

2007

## The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11

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### Recommended Citation

Teska, David L. (2007) "The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 60 : No. 3 , Article 23.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol60/iss3/23>

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power and security around the world, Klein reasons, space will become an arena where states will protect their space assets in the same manner that they protect their sovereign airspace, land, and territorial seas. To this end, he draws upon the historical context of Sir Julian Corbett's maritime strategy theory as a basis on which to build a comprehensive space strategy. Previous attempts at space strategies have hinged upon using air or naval strategies, or a combination of the two. Klein argues that simply using air or naval strategies is too restrictive and does not adequately capture the uniqueness of space operations. Air and naval strategies in his view are too militarily focused, specifically on offensive weapons, or lack the proper linkage to the instruments of national power. For these reasons he turns to Corbett's maritime theory, which describes the relationship between land and sea as vital and also serves well as a model for development of space strategy.

This unique approach may be criticized by some. However, these same critics would do well to understand Klein's use of Corbett not as the be-all and end-all approach to space strategy but rather as a framework upon which to build. In fact, Klein himself admits that his approach to a space strategy largely agrees with current joint doctrine, the *Space Commission Report*, and other publications. However, his treatment highlights some areas deserving more debate, such as a better understanding of the defense of high-value positions in space and access to what he calls "celestial lines of communication," a phrase adapted from classic Corbett.

Klein's Corbett-based space strategy is presented in a fairly easy-to-read way,

although some of his basic premises are quite repetitive. Additionally, a few of his recommendations may be viewed as incredibly challenging, if not impossible, from technological and fiscal perspectives.

This is a must-read for military and nonmilitary strategic thinkers with interests or stakes in space operations. While it is sure to raise some eyebrows, particularly in the air and space communities, this book does what it is supposed to do: raise the level of debate on the formulation of a sound space strategy. This is a critically important subject, one that if not properly implemented and understood could have disastrous consequences on our national interests.

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Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York: Knopf, 2006. 480pp. \$27.95

Lawrence Wright has provided the military professional an excellent primer into the world of those who see the United States as a threat. The Arab world remains little understood by most Americans. It takes Wright nearly five hundred pages to lay out the complex tale of modern Islamic fundamentalism. It is no surprise that Osama Bin Laden is a key player, and Wright gives him center stage. Bin Laden is the son of a wealthy Yemeni who through grit and hard work earned the favor of the ruling family in Saudi Arabia for boldness in civil engineering projects that helped Saudi Arabia advance into the twentieth century.

The 1980s saw the first true conflict between Islamic fundamentalists and a major power, the ten-year war waged by the mujahideen in Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion. The Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, having suffered an unexpected drubbing. Emboldened by their victory against one superpower, many mujahideen, under the spiritual leadership of Osama Bin Laden (who spent some time in Afghanistan during the war), turned to fighting the new threat to Islam posed by the United States. The organization formed from disparate jihadist groups in Egypt, Iran, and Pakistan to meet this task was one whose name would become synonymous with the most violent form of anti-American Islamic fundamentalism—al-Qa‘ida (the Base). Ironically, it was the United States that, through the CIA, had largely financed and equipped the mujahideen and other anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

*The Looming Tower* is truly a book for our time. The *New York Times* agrees; it selected it as one of the ten best books of 2006. Drawing upon expertise gained from living and teaching in the Middle East, Wright has written a succinct and engaging work on the history, religion, and temperament of a people who remain at best enigmatic to most Americans. More importantly, Wright’s narrative characterizes the path to September 11th as a lengthy and convoluted one, a journey that started long ago. The attacks on that day were the next step in an irrevocable conflict between elements of radical Islam and the country they saw as a threat to their existence.

The lessons of *The Looming Tower* are many. The United States can succeed in its fight against the radicals of Islam only if it is completely united, with all

internal barriers swept aside. Much has been done in the years since that clear, blue Tuesday morning in September to reconcile that environment. The other take-away is that Bin Laden and his ilk are more complex than their rhetoric would have us believe. His followers, however, see him as a devout Muslim, pure in thought and strident in deed, out to defend his faith from foreign influences bent on its destruction. So as long as the United States remains engaged in that vital region, his likes will remain ever present and ever the threat.

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Key, Joshua, and Lawrence Hill. *The Deserter’s Tale: The Story of an Ordinary Soldier Who Walked Away from the War in Iraq*. New York: Atlantic Monthly, 2007. 237pp. \$23

Joshua Key is a young married man with four children who joined the U.S. Army to escape the grinding poverty of his life in Guthrie, Oklahoma. In 2003, he was deployed to Iraq with the 43rd Combat Engineer Company. At the end of seven months, Key had become so disillusioned with the Army and the Iraq war that he deserted while on leave in the United States. He ultimately made his way to Canada to ask for asylum. Lawrence Hill, a Canadian writer and journalist, put Key’s story into coherent form.

Although the book is well written, it is actually hard to read, because of the U.S. Army’s allegations of Key’s disloyalty, dishonesty, disrespect, selfishness, dishonor, lack of integrity, and cowardice, particularly during his first deployment with the 3rd Armored Cavalry