointment that people in Sweden could subject her to this.

Knew about it

Another person who is detailed is Mattay, a dentist. He is just as upset that his activities in the Assyrian movement were reported.

"We knew about it, but we have never had any proof," he says.

Murdered after visit to Sweden

However, he knows that information from Sweden about Assyrian politicians visiting from northern Iraq was quickly reported back to their homeland. He claims that these reports resulted in one of the politicians being murdered when he returned to Iraq.

"Francis Shabo was a very prominent Assyrian politician in northern Iraq. He was here in Sweden and visited Swedish organizations and the Riksdag Swedish parliament, where he spoke out

publicly against Saddam Husayn. We know that this report led to Saddam hiring people who shot at the car Shabo was travelling in from six different directions when he was murdered," Mattay says.

Mattay wants the Swedish government to take this seriously.

"Those who worked for Saddam must be judged individually. Some have been forced into this but others believed in what they were doing. They must be brought to justice because they have contributed to the deaths of many others," Mattay says.

Important that documents are safeguarded

Sara agrees and emphasizes that it is important that the Swedish government ensures that all documents are safeguarded so that everyone can read their own document.

"It is important that the Swedish government acts regarding these documents, which are about many of us who are Swedish citizens, even if I come from a different background. Because I am a Swede and an Assyrian and I am proud of being both," Sara says.

(Sara and Mattay have other names. They have chosen to remain anonymous as they are still not sure who are informers and who are not.)

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LENGTH: 252 words

HEADLINE: Swedish Migration Board confirms suspicions of Iraqi spying

SOURCE: Sveriges Radio Ekot web site, Stockholm, in Swedish 18 Dec 03

BODY:

Text of report by Swedish radio Ekot web site on 18 December

One of those identified as a spy has worked for the Swedish Migration Board for more than 10 years and has had access to information about people seeking asylum in Sweden, despite the Swedish security police pointing out to the Migration Board as early as 1996 that the man had been in contact with the Iraqi embassy. Ingvar Belkert is head of security at the Swedish Migration Board in Norrkoeping. He confirms that questions were raised about the man as far back as 1996.

"There was information that he had been in contact with the Iraqi embassy," says Ingvar Belkert, head of security at the Swedish Migration Board.

Nineteen ninety-six is seven or eight years ago. What did you do at that time?

"We had a discussion with this man at the time and he asserted that he had not passed on any information and that he was innocent of the allegations," Ingvar Belkert says. We also told him that he should not come into contact with information about applications for residence or work permits or asylum seekers as part of his work.

Will he remain at the Swedish Migration Board?

"It's too early to answer that," Ingvar Belkert says.

Is there anything inappropriate in a person who had been in contact with Saddam Husayn's regime and who may have spied on refugees working at the Migration Board?

"You could easily think so, but there's also a question of whether there are sufficient grounds to dismiss someone."

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HEADLINE: Swedish citizen identified as Iraqi spy coordinator

SOURCE: Sveriges Radio Ekot web site, Stockholm, in Swedish 19 Dec 03

BODY:

Text of report by Swedish radio Ekot web site on 19 December; subheadings as published:

Sweden was a centre for Saddam Hussein's international monitoring of Assyrians. Ekot Swedish radio news has met a Swedish man who is identified as coordinator for Europe. He denies the allegations even though his signature appears on several reports about Swedes which were sent to Baghdad.

In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. This is how a letter written in Arabic to a man in Sweden by the Iraqi intelligence service begins.

The letter is signed by Qusay Husayn's right-hand man.

It is about how the Swede was to be responsible for an international intelligence unit based in Sweden.

Trained by Iraqis

According to the document the Swedish agent was also trained by Iraqis in Tunisia, Lebanon and Egypt.

According to the documents which Ekot has seen, the Swede's task was to coordinate and recruit agents in other European countries.

It is clear that he was in contact with agents in the United Kingdom, Germany and elsewhere and that reports about Swedes were often delivered through a contact in Paris.

He was also in contact with agents in other Iraqi cells in the USA, Australia and Canada.

Denies everything

The man denies everything when Ekot confronts him with the document. "None of it is true. I have been a good person all my life," he says.

There are more than three million Assyrians in the world today. The Assyrians are an ethnic group which Saddam Husayn did not recognize.

There are 60,000 people in Sweden who have some sort of Assyrian background. Many were born and brought up in Sweden.

Called refugee espionage

Prompted by Ekot's revelations about how Saddam Husayn's men operated in Sweden, the

Swedish security police have stated in a press release that they "are continually working on refugee espionage".

The Swedish security police refer to Swedes spying on other Swedes and reporting to Iraq as refugee espionage, even though those affected were born in Sweden and are Swedish citizens.

Ekot has also met another man, who worked in the former intelligence service's headquarters in Baghdad for many years. He confirms to Ekot that Saddam Husayn had paid agents throughout Europe, including Sweden, and these were not only people with Iraqi backgrounds.

Former US senator features in documents

John Nemrud is a former US senator who is also named as an Assyrian activist in the documents Ekot has read.

It seems natural to him that much of the Iraqi spying on Assyrians took place in Sweden.

"Why should this be concentrated in Sweden unless agents were able to operate freely or significantly more freely there than in other parts of the world?" John Nemrud says.

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HEADLINE: Swedes spied on by Iraq demand government action

SOURCE: Sveriges Radio Ekot web site, Stockholm, in Swedish 18 Dec 03

BODY:

Text of report by Swedish radio Ekot web site on 18 December; subheadings as published:

Reports about Swedes of Assyrian origin were supplied to the former Iraqi regime by at least six Swedish informers. The Swedes who were spied on are demanding that the Swedish government ensures that they receive clarification of what happened. If the government investigates the espionage they may gain access to the documents.

"It is up to them and it must be a Swedish decision. We have nothing against cooperating with them if that is what they want," says Younadem Kana, a member of the Iraqi Governing Council.

He has access to the archive as his office is located in one of Saddam Husayn's sons' former residences in Baghdad. This is where the original document is.

Government silent

Although many of those who feature in the archive are very upset and have demanded that the Swedish government act there is silence today.

Justice Minister Thomas Bodstroem does not think it is his business to speak to Ekot Swedish radio news about this. The Swedish security police will not speak about Saddam Husayn's Swedish spies today either.

One of those who according to the document submitted reports to Iraq has been working for the Swedish Migration Board for more than 10 years.

Both the Swedish Migration Board and the Swedish security police knew as far back as 1996 that there were suspicions that the man was spying for Saddam Husayn. They also know that he has now been identified in the Iraqi documents.

Still working at the Migration Board

As long as he has not done anything which can be proven to be illegal he is working as normal, according to Lars Paulsson, the board's acting director-general. This means that for 13 years asylum seekers have run the risk of speaking to a spy.

"You can't ignore the fact that he met asylum seekers through his work with the Swedish Migration Board and there may have been asylum seekers who told him something which they shouldn't have said to anyone apart from the person handling their case," says Lars Paulsen of the

Swedish Migration Board.

Migration minister also silent

Migration Minister Barbro Holmberg is not willing to comment on the matter today either. There were also suspicions about the man when Barbro Holmberg was director-general of the board.

Younadem Kana in Baghdad admits that six suspected spies were involved. This is within the Assyrian group.

Other archives held by the former intelligence service contain documents about Kurds and Arabs.

"There is a lot more in the archive, especially about Arabs," says Younadem Kana of the Iraqi Governing Council. Ekot has read documents from the former Iraqi intelligence service.

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HEADLINE: Radio reports more facts about Iraqi spies in Sweden

SOURCE: Sveriges Radio Ekot web site, Stockholm, in Swedish 18 Dec 03 – BACKGROUND SHEET

BODY:

Text of report by Swedish radio Ekot web site on 18 December; subheadings as published:

Here you will find facts about the Al-Mukhabarat intelligence organization, the document, the people who were monitored and the Assyrian people.

Al-Mukhabarat

Al-Mukhabarat was Saddam Husayn's own powerful intelligence organization.

It controlled the police, state institutions and the army.

A total of around 4,000 people were employed. They performed a number of tasks as well as traditional information gathering and spying, including testing and developing weapons and performing covert operations both inside and outside Iraq, including sabotage and executions.

They also engaged in counterespionage, detecting and interviewing foreign agents.

They were also responsible for developing propaganda. Their methods were well-known and feared and reports of torture and extortion reached beyond Iraq's borders even during Saddam Husayn's time.

People in the document

In the documents which Ekot Swedish radio news has seen about 50 Swedes are described.

They include doctors, journalists, teachers and politicians.

They were often involved in associations of some kind.

However, monitoring covered thousands of Swedes with Assyrian links as there are also reports on members of Assyrian cultural associations, church assemblies and political parties.

The document

The document is dated between 23 April 1983 and 18 March 2003 (two days before the American invasion) and details:

- * wages paid to Swedish agents, details of invoices;
- * very detailed accounts of Swedes with Assyrian links, regarding their families, relatives, employment, political views, leisure activities, style of clothing, appearance, conduct, personalities, etc.;
- * a directive to the Iraqi embassy in Stockholm about how their contacts with Swedish informers should be conducted;
- * contact lists with the names and telephone numbers of officers of Al- Mukhabarat, the former Iraqi intelligence service;
- * a list of eight agents in Europe, their code names and details of false identities;
- * reports from the Stockholm embassy about agents linked to them, with assessments of their work and loyalty;
- * details of completed applications for employment with Al-Mukhabarat;
- * agreements with informers;
- * details of Assyrians in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmoe, Joenkoeping, Soedertaelje, descriptions of Assyrian organizations in Sweden and their activities;
- * reports on Swedish-Assyrians' contacts with Swedish politicians;
- * lists of the code names and code numbers of Swedish and international agents;
- * letters which describe how Swedish agents were to be trained through travel to other countries, where they would meet agents from other countries and Iraqi officers;
- * Al-Mukhabarat's own details about the Swedish agents' backgrounds;
- * reports from the Assyrian democracy movement's annual meeting in Sweden.

Assyrians

Assyrians, who are also called Syrians and Chaldeans, are the indigenous people of ancient Mesopotamia, the country around the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, which includes part of Iraq.

There are currently about 60,000 Assyrians living in Sweden. Many of them are Swedish citizens. The Christian Assyrians' home countries are Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey.

Assyrians are not recognized as a minority in any of these countries except Iran and do not have ethnic-minority rights on issues regarding freedom to practice their religion, use their language and indulge in their own culture.

During and after the First World War Assyrians were massacred and persecuted in their own countries and many fled to other countries. The Assyrians are now spread throughout the world.

In 1967 205 Assyrians came to Sweden through the World Council of Churches. Increased

emigration from Lebanon and Turkey then began. The latest mass emigration has been from Iraq.
There are now about three million Assyrians in the world.

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