

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: SHEATHING THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES:
ASSESSING AL QAEDA AND DEVISING A U.S.
RESPONSE

Kevin McGrath, Doctor of Philosophy, 2007

Dissertation directed by: Professor Miranda Schreurs

Department of Government and Politics

Al Qaeda killed over 3,000 US citizens on September 11, 2001, and terrorism leapt to the fore of US strategic and political priorities. Yet, after nearly six year of concerted effort by the United States, the dominant power in the international system, Al Qaeda survives and is still acknowledged as a potent threat. This begs the question not just of why, but of what the United States can do to redress the situation.

This dissertation seeks answers by examining the four key aspects of Al Qaeda that enable it function as a successful terrorist entity – strategy, organization, financing, and politics. These factors area analyzed relative to the dynamics of the phenomenon of terrorism in the US-Al Qaeda struggle. For each variable, Al Qaeda’s perspective and efforts, as well as the perspective and efforts of the United States, are scrutinized.

This dissertation assesses Al Qaeda is primarily a political threat, not a military one. Terrorists subvert legitimate political processes to achieve political ends. Al Qaeda challenges not only specific US political decisions, but also the very nature of the US political system, a classical liberal democracy, and the nature of the US-created post World War II international order. The character of the US political response is critical.

As such, this dissertation concludes that US efforts to combat such a threat cannot be limited solely to a hard power approach. Such a component must be present in US strategy, for it alone directly degrades Al Qaeda's capacity for violence, the source of its power. The US approach must, however, include a greater emphasis on the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension.

The political aspect both drives the conflict and frames its execution, thus shaping the possible outcomes in both the near and far term. Fortunately, as the leader of the international system, the United States is in a position to politically undercut Al Qaeda. The United States can do so by adhering to globally revered traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases – the rule of law, a participatory political system emphasizing the importance of international institutions, and democratic values, such as human rights – in not just the execution, but also the formulation of US policy.

The potential impact is significant. Internally, manipulating the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension in accordance with traditional US values can weaken Al Qaeda's internal cohesion. Externally, the United States can narrow Al Qaeda's room for maneuver by depriving it of political support, thus strategically degrading Al Qaeda's operational capability. In the process, the United States will also stunt the terrorism process's subversive effects on the United States' political character. In short, addressing the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension in a manner consistent with traditional US political values ensures US political integrity while also yielding national advantage.

SHEATHING THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES: ASSESSING AL QAEDA AND
DEVISING A U.S. RESPONSE

by

Kevin McGrath

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Miranda Schreurs, Chair
Professor George Quester
Professor Jillian Schwedler
Professor John Steinbruner
Professor Nancy Gallagher

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all those, both military and civilian, who choose to commit to and give of themselves to the fight against Al Qaeda.

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Introduction

“When people are entering upon a war they do things
the wrong way round. Action comes first, and it is only
when they have already suffered that they begin to think.

Thucydides (as quoted in Berner 2005,
prologue)

“If you wish to conduct offensive war you must know
the men employed by the enemy. Are they wise or stupid,
clever or clumsy? Having assessed their qualities, you
prepare appropriate measures.”

Sun Tzu (Tzu and Griffith 1963, 148)

After more than five years of concerted effort by the United States, the most powerful state in the international system, to politically and organizationally neuter Al Qaeda, a numerically small, resource-poor, transnational terrorist group hunted by every state, Al Qaeda is not only not defeated, it remains a potent threat. Operating on the premise that “the experience, charisma and organizational skills of Al Qaeda’s top men would be difficult or impossible to replace,” the United States has pursued a “kill or capture” strategy to decapitate Al Qaeda’s leadership akin to taking down an organized crime family.¹ The United States has done so almost exclusively via hard power. Traditional US foreign policy political norms and values – the rule of law, a participatory form of governance executed via an embrace of international institutions, and democratic values such as human rights – that have historically governed US decisions to use and implement force have held little sway.

Though initially impressively damaging Al Qaeda by stymieing attacks and killing and/or capturing thousands of terrorists, the US counterattack has stagnated. “This ‘decapitation strategy’ (now) appears to be failing against the organization – especially as it grows into a social movement that links like-minded groups feeding off anti-American

sentiment to attract new recruits and sources of funding.”² The realist US hard-power approach has proven to be a necessary but not sufficient effort.

The problem is that Al Qaeda is primarily a political threat, not a military one. Terrorists subvert legitimate political processes to achieve political ends. Al Qaeda challenges not only specific US political decisions, but also the very nature of the US political system, a classical liberal democracy, and the nature of the US-created post World War II international order. The character of the US political response is critical. “It is not the people Al Qaeda might kill that is the threat. *Our* reaction is what can cause the damage. It’s al Qaeda plus our response that creates the existential danger” (David Kilcullen as quoted in Fallows 2006, 62).

This dissertation will explore the relationship between political values and power in the context of the US-Al Qaeda struggle. This dissertation purports that the US use of hard power against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world in a manner that ignores traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases, while yielding some hard power gains, ultimately politically undermines itself. This is an Achilles heel in a conflict that is fundamentally political, not military, in nature, and it can deny the United States victory. Traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases must guide both US strategic decision-making calculus and execution. Such an approach defends US political integrity from terrorism’s subversion, and it also furthers US national advantage.

RESEARCH QUESTION/HYPOTHESIS

From September 11th until the present, the United States has been confronted by the question of: how does the United States, a liberal democracy, defeat Al Qaeda, a non-state transnational terrorist entity espousing militant political Islam, without losing its

democratic character? Al Qaeda's continued menace shows that the US realist-oriented response emphasizing the state, focusing on national security, and employing a preponderance of coercive hard power tools to include military, intelligence, and law enforcement abilities is inadequate. The US strategy needs revision.

The central hypothesis of this study is: the failure of Coalition forces to quickly subdue Al Qaeda as was suggested would occur in the first months of the war is a result of the US government's failure to place sufficient emphasis on the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension. In other words, the administration's heavy emphasis on hard power tactics to the near exclusion of soft power ones, weakened the ability of the US to effectively deal with Al Qaeda. Instead of comprehensively addressing the Al Qaeda phenomenon by both blunting the group's hard power capabilities and engaging its political agenda in a manner consistent with traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases – most notably the rule of law, a participatory political system emphasizing the importance of international institutions, and democratic values, such as human rights – the US approach has given Al Qaeda political appeal.

In contrast to the tactical dimension of the US-Al Qaeda struggle, which plays to the non-state transnational terrorists' hard power strengths and the state's hard power weaknesses, the political dimension is an open playing field. Because Al Qaeda is not a nation-state, a natural political entity with multiple bonds uniting its members, the political dimension of the US-Al Qaeda struggle takes on dramatically increased importance as this dimension becomes the primary inspiration to increase the group's membership, the primary link to sustain group cohesiveness, the primary guide for group

action, and the means to appeal to non-members for assistance. These factors must be blunted. Hard power, while necessary, is not a sufficient approach.

BACKGROUND

Support for the United States swelled from both foreign governments and foreign populations in the wake of the September 11th attacks.³ The US had moral and political authority as a victim. Traditional US political values, as crystallized by the US citing of Chapter 7 of the UN charter, UN condemnation of the 9/11 attacks, and the UN approval of US retaliation, positioned the United States to retaliate. The world's states and publics overwhelmingly stood behind the United States on the cusp of its 9/11 response to destroy Al Qaeda, which at that time was effectively unbloodied and at its peak.

Four key Bush administration decisions then governed the US 9/11 response. First, President Bush drew a distinction between Al Qaeda and Islam writ large by emphasizing that bin Laden's "extremism... has been rejected by Muslim scholars."⁴ Second, he declared the enemy as "a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them."⁵ President Bush stated that, from the US perspective, "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."⁶ Third President Bush ruled out politically engaging Al Qaeda's agenda. All US efforts would attempt to disrupt Al Qaeda's organization and structure. All responsibility for political change was thus placed upon Al Qaeda. Fourth, by overthrowing the Taliban and proclaiming Iran, Iraq, and North Korea an "axis of evil," President Bush expanded terrorism to include nation-states.⁷

Four main post 9/11 US actions have flowed from this framework. First, contrary to Post Cold War norms, the Bush administration unilaterally deposed Afghanistan's Taliban regime and only involved the United Nations and key allies after the fact.

Second, beyond the rule of US law, the Bush administration has partnered with select allies around the world to set up a secretive prison and detainment system publicly acknowledged to have violated human rights.⁸ Third, contravening international law, the United States unilaterally invaded Iraq in the name of combating Al Qaeda and denying it potential access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) after sidestepping UN approval and in spite of outright allied opposition.⁹ Fourth, repeating past patterns, the United States is politically pressuring Iran on its nuclear program and its purported Iraq involvement while intimating militaristic warnings under the guise of Iran hindering US counterterrorism efforts in Iraq and Iran's potential to aid terrorists if it acquires WMD.

Collectively, in the eyes of both other states and the world's publics, traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases provide US political leadership with legitimacy, the key to combating a transnational terrorist actor attempting to lead a global insurgency against the US-led world system (Fallows 2006).¹⁰ The US response to 9/11, however, significantly violated these pillars of US foreign policy. As a result, the US world position situation is dramatically different and less promising as of fall 2007.

Support from foreign governments is waning. International participation in Iraq and Afghanistan, which was largely symbolic to begin with, continues to decline. The European Union is actively condemning secret US prisons, and sanctioning suspected European participants. Individual European states are indicting US counterterrorism operatives for executing US policies, such as secret arrests and extraditions to countries that use torture, that run counter to their political norms.¹¹

Support from foreign publics is also falling. Despite the spiked decrease in support for the United States stemming from the 2003 invasion of Iraq, international

public support continues to decline. Reversing the moral amplification of US political power stemming from US victimization, the United States is no longer generally perceived as a force for good in the world despite its highly publicized campaign to combat Al Qaeda, whose violence and goals garner low international public support.¹²

Though bloodied in the fighting – Al Qaeda’s Afghan sanctuary has been destroyed, roughly two thirds of its pre 9/11 leadership has been killed or captured, and hundreds if not thousands of its operatives have been killed and/or detained – Al Qaeda has become a potentially even more potent, albeit different, terrorist entity.¹³ Initial post 9/11 losses have been reversed. Al Qaeda has appointed new leaders (“Fighting Zarqawi’s Legacy” 2006).¹⁴ It has regained sanctuary in Pakistan while carving out a niche in Iraq.¹⁵ Its ranks have become numerically deeper while new expansion wings have increased Al Qaeda’s breadth.¹⁶

JUSTIFICATION FOR STUDY / OBJECTIVES

Al Qaeda, the leading embodiment and organizer of a global jihadi movement comprised of over 100 militant political Islamist movements to emerge since the 1980s, is the most immediate, potent short to medium term threat to US national security. No serious state competitors to US supremacy exist (Hoffman).¹⁷ It alone combines the will and the ability to inflict sustained harm unto the US polity proper and US interests abroad. The Al Qaeda-published Wills of the Washington and New York Battle Martyrs¹⁸ states that the 9/11 attacks were but the start. There has been a marked annual jump in the volume of attacks in the years after 9/11 with no signs of abatement.¹⁹

The US and international response to Al Qaeda will be crucial to determining the trajectory of both existing and emerging groups. If Al Qaeda is discredited and destroyed,

it will signal to other would-be terrorists the consequences of executing mass casualty attacks. If Al Qaeda thrives, more groups are likely to emulate it.

This dissertation scrutinizes the US political and military approach to Al Qaeda and contrasts it against the dynamics of terrorism as a phenomenon. After identifying these systemic disconnects, this dissertation will explore these shortcomings in relation to the Al Qaeda case study to provide policy recommendations to better combat Al Qaeda, a real, immediate threat to life, liberty, and prosperity in the international community.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Terrorism is a multifaceted and amorphous phenomenon. That it materializes in context means that terrorism scholarship has largely reflected political trends.

Scholarship on Al Qaeda is thus reflective of and has tracked with unfolding US policy.

While the original policy literature on modern terrorism stems from the Bolshevik Revolution's Mikhail Bakunin (Stillman 1952), early academic work began in earnest during 1960's decolonization era non-state violence reached the US political agenda. Much of this scholarship was focused on the definition of the term. Unique to this field of study, there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism, and over 100 definitions had been proposed by the latter 1980's (Schmid 1987). Sufficient progress has been made, however, such that consensus exists regarding terrorism's elemental properties and their interrelationships.

This dissertation will herein define terrorism as an illegitimate act of violence against a symbolic, innocent victim intended to induce a state of terror in a target group beyond the immediate victims in the process of challenging authority to coerce political change.²⁰ This dissertation's definition falls within the bounds of established scholarship.

It is, however, more precise than is often cited to ensure it is distinguishable from insurgency, a term explicated in Chapter Two that also applies to the US-Al Qaeda struggle.

Prior to September 11th 2001, no US Administration had adopted the destruction of Al Qaeda as a national strategic priority. As such, there was not an intense scholarly focus on Al Qaeda either in the United States or the West in general. That Afghanistan was engulfed in an internal war, was geographically remote, and of a different culture only added to the difficulties of gathering data and/or conducting serious scholarship in the United States.

Much of the literature produced on Al Qaeda and/or southwest Asia was journalistic and/or historical in nature; it was not policy-oriented. Rohan Gunaratna (2002b), Peter Bergen (2001), and James Burke (2004) are three known and generally well regarded authors whose work has defined the contours of Al Qaeda's history and produced corroborative, research. Most of the more timely Al Qaeda-specific literature was journalistic work by journalists, such as Pakistan's Ahmad Rashid (2001, 2002) and US journalist Robert Kaplan (1990, 2000). Barnett Rubin (1995, 2000, 2002, 2003; Labin and Rubin 1988), who was heavily consulted by the US government following 9/11, was one of the only Afghanistan specialists in all of US academia.

The secretive nature of the subject matter, and this dissertation's author's limited resources and governmental obligations stemming from his employment by the Department of Defense, dictates drawing upon this established information and publicly available data. Rather than producing new, unique Al Qaeda data, this dissertation's goal is to address the question of why the United States has failed to destroy Al Qaeda despite

a concerted, multi-year campaign. This question has not been answered satisfactorily in the literature to date. Thus far, two main trends have emerged.

First, there has been a secular strand of literature. The 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan sparked numerous retroactive histories and contemporaneous journalistic accounts focusing on the strategic, organizational, economic, and social aspects of Al Qaeda (Crile 2004; Coll 2004). This perspective viewed Al Qaeda as a criminally murderous entity little different from pirates that earlier rejected civilized society, whose only means of defense then and now is to reduce the enemy's capacity for violence by forcibly dissembling it.

The right's neo-conservatives, as symbolically embodied by President George W. Bush, Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld, sought to combat Al Qaeda using any means necessary means with all due haste. Al Qaeda's existence only increased the chances of another strike. This perspective has manifested itself in the hard power-dominated Bush administration real politik policies targeting Al Qaeda and actual or potential supporting states, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, to be eliminated by military action uninhibited by precedent, thus effectively disregarding traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases adhered to in conflicts past.²¹

Policy attention, and thus scholarly analysis, is primarily focused on Iraq, the Administration's counterterrorism centerpiece. Afghanistan is a distant second. Al Qaeda's diffuse global presence receives only tertiary policy and scholarly attention.

This creates a gap relative to the problem set. As denoted by the July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, the Pakistan-based node of Al Qaeda, and by extension the diffuse global presence, is the chief international threat, not the Iraq-based node,

which is focused on events inside Iraq.²² As denoted by this report's assessment that Al Qaeda is increasing its potency around the world, particularly when contrasted against the dramatic rise in attacks beyond Iraq since 9/11, there is a gap in US policy emphasis and supporting scholarly analysis. This dissertation will speak to this gap.

Second, a separate but parallel vein of scholarship has examined Al Qaeda's version of militant Islam from a religio-political point of view and emphasized how this perspective clashes and/or melds with modernity. This tack is typified by the work of John Esposito (1996, 1997, 1999, 2002), Bernard Lewis (1993, 2002, 2003), and Samuel Huntington (1996). The relative constancy of Al Qaeda's political views and objectives juxtaposed versus the fluctuating and malleable international system means this body of thought plays an integral role. This dissertation builds upon the work of these scholars from a political, not theological perspective.²³

Different segments of the US political spectrum, however, view the problem differently. Differing political prescriptions have followed. No consensus yet exists.

The US political right, as embodied by the George W. Bush administration, refuses to politically engage Al Qaeda. This perspective equates acknowledging Al Qaeda politically as validating Al Qaeda, and by extension its agenda. Conversely, the US political system is subverted. A hermetic political seal is necessary for US protection. Al Qaeda's continued political popularity and increasing operational potency, however, suggest that this tack has not been, and is not likely to be, successful. Alternative US approaches that incorporate a political dimension must be considered.

The left's neoliberals, as symbolically embodied by Michael O'Hanlon, Ivo Daalder, and James M. Lindsay, have largely concurred with need for hard power

(Katzenstein 2002). They have disagreed, however, with failing to frame the application of US hard power via the prism of traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases. The question for them has been not whether to crush Al Qaeda militarily, but how best to employ politics to guide and enable the use of force to do it (Kurth 2002; Klare 2002; Daalder 2003). While the left has generally called for a less unilateral approach and pointed out potential disconnects between democracy-promotion efforts and combating Al Qaeda, no coherent alternative approach exists (Daalder, Lindsay, and Steinburg 2002).²⁴

There is a shortage of literature focusing on the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension. This is so both in terms of an interactive US-Al Qaeda dynamic and in terms of political impact of US actions upon the United States as a polity. This dissertation will also speak to these two gaps in the literature.

SCOPE

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is Al Qaeda's ability to exist as a successful terrorist entity. Al Qaeda is defined as the organizational apparatus that, either directly or indirectly, is ultimately under the nominal control and/or preponderant influence of the leadership node associated with Usama Bin Ladin. Success is defined as the ability to exist as a coherent entity and execute terrorist attacks to further a political agenda.

Independent Variables

Assessing Al Qaeda to develop a more robust policy response requires evaluating the factors that make it a viable terrorist entity. Every terrorist entity requires, at a minimum, four component parts:

First, a terrorist entity must have a political agenda. Terrorism is motivated by political grievances, which are colored and determined by the terrorists' particular ideology. In the case of Al Qaeda, this variable addresses the religio-political doctrine that Al Qaeda uses to justify and guide its actions as well as recruit and sustain itself.

Second, a terrorist entity must have a strategy to enact its political agenda. Its strategy will seek to maximize its well being against its opponents in pursuit of its ideological agenda in a manner consistent with its ideological outlook. In the case of Al Qaeda, this variable addresses Al Qaeda's strategic plan to implement the real world manifestation of its religio-political doctrine.

Third, a terrorist entity must have a formal organizational structure to enact the strategy meant to achieve its political agenda. This structure will seek to survive contesting a stronger opponent while adhering to the strictures of the terrorists' ideological vision. This variable addresses the formal organizational structure and managerial practices of Al Qaeda as it operates in its main locations around the globe.

Fourth, a terrorist organization must have resources to carry out its political agenda. In practical terms, this means cash. In the case of Al Qaeda, this variable addresses the means by which Al Qaeda acquires, transfers, and expends its money to finance its terrorist activities.

Boundaries of Study

This dissertation focuses on the period from September 11, 2001 to the present. Post-2001 US counterterrorism policies were devised and have been executed under George W. Bush's watch. Few, if any, serious changes have been made to US counterterrorism policy since their inception. The more subtle changes that have occurred

include temporary troop increases in Iraq and adjusting the nuances of US detainee policies and trials. None of these, however, have led to major troop withdrawals or altered the Administration's political and/or legal policy framework. While the next administration may act differently, it is a reasonable expectation that the current administration will continue both its general approach and specific policies.

Although Al Qaeda is a terrorist entity with a global presence, the primary focus of this dissertation will be on where Al Qaeda is most potent and prominent: the Middle East, Europe, and South Asia. Of these regions, the one that received the most attention are the Middle East and South Asia.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a blend of methodologies to address Al Qaeda. Though some quantitative measures are used per the rule of inference, the primary method is qualitative. Specifically, this dissertation emphasizes the case study approach with other methods playing a supporting role. Critics may argue that this is a small "n" study, thus implying less validity for a study addressing such a large topic. Six main points, however, justify this approach.

First, Al Qaeda is the preeminent example of an international entity espousing militant political Islam. It operates on a global scale, and it is atop of the pyramid of similar organizations in the same movement. No other case so exemplifies the threat.

Second, Al Qaeda is very complex. It is a manifestation not just of terrorism, a multidimensional phenomenon, but a religio-political terrorism specific to Islam. It cannot be assessed save "through a close command of the case" (Verba 1967).

This dissertation does not address Al Qaeda in its entirety. It is focused upon Al Qaeda's most prominent organs – Al Qaeda's central node under Usama bin Laden and Al Qaeda's presence in Iraq. Critics will charge that this restricts the study to only one region of the world. The Middle East, Asia, and Europe, however, are where Al Qaeda is most potent and most threatening to the United States and its interests.

Third, intensely scrutinizing Al Qaeda may clarify and/or refine associated existing theories of terrorism and militant political Islam (Guy 1998). Deeper lessons with potential applications for other similar terrorist groups and movements may be developed.

Fourth, the nature of Al Qaeda necessitates a case study approach. Terrorism is, by nature, dangerous and inherently secretive. It is also politically sensitive.²⁵

Fifth, a case study approach permits “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident” (Yin 2003). Al Qaeda, an example of terrorist phenomena, exists in a greater sea of militant political Islam. While the ends of the spectrum are clear, the precise dividing line is not.

Sixth, and lastly, a case study approach facilitates “triangulation” (Peters 1998). Terrorism's multidimensional nature means that no one single source of evidence comprehensively addresses the topic. A case study approach creates the chance to better address the topic.

Unique to the research for this dissertation, the author has spent extensive time in Afghanistan since the September 11th attacks as a member of the Department of Defense. This experience afforded the opportunity to gain an up close and personal understanding

of Islam as it is practiced and understood in this part of the world, as well as a general sense of political sentiment, through interaction with the local population. This experience has also provided the opportunity to interact with a multitude of US government officials engaged in the US “war on terror.” Interviews with these individuals consistent with university standards for doctoral research, however, were not possible due to the security and privacy constraints inherent in being a US government employee and being in a war zone. At the same time, this experience has provided insight and understanding that has heavily informed the author’s thinking.

Of a more traditional nature, sources of information used included government publications and announcements, periodicals, scholarly journals and texts, historical texts, monographs, and the internet. More current events rely upon more sources, particularly primary ones. Older, more established events from the Cold War and immediate post Cold War era rely primarily on secondary sources.

Archival analysis addressed Al Qaeda’s organizational, financial, strategic, and political dimensions. Finding public statements, segments of long-established scholarly texts, and historic documents played a key role. Actual sources of information consisted of government publications and announcements, periodicals, scholarly journals and texts, historical texts, monographs, and the internet.

Polling primarily addressed Al Qaeda’s political dimension, and it secondarily spoke to Al Qaeda’s organizational dimension. Professional polling organizations and public opinion associations - such as Pew, Zogby, Gallup, the British Broadcasting Corporation, Worldopinion.org, etc – conducted multiple polls over time and space. They focused upon Al Qaeda itself as well as political issues germane to studying Al Qaeda.

Their audiences spanned the world, but with a focus upon the Middle East and Islamic countries.

STRUCTURE OF STUDY

This study is broken down into ten chapters. The initial three chapters will establish the issue prism to scrutinize Al Qaeda while providing background knowledge to place the case study chapters in context. The next six case study chapters address each of the independent variables discussed above and the US response. Lastly, the conclusion will place the case study chapter findings in context and make policy recommendations.

More specifically, chapter two, the analytic framework, constructs the theoretical issue prism used to analyze the Al Qaeda case study. This chapter lays out the dynamics of the US-Al Qaeda struggle. This theoretical scrutiny identifies macro-level points of vulnerability for both the United States and Al Qaeda.

Chapter three provides historical and political context. It also provides the necessary factual background to each of Al Qaeda's key dimensions outlined in case study chapters four through eight. Those chapters then conduct a more focused, detailed examination of current information.

Chapter four, Al Qaeda's strategic dimension, describes Al Qaeda's overall strategic baseline approach that speaks to each of the other key dimensions. Specifically, this chapter provides an overview of Al Qaeda's political goals and intermediary objectives. It then does a pre and post September 11th comparison of Al Qaeda's strategy. Al Qaeda's level of success is then assessed.

Chapter five, the US strategic response, assesses the US level of success. The George W. Bush strategic approach is denoted and analyzed per the chapter two framework. Shortcomings are identified.

Chapter six, Al Qaeda's organizational dimension, provides a pre and post September 11th comparison of Al Qaeda's organizational structure. It examines Al Qaeda central's European, South Asian, and Middle Eastern presence and operational dynamics. It heavily emphasizes Al Qaeda central's current role in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater and in Iraq.

Chapter seven speaks to US efforts to counter Al Qaeda on an organizational level. It describes the three-pronged US assault on the organization. After assessing the level of success, this chapter discusses strengths and weaknesses in the approach to date.

Chapter eight, Al Qaeda's financial dimension, provides a pre and post September 11th comparison of Al Qaeda's financial arrangements, level of success, and the US response. Political and cultural factors are especially noted. Levels of success, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches of both sides, are also discussed.

Chapter nine addresses the political dimension of the US-Al Qaeda struggle. It assesses the interplay between Al Qaeda's political agenda and sources of support, and the US post September 11th response and sources of support. The gap between these two competing agendas and its impact upon the US-Al Qaeda struggle is emphasized.

Chapter ten, the final analysis and recommendations, provides macro level recommendations for a general US approach to countering Al Qaeda that speaks to the weaknesses identified in the case study chapters. In addition, it places terrorism in

context with competing US foreign policy priorities. It then submits guidelines for a broader US security policy to help guide US decision-making.

Chapter Two

Analytic Framework

“Without an adequate theory, reality is irrelevant.”²⁶

“If theory without policy is for academics, then policy without theory is for gamblers.” (Schmid and Jongman 1998)

This chapter will review the phenomenon of terrorism. It will do so in context of the US-Al Qaeda struggle. Together, these two steps will provide an analytical framework to assess the post 9/11 US approach to combating Al Qaeda.

The US response, as of fall 2007, has heavily emphasized hard power, the coercive military, intelligence, and legal means of the state, nearly to the exclusion of soft power, i.e. the political values, interests and nature of the actors contrasted against the political context of the fight. Initial progress against Al Qaeda as an organization has been made. This hard power approach, however, neglects the inherent political dimension of the US-Al Qaeda struggle in which terrorism is a tactic employed to influence the US-Al Qaeda political struggle. As a result, the US approach has not been comprehensive.

This chapter will highlight that while the current US approach was sufficient for the initial US counter-attack, it is highly unlikely to yield further substantial gains. The current US strategy can now achieve a holding action at best. A more comprehensive approach with an increased emphasis on political considerations is necessary.

Root Premise

Al Qaeda’s September 11th attack was a “purposive, goal-directed activity” (Allison and Zelikow 1999, 16-17). It was an “intendedly rational” act, which

presupposes both a decision-making authority and alternative options.²⁷ It exemplified Al Qaeda's policy, "the realization in a number of particular instances of an objective," to use terrorism in pursuit of its goals (Allison and Zelikow 1999). Al Qaeda and its actions thus have a consistent internal logic. As such, both Al Qaeda and its actions can be subjected to systematic scrutiny with the reasonable expectation that such a process, if properly executed, will create deeper understanding of the subject matter. Neither terrorism in general, nor Al Qaeda in particular, constitutes irrational violence.

The Process of Systematic Scrutiny

Four crucial questions must be asked to conduct a comprehensive, systematic, and logical analysis of the US-Al Qaeda struggle. If successfully conducted, this approach can potentially identify not only Al Qaeda's strengths and vulnerabilities, but also those of the United States. This initial level of understanding is the cornerstone for constructing a strategy that allows US policymakers to pit US strengths against Al Qaeda's weaknesses while simultaneously defending US vulnerabilities. These questions are:

1) Who are the participants?

Two main antagonists are in the fight. The United States, backed by a loose coalition of allied states, is engaged with Al Qaeda, which is backed by a loose coalition of allied non-state terrorist groups.²⁸ They are diametrically opposed.

The antagonists have significantly differing roles in the world. The United States is the international system's military, economic, and political leader. Al Qaeda, by contrast, is not even a legitimate member of the Westphalian nation-state system. One step further, it is a political leadership node and symbolic standard-bearer for a particular current of religio-political thought that seeks to significantly alter the US world position.

As such, it is both a combatant command and a global coordinator/facilitator of violence perpetrated by coreligionists who adhere to its political agenda.

The United States and Al Qaeda also have significantly differing internal structures. The United States is a nation-state with multiple social, political, and economic bonds uniting its members. Al Qaeda, on the other hand, is a non-state transnational terrorist group composed of members from every Muslim society. It is structured as a network - multiple decentralized nodes linked together primarily by loose horizontal ties, not vertical integration, wherein authority is heavily delegated and all work towards the same common purpose (Arquilla, Ronfeldt, and Zanini 1999).²⁹ The multiple semi-autonomous points – the most significant of which are Usama bin Ladin’s Al Qaeda central in Pakistan, Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia begun by Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, and numerous lesser, yet important, nodes in the form of affiliated, associated, and self-militating groups and individuals that exist and operate around the world – act in concert.³⁰

Further, the antagonists have significantly differing forms of internal cohesion. The United States is a democratically governed nation-state consistent with the tenets of classical liberalism. Al Qaeda is the opposite of a modern nation-state - a natural entity with multiple, mutually-reinforcing social, political, and economic bonds independent of a particular political agenda. Al Qaeda is a terrorist entity, an artificial creation congealed by a common political purpose. Its members are drawn from other natural entities, such as nation-states. Its doctrine is the chief means of both unity and identity.

Lastly, the antagonists are rooted in differing political traditions. Each tradition not only sees itself as the ultimate ideological solution, albeit for different reasons, but

each is a proactive, proselytizing school of thought. On a conceptual level, each is threatened by other traditions. The result is perpetual ideological conflict, which enables real world conflict when this situation is married to conflicting real world interests.

The US political system's ideological origin and guiding framework is Western Europe's Enlightenment. Its' essentially internally unquestioned expression of these sentiments via governance is representative democracy. Ideologically, the US system's firmly rooted niche in the political spectrum is that of classical liberalism.

Al Qaeda's ostensible guiding framework is a line of Islamic jurisprudence stemming from 13th century jurist intellectual and political activist Taqi al Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya. After witnessing the 1258 Mogol conquest of the Baghdad-based Abbasid Caliphate, an empire inspired by and ruled in the name of Islam, Ibn Tamiyya called for a literal interpretation of sacred sources of guidance. The early Muslim community found at Medina was held up as the model for an Islamic state. The Quran, the revelation of God, and the Sunnah of the Prophet were to be taken at face value.

Ibn Tamiyya's vision melded thought with action. On the one hand, Ibn Tamiyya saw an inseparable tie between religion and the state so that the purpose of the state was to rule by religious tenets. On the other hand, he drew distinctions between religion and culture. Religious practice trumped all other concerns, thus legitimating conflict with anyone not copasetic in the eyes of the adjudicating religious authority regardless of their ethnic, religious, cultural, familial, and/or national background (Esposito 2002).

This vision created a set of dynamics that future leaders would exploit. A sharp divide existed between the true believers and all others. Those outside of the circle, either

non-Muslims or excommunicated Muslims, were thus legitimated as possible objects of jihad. Crucially, no adjudicating religious authority was specified (Esposito 2002).

These reformers sought to purify Islam's practice to properly renew and reform society. This would lead to regaining power and glory, which was perceived to have been lost due to human error by straying from the identified path of God (Esposito 2002). Rigorous implementation of the original sources of divine guidance was held up as the way forward. Because Islam officially recognizes no secular-religious divide and provides a comprehensive, detailed code of conduct emphasizing action, as opposed to the Christian emphasis on belief, this interpretation has the potential to conflict with the modern international system on social, political, and economic levels.

Ibn Tamiyya's work has influenced numerous influential figures in Islamic history that have rejected the greater jihad (personal and spiritual betterment) in favor of the lesser jihad (military action). Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahab, the religious pillar of the religio-political team lead by Muhammad ibn Saud who became the founder of modern Saudi Arabia, for example, took Ibn Tamiyya's work as his cornerstone. In the early 20th century, Hassan al Banna, the founder of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, and Mawlana Mawdudi, the founder of Pakistan's Jamiat-e-Islami, took Ibn Tamiyya as their inspiration as they expanded religio-political reform efforts in the modern political realm.

For al Banna and Mawdudi, the question was the same – how to cope with the challenge of modernity and its impact upon Islamic society. In the politico-military realm, Islam appeared to be falling victim to Western imperialism. At the same time, modern nationalism, which emphasizes a sense of identity based upon language, tribe

and/or ethnicity, was challenging the universal, pan-Islamic ideal of the equality and solidarity of all Muslims.

These two reformers saw Islam as the alternative to the failures and/or limits of Marxism and Western-style capitalism, and they preached six main mutual points. First, Islam is a total, all-encompassing way of life that guides the individual and the community on both a personal and political level. Second, the Quran, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the early Muslim community are the foundations of Islam and are a guide for daily life. Third, shariah, Islamic law, is the ideal for a modern Muslim society, and it is independent of Western models. Fourth, straying from Islam, and by default relying on the West, is the cause of Muslim decline. Conversely, returning to the true path can restore greatness. Fifth, science and technology should be harnessed in an Islamic context that filters out the impact of Western culture to avoid an infection of Westernization and secularization. Sixth, and lastly, jihad – individually and collectively, in both ideas and in action – will Islamicize both society and the world (Esposito 2002).

Islam was thus competing not as a means of political, social, and economic organization belonging to a particular faction as a means to gain advantage, but rather as a comprehensive alternative capable of reshaping the world and achieving a just and equitable social order for all. Jihad, which differs from war, which is fought for selfish or material reasons, was to be the means to this noble end. The jihad was to be simultaneously offensive by attacking opposing subversive alternative principles and ideology, though not the opponents' land, while also being simultaneously defensive, for Muslims needed power to implement their views (Esposito 2002).

Mawdudi and al Banna sought to work within the system to achieve evolutionary change. Though initially resistant, both leaders accepted nationalism and democracy, albeit with qualifications consistent with furthering their religio-political principles. In the end, they created the prototypes of contemporary Islamist political parties.

Sayyid Qutb, who is generally acknowledged as the godfather of al Qaeda-style terrorism, radicalized this body of thought. Qutb saw implementing an Islamic government not as an option for which to strive, but as a divine commandment to be realized. In contrast to Mawdudi and al Banna, Qutb assessed this could only be achieved through violent, revolutionary change. The combination of differences between Islam and the world as it was with the power of vested interests perpetuating the world system negated any chance of successfully initiating reform from within the system (Esposito 2002).

Qutb did not allow for middle ground. As with Ibn Taymiyya, Qutb divided the world into a good camp, that of Islam, and a bad camp, which consisted of all others. Even within Islam, however, all less pure Muslims were to be counted among the enemy. As with Mawdudi and al Banna, the West was perceived as a political, economic, and religio-cultural threat, as borne out by the Crusades, European colonialism, and the Cold War. Going beyond them, however, Qutb counted secularized, Westernized Muslim elites as atheists and decreed them subject to obligatory holy war (Esposito 2002).

Akin to Ibn Tamiyya, Qutb sought to combine thought with action. Drawing upon Mawdudi, Qutb emphasized the need to create a special vanguard group of true believers. It was to be their privilege and duty to serve as a lighthouse in the sea of non-Islamic

ignorance to awaken and lead all true Muslims to the way of God. It was then the duty of all true Muslims to participate in the struggle against injustice and evil (Esposito 2002).

An enduring trait of the faith's history is political activism with an eye to reform and renewal premised upon differing interpretations of Islam in response to an ever-changing world. The 18th century revivalist movements that spanned from modern Sudan, Libya, and Nigeria across the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian subcontinent to South Asia laid the basis for the 20th century evolutions that occurred in response to European colonialism. This renewal-reform dynamic preceded Al Qaeda, and it will very likely continue independent of Al Qaeda. The terrorist entity Al Qaeda, however, straddles Islam's dual tradition of peaceful and violent political activism.

On the one hand, Al Qaeda is a particular manifestation of a broader socio-political movement premised upon a specific interpretation of Islam that is unlikely to dissipate in the short to medium term. Though this particular broader socio-political dimension has been decisively rejected everywhere in the world with the possible exception of the Taliban's Afghanistan, it exists as an enduring and vibrant minority view in virtually all Muslim societies. A combination of Al Qaeda's notoriety from its violence and ignorance on the part of observers has at least partially colored peaceful Islamic political activism with Al Qaeda's image. At the same time, Al Qaeda can and does usurp the image, if not actual resources and political support, of these non-militant Islamic political activists to artificially inflate its strength.

On the other hand, Al Qaeda also fits a very specific and narrow niche. It is the leading manifestation of Islamic militancy on a global scale. Al Qaeda is engaging the United States in the context of a global militant Islamic insurgency, which is herein

defined as “a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously uses political resources (e.g. organizational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and violence to destroy, reformulate or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics” against a US-led world order (O’Neil 2005, 15).

2) Second, what are the actors’ interests?

Both the United States and Al Qaeda have multiple, diverse interests. These are a reflection of the needs generated by their differing traits. Enabled by ideological justification and reinforced by the differing traits of the antagonists, the genesis of the US-Al Qaeda struggle, and its practical driver, is broad political interests that are mutually exclusive and whose conflict cannot be avoided or minimized.

The United States has three compelling interests in the US-Al Qaeda struggle. It seeks to 1) ensure its political character, 2) ensure its security, and 3) preserve the international order from which it derives sustenance and sustains its dominant world position. The George W. Bush administration interprets preserving US primacy as ensuring the 2001 international status quo.

Al Qaeda, whose interpretation of Islam is both the inspiration and justification not only for its self-defined interests but also for its means, claims to act on behalf of the Muslim peoples. Al Qaeda perceives US policies as ensuring US prosperity via systemic US-created disadvantages in the international system at the Muslim peoples’ expense. As will be detailed in chapter four, Al Qaeda refuses to permit this continued exploitation.

Al Qaeda’s grievance against US exploitation of Middle East oil is unlikely to be resolved soon or easily. Key pillars of US strength are its economic and military might

(International Institute for Strategic Studies 2003).³¹ The United States has the largest, most innovative, and nearly the most independent economy in the world.³² The premise, and thus chief vulnerability, for post industrial, information age US economic might is securely meeting US energy needs. In practical terms, the United States must have a stable, reliable, source of affordable oil for both itself and its allies. The Middle East, notably the Persian Gulf, is key.

While no one disputes oil's importance as technology has yet to find a viable, large-scale, alternative, critics argue that relying upon oil from the Middle East, Al Qaeda's heartland, creates unnecessary friction. Other sources of supply – Mexico, Venezuela, Russia, Nigeria, the Caspian Basin – exist. Disengaging from the Middle East on the oil issue would place distance between the US and Al Qaeda. At the same time, it would create US leverage over key Al Qaeda-related states, such as Saudi Arabia, that the United States currently lacks because of oil dependence.

A close scrutiny of the world's energy situation, however, reveals flaws in these arguments about alternative supply and political advantage. "The oil market is seamless: no matter where the United States buys its oil, any reduction in the supply will result in price increases everywhere and will affect the entire global economy. The question is not where one buys oil so much as it is who has the capacity to supply oil and affect the market" (Telhami 2002a, 134-136).

The Middle East remains critical for future energy supplies. Although the Middle East currently produces only a quarter of the world oil supplies, it holds between two thirds and three quarters of all known oil reserves. Although natural gas and other energy sources have reduced the relative weight of oil in the global energy market, oil still

accounts for 40 percent of the world's energy consumption and is not projected to drop below this level for the next 20 years. The United States and the West will have to continue to define the region as vitally important (Telhami 2002a).

At the same time, other regions around the world are likely to increase their need for Middle East oil and to compete with the West for these resources. China, for example, now imports 60% of its oil from the Persian Gulf, and forecasts for the next two decades show a possible increase of up to 90%. In fact, China has already begun investing in energy exploration in Iran, and Iran is now China's main supplier (Telhami 2002a).

Since the 1970's, the Gulf's share of the world oil market has dropped as local production levels have slowed and other states' exports have increased. Not only do other states not have the production capacity, but their political reliability is also not assured. Venezuela, a promising new source of oil in the 1990's, for example, is now run by a dictator anathema to the United States who cites oil as a potential weapon. Mexico and Nigeria are a shadow of the Gulf. Caspian Basin development, whose lure is ever present, has been stymied since Cold War's end by regional political instabilities, which also prevent a guarantee of reliable delivery. Lastly, the United States has no desire to depend upon a reassertive, Caspian-dominating Russia, which has only 5% of global reserves and will deplete them by 2040 at current extraction rates (Telhami 2002a).

Only the Gulf monarchies, who share a mutual dependency with the United States, are at least relatively reliable. Ultimately no state around the world has the current impact on and the potential for future importance to the oil market as Saudi Arabia. Its trump card remains its spare production capacity, which allows it to affect the market

significantly by withholding or increasing supply. No other country commands such a capacity, and therefore such power in the global energy market (2002a).

Al Qaeda's grievance against US forces on the Arabian Peninsula and in the Persian Gulf, therefore, is also unlikely to be resolved soon or easily. The United States is wed to the region. Regional animosities, such as the US-Iran rivalry, can deny the United States guaranteed access to its resources. From the US perspective, its regional involvement is necessary to secure its interests.

Al Qaeda's grievance against US support for Middle East monarchical and/or authoritarian regimes, therefore, is also unlikely to be resolved soon or easily. These are the very countries who supply US oil needs. Current and future US prosperity is tied to their well being. A situation of mutual dependency exists.

These regimes also facilitate other US interests. Most immediately, they combat Al Qaeda. Given low US public standing in the world at large and the Middle East in particular, it is not safe to say that other regimes would be as cooperative on this key US interest. These regimes, particularly Saudi Arabia, are also vital to countering Iran. Lastly, these regimes surround Israel, a cultural and strategic US regional ally, and different regimes might take a more hostile position towards it.

Al Qaeda's grievance against US validation and acknowledgement of other regimes that oppress Muslims, such as China and Russia, is also unlikely to be resolved soon or easily. Russia suppresses a Chechen Islamic insurgency. China oppresses the Uighurs, a restive Muslim minority in western China. While the United States has registered objections to these acts, the United States has multiple economic, security, and political interests interwoven in complex relationships with these other world powers.

While the oppression of Muslim minorities is a key factor in Al Qaeda's world view, it is not reasonable to expect that this Muslim oppression will trump all other US interests, and thus cause the United States to sever ties.

Apart from whatever US-Al Qaeda issues may be ameliorated, these cannot be. Short of one side surrendering or significantly altering its interests to the point of wholesale reinventing itself, avoiding a fight is not an option. The US-Al Qaeda struggle is an enduring one. A long term view is necessary.

3) How are the antagonists now working to secure their interests?

The US Utility Function

The US utility function, as determined by the George W. Bush administration, has been to rebuff the impact of Al Qaeda's terrorism. The administration has thus far used a state-centric, two-pronged approach. These initiatives have been concurrently executed.

Operationally, the Administration is ensuring the defense of the United States, and, by extension, its interests, via a strong offense. Both domestically and internationally, it has cast Al Qaeda as a national security threat. It is attempting to locate Al Qaeda operatives and proactively disrupt their activities predominantly through military and/or other coercive means. From spring 2003 to fall 2007, the United States has pursued parallel efforts by concentrating on Iraq and Afghanistan with a supporting effort for the remainder of the world on the premise that countering Al Qaeda abroad makes the United States safer at home.

Politically, the Administration is attempting to blunt Al Qaeda. Domestically, it is denying Al Qaeda's arguments entry into the US public sphere. President George W.

Bush is refusing to politically engage Al Qaeda's agenda. Internationally, President Bush is attempting to isolate, discredit, and ignore both Al Qaeda and its political agenda.

Al Qaeda's Utility Function

Al Qaeda's utility function is persuasion through political advertising. Al Qaeda's specific technique is terrorism, a form of political conflict herein defined as an illegitimate act of violence against a symbolic, innocent victim intended to induce a state of terror in a target group beyond the immediate victims in the process of challenging authority in order to coerce political change.³³ "Indifference (following terrorist acts) is impossible. Those who originally did not even ask themselves what 'those lunatics' were after are forced to take notice of them, to discuss their ideas, and to take a stand for or against. Through deeds which attract general attention, the new idea (promulgated by the terrorists) insinuates itself into peoples' heads...Such an act does more propagandizing in a few days than do thousands of pamphlets" (Thornton, 82-83).

Unable to impose its agenda through established political processes or outright war, Al Qaeda seeks to give its unpopular political agenda a greater chance of success by employing terror-inspiring asymmetric violence difficult for conventional forces to counter. Terrorists thus force the polity that they violently engage to react predominantly politically, not militarily (Pape 2005). This militarily insignificant political communication through violence seeks to force political changes under the auspices of the existing political structure in line with the message communicated by the details of the terrorists' violence.

Though it uses violence, terrorism differs significantly from war. Unlike war, terrorism does not allow for engendering massive amounts of human and material

destruction on a comparable scale with either guerilla or conventional war.³⁴ Also unlike war, terrorism cannot yield a conclusive military victory, thereby creating a chance to implement an agenda in a militarily-created political vacuum. The attack also serves an entirely different purpose in terrorism as opposed to war – political agitation rather than securing a military objective. Additionally, the target set differs with terrorists focusing on “counter-value,” innocent, noncombatant, and symbolic victims. Lastly, in contrast to war, which has a direct and essentially two-sided nature, terrorism is a multi-sided equation that involves an interlocking series of direct and indirect relationships, each of which must occur in a specific, sequential order.

Terrorism is a four step process:

First, the terrorists choose a specific target set. They must be symbolically relevant to the terrorists’ agenda to ensure the impending violence is flavored with politics. They must also be morally innocent to ensure an attention-getting reaction.

In the case of 9/11, Al Qaeda attacked innocent civilians at the World Trade Center. This facility was a preeminent symbol of US economic prowess, which Al Qaeda states derives from unjust US policies. And, it was populated by innocent civilians.

Second, the terrorists challenge the existing authority by publicly and brutally killing their intended victims. The victims’ apparently random selection combined with their innocence magnifies the resulting tragic, victimizing, and fear-inducing feelings as the general public – the real political targets of the attack - now feels endangered. This socio-political disorientation is intended to loosen the targeted public’s tie to the status quo, which operates counter to the terrorists’ political agenda, and shake the target public from political complacency, thus opening it to the possibility of new ideas.

In the case of the September 11th attacks, Al Qaeda attacked not only a symbol, but also killed over 3,000 innocent civilians. The US public's reaction was indeed a sense of shock, horror, fear and anger. Surveys showed fear of another attack. Social and political complacency was shattered. People groped for explanations.

Third, the attack manifests and relays the terrorists' political message through the victims' deaths. The defining traits of the victims correspond to specific terrorist political grievances. The victims' deaths serve to highlight the hitherto ignored contentious issue.

Al Qaeda communicated its 9/11 political message in two ways. First, the symbolism of hitting an iconic US economic entity radiated. Second, to ensure that there was no misinterpretation, Al Qaeda released videos directly explaining the attacks and their purpose to both the US government and US public. These actions not only raised awareness of Al Qaeda, but also of its motivating political grievances.

Fourth, the targeted public's role switches. The terrorists' hope is that their "propaganda by the deed" will cause the general public to internalize the terrorists' message, reevaluate the status quo, and find it unacceptable (Rappoport 1977, 47). Ideally, the targeted public then pressures its government for political change in line with the terrorists' political agenda, which offers a means of respite from continued violence and horror. A triangular dynamic exists. The terrorists use symbolic innocent victims to reach the general public to induce them to pressure their government, who is opposing the terrorists, to execute political change consonant with the terrorists' agenda. The targeted public thus goes from supporting the established authorities' policies to supporting the terrorists' political agenda.

In the case of 9/11, Al Qaeda sought to induce the US public to pressure the US government for a series of changes to US foreign policy with a particular emphasis on economic and security issues. Al Qaeda did not, however, successfully execute stage four. Al Qaeda's violence deafened its target audience to its political grievances. Its message did not resonate with the US public and convert to calls for political action.

Looking outward from the terrorists' point of view, Al Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist violence largely backfired. Al Qaeda did shake the US public from its complacency. The US public now has an awareness of Al Qaeda. The US public, however, is bent on revenge and defense of its perceived interests as largely defined in pre 9/11 terms.

Looking inward from the terrorists' point of view, Al Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist violence was largely successful. Terrorism has three secondary goals – provocation, morale / unity building, and eliminating opposing forces. The 9/11 attacks clearly provoked the United States, thus keeping Al Qaeda in the public eye. Al Qaeda's stunning 9/11 victory, its most ambitious undertaking to date, certainly buoyed the organization's morale and empowered its leadership, thereby increasing team unity. Having killed thousands of Americans and having inflicted economic pain, Al Qaeda also weakened its foremost opponent, whom it had just antagonized.

From spring 2003 to fall 2007, akin to the United States, Al Qaeda has pursued parallel efforts. Operationally, and in sync with US foci, Al Qaeda has employed both terrorism and guerilla war with an emphasis on stymieing US efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan while lessening its emphasis on the US homeland. Al Qaeda has launched attacks, or temporarily retreated in response to US thrusts against it, as the situation has

demanded. Politically, in contrast to US efforts, Al Qaeda has attempted to amplify, manipulate, and exploit the political dimension of the US-Al Qaeda struggle.

4) What are the strengths and weaknesses of these respective approaches?

An aggressive, hard-power approach is necessary to counter the raw security threat inherent in terrorism. Yet, it is not sufficient. It speaks past the political dimension. This political dimension not only creates micro level problems for the hard power aspect of the struggle, but, on the macro level, it also determines the struggle's duration. As of 2007, the dynamics of the US-Al Qaeda struggle favor Al Qaeda.

The US Perspective – Strengths

The US position and approach is not without merit. As the leader of the world system, the United States has extensive leverage to shape its own future. Shutting out Al Qaeda's political agenda to US society will somewhat mitigate the effects of the terrorism process and further stymie Al Qaeda from securing its interests at US expense. At the same time, short run US security may be bolstered as military and political resources are both husbanded for and channeled against Al Qaeda's violence.

The US Perspective – Weaknesses

Given US military capability, it is natural for the Administration to employ one of its most formidable tools. That the business end of terrorism is killing only makes this choice appear more natural. There are, however, fundamental shortcomings in this US hard power approach that fail to speak to the US-Al Qaeda struggle's very nature.

Particularly damning in a political contest, the bar for victory based upon hard power is exceptionally high. A military-oriented approach requires the United States to achieve total victory. The nature of Al Qaeda, however, means that achieving total

victory via hard power against each of Al Qaeda's key aspects – organization, money, strategy, and politics – is unrealistically hard.

From an organizational perspective, a hard power focused US approach reliant upon military means systemically disadvantages the United States. By definition, Al Qaeda has tactical advantage - its members are unknown, its membership self selects from a global population, and it chooses the place, time, and means of attack on a global scale. Furthermore, Al Qaeda's violence is militarily insignificant. It attacks civilians and does not challenge the state in combat. Its violence speaks past US war power. The US military may damage Al Qaeda by capturing and/or killing some of its members, but it is highly unlikely to solve the problem by wholly obliterating Al Qaeda.

Deterrence does not apply. This concept requires data, and the communication of that data, so that comparative loss-to-gain judgments can be made. In the US-Al Qaeda struggle, the identities of all relevant actors are not known, the ability to effectively communicate between the actors does not exist, and the ability of both sides to credibly guarantee the ability to inflict pain on one's opponent does not exist.

Furthermore, the logic of terrorism, particularly in the example of Al Qaeda, precludes deterrence from working. The terrorists, by definition, are inherently overmatched. Political ideology and the terrorists' tenacity, not raw military power calculations, drive the train. Al Qaeda makes its decisions per a vision that cannot be falsified. And, Al Qaeda is ready and willing to accept death as a cost of doing business.

While necessary to save innocent life, efforts to directly combat acts of terrorism and Al Qaeda's organizational capacity for violence through hard power cannot be the primary US emphasis. They are highly unlikely to yield ultimate victory in the long run.

Al Qaeda as an organization must also be confronted via the political dimension from which it derives strategic operational capacity and breathing space. It is necessary for US efforts to capitalize on vulnerabilities in Al Qaeda's nature to exploit internal political tensions. It is also necessary for US efforts to focus upon both the general populace from which Al Qaeda derives its strategic viability and the state structures that govern these foreign populations to strategically undermine Al Qaeda and reduce its organizational resources such as manpower, operational support, and area of operations. Such US political activity framing US hard power efforts has the potential to empower them and magnify their impact and results.

Relying upon hard power means to disrupt Al Qaeda's financial capability is also fraught with difficulties. While the United States dominates the formal international nation-state system, it is overmatched when competing against Al Qaeda. The US-Al Qaeda struggle pits one nation-state's potential, as harnessed by the state, against the potential of the disenfranchised, angry, and otherwise disaffected members a wealthy civilization - who constitute Al Qaeda's actual and potential adherents and supporters - as harnessed by a non-state transnational terrorist entity that spans the globe. Al Qaeda's resource needs are lesser compared to US forces, and its resource base is broader and deeper.

As with Al Qaeda's terrorist operatives, its financiers' identities are secretive, they operate largely beyond the bounds of state, particularly US, power, and they are able to self select into the organization, thus presenting the United States with an ever shifting target set. The US ability to holistically and comprehensively disrupt terrorist financing,

detain financiers, and/or comprehensively deter people from giving financial support to Al Qaeda is minimal.

While necessary to reduce Al Qaeda's capacity for violence, efforts to reduce Al Qaeda's financial capability through hard power cannot be the primary US emphasis. Hard power efforts against Al Qaeda's financial structure will likely cause damage, but neutering it will be virtually impossible. Monetary support for Al Qaeda is analogous to a barometer of its popular support. Al Qaeda's standing vis a vis the United States in the struggle's political dimension must be weakened. It is necessary for US efforts to focus upon both the general populace from which Al Qaeda derives its strategic viability and the state structures that govern these foreign populations to strategically undermine Al Qaeda to reduce its financial potential. Doing so has the potential to increase the effectiveness and impact of the hard power efforts now being pursued directly against Al Qaeda by political authorities.

The US strategy, the US's big picture plan to optimally employ its resources to secure its interests against Al Qaeda's efforts to do the same, must take account not only of its opponent, but also of the nature of the US-Al Qaeda struggle. Time is a crucial factor. The US cannot determine the struggle's duration, but it also cannot remain on a war footing indefinitely. And, the duration of a fight directly impacts its political dynamics. Unfortunately, a US hard power focused strategy does not bear out along a timeline favoring the United States.

As there is no inherently obvious, recognizable end to the struggle because there is no clear, objective military yardstick, the decision to continue the US-Al Qaeda struggle will be based upon the terrorists' desire to continue toward their political goals

relative to their achievements compared against their losses weighed against their willpower. Al Qaeda, unfortunately, has grandiose secular political goals and a deep will rooted in a religio-political vision. Akin to guerilla warfare, the path to political victory through violence is paved with willpower.

Al Qaeda's vision is premised on the idea that it is doing God's work by fighting against unbelievers, who now dominate an unjust world. The massive power disparity means that an Al Qaeda operative can only truly expect to advance the cause, and likely die in its service, rather than defeat the enemy. This paradigm cannot be falsified. An Al Qaeda victory directly validates the ideology. An Al Qaeda loss, however, only validates the premises and meets the expectations of its adherents. A struggle with any group so motivated is likely to be long.

Terrorism is more effective the longer the struggle. In contrast to war where political change happens at the end when one side can no longer fight it off, forcing political change via terrorism does not first require an opponent's military defeat. In theory, the intimate, extreme, and violent nature of terrorist action within a society provokes an extreme, out-of-character political response because the pain caused is so deep and wounding it cannot be permitted to be repeated. The longer the struggle, the more numerous and intense the reactions of the terrorists' target are likely to be.

The political dimension in charting US strategy thus has a two-fold role. Looking inward, the United States must adhere to its traditional political values in the wake of Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks. To do otherwise allows the US political system to be subverted by terrorism through self-inflicted, intrinsic loss stemming from abandoning the political principles that define the US political character, which is under Al Qaeda's direct assault

as it attempts to manipulate the US polity. Looking externally, the political dimension plays a key role because of the inherently long term nature of the US hard power approach. Altering the political context of the struggle is the one malleable variable that can enhance US efforts against Al Qaeda's organizational and financial dimensions, and thus potentially alter the US-Al Qaeda's struggle's timeline in US favor.

Engaging the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension that envelops Al Qaeda's organizational, financial, and strategic aspects requires the United States to speak directly to the antagonists' root political and ideological conflict, the last of the four key aspects the United States must counter. The Administration's political standing and credibility is the United States' enabling factor. The problem is that the Administration's political standing and credibility is ebbing.

Domestically, the Administration's controversial policies are weakening the US public's unity. This increasingly restricts the US government's freedom of action. The ability to sustain current efforts, as well as to undertake new ones, is hobbled barring another attack altering the political environment.

Internationally, US efforts to combat Al Qaeda abroad are hindered amongst both foreign states and foreign publics. At the state level, even if cooperation has been obtained, it will likely be harder to maintain under duress. A low threshold of political pain borne of weak public support when confronted by Al Qaeda-induced violence versus US allies may be enough to disrupt US alliances. Amongst foreign populations, the United States now has the added problem of not just persuading people to its position, but of also convincing people to listen and take it seriously in the first place.

Directly politically engaging Al Qaeda is not without risk. Political engagement gives Al Qaeda a measure of recognition, and thus validation. And, Al Qaeda's political agenda is introduced into the political debate with the force of fear and violence behind it. To the degree that it is successful, the US national interest will be significantly harmed.

Therefore, consideration must be given to denying Al Qaeda political engagement. Doing so prevents the phenomenon of terrorism from gaining traction in US society since closing the political sphere to Al Qaeda effectively blunts the political process of terrorism. Standing US government policies are reinforced as no alternative for comparison or critical perspective that could be usurped by the terrorists is permitted.

The flaws in this approach, however, far outweigh the gains. The durability, viability, and US commitment to the liberal democratic system is weakened when the US government artificially truncates the public debate. The United States is effectively hollowing out its own political character, one of the issues in contention in a terrorism struggle. This response also disavows the political dimension of terrorism, and by extension Al Qaeda, a political actor. Given that terrorism is a political phenomenon, restricting US policy to hard power means completely talks past the fundamental nature of the problem. Proactively moving toward a resolution is effectively precluded as this hands Al Qaeda the initiative and places the United States in a defensive crouch.

Ultimately, the United States must attempt to sway the foreign public. This is where Al Qaeda is nestled, and this is the fulcrum from which the freedom of action of foreign governments pivots. Because US words ring hollow due to the gap between the United State's words and traditional public image and US actions post 9/11, US efforts must begin with actions, not words. It will be necessary for the United States to address

political and ideological aspects of the struggle important not just to the United States, but to Al Qaeda's actual and potential supporters and adherents wherein it is possible to do so without sacrificing core US interests. Traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases, which are largely embraced by the antagonists in the US-Al Qaeda struggle, must be a guide for both US political decision-making and implementation.

The United States is faced with a conscious trade-off that goes to the heart of the US position as leader of the international system. On the one hand, there is total freedom of action through the unilateral, power-based pursuit of US interests that is rooted in actual or potential coercion. On the other hand, there is a somewhat restricted US freedom of action that takes into account the political interests and sensitivities of other actors relevant to the fight, such as both states and world publics where Al Qaeda is present. The gain achieved through this potentially somewhat limiting US course of action is the increased perception of the legitimacy of not only the US world position, but also of both its actions and interests, in the eyes of the international community at international organization, state, and world public levels in combating Al Qaeda. Actions within these guidelines are likely to generate public support, and they will give the United States the political capital it needs to engage the political dimension to isolate and undermine Al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda's Perspective – Strengths

The US-Al Qaeda struggle's dynamics as of fall 2007 presents Al Qaeda with one long run crucial advantage - Al Qaeda's unaddressed political grievances are an exploitable source of political angst for actual and potential adherents. Al Qaeda thus has an un-counteracted opportunity to rally susceptible Muslims both for recruitment and/or

operational support. Al Qaeda will very likely be able to recover from any short term tactical losses inflicted by superior US hard power capabilities, and Al Qaeda's operational potency will very likely continue to increase in the long as the cumulative effect of politically inciting US hard power actions becomes manifest.

Al Qaeda's Perspective - Weaknesses

Al Qaeda also suffers disadvantages from the dynamics of the US-Al Qaeda struggle. At a base level, the Muslim peoples from whence Al Qaeda springs remain at a systemic disadvantage in ensuring their survival and prosperity in the international order. The societal resources for Al Qaeda to draw upon are lesser compared to those of the United States and its Western allies. Additionally, Al Qaeda must always work to avoid the US's long arm, which exists not just via unilateral efforts but through US alliances with various Muslim and non-Muslim states throughout the world.

Resulting State of Play as of Fall 2007

The United States has achieved mixed results at best. To the positive, the US homeland has not sustained another catastrophic terrorist attack. To the negative, the United States is not making significant and sustained political headway. Internationally, Bush administration actions to combat Al Qaeda, such as placing detainees in Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) "black sites" for torture beyond US law and invading Iraq as well as the Administration's general unilateral foreign policy tenor, have made the United States deeply unpopular. At the same time, the Administration's chosen utility function of blunting Al Qaeda's political impact on US society by ignoring Al Qaeda's grievances has allowed them to fester unaddressed. Domestically, the US public's unity and verve

for the global war on terrorism is faltering because of Iraq, and the US public lacks a clear understanding of the Al Qaeda threat's political nature.

Al Qaeda, by contrast, is strengthening. Simply put, “many US, Pakistani, and European intelligence officials now agree that al Qaeda’s ability to launch operations around the globe didn’t diminish after the invasion of Afghanistan as much as previously thought.”³⁵ Politically, Al Qaeda has exploited the every increasing international political angst against the United States by adding a media arm, al Sahab, that is “perhaps the most effective propaganda machine ever assembled by a terrorist or insurgent network” to reach new heights in recruiting and fundraising.³⁶ Operationally, Al Qaeda has drawn upon its “deep bench of lower-ranking...veteran jihadists” to recoup initially heavy personnel losses while forging a Pakistani sanctuary, which enables training akin to pre 9/11 while safeguarding leadership, which has not lost a key player in 18 months.³⁷

Conclusion

The United States and Al Qaeda are at an impasse. They possess mutually exclusive political agendas. Peaceful political discourse cannot bridge the gap.

Al Qaeda has opted for terrorism. This political strategy engages the United States on a hard and soft power footing to achieve political ends it could not achieve via political means alone. Values are backed with muscle.

Given the US-Al Qaeda disparity, the United States can effectively do as it chooses. The Bush administration has opted to partner its hard power emphasis treating Al Qaeda as a national security threat and defeating it through focused coercive state

power with political non-engagement. This approach furthers national security by protecting the lives of US citizens and thus strengthens the US government's sovereignty. This approach also protects US politics versus illegitimate violent foreign influence, thus ensuring the suzerainty of the US people over their government.

What this approach fails to address, however, is the US-Al Qaeda struggle's inherent political nature. Politics shapes the conduct of the fight because of it impacts the key variables necessary for Al Qaeda to sustain the struggle – organization, finances, and strategy. It also impacts the driving force of the struggle – the conflicting Al Qaeda and US political interests and ideologies.

This dissertation posits that the current US posture cannot win the US-Al Qaeda struggle. Current US efforts to win the US-Al Qaeda terrorism struggle, a political contest, are structured as if the US were trying to beat an opponent in war, a military contest. From the hard power perspective, US and Al Qaeda efforts cede no ground to each other. From the political, soft power perspective, however, the current US approach pairs finite and tangible US hard power drawn from the resources of the US public against infinite and intangible political grievance and anger drawn from the world's disenfranchised, angry, and otherwise disaffected Muslim population.

United States' action on the political front has been incomplete. Domestically, the Bush administration has taken the necessary, inward-looking step of shoring up domestic political support against Al Qaeda. It has done so, however, in manner that sacrifices a measure of the US political character. Internationally, the Administration has not taken the necessary, outward-looking step of engaging Al Qaeda's efforts on a political

dimension, which the United States can impact, to undercut Al Qaeda's religio-political vision, which the United States cannot impact.

Blunting an enemy's strike is not the same as defeating an enemy, particularly when an enemy expects a long fight and interprets temporary setbacks as further validation of the righteousness of its cause. At best, this approach is a holding action that hopes to exhaust the enemy. At worst, this approach is a defensive crouch that gives Al Qaeda the political initiative. Engaging the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political aspects with traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases as guide for both decision-making and implementation is crucial to dissipating the political and security threat posed by Al Qaeda to the United States.

The next chapter will provide a brief historical and political background to Al Qaeda before the September 11th attacks. The broader social, political, and historical forces and events from which Al Qaeda sprung will be articulated. With this context, Al Qaeda's political grievances will then be examined. The case study chapters will build from this background to examine Al Qaeda's key dimensions in detail.

Chapter Three

Historical and Political Background

“With a rank and file vastly inferior to our own, intellectually and physically, (the Army of Northern Virginia) had, by discipline alone, acquired a character for steadiness and efficiency unsurpassed, in my judgment, in ancient or modern times.”

...Major General Joseph Hooker, c. 1863 (Tsouras 1998, 17)

“Until this day, Saladin remains a pre-eminent hero of the Islamic world. It was he who united the Arabs, who defeated the Crusaders in epic battles, who recaptured Jerusalem, and who threw the European invaders out of Arab lands.”

...James R. Reston Jr. (2001, xiv; Tsouras 1998, 103)

Stretching from its inception at the Cold War’s end up to the September 11th era, this chapter provides historical and political background for each of Al Qaeda’s key dimensions – structure, finances, strategy, and politics.³⁸ After setting the stage with a discussion of the broader historical and international political context at the time of Al Qaeda’s formation, three main eras will be consecutively scrutinized in reviewing Al Qaeda’s evolution as an organization. The chapter begins with Al Qaeda’s role in the anti-Soviet Afghan jihad. The chapter then follows Al Qaeda in the post jihad years as it congeals from a guerilla force and morphs into a transnational global insurgency support node. Lastly, the chapter will trace the Al Qaeda’s final steps towards the transnational terrorist entity it is today. Scrutinizing these three main eras in Al Qaeda’s history not only provides the necessary background for the more contemporary analysis found in later chapters, but it also provides insight into the difficulties Al Qaeda faced and the solutions that helped it persevere. As such, this chapter may also offer the necessary

context and understanding that the United States can exploit to Al Qaeda's detriment in forming a new approach.

Formation of Al Qaeda – Greater International Context

The year 1979 provided both the impetus for an Islamist awakening as well as opportunities for Islamists to act upon their political beliefs. The Egyptian-Israeli peace deal enraged Islamists. The Islamic Revolution took place in Iran. The Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Wahhabi-sect ideologues occupied the grand mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia under the banner of a non-nationalistic, pan-Islamic religious idealism. This ideology threatened not only the legitimacy of the house of Saud, but, by extension, all secular Middle East state establishments.

Governments in Muslim states, particularly in the Middle East, responded by increasingly persecuting politically active Islamists. These governmental authorities drew a distinction, however, between individuals committing unlawful acts threatening the state and the unquestioned moral authority of Islam. The practical result was to vilify individual regime opponents without vilifying their inspiring cause.

Formation of Al Qaeda – The Role of Afghanistan

Afghanistan served two contradictory roles in mitigating the mounting domestic Islamist pressure against dictatorial Middle Eastern regimes. From an Islamist point of view, Afghanistan was an actionable cause de guerre. Soviet brutality against the Afghans was intense. Over one million Afghans were killed, and approximately five million, roughly one third of the country, was forced into exile. This situation both demanded and provided an opportunity for action. From the perspective of Middle Eastern regimes, Afghanistan was simultaneously a pressure valve. The fighting provided

a socially and politically respectable outlet for Middle Eastern regimes to purge their societies of politically active Islamists who were political agitators. Given the fighting's intensity, these Islamist activists would also likely die, thus permanently eliminating the problem.

Foreign aid – military, logistical, financial, and political – began to flow as the Afghan populace began a home-grown resistance movement against the Soviet occupiers and their Afghan sycophants. Foreign fighters increasingly traveled to Afghanistan to take up arms against the Soviets as the war continued. Because no accurate, systematic, comprehensive records were maintained during the fighting, estimates vary tremendously about the exact size and composition of the anti-Soviet foreign fighter forces. Four observations, however, are generally accepted.

First, representatives of virtually every Muslim society, even if only in the single digits, were present. The bulk of the volunteers, however, “came from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt and Algeria.” In total during the war, estimates are that 25,000 – 50,000 foreign fighters ultimately augmented the approximately 175,000 to 250,000 indigenous Afghan insurgents that presented themselves on the field of battle in any one given year (Burke 2004).

Second, unlike the International Brigade of the Spanish civil war, the foreign fighters did not form one cohesive combat unit. The vast bulk of volunteers arriving in Afghanistan arrived in small numbers at a time and lacked any prior military training. Initially, most were sent to one of the myriad mujahedeen bases for basic instruction on small arms and heavy weapons (Burke 2004). As a general rule, after their initial dispersing, they fought allied to local Afghan commanders at squad-level strength.

Third, unlike the Afghan insurgents, who were primarily focused on fighting the Soviets and did so throughout the country, the foreign fighters, who came to be known as Afghan Arabs, engaged in both front line fighting and rear area support functions. These foreign fighters filled an important enabling gap for the front line forces that any effective fighting force engaged in sustained combat requires. As a result, likely more than half of the foreign fighters never saw combat (Burke 2004).

Fourth, the Egyptian contingent, which was “known as the ‘thinkers and the brains’ among Arab Afghans,” deviated from the norm (Burke 2004). They did so politically, militarily, and organizationally, and they rose to the fore amongst the foreign fighter community. Politically, the Egyptians were well connected throughout the Islamist movement, and to their Afghan hosts. Militarily, the Egyptians were a cut above the rest and fought as a cohesive entity. Organizationally, unlike other volunteers, the Egyptians arrived with coherent, intact capacity.

Formation of Al Qaeda – Organizational Precursors

In 1984, Abdullah Azzam, an intellectual who played a key role in articulating and proselytizing an Islamist jihad doctrine tailored to rally volunteers to fight the Soviets, partnered with Usama bin Laden. Azzam had met bin Laden when he joined the jihad in 1980, and together they set up the Maktab al Khidmat lil Mujahidin al Arab (MAK), whose English monikers became the Afghan Service Bureau, the Afghan Bureau, the Office Bureau, and/or the Service Bureau. The purpose of the Afghan Bureau, which was set up just as the volume of foreign fighters rose to its 1984-86 peak, was to recruit and train foreign fighters for the anti-Soviet jihad.

Outside of the war zone, MAK developed a global outreach capability to recruit personnel and solicit donations. It did so mainly through mosques and charities around the world, as exemplified by the Kifah refugee center and its mosque in Brooklyn, New York. The MAK extensively piggy-backed on the Muslim Brotherhood's networks.

Inside the war zone, MAK built guest houses, training camps, and logistics nodes along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to receive, train, equip, dispatch, and assist foreign fighters combating the Soviets. In particular, bin Laden, drawing upon family construction resources, built cave complexes hiding field hospitals and munitions. He also dug tunnels able to accommodate hundreds of fighters.

Liaison assistance came in the form of donations from other governments and, from private sympathizers. The latter were managed by either state entities or non-state proxies established by their intelligence services.

General Zia ul-Haq, the Pakistani leader who took power in a 1977 military coup, predicated providing his help to the US plan to create a Soviet "Vietnam" upon channeling all US assistance through Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (ISID). The United States complied. In practical terms, ISID served as the local state cut-out in directly funneling arms, logistics, money, training, and other war-related assistance. This gave plausible international deniability to the donor states, a key factor during the rising US-Soviet tensions of the early to mid 1980's. On a domestic level, this arrangement eased donor involvement politically while simultaneously enabling it to deepen militarily – a dynamic which became important as US aid shifted from plausibly-deniable World War I rifles to US Stinger missiles and satellite imagery of Soviet troop deployments (Gunaratna 2002b).

While financial support from state authorities was important and the United States tapped its allies as a force multiplier, especially the Saudis who matched US donations dollar for dollar, non-state aid ultimately dwarfed any state funding. “In fact, as little as 25 percent of the money for the Afghan jihad was actually supplied directly by states” (Burke 2004). “The Saudis were not alone in their support. Sheikhs, emirs, princes, and devout businessmen throughout the Gulf made huge donations, developing a complex network of personal associations and channels for funding, often through specially created charities, that were to be of critical importance” for Al Qaeda’s post Soviet operations (Burke 2004, 57-58).³⁹

General Zia’s ISID disproportionately directed assistance to the Islamists (Burke 2004). Pakistan ultimately wanted the war to end with a compliant, pro-Pakistan government in Kabul. The Pakistan-based Islamists were not only fighting to bring this situation about, but a genuine ideological and personal sympathy had also built up over several years between Pakistani Islamists, especially Jamaat-e-Islami, and their Afghan counterparts. The result was that “four of the seven mujahedeen groups allowed to operate by Pakistan were hard-line Islamist, (and) the other three could be characterized as moderate Islamists, or Islamist traditionalist” (Burke 2004, 65).

Formation of Al Qaeda – Usama bin Laden During the Jihad

Usama bin Laden’s behavior during the anti-Soviet jihad largely ingratiated him amongst the foreigner mujahedeen. Primarily, bin Laden operated in a strategic support role managing the administrative side of the MAK, engaging in political work, and assisting in rear-area battle preparation, such as logistics and weapons acquisition.

Secondarily, bin Laden participated in front-line military actions later in the war. Most significantly, he fought at Jalalabad, Jaji, and in the Lion's Den Operation.

The United States tabulated that there were over three hundred notable guerilla commanders during the struggle (Crile 2003). In an insurgency that was composed overwhelmingly of indigenous Afghans, the foreign fighter community played a minor and militarily insignificant, though politically notable, role. Usama bin Laden largely played a very important, politically influential but behind-the-scenes support role within that segment at a strategic level. As noted by Marc Sageman, a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) case officer who served as a liaison to the mujahedeen from 1986-89, Usama bin Laden simply did not register on the CIA's radar at that time.⁴⁰

Formation of Al Qaeda – Impact of the Afghan Jihad's End

The war did not end for the Afghans with the Soviet 1989 withdrawal. Their country was in political, economic, and social ruins, and the most radical elements in Afghan Islam, which had been marginalized before the war, were now armed and organized, which put them in a position to thrust for power amid the post-Soviet chaos. With the unifying force of the Soviet threat gone, a five year civil war ensued. The jihad's Pakistani-supported Islamist groups, which had been very marginal players in pre Soviet Afghanistan, came to dominate national politics.

The jihad also continued for Pakistan. Islamabad's central policy was still to secure a pliant government in Kabul. Pakistan itself, however, had been altered by the Afghan war. The ISID hardliners and the army were in as strong a position as ever. Over the next years, the war's pernicious effects became apparent as attempts in Pakistan to reestablish democracy and the rule of law foundered (Burke 2004).

Though possessing high political visibility and a measure of social standing and importance, the foreign fighter contingent played only a minor military role (Burke 2004). The Soviets were beaten primarily by Afghan blood supported by foreign treasure, which came primarily from private donations derived from throughout the Muslim world and secondarily from the United States and Saudi Arabia, who between them provided approximately six billion dollars in aid (Bergen 2001). Rather, “it was the lessons that they (the foreigner mujahedeen) learned from the jihad, rather than their contribution to it, that proved significant” (Bergen 2001, 56).

From the perspective of religious political ideology, the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan was a milestone evolution in militant political Islam. However right or wrong, the foreign mujahedeen perceived themselves to be responsible for defeating the Soviets, a global superpower. This real-world, tangible victory simultaneously validated and empowered Azzam’s theological modifications, and thus the resulting world view and political agenda they inspired as well (Bergen 2001). Defeating a global superpower replaced the Palestinian’s struggle in the popular Arab imagination. The Afghan jihad transformed Arab nationalism into Islamism (Bergen 2001).

From the perspective of organizational development, the necessary friendships, alliances, socio-professional networks were formed to constitute the organizational capacity for a global entity. Foreign jihadist leaders from dozens of countries rubbed shoulders and were indoctrinated in the same interpretation of jihad. Most notably, bin Laden met and was befriended by Dr. Ayman al Zawahiri, who had traveled to Peshawar to offer his medical services (Bergen 2001).

As the light at the end of the jihad tunnel began to show, the natural question of what to do after victory arose. The MAK leadership did not want to simply dissipate. As Abdullah Azzam noted in his best-known book, *Defending the Land of the Muslims is Each Man's Most Important Duty*, “the duty will not end with victory in Afghanistan; jihad will remain an individual obligation until all other lands that were Muslim are returned to us so that Islam will reign again: before us lies Palestine, Bukhara, Lebanon, Chad, Eritrea, Somalia, the Philippines, Burma, southern Yemen, Tashkent, and Andalusia” (Esposito 2002, 7).

Formation of Al Qaeda – The Organization Coalesces

Abdullah Azzam envisioned the mujahedeen as an elite vanguard that could serve as a strong foundation (al Qaeda al sulbah) for remaking society in the Islamist vision.⁴¹ The foreign mujahedeen, however, lacked unity. Problems existed on spiritual, political, and organizational levels.

First, the foreign mujahedeen had no unifying spiritual authority on a moral or intellectual level. Because they rejected, and had effectively been rejected by, the state-backed ulema, nearly anyone with any formal training could claim leadership of a group and a degree of religious authority (Burke 2001). This gave Azzam space to form a new group, but it also created chaos.

Second, infighting broke out on a political level. National, ethnic, and ideological divisions amongst the volunteers, all of which had been subordinated to the common, immediate goal of defeating the Soviets, rose to the fore. The Arab Afghans “split into scores of different groups, each focusing on the problems of their own homeland” (Burke 2004, 8).

Third, the fighters were also in disarray organizationally. The pattern of foreign fighters operating in small groups attached to a multitude of commanders did not allow for strong unity of command in the international element. The mujahedeen's disunity was further aggravated by fears of infiltration by government agents from the fighters' homelands, which were worried about Islamist movements in their own countries and how these hardened Afghan war veterans might affect their domestic situations (Bergen 2001).

At some point between 1988 and 1989 in Peshawar, Pakistan, Usama bin Laden and several close associates, acting upon Abdullah Azzam's suggestion and at his direction, formed the militant organization that would eventually become known as Al Qaeda. The group was small, comprising not more than a dozen men. Complete with a charter, Usama bin Laden was its leader, and members swore an oath of loyalty to him.

The group's express purpose was to overcome the mujahedeen's national, ethnic, and ideological divisions. The group was to channel resources into a quick-reaction "Islamic army" that could come to the aid of oppressed Muslims around the world. This group would be the muscle of political Islam, which it saw as the solution to all problems.

Though this organization was to form a secure, inner core for the broader religio-political movement Abdullah Azzam envisioned, it did not have the monopoly on internationalizing the struggle. There was little to distinguish it from the scores of other groups operating, forming, and dissolving in Pakistan, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Islamic world. Though most of the larger groups were focused on campaigning against their own governments, there were plenty of individuals or smaller groups besides bin

Laden's that were radicalized by their Afghanistan experiences and were committed to a wider battle (Burke 2004).

Al Qaeda – Displacing to and Congealing in Sudan

In the 1989-90 timeframe as the Soviet presence in Afghanistan was dissipating, Usama bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia, and his cohorts took the lead in forging Al Qaeda. Shortly after his arrival, the Saudi monarchy invited US troops to help defend the kingdom following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Usama bin Laden subsequently fled to Pakistan in April 1991 upon learning of his impending arrest after joining Saudi dissidents in calling for an overthrow of the monarchy, which was sparked by the foreign troop presence in what many Islamists consider to be the land of Islam's holiest sites.

Al Qaeda's situation in Pakistan, however, was becoming untenable. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan enjoyed close relations (Burke 2004).⁴² After funding a failed no-confidence motion versus Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and then sponsoring assassination attempts against her on two occasions, it was not safe for bin Laden to remain in Peshawar. Also, India was pressuring the US government to designate Pakistan a terrorist sponsor in the wake of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, an attack that was carried out by independent, Afghan-trained, Pakistan-based terrorists.

In response, the United States demanded Islamabad expel or register the mujahedeen in Pakistan. For the United States, it was a chance to engage an emerging threat. For Pakistan, it was a chance to arrest, deport, or register armed internal dissenters who could challenge the state (Burke 2004).⁴³

The National Islamic Front (NIF) came to power in Sudan during this same time. In 1989, they sent a three man delegation to Peshawar to enlist Al Qaeda's assistance in

training NIF members in guerilla warfare to oppose the largely animist and Christian separatist Sudan People's Liberation Army in the country's south. The training request included an invitation to take up residence (Gunaratna 2002b).

Sudan was a sanctuary close to the Arab world, the home of most Al Qaeda leaders and members (Gunaratna 2002b). And, it was a chance for an able but missionless force to "get back to work" (Gunaratna 2002b). From late 1989 to late 1991, most of Al Qaeda's best trained and experienced fighters, numbering 1,000-1,500, moved to Sudan, though bin Laden retained an extensive training and operational infrastructure in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The ending of the Afghan jihad had created a free-floating pool of mujahedeen extending from New York to Algeria to the Philippines. Fearful that these men could upset the political balance, many veterans of the Afghan campaign were being arrested by their regimes. The resources at Al Qaeda's disposal in Sudan brought many of them there for refresher training and finance. Al Qaeda's combat strength, drawing from trained recruits around the world, rose from roughly 1,000 to about 2,000 (Gunaratna 2002b).

Apart from developing its own capabilities, Al Qaeda also took on a train and equip role for the broader Islamist movement. With Sudan as a base, Al Qaeda developed a communications network linking its regional offices in London, New York, Turkey, and elsewhere. After establishing links with about twenty Islamist groups engaged in guerrilla warfare and terrorism, bin Laden supported them with funds, training, and weapons.

Al Qaeda's own actions, however, made Sudan untenable. International pressure from the United States, Egypt, and Britain upon the Sudanese government to expel bin

Laden became intense after he sponsored an unsuccessful assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, a pillar of US and British policy in the Middle East. After an initial Sudanese rebuff, the United States increased its pressure by providing military assistance to Uganda, Eritrea, and Ethiopia - Sudan's often-hostile neighbors. Though Sudan ultimately caved, bin Laden's departure to lawless and geographically isolated Afghanistan deprived the world of its ability to monitor him (Gunaratna 2002b).

Al Qaeda – Returning to Afghanistan

The Taliban, a word which translates into English as seekers of knowledge (i.e. students) emerged in the Pashtun portion of southern Afghanistan in Qandahar Province in response to the lawlessness and chaos of the brutal, anarchic post-Soviet civil war. With direction and assistance from ISID, the Taliban branched out beyond its Pashtun center and seized two thirds of Afghanistan within five months of bin Laden's arrival. Initially welcomed by the common people as a force for peace and stability amidst chaos, the Taliban, with further monetary and materiel assistance from ISID and Saudi Arabia as well as Gulf donations, went on to seize roughly 90 percent of the country. The country soon devolved into a long-running, but fairly stable civil war between the majority Pashtuns, and its domestic allies, based in the south against the minority Tajiks, and their domestic allies, based in the north.

International politics indirectly favored the Taliban. Pakistan, ever fearful of being encircled by enemies with India to the east and Russia to the north, still had securing a safe border to the west via a pliant government in Kabul as its overriding goal. In response to Pakistani pressure spurred by international pressure stoked by India stemming from the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the remaining mujahedeen

commanders, both foreign and native to the region, were forced to flee Pakistan, thus shaking off Pakistani control. The Pakistanis needed a new proxy force to ensure their Afghan interests, and the Taliban, shunned by the rest of the world, possessed nearly exclusive loyalty to Islamabad. The fact that India, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Iran – Pakistan’s enemies – were aiding the Tajik-led Northern Alliance, the Taliban’s primary opposition, only further boxed Pakistan into supporting the Taliban. Given the ascendancy of a more hard-line conservative religious element in Pakistani military and political circles resulting from the anti-Soviet jihad, there was no effective opposition at Pakistan’s senior levels to propose alternative policies. The Taliban were solidly nestled in Afghanistan with Pakistani support (Rashid 2002).

A quid pro quo arrangement existed between Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Usama provided money and materiel to the Taliban in its fight against the Northern Alliance. Al Qaeda even developed a guerilla unit of 1,500 – 2,000 Arabs known as the 055 Brigade to aid Taliban forces. The Taliban, in return, gave Al Qaeda sanctuary as well as weapons, equipment, and training facilities. Al Qaeda was also allowed to use Afghanistan’s national aircraft to transport members, recruits, and supplies from overseas” (Rashid 2002, 54). Al Qaeda exploited this sanctuary to turn itself into a potent terrorist entity.

Preparing to Turn the Corner – The Shifting International Political Context and Militant Islam Enables Al Qaeda

The failure of the first generation of Middle Eastern post-colonial native elites, who had previously been co-opted by the dominant colonial power, paved the road for militant political Islam. Their post World War II classical liberal/Western approach to

economic, social and political problems perpetuated the colonial era's social, economic, and political inequalities. This also did not eliminate the cultural tone deafness that plagued the colonialists. The distance between the government, albeit now under local control, and the general public continued to increase.

These post-colonial leaders were replaced by more nationalist, socialist, secular rulers in the latter 1960's and 1970's. Though local faces not tainted with foreign collaboration, they were also unable to address political, economic and social problems in a culturally valid manner. Publicly failing major tests, such as Israel's victory in the Six Day War, and an inability to stay unified under a universal Arab nationalist approach in the ethnically homogenous Arab Middle East significantly discredited this leadership generation.

Islam as a political ideology began to gain traction, and the latter 1980's are often perceived as the high water mark for legitimate Islamist political activity. On the whole, the tenor was peaceful and main-stream. In 1990, in Algeria, for example, "the Front Islamique du Salut, relatively moderate activists who had engaged with the democratic process, made huge gains in the first free elections since independence. In Sudan, a military coup d'etats allowed one of the key ideologues of contemporary political Islam, Hassan al Turabi, to come to power. Nor did the Iranian Revolution appear to have run out of energy. A fatwa pronounced by Ayatollah Khomeini on the British author Salman Rushdie ambitiously extended the authority of the Iranian Islamist state and, by implication, 'true' Islamic practice throughout the West. The Communist system was collapsing. Political Islam everywhere appeared in the ascendant" (Burke 2004, 78).

The jihadist elements appeared nearly non-existent. Their existence, however, was real but low profile. It was simply submerged beneath the very public presence of more peaceful, main-stream political Islam.

Recruits had not stopped flowing into Pakistan and Afghanistan throughout the 1990s. Rather than focusing on fighting the Soviets, their primary purpose was to prepare themselves and then return to their homelands to combat their own governments. “In the seven years (bin Laden) was absent from southwest Asia, tens of thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands, of militants trained for terrorism and combat in the scores of training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan” (Burke 2004, 79-80).

Two parallel yet juxtaposing trends enabled this situation. On one side of the coin, the Middle East saw increasing stability during the 1990’s. On the international level, the Oslo Accords followed the end of the Cold War. On the domestic level, there was a simultaneous changing and convergence of domestic politics within the United States, Israel, and Palestine. The tolerance for political violence decreased as hopes for peace rose. Individuals and/or groups who wished to pursue militant Islamist activities had to find a non-Middle Eastern geographic area in which to train. On the other side of the coin, and in direct contrast, southwest Asia witnessed increasing instability. Political attention faded from Afghanistan after the Soviet defeat. It was a region devoid of effective state control, awash with weapons, and close to multiple regional conflicts.

Turing the Corner: Al Qaeda Becomes a Terrorist Entity

In the late 1980’s and through 2001, Afghanistan was the central node in international terrorism. The Afghan jihad eclipsed the Palestinian struggle in terms of stature. The training and fighting infrastructure from the anti-Soviet insurgency remained

to serve as a ready-made base for further asymmetrical warfare training and preparation. Through residing in Afghanistan and controlling the training infrastructure, Usama's Al Qaeda was at the global terrorist crossroads (Gunaratna 2002b).⁴⁴ It was perfectly positioned to unite the jihadists and focus their power.

Due to the harsh and often brutal domestic counter-insurgency measures of both Middle Eastern and Asian regimes, many of their guerilla and terrorist groups developed a robust external presence specifically to target those regimes from abroad. Al Qaeda established both strategic and tactical relationships with these and other Arab and Asian Muslim political, guerilla, and terrorist groups. This conglomeration of roughly two dozen entities scattered around the world gave Al Qaeda the global reach it needed to harness the untapped Muslim resources on a global scale, and thus target enemies on a global scale. On February 23, 1998, Usama announced the World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders (Gunaratna 2002b).

Conclusion

Al Qaeda, created by anti-Soviet mujahedeen guerilla fighters, evolved dramatically over fifteen years. What began as an organizational refuge with minimal clout or capability for the world's Islamic militants following the Soviet war in Afghanistan evolved into a rear area support organization for Islamic militants engaged in struggles elsewhere. It then morphed into a fully functional transnational terrorist organization in its own right. It then gained sufficient stature to become a unifying coordinator amongst the world's diverse Islamic political militants.

Having established a historical baseline, the remainder of this dissertation examines the current status of Al Qaeda's structure, finances, strategy, and politics – the

factors that enabled it to become, and remain, a potent transnational terrorist entity. The next chapter will review Al Qaeda's strategy. This will establish the overarching framework for each of Al Qaeda's subsequent key dimensions.

Chapter Four

Al Qaeda's Strategy: Incremental Progress

“They tell us, sir, that we
are weak – unable to cope
with so formidable an adver-
sary...Sir, we are not weak,
if we make proper use of
those means which the God of
nature hath placed in our power.”

...Patrick Henry (Anonymous 2002, 195)

The goals and world view of Usama bin Laden's Al Qaeda have not altered since its inception. Its strategies for their implementation, however, have evolved in response to world affairs and Al Qaeda's own capabilities. Al Qaeda now uses terrorism inside the United States and a blend of terrorism and guerilla war versus US interests abroad.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of Al Qaeda's political goals. It then reviews Al Qaeda's goal-achieving intermediary objectives, the political agenda that manifests Al Qaeda's value choices. The evolution of Al Qaeda's strategy to achieve these goals will then be explored in the context of the international political climate created by the US hard power approach and Al Qaeda's persevering operational capacity despite US blows as contrasted against Al Qaeda's efforts to exploit the political context internationally and democratic societies domestically who are opposing it.

Al Qaeda's strategy has been partially successful. Current underlying political, economic, and military trends favor Al Qaeda. If the US tack remains constant, Al Qaeda is likely to score several short to medium term power and political victories.

Al Qaeda's Political Goals

Al Qaeda has a singular worldly mission. It seeks to restore the fallen position of the Muslim peoples in world affairs. In the view of Al Qaeda, the West, as led by the

United States, subjects Muslims to “an ocean of oppression, injustice, slaughter, and plunder” on a global scale (Berner 2006, 189). This viewpoint holds that the West, especially the United States, primarily victimizes the Muslim peoples because of their adherence to Islam.⁴⁵ In practical terms, this mission is spelled out via executing three main goals. First, Al Qaeda wishes to wipe away current international boundaries, which it perceives as artificial, Western-imposed demarcations that divide rather than unite Islam. Al Qaeda seeks to reestablish the caliphate, which will then rule a multinational, unified Islamic empire. Second, pursuant to establishing a caliphate, Al Qaeda seeks the withdrawal of all US and allied forces from Islamic countries. Third, Al Qaeda seeks to establish sharia. Only by closely adhering to all facets of Islam, which Al Qaeda views as God’s instructions and so by definition supreme and correct, can victory be achieved.

Al Qaeda intends to do achieve these goals operating in the capacity of a politico-military “vanguard of the Muslim nation” to provide the “ummah with the inspiration it requires” in order to right the wrongs being inflicted upon the world’s Muslims.

Operationally, “Al Qaeda was set up to wage jihad against infidelity, particularly to encounter the onslaught of the infidel countries against the Islamic states” (Mir 2006, 99). Al Qaeda thus aims to accomplish worldly political objectives. Politically, as Usama bin Laden stated just after 9/11, “I must say that my duty is just to awaken Muslims to tell them as to what is good for them and what is not” (Mir 2006, 99). As such, Al Qaeda will never surrender to the “crimes and vices” of the US and its allies.⁴⁶

The chief religio-political organizing principle upon which Al Qaeda relies and executes its operational activity is the concept of jihad, sometimes referred to as “the sixth undeclared element of Islam” (Mir 2006, 131).⁴⁷ The term jihad means a great

moral struggle. Such a struggle may be entirely of a non-military nature.⁴⁸ In a world view that does not distinguish between church and state, however, jihad can materialize in military form in pursuit of political objectives ensconced with religious justification. The military version of jihad receives great emphasis in Islamic history, writings, and scholarship.⁴⁹

There are two types of military jihad – offensive and defensive. Each differs not only in the authorities necessary to invoke it, but also in the responsibilities to adhere to it. Defensive jihad is the chief threat in contemporary times.

Offensive jihad is meant to bring new lands under Muslim control and/or convert new adherents to Islam. This type of jihad is a collective responsibility of the Islamic people as a whole. It is not an individual responsibility, so no direct, personal action on the part of each Muslim is required. The only person who can launch an offensive jihad is a Caliph, the recognized leader of the Muslim nation as a whole whose successors derived from the Prophet. The last Caliphate, however, was deposed in the Anatolian segment of the Ottoman Empire in 1924.

Defensive jihad is meant to respond to an attack by non-Muslims. An attack can be upon Muslims as a people, upon Muslim lands, and/or upon Islam as a faith.⁵⁰ Not without at least some justification, Al Qaeda claims that all three have occurred.

Defensive jihad is a personal responsibility, and so every Muslim must contribute to the fight as they are best able once Islam, in any of these forms, has been attacked. This obligation, at least in theory, cannot be avoided under the rubric of a defensive jihad. Such an individualistic orientation to this mode of religio-political action enables Al Qaeda to issue a call for defensive jihad and allow self-selecting Muslims to join him

with religious justification. The nature of defensive jihad means that “each individual faces a fateful decision, one that will decide where he or she spends eternity. If bin Laden’s argument is accepted, he or she must take up arms or otherwise support the mujahedeen, or face eternal damnation for not performing a duty mandated by God”(Anonymous 2004, 8). Politics and all-permeating religion are thus mutually reinforcing.

Usama bin Laden argues that Islam and its people are under attack by the United States and its allies. He is calling upon Muslims throughout the world to recognize this fact and respond. Usama bin Laden is “inciting others to join, not because he orders them to, but because God has ordered them to do so in what He revealed in the Koran” (Anonymouse 2004, 7).

Unlike in an offensive jihad, a defensive jihad does not require a universally acknowledged leader to declare it. No approving authority is necessary, and any secular or clerical authority that hinders a response against external aggression is in the wrong. Despite not being an educated Islamic scholar, bin Laden is not doctrinally prevented from attempting to invoke a defensive jihad.

There is precedent for bin Laden’s actions. “The historical model for such action is the medieval hero Saladin, who though only a regional commander organized and led a successful defense against the armies of the second Crusade” (Johnson 2002, 12). Usama bin Laden, a noted leader in the successful anti-Soviet jihad, is of the same mold. His high personal standing permits him to speak to the Muslim, particularly the Arab, world. His words are not drenched in hypocrisy, and they are taken as genuine.⁵¹ When

combined with his eloquence, Usama bin Laden strikes many cultural chords amongst Muslims in general and Arab Muslims in particular.

Not only has Usama bin Laden been fighting the perceived enemies of the Islamic peoples, but he has also been at least partly successful. In the eyes of his potential and actual adherents, that he is so actively hunted by the United States and its allies not only proves his potency at possibly unsettling an immoral world order, but it also vindicates the righteousness of his cause and its ultimate, existential, if not worldly, triumph (Iqbal 2002).⁵² His calls for a defensive jihad would thus resonate amongst actual and/or potential adherents.

As noted by a Pakistani political commentator who explicates the bond that bin Laden has forged with many actual and/or potential adherents, “Usama bin Ladin is a symbol of the peoples’ hatred of the United States. Usama bin Ladin has become as dangerous as a nuclear bomb. The United States can never catch Usama bin Ladin because he lives in the heart of every Muslim.”⁵³ Usama bin Laden has, in effect, become a larger than life personification of political sentiment.

Al Qaeda’s Intermediary Objectives

Al Qaeda central under bin Laden’s stewardship has been consistent and focused in its goals. Its intermediary objectives to achieve those goals, however, have evolved over time in relation to current events and organizational needs. As of 2007, bin Laden, via jihad, seeks to redress six specific, worldly political grievances.⁵⁴

First, bin Laden routinely cites the Palestinian plight. He, as well as the vast majority of Muslims in general and Arabs in particular, finds the Israeli treatment of the

Palestinians utterly contemptible. That the Israelis are empowered by the United States and perceived to operate with unfettered US backing makes the United States a target.

Second, US and Western troops are present on the Arabian Peninsula, the holy cradle of Islam. This is defamation in the militants' eyes. Further, the presence of such troops only goes to show the weakness and apostate character of the supporting regimes.

Third, Al Qaeda claims that the United States supports corrupt, tyrannical Muslim governments that repress their own peoples to curry US favor. These governments are sell-outs who could not exist without US succor. Worse than Western governments allied with the United States, these governments are apostates, and so they must be eliminated.

Fourth, the United States supports governments that repress and/or are engaged in counter-insurgency efforts against their Muslim minorities. Russia, India, and China are leading examples. Al Qaeda charges that what the United States cannot do directly, it is doing indirectly via other world powers.

Fifth, the United States economically exploits Muslims. The United States pressures oil suppliers, especially Arab ones, to keep prices low for US benefit. This comes at the expense of potential wealth that the Muslim masses could accumulate to better their lives were it not for US actions.

Sixth, the United States has directly occupied Muslim lands. Allied and US forces are in Afghanistan, which holds a special place in Islamic lore due to the anti-Soviet jihad. The United States has also attacked and occupied Iraq, an Arab country in the heart of the Gulf crucial to human civilization in general and Islam in particular.

Trends in Al Qaeda Thinking

Four broader themes can be distilled from these intermediary objectives:

First, Al Qaeda is not attempting to conquer new lands. Per defensive jihad, it is responding to aggression. All of the issues annotated apply to political objectives that derive from either Islamic history and/or existing Muslim communities.

Second, these political objectives are defensive and not invasive or transformative in nature. Usama bin Ladin is not attempting to either destroy or convert the United States and its allies to Islam, though he has offered to aid this process, a necessary condition before attacking a non-Muslim foe in Islamic just war theory. He is not trying to excise US immorality. He simply does not wish it impressed upon Muslims.

As bin Ladin explains, “many people in the West are good and gentle people....I have already said that we are not hostile to the United States. We are against the system (US foreign policy) which makes nations slaves of the United States, or forces them to mortgage their political and economic freedom” (Mir 2001, 1). “This is an unfair division. The time has come for us to be equal” (Anonymous 2004, 153). “We are defending ourselves against the United States. This is why I used to say that if (Muslims) do not have security, the Americans also will not have it. This is a very simple formula...This is the formula of live and let live” (Mir 2005, 139).

These sentiments are not consistent with the oft asserted idea by President Bush, as summarized herein by Paul Bremmer, that “there is no point in addressing the so-called root causes of (Al Qaeda’s) terrorism. We are the root cause of his terrorism. He doesn’t like America. He doesn’t like our society. He doesn’t like what we stand for. He doesn’t like our values” (Ruthven, 158).

Certainly, Al Qaeda takes issue with some US cultural practices and priorities. Al Qaeda tolerates no deviation from the social and religious values it seeks to further. In these areas, there are clashes with US culture.

Al Qaeda's primary grievance, however, is in relation to specific US actions. In fact, after 9/11, Usama called upon the US public "to understand the lesson of the New York and Washington raids, which came in response to some of your previous crimes. The aggressor deserves punishment" (AJST 2002). The United States is not hated for its existence. It is not simply misunderstood. It is understood. And, while perhaps not admired for cultural choices, its actions are reviled.

Third, bin Laden's Al Qaeda is replying in kind to the treatment that he perceives Muslims to be receiving. As bin Laden explained when speaking to the US people, "just as you kill, you are killed. Just as you bombard, you are bombarded" (Anonymous 2004, 153).

Muslim's security is the item bin Laden sees as most chiefly threatened. Speaking to the United States, bin Laden stated on behalf of Al Qaeda that "we renew our pledge to Allah, our promise to the nation, and to the nation, and our threat to the Americans and Jews that they shall remain restless, shall not feel at ease, and shall not dream of security until they take their hands off our nation and stop their aggression against us and their support for our enemies. And soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take" (Anonymous 2004, 153).

Fourth, bin Ladin places blame for the current US-Al Qaeda struggle, and the ultimate decision to change it, in US hands. As the United States is the world's dominant power, the world is as the United States would make it. "The road to safety (for the

United States) begins by (the United States) lifting oppression” (Anonymous 2004, 153). Muslims, whom bin Ladin perceives as global victims, are simply responding to a situation created by the United States and its allies.

Quite simply, bin Ladin argues that because it is the dominant power, the United States can choose to behave otherwise. He suggests Al Qaeda will not go away until the United States does so. The United States, because it intentionally does not choose to behave otherwise thus chooses to engage Al Qaeda rather than alter any of its policy decisions that run counter to Al Qaeda’s political agenda meant to redress grievances.

“So the case is easy, America will not be able to leave this ordeal unless it leaves the Arabian Peninsula, and stops its involvement in Palestine, and in all the Islamic world. If we give this equation to any child in an American school, he will easily solve it within a second. But, according to (President) Bush’s actions the equation won’t be solved until the swords fall on their heads, with the permission of Allah...” (Anonymous 204, 153).

In fact, bin Laden has beseeched the US public to use its democratic system to alter its government’s actions. In mid November 2001 interview, bin Laden asked “the American people to check the anti-Muslim policies of their government. They had described their government’s policy against Vietnam as wrong. The American people should prevent the killing of Muslims at the hands of their government” (Mir 2005, 151).

Al Qaeda’s Employment of Terrorism

Al Qaeda has opted to pursue its intermediary objectives via terrorism. Such a tool necessitates that the terrorists acknowledge their own military inferiority, their status

as a political minority outside of the mainstream, and the essentially political nature of the struggle. Al Qaeda has taken each of these steps.

Al Qaeda acknowledges that it is militarily inferior to its opponent, the United States backed by its world order. Zawahiri explains “that however far our capabilities reach, they will never be equal to one thousandth of the capabilities of the kingdom of Satan (the United States) that is waging war on us.”⁵⁵ The roles of the authority center, the United States, and the challenger to authority, Al Qaeda, are clearly acknowledged.

Al Qaeda also acknowledges the essentially persuasive political nature of the US-Al Qaeda struggle. Zawahiri has articulated that Al Qaeda is engaged in a struggle wherein “more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media.”⁵⁶ Zawahiri notes that “we can kill the captives by bullet. That would achieve that which is sought after without exposing ourselves to the questions and answering to doubts.”⁵⁷

Beyond this, Al Qaeda acknowledges its status as a political minority and the need to win public support. As Zawahiri explained in his 2005 letter, Al Qaeda’s goals “will not be accomplished by the mujahed movement while it is cut off from public support, even if the jihadist movement pursues the method of sudden overthrow. This is because such an overthrow would not take place without some minimum of popular support and some condition of public discontent which offers the mujahed movement what it needs in terms of capabilities in the quickest fashion. Additionally, if the jihadist movement were obliged to pursue other methods, such as a popular war of jihad or a popular intifadah, then popular support would be a decisive factor between victory and defeat.”⁵⁸ Al Qaeda seeks to inspire a political awakening amongst the world’s Muslim publics to induce existing authorities to enact political change.

Al Qaeda's Strategy Pre September 11th

Initial Strategy

Al Qaeda's initial strategy was guerilla and terrorist campaigns against regimes victimizing Muslims. Their international backers would also be fair game. The US forces in the Middle East, and Muslim regimes oppressing their people in cooperation with the United States, were the key targets. This was essentially a comprehensive, simultaneous, system-wide approach. There were several reasons dictating this tack.

There were historical influences. Nineteenth century European colonialism had instilled a nascent sense of nationalism. As such, Islamic resistance movements focused first on their own indigenous problems.

This tendency was reinforced by an injunction from the Prophet Mohammed. When fighting his enemies, he had commanded that the "near" enemy be dealt with first before attacking the "far" enemy. In contemporary times, this correlated with pursuing national Islamic resistance movements first.

Moreover, there was no pan Islamic leader to alter the national orientation of the many Islamic resistance groups. The anti-Soviet jihad was an aberration reflecting a unique confluence of political and social trends at the time. No uniting force existed after the Red Army's defeat in Afghanistan (Anonymous 2004).

Finally, Al Qaeda needed time to develop. The constituent parts were far more powerful than the center. The best manner to act upon its mission and rally support was to assist others, who were more nationally oriented.

This approach ultimately yielded very little headway. Country-per-country, “the jihadists were overmatched by the security apparatus of the states” (Benjamin and Simon 2002). Limited and valuable jihadist resources were being squandered.

Revised Strategy

Al Qaeda next opted for a consecutive, piecemeal approach. To fight battles on a country by country basis was to combat the symptoms, US proxies in a US-dominated system, versus the root disease, US power and influence. The United States, the cornerstone of the unjust international system, was the real problem. If it could be taken down, the rest of the system would collapse on its own and/or be easily defeated.

By the late 1990s, bin Laden was working to focus the global jihad and Al Qaeda, its vanguard, against the United States (Najm 2002).⁵⁹ Apart from having greater economy and efficiency against the enemy, this US-first tack allowed Al Qaeda to rise to prominence. Usama bin Laden kept the hatred of Al Qaeda members focused on the United States, a deeply unpopular country. This simultaneously suppressed internal rivalries to a higher cause while harnessing a powerful inspiration to draw recruits.

Attacks continued against the United States during the 1990s under this strategic rubric. Independent jihadis inspired by Al Qaeda attacked the World Trade Center in 1995. Al Qaeda itself bombed American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Al Qaeda nearly sunk the USS Cole, a US naval frigate, in Yemen in 2000. Finally, in 2001, Al Qaeda launched the 9/11 attacks, its strongest effort yet.

Al Qaeda's Strategy Post September 11th

The US response to 9/11 has been strong. Politically, Al Qaeda has been made a pariah. Militarily, it has been hounded. Though its goals are unflinching, Al Qaeda's strategy has had to adapt to new US-created realities.

The Operational Dimension - Targeting

The US response to 9/11 included not just the United States, but also major European and other world powers, which possess the other leading militaries. Al Qaeda, whether intentionally or not, picked a fight with the Western world as well as many other countries. As a result, Al Qaeda's immediate need was to adjust its strategic balance.

Most significantly, Al Qaeda has done this by loosening its direct, US-only focus. Not forgetting its main enemy, Al Qaeda has temporarily adjusted its focus to reduce the number of its opponents to give itself, and thus its cause, a better chance. Striking the United States indirectly via US allies, especially the Europeans, became a priority.

Al Qaeda has had to strike a delicate balance. On the one hand, Al Qaeda cannot strike US allies so fiercely it sparks a backlash increasing their efforts against it. On the other hand, Al Qaeda must appear to be able to inflict enough pain at will to convey that it is best to be on the sidelines during this struggle.

Each country had to be provided with a clear choice.⁶⁰ As Al Qaeda was not seeking to make new enemies, but rather expel combatants from the fight. The die was not permanently cast. As Al Qaeda noted, "there is still a chance for anyone who wants to reconsider his position before it is too late" ("Al Qaeda Statement Congratulates Yemenis" 2004).

Once the situation in Afghanistan stabilized in late spring 2002, Al Qaeda began attacks against countries supporting US forces in Afghanistan (Anonymous 2004).⁶¹ By

contrast, apart from violence inside the war zone, the US itself and its major interests overseas have gone virtually untouched since 9/11. “Of the twenty nations al Qaeda threatened, eighteen have been attacked, a 90 percent correlation” (Anonymous 2004, 169). In each case, Al Qaeda made clear the attacks were intended to make the targeted country rethink its support for US policies.

The Operational Dimension – The Political Context

The post 9/11 anti-US political climate has framed Al Qaeda’s approach. Since 9/11, the US and other major world powers, particularly Europe, have been drifting apart. In such a context, indirect, warning-style, fringe attacks as opposed to striking allied countries on a 9/11 scale appears to have proven sufficient to tip the scales without inspiring retribution.

The 2004 Madrid train bombing exemplified Al Qaeda’s new strategy. It showed that not only could Al Qaeda still inflict serious harm inside Europe, but that it could influence domestic politics as well. After the attack, which immediately preceded a national election, an anti-war president was elected and Spain withdrew from Iraq.

“Its allies wept with America after September 11th and then swiftly concluded that only America was under attack. The idea that Western Civilization had been the target was not convincing. While America and its allies stood shoulder to shoulder when they faced a common Soviet foe, Islamic terrorism seemed to have America alone in its sights. Why cozy up to a primary target, America’s allies asked themselves, when it will only make you a secondary one?”⁶² Al Qaeda’s terrorism was aptly exploiting the political processes of its target publics.

The Role of Afghanistan and Iraq

The US response to 9/11 has significantly impacted one of the core tenets of Al Qaeda's strategy - "that radical Islamists must gain control of a nation. Holding a state, in their view, is a prelude to knocking over the dominoes of the world's secular Muslim regimes" (Benjamin and Simon 2002, 134). Once a chink in the international system is found and a foothold gained, this state will become a base for Al Qaeda to lead its adherents to victory.

Afghanistan

Initially, Afghanistan served this purpose. The 1996 Taliban capture of Kabul made Afghanistan an Islamic emirate under sharia, notwithstanding deviations for local cultural adaptations. Afghanistan, ruled by Islamic scholar Mullah Omar, was a state that could serve as the first step in restoring the Caliphate and thus divide the world between the Islamic system and the rest, which constituted not only non-Muslim countries but also Muslim countries under "apostate" Muslim rulers who collaborated with the United States and other non-Muslim states ("Address from the Shaykh" 2002).⁶³

The US thrust into Afghanistan, with its chaotic US troop presence, and the US thrust into Iraq, with its chaotic US troop presence, however, creates two cracks in the international system for Al Qaeda to pursue. In each case, if Al Qaeda does not attain control of a state, it can at least deprive the international system of control. It is highly unlikely to give up pursuing either.

Tangibly, Afghanistan has the potential to provide a strategic sanctuary. The adjacent tribal areas in Pakistan provide a ready base from which to continue the fight as well as a safe haven in case the fight fails. Extensive regional infrastructure built up since the Soviet era either remains or can be reestablished. As it did between the Taliban's

1996 capture of Kabul and the 2001 US invasion, Afghanistan can regain its status as a vanguard Muslim state in contemporary international relations.

Intangibly, Afghanistan has significant political and historical-religious value. The Russian defeat by the mujahedeen was Islam's first victory over the West in roughly eight centuries. This factor resonates amongst Al Qaeda's leadership and those amenable to Al Qaeda's sway. Such a victory is a recent reassurance that, with the backing of God, anything is possible, and that good beliefs and valiant actions can lead to good results.

Losing Afghanistan to US forces was an undeniable setback. From Al Qaeda's perspective, however, this is only a temporary state of affairs. As explained by Usama, "the one who prolonged us with one of His helping hands and stabilized us to defeat the Soviet Empire is capable of prolonging us again to defeat America on the same land, and with the same sayings, and that is the Grace of God" (Gunaratna 2002). Akin to the battles of Badr and The Trench, victories where the Prophet Mohammad won against superior forces, the stage is now set for a replay of events.⁶⁴

Iraq

Tangibly, Iraq has the potential to provide a strategic sanctuary for Al Qaeda. Iraq currently has a barely existent state structure with little to no actual authority in the heart of the Middle East. Akin to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq is a galvanizing event that has served as a radicalizing and recruiting incentive to draw out new volunteers. The more damage that Al Qaeda does there only heightens its profile. The impact of Iraq simply goes far beyond Iraq itself in militant Islamist circles. From Al Qaeda's perspective, Iraq is rapidly becoming the desired chink in the world system.⁶⁵

Intangibly, Iraq has strong political and historical-religious value. Defeating the United States, or at least being able to claim credit for doing so, carries tremendous political value. To do so in the heart of the Middle East only appeals to historical and cultural pride. Lastly, such a victory provides reassurance that, with the backing of God, good beliefs and valiant actions get good results.

The Role of Economics

Lastly, it is important to recognize that there is also a latent economic dimension to Al Qaeda's strategy. "A Lesson in War," a 2002 entry on the Al Qaeda-connected Al Ansar website, stated Al Qaeda embraced the Clausewitzian dictum of attacking an enemy's center of gravity (Von Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret 1976).⁶⁶ In contrast to Vietnam, where public opinion was the US center of gravity, Al Qaeda argues that the new US center of gravity is its economy ("A Lesson in War" 2002).⁶⁷ Usama bin Laden has told the US public that Al Qaeda "will target key sectors of your economy until you stop your injustice and aggression" (AJST 2002).

The economic facts since 9/11 support the view that "aborting the American economy is not an unattainable dream" ("A Lesson in War" 2002). The costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as of fall 2007, are rapidly nearing half of one trillion dollars. By contrast, US cost estimates for the 9/11 attacks range from 500,000 to two million dollars. At best, this equates to a roughly 1:250,000 Al Qaeda-US spending ratio as of 2007. Regardless, this ratio only worsens as the fight continues.

The underlying economic trends favor Al Qaeda as well. The economics of indigenous third world personnel employing terrorism and fighting guerilla wars locally against a high technology army sustained from overseas by a first world economy run

against the United States in the long run. Apart from this military spending, overall government spending within the greater national security arena has been permanently increased. Creating new government agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security, hiring thousands of new federal employees to counter the US terrorism threat, veterans' benefits, and perpetual security upgrades to cope with an ever-evolving terrorism threat have added permanent new costs.

It is an open question as to whether the United States can sustain this level of spending long enough to win. This is so not just in terms of raw US economic capacity, but also in terms of the domestic political choices such spending forces. Social Security and the US health care system will become pressing issues as the baby boom generation retires and smaller generations are called upon to support the current social system as the record deficit spending now financing the wars eventually comes due. The outcome of this looming guns or butter choice is unclear.

Conclusion

Al Qaeda has a clear and grandiose overarching goal at odds with the current US-led international system – the restoration of historical Muslim glory. This goal is not only validated by its religio-political ideology, but the characteristics of that religio-ideology also assist in achieving it. Long term conflict rooted in differing religio-political views is highly likely.

To achieve this overarching goal, Al Qaeda has delineated six intermediary objectives. These are the redress of the Palestinian's situation, removal of US troops from the Arabian Peninsula, ending US support for Middle East dictatorships, ending US support for non-Middle East regimes that repress Muslims, ending US economic

exploitation of Middle East oil, and ending US occupations of Muslim lands. Mindful of the political dynamics of terrorism, these objectives are not only consistent with Al Qaeda's world view, but they will also help it gain political support on a global scale.

Aware of the power disparity between it and the United States, Al Qaeda has opted for US-focused terrorism to effect these desired political changes in the world order. As exemplified by the US invasion of Afghanistan, this strategy's power and political dimensions reinforce one another, for the US invasion validates Al Qaeda's claims of aggressive US desires while simultaneously inspiring adherents to fight there, thus helping it to regain a sanctuary. At the same, per the dynamics of terrorism, this fight leverages economics to Al Qaeda's long term benefit. In contrast to the Administration's approach, Al Qaeda is staying true to its internal political nature and using the international political context to frame and guide its application of force to successfully, albeit incrementally, achieve its political goals in the US-Al Qaeda political struggle. Al Qaeda has embraced the political dimension, and it is gaining.

Though powerful, Al Qaeda's approach is not invincible. Progress against it has been made. The next chapter will describe and evaluate US counter strategy.

Chapter Five

US Strategy Against Al Qaeda: Progress and Pitfalls

“Hope is not a plan!”
...LTC Michael Bochna⁶⁸

As noted by the 9/11 Commission: “The United States did not, before 9/11, adopt as a clear strategic objective the elimination of al Qaeda” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004, 108). Until 1997, in fact, the US government understood bin Laden to be an “extremist financier” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004, 108). As a result, Al Qaeda was unhindered during the 1990’s and became steadily more potent as US attention focused on Cold War detritus – Yugoslavia’s breakup, Dual Containment in the Gulf, securing the Soviet nuclear arsenal, and peacekeeping missions to establish new norms.

September 11th made terrorism, specifically Al Qaeda, a strategic priority. The United States directly retaliated in Afghanistan. To preemptively pursue Al Qaeda, the United States invaded Iraq. The question now is how to secure US strategic gains and continue pursuing Al Qaeda, which a July 2007 US National Intelligence Estimate says is regenerating and has created a “heightened threat environment” for the United States.⁶⁹

This chapter will begin with a review of the US post 9/11 approach and an overview of current international realities resulting from these US efforts. This review will identify current successes, key strengths and weaknesses, and current failures in the US approach. The limits of pure hard power will be revealed. Unexploited opportunities stemming from US non-engagement of the US-Al Qaeda struggle’s political dimension will become manifest, which indirectly suggests future US strategic choices.

This chapter will then review the emerging US strategy going into the last 18 months of the Bush administration. A coherent and focused US strategic approach to Al Qaeda as an organization has been lacking. While the United States initially dealt with Al Qaeda on its own merits, the US approach has evolved to make combating Al Qaeda a function of competing US interests. It is not clear the United States will win.

Post September 11th US Strategy to Combat Al Qaeda

The post 9/11 US counterterrorism campaign to date has consisted of two consecutive components – an initial reaction to the 9/11 attacks in Afghanistan, Part I, followed by a broader pro-active effort around the world, Part II. In line with President Bush's initial four post-9/11 decisions forming the philosophical basis of US strategy to combat Al Qaeda, Parts I and II heavily emphasized hard power. These steps made progress, but it has proven both partial and tenuous.

Part I

Part I, immediate retaliation against Al Qaeda, occurred from 12 September 2001 until summer 2002. This part of the US 9/11 response centered on directly combating Usama bin Laden's Al Qaeda. It consisted of four steps.

The first step was to deny Al Qaeda a safe haven. The November 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan deprived Al Qaeda central of its established sanctuary.⁷⁰ Around the world, US troops deployed against major known Al Qaeda allies, such as Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, and helped governments around the world threatened by Al Qaeda-associated terrorists reclaim their sovereignty.⁷¹

The second step, which occurred concurrently with the first, was to attempt to capture Al Qaeda's leadership and membership. One system for detention, interrogation,

and eventual adjudication was set up under the stewardship of the Department of Defense and headquartered at Guantanamo Bay.⁷² The other system was a series of secret CIA prisons known as “black sites” in allied countries around the world wherein Al Qaeda prisoners are interrogated using controversial methods.⁷³

The third step, which occurred concurrently with the first two, was to engage other states in the capture and detention of Al Qaeda operatives. The United States quickly established intelligence liaison relationships to yoke the power of local states to detain Al Qaeda operatives within their countries, and Pakistan has played a key role in this effort.⁷⁴ The United States also made arrangements for select allied governments, such as Egypt, to assist in interrogating and incarcerating Al Qaeda prisoners so as to expand US capabilities beyond US laws.⁷⁵

At first blush, these steps paid real dividends. Roughly 4,000 people have been detained world wide since 9/11 as of summer 2005 discounting battlefield detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁷⁶ Pakistan alone has transferred over 700 Al Qaeda operatives to the United States.⁷⁷ No major terrorist attacks have occurred against the United States. Several major plots have been disrupted, the most recent being an attempt to hijack 10 airliners out of Heathrow.⁷⁸

Fourth, the Department of State launched a political effort, the “Shared Values” campaign, to improve US public standing. “The effort was designed by a talented Madison Avenue advertising executive; she described the task as ‘almost as though we have to redefine what America is. This is the most sophisticated brand assignment I have ever had.’ It was to feature public-service ads televised in Muslim countries, as well as

CD-ROMs, pamphlets, and a splashy magazine for young Muslims” (Anonymous 2004, 15).

The US political effort, however, was drastically less successful than the organizational effort, and the campaign ended in early 2003. One reason for this was conceptual. The other factor, however, is an intractable short to medium term problem resulting from larger US policy.

Conceptually, the Shared Values Campaign was “apparently...flawed, with the films showing how well Muslims lived and were treated in America, rather than explaining or defending US policies. Worse, the countries asked to run the films – Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon – refused, saying they would not ‘run messages on behalf of other governments’” (Anonymous 2004, 15). The United States touted US values instead of engaging Al Qaeda’s values, as manifested in its political agenda, to explain US actions. This effort to assuage political concerns spoke to the US point of view instead of the perspective of Al Qaeda and its potential adherents and supporters. The US effort simply did not acknowledge the subversion of the political sphere to ideology, which is inherent to terrorism, and thus it did not address the conflict’s underlying competing political agendas.

Reflective of deeper problems resulting from US policy, the United States was not a credible interlocutor.⁷⁹ As explained by Professor Shibley Telhami in *The Middle East Journal*, “we in the West, in the United States, cannot wage that war of ideas. For one thing, we would not be trusted. I do not think that the US policy right now can be oriented at ‘winning hearts and minds’ of the Middle East in the short term. That is not going to happen. The US has a legacy of decades that is based in part on our policy and in

part on impression; it is not going to be able to change the paradigm overnight simply by a charm campaign... People are not going to trust the message if they don't trust the messenger" (Telhami 2002, 9).

Actions, not words, therefore, would be necessary to politically engage Al Qaeda's potential adherents and supporters. US actions, however, repeatedly contradicted positive-sounding US words, and the United States was unwilling to take substantive action on salient issues from the perspective of Al Qaeda's supporters and adherents, such as the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The United States further undermined its own credibility, which prevented it from meaningfully engaging Al Qaeda politically.

Al Qaeda was defined as a national security threat. The US government rationally applied all of the hard power resources it could muster to pursue the national interest, which the Administration defined as maximizing its power vis a vis Al Qaeda. Though the caveat of ideology was acknowledged, it was given a distinctly secondary emphasis.

Part II

Part II, expanding US military action on a global scale under the guise of combating Al Qaeda, effectively began when the Taliban's spring 2002 offensive was kept in check and Afghanistan's military and political situation began to stabilize. It continues into the present. Less than a year after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Administration turned to other objectives, most notably preparing and executing the US invasion of Iraq. Though not over, as of 2007, the range of likely outcomes appears far less positive than the Administration initially predicted five years earlier.

Starting in the summer of 2002, a post 9/11 hyper-empowered President Bush began making the argument that Saddam Hussein was a clear and present danger. President Bush asserted that Saddam maintained viable links to Al Qaeda. The President, though never drawing a direct connection, repeatedly alluded to Saddam in the context of 9/11. This persuasion via innuendo proved so effective that, during the summer and fall of 2002, roughly 20-25% of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein had been directly involved in 9/11. About 48% thought that even if he was not involved, Saddam Hussein still retained strong links to Al Qaeda.⁸⁰

Even more threatening, President Bush claimed Saddam Hussein was seeking weapons of mass destruction. President Bush raised the specter not just of being attacked outright by Iraq, but of the possibility of Saddam Hussein not only permitting Al Qaeda to operate under his purview, but of Saddam Hussein colluding with Al Qaeda and providing them weapons of mass destruction.⁸¹ No firm, presentable evidence existed to conclusively prove otherwise, and President Bush's concerns, particularly when articulated by Colin Powell before the world at the United Nations, gained traction in a public psyche still traumatized by 9/11, which had occurred less than one year prior.⁸²

When the United States could not obtain backing from the United Nations for its actions, the Bush administration cast the institution aside and proceeded unilaterally with a "coalition of the willing," a collection of states willing to follow the US lead in Iraq in spite of a lack of UN approval.⁸³ The US invasion of Iraq commenced in March 2003 drawing primarily upon US active duty and reserve US forces not engaged in Afghanistan. The US brought overwhelming conventional force to bear against weaker

Iraqi forces. The country was effectively taken within one month, and US casualties totaled a mere 137 losses in defeating the 400,000 strong Iraqi armed forces.⁸⁴

Part II was counterproductive in organizationally combating Al Qaeda. Political and organizational dynamics have been mutually reinforcing to US detriment. The impact has been both domestic and international.

Al Qaeda has organizationally expanded as a result of the US war in Iraq. As the September 11th commission has articulated, there were no substantive ties between Iraq and Al Qaeda prior to September 11th, and Al Qaeda did not have a discernable presence inside Iraq prior to the 2003 US invasion (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). Now, however, Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia not only exists, it is the most active Al Qaeda franchise, and its violence has significantly shaped the political tenor of the fighting.

The US invasion of Iraq has spurred recruiting. The US invasion of another Muslim country, and this one in the heart of the Middle East, followed by US backing of a Shia -dominated regime effectively rallies actual and potential Sunni jihadists. Al Qaeda is now numerically stronger.⁸⁵

Poor US post-invasion political and military execution has created an Al Qaeda haven. Force levels were insufficient to either occupy the country or quell a post-invasion insurgency.⁸⁶ Poor political planning for the invasion's aftermath and inadequate military capability employed in conventional means against unconventional foes has resulted in an insurgency that has grown stronger every year and an Iraqi national government that is largely dysfunctional.⁸⁷ The necessary ingredients for continued fighting – armaments, political conflict, and a weak state – are present in such quantity that the current fighting

can be sustained indefinitely. The sanctuary/growth engine that Al Qaeda lost in the US invasion Afghanistan has been partially regained.⁸⁸

As a result, the United States is now less able to confront Al Qaeda elsewhere, or deal with non-Al Qaeda related threats. The US armed forces are wholly occupied and straining to maintain the pace of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 2007. Now, US forces are bogged down, and reserve strength for other action – whether to respond to new threats or to reinforce threatened gains – is slim to non-existent.⁸⁹ Six years into the struggle against Al Qaeda, only now is serious talk being given to expanding the US armed forces.⁹⁰

The United States, which had the world's sympathy following 9/11, has become increasingly politically isolated internationally, at least in relation to its Iraq policies.⁹¹ Actions to date have significantly weakened US credibility and moral validity.⁹² The United States has handicapped itself.

Terrorism is a political contest, and thus it inherently has a values-based political dimension. As noted in chapter nine, the US invasion of Iraq violated not only the terrorists' political values and agenda, but the generally accepted political norms and values of the general populations in both developed and developing states, particularly Muslim ones, which is the base from which Al Qaeda draws its support. Because Al Qaeda cast itself as defending against this broadly unpopular US action – which was executed without UN backing and appeared both wanton and unjust in the eyes of much of the world, particularly the developing and Muslim worlds – its popularity rose, which is the key to increased operational and logistical assistance from the general populace. The United States' hard power approach emphasizing objective measures of power

ignores the fact that the terrorists, Al Qaeda, gain support through towing the line to a political agenda and contrasting it to their opponents' actions, the US invasion of Iraq.

In a terrorism struggle, political values can have hard power implications. Al Qaeda's political ideology has gained increased validation among potential supporters and adherents. As a result, as will be explained in the following chapters, Al Qaeda's position has improved in power-based terms of organizational capacity, manning, territory, and finances.

Conversely, the US position is weaker. First, the term "terrorism" has been diluted. By blending Saddam Hussein with Usama bin Laden, two very different people who are viewed very differently throughout the world, the term's integrity has depreciated. It is now linked to an unpopular war launched without UN backing. Second, the damaged US standing with both the world's Muslim publics, upon whom Al Qaeda depends, and US-allied authoritarian Muslim states, whose range of action is reduced by pro-Al Qaeda public opinion reduces overall US efficacy against Al Qaeda (Al Qurashi and Abu Ubayd 2003).⁹³ Third, the US public is becoming increasingly divided as the banner of counterterrorism is increasingly being waived in locations other than directly against Al Qaeda and its purported safe-havens in Pakistan. This domestic political fragmentation and turmoil limits the freedom of action of the US government.

Current International Relations and US Foreign Policy:

As of fall 2007, the greater US war effort has reached a temporary strategic stability. The underlying trends in Afghanistan, Iraq, and with respect to Iran, however, do not favor the United States. Unfortunately, the United States does not have the power to permanently alter the current dynamics.

In response, the United States is employing a new strategic framework to deal with the world that has emerged as a result of post 9/11 US actions. Rather than defensively focus on securing gains and shoring up weaker positions, the Administration is embarking upon a new offensive approach to attack perceived centers of gravity threatening existing US initiatives. This effort, however, is not only premised upon questionable assumptions and arguable priorities, but it also muddies the fight against Al Qaeda, the ultimate purpose, by making it a function of other intermediary objectives.

Contemporary International Realities

Afghanistan

The US situation in Afghanistan is tenuous at best. Mixed progress has been made on governance, economics, and security. The overall outcome is still uncertain.

There are some positive developments. A president and a legislature have been democratically elected.⁹⁴ Sufficient foreign aid continues to sustain the nascent central government as the economy continues to expand significantly since the arrival of US forces and at double digit rates since 2005.⁹⁵ And, the army and police forces continue to strengthen, albeit not as quickly as the US and its allies would like.⁹⁶

Countervailing factors exist, however. The result is that the accomplishments to date mask deeper, dominant problems. The Afghani government is in a difficult political position. Immediately after the Taliban's fall, the government claimed victory; now, however, it must deliver services to meet people's rising expectations, needs, and wants. The problem is that government's capacity to do this is virtually nonexistent.⁹⁷

Though the economy continues to grow, the government still lacks a significant revenue collection enterprise. It is utterly dependent upon unreliable foreign aid

donations.⁹⁸ At the same time, soaring opium production, which some estimates place at more than 50% of the economy, denies it revenue.⁹⁹

Though the army and police forces are growing, the overall security situation is worsening. In summer 2007, Human Rights Watch announced there were 136 suicide attacks intended to terrorize the civilian population, a six-fold increase from 2005.¹⁰⁰ Civilian casualties have also reached unprecedented levels.¹⁰¹ The Taliban, which the 2001 US invasion swept away, now controls up to four times as much territory as it did in 2005. With a tripling of attacks on the national government and its international backers, the Taliban effectively contests the Afghan national government for sovereignty in the south and east of the country.¹⁰²

At the same time, Iran, Afghanistan's most powerful regional neighbor, is increasing its influence over Afghanistan's future.¹⁰³ A historic host to millions of Afghan refugees during the Cold War and Afghanistan's civil war era, Iran still supports roughly one million Afghan refugees as of 2006.¹⁰⁴ They play an important bilateral political role due to the possibility of their forced return and Afghanistan's inability to absorb them, a socially significant domestic role because of Afghanistan's extended family network, and a vital international economic role via remittances. Iran is also the primary actor for Afghanistan's reconstruction, particularly on the politically sensitive topics of electricity and water, and it has done much to develop Afghanistan's western provinces.¹⁰⁵

The burgeoning US-Iran struggle, however, makes Afghanistan a pawn in the fight. Iran will seek to avoid a pliant American client state in Afghanistan to avoid US

geographic encirclement. In practical terms, Iran has three options to leverage Afghanistan against the United States

Iran can seek to influence internal Afghan politics. It can try to co-opt the United Front, the last vestiges of the Northern Alliance, now the anti-Karzai parliamentary bloc whom Iran had militarily backed versus the Taliban prior to 2001.¹⁰⁶ Iran can also seek to draw the Pashtuns writ large, and the Taliban in particular, into the political process.¹⁰⁷ The closer the Taliban comes to achieving legitimacy, the more potent Al Qaeda becomes as a behind-the-scenes actor. As Iran has noted, it played a very constructive role when the US entered Afghanistan by providing military and refugee assistance, and it eased the US political entry by not opposing US efforts.¹⁰⁸ Though it can not only prevent future progress and undo existing progress, it would also be willing to be more helpful in resolving Afghanistan's current crises with proper incentive from the United States.¹⁰⁹

Iran can intensify the insurgency as in Iraq. A combination of cultural connections with experience from the Afghan jihad gives Iran a thorough knowledge of Afghan society. When combined with a long, porous border and a low US and international troop presence relative to Afghanistan's size and population, Iran can covertly intervene in the fighting at US expense. To date Iran has already begun aiding the Taliban by providing small arms and advanced improvised explosive device technologies that can defeat US armor and have caused so many US military casualties in Iraq. That assistance appears to be increasing as tensions with the United States rise.¹¹⁰

Finally, Iran can illicitly assist Pakistan's President Musharraf, and vice versa. Afghanistan's two chief neighbors are uncomfortably under pressure by and dependent upon the United States. They are better able to resist US pressure when working together

– either cooperatively as a united front or in a more conflictive manner by attempting to divert US attention to each other. Pakistan and Iran have, in fact, renewed previously lapsed ties post 9/11, and Musharraf and Ahmadinejad have engaged in summitry.¹¹¹

Iraq

The US situation in Iraq is also tenuous at best. Mixed progress has been made on governance, economics, and security, but as with Afghanistan, the future is uncertain.

As in Afghanistan, a national government has been democratically elected, and it has proven durable enough to survive personnel changes.¹¹² While Iraq has been unable to finance its own reconstruction via oil sales as predicted prior to the war by then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, substantial US foreign aid with some backing from the world community to bolster domestic revenue is sustaining the nascent central government. And, the Iraqi national army and police forces continue to grow in number, though their quality is high debatable.¹¹³

Despite this progress, there are many deeper, unresolved issues that could and are undoing this progress. The national government has failed to extend its writ over the whole country, and sectarian feuding has deprived it of widespread legitimacy, a fact recognized in the September 2007 US Senate resolution endorsing a strategy of ethnic partition.¹¹⁴ Partisan feuding, particularly within the Shiite confession, has robbed the national government of stability and effectively dead-locked it.¹¹⁵ The government's ability to deliver services is minimal, and popular support for its US backers, who guarantee the national government's survival, has run counter to its survival since 2004.¹¹⁶

Despite sitting atop massive oil reserves, Iraq's economy is sputtering. The oil infrastructure, which was supposed to pay for Iraq's reconstruction, is not only producing insufficiently to cover expenses, but production is also declining due to post-invasion wartime violence and infrastructure damage.¹¹⁷ At the same time, extensive capital, both monetary and human, is becoming internally displaced and/or fleeing and taking refuge inside Iraq's more peaceful neighbors.¹¹⁸

Though the army and police are growing, the overall security situation is worsening. Violence against US forces and the Iraqi government – in both volume and complexity - has grown steadily per annum.¹¹⁹ A de facto civil war has emerged, and civilian casualties – both in volume and rate - by far outpaces the military.¹²⁰ Despite a brief lull as the US troop surge began to take effect in spring 2007, the violence has effectively returned unabated with trend lines that do not favor US and Iraqi government forces.¹²¹

Iran and the Greater Middle East

The 2003 US invasion of Iraq fundamentally altered the strategic balance in the Persian Gulf, the heart of the Middle East, which is the regional heart of Al Qaeda's support. The most profound unintended consequence has been Iran's stark military and political empowerment. The faltering US regional position, which is tied to the failing US war in Iraq that limits US military options, means the United States cannot dominate the region and impose a new order.

In the wake of the 1991 Gulf War, the United States was the preeminent military and political power in the region. The Dual Containment Doctrine, wherein the United States directly contained both Iraq and Iran on a military, and to a lesser extent, political

level perpetuated the US role, presence, and position in the region. Intended as a temporary fix, it devolved into a long running policy that slowly unraveled during the latter 1990s (Cause 1994).

Following the US invasion of Afghanistan, which was shortly followed by the US invasion of Iraq, Iranian power, influence, and standing vis a vis the United States was at its nadir. The United States was politically empowered by 9/11. The US military was successfully engaged on Iran's eastern and western borders while the US navy boasted a powerful armada in the Gulf, thus encircling Tehran with combat-ready US forces. And, Iran's historical ties to groups that could be characterized as terrorists, such as Hezbollah, put it at a political, and potentially strategic, disadvantage in the post 9/11 era, especially given its publicly acknowledged holding of senior Al Qaeda leaders.¹²² When these facts are viewed through the negative light of US-Iranian relations since the 1979 revolution, Iran was in a potentially precarious position.

Iran responded by reaching out. First, Iran explicitly offered immediate assistance to the United States in its war effort by allowing over-flights by US planes into Afghanistan, offering search and rescue services for US pilots, and aiding refugees. Politically, Iran participated in regional discussions about Afghanistan in a manner constructive to US interests.¹²³ Beyond not obstructing US war efforts, Iran also purportedly offered the United States a "Grand Bargain" to resolve outstanding bilateral issues and map a new future.¹²⁴

The United States did not, however, exploit this opportunity. Rather, the United States publicly labeled Iran a member of the "Axis of Evil" and reduced Iran's incentive

to amicably engage.¹²⁵ Only as of 2007 have formal, direct, bilateral negotiations been initiated, and, permeated with an adversarial tone, they have accomplished little.¹²⁶

As of summer 2007, the situation is dramatically different. Iran's strategic position has improved dramatically. Iran is now more defiant.

The US invasion of Iraq destroyed the only Arab force able to contain Iran. The Saudis, whose military is 75,000 strong, is a distant second to Iran's military in excess of 400,000 personnel, even when accounting for the Saudi's superior, modern US technology. Simply stated, US forces are now stretched too thin for any significant unilateral ground action, a critical military arbiter.¹²⁷

Politically, Iran, acting via non-state proxies, can now needle US interests in Lebanon via Hezbollah and in Palestine via Hamas. Militarily, US forces are exposed in Iraq and Afghanistan. These troops, who are fully engaged in situations considered to be on the brink, are stretched too thin to turn their efforts toward Iran (Hersh 2007).

Problematically, US strategic depth is lessening. Allies are retiring from Iraq.¹²⁸ Those shifting to Afghanistan are having their capabilities consumed by that fight against a resurgent Taliban, and many allies forces there have restrictions that bar their troops from engaging in combat.¹²⁹ From the US view, allied strategic reserves are declining.

It appears that time is on Iran's side. If Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons, it has gained several more years of research from when President Bush first labeled Iran a charter member of the Axis of Evil. Further delay, even if under sanctions, only enables the possibility of further progress. Given that Iran's conventional inferiority to US forces is not disputed, a nuclear capability is the one possible ultimate guarantor of regime survival in a US-Iran struggle. If Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons, then Iran has

forced the United States to expend ever increasing amounts of political capital on a non-existent threat, thereby increasing Iran's relative advantage in any future dispute.

Finally, Iran's sway over its neighbors is higher than it was prior to the US invasion of Iraq. In Iraq, a Shiite-dominated state with close ties to Iran has risen to power.¹³⁰ In Afghanistan, as noted earlier, massive reconstruction contracts yielding economic and political influence have been signed while Iran also retains the ability to manipulate the insurgency.

Iranian political leadership statements, a barometer of perceived relative power, have gone from conciliatory following 9/11 to confrontational as of 2007. Since the start of the Iraqi insurgency, Iranian President Amadinejad has publicly called for Israel's destruction.¹³¹ He has also made repeated statements expressing Iran's right to pursue nuclear power regardless of the will of the US-led international community.¹³² In early March 2007, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who rarely makes public pronouncements, spoke on Iranian state television and said that the "realities in the region show that the arrogant front, headed by the US and its allies, will be the principal loser in the region" (Hersh 2007).

Contemporary US Foreign Policy

With faltering wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the November 2008 national election in the background, the combined pressure of the November 2006 Democratic takeover of Congress and the December 2006 Iraq Study Group's report release established common terms for all sides in the Iraq debate and is forcing President Bush to review his Iraq policy.¹³³ The United States is now faced with the task of dealing with the

repercussions of the US invasion of Iraq, which the Bush administration touts as the centerpiece of US efforts against Al Qaeda, while still combating Al Qaeda elsewhere.¹³⁴

In order to save the US effort in Iraq, US effort has moved to countering Iran. The Bush administration maintains Iran is aiding insurgents against the US-backed Iraqi national government, whose failure, according to President Bush, will give Al Qaeda a regional base from which to attack the United States.¹³⁵ Secondly, but not dismissively, President Bush accuses Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons and claims Iran might give these weapons to terrorists, with whom the United States accuses Iran of having ties, as well as being menacing to other regional US interests – most notably Israeli security, and a stable US oil supply.

The Administration perceives Iran as more powerful than the non-state actors it is engaging. This root of the problem has therefore now become the US regional foreign policy issue prism. The United States has subsequently adjusted its Middle East priorities and implemented them via a series of four understandings with the Israelis and the Saudis, the two chief US regional allies who also see an Iranian threat (Hersh 2007).¹³⁷

First, the United States wishes to ensure Israeli security, which also creates a favorable US balance of power as Israel is a key US ally and occasional regional proxy. The Saudis and other US-allied Sunni states, such as Jordan, share Israel's concern about Iran. The political and military fallout from an attack upon Israel would wreak regional havoc. Israeli security is thus a necessary precursor to future regional stability.

Second, in response to Arab concerns, the United States will make the Israeli-Palestinian issue a focus.¹³⁸ Israel's ceding of Gaza effectively killed President Bush's "Road Map."¹³⁹ With no diplomatic headway since HAMAS's election, intra-Palestinian

violence continues.¹⁴⁰ A respected Arab interlocutor is required. The Saudis have vowed to urge the Palestinians to work together and in earnest with Israel.¹⁴¹

Directly, achieving an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement will likely increase US leverage in the region. A peace agreement will decrease the political space that Iran could exploit, for the Palestinians, particularly HAMAS, will not be in desperate need of third country backing as they struggle with a US-backed Israeli goliath.¹⁴² Also, increased peace and stability inside Israel will likely improve Israel's range of political maneuver, both domestically and internationally – a factor that could be exploited to US benefit.

Indirectly, improving the Palestinian's plight is to US political benefit. The United States is, at a minimum, largely held responsible in the eyes of the much of the rest of the world, particularly amongst Muslims, for permitting the beleaguered plight of the Palestinians to endure. Improving that situation with an enduring peace ending indefinite regional hostilities will be to US political benefit because, in the converse of being held indirectly responsible for Palestinian suffering, the United States will very likely be indirectly credited with aiding the Palestinians. The US political position, and that of its allies, will likely improve.¹⁴³ To this end, as of fall 2007, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice is laying the groundwork for a major Israeli-Palestinian conference.¹⁴⁴

Third, the United States and its allies will work against Shiite ascendance in the Middle East. Virtually all of the Sunni regimes upon whom the United States depends have Shiite minorities. In the Administration's view, any Shiite gains are seen as beneficial to Iran. Empowering Sunni regimes against their Shia minorities makes them more internally unified, and thus better able to counter Iran (Hersh 2007).

Fourth, the Saudis, acting as a US proxy, will work to weaken Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime, which is most effectively done by engaging his political opposition. The Syrians are accused of being a major conduit of fighters, money, and weapons for the Iraqi insurgency, which also threatens the Saudis.¹⁴⁵ The Syrians are also accused of being a conduit for Hezbollah, thereby strengthening a de facto alliance with their Iranian backers.¹⁴⁶ And, the Syrians are still at odds with Israel over the Golan Heights.¹⁴⁷ By pressuring Syria, movement on one or more of these fronts might be possible.

Premised upon this framework, the Bush administration has subsequently ratcheted up the tension between the United States and Iran throughout 2007. It has done so politically and militarily. The United States is now positioned for a military strike.

On January 10, 2007, President Bush in a televised speech stated that Iran and Syria were "allowing terrorists and insurgents to use their territory to move in and out of Iraq. Iran is providing material support for attacks on American troops. We will disrupt the attacks on our forces. We'll interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria. And we will seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq" (Hersh 2007, 54). The clear implication was that US difficulties in Iraq were due to Iranian malfeasance.

Evidence bolstering the Bush administration's position then became public. A series of articles in the Washington Post, the New York Times, and the Los Angeles Times flowed in the subsequent weeks about illicit Iranian activities. On February 11, 2007, a press conference in Baghdad showed reporters sophisticated weaponry that the US government claimed was taken from Iranian operatives.¹⁴⁸

On January 14, 2007, Vice President Cheney on Fox News warned of “a nuclear-armed Iran, astride the world’s supply of oil, able to affect adversely the global economy, prepared to use terrorist organizations and/or their nuclear weapons to threaten their neighbors and others around the world” (Hersh 2007, 54). In an attempt to isolate Iran, Vice President Cheney added that “if you go and talk with the Gulf states or if you talk with the Saudis or if you talk with the Israelis or the Jordanians, the entire region is worried...The threat Iran represents is growing.”¹⁴⁹

The administration has not stood idly by while articulating the Iranian threat. Actual military action has been taken. Potential military action has been readied.

Starting in August 2006, the US military began detaining and interrogating hundreds of Iranians in Iraq. “‘The word went out last August for the military to snatch as many Iranians in Iraq as they can,’ a former senior intelligence official said. ‘We’re working these guys and getting information from them. The White House goal is to build a case that the Iranians have been fomenting the insurgency and they’ve been doing it all along – that Iran is, in fact, supporting the killing of Americans’” (Hersh 2007, 56).

During a January 2007 appearance before the Senate Foreign Affairs committee, Democratic Chairman Senator Joseph Biden pointedly asked Secretary of State Rice about US plans and intentions for pursuing Iranian operatives across the border into Iran from Iraq. The Secretary replied that “obviously, the President isn’t going to rule anything out to protect our troops, but the plan is to take down these networks in Iraq. I do think that everyone will understand – that the American people and I assume the Congress expect the President to do what is necessary to protect our forces” (Hersh 2007,

57). This vague response allows for the possibility about which Senator Biden was concerned.¹⁵⁰

Also in winter 2007, a second aircraft carrier strike group was dispatched to the Persian Gulf. Vice President Cheney publicly emphasized that this should not be misconstrued as being related to Iraq and that it was intended as a warning to Iran. The baseline naval force was indefinitely increased from one carrier strike group to two. Since summer 2007, when two more strike groups were dispatched to relieve those on station, the Eisenhower and the Stennis, three to four carrier strike groups have been within attack range of Iran at one time. With their capabilities, virtually all of Iran would be at risk to US forces (Hersh 2007).¹⁵¹

Emerging US Strategy to Combat Al Qaeda

These regional priorities address immediate problems affecting US interests and those of its key regional allies. If successful, a measure of regional stability conducive to US interests may be achieved. The ultimate result, however, has been to make combating Al Qaeda a function of competing US interests.¹⁵²

The US War in Iraq

As of fall 2007, the US political fate is hitched to Iraq's Shia leaders. Iraq is now an electoral democracy, and Iraqi Shiites form roughly half to two thirds of the population.¹⁵³ It is highly unlikely that the Shiites would peacefully surrender power in any significant way to a Sunni minority after decades of Sunni repression.¹⁵⁴ Even if the faces change, the presence and prominence of Iraqi Shiite leadership will not.

Unfortunately, this US-dependent national government's Shia leadership upon whom the US depends is becoming increasingly isolated and weakened. This leadership,

and by extension the national government, despite its best efforts, has not been able to broaden its base of appeal significantly within the Sunni and Kurdish communities. The national government Shiite leadership exists in an ever-shrinking space between conflicting interests.¹⁵⁵

From the top down, the Iraqi national government's Shiite leadership is pressured by the United States to execute a US vision of Iraq. The United States wants to see a federal-style Iraq where the three main religio-ethnic confessions share power in a unified, albeit federated, national government. The US has been using its political, economic, and military aid to leverage the Iraqi national government.¹⁵⁶

It has not been smooth sailing for the Administration thus far. The Iraqis have largely failed to meet the political benchmarks the US troop surge was supposed to enable. At the same time, US public opinion, as reflected in the election of a democratic-controlled congress that largely campaigned on opposing the Administration's war strategy, rose sharply against President Bush. Nonetheless, the willingness of the Administration to bypass the failure of Iraq's government to meet previously identified benchmarks means that, at least through Bush's second term, the United States will continue to its efforts to implement this vision.¹⁵⁷

From the bottom up, the national government's Shiite leadership is pressured not just by the Sunni militia leaders who seek to either overthrow it or force substantial political change, but also by Shiite militia leaders, who are also political leaders. They are seeking to politically capture the national government to ensure national dominance at the expense of Sunnis and Kurds. Sunni resistance and de facto Kurdish independence makes the national government's Shiite leadership especially vulnerable to this pressure.¹⁵⁸

The Shia and American visions for Iraq are at odds. The Shiite leadership seeks to dominate the country to the exclusion of other religio-ethnic groups. From the perspective of the United States, these Shiite militia leaders are at best an unwitting extension of Iranian influence. At worst, they act at Iran's behest. From the US view, they cannot be allowed to dominate Iraq.¹⁵⁹

Moqtada al Sadr personifies this conundrum. He pressures the Iraqi national government to strongly pursue sectarian interests. He and the United States have militarily clashed. At the same time, he is effectively sustaining the Iraqi national government, a vehicle for national dominance that the Shiite leaders are trying to capture for national political success, which makes the US simultaneously dependent upon him.

The Iraqi national government is caught in the middle. The national government's Shiite leaders need US backing to remain in power. At the same time, the national government Shiite leadership is dependent upon Shiite militia leaders for its survival, and so the leadership is also beholden to its brethren. The US pressure to crack down on Shiite militia leaders seeking to effect political changes counter to US interests is an untenable position for the national government that forces it to choose sides in a neighborhood that the US does not control.

These internal Iraqi tensions play out in the realm of US-Iranian relations. When the US squeezes Iran, Iran squeezes the Shia militias, who can directly attack US troops and indirectly pose stumbling blocks in the political process of the Shiite-dominated, US-backed national government upon which the United States depends. The national government Shiite leadership, when under US pressure to more firmly establish central government sovereignty by cracking down on all militias, to include Shiite ones, is then

put in an untenable position. Inside Iraq, US efforts to counter Iran, and their perceived Arab Shiite proxies by extension, is counterproductive to the effort's overall success.

There is an internal contradiction in US policy inside Iraq relative to desired US goals. A continued US presence supporting the Iraqi national government will permit the existing situation to continue. Pressing for change toward US goals, however, only destabilizes the Iraqi national government, and may even unravel it completely.

This Iraq policy directly impacts US efforts vis-à-vis Al Qaeda both politically and militarily. At best, the United States can hope to have its efforts only partially impaired.

The fighting now in Iraq will keep the jihadists busy in Iraq for as long as the US is there. Invading Iraq to "fight them there so that we don't have to fight them here" made no sense when the war started because Iraq had no real connection to Al Qaeda.¹⁶⁰ The statement does, however, have some relevance now owing to US actions as the US presence in Iraq does present a target-rich environment upon which jihadists can focus.

Some day, though, the US combat presence will end. If the US-backed Iraqi national government fails and the country descends into chaos, Al Qaeda will benefit. It will do so both politically and organizationally.

Politically, Al Qaeda will be empowered. By virtue of being the last one on the field of battle, Al Qaeda will claim and receive credit for having defeated the leader of the international system in the eyes of its potential supporters and adherents. Its sacrifices will have been validated. Both the righteousness and the functionality of its philosophy will be empowered.

Organizationally, with such a stunning victory to their credit, Al Qaeda's recruitment efforts will very likely improve. In addition, Al Qaeda will gain some sanctuary. A regional proxy war will likely result in Iraq should the US-backed national government fail. The Saudis and Iraq's Sunni neighbors will back Iraq's Sunni confession.¹⁶¹ Besieged Sunnis are likely to embrace Al Qaeda's firepower against the Shiites, the enemy of their enemy, as they do now. The Iranians will very likely continue to back the Shiites. The Kurds will likely either be left by the way side or invaded by Turkey and/or harassed from all sides in an effort to tamp down stirrings of Kurdish independence that might rile up restive Kurdish populations amongst Iraq's neighbors, particularly Turkey and Iran. Should such a situation materialize, the ensuing chaos will provide a de facto stateless piece of territory that will be awash in weapons and unduplicated combat training and preparation.

If the US-backed Iraqi national government succeeds, Al Qaeda will still benefit. It will do so both politically and organizationally. It will do so, however, to a lesser degree.

Politically, the bar for the United States in jihadist eyes, as well as the eyes of Muslim publics around the world is very high. To receive credit for its efforts and claim victory, the United States will have to create a capable government in a pacified country and completely withdraw its forces. Al Qaeda will claim credit for anything short of this. In the eyes of its potential and actual supporters and adherents, Al Qaeda will be empowered.

As of summer 2007, US government predictions are trending towards ensuring Al Qaeda will be politically strengthened.¹⁶² Senior US military officers are stating that

while US forces may be able to draw down, US troops will be necessary for a long time to ensure the viability of the national government. President Bush has publicly stated an acceptable outcome is manageable violence as opposed to peace.¹⁶³

Partial US defeat will mean Al Qaeda will gain some sanctuary, a key organizational benefit. The Iraqi national government will not have true sovereignty over its territory. Continued inter-confessional war will continue to provide Al Qaeda a sectarian niche as it has done thus far so long as it calibrates its activities to the interests and sensitivities of its besieged Sunni hosts. Al Qaeda will gain training and experience in the process.

This sanctuary will not be as stable, however, as in a true failed-state scenario. Al Qaeda is not popular in Iraq.¹⁶⁴ Iraq's Sunnis embrace Al Qaeda because they fight its common enemies – the US and Shia forces. To the extent that inter-communal peace develops and the US presence draws down, Al Qaeda's position will progressively weaken.

The changing US approach to pacifying the Sunni-dominated areas starting in spring/summer 2007 raises the possibility of an alternative course of events. As exemplified in Anbar Province, US forces are now politically allying with Sunni tribal elders and insurgent commanders. These arrangements include the United States providing these non-governmental paramilitary forces arms and materiel for use against Al Qaeda as well as powers of arrest.¹⁶⁵

This approach has yielded gains. Politically, Al Qaeda's room for maneuver within its natural constituency has been significantly lessened.¹⁶⁶ Organizationally, the

US alliance with Al Qaeda's former allies have enabled US forces to damage the organization and reduce US casualties as well as the overall level of violence.¹⁶⁷

This approach, which is generally accepted to have occurred due to localized changes in the balance of power in response to the 2007 US troop increase, is plagued with contradictions, however. In direct contrast to the US approach in Afghanistan, where US efforts were directed toward consolidating the capacity for violence under governmental authority through demobilization and disarmament programs for all non-governmental entities, US forces in Iraq are actively creating multiple rival power centers in Iraqi society. In the short run, this substitutes the stability of US-blessed warlords for the writ of the Iraqi national government, which US forces are purportedly defending and seeking to expand.¹⁶⁸ In the longer run, US forces are only making a future national reconciliation, and the potential violence of any post-US presence Iraqi civil war, immeasurably harder while also threatening the Shiites, and thus, indirectly, Iran.¹⁶⁹

Sectarian strife is deepening. Compromise and negotiation at the national political level on issues key to the country's fate, such as the distribution of oil revenue and internal provincial boundaries, are not making significant substantive headway.¹⁷⁰ While an eventual US drawdown is inevitable, US troops will likely not leave in their entirety, and, as of June 2007, a post-occupation force to support the national government is increasingly being discussed.¹⁷¹ A continued US presence will only perpetuate the conflictive status quo.

From the US perspective, no matter whether the Iraq endeavor succeeds or fails, the Al Qaeda problem will likely become worse. The fight in Iraq is akin to drawing moths to the flame. The next phase in Iraq, no matter what form it takes, will dim that

flame of attraction all the while the moths are becoming more numerous. The departure of non-Iraqi Al Qaeda jihadists to Afghanistan and other locales to combat US forces and strike US interests, both at home and abroad, is highly likely. Prolonging the US engagement in Iraq, however, will very likely only increase the number of moths.

Lebanon and Jihadists

There has also been an increase in US activity in Lebanon to counter perceived Shiite ascendance, which the Bush administration equates to Iranian power and influence. The United States, and the Saudis at US behest, have leant significant political and financial support to Sunni Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora in his political struggle with Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah (Hersh 2007). “American, European, and Arab officials (stated) that the Siniora government and its allies had allowed some aid to end up in the hands of emerging Sunni radical groups in northern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, and around Palestinian refugee camps in the south. These Groups, though small, are seen as a buffer to Hezbollah; at the same time, their ideological ties are with Al Qaeda” (Hersh 2007, 59).

This situation is akin to when the United States, using Saudi Arabia as a proxy, yoked the strength of Sunni jihadists to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. The difference now is that the United States-Saudi alliance is attempting to manipulate Al Qaeda-style jihadists against Iran, a Middle Eastern Muslim, albeit Persian, country. This situation is ripe for negative outcomes.

As evidenced by the formation of Al Qaeda after the Soviet defeat, there is no guarantee that this movement can be controlled once it is stoked. These jihadists are not agents of a foreign government. Though accepting help from secular regimes, they are

rejectionists of the modern nation-state system. They have their own goals, objectives, and desires. Once made capable and self sufficient, state leverage over them decreases. The summer/fall 2007 fighting in Beirut at the Nahr al Bared Palestinian refugee camp against Fatah Al Islam exemplifies this (Hersh 2007, 59).

At best, the United States will have manufactured more of the very radical Sunni jihadists who comprise Al Qaeda. They will execute the goals that the US-Saudi alliance intends for them. And, they will effectively be destroyed and/or sufficiently weakened in the process.

At worst, the United States will have increased the pool of potential enemy recruits. They will not execute the goals that the United States intends for them. And, they will turn on their regional benefactors once becoming self sufficient.

From the US perspective, there are no enduring good outcomes. In the short term, the United States will be playing one of its enemies against another so that US aims are achieved at their expense.¹⁷² In the long term, however, even if successful, the United States will have generated more enemy capability it will have to deal with eventually. Unfortunately, the non-state actor enemy the US is stoking is harder to address than a state-centric opponent.

This strategy is based upon a highly questionable premise. At root in this approach is the contention that Sunni jihadists will see their fellow Muslims, albeit Shiites, as the bigger enemy instead of United States and its allies. This is not a safe bet.

The 2005 letter from Ayman al Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's chief ideologue and one of the leading ideologues of the greater jihadi movement, to Abu Musab al Zarqawi explicitly directed Al Qaeda in Iraq not to attack Shiites. While Zawahiri allowed for the

possibility of acting differently after gaining victory against the United States, he noted that it was politically and strategically improper to do so before the greater common enemy had been defeated.¹⁷³

The implicit Bush administration calculus is that all Shiites in general, and Hezbollah in particular, are firmly under the sway of Iran.¹⁷⁴ This, however, is neither a comprehensive and accurate characterization of Hezbollah, nor a safe assessment of how it will act. Within Lebanon, Nasrallah is now the nominal leader of the largely sectarian political protests against the Siniora government. While acknowledging its violent capabilities, Hezbollah is viewed by most Lebanese as “a political force of some note, with a role to play inside Lebanon” (Hersh 2007, 64).

A domestic Arab Lebanese political entity with stature, it is not at all a given that Hezbollah, with its own agenda, would blindly follow and sacrifice itself for Persia and its interests. At one point when Hezbollah was weaker and overly dependent upon foreign aid, it may have been at the mercy and done the bidding of Iran, perhaps even if counter to its own short term interests. This situation, however, no longer is the case.¹⁷⁵

Syria and Sunni Jihadists

The issue of Syria connects to Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran. Relative to Iraq, the Bush administration views Syria as serving at least as a passive, if not an active, abettor of the Iraqi insurgency.¹⁷⁶ Relative to Lebanon, the Bush administration views Syria as a key backer of Hezbollah, which the Bush administration views as both a force in Lebanon as well as an Iranian terrorist outreach arm.¹⁷⁷ The Administration also sees Syria as the link between Iran and Hezbollah.¹⁷⁸ Relative to Iran, the Bush administration views Syria as Iran’s main regional ally, who has the ability to pressure the United States in Iraq and

Lebanon.¹⁷⁹ Failed efforts to date to break Syria from its cooperation with Iran or significantly alter its policies via diplomatically engaging Syria, which the Bush administration has largely been unwilling to do, has left undermining the regime as the only option.

The main way to undermine such a minority dictatorship short of overtly overthrowing it through military force is to secretly assist its internal opposition. In the case of Syria, that means engaging the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. Despite the US and Muslim Brotherhood's common goal of deposing the Syrian regime, the Muslim Brotherhood's core ideological identity prevents the United States from engaging it directly, and so the Saudis are once again the interlocutor.

Again, this US approach flirts with the very Sunni jihadists it is trying to defeat. Even in the Syrian context where there is a secular component to the Syrian opposition, all of the same strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of the United States apply as in the case of Lebanon. And, there is no guarantee that the secular companion has or will maintain the upper hand and could substantively change the equation.

Conclusion

The fight against Al Qaeda has temporarily stabilized with Iraq and Afghanistan as the foci. Stability, however, does not equate to stalemate. Existing political, economic, and military trends favor Al Qaeda. The United States is likely to suffer strategic losses when the current tenuous stability exhausts itself.

The Administration is now expanding the fight to Iran to consolidate its current strategic gains. The United States is doing so by pressuring Shiites in Iraq, denying Iran political leverage in Palestine, and funneling jihadists against Iranian ally Syria and

perceived Iranian proxy Hezbollah. All the while, the United States is attempting to provide for Israel's security.

This tack, however, blurs the US strategic focus. It addresses Al Qaeda as a function of countering Iran, with whom Al Qaeda is not inherently bound. The US effort in Iraq may collapse, the US situation in Afghanistan may weaken, and jihadists under dubious US allied control will be empowered. Al Qaeda's political power will increase, as will its organizational depth.

While strategy indirectly guides the fight and either hinders or empowers tactical action, actually combating Al Qaeda to prevent it from killing innocents involves directly attacking it. Al Qaeda's organizational structure, finances, and political ideology must be addressed. The next chapters will address Al Qaeda's organizational dimension and US efforts to defeat it.

Chapter Six

Al Qaeda's Organizational Dimension: Herding Cats

“Hence it comes that
all armed Prophets
have been victorious,
and all unarmed Prophets
have been destroyed.”
...Nicolio Machiavelli¹⁸⁰

“The enemy, as the military
is fond of saying, is both
thinking and adaptable.”
...US Government Official¹⁸¹

The business end of terrorism is killing. To effect this on a sustained basis for political purposes requires a secure entity that can 1) plan, support, and execute missions, and 2) recruit, train, and support operatives. All the while, the group must communicate its political message while state authorities are trying to eradicate it.

Al Qaeda has this capacity because it has constantly adapted to its changing environment. Prior to 9/11, Al Qaeda's had a centralized command structure, which was suited for operating from a safe haven. Since 9/11, Al Qaeda has expanded and morphed into a more diffuse network.

This chapter will trace Al Qaeda's organizational and operational evolution from the cusp of 9/11 through fall 2007. It will do so noting Al Qaeda's operational environment, which US actions have substantially altered politically and in terms of security, with an eye to how this influences its structural and operational dynamics. Particular emphasis will be placed upon Al Qaeda's activity in Iraq.

Al Qaeda now leads an emboldened movement as much as it does an organization. The exact role and degree of control by Al Qaeda's primary node associated

with Usama bin Laden over both the organization and the global jihadi movement, however, is blurry. The outcome, while showing trends, is not clear.

Al Qaeda - Pre 9/11 Structure and Operations

Structure

Prior to 9/11, Al Qaeda was a robust organization nestled in its Afghan sanctuary that consisted of four main entities. They were vertically integrated in descending order by a formal chain of command led by Usama bin Laden (Hirschhorn and Gunaratna 2001). The center was able to project itself throughout the world by maintaining authority, power, and/or influence over subordinate elements.

First Main Entity

The first main entity, the heart of the organization, was a hierarchical command and control node located in Afghanistan that consisted of three layers:

At the top was Usama bin Laden himself as the overall emir of the entire organization. He did not have a deputy. He did, however, have informal advisors.

The next layer in the command and control hierarchy, was a consultative council consisting of very senior, experienced, and trusted members. Usama bin Laden appointed prominent personalities and trusted followers to ensure legitimacy and loyalty. Merit was relevant, but family, friendship, and nationality also mattered (Gunaratna 2002b).

The next layer was four operational committees – military, finance, religious study, and media/publicity. The military committee planned, prepared, and executed terrorist operations while the others performed support roles religiously justifying, advertising, and paying for Al Qaeda activities. Each committee, headed by an emir who was supported by a deputy emir, handled day to day affairs (Gunaratna 2002b).

Second Main Entity

Al Qaeda's second main entity was the 055 Brigade. This "International Brigade" was integrated into the Taliban's army of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan from 1997-2001 as shock troops. It consisted of approximately 2,000 fighters, who were mostly from the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region. Populated by experienced and motivated fighters, the 055 Brigade was Al Qaeda's strategic reserve (Gunaratna 2002b).

Third Main Entity

Al Qaeda's third main entity was a global terrorist network. This consisted of bona-fide Al Qaeda members around the world conducting attacks or doing logistics. These members, many of whom came from the 055 farm team, had a direct connection to Al Qaeda and served it from a subordinate position in a hierarchical format. The Hamburg Cell involved in the 9/11 attacks exemplifies this entity.

Fourth Main Entity

Al Qaeda's fourth main entity was a loose transnational coalition of guerilla and terrorist groups. Al Qaeda was primarily an international network. The Afghan core was thought to be only 30 key officials. Al Qaeda's workhorse was its international network consisting of roughly 24 groups in 60 countries comprised of 5,000-12,000 men.¹⁸²

Operations

Al Qaeda functioned like a network. Despite having a vertical chain of command, Al Qaeda was not a strict, top-down hierarchy. It was relatively decentralized, and authority was delegated. Orders flowed from the top down, but initiative could flow from

the bottom up. There were loose lateral ties within each main entity (Arquilla, Ronfeldt, and Zanini, 1999).

Apart from establishing its own independent cells, Al Qaeda brilliantly co-opted local groups, which had narrow, country-specific agendas. By aligning itself with local militant groups, vice subsuming them into the organization, Al Qaeda was able to develop roots in the militants' countries without assuming ownership of their struggle. By themselves, these militant cells were too small and weak to make a political impact. Those who pledged a measure of loyalty and allegiance to Al Qaeda, however, shared in Al Qaeda's intelligence, money, equipment, and recruitment duties, and these local militants used the Al Qaeda network to coordinate their activities (Alexander and Swetnam 2001). This vastly increased Al Qaeda's reach and influence.¹⁸³

Al Qaeda - Post 9/11 Structure and Operations

Mass

Estimates vary widely about Al Qaeda's overall post 9/11 bench strength. The London International Institute of Strategic Studies' Strategic 2003-2004 Survey cited 18,000 Al Qaeda militants worldwide. By contrast, a Saudi official, also speaking on background, told UPI he estimated there were no more than 5,000 al Qaeda activists and supporters.¹⁸⁴ The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in turn, claims Al Qaeda can draw upon the worldwide support of roughly 6-7 million radical Muslims, of whom the CIA estimates 120,000 are willing to take up arms (Gunaratna 2002b).

Regardless of the estimate, Al Qaeda has a troublesome manpower reservoir. By comparison, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) had no more than 500 militants, of which maybe 150 were extremists during its 1970's heyday. The West German Baader-

Meinhoff gang had even fewer, with some estimates going as low as 50 hard core activists. Yet, both groups wreaked havoc for years.¹⁸⁵

Structure

Al Qaeda's post 9/11 structure is dramatically different than its pre 9/11 form. The four original entities that comprised Al Qaeda no longer exist in the same format, to the same scale, and with the same set of dynamics. Its modus operandi also differs.

First Main Entity

The first main entity, Al Qaeda's central leadership, has suffered severely. During the 2004 US election, President Bush routinely cited that two-thirds of Al Qaeda's pre September 11th leadership had been killed or captured. The apparent 18-24 month attack cycle has been disrupted, and no new, successful 9/11-scale attacks are further evidence of the damage.¹⁸⁶

The central command and control node has not, however, ceased to exist. The very top of the pyramid – Usama bin Ladin, Ayman al Zawahiri, and key aides – remains. They continue to broadcast television and internet messages and dispatch instructions. One level beneath the front office, Al Qaeda appears to be functioning as a systemic organization, not a uniquely contrived amalgam of irreplaceable personalities. Troop losses have been regenerated, and replacement leaders have been appointed.¹⁸⁷

The question is not whether this node exists, but what role it plays relative to the third and fourth main entities. No clear-cut consensus or rock-solid evidence exists. To the extent discernable, however, it appears the command node has retained centralized control over a reduced organizational core while emphasizing expanding its general political guidance and influence over like-minded operational entities and individuals.

Second Main Entity

Al Qaeda's second entity, the 055 Brigade, has become a shadow of its former self. It lost roughly 25 percent of its strength fighting alongside the Taliban in the 2001 US invasion (Gunaratna 2002b). Ultimately, as defeat became inevitable, bin Laden ordered its retreat into Pakistan's semi-autonomous tribal regions, where he is publicly suspected of hiding.¹⁸⁸

Al Qaeda's flight into a limited geographic area presented the opportunity for a US-Pakistani hammer and anvil approach to destroy Al Qaeda. Pakistani President Musharraf initially refused to engage the tribal areas to round up fleeing Taliban and Al Qaeda personnel citing domestic politics and a lack of military capability. Ultimately, however, he dispatched 70,000 of Pakistan's Frontier Corps, a paramilitary auxiliary, into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) starting in winter 2003-2004 to flush out Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters.¹⁸⁹ Clashes between Islamabad's forces and Taliban/Al Qaeda insurgents became frequent.¹⁹⁰ Al Qaeda's foreign fighters, easily identified in a homogenous Pashtun area, have lost several hundred, and Musharraf has cited 200-300 casualties sustained by Islamabad's forces.¹⁹¹

Pakistani pressure eased markedly in fall 2006, however, when, responding to domestic political pressure and rising tensions with India, Islamabad signed a treaty with FATA tribes. In return for removing federal troops, the tribes agreed to police themselves and prevent Al Qaeda or Taliban violence. A clause stipulated that federal troops would return if the tribes could not uphold their obligations.¹⁹² While sound in theory, the deal has failed in practice.¹⁹³

One reason for the failure is that the tribes were either unwilling and/or unable to control their territory. This has provided a de facto safe haven for Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Since the deal, cross border attacks into Afghanistan have tripled.¹⁹⁴ Tribal leaders seen as helping Islamabad have been killed.¹⁹⁵

Another reason is that the Taliban and Al Qaeda are popular in FATA. FATA is the birthplace of the modern global jihadi movement. Musharraf's newfound efforts to destroy Islamic militancy runs counter to 25 years of Islamabad using many of those same Islamic guerillas as foreign policy implements.¹⁹⁶

Moreover, Islamabad has no desire to return to FATA. In spite of rising violence, Islamabad, as of February 2007, had pronounced the treaty a success, and it advocated more such autonomous zones. Islamabad has even announced plans to salvage the deal since insurgent tribal spokesmen pronounced the treaty dead in the wake of federal authorities storming the Red Mosque, an Islamic militant center connected to the Taliban, and Taliban and Al Qaeda elements retaliated by killing scores of federal troops.¹⁹⁷

Whatever pressure did exist is now off, and it will likely remain so until Musharraf's succession is adjudicated.¹⁹⁸ Musharraf's declaration of martial law in November 2007 has at least temporarily prolonged his hold on national politics.¹⁹⁹ It has, however, come at the expense of the Pakistani security establishment's focus on the US-sponsored counterinsurgency effort against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in the tribal areas as the state shifts emphasis to detaining dissidents and curtailing anti-Musharraf political activity.²⁰⁰ This move, which is both internationally and domestically unpopular, has also further weakened Musharraf's support, thus further constraining his freedom of movement on the already domestically unpopular federal efforts in the tribal areas.²⁰¹

Meanwhile, US leverage on the situation to ensure US priorities are secured continues to decline. US pressure did not prevent the current situation from arising, and the United States has already stated it will not curtail military aid, the chief US lever.²⁰² Conversely, the militants have capitalized on the situation.²⁰³

As described by a senior Pakistani intelligence official, FATA, especially Waziristan, has become the hub of Al Qaeda operations world wide.²⁰⁴ The 055 Brigade is the core of a future force to fight in the region or conduct terrorism overseas. It now has a new lease on life.

Third Main Entity

Al Qaeda's third main entity, its global terrorist network, also appears to have been severely weakened. This network, primarily a command node offshoot, was severely damaged by Al Qaeda's displacement from Afghanistan - thus destroying the centralized headquarters, support, and planning functions - as well as post 9/11 US efforts. The low hanging fruit of known and/or suspected operatives not seized prior to 9/11 were quickly taken down once the political winds shifted. The US Department of State puts the number of detained suspects at roughly 4,000 since September 11, 2001.²⁰⁵ Each interrogation creates a ripple effect that cascades through the remaining Al Qaeda members which then snowballs as its effects are manifested in further detentions.²⁰⁶

Though the scale and sophistication of the attacks appears to have dipped, at least temporarily, the command node has not been totally deprived of its action arm as was initially thought post 9/11.²⁰⁷ Contrary to initial suspicions, US and Western intelligence officials now believe the July 7, 2005 London subway bombers as well as the foiled August 2006 Al Qaeda-linked airliner bombing plot that would have rivaled 9/11 came

from the Al Qaeda command node.²⁰⁸ Though the network is degraded, “Osama bin Laden is still giving direct orders for al Qaeda attacks.”²⁰⁹

The September 2006 nonaggression pact between FATA and Islamabad holds the seeds of rejuvenation for Al Qaeda’s third main entity. Al Qaeda is reported to have established several camps in the Pakistani territory of North Waziristan along the Afghan border, and there is apparently “no shortage of recruits or arms.”²¹⁰ With its new emphasis on training “white Muslims” who carry Western passports, there is no standard jihadi profile for authorities to detect.²¹¹ As stated in a July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), the backbone of the jihadi infrastructure is not only not dismantled, but it is regenerating, and the United States now faces a “heightened threat environment.”²¹²

These new Al Qaeda camps, however, are essentially contracted out to local, allied militants, who Pakistan has traditionally used to battle India. Camps now permeated by Al Qaeda exist not due to terrorists’ survival prowess, but rather because Al Qaeda has interwoven itself into internal Pakistani politics. The United States had never pressed Pakistan on indigenous militant group camps because they were viewed as localized affairs. Al Qaeda has changed that.²¹³

The United States and Musharraf are locked in a state of mutual unsustainable dependency. The United States relies upon Musharraf to combat Al Qaeda in Pakistan. Publicly, Bush praises Musharraf, but he has been critical privately.²¹⁴ Though Musharraf depends upon foreign aid and foreign political support, his “hold on power also depends on the support of (Pakistan’s) military and intelligence officials more sympathetic to Islamic extremists.”²¹⁵

Fourth Main Entity

Linked to Al Qaeda's central command node primarily via the web, Al Qaeda's fourth entity, a loose network of affiliated and associated transnational groups and sympathetic individuals, has risen to the fore as the most capable and active element. While Al Qaeda cells mostly operate in the West, its associated groups are more numerous in the global South. Its affiliates operate in Muslim societies or countries with Islamic communities (Gunaratna 2002b). Inspired individuals, by contrast, are everywhere. Each component has a varying degree of closeness and supplication to Al Qaeda's central command node, though no component of this node is under direct and total control.

Groups affiliated with Al Qaeda continue to gain adherents as time goes on. Counterterrorism experts note that some regional Islamic radical groups function independently of Al Qaeda, but that they enter into mutual alliances for specific operations or campaigns and slowly become affiliates.²¹⁶ The most recent, most significant addition to Al Qaeda, which has "grown in the past few years into 14 to 16 separate networks," occurred in September 2006 when Algeria's Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat became Al Qaeda in the Maghreb as it and Al Qaeda central declared a mutual alliance.²¹⁷ The story of this self-developed group that subsequently pledged fealty to bin Laden is emblematic of other members of this component of Al Qaeda's fourth main entity.

Al Qaeda forged its alliance with the GSPC despite an antagonistic history with the Algerian radicals. The Algerian conflict initially attracted enthusiastic support from Islamic radicals the world over, and Al Qaeda sent money, weapons, and fighters. The war was an opportunity to replace Algeria's secular, military-backed government with a

fundamentalist Islamic state. The jihadist movement universally denounced them, however, when Algerian rebels under Armed Islamic Group (GIA) leadership began slaughtering thousands of innocent civilians.²¹⁸

The US response to 9/11 changed everything. With the loss of Afghanistan, Al Qaeda's leadership needed a safe place to relocate. The alliance had the potential to be mutually beneficial. If the Algerians could win Al Qaeda's endorsement, it would erase their network's pariah status in radical Islamic circles. It would then be easier to raise money and logistical support.²¹⁹ In turn, Al Qaeda would gain a local affiliate and an operational foothold in North Africa.²²⁰ Finally, in 2006, Al Qaeda assented.

Al Qaeda has pursued this strategy of partnering with local underground groups in an effort to extend its name and influence in multiple Muslim countries. The Algerian network, with Al Qaeda's assistance, has rapidly transformed itself from a local group devoted solely to seizing power at home into a global threat with cells and operations across North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. It now sponsors training camps in the Sahara and the Sahel, and it supplies fighters to Iraq and Chechnya. The network has also planted deep roots in Europe. Authorities have broken up cells since 2006 in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland.²²¹

Al Qaeda's associated groups are also rising in number and lethality. In contrast to affiliated groups, Al Qaeda's command and control node does not maintain direct connections with associated groups. Though these groups share an ideological affinity with Al Qaeda and their very existence is often Al Qaeda-inspired, they operate independently, though in line with Al Qaeda's general philosophy. The Army of Islam, a new Palestinian group which claims to have played a key role in the capture of Israeli

Corporal Gilad Shalit, for whose return the 2006 Israeli-Lebanese war was ostensibly fought, exemplifies this newfound phenomenon.²²²

It is, however, individuals and self-originating cells that have risen to the fore. These components are filled with people who self-actualize themselves into becoming Islamic militants. Though less sophisticated, their attacks are “still lethal.”²²³

Though self-militating individuals and self-generating cells can exist anywhere, they are most successful and most prevalent in European and other liberal democracies.²²⁴ They manipulate asylum and civil liberties laws to both secure their persons and continue their activities. By contrast, cells in Middle Eastern dictatorships do not have the legal and/or political freedoms in which to hide.²²⁵

Al Qaeda’s level of control over these self-militating groups and cells varies dramatically. In some cases, there is virtually no organizational contact, as with many associated groups. In other cases, there are organizational points of contact that exert moderate control and/or influence. On the whole, however, rather than being a hierarchical organization dictating orders to the third and fourth components of this main entity, “Al Qaeda has become an enabler for myriad terrorist groups and sympathizers to fight the jihadist holy war.”²²⁶

Operations

Al Qaeda, a consummate user of technology, has now harnessed the internet to the point where terrorism has become a “web-directed phenomena.”²²⁷ Twelve terrorist-related web sites prior to 9/11 have grown to more than 4,500.²²⁸ “The internet is the ideal medium for terrorism today: anonymous but pervasive.”²²⁹ It is “a bargain-

basement, redundant system for distributing information... (that) can't (be) shut... down anymore."²³⁰

Al Qaeda has exploited the web in several ways. The web has proven to be an excellent recruitment tool. Its anonymity masks ancient prejudices and offers a “‘virtual sanctuary’ on a global scale” to propagandize.²³¹ It has become a training resource: “if you want to conduct an attack, you will find what you need on the internet.”²³² Compared to its Afghan jihad predecessors, the newest generation of Al Qaeda members is far more technologically sophisticated. The internet has also enabled terrorist activities. On the one hand, flowing from its training utility, Al Qaeda has facilitated computer hacking against government authorities. On the other hand, real world operatives have used the internet’s anonymity, pervasiveness, and reliability to communicate information and increase operational security.²³³

Internet’s Organizational Impact

The media writ large, and the internet in particular, have, however, proven to be a two edged sword. To the positive, as noted above, Al Qaeda has been able to dramatically expand its outreach, and it has reaped operational and organizational benefits. To the negative, however, Al Qaeda’s traditional leadership – Usama bin Ladin, Ayman Al Zawahiri, and a coterie of key aides who previously played a dual role as both intellectual and operational leaders - now has competition. This is causing Al Qaeda’s first main entity to lose the direct control it once had not only over its entire organization, but over the movement for which it sought to serve as a vanguard.

Politically, the Department of Defense has found that a series of Saudi and Jordanian clerics, are becoming more theologically, and thus politically, influential than

high profile standard-bearers such as Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al Zawahiri. Usama bin Laden's political agenda and religious justifications are well known. It is the deeper, more tailored arguments, however, that are bringing new people into the movement. These new, young, educated, capable, easily-accessible, internet-based clerics are making the more resilient arguments.²³⁴

Dramatic political change is occurring in the Middle East, and the Sunni jihadist movement is now global in scope with its own momentum.²³⁵ While the names of Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al Zawahiri continue to have great cache, they are losing their immediacy. The challenge before the traditional leadership is to avoid becoming a detached, yet revered, iconic figurehead.

Operationally, Al Qaeda is becoming more of an enabler than a direct command element. Mustafa Semariam Nasar, the foremost author in "jihadi strategic studies" (Lia and Heggmhammer 2004) whose 1,604 page tome entitled "The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance" analyzes and determines the "best practices" and lessons of 20th century Islamic insurgencies, advocates decentralized personal contact. Because of disproportionate US power, centralized secret groups, which are vulnerable if one member is arrested, and open combat, which focuses jihadists energy on superior US firepower instead of the Islamic awakening, are ineffective.²³⁶ By contrast, the "Jihad of Individualized Terror," which employs centrally-dispatched singleton trainers to link up with local, self sufficient militants to enable terrorism behind enemy lines, directly focuses on inspiring a political awakening along Islamist lines while avoiding superior enemy firepower and centralized command and logistics lines that can be penetrated.

(Lower level attacks like the 2004 Madrid train bombings, technically unsophisticated and inexpensive yet still effective, are thought to exemplify this.)²³⁷

The fight is rapidly changing. Field operatives are now given general guidance by ranking command nodes, and they then have extensive operational autonomy in execution – a more secure way to operate when organizationally weakened in a high threat environment. The trade-off, however, comes at the expense of operational control, efficacy, and targeting precision. The challenge before the traditional leadership is now to maintain operational control and relevance in a much more crowded field.

The Rise of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia

As Al Qaeda has morphed organizationally into a more decentralized network, it has simultaneously expanded its geographic scope as new affiliates have been brought into the fold. Formerly unorganized Islamic militants have, for example, congealed into Al Qaeda of the Maghreb and The Secret Organization of Al Qaeda in Europe.²³⁸ These organizations consist not only of previously existing militants, but of new militants who have become politically mobilized by US post 9/11 actions.

One of the great ironies of the US “war on terror” is that it has resulted in a powerful new franchise, Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, which in contemporary times constitutes the modern day state of Iraq. The US “invasion and occupation of Iraq has helped spawn a new generation of Islamic radicalism and the overall terrorist threat has grown.”²³⁹ Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia (AQM) under the leadership of now deceased Abu Musab Al Zarqawi stepped up to harness this new jihadist exuberance.

AQM has become Usama’s flagship franchise. In line with the changing organizational structure and operational dynamics of Usama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda for

affiliated groups, it is clear that there is a center-periphery connection. At the same time, there is neither a strong consensus nor rock-solid evidence on the degree of center-periphery control. The evidence, however, suggests only nominal political and operational control by Al Qaeda central.

Prior to the Death of Abu Musab Al Zaraqawi

While occasionally engaging US forces, AQM, from the start, emphasized putting an overlay of terrorism atop a guerilla warfare directed at US and Iraqi national government forces. AQM played upon Iraq's incipient social instabilities to spiral sectarian violence to deny Iraq's nascent, US-backed democracy its requisite social stability, and thus sink the whole US endeavor. AQM tried to affect the political environment, not the military balance, to influence the war's outcome.²⁴⁰

AQM worked through terrorism's four step process. First, AQM chose its target set – Iraq's Shia population. This target set was important not only for religio-political reasons from Al Qaeda's religio-political perspective, but also for reasons of power politics, for the Shia were most closely wedded to the United States. Second, AQM killed innocent Shia through horrific car bombings and other suicide attacks in a manner never seen in Iraqi history. Sectarian violence spiraled as fear permeated Iraq's communities and the previous social fabric disintegrated. Third, through killing Shia, that national government's primary backers, AQM sent the message that a US-backed democracy was not acceptable. Fourth, the targeted publics began to press their respective authority centers for change. This terror had two particular audiences in mind – Iraqi society directly and the American public indirectly. AQM directly antagonized the Shiites by killing them, and it indirectly antagonized the US public by spiraling the overall level of

violence, which has killed more US troops and created perceptions of chaos. The result has been to dishearten the US public with more casualties and no discernable political and security progress, which exacerbates the contest of wills inherent to the guerilla war in which US troops are engaged. AQM simultaneously relied upon each newly-mobilized populace, the US public and Iraq's Shia, to pressure their political leadership. AQM expected the US public to pressure its representatives to withdraw US forces, which would sink the nascent Iraqi national government. AQM expected the Shia public to pressure its representatives into less political compromise with the Sunnis, the Shia's attackers within whom AQM was hiding, to stifle the political process, and thus undermine Iraq's nascent democracy.

As was suggested in chapter two in the discussion on the dynamics of terrorism, AQM gained three secondary benefits from these successful attacks:²⁴¹

AQM's morale rose and unity/teambuilding solidified. Foreign volunteers, the vast majority of suicide bombers, were not in short supply.²⁴² This rolled over positively into AQM's efforts to recruit soldiers, and it became one of the few "foreigner brigades" to seize and hold towns, such as Falluja and Al Qaim, for prolonged periods before honorably retiring before overwhelming US firepower.²⁴³

AQM eliminated opposing forces. In line with AQM's ideology, AQM killed Shiites, which it deemed heretics, to purify Islam. This political dimension created self-fulfilling power-oriented benefits. If AQM did not kill them now, it would only have to kill them later. Killing them proactively weakened its enemy for future fighting.

Lastly, AQM, and its agenda, remained provocative. AQM's high visibility, mass casualty attacks became among the most politically influential ongoing acts of violence. AQM became the insurgency's de facto political leader.²⁴⁴

Al Qaeda effectively engineered itself a role by exploiting pre-existing Sunni-Shia ethno-religious cleavages. "Zarqawi's attacks on Shia mosques and police stations, U.S. intelligence officials believe, were the main reason for the creation of the fearsome Shiite death squads. These in turn have created renewed support among the Sunnis for the insurgency" (Nordland and Hirsh 2006). Shia militia retaliation versus AQM-initiated attacks spurred Sunni insurgents into at least a marriage of convenience with AQM.²⁴⁵

"'Sectarianism is Zarqawi's legacy,' says Mokhtar Lamani, the Arab League's permanent envoy to Iraq. 'The main thing that all Iraqis share now is being afraid of one another. And everybody's afraid of what is in the future'" (Nordland and Hirsh 2006). Zarqawi's efforts have effectively guaranteed "plenty of fighting...for years."²⁴⁶

Despite its high visibility and significant political impact, AQM is only a small portion of the overall volume of Iraqi fighters, which is estimated to consist of 20,000-30,000 men.²⁴⁷ "Foreigners make up 10% of the insurgents – probably less than that."²⁴⁸ AQM gained prominence by being the first to exploit the internet's chief virtues – no broadcast standards or censorship – to disseminate its propaganda and spread its tactics.²⁴⁹

Consequently, AQM and its founder, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, obtained global operational influence and a political following.²⁵⁰ Zarqawi used this fame to build a network with formidable potential beyond Iraq. AQM effectively consisted of two parts - the Iraq-based force comprised of suicide bombers and some resistance fighters and the

international network supporting it. These two elements interacted with and complemented one another in a deadly symbiosis.

The international network funneled new recruits to Iraq. The US National Counterterrorism Center stated that AQM's network consisted of associates of at least 24 groups in nearly 40 countries in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe.²⁵¹ It also was an outreach effort. AQM's third main recruitment effort, training operatives and dispatching them back home for future action, was its heart. AQM wanted a standing terrorist capability in the Middle East and Europe, a move that effectively positioned Zarqawi to challenge Usama bin Laden for leadership of the global jihadist insurgency.²⁵²

After the Death of Abu Musab Al Zarqawi

Abu Musab al Zarqawi, AQM's founder, was killed in a targeted US air raid in June 2006. Zarqawi's prominence means his death creates both dangers and opportunities for the United States, Al Qaeda, and the greater jihadi movement. His death's impact must be evaluated on four main points.

First - Operational Techniques

Zarqawi's signature invention was internet-focused media manipulation. His advertising was unedited, raw, piercing, and timely. And, his work's power was magnified by being the first (Nordland and Hirsh 2006).²⁵³ His techniques will very likely have a lasting impact.

This is because he used the internet to advertise externally to the greater jihadi movement for his cause. The power of this strategy has been recognized and adopted by other groups even when their own tenets contradict its use. Even the Taliban, who had

banned all human images per its interpretation of Islam, for example, now have a video department (Nordland and Hirsch 2006).

Zarqawi also focused the internet internally towards the greater jihadist movement. He tried to gain advantage over other jihadist leaders in the struggle to captain the movement. In the cyber world, for example, his legend rivals bin Laden.²⁵⁴ In this specific situation, Zarqawi effectively created a rival power center that threatened bin Laden's previously unilateral putative dominance of the movement. More generally, this precedent has enabled other aspiring leaders to non-confrontationally challenge bin Laden, and thus diversify and fragment the movement.

Second – Network Viability

Contentions AQM would splinter after Zarqawi's death, thus making it easier to combat, have proven wrong.²⁵⁵ Eliminating infighting over succession, bin Laden publicly anointed Abu Hamza al Muhajir.²⁵⁶ Under his tenure, AQM has steadily "pushed the sectarian violence into a new era," and there have been roughly 5,000 violent acts per month as of spring 2007.²⁵⁷

By contrast, operations external to Iraq have slowed. Its network external to Iraq facilitates passage to and from the battlefield from the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North America. It has not, however, become an active operational terrorist wing.

While the abrupt personality change must have impaired processes at least temporarily, the main reason for this change in organizational focus appears to be the new leadership's philosophy.²⁵⁸ Both Zarqawi and Muhajir marched in the same general jihadist direction. Each, however, had a different political agenda.

Muhajir's prior Islamic militant experience is rooted in bin Laden's Al Qaeda. Likely owing to this, he sees Iraq as an opportunity not just to harm the United States, the world system's central support column, but also as a chance to give jihadists access to a state, the first step to inevitable victory per Al Qaeda central's approach. Focusing effort in Iraq accomplishes these two objectives in a single stroke.

By contrast, Zarqawi's history was rooted in his own independent thought and efforts within the greater jihadist movement. His ultimate goals were to overthrow the Jordanian monarchy and to attack Israel. Zarqawi likely saw the fighting in Iraq as an opportunity to purify Islam via killing Shia, work closer to these goals, and to bloody US forces, thus weakening their ability to defend Israel and Jordan. Unlike in bin Laden's thinking, a sequential process is not necessary.

Third – AQM's Relationship to the Iraqi Insurgency

Without its own territory and a 1980s Afghan jihad-style third country sanctuary, AQM cannot survive without the support of an Iraqi sectarian backer.²⁵⁹ The first order of business in the fight is thus not to engage the enemy. Rather, it is to stay alive to allow for the chance to engage the enemy.

AQM was slowly isolating itself in the year prior Zarqawi's death. While certainly Zarqawi's Shia targets despised AQM, Iraq's Sunnis also resented its horrific violence employed purely along ideological lines (Nordland and Hirsh 2006).²⁶⁰ AQM's "efforts to recruit Iraqi Sunni nationalist and secular groups, (though initially achieving modest gains, were fundamentally) undermined by its violent tactics against civilians and the fundamentalist doctrine of its founder, Jordanian Abu Musab Al Zarqawi."²⁶¹

Only a rudimentary level of popular support, upon which Zarqawi depended upon for logistical and operational assistance, could protect him from US and Iraqi authorities as well as other insurgents. AQM's fate hinged upon the Sunnis. Zarqawi, however, drained his own swamp of politically navigable waters. Already fighting the Shia, he angered the Sunnis. A faction of Sunni chiefs forced him to relocate, and US forces killed him.²⁶²

With bin Laden in hiding, Zarqawi was the missing hands-on, unifying operational jihadi commander. His loss raises concerns for AQM. AQM risks losing the political dominance of the battlefield to nationalist insurgents not interested in global jihad. AQM must maintain a highly visible role so that it appears to be, if not in the lead, at least at the forefront of the conflict to repel invading US troops from historically significant Muslim land. If not, its relevance to the global jihadi movement will likely quickly diminish.²⁶³

This fear has been realized. It was not, however, because a principled AQM was sidelined by stronger nationalist forces. Muhajir has had to deal with unresolved political concerns Zarqawi's stature blunted. AQM has traded its high visibility, ideology-centered, greater jihad role and ambitions for more local concerns to ensure its survival.

In contrast to when it began, AQM's roster is now overwhelmingly Iraqi, "both in terms of leaders and foot soldiers."²⁶⁴ In addition, Muhajir adjusted AQM's relationship to the insurgency. Zarqawi's death made it easier to form partnerships with groups who disliked Zarqawi's tactics.²⁶⁵ AQM created, but abdicated leadership of, a pan-Sunni umbrella group and has eased pressing AQM's social dictates, which differ from traditional Iraqi customs.

On an organizational plane, though by no means the dominating entity, AQM remains capable of potent violence. As of July 2007 the US government assessed it to have several thousand fighters. It is still responsible for the vast majority of suicide bombings.²⁶⁶ The United States must still contest with the security challenge, and the resulting political impact, that this group creates.²⁶⁷

Politically, AQM has survived and maneuvered to the top of the post-Zarqawi insurgency by becoming, in effect, a Sunni militia to counter the Shiite death squads it inspired (Nordland and Hirsh 2006). It now has a wholly different membership and localized agenda. AQM as a transnational jihadi entity now exists in name only.²⁶⁸ AQM and the insurgency are now intertwined.

Fourth - AQM - Al Qaeda Central Relations

“The Jordanian born militant’s death will test a vital nexus: the partnership between his group, Al Qaeda in Iraq, and the core remnants of Al Qaeda.”²⁶⁹ Zarqawi’s network publicly boosted Al Qaeda central by giving it a highly visible beachhead at the jihadist front while its original leaders were hiding. In turn, by using the Al Qaeda name, Zarqawi bolstered his legitimacy and attracted media attention, money, and recruits.²⁷⁰ The relationship, however, was fraught with tension over goals, the means to achieve success, and on a personal level.

There was a fundamental clash over goals. Usama bin Laden, as noted in chapter four, sought to reorder the entire international system, and Iraq was an end in itself to creating an Islamic state as a first step. While not entirely incompatible, Zarqawi wanted to overthrow the Jordanian monarchy and attack Israel, which meant Zarqawi’s purpose

for Iraq was to exhaust the United States so it would be unable to defend its allies while strengthening his own organization and profile for the fight yet to come.

Iraq served different purposes. By bin Laden's critique, Zarqawi's goals were superfluous at best and inefficiently squandering resources at worst. By contrast, Zarqawi saw Iraq as an incision into the US body politic and employed terrorism to cause harm while husbanding resources.

Personally, Arab intelligence officials and former Islamic militants noted there was a disconnect between bin Laden and Zarqawi when they met in the late 1990s.²⁷¹ With the assumption to the leadership post Zarqawi AQM by Muhajir, there is a possibility AQM-Al Qaeda relations might improve. Muhajir and Zarqawi are different people with different backgrounds. Zarqawi was a poorly educated ex convict.²⁷² Muhajir, in contrast, is an explosives specialist with Afghan jihad credentials and links with the jihadi establishment. Furthermore, Zarqawi had a different relationship to AQM than does Muhajir. Zarqawi built his own network from the ground up, directed it, and had a sense of ownership. Only a member, Muhajir, might be more receptive to taking guidance when managing and leading the network.

The fundamental clash over means, and the reasons for it, however, make that highly unlikely. Usama bin Laden benefited from having a high-profile commander able to draw foreign jihadis to Iraq to fight US troops. Zarqawi, however, killed Shiites en masse.

From a pure religio-political view, there was no conflict. Both bin Laden and Zarqawi are Sunnis. Both deem Shia to be heretics. Both leaders wish to purify them from Islam.

From a power politics view, however, bin Laden's and Zarqawi's goals, and their respective strategies for implementing these goals, were premised upon differing assessments of the power balance. Usama bin Laden and Zarqawi differed over how to create and apply power in the context of a global insurgency against the US-led world order. Each leader chose a strategy rooted in his respective political geography.

Usama bin Laden, purportedly at general but not direct risk in Pakistan's tribal areas, apparently sees himself leading a global insurgency, wherein popularity is the currency for both victory and survival. He curbed implementing his full ideology, i.e. purging Shiites, as he realized that killing Muslims, even Shiites, would be looked down upon by many Muslims and would eliminate potential Al Qaeda troops against the United States. This realist concession is necessary to build and sustain short run popularity to eventually alter the US-Al Qaeda balance. Iraq is but one battle, and bin Laden must curry public favor in the long run regardless of the circumstances.

By contrast, Muhajir is at immediate risk on the front lines. He apparently sees himself as engaged not in a global insurgency but in a single battle. His focus is the short to medium run. Such a fight to wreck the US venture is a tactical and strategic competition where popularity plays a lesser and shorter term role.

Potential Al Qaeda supporters viewed Zarqawi as leading the militant political Islamist global insurgency in bin Laden's name. AQM-Al Qaeda tension arose because, as conveyed in a 2005 letter from Zawahiri to Zarqawi, Al Qaeda feared its name would be tarnished by AQM's violent and controversial tactics of killing fellow Muslims en masse.²⁷³ In spite of this scolding, AQM's killings actually increased. This differing political geography not only perpetuates the existence of these two poles within the

greater Al Qaeda organization, but it perpetuates the organization's internal conflict as well.

Conclusion

The 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan disrupted Al Qaeda's pre 9/11 structure. All of Al Qaeda's four main entities have reorganized. Despite US efforts, "Al Qaeda hasn't been eliminated. It's metastasized."²⁷⁴

Usama bin Laden's command node, first main entity, has been the hardest hit. Roughly two thirds of its pre 9/11 staffing has been killed or captured. Replacements have been selected, however, and the node continues to function. The devastation to the second and third main entities, those most directly under bin Laden's command, have led to the transformation of the command node from a direct operational authority into a more indirect giver of political and operational guidance.

The second main entity, the 055 Brigade, Al Qaeda's shock troops and strategic reserve, is a sliver of its former self. After taking losses fighting the 2001 US invasion, it fled to Pakistan, where it now defends the remnants of the organization against local tribal enemies and/or incursion by the Pakistani armed forces. Though weakened, its role is the same, and it continues to survive.

Al Qaeda's global terrorist network, the third main entity, has been severely disrupted. No 9/11 scale attacks have been mounted since September 11th, and the 18-24 month attack cycle has been broken. Over four thousand terrorism suspects have been detained worldwide.

This component, however, remains viable. Numerous low level attacks have been witnessed since September 11th against US allies and, as with the 2004 Madrid train

bombing, they have had an effect. According to the July 2007 NIE, this component is actually regenerating, and it has done so sufficiently that the United States now considers itself to have a heightened vulnerability.²⁷⁵

In contrast to the first three main entities, a loose coalition of Al Qaeda affiliates, the fourth main entity, has blossomed. The 2003 US invasion of Iraq created a new front to engage US troops while simultaneously proving a motivational boon. This fourth main entity is stronger than before 9/11. It is now Al Qaeda's front line work horse.

The fourth main entity is highly decentralized, a major benefit for Al Qaeda in the post 9/11 heightened security environment. Self-militating individuals, who are harder to detect than organizations, have taken on a new operational prominence. Associated groups, which share Al Qaeda's general outlook but retain organizational autonomy, are also growing in number. Affiliates, essentially Al Qaeda franchises, have now come into being. Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, bin Laden's lead affiliate, is now Al Qaeda's first tier front line element against the United States. Legitimate question exists as to whether Al Qaeda's lead affiliate, AQM, which is at the forefront of the action against the United States, is under anything more than nominal Al Qaeda central control.

As of fall 2007, the greater jihadist movement is booming. Al Qaeda, however, is no longer its unchallenged operational and political leader. The combination of the decentralized nature of the fourth main entity, Al Qaeda central's reliance upon it, and post 9/11 operational dynamics that heavily incorporate the internet has changed Al Qaeda central's role.

Operationally, Al Qaeda central's role is in transition. It is still a direct command element. Though rejuvenating, its forces are significantly weaker than pre 9/11. It is,

however, increasingly becoming more of an enabler for other like-minded operational entities. As a result, Al Qaeda central's direct operational power and control is decreasing while its overall indirect operational influence is increasing.

Politically, Al Qaeda central's role is also in transition. Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al Zawahiri are iconic figures with tremendous cache in jihadist circles. Their immediate relevancy, however, is in question. As other elements score operational victories – the political coin of the realm – and other religio-political leaders access the media, particularly the internet, with greater regularity than bin Laden, whose visibility is requisitely lower while on the run, Al Qaeda central must struggle to ensure that it remains politically paramount to direct the front lines within the ever-evolving jihadist movement.

Each step of the way in response to Al Qaeda's situation at the time, the United States has taken steps to counter it as an organization using hard power. Al Qaeda, in turn, has evolved in response to US efforts. It has done so by capitalizing on the political context that the US use of hard power creates to generate popular support, which translates to operational capability. The US failure to address the political grievances Al Qaeda touts or to exploit conflicting political within Al Qaeda and/or between Al Qaeda and those upon whom it relies leaves this door wide open. The next chapter will present a writ large picture of US efforts as they have evolved through fall 2007.

Chapter Seven

Countering the Organization: A Three-Pronged Approach

“It does not matter how
slowly you go as long as
you do not stop.”
...Confucius²⁷⁶

Al Qaeda’s practical terrorist potency is as an organization. As of summer 2007, there are three main Al Qaeda organizational centers of gravity. First, Al Qaeda’s primary center of gravity, which consists of the first, second and third main entities, is hidden along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in Pakistan’s tribal areas, and it is rejuvenating. Second, Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, the dominant fourth main entity affiliate, is ensconced in the chaos of Iraq. Third, there is a diffuse presence of individuals, associated groups, lesser affiliates, and occasional Al Qaeda overseas terrorist network members scattered around the world.

Only by destroying Al Qaeda’s organizational capacity to execute violence can the United States save innocent lives. The United States has adopted a three-pronged approach since 9/11. To counter Al Qaeda’s Afghanistan-Pakistan center of gravity, the US forces have attempted to physically destroy Al Qaeda in Afghanistan via the US military while attempting to invoke Pakistani military assistance. To counter the Iraq center of gravity, the US government has pursued unilateral military options inside Iraq while threatening Iran, which the Bush administration blames for US difficulties in Iraq. Lastly, the United States has developed a counter-network of allied states to press Al Qaeda globally.

As the United States did not have Al Qaeda’s destruction as a national priority prior to 9/11, there was no pre 9/11 strategic policy framework to guide bureaucratic

execution. The US government efforts, while present, were sporadic and chaotic at best. Consequently, this chapter will begin with the US response to Al Qaeda after September 11th and trace it to fall 2007. It will address Al Qaeda's three centers of gravity in the sequential order in which they have come to the fore in the post 9/11 era – Pakistan followed by Iraq, and then the greater Al Qaeda presence world wide.

The chapter concludes that the United States has not been entirely unsuccessful. No 9/11 scale attacks versus the United States or its allies have occurred September 11th. Thousands of terrorist operatives have been detained world wide.

Current efforts, however, have reached their potential. US hard power efforts have taken the low hanging fruit, and repetition of existing methods is achieving diminishing returns. All the while, the political environment, which has been shaped as a result of US hard power actions rather than consciously and intentionally in line with US political strengths to capitalize on Al Qaeda's political weaknesses, allows Al Qaeda to regenerate losses and continue the hard power fight. Al Qaeda remains a problem.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Center of Gravity

The Afghanistan-Pakistan region is a remote mountainous area whose political boundary, the ill-demarcated Durrand Line of Britain's colonial era, intentionally cut across ethnic and tribal lines. Much of the local population neither recognizes nor abides by it. The intent at the time the demarcation as established by Britain was to create weak, destabilized neighbors to help secure the borders of India, then Britain's imperial crown jewel. The modern day impact, apart from regional political instability, which in the era of globalization has the potential to spread its impact dramatically, is that any US effort in one country must correspond with effort in its counterpart to be effective.

Step 1 - Afghanistan

The 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan deprived Al Qaeda of its pre 9/11 sanctuary. Not only did US forces chase Al Qaeda and depose its protectors, but the United States also installed the Afghanistan Transitional Authority (ATA), an allied regime under now tribal leader Hamid Karzai, to stabilize the country per agreement of senior Afghan figures at the 2001 Berlin Conference. The US intent for the ATA was to build an internationally-backed central government complete with power ministries to bring security and political stability to the country, thereby insuring against a return of Al Qaeda and Taliban forces, in preparation for holding national elections to create a working democracy, which would reject any future terrorist political domination. Roughly 20,000 US armed forces personnel remained to back the nascent ATA in counter-insurgency operations against remaining Taliban and Al Qaeda forces.²⁷⁷

The US political plan has achieved significant success. In fall 2004, Hamid Karzai became Afghanistan's first democratically-elected president in what was widely viewed as a free and fair election.²⁷⁸ In spring 2005, the national legislature came into being in what also was widely viewed as a free and fair election.²⁷⁹

US desires for security, however, have not materialized. After initially beating back the Taliban and Al Qaeda, Al Qaeda-backed Taliban resurged in 2006 to seriously contest the Karzai government for control in the south and east of the country while launching terrorist attacks in Kabul, the national capital.²⁸⁰ The 2007 fighting season is proving to be another intense year.²⁸¹

Per the classic analysis of the arithmetic of insurgencies by James T. Quinlivan in his article "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," Afghanistan will require at least

600,000 troops if it is in as bad shape as Iraq.²⁸² Afghanistan, while not faring well, has not yet deteriorated to Iraq's level. A smaller force may suffice.

The time to act on this option is rapidly approaching. "The commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan says that most of the population will switch its allegiance to a resurgent Taliban unless things get better by (fall 2007)."²⁸³ As of summer 2007, the international force presence is wholly inadequate. Roughly 40,000 Western troops and roughly 70,000 Afghan soldiers, who vary wildly in capability, are attempting to provide security to roughly 30,000,000 people. Depending upon one's assessment of the situation, 120,000-600,000 trained and reliable troops are needed.

This is obviously impossible for the current US force structure.²⁸⁴ If Quinlivan's analysis is accepted, current restraints on US political and military resources requires strategic choices and trade-offs amongst competing US foreign policy objectives. The United States military cannot adequately pursue US objectives in both Iraq and Afghanistan simultaneously without a substantial increase in forces.

Step 2 - Pakistan

With Pakistan as a US ally, Al Qaeda, in theory, had no place to run from the 2001 US juggernaut. In practice, however, Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants fled Afghanistan to Pakistan's semi-autonomous Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Pakistani President Musharraf refused to deploy Pakistani forces into the FATA to capture or kill fleeing Taliban and Al Qaeda elements citing domestic political considerations and a lack of military capability.

Yet, in the 2003-2004 winter, despite increased regional anti-US sentiment and no discernable increase in Pakistani military capability, Musharraf relented to US pressure.

He dispatched 70,000 troops from Pakistan's Frontier Corps, a paramilitary auxiliary, to the FATA. This action coincided with the public unmasking of Abdul Qadeer Khan's global black market nuclear activities, which purportedly gave Libya, Iran, and North Korea nuclear weapons potential.²⁸⁵

Four actions followed this Pakistani troop dispersal. First, Abdul Qadeer took sole responsibility for any illicit proliferation activity emanating from Pakistan. Second, he apologized on television in English, which the average Pakistani does not understand. Third, he was placed under house arrest, though he was still allowed to retain the wealth he gained from his purportedly illicit activities. Fourth, the US initiated no actions against Abdul Qadeer, the government of Pakistan, or any of its members in an international diplomatic, political, legal, economic, or military manner. Fifth, and key relative to Al Qaeda, the Pakistani Frontier Corps, an auxiliary paramilitary entity, was deployed into the tribal regions.²⁸⁶

Negotiations over this incident between Musharraf and then Secretary of State Colin Powell were, and remain secret. Causation, therefore, cannot be proven. There is, however, strong correlation between Pakistan's troop deployment and the potentially massive flap over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to two members of the "Axis of Evil" emanating from a purported US ally that implies a deal was struck wherein Pakistan avoided negative proliferation-related repercussions in return for better serving US counter-terrorism interests.²⁸⁷

Easily identified in a homogenous Pashtun area, Al Qaeda lost several hundred fighters. Pakistan has turned over in excess of 700 prisoners to the United States. Pakistani forces have suffered 200-300 casualties.

Pakistani pressure eased markedly in fall 2006, however, when, responding to domestic political pressure and rising tensions with India, Islamabad signed a treaty with FATA tribes. In return for removing federal troops, the tribes agreed to police themselves and prevent Al Qaeda or Taliban violence. A clause stipulated that federal troops would return if the tribes failed. While sound in theory, the deal has failed because the tribes were either unwilling and/or unable to control their territory, which is what made federal troops necessary in the first place. Cross border attacks into Afghanistan tripled after the deal was inked. Tribal leaders seen as helping Islamabad have been killed.²⁸⁸

Second, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are popular in FATA. The FATA is the birthplace of the modern global jihadi movement. Musharraf's efforts to destroy Islamic militancy runs counter to 25 years of Islamabad using many of those same Islamic guerillas as foreign policy implements.²⁸⁹

Third, Islamabad has no desire to return to FATA. In spite of rising violence, Islamabad, as of February 2007, had pronounced the treaty a success, and it advocated more such autonomous zones. Islamabad has even announced plans to salvage the deal since insurgent tribal spokesmen pronounced the treaty dead in the wake of federal authorities storming the Red Mosque, an Islamic militant center connected to the Taliban, and Taliban and Al Qaeda elements retaliated by killing scores of federal troops.²⁹⁰

Despite initial assertions to the contrary and no appreciable change in Pakistani military capability or domestic politics, Musharraf was politically and militarily able to send forces into FATA. Despite a consistent and acknowledged Taliban and Al Qaeda presence, however, Musharraf withdrew Islamabad's forces. With external factors constant, the reason for Musharraf's inconsistency, and, from the US perspective,

behavior counter to US interests, must either stem from the Musharraf regime's internal dynamics and/or inconsistencies in US policy. Both factors play a role.

Analogous to US Russia policy in the fluid Post Cold War environment when Yeltsin was in power, US policy towards Pakistan was formed in a fluid environment in response to a crisis when few options appeared available. This is so at all three of security specialist, Arnold Hammer Hall's levels of analysis (Hall 1953):

In the first image, each set of US policies depended on a strongman. During the 1990's, the United States staked its Russia policy on Yeltsin, a credentialed former senior communist who was seen as a workable interlocutor capable of negotiating a political system in chaos and at odds with US interests. During the 2000's, the United States has essentially staked its counterterrorism policy on Musharraf, a general seen as a secular bulwark against rising Islamic militancy in a nuclear-armed country.

In the second image, the United States gave de facto blessing to a change in regime. In supporting Yeltsin, the United States effectively blessed his assumption to a newly emerging democratic Russian regime. Implicitly, the United States blessed Musharraf's coup against Pakistan's former democracy to obtain Pakistani assistance against Al Qaeda.

In the third image, the United States viewed each man as insurance against potential international threats. Even if Yeltsin did not reform Russia's socio-economic system, he would at least secure Russia's nuclear arsenal. Even if Musharraf is not helpful against Al Qaeda, he would at least secure Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

Both policies achieved short term goals. The analogy breaks down, however, when accounting for differences in US interests and acknowledging Pakistan's unique

domestic and international context. Unlike Russia, Pakistan is neither a major power nor inwardly focused, and it is confronted with antagonistic relationships.

Pakistan, whose *raison de entrée* stems from lingering ethno-religious issues, lacks strategic depth. Relative to its neighbors, it has a smaller population, military, and geographic size. To its east and south, Pakistan confronts India, which has massive geographic, population, and military advantages while the Kashmir issue keeps tensions simmering. To its north, Pakistan must engage Russia and China, former Cold War adversaries who still support India. To its west, Pakistan must engage Iran, which has extensive influence over Afghanistan. Yet, Iran conflicts with the United States, Pakistan's primary backer, over Afghanistan, Pakistan's immediate western neighbor.

In contrast to Moscow's defensive, internal orientation, Pakistan's perennial fear of encirclement by hostile, more powerful neighbors forces an outward orientation. With actual or potential problems on all sides, Pakistan has always sought to keep its frontier with Afghanistan, Pakistan's second longest border after India, safe and secure. Due to strong ethnic, political, and economic ties, Pakistan is influential, and it has always been so by either ensuring a placating client in Kabul or adequate chaos to ensure Afghanistan would be sufficiently weak, and thus unable to be exploited by hostile neighbors or become a threat itself. Afghanistan provides a buffer to enemies and/or their proxies who are otherwise cheek to cheek.

Set in the context of Musharraf's reliance upon US military, economic, and political assistance, Pakistan's ability in Afghanistan is exactly what draws the United States to it and simultaneously creates conflict. Musharraf must assist US efforts or lose the aid upon which he survives. The United States, however, wants to see a strong and

stable Afghanistan, which Pakistan views as contrary to its national interests. That would only create another competitor in a neighborhood with many overlapping tribal, economic, security, and political issues. Most significantly, a strong and self-sufficient Afghanistan would force Pakistan to confront its own Taliban-led insurgency instead of exporting it to Afghanistan.

Ideally, the United States would also like to see a democratized Pakistan. Musharraf's dictatorial political system is, however, basically a continuation of a previous political and socio-economic system instituted under former dictator Zia-ul-Haq that had been interrupted by a brief era of democratic governance. The US wants to see Pakistan extend its reach over restive areas vice retire from them. While exerting sovereignty over perpetually unstable and restive areas of the country is quite arguably in Pakistan's national interest, doing so is not in Musharraf's interests.

The problem is that for its survival Musharraf's dictatorial system is intertwined with and dependent upon the very forces of Islamic militancy that the United States is seeking to combat.²⁹¹ Intensively combating these forces would undermine Musharraf's own position domestically with governmental institutions and political parties upon which he depends. Musharraf has to walk a fine line placating the United States while looking after his own interests.

Musharraf has chosen to do this by splitting the difference between Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Despite routine public US and Afghan claims that the Taliban and its leadership have taken refuge in Pakistan, the Taliban has suffered far less at Pakistani hands than Al Qaeda despite having a far larger membership and having once been a

public organization with formal diplomatic relations ties to Pakistan.²⁹² There are four main reasons for this discrepancy.

First, the long history of public and secret support that Pakistan has provided to the Taliban since the anti-Soviet jihad days strongly suggests that Pakistan continues to view the Taliban as its primary foreign policy instrument in Afghanistan. The Taliban, not total pariahs like Al Qaeda, can affect Afghanistan's political and military situation. This advances Pakistani national interests by keeping Afghanistan weak while keeping the United States, upon which Musharraf is uncomfortably dependent, occupied. So long as US efforts are focused on securing Afghanistan, US aid and political blessing, both of which can be withdrawn at any time, will flow and longer term political reform that might install democracy and alter the internal balance of power will be postponed.

Second, Musharraf views Al Qaeda as a threat. It has made attempts on Musharraf's life. Unlike the Taliban, Al Qaeda is hostile to the Pakistani state structure.²⁹³

Third, attacking Al Qaeda is more politically palatable because it is composed of foreigners. While Usama and Ayman al Zawahiri are popular figureheads whose arrest might cause a political backlash, rank and file members can be detained without local political trouble because they are devoid of social, economic, and largely political roots in Pakistan. The Pakistani government can thus do harm to Al Qaeda as an organization while maintaining the current internal political balances.

Fourth, and on a related point, the Punjabi-dominated Islamabad's failure to persecute the Taliban avoids political difficulties with their ethnic brethren, the Pashtun tribes, on the Pakistani side of the border. The Pashtun peoples are on both sides of the

ill-defined Afghanistan-Pakistan border, the colonially-drawn Durand line. There is a tighter localized ethnic nationalism than there is patriotism to either the Afghan or Pakistani states. Persecuting any Pashtuns, regardless of whether they are Afghan or Pakistani, is resented by all, which only leads to political calls for an independent Pashtunistan that would weaken Islamabad.²⁹⁴

Though Pakistan may draw a distinction between the Taliban and Al Qaeda, the United States cannot. If the Taliban wins in Afghanistan, then Al Qaeda once again has a state-backed safe haven. Not only must it be deprived of a state, the Taliban must also not be permitted to thrive as a fighting element as to spare the Taliban is to help Al Qaeda because the two are intertwined. Unfortunately, as of summer 2007, the Taliban are rebounding.²⁹⁵

The failure to crush the Taliban and catch either Usama bin Laden or Ayman al Zawahiri has sparked strong US-based criticism that Musharraf is not effective. These criticisms have only risen since Musharraf's imposition of martial law, which has simultaneously undercut his political support and allowed the militants to capitalize on his distraction, which they have done. In the context of international regional competition, Musharraf repeatedly faults domestic political constraints - he does not control the semi-autonomous tribal areas where the Taliban and Al Qaeda are publicly suspected of hiding. Not willing to explicitly or obtusely violate Pakistan's sovereignty, and evidently sufficiently convinced of Musharraf's intransigence and/or the precariousness of his position, the United States has even closed the CIA's Alec Station, whose sole purpose was to hunt Usama bin Laden and his top lieutenants.²⁹⁶

US foreign policy elites are cognizant of Musharraf's position. A 2007 Council on Foreign Relations poll found that 11% thought that Musharraf was making significant headway against terrorism. By contrast, only 23% thought that Musharraf was being unhelpful in the struggle against terrorism. The vast majority, 66%, however, thought that while Musharraf could perhaps be more helpful, it was unlikely another general would be strongly more helpful.²⁹⁷ From the perspective of combating Al Qaeda, Musharraf the man is not the problem. His supporting political system is.

Current US policy towards Pakistan, however, omits several key factors that suggest the United States has the flexibility to pressure Musharraf for action:

First, Islamists lack broad public support. "Islamic parties have never garnered more than 13 percent in any free parliamentary elections in Pakistan."²⁹⁸ In 2002, Pakistan's last major election, religious political parties received just 11% of the vote. By contrast more than 28% was won by the secular party led by Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister. Capitalizing on surging anti-American sentiment after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, this election was likely the Islamist high-water mark.²⁹⁹ The United States need not fear an Islamist takeover by pressuring Musharraf.

Second, as evidenced by how he plays both sides of the coin, Musharraf is not afraid of the Islamists. On the one hand, Mr. Musharraf's status as a personal target of Al Qaeda has won him a reputation in the West as a terrorist fighter. He speaks ominously about the Islamists' rising power, and the United States perceives him as a voice of moderation. On the other hand, he has regularly brokered agreements with them in the provinces as a way to gain allies amid the growing support nationally against civilian challengers like Mr. Sharif and Ms. Bhutto. These secular leaders, however, are

Musharraf's natural allies against the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and their political backers.³⁰⁰ If Musharraf is able to negotiate with his smaller political enemies to contain more serious political enemies, then he mostly likely does not fear their taking power either.

Third, the United States has significant leverage over Musharraf through US foreign aid, upon which Musharraf depends for survival. Musharraf is "the fifth-largest recipient of US aid – the Bush administration proposed \$785 million in its (2007) budget."³⁰¹ "To the extent that Mr. Musharraf's government feels real pressure, it is from those within the Pakistani military who worry most about alienating Washington and jeopardizing the flow of military aid to Pakistan."³⁰² The money and military hardware from the United States is crucial for Pakistan's armed forces to keep pace with India, Pakistan's greatest threat. Tying this to action against Al Qaeda could spur new activity in the tribal areas by Pakistan's military.

Underwriting all of this is an internal conflict in US policy. On the one hand, 2007 US counter-proliferation policy views it as necessary to support Musharraf. He is a force for stability in a semi-stable country with nuclear weapons. One of the only things worse than not catching Usama and finishing the dismantling of Al Qaeda would be for Al Qaeda to acquire nuclear weapons. On the other hand, this aspect of US policy, when combined with the Pakistani political system, gives Musharraf leverage over the United States and curtails US counter-terrorism efforts in line with Musharraf's interests, which differ from those of the United States.

As of fall 2007, US efforts to destroy Al Qaeda as an organization in Pakistan are at a standstill. Al Qaeda is ensconced in the tribal areas, and no significant, public Pakistani effort exists to pursue it. The tentative October 2007 change in internal

Pakistani politics that combines Musharraf's resignation as army chief with his assumption to the Presidency - a move still awaiting confirmation from Pakistan's Supreme Court - and the return of Benazir Bhutto to Pakistan enables the possibility of Musharraf pursuing Al Qaeda more doggedly because his base of official political support will grow beyond non-Islamist members.³⁰³ Nothing is guaranteed, however, for the ultimate loyalty of the army, whose leadership Musharraf has packed with stalwart followers, is still an open question, and the precise limits of Musharraf's political reach are still not yet defined.³⁰⁴ Until US policy conflict is relieved of its internal contradictions, the United States sidesteps the issue by acting unilaterally, or the dynamics of the Pakistani political system congeal in US favor, current US efforts in Pakistan have reached their limits.

Iraq Center of Gravity

As with Afghanistan, the post US invasion effort has been dedicated to establishing a central government complete with power ministries to bring political stability and security to the country, thus denying AQM sanctuary. As noted in the chapter on US strategy, this effort has not proceeded according to plan, and there are structural contradictions in the US approach that will likely prevent it from achieving better results. Starting in late fall to early winter 2006, the Bush administration made two key decisions to try to alter existing dynamics; it is now implementing these.

First, the Bush administration escalated US troop levels by 30,000 men, approximately one third of whom are support troops, to increase US military capacity. These troops have mostly been surged into Baghdad and Sunni surrounding areas, which

is where Al Qaeda incubates.³⁰⁵ The stated intent was to create sufficient stability and security to enable political reconciliation amongst Iraq's competing sectarian factions.³⁰⁶

This troop influx, while bringing higher US casualty levels, has brought some localized security and political stability in the areas where it has been employed.³⁰⁷ In Baghdad, for example, the United States has gone from controlling fewer than 20% of neighborhoods to roughly 40% of the city.³⁰⁸ When the increased US troop presence has been significant enough to change the local tactical balance, some tribal leaders have even temporarily allied with US forces against Al Qaeda, though those alliances are of dubious durability.³⁰⁹

At the macro level, however, the 2007 US troop surge has brought little fundamental change in the political or security situation. In terms of security, the 2007 US troop surge mostly forced the enemy to readjust its methods, thus altering locations and modes of violence, vice reducing overall violence.³¹⁰ Of the specifically identified pre-surge benchmarks that the 2007 effort was to accomplish, only two of nine were deemed met, and another two, after revision, were rated "partially met."³¹¹ Reference the political situation, only one of eight benchmarks was met, and another two, after revision, were deemed "partially met."³¹² As of early October 2007, senior Iraqi political leaders have effectively abandoned the political reconciliation process, which only validates General Petraeus's September 2007 Congressional testimony that the fight in Iraq is essentially a domestic civil struggle for power in a post-Saddam Iraq.³¹³

The Administration has pursued a two track strategy in assessing the way ahead that has effectively prolonged the US military and political commitment. On the one hand, given that the surge was not fully in place until June 2007, the Administration has

claimed a need for more time to allow the full effect of the surge to be made manifest before rendering a final verdict on the US venture in Iraq.³¹⁴ On the other hand, and at the same time, the Administration is claiming that the surge has proven successful to date and that the emergency troop plus-up can be eliminated. Talk of further reductions has even been circulated by senior administration officials.³¹⁵

Apart from being belied by the Administration's acknowledgment that it failed to meet its own political and security benchmarks, the evidence suggests that claims of significant political and or military headway allowing for US troop reductions based upon success to date are not strongly backed by the evidence. No serious discussion has surfaced about altering the pre-surge baseline of roughly 130,000 troops. Any discussion of future draw-downs is overtly premised on yet-to-be-determined factors on the ground, and no administration official has offered a positive prognosis either at or since the September 2007 Petraeus/Crocker testimony.³¹⁶ Most significantly, the timing of the surge draw-down directly correlates with the US Army's ability to maintain that volume of forces in the field given current manning constraints while having absolutely no correlation to achieving a significant portion of any of the surge's political or military goals. Until such time as events on the ground significantly alter or there is a significant increase in US political and military commitment to the US venture in Iraq, political inertia appears to be indefinitely perpetuating the status quo. The mathematics of occupation outlined when discussing Afghanistan, however, strongly suggest that neither the baseline US presence nor the US troops surge will stem the Iraqi insurgency, and thus deny AQM safe haven.

Second, the Bush administration has increasingly focused on Iran. The US goal is to deter what the Bush administration sees as empowering Iranian assistance driving the Iraqi insurgency, thereby denying AQM sanctuary in Iraq's sectarian conflict and thus making AQM vulnerable by exposing it to US forces. As discussed in chapter five, the Administration has ratcheted up tensions politically and militarily, and it is intimating the possibility of punitive military strikes.

While it is also too early to tell how well this second decision is proceeding, initial results do not appear positive. No public reports have surfaced that Iranian assistance to the Iraqi insurgency has either decreased or stopped. At the same time, US-Iran tensions are rising. Given Iran's potential for detrimental impact both in Iraq and Afghanistan, this is not a positive development.

In contrast to US efforts in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, the Iraq situation as of summer 2007 is more fluid. Concurrent with greater US political attention, the Bush administration is devoting more military resources as well, and this gives the United States more options. In each case, however, current approaches have been relatively unsuccessful to date. A new political strategy to shape the military environment is needed.

Diffuse Global Presence Center of Gravity

Though crucially important and highly visible, Afghanistan/Pakistan and Iraq are not the only problem locales. Al Qaeda has "cells (that) operate in about 60 countries, and Islamic insurgencies exist in nearly 20."³¹⁷ A global solution is required to avoid the mistake of employing "a two-country solution to a 60 country problem."³¹⁸

Al Qaeda is a network. By design, a network is akin to a balloon. Pressure on one point will only cause the network to dissipate at the contact area. It will not only still exist, but it will expand elsewhere. Pressure must be applied holistically throughout to shrink the balloon.

To apply holistic pressure upon the Al Qaeda network, the United States has taken two steps. First, the United States has created a countering network consisting of two components - intelligence liaison relationships and public-private partnerships with technology firms. The United States uses these tools to attack Al Qaeda personnel and communications on a global scale. Second, the United States is striking unilaterally at Al Qaeda targets wherever they can be found via renditions.

Countering Network

Intelligence Liaison

The CIA has established joint Counterterrorist Intelligence Centers (CTIC's) financed mostly by the United States in more than two dozen countries in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. Foreign and US intelligence officers work side by side to track and capture suspected terrorists and to destroy or penetrate their networks. The US officers and their counterparts at the centers make daily decisions on when and how to apprehend suspects, where and how to interrogate and detain them, and how to disrupt al Qaeda's logistical and financial support.³¹⁹

This network of centers co-opting foreign security services is the essence of the CIA's strategy. Virtually every capture or killing of 3,000 suspected terrorists external to Iraq since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks resulted from this bilateral cooperation. No matter

where the information originates, the CTIC assesses it and coordinates with the local service for action.³²⁰

This cooperation has largely persisted despite other political tensions. In Indonesia, for example, the State Department doled out tiny amounts of assistance to the military when it made progress on corruption and human rights, but the CIA poured money into Jakarta and developed intelligence ties there after years of tension. In Paris, as US-French acrimony peaked over the Iraq invasion in 2003, the US and French intelligence services were creating the agency's only multinational operations center and executing worldwide sting operations.³²¹

This purposefully constrained and focused agenda focuses on common national interests, the basis for cooperation, as defined in security terms. No state benefits from being terrorized by Al Qaeda and/or its allies. At the same time, it permits competing and conflicting priorities elsewhere in the course of normal political relations.

There are no serious opponents to this approach. The existence of this program correlates with no major international terrorist attacks against the US homeland as well as with numerous foiled plots.³²² The program leverages host nation strengths - access to and understanding of their society - to US weaknesses - knowledge of and access to foreign publics. And, this program produces clearly quantifiable results that would not likely have been obtained otherwise.

Attacking Al Qaeda Communications

US efforts have been attacking Al Qaeda's communications simultaneous to detaining its members. Communications are the sinews of a diffuse network. If they can

be either interdicted or exploited, the network's members will fragment and not operate as a coherent entity.

“While terrorists plan with great secrecy, the lack of their own critical infrastructure forces them to frequently emerge from the shadows. They contact one another on mainline communications networks and the Internet. They move and launder money through established financial channels. They utilize commercial, air, rail and shipping networks...Nearly all the global infrastructure that terrorists use, exploit and could target is operated and controlled by private business.”³²³

In particular, the internet is ripe for exploitation. The anonymity upon which the terrorists are so dependent is a two edged sword. Just as actual and/or potential Al Qaeda operatives can communicate with one another in secrecy and safety, they can be engaged anonymously in secrecy and safety by the counterterrorism officials posing as terrorists. Disinformation is easily spread, internal dissension is easily created or fanned, sting operations are easily run, and terrorist information can be gathered.

The Defense Department's Partnership To Defeat Terrorism (PTDT) was created to capitalize upon this situation.³²⁴ “More than 1,000 executives of Fortune 500 companies and experts in academia have become part of what until now has been an informal PTDT network, according to a STRATCOM briefing paper. That group has been tapped more than two dozen times for assistance, the paper says.”³²⁵

The United States and its allies have leveraged their world position to co-opt the technological edge upon which the world is, and will continue to be, dependent. Public-private partnerships against such a reviled threat have allowed the state to effectively form its own network in the private sphere to counter Al Qaeda, a non-state enemy.

The combined results of the intelligence liaison and communications initiative, as earlier noted by the Department of State, have netted thousands of suspected terrorist operatives. These initiatives against this Al Qaeda center of gravity should continue. Three factors, however, suggest that the effectiveness of these efforts have plateaued.

First, the US countering network is now well established with key countries relative to combating Al Qaeda. There is little room for it to grow. This thrust made offensive headway against Al Qaeda at first by eliminating as-yet-untouched enemy forces. Now, however, this effort plays a defensive role by working against new operatives engaging in the fight vice preventing new operatives from joining.

Second, to the extent that it does grow, it will only absorb lesser actors. The key ones are already involved. The question of the cost of further dissipating US resources on new members versus the potentially marginal gain that can be ascribed from new weaker states arises.

Third, this US countering network is no longer a novel invention. It has now been around since shortly after the 9/11 attacks. Al Qaeda has had time to adapt to it and adjust its operational activity accordingly.

Renditions - A Unilateral Approach with Global Scope

While the US countering network is global in scope and emphasizes multilateral action, the US rendition program is global in scope and emphasizes unilateral action. This process involves US authorities unilaterally seizing non-US citizens abroad. In theory, this does not require the permission of the national's government and/or the government of the country in which he/she is seized.

The rendition process has existed since the 1990's, when terrorism emerged as a post Cold War concern on the international scene. It was used throughout the 1990's, though individuals were generally rendered to the United States for trial, as with Mir Amal Kansi.³²⁶ While there is little serious opposition within the United States to plucking terrorists off the streets, there is serious opposition to the current rendition program on the grounds that current rendition practices equate to torture. Under current practices, "rendered" suspects are sent not to the United States, but to either countries with bad human rights records, such as Egypt and Uzbekistan.³²⁷ Or, they are sent to secret CIA prisons, whose interrogations methods have been acknowledged to include "water-boarding" and other forms of "enhanced interrogation."³²⁸

Critics claim that the George W. Bush administration assurances that this practice is not "outsourcing torture" are false.³²⁹ The Washington Post's Dana Priest, who has broken many stories about this practice since late 2002, quoted a CIA official engaged in renditions that assurances torture will not happen are "a farce." A "US government official who visited several foreign prisons where suspects were rendered by the CIA after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, said: 'It's beyond that. It's widely understood that interrogation practices that would be illegal in the US are being used.'"³³⁰ Numerous innocent people rendered by mistake and then released describe being tortured.³³¹

From a power politics perspective, there are three main issues of concern:

First, the reliability of information obtained from torture is questionable. Anyone under sufficient duress will ultimately confess to almost anything to make the process stop. The inherent presumption in rendering people to countries other than the United States, however, is that torture will yield better results than more tame interrogation

practices permitted in the United States, where torture is constitutionally banned.

Important decisions risk being contaminated by bad information. This is not conducive to maximizing utility against one's enemies.

Second, objections are raised concerning the political damage that is incurred should these operations be exposed. The main problem is that they cannot be done with sufficient secrecy. Collaborating governments risk falling victim to domestic political fall-out from criticisms attached to the human rights and civil liberties concerns associated with the program. The electoral defeat of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi one President Bush's most stalwart supporters, for example, is significantly credited in part to his involuntary public association with and then implausible denial of assisting in CIA rendition activities.³³²

Such losses do not hold to the realist maxim of increasing power. Again, in the case of Italy, the benefit of transporting one or more terrorism suspects exacted a friendly government from power that had influence in Europe and Africa, key parts of the world for battling Al Qaeda. The costs simply outweigh the actual and potential gains.

Third, even when not directly exposed, the very program itself is controversial internationally and generates political problems for the United States. This program effectively disavows extradition treaties and puts US citizens at risk under the principle of reciprocity. Regional organizations of critical political importance with human rights clauses, such as the European Union, take umbrage and reduce overall political cooperation if any of their wide memberships are even suspected of being involved.³³³

From a raw power politics perspective, it can be argued that the risk of any harm to a terrorism suspect simply does not outweigh the probative value of his forceful

interrogation, which could save the lives of innocent Americans. This position, however, does not take full account of the political dynamics of terrorism. Moral standards, as manifested in political values, matter.

The moral standards as reflected in political values are necessary to evaluate the terrorists' political agenda. Only then can differences between the polity and the terrorists be delineated and measured. This enables the terrorists' true goals to be determined, and a policy response fashioned.

Al Qaeda's political basis differs significantly from that of the United States. Al Qaeda is rooted in religion and Middle Eastern history. The United States is rooted in the Enlightenment and Western history.

Al Qaeda's basis of legitimacy also differs. Al Qaeda seeks to reestablish the caliphate over all Muslim lands on a religious premise. The United States government's premise is the consent of the governed. Once established, Al Qaeda seeks to implement its version of Islamic law, as compared to US-style man-made laws.

Al Qaeda's permissible means of persuasion also differs. Al Qaeda views the force of arms as a legitimate means of political persuasion to advance an agenda. The United States, by contrast, emphasizes argument and reason with a historical recourse to arms only in self defense against external aggressors.

These political values impact the treatment of prisoners. As noted in chapter two, terrorism is a political contest fought in the real world with violent means. Al Qaeda terrorists are engaging in extreme activity to force extreme reactions. Their hope is to drive a wedge between a government and its people over controversial government responses not rooted in their true political values and identity, which serve as society's

glue. The terrorists hope to create exploitable disunity that will paralyze the targeted polity and give their previously un-embraced political agenda a chance. The values that underwrite political decisions are implicitly being challenged. These political values are, therefore, not just a zone of conflict. They are both the prize of the conflict as well as a strategic resource.

United State's political values, which emphasize human rights and civil liberties, do not condone the torture associated with the US rendition program. These US values are not upheld by failing to practice them. The cost of systematically violating them is two-fold.

Internally, US political standards and identity are undermined. The terrorists are forcing US society into change via illegitimate violence. An inherent part of a terrorism struggle is to avoid becoming akin to the side one is struggling against. The United States self-inflicts an intrinsic political loss upon itself.

Externally, the US strategic position is undermined. The US social and political values Al Qaeda challenges are unique, respected, and sought after the world over. Their integrity is in itself a strategic strength. Their erosion hurts US political credibility in a political struggle, and is thus a strategic liability. These values alone allow the United States to bypass other state structures and directly engage on multiple levels with the worlds' publics, the critical mass of any terrorism struggle.

The rendition program's capabilities are limited, and so it cannot be considered a strategic approach in its own right. There are numerous political considerations involved when executing a rendition, and the whole affair can go badly in terms of both operational execution and political fallout. Because this is a resource-intensive tool and

the stakes are so high relative to US political identity in the fight against Al Qaeda, a vast global network with unknown thousands of members, possible reliance upon this tool as well as its possible strategic impact are limited.

Conclusion

From the US perspective, a scattered Al Qaeda is a mixed blessing. To the positive, Al Qaeda has less capability than a unified, centralized entity that can pool and direct resources. This makes Al Qaeda less capable, and it should be easier for US forces to kill Al Qaeda's component parts. To the negative, however, it will be harder to eliminate Al Qaeda as whole because there is no central node upon which to focus. The US government must now broaden its capabilities to deal with Al Qaeda's diverse manifestations. The US response has been a three pronged approach.

The United States began by focusing on the Afghanistan - Pakistan center of gravity, Al Qaeda's traditional locus, to deprive it of sanctuary. First, the United States invaded Afghanistan to devoid Al Qaeda of its sanctuary. Second, the United States followed up by pressuring Islamabad to exert its sovereignty over the tribal areas. In contrast to the first step, the second step has been only marginally successful. This is primarily due to a combination of the internal political dynamics of Musharraf's regime, which actually make him dependent upon the Islamic militants the US is trying to combat, and conflicting US counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation goals.

The next center of gravity attracting US focus was Iraq. Though the 2003 US invasion to destroy Al Qaeda's Iraqi sanctuary was misplaced, no one denies Al Qaeda's key role in the Iraqi insurgency as of 2007. Without a stable Iraqi government, Al Qaeda

will have stateless chaos to exploit. Bush administration policy equates politically stabilizing and securing Iraq as defeating Al Qaeda.

The Bush Administration has recognized that the current political and military dynamics in Iraq are not trending toward an outcome conducive to US interests.. The United States has attempted to alter these dynamics by escalating the US troop commitment as well as threatening Iran to deter it from stoking the Iraqi insurgency. As of fall 2007, however, neither step appears to be having a significant impact.

Lastly, US efforts have been directed against Al Qaeda's diffuse global presence. The United States has employed a countering network of states to attack Al Qaeda's personnel. This continues to be a key venue for globally combating Al Qaeda. The United States has employed public-private partnerships to seize upon Al Qaeda's communications and technologically-based operational vulnerabilities. While this effort made initially significant headway, it has effectively maximized its offensive capacity and now plays more of a defensive role combating new Al Qaeda arrivals to the fight.

The United States has backed up these efforts with a unilateral extraordinary rendition program. This program is a double edged sword. On the one hand, it gives the United States a last-resort unilateral capability. The cost, however, is high, and it lacks the necessary scale to have a truly strategic impact. Domestically, this process, as currently implemented, is actually complicit in the process of terrorism and inflicts intrinsic political damage upon the United States. Internationally, this practice undermines US political standing, which is a strategic asset in the US-Al Qaeda international political struggle.

The US approach to counter each Al Qaeda center of gravity has the potential to inflict organizational harm. In each case, however, the factor that either enables or undercuts a particular technical effort, such as military action or intelligence operations, is political – US political interests, the political interests of other actors whom the United States must engage, and/or US political values – because political factors frame the situation. Generally accepted as being proficient in military and intelligence operations, the key weakness in the US approach to each of these Al Qaeda centers of gravity is therefore political. The next chapter, which will address Al Qaeda’s economic situation, will clearly expose this dynamic.

Chapter Eight

Al Qaeda Financing: The Tide Overflows the Dam

“Endless money forms the sinews of war.”
...Cicero³³⁴

“There are two things a brother must always
have for jihad, the self and money.”
...captured Al Qaeda operative (National
Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004)

“Follow the money!”
...LTC Oliver Cass³³⁵

Prior to 9/11, Al Qaeda’s finances were steady and secure. It derived sustenance from the enduring remains of its non-state anti-Soviet jihad financial network. Neither the United States nor its allies aggressively pursued Al Qaeda finances as a priority.

After 9/11, however, the United States systematically worked to dismantle Al Qaeda’s financial capabilities. The US government has rated its efforts against Al Qaeda’s financing as effective.³³⁶ It is clear that the measures taken to date have had a significant effect. In the captured 2005 letter from Ayman al Zawahiri to Abu Musab al Zarqawi, for example, al Zawahiri bemoans that “many of the lines have been cut off.”³³⁷

Despite initial success, however, US progress has stagnated. “As al Qaeda’s cash flow has decreased, so too have its expenses, generally owing to the defeat of the Taliban and the dispersal of al Qaeda” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). Because its expenses are not radically out of proportion to its resources, Al Qaeda remains financially viable, albeit at an overall lower level.

The questions to be considered are: From where does Al Qaeda get its financial support? How has the organization’s financial structure and health changed as a result of US-led efforts to squeeze the organization dry? And, what are its financial prospects?

This chapter's starting point will be an assessment of Usama's personal wealth. This chapter will then engage in a pre and post 9/11 comparison of the way in which Al Qaeda generates, handles, moves, and spends its money. Lastly, this chapter will review the steps taken against Al Qaeda financing and identify weaknesses in the US approach.

Comparatively speaking, US efforts against this key dimension of Al Qaeda's ability to sustain itself have been relatively successful. Al Qaeda is now financially hard-pressed. While effective, the existing US approaches have, however, reached their limits. Few new technical means exist to further counter Al Qaeda's adaptation to the post 9/11 financial environment. To make more headway, the United States must begin to address the political environment that give context to the technical processes it employs.

Establishing a Baseline - Usama's Finances

Usama bin Ladin's wealth is fabled. He is alleged to have inherited approximately \$300 million when his father died. He is also supposed to have garnered further unspecified millions from multiple business endeavors in Sudan. This money was believed to have been Al Qaeda's financial base.³³⁸ Usama did not personally bankroll Al Qaeda, however, because neither contention about his fortune is true (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).³³⁹

Usama bin Ladin's family's money had been greatly exaggerated. From about 1970 until 1993 or 1994, bin Ladin received roughly one million dollars per year. While no small sum, it was not a \$300 million fortune. In 1994, the Saudi government forced bin Ladin's family to find a buyer for his share of the family construction business and place the proceeds into a frozen account. This effectively divested bin Ladin of what

would otherwise have been that \$300 million fortune (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).³⁴⁰

Usama bin Ladin's Sudanese assets were also apparently greatly exaggerated. He was reputed to own 35 companies in Sudan when he lived there from 1992 to 1996. Actual ownership, however is in question, and many of the companies were small and/or not economically viable. His investments, at least in part, were designed to gain influence with the Sudanese government rather than to be a revenue source. Upon leaving Sudan in 1996, Sudan's government expropriated bin Ladin's assets and seized his accounts.

Al Qaeda Finance Pre 9/11 – Generating Income

By 1996, bin Ladin had almost nothing left.³⁴¹ Because he could not finance his organization independently, Al Qaeda had to generate revenue from external sources. The changing international climate around the time of Al Qaeda's formation dictated that states would play a declining role in international terrorism. The end of the global Cold War rivalry eliminated the need for states to fund proxy groups, though significant amounts of aid disbursed during the 1980's remained viable long into the 1990's. And, the overall political tolerance for terrorism, and the possibility that it could be justified under certain circumstances, was declining. Non-state actors rose to the fore (Gunaratna 2002b; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).³⁴²

First and foremost, individuals were Al Qaeda's mainstay. Wealthy and generous Arab benefactors, particularly Saudis, had contributed heavily. Throughout the Middle East, the jihadist cause in general, and Al Qaeda in particular, had great popularity.

Directly or indirectly, much of this money ultimately made its way to Al Qaeda and/or its subsidiaries. Donors knew that they were in some way supporting the families

of fighters. These contributors had a significant enabling influence over the operational capacity of the greater movement and its constituent organizational members.

Second, charities and non-governmental organizations played a key role. Al Qaeda exploited culture and religion to its advantage. The religious obligation to give alms, known as “zakat” in Arabic, is one of the five pillars of Islam, which are mandatory practices. This form of giving is much more broadly used and understood than in Western society’s conception of secular charitable donations as there is no conceptual civic-religious divide in Islamic society. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the Quran is officially proclaimed as the country’s constitution. Due to this intertwining of church and state, the giving of alms not only has charitable implications, but civic ones as well.³⁴³ Throughout the Middle East, zakat “functions as a form of income tax, educational assistance, foreign aid, and political influence” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Al Qaeda successfully infiltrated legitimate organizations unbeknownst to the hosts and siphoned their resources for its own illicit purposes. In the mid 1990’s, the CIA estimated that fifty Islamic charities “support terrorist groups, or employ individuals who are suspected of having terrorist connections” (Gunaratna 2002b, 83). The KindHearts association of Toledo, Ohio exemplified this type of activity.³⁴⁴

While in some cases Al Qaeda specifically targeted and penetrated specific foreign branches of large and well recognized international charities, more often than not Al Qaeda simply exploited cracks in the philanthropy system writ large, and the actual charity in question was not significant in itself. Weaknesses in oversight and organization structure in these non-profit institutions, when combined with the time and distance of global transactions to remote parts of the world, presented an easily exploitable situation

for Al Qaeda operatives to siphon money. If not done at the headquarters level, it was easy enough to do so in a remote corner of the world at the field level once donated money was received (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

In addition, Al Qaeda thoroughly co-opted existing charities. The organizations' employees, or, at a minimum, their leadership, knew that their purpose was to funnel money to Al Qaeda. Assistance, either active or passive, was present. "In those cases, al Qaeda operatives had control over the entire organization, including access to bank accounts" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). The Wafa Charitable Foundation exemplified this type of activity (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Third, Al Qaeda operated a sizable network of front companies and organizations. These were designed not just to facilitate operational activity. They were also meant to ensure that those operations were, at a minimum, self sustaining if not producing a profit. "For instance, (Al Qaeda) owned boats and had a fishing business in Mombasa; in Sweden it invested in the hospital equipment industry; in Denmark in dairy products, and in Norway in paper mills" (Gunaratna 2002b, 84).

Fourth, Al Qaeda operatives at the working level were engaged in criminal enterprises to facilitate their terrorist activities. Al Qaeda went so far as to establish a special camp in Afghanistan to train its European members in financial crime, including credit card counterfeiting. Captured training manuals provide detailed instruction in these criminal enterprises.³⁴⁵

Numerous fraud and other financial crimes cases have mushroomed into terrorism investigations. Al Qaeda operatives arrested in Jordan while preparing attacks for the

Millennium, for example, were mostly self-financed by bank robberies, burglaries and forging checks. Al Qaeda's financial network in Europe, which is dominated by the Algerians, relies heavily on credit card fraud. European security and intelligence agencies estimated Al Qaeda raised nearly one million dollars per month via this work. A British Algerian cell found in 1997, for example, raised nearly \$200,000 in six months.³⁴⁶

Despite these large sums, cell members did not live in luxury. Those committing the fraud and other financial-related crime on behalf of Al Qaeda transferred the money to banks in the Middle East and Pakistan. Al Qaeda as an organization retained control (Gunaratna 2002b).

Fifth, in some cases, Al Qaeda openly made legitimate financial investments to generate revenue. The true purpose of these legitimate businesses was to use their profits to support Al Qaeda and/or further Al Qaeda's terrorist operations. Most prominently, Usama helped to capitalize Sudan's leading bank. Usama also opened multiple other companies, such as construction firms, in Sudan in his own name.

Al Qaeda Finance Pre 9/11 – Handling and Moving Money

Acquiring money was the essential first step. Managing and dispersing these resources to ensure that they were handled safely, securely, and effectively, however, was equally necessary. Elaborate means and guidelines existed.

Terrorist operators and support staff were two separate, albeit complementary, categories of personnel. Al Qaeda support cells generated money and distributed it to operational cells, which expended the funds. Though Al Qaeda conducted operations on a global scale, its operational locales and its funding/resource acquisition locales were not

concurrent with one another. As a result, Al Qaeda constantly transferred funds within the organization around the world.

Al Qaeda managed its financial networks via a series of regional financial officers. This approach compartments both personnel and information, thereby limiting the damage to the overall network should anyone be detained. Rather than centrally selecting, training and dispatching personnel, Al Qaeda chose locally-based financial officers. Their strong sense of the local financial and political communities aided manipulating and blending witting and unwitting sources.

These financial officers adhered to five key financial security principles. First, monies were divided between operational funds, which were to be expended in pursuit of operational objectives, and support money, which was to be invested for financial return to grow more operational resources for the future. Second, operational funds were not stored in just one place. Third, access to the money was restricted, and only a necessary few had knowledge of the operational funds. Fourth, security precautions were taken when transporting large amounts of money. Fifth, when not in use, money was held by sympathetic non-members to lessen the chance of compromise. Sixth, money was only spent when necessary.³⁴⁷

Financial officers had multiple mechanisms to move money. Banks, hawala dealers, and couriers were the primary means. While charitable and non-governmental organizations played a significant role in fundraising, they played only a minor role in transferring money. Financial officers piggy backed upon established, legitimate bank, hawala dealer, and courier networks to actually move the money they collected, though

an organizational counterpart may well have been the recipient on the other end. Al Qaeda usually used a mix of these means and blended witting and unwitting participants.

Banks were a leading tool. Al Qaeda's bank account network had support accounts, which were registered in the names of Al Qaeda-controlled charities and companies, and operational accounts, which were registered in the names of either reliable sympathizers or the names of Al Qaeda members who were not publicly suspected. Al Qaeda usually transferred money from support accounts to the operational accounts through several bank accounts in order to disguise their true purpose (Gunaratna 2002b).

Al Qaeda often used highly respected Western banks. They were less subject to regulatory and intelligence scrutiny. As such, they were unwitting conspirators.

Al Qaeda also used Islamic banks to transfer funds (Gunaratna 2002b).³⁴⁸ The top 100 Islamic banks possessed a multibillion dollar global capitalization in 2000, and the annual turnover was approximately 100 billion dollars (Gunaratna 2002b). While the vast majority of banks were most certainly unwitting collaborators, several individual banks acted as witting facilitators.

The hawala system was, and remains, interwoven with the banking system. Hawala dealers, both those associated with Al Qaeda as well as hawala dealers in general, often rely on banks as a means of transferring money to other hawala dealers. For a single transaction, hawala dealers will often use both fellow hawala dealers and either the formal banking system or money remitters.

This blending of formal and informal systems is very conducive to terrorist financing. One bank in Pakistan, for example, had 1,800 to 2,000 branches, thus making

it easy for hawala dealers to move money. Terrorist operatives using hawala dealers could thus take advantage of the formal banking system one degree removed without having to actually formally register for an account, which might draw scrutiny (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Charitable and non-governmental organizations also unwittingly partook in the system to assist Al Qaeda. Organizations had accounts at banks, and these moved money for terrorists. Fund-raisers for Al Qaeda also used banks to store and move money (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Such exploitation of the banking system, either directly or indirectly, was only possible due to the underdeveloped nature of government financial regulations. Industry-imposed oversight practices in non-Western financial hubs, such as the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, were, and are, weak. Al Qaeda exploited the gap.

Of equal if not more importance than the official banking system were hawala dealers in their own right. Via a hawala dealer, a person is able to transfer money at an exceptionally small commission to friends, family, business associates, etc. A customer requests to transfer money. This is usually paid up front, but it may be paid at a later time at the hawala dealer's discretion. A hawala dealer of whom a request to transfer money is made calls a corresponding hawala dealer on the other end of the transaction, who then gives the intended recipient the "transferred amount." The hawala dealers involved in the transaction, both of whom are businessmen, then square accounts, either in cash or through subsequent business deals, at a later point.

The hawala dealer informs the customer that he will transfer the money, and that he has done so. Depending upon the details of the exchange, the level of technology in

the area, and the wealth of the two customers, the exchange may or may not be verifiable by the requesting customer in a timely manner before the bill is due. Profits are by commission.

The non-Western world's group-oriented social structure, with its particular emphasis on the extended family buttressed by clan and tribe, serves as an informal yet powerful enforcer of the trust. A violator of the trust incurs the wrath of those he wronged not just upon himself, but also upon his family and those to whom he owes, and is owed, a social obligation, which is primarily clan and tribe. Because the family, clan, and tribe would struggle under such a burden and be shamed as well, they ensure that their member adheres to the rules.³⁴⁹

The consequences of intentional malfeasance in such a trust-based, easily-violated system are severe. Unlike in a Western society where the individual is the primary social unit, one cannot begin anew by moving from one location to another due to society's atomization. If enforcement fails, an individual will be shunned. Being shunned in such an interconnected society not only prohibits prosperity, but it can effectively expel one from a region or condemn one should they choose to stay.³⁵⁰

Though informal the hawal system can handle volume. Roughly 1000 Pakistani hawala dealers processed roughly three times the exchange volume handled by the official banking system in the year 2000 (Gunaratna 2004).³⁵¹ Some of this was done in transactions as large as 10 million dollars (Wechsler 2001). In 2001, for example, it was estimated that between two and five billion US dollars would pass through Pakistan's hawala system alone.³⁵²

Because these transactions generally take place in economically underdeveloped areas, a hawala dealer's true worth is rooted not in his capital baseline, but in his personal contacts and networking. These get him access to more capital. They simultaneously expand his geographic and demographic reach, which makes him a more effective dealer.

As a general rule, neither party is provided a formal receipt stating the details of the transaction. The literacy rate in the societies where hawalas are prevalent is low, and few, if any, records are kept. When records do exist, their content, detail, and method of notation differs from dealer to dealer. There is no standardizing, regulatory government entity to oversee this sort of financial activity.

The hawala system is thus ripe for criminal and terrorist exploitation. They lack paper trails and government oversight. These circumstances are compounded by the intensely personal and discreet nature of the hawala networks.

Al Qaeda had no choice after it moved to Afghanistan in 1996 but to heavily use the hawala system as Afghanistan's banking system was antiquated and undependable. Once Al Qaeda's profile rose after the August 1998 East Africa bombings and government scrutiny of the formal financial system increased worldwide, hawals again rose in importance. "Al Qaeda used about a dozen trusted hawaladars, who almost certainly knew of the source and purpose of the money. Al Qaeda also used both unwitting hawaladars and hawaladars who probably strongly suspected that they were dealing with al Qaeda but were nevertheless willing to deal with anyone" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Lastly, couriers were a primary means of conveyance. Couriers are a secure way to move funds. Given the level of trust required, couriers were typically recruited from

within al Qaeda. Traits that could help the traveler keep a low profile, such as language skills, ethnicity, or documentation were key considerations. Practicing operational security, Al Qaeda's couriers simply carried the money without knowing its intended purpose. To further blur any traceable pattern, Al Qaeda occasionally blended hawala and courier segments into a single transaction.³⁵³

Al Qaeda Finance Pre 9/11 – Spending Income

Once Al Qaeda moved back to Afghanistan, bin Laden sought to turn it into a fully operational organization. This meant an overall increase in the volume of expenses as well as a more diverse array of expenditures as the organization fleshed out. The CIA and academic researchers estimate that Al Qaeda's overall expenditures pre 9/11 were roughly 30 to 35 million dollars per annum (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004; Gunaratna 2001).³⁵⁴ Four main expenses existed.

First, Al Qaeda had to stay in the good graces of the Taliban, who were notoriously strapped for cash. The US estimates put this annual amount, Al Qaeda's single largest expense, at roughly 10 to 20 million dollars. Over time, the Taliban increasingly relied on al Qaeda for their military needs, to include arms and vehicles, as well as social projects. In turn, the Taliban resisted pressure to expel Bin Ladin or turn him over to a third country (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Second, Al Qaeda covered expenses associated with maintaining and building the organization. These expenses included military training and support, jihadist salaries, training camp infrastructure, and propaganda (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). By the time it was fully developed, start-up costs for weapons, technology,

physical infrastructure, transportation, housing, offices, etc. were tabulated at roughly 50 million dollars.

Third, Al Qaeda strategically used its finances to create alliances with other Islamic militants around the world and broaden Al Qaeda's reach. Al Qaeda's money enabled it to establish connections with these groups and harness their members, contacts, and facilities. Not a blanket program, Al Qaeda selectively funded new groups for specific operations. On the whole, however, Al Qaeda generally provided logistical support and other operational assistance rather than money (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, 2004).

Fourth, and smallest in overall volume, Al Qaeda expended money on actual terrorist operations. Most significantly, these included the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in East Africa (approximately \$10,000), the 9/11 attacks (roughly \$400,000–500,000), the October 18, 2002, Bali bombings (around \$20,000), and potential maritime operations against oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz (about \$130,000). These centrally-directed, major attacks, however, were not the norm (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

In line with its operational dynamics, Al Qaeda functioned akin to a research foundation. Certain projects were driven, and thus funded, by the main organization. Most projects, however, were submitted from outside the organization for review with a request for funds. A few projects were selected, but most were rejected (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks).³⁵⁵ Operational funding, vice being a sustained flow of cash, was generally a frugal one-time payment limited to operational expenses

(Gunaratna 2002b).³⁵⁶ Daily living and other associated bills were the responsibilities of the operatives themselves.

Al Qaeda Finance Post 9/11 – Generating Income

The political impact of the September 11th attacks was so dramatic that it overrode preexisting political interests in the financial world that had previously staved off government oversight. New laws and regulations, at both the national and international level, were enacted that not only empowered governments around the world to take direct action, but that also required them to do so. The changed political climate not only ensured follow-through in this new regulatory environment, but it also induced governments to take political action not specifically accounted for in the legal realm.

Al Qaeda's financial structure took quick, repeated blows in short succession. Every aspect – generating income, handling and moving money, and expenditures – was markedly reduced in volume. Nevertheless, Al Qaeda has managed to adapt to its financial environment of international intelligence, regulatory, and legal scrutiny. Though hard pressed, Al Qaeda remains financially viable.

Most prominently, the post-9/11 international political environment eliminated any remaining vestiges of direct or indirect state aid. Major Al Qaeda allies, such as the Taliban, who served as a cut-out for the Pakistanis in passing aid to Al Qaeda, have either been eliminated or are under siege by local governmental authorities at US behest.

More significantly, after the September 11th attacks the US government and other governments around the world aggressively pursued and froze terrorism-related monies. Governments revamped existing financial laws, regulations, authorities, and protocols to enable quick and direct government action against terrorist funds. This crackdown

permanently altered the legal, regulatory, and political environment and made it far less hospitable to terrorist financing.

On the domestic side, President Bush publicly signed Executive Order 1324 on 23 September 2001. This order, directed against terrorist financing, focused US government efforts against “al Qaeda, Bin Ladin, and associated terrorist groups, freezing any assets belonging to the listed terrorists or their supporters and blocking any economic transactions with them” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).³⁵⁷ The US government struck a quick, hard blow that Al Qaeda either did not anticipate or was unable to respond to in a timely manner.

The Office of Foreign Assets Control moved from a counter narcotics focus and began to block terrorists’ assets. It added a host of new terrorist front, cover, and other sympathetic organizations to its existing list. At 12:01 A.M. on September 24, 2001, the freezes began, and within one month US and foreign financial institutions froze nearly \$100 million in terrorist assets. The US Office of Foreign Assets Control then released the names of 2,500 companies and individuals whose assets were to be blocked (Gunaratna 2002b). The U.S. government publicly issued additional lists of designated terrorist supporters into the winter of 2002. “The goal was to try to deprive the terrorists of money, but this approach also served to assure the general public that action was being taken in the area of terrorist financing and to keep the intelligence and world communities focused on identifying terrorist financiers” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Congress enacted numerous financial institution regulations that had been largely rejected before the attacks under the USA PATRIOT Act. These regulations, at least in

part, were designed to empower the Secretary of the Treasury to address the terrorism problem over the concerns of competing interests that had dominated prior to September 11th. The Secretary of the Treasury now had the power to name countries, institutions, or transactions found to be of primary money-laundering or terrorist-financing concern and implement new requirements that US banks more closely scrutinize their relationships with foreign persons and banks. A multitude of financial industries - insurance companies, money service businesses, broker dealers, and credit card companies — were potentially subject to a host of new requirements, including reporting suspicious financial activity on the part of their customers to the Treasury Department. Federal Reserve examiners were now tasked with inspecting banks for compliance with antiterrorism directives (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

These steps, though effective against their target, still left the larger problem unaddressed. “The United States is not, and has not been, a substantial source of al Qaeda funding.”³⁵⁸ Most Al Qaeda money was and is simply not connected to US banking entities, and so much of Al Qaeda’s money fell outside the scope of unilateral US government efforts. So, the United States also pursued international efforts. These have been both bilateral with states and multilateral via non-state actors.

Significant new multilateral norms are now in place to set standards preventing terrorist use of the formal financial system (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). With the United States as a driving force, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1373 on September 28, 2001. It mandated that member nations had to formulate laws to designate individuals and entities as supporters of terrorism and freeze their assets. Numerous additional supporting United Nations resolutions were passed.³⁵⁹

These resolutions have established sanctions and travel bans against Al Qaeda, the Taliban, affiliates, and splinter groups to clamp down on terrorist financing. New UN committees were set up to implement the resolutions.³⁶⁰ Shortly thereafter, more than 100 nations drafted and passed laws addressing terrorist financing or money laundering. As of 2006, approximately 170 nations have the legal ability to freeze terrorist assets (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

The work of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the heart of this effort. This non-governmental entity is a group of more than 30 countries and non-governmental organizations at the heart of the modern financial world.³⁶¹ FATF seeks to tighten controls on monetary and financial transfers to prevent abuse furthering criminal, and now terrorist, activity. Prior to 9/11, it had been the multilateral body responsible for setting international standards for the detection and prosecution of money laundering. In the months after 9/11, the FATF expanded its remit to include setting standards for preventing terrorist financing. It made eight recommendations, the most prominent of which included creating the ability to freeze terrorist assets, licensing informal money remitters, and regulating nongovernmental organizations (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004; Caruana and Norgren 2004). Having been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, these recommendations now carry the weight of mandatory international law.

The United States bolstered this multilateral work by engaging in bilateral diplomacy. Most importantly, it did so with Saudi Arabia, the primary source of Al Qaeda donations. Ideologically, this country is closest to Al Qaeda's prescribed religious, cultural, and political practices. Politically, Al Qaeda has great popularity amongst the

Saudi public. In terms of personnel, many of Al Qaeda's members and leaders have familial ties to the kingdom.³⁶²

The limited and inconsistent cooperation Saudi Arabia provided against Al Qaeda both before and after the September 11th attacks changed dramatically after Al Qaeda attacked Riyadh on 12 May 2003. "Saudi leadership, now finally understanding the al Qaeda threat, is by all accounts providing significantly higher levels of cooperation" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). Much of the Saudi government's efforts focus on killing or capturing terrorist operatives, but the Saudis are also moving against fundraisers and facilitators, sharing intelligence, and enacting financial controls, such as requiring that all charitable donations destined for overseas be administered by the government and banning cash donations in mosques. They have taken significant action against al Haramain, for example, a charity suspected of funneling money to terrorist organizations (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

The Saudis are also participating in a joint task force on terrorist financing with the United States in which U.S. law enforcement agents are working side by side with Saudi security personnel to combat terrorist financing. The Saudis have accepted substantial U.S. training in conducting financial investigations and identifying suspicious financial transactions in furtherance of this effort that they had previously refused. Though "Saudi Arabia likely remains the best and easiest place for al Qaeda to raise money, the Saudi crackdown appears to have had a real impact in reducing its funding. In addition, the Saudi population may feel that as a result of the attacks against their own people, they should be more cautious in their giving" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

This altering of the international financial environment has hit three of Al Qaeda's means of revenue generation hard: 1) Al Qaeda is no longer capable of openly and legitimately investing in its own name and/or via known or suspected associates, 2) Al Qaeda's front companies have been disrupted, and 3) Al Qaeda's involvement with charities and non-governmental organizations has been severely hindered.

Two critical sources of long term funding, however, remain largely intact. First, despite a heightened general political awareness and some increased attention from authorities, numerous wealthy individuals continue to contribute funding to the jihadist movement and Al Qaeda. Second, crime, effective in the past for meeting the daily expenses of Al Qaeda operatives, continues to be effective today in helping to sustain the organization's working-level networks abroad. If anything, the viability of this venue has increased post 9/11. Governments have shifted more emphasis to national level resources against classically defined terrorism. This often has come at the expense of more local police forces who engage against routine criminal behavior that, on its face, has no ostensible connection to terrorism but actually plays a key role in supporting terrorists (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Amidst the reduction of so many previous options, one new revenue stream has opened up: named franchises. Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, which is assisted by Al Qaeda in the Maghreb,³⁶³ is directly confronting US troops in Iraq via high visibility attacks. Their high publicity work has enabled them to raise funds more successfully than the more isolated, lower-visibility Al Qaeda central. As with Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, they are remitting money to the center instead of vice versa (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).³⁶⁴

Al Qaeda Finance Post 9/11 – Handling and Moving Money

Despite the multitude of government actions noted above, Al Qaeda's financial methodology and personnel structure remain largely intact. The method of transferring money, however, has changed. "The money seems to be distributed as quickly as it is raised, and (the United States government has) found no evidence that there is a central "bank" or "war chest" (to and) from which al Qaeda (reposes and) draws funds" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). Banks no longer play a significant role.

Al Qaeda and its affiliates now rely increasingly upon couriers to haul money across borders, and, as of mid 2006, "it is a trend that has accelerated."³⁶⁵ The trend began shortly after the 9/11 attacks as the world community rapidly mobilized. Trusted couriers are relied upon for significant cash transfers. When necessary, for added security, the operatives themselves avoid support personnel altogether.

Using couriers has slowed down al Qaeda's movement of money. Physically transporting money over large distances necessarily takes much longer than electronic means. There is also evidence that the limited supply of trusted couriers has caused significant delays in moving money, especially to al Qaeda operatives in distant locations. Lastly, moving funds by courier requires planning, coordination, and communication, and these things take time (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Hawala networks, while still existent, now play a lesser role. "The hawala network that existed prior to 9/11 seems to have been largely destroyed. Several of the main hawaladars who were moving money for al Qaeda before 9/11 have been detained,

and the identities of others have been revealed in seized records. Al Qaeda may have developed relationships with other hawaladars, and it most likely uses them to move some of its money” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Al Qaeda Finance Post 9/11 – Spending Income

The combination of the markedly reduced size and capability of Al Qaeda central and the drastically changed post 9/11 financial environments have combined to dramatically decrease Al Qaeda’s overall expenditures. Current US government projections assess Al Qaeda’s overall annual budget to be roughly three to five million dollars per year (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). Nevertheless, Al Qaeda remains financially viable because its expenditures are not disproportionate to its dramatically reduced expenses.

Al Qaeda no longer makes payments to stay in the good graces of the Taliban as the Taliban can no longer provide a sheltering state structure. Instead, Al Qaeda, which is publicly presumed to be hiding in the ungoverned areas of Pakistan, is now most likely providing money to local tribal chiefs and governmental authorities. Such a payment is almost certainly lower than when Al Qaeda was helping to support the Afghan state structure. Apart from the lesser need for money and a lesser developed economy in which to actually spend it, which only magnifies its effect, Al Qaeda has strong popular support throughout Southwest Asia. When combined with Al Qaeda’s propensity for violence, it is highly unlikely that Al Qaeda’s senior leadership would be extorted for protection and thus re-incur a voluminous Taliban-style rent.

There is also less existing organizational structure to maintain both in terms of personnel and physical infrastructure. Overall, personnel expenses must be markedly less

now than when Al Qaeda was in its heyday with thousands of acknowledged and documented members actively performing a multitude of military and terrorist functions. The 055 Brigade, as noted in chapter six, is significantly reduced. Beyond this, over 4000 Al Qaeda personnel have been detained world-wide, and Pakistan alone has extracted 700 from its tribal areas and cities. There are simply far fewer fighters and their families to support, though Al Qaeda still supports those remaining.³⁶⁶ Even with the reported restoration of training camps in the Pakistani tribal areas, their hidden nature means that their scale can never rival the volume formerly processed in Afghanistan.

Expenses associated with Al Qaeda's extensive physical and training infrastructure are also presumably markedly less now than when Al Qaeda was in its heyday. Al Qaeda's industrial scale physical and training infrastructure built up in Afghanistan during the mid to late 90's is now in US hands, and so it no longer needs to be maintained. Even with the reported restoration of training camps in the Pakistani tribal areas, international political pressure prevents them, and thus expenses, from demonstrably growing, for that would increase Al Qaeda's visibility and lead to its annihilation. Concurrent with purportedly hiding in the tribal areas of Pakistan, Al Qaeda can now rely upon physical and training infrastructure investments made long ago during the jihad against the Russians, thus precluding significant new building and expenses.

Third, the demand for building alliances has waned. Al Qaeda central still occasionally provides funding to other terrorist groups, particularly in Southeast Asia, but circumstances have changed.³⁶⁷ In the wake of the September 11th attacks, Al Qaeda is now an established player and is no longer seeking to make a name for itself. Many lesser groups perceive Al Qaeda to be the gold standard of terrorist entities. Amongst the

jihadist community, Usama bin Ladin is revered. This increase in political capital means that Al Qaeda has to devote fewer resources to buying influence.

Fourth, Al Qaeda is less operationally active than it was prior to the September 11th attacks, so fewer resources are being devoted to centrally-directed terrorist operations. The 18 to 24 month major attack cycle has been broken. Al Qaeda central is no longer plugged in as a fully functional terrorist command element managing day to day issues, and so it has fewer expenses in that regard. The attacks that have been witnessed have been smaller in scale, and thus cheaper to execute. They have relied more on indigenous personnel, who are generally less expensive than those Al Qaeda imports who are not integrated into society and must be supported from abroad.

Though Al Qaeda's tendency toward frugality and its grant-foundation-approach to supporting non-centrally directed terrorist activity are not assessed to have changed, the awarding of this money is now done differently. "Al Qaeda has become decentralized and it is unlikely that the Finance Committee still exists. Sa'id continues to operate, but given the difficulties of communication, it is doubtful that he exerts much control. The direction and financing of operations are now based more on personal relationships with operatives than on a management structure."³⁶⁸

Existing US Procedures to Combat Al Qaeda Finance

The financial dimension of the US government's counterterrorism campaign to reach the current level of pain it has inflicted on Al Qaeda has evolved through two stages. The initial emphasis on denial of funds has given way to the exploitation of funds. Both tacks now run concurrently.

Stage One

The first stage was to deny Al Qaeda resources and seize the low-hanging financial fruit. The post 9/11 political sea change meant that any future known and/or suspected monies could also be pursued, and thus denied to Al Qaeda. In one fell swoop, as noted earlier, in excess of 100 million dollars, the known and/or suspected Al Qaeda resources at the time, was quickly seized.

Treasury officials argued that this approach had multiple benefits. Designations, for example, prevent open fund-raising and assist in preventing al Qaeda from raising the amounts of money necessary to create the kind of refuge it had in Afghanistan, or from expending the sums necessary to buy or develop a weapon of mass destruction. Plus, freezing groups or individuals out of the world's financial systems forces them into slow, expensive, and less reliable methods of storing and moving money. Also, there is significant diplomatic utility in having the world governments join together to condemn named individuals and groups as terrorists. Wary of being publicly named and their assets frozen, donors and al Qaeda sympathizers may have become more reluctant to provide overt support (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Though symbolically and politically significant, this effort did not yield overwhelmingly tangible results in preventing terrorist attacks. It is virtually impossible to completely starve Al Qaeda of funds. Save for notable exceptions, most terrorist attacks are remarkably inexpensive to execute. "Al Qaeda can apparently still draw on hard-core donors who knowingly fund it and sympathizers who divert charitable donations to it" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). And, multiple venues for moving money outside of the formal, traceable financial system exist.

Apart from weaknesses at the conceptual level, this approach also had weaknesses at the implementation level. These weaknesses were a function of politics, process, and enforcement. Three main flaws existed.

First, the ineffectiveness of making the international financial system the primary point of emphasis is highlighted by the industry's inability to identify the intended target. Efforts within the financial industry to create financial profiles of terrorist cells and terrorist fund-raisers have proven unsuccessful. The ability of financial institutions to detect terrorist financing is limited at best.

Second, inherent conflicts between the innate dynamics of law and intelligence led to counterproductive implementation. Initial designations were undertaken with limited evidence, and some reflected more suspicion than factual evidence. Legal challenges resulted. Faced with having to defend actions in courts that required a higher standard of evidence than was provided by the intelligence that supported the designations in the first place, the United States and the United Nations were forced to "unfreeze" assets.

The problem not fully understood by policymakers was that the intelligence community "linked" certain entities or individuals to known terrorist groups primarily through common acquaintances, group affiliations, historic relationships, phone communications, and other such contacts (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). This is not the same as showing complicity in terrorism. It is far more difficult to actually trace the money from a suspected entity or individual to an actual terrorist group and prove intent. This standard is what is necessary in a court of law, the realm where challenges to financial seizures took place.

This required a wholesale change of practices for intelligence officers. During the Cold War, information was gathered over long periods of time before it ever became public, action became necessary, or both. Now, however, information not only needed to be quick and action-able, but it had to be able to survive a court challenge.³⁶⁹

Early mistakes that induced numerous legal challenges have sapped the enthusiasm of other countries to either freeze assets at all or act simply because America made a request. Multilateral freezing mechanisms now have waiting periods before money can be frozen. This change in process means that the element of surprise is gone, and so virtually no new money is actually frozen. To compound the problem, existing freezes on assets around the world have not been adequately enforced, and they have been easily circumvented, often within weeks, by simple methods (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Third, whatever success was achieved by either systemically adjusting existing global financial practices or creating new ones, however, was only tentative due to the absence of an impartial enforcement mechanism for international law that could override local political and economic concerns (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).³⁷⁰ Historically, the US financial community and some international financial institutions have generally provided US law enforcement and US intelligence agencies with solid cooperation, particularly in providing information to support quickly developing investigations, such as the search for terrorist suspects. Much of this cooperation, such as providing expedited returns on subpoenas related to terrorism, however, was voluntary and based on personal relationships. As 9/11 recedes into

history, it is an open question as to whether or not such cooperation will continue (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

Subsequent to this initial flurry of multilateral, financial-system-centric activity, the United States complemented these efforts with bilateral approaches to other states. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States were a particular focus. While problematic at first, the result has since proven moderately successful, though assigning credit to US persuasion efforts would be a dubious claim.

Saudi Arabia is crucial to fighting terrorist financing. The intelligence community has identified it as the primary source of money for al Qaeda both before and after the September 11 attacks. Fund-raisers and facilitators from throughout Saudi Arabia and the Gulf raise money for Al Qaeda from witting and unwitting donors and divert funds from Islamic charities and mosques. The 9/11 Commission staff found no evidence that the Saudi government itself or any individual senior officials knowingly are assisting or have assisted al Qaeda. De facto passive assistance is ripe, however, due to a lack of awareness of the problem combined with a failure to conduct effective oversight that has created an environment conducive to terrorist financing (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

The year 2003 was a watershed. From the 9/11 attacks through spring 2003, most U.S. officials viewed Saudi cooperation on terrorist financing as ambivalent and selective. The U.S. efforts stymied by Saudi recalcitrance suffered from the lack of a US strategy to counter Saudi terrorist financing, the failure to present US requests through a single high-level interlocutor, and US unwillingness to obtain and release actionable intelligence to the Saudis. By spring 2003, however, the U.S. government had corrected

these deficiencies. Not just a more effective U.S. message, but, more importantly, Al Qaeda operations within the Kingdom in May and November 2003 focused the Saudi government's attention on its terrorist-financing problem. Cooperation with the United States soon dramatically improved (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). Again, this newfound diplomatic cooperation is tentative, and changing political winds could dissipate it.

Stage Two

Stage One weaknesses gave way to State Two US counterterrorism efforts on the financial front, a sustained effort to "follow the money." Al Qaeda's money trails, vice being an end, can be used as a means, as a beacon, to identify terrorist operatives. Alternative approaches to these now-identified terrorist operatives can then be devised.

The complexity of Al Qaeda's handling and moving of money means that providing actionable intelligence is particularly difficult. The U.S. government's reliance upon foreign government intelligence reporting only compounds the problem. At the end of the day though, the US government can often show that certain fund-raising groups or individuals are "linked" to terrorist groups via common acquaintances, group affiliations, historic relationships, phone communications, or other such contacts. As noted, it is far more difficult to show a suspected NGO or individual actually funds terrorist groups (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004).

This type of identifying and associative information – which falls far short of legally sufficient evidence - is ideal for law enforcement and/or intelligence exploitation. After tracking tainted money as a first step, this knowledge can then be combined with

other information pertaining to known and/or suspected individuals. Independent investigations against likely terrorists can then be pursued from this indirect guidance.

Though far less visible than seizing funds, following the money is a necessary process. This approach does not unnecessarily force irreversible decisions when navigating the terrorist financing web, which is filled with both witting guilty people and the innocent unwitting. It is a long term approach that draws upon multiple sources of information, which can then be preserved for future exploitation because they do not need to be revealed in court. Over time, a holistic picture can be painted and a network can be taken down through simultaneous pressure on all nodes at once rather than selectively attacking identified nodes, which can then be replaced.

Weakness in US Procedures to Combat Al Qaeda Finance

Al Qaeda has been forced into informal systems. To raise money, it now relies primarily upon personal donors and crime. To move money, Al Qaeda depends primarily upon couriers and hawala dealers. Nearly all of this takes place beyond US shores.

Other states, therefore, are the key to access for the United States in dealing with these issues. The chief remaining venues are outside of the formal societal system. No foreign government knows the society of another country better, much less its private sphere activity, than does a society's own government. No foreign government is in a position to pursue private sphere elements of another society that are hostile to it better than that society's own government.

Two key mutually complementary weaknesses in the US approach emerge:

First, the United States is at the mercy of the capacity of foreign states. Al Qaeda's support overwhelmingly comes from the developing world. The United States is

at a systemic disadvantage in having to rely upon weak governing authorities of developing countries.

Second, the United States is at the mercy of local politics. It is the politics of the developing world that sustain Al Qaeda to begin with and enable it to strike its developed world targets – the United States and Europe. Hostile politics only further weaken whatever actual state capacity exists.

Conclusion

Contrary to popular mythology, Al Qaeda was not financed by a multimillionaire Usama bin Ladin, and so it had to develop external fundraising abilities to ensure its financial vitality. This was significant. Since Al Qaeda was and is not self sufficient, there is a window of opportunity to pressure the organization on a crucial dimension.

Prior to 9/11, Al Qaeda operated virtually unhindered. It relied upon five key means - wealthy individuals, charities, front companies, criminal activity, and legitimate investments. It exploited the formal financial system to manage its money. Its expenditures – rent to the Taliban, organizational maintenance such as salaries and physical infrastructure, lobbying payments to other organizations, and monies for actual terrorist operations - were reflective of a vibrant and growing organization.

The September 11th attacks, however, drastically changed the political environment, and this, in turn, altered the financial environment. Political interests that had kept increased government regulation at bay were swept aside, and a host of new laws and regulations, at both the national and international levels, empowered state authorities to freeze suspected monies. Unilateral and multilateral state-centric efforts have since seized millions. Policy action, both bilateral and multilateral, also followed.

The unbridled flow of terrorist money has been hemmed, and terrorists have been forced out of the legitimate financial world. Al Qaeda's money raising is now largely reduced to crime and individual donors. Its movement of money is now largely restricted to informal means, such as couriers and hawala dealers.

Nevertheless, despite being hard-pressed, Al Qaeda still remains financially viable. Its intake has been reduced. Its financial outlays, however, also appear to have correspondingly declined.

No state, no matter how powerful and totalitarian in nature, can totally dominate the private sphere, which is where Al Qaeda derives its sustenance. As long as Al Qaeda has political appeal, people will continue to give money, and Al Qaeda will have the resources to act. Whether via multilateral or bilateral means, attempting to starve Al Qaeda of money, a technical process to seize or trace funds, ultimately rests on a political cornerstone. Seizures and other punitive actions stemming from tracing the money are a race between government action and countervailing public.

Unfortunately for the United States and its allies, Al Qaeda holds the advantage. Not only does it have more operational and political agility than cumbersome state authorities bound by law, but the United States is not addressing the political currents that Al Qaeda manipulates to create bedrock of support. The ultimate potential of the technical processes of tracing and/or seizing funds is thus unlikely to ever enable fundamentally financially undercutting Al Qaeda; it will, at best, only mangle the situation. Hostile politics, which Al Qaeda will incite and manipulate, will create a buffer that will safely cap the potential US efforts. The next chapter will explore the as yet

unaddressed root of Al Qaeda financing – the politics that is driving the US-Al Qaeda terrorism struggle.

Chapter Nine

Politics and Ideology: The Yardstick of Terrorism

“He who rules by moral forces is like the pole star, which remains in place while all the lesser stars do homage to it.”
 ...Confucious³⁷¹

Terrorism is, at root, a political contest. Both the legitimate political authorities and the terrorists fight for public support. Both seek control of the political agenda.

The case of Al Qaeda presents a paradox. On the one hand, Al Qaeda should be struggling. Terrorism is universally condemned. Al Qaeda’s professed political goals garner widespread public disapproval. On the other hand, Al Qaeda survives. Al Qaeda terrorists “are being replaced as fast as we can kill or capture them... Even if they are reduced as an organization, they’ve been able to enlist...others to do their bidding.”³⁷²

This chapter will discuss how Al Qaeda has been able to continue as a viable terrorist entity and spearhead the global jihadist insurgency in the face of constant US pressure to eradicate it and in spite of the apparent unpopularity of its political agenda. This discussion will be framed by the dynamics of terrorism in the US-Al Qaeda struggle.

The United States, as the world’s dominant power, has largely shaped the political context in which the US-Al Qaeda struggle is occurring. Al Qaeda is reacting to US policy. The United States, therefore, is positioned to engineer a political solution, or at least mollify the struggle’s intensity. Implications for existing US policy will be noted.

Looking at Al Qaeda

The US-Al Qaeda struggle is, at its heart, a political contest. Terrorism is a tactic to influence this struggle’s political discourse. Competing political agendas, and thus their degree of popularity, are at the heart of the struggle.

As theory suggests, the terrorists' political agenda serves three main roles. First, it unites and defines the terrorist entity, which is an artificial creation rooted in adherence to political goals. Second, with the hope that their agenda has incipient potential for as-yet-unrealized popularity, the terrorists' agenda will serve as the beacon to rally incipient but not yet mobilized supporters to the terrorists' cause once these unmobilized people become aware of the terrorists' agenda. Third, it serves as the yard stick of political action for the terrorists' targeted population to measure the amount of further terrorism needed to persuade the targeted population to bring its political agenda into line. Conversely, in the eyes of the targeted populations, the terrorists' political agenda becomes a yardstick. It measures the probability for future violence with the chances of terrorism increasing in direct proportion to the distance the targeted public is from the terrorists' political goals.

Public Support for Al Qaeda's Political Goals and Terrorist Tactics

Al Qaeda's political goals, as laid out in chapter four, do not have widespread popular support. A 2006 Zogby poll queried Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia about support for Al Qaeda's primary political goal – a single Islamic state under sharia. Support never broke single digits.³⁷³

Despite being extremely diverse in terms of ethnicity, geography, political situation, economic situation, etc., the vast majority of the world's Muslim population is strongly unified and unequivocal in condemning terrorism. The 2002 Gallup Survey of the Islamic World showed strong majorities in eight of the nine Muslim countries polled condemned the 9/11 attacks.³⁷⁴ A spring 2007 poll by Pew and Terror Free Tomorrow (TFT) found "strong opposition" to terrorism by Muslims in seven of ten countries.³⁷⁵

Majorities in Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan and Iran say that attacks against civilians can never be justified.³⁷⁶

After initially raising its profile, and that of its political issues, Al Qaeda's terrorist acts have politically wounded it. A 2006 Zogby poll of Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia revealed mostly single digit support for Al Qaeda's "methods of operation."³⁷⁷ This sentiment has only increased the more Al Qaeda has executed post 9/11 strikes in Muslim countries.³⁷⁸ As shown by Jordan, this increased exposure has lessened support not only for terrorism, but it has also reversed support for bin Laden.³⁷⁹ More concretely, a February 2007 World Public Opinion survey of Muslim countries showed strong disapproval of "groups that use violence against civilians, such as Al Qaeda."³⁸⁰

US-Al Qaeda Struggle

Muslim Publics and US Political and Economic Values

At the end of World War II, competing political agendas amongst the Allied, which were both a reflection of and were powered by alternative political values, rose to the fore. These political differences were cast against a background of very stark power disparities. Though US naval power reigned supreme, Soviet land power dominated, and this aspect of military prowess would control the fruits of the Nazi defeat. The United States, militarily backed by its less powerful political allies, and the Soviet Union, militarily backed by both its less powerful political allies and those polities it had conquered in the name of defeating the Nazis, became embroiled in a cold war. Tensions existed on both political and hard power planes.

The United States responded with a two track approach. In the short term, the United States used its hard power assets to temporarily hold the Soviet juggernaut at bay. In the longer term, vice proclaiming an empire, the United States invoked the appeal of its political and economic values to create a rival politico-economic system that would ultimately be capable of producing sufficient hard power to counter the Soviets in a hot war if necessary. In short, the United States created a participatory system that involved, benefited, and constrained all actors, to include itself.

Politically, the United States promoted international law and embraced participatory international institutions. In doing so, the United States endorsed the United Nations, limited the use of force to self defense, and respected sovereignty. The United States also championed democracy and human rights. These positions not only offered political appeal to less powerful states whose political, and thus hard power, support the United States was attempting to win, but they both presented a stark contrast to the Soviets while simultaneously advancing US interests.

Sixty years later, US political values have permeated the world. A May 2003 Zogby poll revealed majorities in all five Arab countries surveyed held a favorable view of US “freedom and democracy” (Telhami 2002). A 2005 Gallup International poll found 78% in the Middle East, as a whole, agreed that “democracy may have problems, but it is the best form of government.”³⁸¹ Separate 2006 Pew polling found that most Muslims around the world rejected the proposition that “democracy is a western way of doing things that would not work in most Muslim countries.”³⁸² A 2007 BBC poll found that in 30 out of 32 states, people thought the UN - the world’s chief embodiment of international law, human rights, and sovereignty - is having a positive influence in the

world (Telhami 2002).³⁸³ Economically, the United States promoted private enterprise and an open international trading system. At its root, doing so was about increasing mutually beneficial participatory economic opportunity for all. In doing so, the United States backed institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Further, US foreign aid and economic policies integrated poorer countries, particularly ones with strategic value, into the US-dominated international economic system. This was done to the Soviet's exclusion, thus undercutting Soviet hard power production capability as well as weakening a potential tool for generating political appeal.

Sixty years later, these US economic tenets have been strongly embraced. In 2006, the BBC found publics in 19 out of 20 countries agreed that “the free enterprise system and free market economy is the best system on which to base the future of the world.”³⁸⁴ In December 2001, Pew found overwhelming majorities in the Middle East (81%) and Islamic states in general (81%) viewed the United States as the land of opportunity. Overwhelming majorities in the Middle East (86%) and Islamic states in general (73%) revered the scientific and technical achievements of the US system.³⁸⁵

In contrast to Al Qaeda's contention, there is not a fundamental clash in political values between the United States and the world's “Muslim publics.” In fact, there are no indications that support for these US political and economic principles that underpin the world system is declining.³⁸⁶ Al Qaeda, not the United States, is the politico-economic ideological outlier.

Global public perceptions back up this finding. Rather than clashing political values, combative and intolerant minorities, who by definition reject the inviting and encompassing US political and economic norms, were often perceived as the larger

problem. Findings in a 2006 BBC World Service poll of 27 countries found 58% of respondents in 27 countries cited intolerant political minorities as the primary source of tension as opposed to clashing political values.³⁸⁷

US Public Standing

The United States not only possesses well-regarded political values, but it is the source of those values. By this logic, the United States should be an exceptionally popular country. This is not, however, the case.

The US public image, which suffered a sharp drop with the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, continues to degrade. A 2006 BBC World Service Poll shows the average percentage saying that the United States is mainly a positive influence in the world dropped seven points from 2005 – from 36 to 29 percent – after dropping four points from 2004. Across all 25 countries polled, one citizen in two (49%) now says the US is playing a mainly negative role in the world.³⁸⁸ Negative views have risen from 46% in 2005 to 52% in 2007.³⁸⁹ Germane to Al Qaeda, a February 2002 Gallup poll when 9/11 sympathy for the United States was high found more unfavorable than favorable in all but one of the nine Muslim countries surveyed.³⁹⁰

A 2006 Chicago Council on Global Affairs poll surveyed publics around the world that represented about 56% of the world's population. In 10 out of 15 countries, the most common view was that the United States could not be trusted “a great deal”, “somewhat”, or even “not very much” to act responsibly in the world.³⁹¹ Amongst Islamic states, there is a general perception that Western nations are not fair in their stances toward Palestine in particular, or Arab and Islamic peoples in general.³⁹²

By contrast, Europe's ratings are positive. A November 2006 – January 2007 BBC World Survey poll found that, in 24 out of 27 countries surveyed, 53% worldwide say the EU's influence is positive while only 19% say it is negative. Even when EU members were excluded from the polling, 16 out of 19 non-EU countries said the EU plays a constructive role in world affairs. On average, 48% say the EU is a positive influence while only 22% say it is negative. In fact, majorities around the world prefer that Europe be more influential than the United States.³⁹³

Policies versus Values

Such disparate ratings for two entities of the same highly respected value sets begs the question of why. Policy, which is either an implicit expression of values manifested in interests or a direct implementation of values, as opposed to the values themselves, is the issue. Given the dichotomous US-European approval ratings, US policies, not Western policies, are the point of objection.

Polling supports this contention. Pew's December 2001 survey of opinion makers in Islamic states found, to the tune of 76%, that "most/many people believe" that US policy caused the 9/11 attacks. Within the Middle East, a vast majority (81%) of opinion-makers stated that "many/most people believed" US policies vice values were the problem.³⁹⁴

A March 2002 poll in Saudi Arabia, a relative hotbed for Al Qaeda support, queried Saudi elites about their source of frustrations with the United States; the poll found that 86% saw US policies as the source of their frustrations. Amongst the general public, 59% identified "policies" as the cause whereas only 19% identified "values" (Telhami 2002). A 2006 BBC World Service Poll across 27 countries found Muslim

respondents overwhelmingly cited “conflicts about political power and interests” over “differences of religion/culture” as the “cause of Islam-West tensions.”³⁹⁵

Three key policy disagreements stand out:

First, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is a highly visible point of contention. A 2001 Pew survey of opinion-makers found that while a range of non-Islamic societies spanning from 36% in Asia to 7% in Latin America cite US support for Israel as a major reason for not liking the United States, the global average is 29%. By contrast, 57% of opinion-makers in Islamic countries in general and the Middle East in particular cited US support for Israel as a major reason for disliking the United States.³⁹⁶ Even in places where US support for Israel is not a front line issue and most people register a particular sympathy for neither side, such as Western Europe, the underlying current amongst those who do express a sympathy favors the Palestinians.³⁹⁷ The US policy stance on the issue is simply not in concert with the rest of the world.

In spring 2001, when noted Middle East scholar Shibley Telhami polled “five Arab states – Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Egypt – public attitudes on this question were decidedly clear. In the first four countries, about 60% of the respondents identified the Palestinian conflict as the ‘single most important issue’ to them personally, while about 20% more said it was among their top three issues. In Egypt, 79% identified it as ‘the single most important issue’” (Telhami 2002, 98).

This issue has applicability throughout the Muslim world. In spring 2002, approximately 2/3 of all Arab countries queried in a subsequent survey stated that the Palestinian question was either “the most important” or a “very important” issue confronting the Arab world. A similar rate of agreement was found in Pakistan and

Indonesia, two of the most important non-Arab Muslim states (Zogby International 2003).³⁹⁸

Second, the US war in Afghanistan has been generally unpopular around the world, especially in the developing world, Al Qaeda's primary emphasis. The March 2002 Gallup Poll of the Islamic world found a majority in every country viewed US military action in Afghanistan as either "largely or completely morally unjustifiable."³⁹⁹ A majority of respondents in more than half of the countries actually viewed the US military actions in Afghanistan as less defensible than the 9/11 attacks.⁴⁰⁰ The remainder of the developing world, especially Latin America and Africa, also opposed the war.⁴⁰¹

Only Europe differed. An April 2002 Pew poll showed support was highest in Great Britain, which revealed a 73 percent approval rating and an 18 percent disapproval rating. Larger minorities in France, Germany, and especially Italy dissented, but majorities in all three nations agreed with the US and Britain.⁴⁰²

Third, the US invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq has strongly piqued potential supporters and adherents of Al Qaeda. A 2006 BBC World Service poll of 27 countries showed an overall average of 76% disapproval of how the US is handling the Iraq war.⁴⁰³ Subsequent to the US invasion, the overall volume of global terrorism has skyrocketed. "Comparing the period before the war (Sept 12, 2001 to March 20, 2003) and the period since, there has been a 607% rise in the average yearly incidence of attacks – and a 237% jump in the fatality rate."⁴⁰⁴ Not only have fatal jihadist terrorist attacks around the world as well as the number of civilians killed in those attacks risen sharply since the US invasion of Iraq, but analysis also shows that terrorism is not becoming more geographically focused. "Even after excluding (Iraq and Afghanistan),

there has been a 35% rise in the number of terrorist attacks globally and a 25% increase in attacks on Western targets.”⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, Al Qaeda has increasingly attacked US allies, both European and Middle Eastern, since the US invasion.⁴⁰⁶

Perceptions of Muslim Publics of the United States

The US “war on terror” writ large is roundly disapproved of by global public opinion. The world’s reaction has not, however, been uniform. Unfortunately for the United States, the segments most crucial to enabling terrorism are the ones least supportive.

A December 2001 Pew poll found nearly three fourths (74%) of opinion-makers in the Middle East and nearly two thirds (59%) of opinion-makers in Islamic states in general thought that the war on terrorism against Al Qaeda was worth fighting even if it potentially destabilized Muslim states. A vast majority (85%) of Americans were willing to chance destabilizing authoritarian Muslim regimes to combat Al Qaeda. A strong majority (61%) of Europeans were also willing.

The United States, however, is strongly suspected of having ulterior motives by the world’s Muslim publics. A December 2006-February 2007 popular survey in Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, and Indonesia found that, on average, 79% say they “definitely / probably” perceive the weakening and dividing of the Islamic world as a US goal. At the same time, 79% also claim that the United States is trying to maintain “control over the oil resources of the Middle East.” A sizeable majority (64%) even believe it is a US goal to “spread Christianity in the region.” People in the Islamic world clearly perceive the United States as being at war with Islam.⁴⁰⁷

The perception of US ulterior motives has caused public sentiments favoring some of Al Qaeda's interim political objectives. The December 2006-February 2007 popular survey in Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, and Indonesia noted above found that an average of 70 percent or more in each country support Al Qaeda's intermediary objectives of pushing the US to remove its bases and its military forces from all Islamic countries and pressuring the United States not to favor Israel. Substantial numbers also favor attacks on US troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in the Persian Gulf. Approximately half support such attacks in each location while 3 in 10 are opposed.⁴⁰⁸

Perceptions of Muslim Publics of Al Qaeda

Despite its terrorist tactics and widespread lack of political approval, Al Qaeda is sufficiently popular to remain viable despite being hunted by almost every state in the world. The 2006 Zogby poll found that Al Qaeda was perceived by a small but still notable percentage of respondents as standing up for Muslim causes (Lebanon 7%, Egypt 12%, Jordan 16%, Morocco 18%, the UAE 29%, and Saudi Arabia 20%).⁴⁰⁹ Second, and more importantly, Al Qaeda was more strongly perceived as confronting the United States (Lebanon 18%, Egypt 33%, Jordan 38%, Morocco 34%, the UAE 28%, and Saudi Arabia 36%).⁴¹⁰ "Arabs may deplore (Usama's) violence, but few will not feel some pull of emotions. Amid Israel's brutality toward Palestinians and American threats toward Iraq, at least one Arab is prepared to hit back" (Fisk 2002).

Possibilities for the Future

Despite adverse perceptions of the United States and its actions, all is not lost. December 2001 Pew polling reveals that opinion leaders in both the West and Islamic countries rejected the idea the 9/11 attacks would trigger a major cultural clash pitting the

West against Islam.⁴¹¹ A subsequent 2006-2007 BBC World Service poll of 28,000 respondents across 27 countries backed these initial post September 11th findings. It found less than one third (28%) thought violent conflict was inevitable while more than half (56%) thought “it is possible to find common ground,” the most common response in 25 countries.⁴¹² A February 2007 BBC poll found that, on the whole, while 28% of all respondents thought “violent conflict is inevitable,” twice as many (56%) believe that “common ground can be found.”⁴¹³ Overall, 35% of Muslims felt that “violent conflict is inevitable” while 52% said that “it is possible to find common ground.”⁴¹⁴ “Most people around the world clearly reject the idea that Islam and the West are caught in an inevitable clash of civilizations.”⁴¹⁵

Implications for the US-Al Qaeda Struggle

These findings create the underlying political bedrock upon which the US-Al Qaeda struggle plays out. Either party ignores these political dynamics to its peril. Three key themes emerge when these findings are contrasted with terrorism’s dynamics:

First, the United States is inadvertently helping Al Qaeda resonate and foster unity amongst its ranks on a global scale. Al Qaeda is an ethnically diverse transnational terrorist organization whose central node associated with Usama bin Ladin is experiencing weakening suzerainty over both the organization itself and the greater jihadist movement writ large. While the United States and Al Qaeda are in an enduring conflict with mutually exclusive goals, the three main issues of contention outlined above, especially when associated inflammatory policies (e.g. the US military presence in the Middle East, the US handling of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon, and the burgeoning US-instigated US-Iran crisis) are added, are uniquely potent.⁴¹⁶ They serve as

political glue for Al Qaeda because they resonate among disenchanted, angry, or otherwise dissatisfied Muslim groups from Morocco to Jakarta. These US policies unite a transnational terrorist entity espousing a pan-Islamic identity in an age of nationalism to internally unite and focus otherwise disparate, albeit not unrelated, forces against the United States.

Second, Al Qaeda is harnessing and co-opting the political outrage of disenchanted, angry, or otherwise dissatisfied Muslim groups around the world. Its goals will never be realized. The world's Muslim publics do not support and will never rally to its vision. Al Qaeda derives its popularity, and thus its potential for operational viability, not by struggling against US values, but by struggling against the US policies that the world's publics do not view as being in line with those values. The world's publics are not pro Al Qaeda, but rather anti United States.

While this situation is unfortunate, it also gives the United States the initiative. As the leader of the international system, the United States, however, largely controls its own destiny. It has significant political leverage over Al Qaeda and can politically undercut it. In contrast to the clash of civilizations thesis, the intensity of any conflict between the United States and various Muslim, particularly Arab, polities will be governed by clashing national interests.⁴¹⁷ These can be massaged, manipulated, and even resolved as compared to enduring socio-cultural politics.

Critics will argue that any political change in response to terrorism is giving in to and empowering the terrorists. To the extent that a country caves to the terrorists and is violating its own self-defined national interests simply to stave off another attack, such a

contention is entirely correct. Such an act is knowingly and intentionally subjugating oneself to terrorist demands.

Another side of the coin also exists. In the wake of a devastating terrorist attack announcing the emergence of a serious, potent, long-term, self-declared terrorist enemy, the international political and strategic landscape has been altered. A new international environment requires a reassessment of a nation's national interests in response to a new international context. Any actions that are then taken in line with newly defined national interests in response to events are a prudent evolution of national policy recognizing new realities. It is only "giving in to terrorists" if a state acts counter to its self-defined interests in the new international context even if redefined in response to the new threats.

The only other option is to continue the same policies as prior to the threat's onset and attempt to quash terrorists via force. Relying solely on force has the possibility of success against a very weak and isolated terrorist group, for its political appeal is likely to have been low and it would likely have been doomed to failure anyway. Eliminating the membership may effectively squelch the political current it embodied. A capable group speaking to potent political currents, however, is highly unlikely to be undone. The underlying political currents ensure that the political energy embodied by a terrorist entity will continue beyond any particular membership set at any one point in a group that manifests it. Al Qaeda is such a group.

Terrorism is most effective when there is an incipient yet unrealized potential for the terrorists' political agenda that terrorist violence can awaken and mobilize. The US population, Al Qaeda's main target public, however, has firmly rejected Al Qaeda in both form and substance. The audience for Al Qaeda's actions, potential supporters coming

primarily from Muslim publics in different countries from whom Al Qaeda hopes to derive terrorism's secondary benefit of rallying assistance from potential adherents and supporters, however, rejects both Al Qaeda's political goals and its means of achieving them. Popularity is the currency of survival in the global jihadist insurgency, and Al Qaeda, if left to its own devices, rapidly depletes its stock. It is only by rallying against US actions, which are perceived as a greater evil, that Al Qaeda gains traction with its potential adherents and supporters.

Third, as of 2007, the perceived discrepancy in the eyes of Al Qaeda's potential adherents and supporters between US actions and self-professed US values hampers the US ability to deal with terrorism on a political level in the long run because it deprives the United States of both popularity and credibility.⁴¹⁸ Short term success can be gained by yoking foreign state structures. As outlined in chapter seven, that has been done since 2001. The dynamics of terrorism, however, dictate that long term success can only come by winning popular support not just among the public targeted by the terrorists, but also among the public with whom the terrorists seek to have an audience and upon whom they depend for survival. This audience is where Al Qaeda lives and from where Al Qaeda draws its recruits. Only the public can refuse Al Qaeda sanctuary and/or cooperate with state authorities. No US effort focused on a culturally-based terrorist entity from a specific realm of world society can succeed with so little support from that realm.

Fortunately for the United States, the US actions that draw international ire are clearly delineated. Not only are they identified, but the gap between the action itself and the popularly embraced US values at issue are relatively obvious. The way ahead for

gaining popular support, either by actually enacting steps that manifest a popularly embraced US political value and/or at least giving the appearance of doing so, is evident. Each of these situations are either of US making, or the United States can bring to bear significant leverage against the issue. As the leader of the international system, the United States is in the position to marry its power to popularly-accepted political values in service of the US national well being.

Conclusion

US political and economic values have permeated the international system since World War II, and they are now highly respected. They set a yardstick by which to measure both policy ends and means. Yet, the United States remains deeply unpopular.

From the perspective of Al Qaeda's actual and potential adherents and supporters – disenchanted, angry, or otherwise dissatisfied groups throughout Muslim countries - US policies are to blame. Major US actions post 9/11, (e.g. the US invasion of Iraq, the perceived US disregard for human rights, perceived US unilateral tendencies) have generated resentment. This is so not because of any significant differences in political values amongst the culturally disparate combatants in the US-Al Qaeda struggle, but because of the the differing political power and interests beneath the surface of the sea of common political values and the way those interests are furthered in conflict with self-professed US political values. The United States self-inflicted damage to US credibility and legitimacy. In a political struggle like terrorism, these are gaping wounds.

Al Qaeda - whose own agenda and means of pursuing it is highly unpopular with both the United States, its target audience, and the world's "Muslim publics" with a particular emphasis on the disenchanted, angry, and dissatisfied components, a secondary

audience from whom it hopes to rally support – capitalizes on this situation. It shrouds its own agenda in opposition to US policies. The support that Al Qaeda receives is thus largely not pro Al Qaeda. Rather, it is an expression of anti-US sentiment, and Al Qaeda is simply the instrument of that expression.

Per the dynamics of terrorism, force cannot be used to solve what is inherently a political conflict. Only politics can achieve a lasting, stable solution. The current, state-centric US approach can yield short term gains, but it is not a long term strategy. To simply try to muscle the problem is not prudent policymaking because it is not taking account of political realities driving the situation. Such an approach ensures the struggle will continue, and time is not on the US side given that Al Qaeda is presumably seeking weapons of mass destruction and ever more potent means of attack. Responding with force alone all but guarantees future US casualties.

The United States must narrow Al Qaeda's political, and thus operational, breathing space and defeat it in the long run. The polling lays out the path to follow. The United States can do this by paying greater heed to the appearance of, it not actually adhering to, popularly embraced US political values in the formulation and execution of US policy on issues directly or indirectly relevant to Al Qaeda.

Despite generally unfavorable views of the United States, there is still a general public sentiment around the world that peaceful accommodations can be made in disputes with the United States. This is significant as it shows the United States is not inherently hated. The United States is not doomed from the start, and the raw potential for the United States to garner international political support exists.

The next chapter is this dissertation's final analysis and recommendations. It will place these political sentiments, which permeate all of the previous dimensions, in the context of the greater US effort. In doing so, it will explore the relationship between political values and power in the US-Al Qaeda terrorism struggle and submit policy recommendations to help guide future US actions.

Chapter Ten

Final Analysis and Recommendations

“Take the diplomacy out of war and the thing will fall flat in a week.”

...Will Rogers⁴¹⁹

“Strategic theory must...study the engagement in terms of its possible results and of the moral and psychological forces that largely determine its course.”

...Carl Von Clausewitz (1976, 177)

In chapter one, the hypothesis was offered that the failure of Coalition forces to quickly subdue Al Qaeda as was suggested would occur in the first months of the war is a result of the US government’s failure to place sufficient emphasis on the US-Al Qaeda struggle’s political dimension. In effect, the Administration’s heavy emphasis on hard power tactics to the near exclusion of soft power political ones weakened the ability of the US to effectively deal with Al Qaeda. In fact, the July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate states a rejuvenated Al Qaeda now places the United States in a heightened threat environment.⁴²⁰ The US approach to date emphasizing force to capture and/or kill Al Qaeda members has failed to eliminate the security or political threat to the United States posed by Al Qaeda. The obvious questions are: Why? What are US options?

A hard power approach is necessary. Only hard power can dismantle Al Qaeda’s operational capability, the source of Al Qaeda’s security threat, and thus its ability to induce political harm. For the United States to effectively and efficiently apply hard power, however, the US approach to Al Qaeda must move beyond tactical concerns, wherein the dynamics of terrorism systemically disadvantage US efforts, and look to manipulate the political context that frame, and can empower, US hard power actions.

A comprehensive US approach must engage the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension, its most malleable aspect. Internationally, the United States must examine and exploit both the internal nature of Al Qaeda as a political actor as well as the interaction present between Al Qaeda and the foreign populace of disenfranchised, angry, and otherwise disaffected Muslims upon whom it relies for political support, which translates into recruits, money, and operational assistance. Domestically, the United States must examine its Al Qaeda-related policies, both in decision-making and implementation, to ensure they are consistent with traditional US political values. This defends the US political character, which terrorism seeks to subvert by inducing controversial and unsustainable political choices incompatible with the US political identity. By extension, this also improves US public standing and credibility, which better enables the United States to engage both foreign states and foreign publics, because traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases are widely embraced.

Al Qaeda has reaped both political and operational success stemming from the nearly exclusive hard power US approach. Politically, the United States has self-inflicted wounds from undertaking and sustaining policies inimical to the US political character (e.g. extralegal detention, illegal wiretapping). Domestically, this gives the phenomenon of terrorism traction by subverting US politics. Internationally, US political standing and credibility are hurt, and this translates to reduced US leverage. Operationally, US political tone-deafness exacerbated by political non-engagement has further enraged the foreign populace upon whom Al Qaeda depends. Its operational capacity has managed to rejuvenate despite ongoing US efforts as US hard power efforts against Al Qaeda's financing and organizational capacity have been undermined. Because the conflicting US

and Al Qaeda political agendas, the struggle's driving force, remain untouched, the struggle's duration is lengthened, and this only favors Al Qaeda.

Traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases – the rule of law, a participatory political system emphasizing the importance of international institutions, and democratic values, such as human rights – give US leadership global legitimacy. This is crucial for US efforts to combat a non-state adversary wherein the actions and attitudes of the general population beyond the purview of the state's coercive power is a crucial factor. The current US tack undermines itself by insufficiently accounting for this political aspect in forming and executing US policy. Guided by traditional US political values, the United States gains both political and hard power national advantage via engaging the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension

US-Al Qaeda Struggle Synopsis

The US-Al Qaeda struggle, as noted in Chapter Two, is a conflictive dyad. Al Qaeda is a religio-political non-state transnational terrorist network composed of members from every Muslim society. An agitator to the world system, its political purpose is its internal cohesive. More than just a terrorist group, Al Qaeda presents itself as the organizational manifestation of a minority yet ever-present strain of Islamic jurisprudence that emphasizes melding thought with action to spread a purified Islam via armed jihad to reform and govern humanity. By contrast, the United States, a nation-state with multiple political, social, and economic bonds rooted in classical liberalism, is the international system's military, economic, and political leader.

As explained in Chapter Four, the conflicting political agenda of the United States, to structure and remain atop the world system, and that of Al Qaeda, to adjust the world system to restore the Caliphate era, are manifested in mutually exclusive interests. In particular, the United States is reliant upon the Middle East in general, and the Persian Gulf specifically, to meet its energy needs in an economically feasible manner. Al Qaeda views current arrangements as economic exploitation of Muslim natural resources at Muslim expense. To facilitate this arrangement, the United States has placed US forces in the region and backed authoritarian regimes. Al Qaeda views US forces as the tools of US imperialism and US-backed authoritarian regimes as traitorous surrogates for US power. Lastly, the United States makes no serious active effort to combat other world powers, such as Russia and China, who repress their Muslim minorities. Because the United States claims to be a model of human rights while also being the most powerful country in the world, Al Qaeda equates the failure of the United States to prioritize the plight of this repression and the US failure to redress it, an act which runs counter to self-professed US political values, as tacit US endorsement of these states' behavior.

The US-Al Qaeda struggle is likely to be a long one. Enabling and reinforcing the terrorism struggle, the political ideologies of the United States and Al Qaeda are in direct opposition. Further, the stations in the international system of the United States and Al Qaeda are in direct opposition, a situation in which the disproportionately strong US world position actually encourages challengers to go beyond accepted formal procedures, which is where US power and influence is weakest. Driving the US-Al Qaeda struggle, the United States and Al Qaeda have conflicting, mutually exclusive political agendas manifested in disagreement over the employment of US political, economic, and military

power. The enduring US economic interests that tie it to Persian Gulf oil, and the necessary supporting military and political arrangements to facilitate this US need, are rooted in a global politico-economic system underwritten by US military power. Neither the general outlines of the world's natural resource based politico-economic system nor the predominance of US military power are likely to alter in any significant way in the short to medium term. This situation creates a self-perpetuating loop of political conflict because the sustainment of current arrangements further riles Al Qaeda's enduring religio-political philosophy, which is only antagonized by the increasing impact of globalization, while the grievances of those oppressed by this system, the very people upon whom Al Qaeda depends, only grow with time.

Though its goals and objectives have largely remained constant, as noted in Chapter Four, Al Qaeda has varied its strategy over time in response to events. It initially emphasized attacking the "near enemy" by launching guerilla and terrorist campaigns against regimes victimizing Muslims around the world. By the late 1990's, however, a more developed Al Qaeda shifted its efforts to the United States, the "far enemy," on the theory that it would be more effective and efficient to buckle the international system's main support column, thus causing the entire structure to collapse (Najm). While Al Qaeda has had to diversify its targeting to include US allies in order to dissuade them from contributing to the post 9/11 US effort, and thus adjust the balance of power more to its favor, Al Qaeda has essentially kept its US-centric focus. Iraq and Afghanistan have become the centerpiece of Al Qaeda's efforts. They present not only an opportunity to create a chink in the international system as a state sanctuary, but also a chance to strike

directly at US forces. Al Qaeda knows that time is on its side, and the longer the struggle continues, the more the economics of the fight favor it.

The United States, as noted in Chapter One, has chosen a two track response to 9/11. On one hand, the United States has precisely identified the enemy as the Al Qaeda network and any state sponsors that assist it. The United States is using its military power to destroy this target set. On the other hand, the United States has attempted to politically isolate Al Qaeda by declaring it separate from mainstream Islam. The United States has attempted to blunt Al Qaeda's political impact, and thus stunt the terrorism process, by refusing to engage the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension. Conceived and implemented only after 9/11, this two-track US approach to countering Al Qaeda has been implemented via two consecutive parts.

Part I, the initial US reaction to the 9/11 attacks, directly centered on combating Usama bin Laden's Al Qaeda. This process, as described in Chapter Seven, has consisted of three main actions. First, the United States invaded Afghanistan to depose the Taliban government and then attempted to secure its gains by instituting a democratic government as a bulwark against the revival of a terrorist state while working with Musharraf's Pakistan to capture and/or kill fleeing Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership. Second, the United States has attempted to capture Al Qaeda's membership around the world through a series of bilateral intelligence liaison relationships coupled with a rendition program to either detain suspects unilaterally and/or interrogate suspects in a manner not acceptable under US law. Third, the United States has devised an alternative prison system beyond the purview of the US judicial system to detain and interrogate Al Qaeda's leadership.

Hard power progress has been made. Thousands of terrorism suspects have been detained. Multiple terrorist plots have been disrupted. No new 9/11-scale attacks have hit either the United States or its allies.

Though far from eliminated, the Al Qaeda organization, as explained in Chapter Six, is a shadow of its former self. It has had to decentralize and rely increasingly on impersonal computer-based communication at the expense of internal cohesion and organizational development. Al Qaeda affiliates, such as Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, backed by associated groups and individuals now play the main frontline role. This operational diffusion has altered the political balance within the greater jihadi movement, and it has reached the point where the certainty of Usama bin Laden's control over both his organization, as well as the greater jihadi movement, is of dubious certainty.

The US administration also ordered a public relations campaign to accompany these hard power steps to improve US public standing. This initiative, however, failed miserably. Rather than focus on the policy issues reflecting US interests that generated resentment against the United States, such as the US military presence in the Middle East and US support for the Israeli occupation of the Palestinians, this public relations campaign touted US political values. The increasing divergence, however, between US political values of democracy, law, and human rights and US policy actions of backing dictatorships, supporting Israeli acts against the Palestinians perceived by much of the world as repression, acting unilaterally in contravention of international law, and arguably violating human rights through US detention and interrogation policies deprived the United States of its political credibility. The United States could not be its own spokesman. The program was soon cancelled.

Part II, which has been in progress since the military situation in Afghanistan stabilized in fall 2002, is expanding US military action under the guise of combating Al Qaeda. To date, it has consisted of two steps. In contrast to Part I, however, US focus has become blurred. These US policy steps are not only slowing Al Qaeda's descent, but they are also unwittingly helping Al Qaeda to rejuvenate.

The first step involved invading Iraq by asserting Saddam Hussein's actual and/or potential involvement with Al Qaeda and weapons of mass destruction – arguments to which a traumatized post 9/11 US public was readily receptive. The US invasion of Iraq, however, was counterproductive to combating Al Qaeda. Internationally, not only did Al Qaeda organizationally expand to combat US forces in a new theater of operations, but overall recruiting increased. Al Qaeda gained a de facto sanctuary in the chaos of Iraq. The US resources now tied up in Iraq are not available to confront Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and elsewhere. And, global public opinion, particularly in Muslim countries crucial to Al Qaeda's support, has swung against the United States. Domestically, the US public is no longer unified, thus limiting the US government's freedom of action.

As of 2007, the US effort in Iraq is faltering. As evidenced by the establishment of a new democratically elected government, some progress has been made. Underlying trends, however, are not positive. The Iraqi economy is anemic. The security situation is slowly deteriorating. And, the Iraqi political system is gridlocked. The United States simply does not have the force presence necessary to defeat the Iraqi insurgency.

At the same time, the US effort in Afghanistan is also faltering. As shown by the establishment of a democratically elected national government and a national army, progress has been made. As with Iraq, however, underlying trends are not positive. The

Afghan economy, though growing, is drowning in opium production unequalled in Afghanistan's history. The Taliban have revived, and the security situation is deteriorating. And, the Afghan political system, while apparently established, is losing public support due to corruption and an inability to deliver services. The United States simply does not have an adequate force presence to help enforce the writ of the Afghan national government and defeat a Taliban-led, Al Qaeda-backed insurgency.

In order to consolidate strategic US gains in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has engaged in the second step to date, raising tensions with and intimidating military action against Iran. The Administration sees Iran as holding a decisive position vis a vis US success in both Iraq and Afghanistan as well as other US regional interests, most notably Israel's security. With Saddam Hussein's Iraq gone and US forces stretched too thin for decisive action elsewhere, Iran is now the regional power. It can needle US interests not just in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in Lebanon and Israel via Hezbollah and in Palestine via Hamas.

Iran has become the regional US foreign policy issue prism, and the United States is working with the Israelis and the Saudis to counter a mutually-perceived Iranian threat. This has resulted in four political understandings. First, Israel's security is assured. Second, as a concession to US Arab allies, the Israeli-Palestinian issue should be elevated in importance. Third, the United States will work to counter general Shiite ascendance throughout the Middle East, which the Administration perceives as a proxy force for Iranian interests. Fourth, using Saudi Arabia as a proxy, the United States is working to weaken the Syrian regime by stoking and channeling Sunni jihadists against it.

This US focus shift, however, makes combating Al Qaeda a function of countering Iran, a state with whom Al Qaeda is not inherently bound. In Iraq, pressuring Iran entices it to either intensify the insurgency militarily through increasing lethal aid to and/or leveraging Iraq's Shiites against the United States politically by enabling their defiance against US-backed national reconciliation efforts. This scenario perpetuates Iraq's internal chaos and thus provides Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia a de facto sanctuary amidst the sectarian conflict in territory bereft of central government control. The US attempts to direct Al Qaeda-styled jihadists against Iranian allies Hezbollah and Syria is akin to the 1980s US policy of trying to yoke jihadist zeal against the Soviets in Afghanistan. As then, the United States is stoking a potent enemy. The certainty of US control, however, is a very open question as the effort rests on the questionable premise that the jihadists view Shiites in general, and Iranians in particular, as a worse and more immediate enemy than the United States and its allies.

As with efforts to counter Al Qaeda organizationally, the US efforts to counter Al Qaeda's financing, as detailed in Chapter Eight, achieved initial success but have since atrophied. In the wake of 9/11, the United States seized millions of dollars of suspected terrorist financing. Unfortunately, errors were made, and the subsequent safeguards have effectively rendered this tool moot. The follow-on approach, tracing terrorist money via intelligence work vice law enforcement, has yielded increased data. This tool, however, ultimately rests on the political will of other states to then act upon the information.

All technical means of interdicting Al Qaeda's financing – whether seizing money or tracing it – ultimately rests on a political cornerstone. People will continue to give to Al Qaeda so long as it has political support. Governments only act with political support.

The problem, as illustrated in Chapter Nine, is that Al Qaeda, despite having little political support for its own agenda, has been able to co-opt the global anger directed at the United States. Al Qaeda has cast itself as one of the lone antagonists willing to challenge US power. Though its terrorism is roundly disapproved, Al Qaeda's violence and political tirades gives voice to peoples' frustrations against a common enemy.

As of 2007, US political credibility is ebbing. Though US political values that have taken root in the international system since World War II are broadly revered the world over, multiple US policies are highly unpopular with foreign publics, particularly the disenfranchised, angry, and otherwise despondent segments of Muslim societies that have not reaped as many benefits from globalization as the United States. In particular, relatively unwavering US support for harsh Israeli treatment of the Palestinians has been criticized the world over for apparent US hypocrisy regarding the rule of law and human rights. Since 9/11, the US invasion of Iraq has inflamed tensions not just because of the cultural impact of a Western nation invading an Arab one, but also because the war was unilaterally launched in contravention of international law by sidestepping multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and then conducted in a manner that often appears callous toward the lives of innocent Muslim civilians. The US capture and treatment of terrorism suspects, which is generally perceived to violate human rights and international law, also incites resentment. Because of the broad and perpetuating gap between lofty US political principles and US policies, the power of US words is weak. Only US policies that clearly demonstrate not only new US behavior but also differing results on these and other contentious issues are likely to have any appeal.

Way Ahead

Proposed US Political Focus in the US-Al Qaeda Struggle

Because Al Qaeda is a transnational, non-state actor, the world's publics, vice governments, are the core audience to which the United States must cater. It is this center of gravity in which Al Qaeda incubates and draws operational support. Though the United States has largely co-opted state structures around the world, it is this particular global non-state audience that the United States has most alienated. This audience cannot be controlled through force of arms. Only creating and preserving a perception of the legitimacy of US rule through the appearance of adhering to globally revered US political values – most notably a participatory political system, the rule of law, and human rights – can this perception of legitimacy be created and sustained.

Proposed US Objective in the US-Al Qaeda Struggle

The United States must seek to manage the US-Al Qaeda struggle, not eliminate Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is an organizational manifestation of a school of religio-political thought that cannot be eradicated. Its followers self select into membership. The necessary hard power steps to possibly thoroughly destroy such a body of thought by eliminating all of its actual and potential followers would so trample US political values in the process that it would only increase Al Qaeda's political appeal, and thus indirectly increase its capacity for violence.

Therefore, US efforts should seek to reduce Al Qaeda to a series of localized national movements and eliminate its unified global nature (Goldstone 2002). This will reduce the threat to the United States itself and shift the danger to US interests overseas. The remnants of Al Qaeda can then be defeated in piecemeal fashion by US allies with US backing.

The United States can accomplish this by engaging the US-Al Qaeda struggle's political dimension. Internally, the United States must adhere to its traditional political values when devising and executing its counter-terrorism policies to maintain credibility and deny the phenomenon of terrorism traction in US politics. Externally, the United States, using traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases as a guide when devising and implementing US foreign policy, must take account of the perceptions and interests of the segments of the world population most supportive of Al Qaeda in order to secure US interests. This will weaken the bonds between Al Qaeda and its' supporting population. This, in turn, will empower US hard power efforts, undermine Al Qaeda's efforts to build operational capacity, and exploit Al Qaeda's incipient internal political cleavages.

Proposed US Security Policy Issue Prism

Until a great power threat arises, this dissertation proposes that transnational terrorism, as embodied by Al Qaeda of the global jihadist movement, be the evaluative prism of US security policy. Al Qaeda is the only current threat both capable and likely to directly attack the United States and kill US citizens. As outlined in chapter two, however, Al Qaeda is primarily a political threat, not a military one. The risk is thus not to the existence of the United States as a polity, but to the US political character and US prosperity, as ensured by US foreign policy to further US interests, as Al Qaeda uses terrorism to subvert the US political process that devises and guides the implementation of US policy decisions.

Al Qaeda threatens, or has the potential to threaten, all of America's pillars of strength. Al Qaeda, as witnessed on September 11th, obviates the benefits of US

geographical independence. By provoking an extreme reaction to its terrorist violence, Al Qaeda threatens US soft power appeal. It has done this by inciting the US to take actions inconsistent with its values. This, in turn, threatens to undermine the United States in the world's international institutions if states begin to use them as rallying points to counter the US in response to unpopular US policies. This inconsistent behavior also has the potential to threaten US economic well being by inducing a reactionary US response to world engagement, upon which the US economy is heavily based. Lastly, if the United States can be provoked, as with Iraq, Al Qaeda can draw US forces into quagmires. Neither the economics nor the politics favor US interests long term.

Proposed US Policy Approach to Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is present on both a political and a hard power plane of existence. Any comprehensive US approach must address both of these dimensions, and it must do so in an interactive, mutually-complementary manner because of the interactive dynamic present between politics and hard power in a terrorism struggle. In the long term, however, politics must frame the US strategy and set the limits of hard power actions.

Political Approach

The United States must seek to politically undercut Al Qaeda. As the most powerful actor in the international system, the United States can significantly alter the global political landscape to its advantage. By ameliorating salient grievances in the eyes of Al Qaeda's actual and potential adherents and supporters that Al Qaeda exploits to US political detriment that do not violate core US national interests, the United States can reduce global anger directed at it and deprive Al Qaeda of political fuel, which will lessen Al Qaeda's capacity for violence.

This can be accomplished via a three-pronged political approach. Each step creates breathing space for the others. Execution, however, must be in tandem.

First, the United States must use its leverage to bring about a negotiated settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulting in a viable, territorially-contiguous Palestinian state. The United States has extensive economic, military, and political leverage over both the Israelis and the Palestinians. The only time that serious agreements have ever been reached, or serious progress has ever come close to being realized, is as a result of US involvement.

Israel will have to conclude if its chosen path of perpetual martial conflict with the Palestinians to deny them a state - and the immediate and ever-increasing violence, suffering, and polarization on both sides that accompanies it – is truly in Israel's long term interest, or whether the long term peace and stability wrought from political accommodation that, for the first time, demarcates Israel's boundaries is preferable. In effect, Israel will be choosing whether to remain in US good graces and, as a lesser power and weaker ally, succumb to US interests. It can retain virtually unparalleled US military assistance and political backing, or it can cross US interests and attempt to sustain its policies without active or passive US backing as the United States should withdraw support when US interests are threatened.

The plight of the Palestinians is an exceptionally powerful issue that resonates throughout the world's Muslim populace. Al Qaeda harnesses the anger stemming from the US-backed Israeli treatment of the Palestinians as a potent glue to unite a membership drawn from every Muslim society throughout the world. Removing this political cohesive

will very likely exploit incipient internal fissures amongst Al Qaeda's myriad nationalities, each of whom have concerns endemic to their own country.

Second, the United States must disengage from Iraq. The negative political repercussions from Iraq are costing the United States international cooperation against a globally networked terrorist enemy. Ever increasing US blood and treasure is being consumed at an unsustainable rate, thereby weakening the United States for the fight elsewhere. While Iraq is a focal point for Al Qaeda-style jihadists, the US fight in Afghanistan persists to absorb any excess generated by a US pullout from Iraq. Plus, the war has proven an overall recruiting boon for Al Qaeda, which outweighs its attention-grabbing value. Lastly, devoid of a US enemy to fight, the highly unpopular Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia is likely to decline. The flagship franchise can be defeated.

No matter the details of the US exit, Al Qaeda will claim a victory by virtue of being the last ones on the battlefield. The United States can, however, choose the price it will pay to reach that end. Continued US military action in Iraq operates to US detriment vis a vis combating Al Qaeda in both political and hard power terms.

Third, and more indirectly, the United States must alter how it manifests its political values in three main ways (Walt 2005):

First, spreading democracy, especially if by force, will not help the United States beat Al Qaeda. This argument implies that allowing Al Qaeda's political agenda to come to the surface through legitimate institutional means will eliminate Al Qaeda's need for terrorism. Al Qaeda's political goals, however, have very little popular support. Al Qaeda's party platform would likely lose out to entities spouting anti-Americanism, emphasizing nationalism, and opposing US allies, as was seen in the 2005 HAMAS

victory in the Palestinian territories. Further, because Al Qaeda's philosophy cannot be falsified, its members would likely take an electoral defeat as justification of their cause and validation of their need to work harder.

Depriving Al Qaeda of the excuse of being denied a fair political hearing will, however, likely reduce its support to only a core following. Multiple parties competing for political support will distill out various grievances, and possible means to redress them, amongst a multitude of actors. Al Qaeda's ability to mask itself under the guise of more germane, salient local issues and usurp those sentiments into support for its own agenda will be severely reduced. Al Qaeda will very likely become politically isolated and marginalized, which will, in turn, reduce its organizational capacity for violence. ,

The United States now manages the dissent that Al Qaeda usurps by supporting regional authoritarian state structures, which are also threatened by Al Qaeda and assist the United States in combating Al Qaeda despite local anti-US sentiments.. This framework is not supportive of widely admired US political values in the long run. It is, however, a temporary short to medium term necessity until US public standing improves.

Second, the United States can, and should, return to a 1990's style embrace of international institutions, whose US domination serves as a pillar of US strength in the Post Cold War world. Implicit in this act is embracing democratic values, such as human rights, and a participatory political system flavored with restraint stemming from the rule of law. As shown in Chapter Nine, this is a critical component to improving US public standing, which is crucial to combating Al Qaeda.

As with Athens during the Peloponnesian Wars, it is in the US national interest to defend the existing political, military, and economic order to preserve US primacy and

ensure that the international system is structured to the benefit of US citizens and the detriment of US enemies (Thucydides [431 B.C.] 1972). In a situation somewhat analogous to Bismarck's Prussia, however, "only outside Germany (America) can we find the means to strengthen our position in the interest of Germany (America) itself" (Taylor 1967).⁴²¹ The United States will have to intensively engage the rest of the world politically, militarily, and economically, to nurture these arrangements.

Ensuring the United States adheres to the world's rules and traditional US political values and foreign policy emphases – the rule of law, a participatory political system emphasizing the importance of international institutions, and democratic values, such as human rights – is not only an executable action, but it will likely have a more immediate effect and carry more weight than will proactive US efforts to force changes in domestic governance elsewhere in the world. The United States must seek to avoid creating an international framework wherein its opponents will be inspired to perpetuate their opposition to the United States and/or unite against it. The "axis of evil label," for example, commits both of these sins. It lumps opponents together by giving them no option but opposition or capitulation with no means to resolve a dispute save for on US terms. Traditional US political values principles and foreign policy emphases creates checks and balances to help prevent such a situation from arising while offering peaceable means of dispute that are fair, reliable, and predictable if it does.

Critics will argue that this philosophic approach and guide to implementation is constraining US actions, and thereby inhibiting the United States' ability to secure its interests in the face of a potent adversary. While a modest imposition may result, any institutions the United States might use exist in the international context in which the

United States is still preeminent with many levers of power. A major infringement to US freedom of action is highly unlikely. Conversely, any lesser infringement upon a proposed US policy is likely to ultimately increase the chances of success for any US policy ultimately enacted as it will account for and institutionalize the needs of other actors, thereby giving them a stake in the US action. The benefits of this legitimation of US actions far outweigh any initial restrictions, which can always be reworked in time.

Hard Power Approach

The United States must simultaneously undertake efforts to organizationally disrupt Al Qaeda to lessen its capability for violence. Its leaders and operatives must be captured or killed. Its activities must be neutralized. This will not only save lives, but it will also show that attempting to engage in Islamic terrorism is futile and against the best interests of those who might consider it. As shown by the analysis and options presented in this dissertation, this is primarily a tool to be pursued through military, intelligence, and other state-oriented means. The United States can take three key actions.

First, the United States must work to reduce the likelihood that Al Qaeda will acquire a weapon of mass destruction. The United States should take the lead against this threat by: 1) securing “loose” government nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union and around the world, 2) securing uncontrolled civilian nuclear materials, as can be found in research reactors, industrial facilities, medical facilities, etc., and 3) initiate more intensive anti smuggling efforts at the inter-state and non-state levels.⁴²²

Second, as US forces disengage from Iraq, the United States must ramp up in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda central is publicly reported to be in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. The social, political, security, economic, and cultural dynamics of this region are

far more conducive to Al Qaeda than are Iraq. The United States is only able to hold a country of roughly 25 million people, to the extent that US forces backed by Afghan allies do maintain control, with the support of the Afghan people. This support will dissipate unless tangible progress is shown. To meet this objective, US troop strength should be increased in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda's sanctuary should be eliminated, and the US must continue to attack Al Qaeda operatives and communications, albeit in a reformed manner consistent with traditional US political values.

Third, the United States should do a "grand bargain" with Iran to address contentious issues in the US-Iran bilateral relationship in return for restoring diplomatic relations. Iran is the one Gulf state actively hostile to the United States with the power to threaten US security and economic vitality. As of fall 2007, the United States is attempting to combat Al Qaeda by trying to salvage Iraq through countering Iran. This approach makes countering Al Qaeda a function of two other separate, albeit related, foreign policy issues. At best, the net result will slow Al Qaeda's organizational development and weaken its geopolitical position. At worst, Al Qaeda will be organizationally and geopolitically enhanced. Not even the best option, however, actually forces Al Qaeda onto the defense.

Conclusion

The US-Al Qaeda struggle is likely to be a long term one. The US political agenda and that of Al Qaeda are almost entirely mutually exclusive. Each actor has an enduring nature. And, given that Al Qaeda draws upon the world's Muslim community for support, a population of over one billion people, the United States is highly unlikely

to ever kill/capture all of Al Qaeda's operatives and/or cut off all sources of support. The United States, therefore, must manage this conflict vice seek Al Qaeda's elimination.

Hard power is necessary. It alone can dismantle Al Qaeda's organizational capacity for violence, the source of terrorism's security threat, which enables its political potency. A macro US approach favoring hard power, however, is likely to fail. Terrorism's operational dynamics favor Al Qaeda, not the United States. Furthermore, a pure hard power approach ignores the political core of the US-Al Qaeda struggle that both frames and drives the conflict. At best, US hard power efforts might hold Al Qaeda in check. At worst, short term tactical gain is achieved at long term strategic expense by further aggravating the political base of the conflict through politically offensive means of implementation, such as using force in contravention of international law as in Iraq and abandoning human rights when detaining terrorist operatives, as with the US rendition program.

Any hard power efforts, however, must be executed in tandem with attention to the political context that frames, and thus empowers, their application. Specifically, the United States must attempt to better secure loose nuclear materials, ramp up the US force presence in Afghanistan, and execute a "Grand Bargain" with Iran. All the while, traditional US political values such as the rule of law, international institutions emblematic of a participatory political system, and democratic values, such as human rights must serve as a guide to US policy formulation and implementation.

More importantly, US political values can be used to politically undercut Al Qaeda and achieve hard power gains as well. As of 2007, however, US political

credibility is at an ebb because of the disparity between US policy choices and its stated political values. The United States must speak with actions vice words.

Externally, US efforts can narrow Al Qaeda's room for political maneuver by adhering to the traditional US political values - the rule of law, a participatory political system emphasizing the importance of international institutions, and democratic values, such as human rights – to increase domestic and international perceptions of the legitimacy of global US leadership and weaken Al Qaeda's potential to find new recruits. The stronger this perception, the less likely the potential adherents and supporters amongst the disenfranchised, angry, and otherwise disaffected Muslim populace will be willing to actively or passively materially aid Al Qaeda. Specifically, the United States can withdraw from Iraq and embrace traditional US political values in the formation and execution of grander US foreign policy.

Internally, US efforts can play upon the inherent internal weaknesses, primarily the conflicting nationalisms of Al Qaeda's members, by adhering to stated US political values. This will help to weaken the political glue that holds a diverse multinational organization with multiple competing centers of gravity together in a unified network directed at the United States. Specifically, the United States can work to resolve the plight of the Palestinians.

Making Al Qaeda the primary US security policy evaluative prism for these particular data points will reduce Al Qaeda's capacity for violence. The result will be to reduce Al Qaeda to a series of localized national movements and eliminate its unified global nature. The threat will be dissipated, and thus more manageable.

Notes

1. “Al Qaeda or Not? U.S., U.K. Differ on Its Likely Role: Gap Reveals Basic Questions about the Group’s Strength and Its Possible Evolution,” *Wall Street Journal*, 12 August 2006.
2. Ibid.
3. Not only did many friendly European governments and governments of US Middle Eastern allies offer statements of support and/or pledge action against Al Qaeda, but competing world powers such as Russia and China stood by the United States. “Even countries with which the United States has had tense and often confrontational relationships, such as Iran, which remains on the State Department’s list of ‘terrorist states,’ expressed unusual sympathy with American’s pain. Iranian President (at the time) Mohammad Khatami immediately issued a condemnation of ‘the terrorist attacks’ and expressed ‘deep sorrow and sympathy’ for the victims. Syria’s young President Bashar Assad sent a letter of condolence to President Bush strongly condemning the terror attacks.” Shibley Telhami, *The Stakes: America and the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Westview, 2002), 5-6.

As detailed by President George W. Bush’s 20 September 2001 address to the nation, “America will never forget the sounds of our National Anthem playing at Buckingham Palace, on the streets of Paris, and at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate. We will not forget South Korean children gathering to pray outside our embassy in Seoul, or the prayers of sympathy offered at a mosque in Cairo. We will not forget moments of silence and days of mourning in Australia and Africa and Latin America.” www.whitehouse.gov

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. “US Recruits a Rough Ally to Be a Jailer,” *New York Times*, 1 May 2005; “Terror Detainees Sent to Egypt,” *Washington Times*, 16 May 2005; “Ending Torture Outsourcing,” *Washington Times*, 11 April 2005; “2 Yemenis Allege Secret U.S. Detention,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 August 2005, sec. A; Craig S. Smith and Souad Mekhennet, 2006. “Algerian Tells of Dark Odyssey in U.S. Hands.” 7 July. Accessed 10 July 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/07/world/africa/07algeria.html>
9. The 9/11 attacks proved Al Qaeda and its associates were focused US enemies. If the “axis of evil” members obtained weapons of mass destruction, these states, all US enemies, would have the ability to give them to terrorists. Per the logic of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” there is no reason not to conclude that states with the worst weapons which were opposed to the United States and terrorists harboring the worst of intentions against the United States would not collude.

Given the potential devastation of being victimized by such an ominous collaboration, the Bush administration took the United States off of its traditional standard of employing force as a last resort against a clear and present danger. For the first time in US history, the United States took up a new pre-emptive focus. Under the Bush administration, the United States would employ force as it saw fit to prevent threats from ever materializing. Making the argument that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction and had ties to Al Qaeda, the United States invaded Iraq.

This set of arguments was built upon two implicit premises. First, the concept of deterrence was dismissed. Second, it assumed “axis of evil” and Al Qaeda links.

10. See also Thomas Pickering, Carla Hills, and Morton Abramowitz, “The Answer in Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, 13 November 2007, sec. A; Rashid Khalidi, “Yankee Go Home: In the Mideast, America Casts an Imperial Shadow,” *Washington Post*, 11 November 2007, sec. B; Staloff, Robert. “How to Win the War of Ideas,” *Washington Post*, 10 November 2007, sec. A.

11. Doug Struck, “Inquiry Exposes Canada’s Role in ‘Renditions,’” *Washington Post*, 26 June 2005, sec. A; Craig Whitlock, “New Swedish Documents Illuminate CIA Action,” *The Washington Post*, 21 May 2005, sec. A; “Europe in Uproar over CIA Operations,” *Los Angeles Times*, 26 November 2005; Craig Whitlock and Dafna Linzer, “Thirteen with the CIA Sought by Italy in a Kidnapping,” *New York Times*, 25 June 2005, sec. A; “CIA Expanding Terror Battle under Guise of Charter Flights,” *New York Times*, 31 May 2005.

12. Steven Kull, 2007. “America’s Image in the World.” 6 March. Testimony Before House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight. Accessed: 1 March 2007.

<http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>; Program on International Policy Attitudes. 2007.

“Large and Growing Numbers of Muslims Reject Terrorism, Bin Laden.” 6 March.

Accessed: 6 March 2007. <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

13. Steve Coll, “Attacks Bear Earmarks of Evolving Al Qaeda: Targets, Timing Both Familiar,” *Washington Post*, 8 July 2005, sec. A; “Qaeda on the Run? Raids Seem to Belie Pakistani’s Word,” *New York Times*, August 5, 2005; “Al Qaeda Remains Threat,

Officials Warn,” *Washington Times*, 14 June 2006; Craig Whitlock, “Terrorists Proving Harder to Profile,” *Washington Post*, 12 March 2007, sec. A; “Al Qaeda 2006: Fighting in Iraq, Regrouping in Afghanistan, Enlisting in Europe: An Assessment of Some of Last Year’s Most Significant Gains and Losses for the Terrorist Organization,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 February 2007; Steve Coll and Susan B. Glasser, “Terrorists Turn to the Web as a Base of Operations,” *Washington Post*, 7 August 2005, sec. A; Susan B. Glasser and Steve Coll, “The Web as Weapon: Zarqawi Intertwines Acts on Ground in Iraq with Propaganda Campaign on the Internet,” *Washington Post*, 9 August 2005, sec. A; Craig Whitlock, “Architect of New War on the West: Writings Lay Out Post 9/11 Strategy of Isolated Cells Joined in Jihad,” *Washington Post*, 23 May 2006, sec. A; David Ignatius, “Our Worsening Terrorism Problem,” *Washington Post*, 30 June 2005, sec. A.

14. See also Karen DeYoung, “Al Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here: Intelligence Experts Say Group Is Busy on Its Home Front,” *Washington Post*, 18 March 2007, sec. A.

15. Washington Post Editorial, “A Problem of Passivity: Once again the United States Stands by While Al Qaeda Operates in a Safe Haven,” *Washington Post*, 21 February 2007, sec. A; “Terror Camps Scatter, Persist,” *Los Angeles Times*, 20 June 2005; N.C. Aizeman, “I Will Go to Do Jihad Again and Again: Prisoner’s Story Highlights Pakistan-Based Training Network for Insurgents,” *Washington Post*, 21 August 2005, sec. A; “Iraq May Be Prime Place for Training of Militants, C.I.A. Report Concludes,” *New York Times*, 22 June 2005.

16. Craig Whitlock, “Al Qaeda’s Far Reaching New Partner: Salafist Group Finds Limited Appeal in Its Native Algeria,” *Washington Post*, 5 October 2006, sec. A;

Michael Slackman and Souad Mekhennet, 2006. "A New Group that Seems to Share Al Qaeda's Agenda." 8 July. Accessed: 20 July 2007.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E03E2DD1030F93BA35754C0A9609C>

[8B63](#); "The New Al Qaeda: Local Franchises," *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 July 2005;

"Specter Surfaces of World of Local Qaeda Offshoots," *Boston Globe*, 8 July 2005.

17. In contrast to modern terrorism's previous record of 440 people at a cinema in Abadan, Iran in 1978, the 9/11 attacks killed over 3,000 people in a single blow.

18. www.intelcenter.com

19. www.state.gov; www.dhs.gov

20. The following works were instrumental in concluding this definition: Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism* (St. Louis, MO: Ashworth Books, 1988); Harry Eckstein, ed., *Internal War* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1964); Martha Crenshaw, *Terrorism, Legitimacy, and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence* (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983); Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State* (London: MacMillan, 1973); Harold Vetter and Gary Perlstein, *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991); Special Issue: Terrorism and Political Violence. *Peace Review* 7 (1995): 3/4.

21. George W. Bush. 2002, September. "United States National Security Strategy." Accessed: 3 March 2007. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>; George W. Bush. 2006, March. "United States National Security Strategy." Accessed: 4 March 2007. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf>

22. De Young, Karen. "Al Qaeda's Gains Keep US at Risk Report Says: Safe Haven in Pakistan Is Seen as Challenging Counterterrorism Efforts," *Washington Post*, 18 July 2007, sec. A.

23. Only belatedly after the attacks did serious publications attempt to fuse religion and politics from a policy point of view to deal with Al Qaeda. Two leading examples of this effort are Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon's *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House, 2002) and Jessica Stern's *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003). As with the works of Esposito, Lewis, and Huntington, these works use a theological prism to explain current events.

24. Two examples of proposed alternatives that are on the same side of the political spectrum but yet have significantly differing details are Stephen Walt's *Taming American Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) and Ivo Daalder's *Beyond Preemption: Force and Legitimacy in a Changing World* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2007).

25. All information will come from unclassified sources, though some of those do make reference to classified ones. In short, only known, established pieces of the puzzle will be used.

26. Kent Sparky Gregory, www.quotations.com

27. Rationality is defined as "behavior that is appropriate to specified goals in the context of a given situation." Herbert Simon, "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 79 (1985): 293-304.

28. The United States has a loose coalition of allies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the globe assisting in the fight against Al Qaeda. The disparity between US power and presence and that of US allies, however, is massive. With the possible exception of the British, their support is more symbolic than substantive. The United States is Al Qaeda's main target.

Conversely, Al Qaeda has a loose coalition of allies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world assisting it in its fight against the United States. The disparity between Al Qaeda's power and presence and that of its terrorist allies, however, is massive. Al Qaeda is the primary US target.

Due to these parallel circumstances, which will be explained in greater detail in the forthcoming chapters, and for the sake of simplicity and clarity, this dissertation will refer to the antagonists as Al Qaeda and the United States.

29. A network, by definition can survive the loss of any of its semi-autonomous nodes and continue to function as each one is imbued with the organization's practical goals, motivating ideology, and operational capabilities. By contrast, the opposite of a network would be a centralized, military-style, hierarchical command and control structure with authority parsimoniously dispersed throughout that is immobilized when leadership nodes are lost.

30. Craig Whitlock, "The New Al Qaeda Central: Far From Declining, the Network Has Rebuilt, With Fresh Faces and a Vigorous Media Arm," *Washington Post*, 9 September 2007, sec. A.

31. As of 2003, US defense spending equaled the next thirteen countries combined, which includes a seven-fold advantage over China. Given that many of these countries

are US allies, America's advantage is only further magnified. Of this money, America devotes more to research, development, testing, and evaluation than the combined entire budgets of Germany, the UK, France, Russia, Japan, and China. The result is a global military presence, superior-trained troops, second-to-none conventional and unconventional munitions, unrivaled power projection capability, and an information age command, control, and communications network.

32. The United States has held steady at twenty-five to thirty percent of world production from 1960 to the present, and possesses an economy sixty percent larger than its closest rival, Japan. World Development Indicators Database. "WDI Online." <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers>. Cited in Stephen Walt, *Taming American Power* (Corning, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 32.

"According to MIT's 'Technology Review Patent Scorecard,' American companies were the top innovators in the automotive, aerospace, biotechnology, pharmaceutical, chemical, computer, telecommunications, and semiconductor industries between 1998 and 2002, and trail Japan (the number two innovator) only in electronics. (See MIT Technology Review. 2004. "The Technology Review Patent Scorecard 2004." Accessed: 20 June 2007. <http://www.technologyreview/scorecards/2004>; World Development Indicators Database. "WDI Online." Accessed: <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers>. Cited in Stephen Walt, *Taming American Power* (Corning, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 32.

Though the US is more dependent upon the rest of the world than in the past, it still maintains a greater relative independence. Only three countries had a lower trade to

gross domestic product ratio as of 2000, and Brazil was the only military power. World Development Indicators Database. “WDI Online.” Accessed: <http://http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers>. Cited in Stephen Walt, *Taming American Power* (Corning, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 32.

China is cited as the rising “peer competitor” power, but it is decades behind. If China’s economy grew by three percentage points more than the US each year, seventy-four years would be necessary to exceed the American total. See Richard Cooper, “Is ‘Economic Power’ a Useful and Operational Concept?” Working paper (Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 2003).

33. The following works were instrumental in concluding this definition: Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide To Actors, Authors, Concepts, Databases, Theories, and Literature* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1988); Harry Eckstein, ed., *Internal War* (Toronto: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1964); Martha Crenshaw, *Terrorism, Legitimacy, and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983); Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State* (London: MacMillan, 1973); Harold Vetter and Gary Perlstein, *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991); Special Issue: Terrorism and Political Violence. *Peace Review* 7 (1995): (3/4).

34. The possible exception to this statement is terrorist employment of a weapon of mass destruction. A brief summary of the issue is that while the potential magnitude of devastation from such an attack is high and the social and political impact could be extreme, the likelihood of such an attack is low. As such, this point is acknowledged but

not belabored in this dissertation. For further information on this topic, please see: Jessica Stern, *The Ultimate Terrorists* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1991).

35. “Al Qaeda’s leadership, with bin Laden’s direct blessing, made the decision to activate sleeper cells in Saudi Arabia in 2003, prompting a wave of car bombings and assassination attempts that the Saudi government has only recently brought under control. From hideouts in Pakistan, according to court testimony and interviews, bin Laden’s deputies ordered attacks on a Tunisian synagogue in 2002, a British consulate and bank in Istanbul in 2003, and the London transit system in 2005. US intelligence officials also blame the Al Qaeda brain trust for orchestrating dozens of other failed plots, including a plan to blow up transatlantic flights from Britain in August 2006.” Craig Whitlock, “The New Al Qaeda Central: Far from Declining, the Network Has Rebuilt, with Fresh Faces and a Vigorous Media Arm,” *Washington Post*, 9 September 2007, sec. A.

36. Al Qaeda’s media wing has increased its video production quantity four-fold over 2006. Quality has increased to the point where videos now include subtitles in multiple languages with a 24 hour turnaround capability to exploit current events as they happen. All the while, videos are securely uploaded to the internet such that there is a virtually untraceable chain back to the originators. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. The segment focusing on the 1980’s and the early to mid 1990’s draws heavily upon works of a few credible, specialized authors who corroborate one another. The journalistic work emphasizes secondary sources from of Burke, Bergen, and Gunaratna. The segment focusing on the mid to latter 1990’s and the early 2000’s will use these

same secondary works, but it also blends insights from scholarly works and primary sources. Scholars, such as Esposito and Lewis, are drawn upon for Islam's political applications. Primary sources include newspapers, journals, translated documents, translated television broadcasts, foreign press, government documents, and the internet.

39. "Just how important the Gulf funds were is shown by the success of Sayyaf, the Arabic-speaking Afghan Wahhabi. In 1981, two years after escaping to Pakistan, his Ittehad-e-Islami faction was recognized by ISID. He had managed, purely through his access to Saudi cash and support from the Saudi religious establishment, to build up a mujahedeen group from nothing. The American political scientist and Afghan expert Barnett Rubin describes Sayyaf's group as having 'virtually no social networks in Afghanistan...(His fighters) were a heterogeneous group of individuals who affiliated themselves...because of the money and arms he could supply.'" The social, political, economic, and military conditions were ripe, and the stage was thus set, for the possible formation of a group like Al Qaeda.

40. University of Pennsylvania Press Log. 2003. Sageman's Senate Committee Testimony. 9 July. Accessed: 11 March 2007.

<http://pennpress.typepad.com/pennpresslog/2007/06/sagemans-senate.html>

41. This is among the first written references using the term Al Qaeda. "The word itself is critical. 'Al Qaeda' comes from the Arabic root qaf-ayn-dal. It can mean a base, as in a camp or a home, or a foundation, such as what is under a house. It can mean a pedestal that supports a column. It can also mean a precept, rule, principle, maxim, formula, method, model, or pattern. The word or phrase 'al qaeda' was certainly in use by the mid 1980's among the Islamic radicals drawn from all over the Muslim world to fight

the Soviets in Afghanistan alongside the local resistance groups. Given that it is a common Arabic word this should not surprise us. For most of them it was a word used in a relatively mundane sense: to describe the base from which they operated. However, the word 'al Qaeda' was also used by the most extreme elements among the radicals in fighting in Afghanistan, particularly those who decided that their struggle did not end with the withdrawal of the Soviets from the country in 1989. Abdullah Azzam, the chief ideologue of the non-Afghan mujahedeen and an early spiritual mentor of bin Laden, used the word to describe the role he envisaged the most committed of volunteers playing once the war against the Soviets was over." James Burke, *Al Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 7-8.

42. Several thousand Pakistani army troops help guard the Saudi royal family.

43. More than 5,000 mujahedeen registered. There were 1,142 Egyptians, 981 Saudis, 946 Algerians, 792 Algerians, 771 Jordanians, 326 Iraqis, 292 Syrians, 234 Sudanese, 199 Libyans, 117 Tunisians, and 102 Moroccans.

44. Terrorist training was diverse, intense, and voluminous. In total, estimates of Usama's activity in Afghanistan range as high as the establishing of roughly forty training camps that processed anywhere from fifteen thousand to seventy thousand personnel.

Training consisted primarily of operational tradecraft. An Al Qaeda training and operational manual recovered during raids in Manchester England that was cited in the trials of the East Africa embassy bombers consisted of eighteen chapters of instruction: 1) General Introduction, 2) Necessary Qualifications and Characteristics for the Organization's Members, 3) Counterfeit Currency and Forged Documents, 4)

Organization Military Bases, “Apartment Places” - Hiding , 5) Means of Communication and Transportation, 6) Training, 7) Weapons: Measures Related to Buying and Transporting Them, 8) Member Safety, 9) Security Plan, 10) Definition of Special Operations, 11) Espionage (1) Information – Gathering Using Open Methods, 12) Espionage (2) Information – Gathering Using Covert methods, 13) Secret Writing and Cipher Codes, 14) Kidnapping and Assassinations Using Rifles and Pistols, 15) Explosives, 16) Assassinations Using Poisons and Cold Steel, 17) Torture Methods, and 18) Prisons and Detention Centers, “UK/BM Translation.” n.d. In *The Al Qaeda Manual*. http://www.justice.gov/ag/manualpart1_1.pdf. Particularly promising trainees were brought directly into the organization. Most, however, returned to their homelands to continue their own operations.

45. “For God’s sake, what are the documents that incriminate the Palestinian people that warrant the massacres against them, which have been going on for more than five decades at the hands of the Crusaders and the Jews. What is the evidence against the people of Iraq to warrant their blockade and being killed in a way that is unprecedented in history? What documents incriminated the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina and warranted the Western Crusaders, with the United States at their head, to unleash their Serb ally to annihilate and displace the Muslim people in the region under UN cover? What is the crime of the Kashmiri people and what documents do the worshipers of cows possess to make them sanction their blood for more than fifty years? What have Muslims in Chechnya, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian republics committed to warrant being invaded by the brutal Soviet military regime and after it communism’s killing, annihilating, and displacing tens of millions of them. What evidence did the United States

have the day it destroyed Afghanistan and killed and displaced the Muslims there? It even launched prior to that the unfair blockade of (the Afghans) under UN cover. Under the same cover, Indonesia was ripped apart; Muslims were forced to leave Timor....Under the UN cover too, it intervened in Somalia, killing and desecrating the land of Islam there. It is even the first to urge the Crusade ruler in the Philippines to annihilate our Muslim brothers there. There are many other countless issues. We say that all Muslims that the international Crusader-Zionist machine is annihilating have not committed any crime other than to say God is our Allah.” Brad K. Berner, *JIHAD: Bin Laden in His Own Words, Declarations, Interviews, and Speeches* (Charleston, SC: BookSurge, 2006), 189.

46. “Recorded Audio Message by Ayman al Zawahiri,” Al Jazeera Satellite Cable Television, 10 September 2003; and “Exposing the New Crusader War—Usama Bin Ladin—February 2003.” 2002. Cited in Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc., 2004), 131.

47. This dissertation will not engage in a substantive theological and/or historical discussion of the concept of jihad and whether or not Usama’s Al Qaeda is properly using or improperly abusing this notion for its own purposes. Rather, the concept will be briefly explained and then presented in the manner in which Al Qaeda and its actual and/or potential adherents widely accept and apply it today in a political context. Right or wrong, that version is having an impact on international relations, and so it must be explored via that version.

48. Other commonly accepted interpretations of non-military jihad include jihad of the hands by doing good works, the jihad of the heart by giving charitable donations, and the jihad of the mind by engaging in self-improvement.

49. “The overwhelming majority of early authorities, citing the relevant passages in the Qu’ran, the commentaries, and the traditions of the Prophet, discuss jihad in military terms....For most of the fourteen centuries of recorded history, jihad was most commonly interpreted to mean armed struggle for the defense or advancement of Muslim power.”

Bernard Lewis, *Crisis of Islam: Holy and Unholy Terror* (New York: Random House, 2004), 31-32.

50. An attack upon the Muslim people is exemplified by US support for “apostate” Islamic governments in Kuwait, the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere. The corrupt, oppressive regimes are viewed as being approved of and protected by US democracy. Bernard Lewis, “Time for Toppling,” *Wall Street Journal*, 27 September 2002. An attack upon Muslim lands is exemplified by how “America now occupies and effectively rules the Muslim states of Afghanistan, Iraq, and the states of the Arabian Peninsula, the Prophet Mohammad’s birthplace.” “Now the War Has Begun.” 2003.

Cited in Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc., 2004), 13. An attack upon Islam is exemplified by US demands “Muslim educational authorities alter their curricula to teach a brand of Islam more in keeping with modernity and, not coincidentally, US interests.” Iqbal al Sibai, “Interview with Al Azhar Grand Imam Shaykh Mohammad Sayyid Tantawi.” Cited in Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc., 2004), 11.

51. As noted by Bernard Lewis, “Bin Laden is not a ruler, and therefore not tainted with tyranny and corruption....Even more striking is the contrast demonstrated in his personal life between himself and the present-day rulers of most of the Arab lands....Osama bin Laden presents the inspiring spectacle of one who, by his own free choice, has forsaken a life of riches and comfort for one of hardship and danger.” Bernard Lewis, “Deconstructing Osama,” *Wall Street Journal*, 23 August 2002.

52. As explained by Mullah Omar, Usama “has been fighting all satanic forces in the world by risking his life. He does not like an easy life, instead he prefers to work hard. He strikes the enemy effectively and that is why the United States is scared of him. The infidels are worried whether the ummah may not get united under his leadership. Imperialist forces want to kill him but we believe that death is the savior of life. Everybody has his own scales of victory and defeat. Sometimes an apparent winner is a loser, and sometimes the one who seems defeated actually wins with the help of God Almighty.” Iqbal, Moshin. 2002. “Exclusive Interview with Taleban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar.” 29 April. Cited in Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc., 2004), 125.

53. Aijaz Mangi, “Usama Is Not Caught Despite Exhaustive Efforts,” *Ibrat*, 10 March 2003.

54. Questions can certainly be raised about how genuinely bin Laden feels for these causes and whether or not he is merely exploiting situations for political gain. The bottom line, however, is that he has routinely articulated these grievances as his main foci since the September 11th attacks. These points are what the public sees and evaluates. This information, therefore, is presented at face value without delving into possible ulterior

motives because Al Qaeda has established these objectives as a data point in the political dimension of the US-Al Qaeda terrorism struggle.

55. www.dni.gov

56. Ibid.

57. [Ibid.](#)

58. Ibid.

59. After a trip to Afghanistan to interview Usama, an Al Quds Al Arabi journalist in a 1999 Al Jazeera interview explained that Usama “does not want to fight the regimes....He wants to fight the Americans, who are protecting the regimes.” Najm, “The Destruction of the Base.” In *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America*, ed. Anonymous (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc., 2002), 172.

60. As noted by Al Qaeda in an October 2002 explanation, the attacks on America’s allies were meant to communicate “a strong political message to Washington’s allies in its war on and aggression against the Islamic nation, namely, that they will not remain forever safe from Allah’s hand of revenge and then that of the mujahedeen. If they persist with this alliance, then they must be ready to pay a heavy price from their blood and interests.” Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc., 2004), 146.

61. French citizens were killed in Karachi, Pakistan in May of 2002 and off the coast of Aden, Yemen in October 2002. German citizens were struck in Djerba, in Tunisia in April 2002, in Mashera, Pakistan in July 2002, and in Kabul, Afghanistan in June 2003. Apart from killing British troops in Afghanistan, British citizens in the financial sector

were killed in Istanbul in November 2003. Two hundred Australians, along with some British citizens, were killed in Bali, Indonesia in October 2002.

62. M. Ignatieff, “Why Are We in Iraq? (And Liberia? And Afghanistan?),” *New York Times*, 7 September 2003.

63. In January 2002, several senior Saudi religious scholars stated that “we – the collective scholars – are honored to have the likes of you attributed to our ummah, because you have affirmed, in reality, the supremacy and honor of the believers. And we will bear witness that you were alone the ones who raised your heads to America; the country of disbelief and the Cross, when Muslims were not honored by a single man who would say, ‘No! and again, No!’ to what America sought from him, in this time. Only you did so. So congratulations to the Muslims because of you.

64. “The early period of the ummah remains alive to all Muslims, because it represents a sacred drama, and in this sense Islamic history has never been drained of its holy significance. Muslims feel that they participate collectively and individually in the consequences of past events in a way largely absent from Christianity (but more present in Judaism).” Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa’ud from Tradition to Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), p. 28.

65. It has always been Ayman al Zawahiri’s “belief that the victory of Islam will never take place until a Muslim state is established in the manner of the Prophet in the heart of the Islamic world, specifically in the Levant, Egypt, and the neighboring states of the Peninsula and Iraq.” Once achieved, this Caliphate, which the mujahedeen must defend “for every generation to hand over the banner to the one after it until the Hour of Resurrection,” can then serve as a base to “extend the jihad wave to the secular countries

neighboring Iraq.” Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2005. “Letter from al Zawahiri to Al Zargawi.” 11 October. Accessed: 18 February 2007.

http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/press_releases_2005.htm

66. An enemy’s center of gravity is the cornerstone of strength and support for its war effort. Conversely, this locus of capability and motivation is a central node of vulnerability. If knocked out, it has the potential to indirectly weaken all enemy capability at the fringes, i.e. military activity, and ultimately compel failure to achieve war goals by hollowing out the enemy from the center, thus forcing it to retract back into itself from the fighting.

67. “This time it is clearly apparent that the American economy is the American center of gravity. This is what Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin has said quite explicitly. Supporting this penetrating strategic view is that the Disunited States of America are a mixture of nationalities, ethnic groups, and races united only by the ‘American Dream,’ or, to put it more correctly, worship of the dollar, which they openly call ‘the Almighty Dollar.’”

68. United States Army.

69. Karen DeYoung, “Al Qaeda’s Gains Keep U.S. at Risk, Report Says: Safe Haven in Pakistan Is Seen as Challenging Counterterrorism Efforts,” *Washington Post*, 18 July 2007, sec. A.

70. Thomas E. Ricks and Bob Woodward, “Marines Enter South Afghanistan: Force to Set Up Base Near Kandahar, Track Members of Al Qaeda,” *Washington Post*, 26 November 2001, sec. A; Bradley Graham, 2001. “100 GIs Have Entered Afghanistan.”

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72. Vernon Loeb and Susan Schmidt, "US Wants Enemy Leaders Turned Over If Captured: Interrogation, Trials Planned for Al Qaeda, Taliban Chiefs," *Washington Post*, 2 December 2001, sec. A.
73. Dana Priest, "Covert CIA Program Withstands New Furor: Anti-Terror Effort Continues to Grow," *Washington Post*, 30 December 2005, sec. A; Dana Priest, "CIA Holds Terror Suspects in Secret Prisons: Debate Is Growing Within Agency About Legality and Morality of Overseas System Set Up after 9/11," *Washington Post*, 2 November 2005, sec. A.
74. Dana Priest, "Foreign Network at Front of CIA's Terror Fight: Joint Facilities in Two Dozen Countries Account for Bulk of Agency's Post 9/11 Successes," *The Washington Post*, 18 November 2005, sec. A. See also Dana Priest, "Help from France Key in Covert Operations: Paris's 'Alliance Base' Targets Terrorists," *Washington Post*, 3 July 2005, sec. A and "Official Pariah Sudan Valuable to America's War on Terrorism: Despite Once Harboring Bin Laden, Khartoum Regime Has Supplied Key Intelligence, Officials Say," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 April 2005.
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76. Steve Coll, "Attacks Bear Earmarks of Evolving Al Qaeda: Targets, Timing Both Familiar," *Washington Post*, 8 July 2005, sec. A.
77. Washington Post Editorial, "A Problem of Passivity: Once again the United States Stands by While Al Qaeda Operates in a Safe Haven," *Washington Post*, 21 February 2007, sec. A.
78. John Ward Anderson and Karen DeYoung, "Plot to Bomb US-Bound Jets Is Foiled: Britain Arrests 24 Suspected Conspirators," *Washington Post*, 11 August 2006, sec. A.
79. The US public standing in the Middle East has done an absolute reversal since World War II when, during the 1950's and 1960's, the United States was revered for ending colonialism and bringing freedom and independence to the region. Now, the United States is perceived as a "hated and feared advocate of a new imperial order, one that has much the same characteristics as nineteenth-century European imperialism: military garrisons; economic penetration and control; support for leaders, no matter how brutal and undemocratic, as long as they obey the imperial power; and the exploitation and depletion of natural resources. Because Muslims have seen this before, America is no longer the nation of Franklin Roosevelt, who destroyed fascism and force Churchill to begin dismantling the British Empire, nor of Dwight Eisenhower, who stopped the brazen, racist Anglo-French-Israeli land grab at Suez, nor even of Ronald Reagan, who defied the atheistic Soviets, armed the mujahedeen, and freed Eastern Europe. It is, moreover, no longer the nation to which Muslims will give the benefit of the doubt in situations where America claims to be an even-handed, honest broker in dealing with them vis a vis Israel or other matters...Rather, America is now regarded as a nation that

supports and protects Arab tyrants from Rabat to Riyadh, that has abandoned multiple generations of Palestinians to cradle to grave life in refugee camps, and that blindly supports Israel, arming and funding her anti-Muslim violence and preventing Muslims from arming sufficiently to defend themselves.” Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc., 2004), 15-16.

80. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2003. “Misperceptions, the Media, and the Iraq War.” 2 October. Accessed: 11 May 2007. <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

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Increased margins of support for using force were apparent in six of the seven nationwide polls conducted last week. Further, almost all measures of opinion moved in the direction that must have pleased the Bush Administration. There is even increased support for unilateral military action against Iraq.” <http://people-press.org/commentary/display>

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93. As explained in *Al Ansar*, an Al Qaeda-associated web page, "after the fall of Baghdad, voices of wailing and mourning swelled in many Islamic countries, while total numbness and silence encompassed other circles. While some lamented the capital of al Rashid, others recalled the fall of al Andalus. They forgot that the entire Arab world is as good as fallen, as long as Islamic law is abrogated and the people of Islam fill the prisons and detention camps.... Yes, direct colonialism has returned again. Another Arab capital has fallen into its hands, as Jerusalem, Beirut (before resistance flared), and Kabul fell." Al Qurashi, Abu Ubayd. 2003. "Why Did Baghdad Fall?" As found in Anonymous,

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237. Steve Coll, "Attacks Bear Earmarks of Evolving Al Qaeda: Targets, Timing Both Familiar," *Washington Post*, 8 July 2005, sec. A.
238. Craig Whitlock, "Al Qaeda Branch Claims Algeria Blasts: Dozens Die in Strikes on Premier's Office, Police Post; 'New Front' Seen in N. Africa," *Washington Post*, 12 April 2007, sec. A; Steve Coll and Susan B. Glasser, "In London, Islamic Radicals Found a Haven," *Washington Post*, 10 July 2005, sec. A.
239. "The evidence shows the war has damaged America's global efforts to defeat Al Qaeda. Excluding Iraq and Afghanistan, (there has been) a 150% increase globally in the rate of suicide attacks by jihadist groups since the war began. Not only has (the war in Iraq) brought more recruits to Sunni terrorist groups, but the conduct of these groups in Iraq has energized militants elsewhere. This has particularly been the case in the Arab world, whose countries excluding Iraq have seen 783% more fatalities from jihadist terrorism since the U.S. invasion." "Brutal Reality: The War Is Fueling Global Jihad," *New York Daily News*, 21 February 2007; "Spy Agencies Say Iraq War Worsens Terror Threat," *New York Times*, 24 September 2006.
240. "Foreign Fighters Only a Tiny Part of the Rebellion," *London Daily Telegraph*, 30 June 2005.
241. Zarqawi is credited with executing 479 suicide car bomb attacks killing 2,174 people and wounding 5,520 as of summer 2005 since the US invasion. "Following the Trail of Death: How Foreigners Flock to Join Holy War," *London Times*, 25 June 2005.
242. As of 2005, approximately 150 foreign volunteers, who form the vast majority of suicide bombers, were crossing into Iraq every month. A series of reports from counterterrorism think tanks at that time found that as many as 55% of Zarqawi's suicide

bombers were Saudis. Large numbers also came from Syria, North Africa, Jordan, and Kuwait. Relatively few were Iraqi. By mid 2005, an estimated 3,000 foreign fighters had traveled to Iraq. “Saudis Are Becoming Top Threat to Our GIs,” *New York Post*, 29 June 2005.

243. “Zarqawi’s group was originally thought to comprise mainly non-Iraqis, but over (2005), he has been able to recruit many Iraqis as well as more foreign fighters after a string of successful attacks. (As of late 2005,) he was believed to command perhaps 1,000 fighters and a much larger group of sympathizers.” “In a Battle of Wits, Iraq’s Insurgency Mastermind Stays a Step Ahead of US,” *Los Angeles Times*, 16 November 2005. While in the Afghan jihad foreigners were parceled out to local commanders and generally were at squad strength, foreigners in Iraq are appearing in coherent foreigner units akin to 1930’s Spanish civil war.

244. “‘In a year, Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia went from being a major insurgent group, but one of several, to basically being the dominant force in the Sunni insurgency,’ said terrorism consultant Evan F. Kohlmann. ‘It managed to convince a lot of large, influential Sunni groups to work together under its banner – groups that I never would have imagined,’ Kohlmann said.” Karen DeYoung, “Al Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here: Intelligence Experts Say Group Is Busy on Its Home Front,” *Washington Post*, 18 March 2007, sec. A.

245. As pointed out by former US Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad, “the nature of the conflict has changed. If you look back over (2006), what you see is that the sectarian conflict has become a dominant, if not the dominant, conflict here. Some insurgents see themselves as protecting Sunnis against Shia militias.” Rod Nordland and

Michael Hirsh, "Fighting Zarqawi's Legacy," *Newsweek*, June (2006). Although US forces have enlisted some Sunni tribal leaders versus Al Qaeda and the insurgency in summer 2007, these efforts have been short lived and have happened in limited areas where the US troop surge changed the tactical balance. "We Didn't Kill Al Qaeda," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 June 2006.

246. Karen DeYoung, "Al Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here: Intelligence Experts Say Group Is Busy on Its Home Front," *Washington Post*, 18 March 2007, sec. A.

247. "Al Qaeda's Hydra Head in Iraq," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 June 2006.

248. "Foreign Fighters Only a Tiny Part of the Rebellion," *London Daily Telegraph*, 30 June 2005.

249. "Videos later posted in Thailand showed people being beheaded by militants 'who looked into the camera and said one word: 'Zarqawi,' said Evan F. Kohlmann, who follows militants web sites at GlobalTerrorAlert.com. 'I would call him the Alexander Graham Bell of terrorist propaganda.' 'It's a new day for these groups because of him.'" "The Grisly Jihadist Network that He Inspired Is Busy Promoting Zarqawi's Militant Views," *New York Times*, 9 June 2006.

250. European intelligence reports reviewed by TIME in 2005 suggested that AQM had expanded far beyond Iraq and that he rivaled Usama for influence among Middle Eastern and European jihadists. "He functions as a role model...Groups...believe it is a great honor to be able to carry out attacks in his name," said August Hanning, chief of Germany's foreign intelligence." Bruce Crumely, "Notebook: The New Bin Laden?"

Time (2005): 5 September; “Bin Laden’s Ruthless Rival Spreads Tentacles of Jihad across Region,” *London Times*, 18 November 2005.

251. “Al Zarqawi’s Network Bigger, Stronger,” *Houston Chronicle*, 23 October 2005.

252. “Terrorists Trained by Zarqawi Went Abroad, Jordan Says,” *New York Times*, 11 June 2006.

253. “He set a new standard of ruthlessness,” says Boston University’s Husain Haqqani, an expert on Muslim extremism.

254. “‘It’s the media emphasis that really made him a global phenomenon,’ a senior Italian counterterrorism official said. ‘And his videos are more popular because he is pure action. Bin Laden is more boring.’” “Zarqawi May Have Spawned an Army of Admirers,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 June 2006.

255. “Of course the loss of their leader here in Iraq is going to disrupt them,” said Maj. Tim Keefe, a US military spokesman in Baghdad. “But you have to understand there are many more out there. While it’s a serious blow to them, it hasn’t been completely wiped out. We still have challenges ahead.” Joshua Parlow, “Zarqawi Group Vows to Press Attacks,” *Washington Post*, 12 June 2006, sec. A.

256. Abu Hamza al Muhajir, who the Americans say is actually Abu Ayyub al Masri, an Egyptian, is an Al Qaeda veteran trained in Afghanistan. He is also a former lieutenant of Ayman al Zawahiri in the Egyptian Islamic Jihad before its union with Usama’s Al Qaeda in 1998. He has worked closely with Zarqawi in Iraq since at least 2003, and he participated in the battle of Fallujah in 2004. “Al Qaeda’s Hydra Head in Iraq,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 June 2006.

257. Karen DeYoung, "Al Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here: Intelligence Experts Say Group Is Busy on Its Home Front," *Washington Post*, 18 March 2007, sec. A; Thomas E. Ricks, "Shrine Bombing as War's Turning Point Debated," *Washington Post*, 13 March 2007, sec. A.
258. "'Certainly, Zarqawi had an agenda outside Iraq, and Ayyub has publicly stated that he envisions one day attacking the US,' said a US official. I think what we determined was that they're so busy inside Iraq...they really are focused on internal things.'" Karen DeYoung, "Al Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here: Intelligence Experts Say Group Is Busy on Its Home Front," *Washington Post*, 18 March 2007, sec. A.
259. Joshua Partlow, "For US Unit in Baghdad, an Alliance of Last Resort," *Washington Post*, 9 June 2007, sec. A.
260. Zarqawi "inspired almost as much fear among his Sunni confederates as he did in his victims...frightening his Sunni hosts into silence or cooperation with his unique combination of cruelty and competence: cross Zarqawi and you would die, along with your family, perhaps horribly. "We Didn't Kill Al Qaeda," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 June 2006. In the first half of 2006, Zarqawi's AQM assassinated 11 Sunni tribal chiefs around Ramadi. According to Israeli historian Amatzia Baram, they were all killed for merely talking to the Iraqi national government.
261. Karen DeYoung, "Al Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here: Intelligence Experts Say Group Is Busy on Its Home Front," *Washington Post*, 18 March 2007, sec. A.
262. "We Didn't Kill Al Qaeda," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 June 2006.

263. Craig Whitlock, "Death Could Shake Al Qaeda in Iraq and around the World," *Washington Post*, 10 June 2006, sec. A.
264. US officials now estimate that Iraqis make up 90% of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia's now several thousand fighters. In early March 2007, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates in early March 2007 estimated the number of foreigners now arriving in Iraq to join the Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia-led insurgency at "perhaps several dozen a month." He went on to explain that they from neighboring Syria, and that most of them are volunteers for suicide-bombing missions. Karen DeYoung, "Al Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here: Intelligence Experts Say Group Is Busy on Its Home Front," *Washington Post*, 18 March 2007, sec. A.
265. "We Didn't Kill Al Qaeda," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 June 2006.
266. "Al Qaeda in South Asia Called Top Threat," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 July 2007.
267. Sudarsan Raghavan, "U.S. Military Calls Al Qaeda in Iraq 'Principal Threat,'" *Washington Post*, 12 July 2007, sec. A.
268. In what amounts to a political concession to Al Qaeda, in November 2006, many of the Sunni resistance groups joined Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia in declaring the Islamic State of Iraq. At the same time, US government and outside experts note that "Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia's new membership and the allied insurgents care far more about what happens within Iraq than they do about bin Laden's plans for an Islamic empire. That is likely to remain the case whether US forces stay or leave." Karen DeYoung, "Al Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here: Intelligence Experts Say Group Is Busy on Its Home Front," *Washington Post*, 18 March 2007, sec. A.
269. "Osama Just Bin Given a Big Break," *New York Daily News*, 10 June 2006.

270. Ibid.

271. Craig Whitlock, "Death Could Shake Al Qaeda in Iraq and around the World," *Washington Post*, 10 June 2006, sec. A.

272. "'You compare him to Bin Laden, Zawahiri or eight others from Al Qaeda, he comes off as a ghetto gang leader, the senior Italian official said. 'His contacts in Syria, in Iran tended to be with gangster types and corrupt military and spies. There's always the bandit aspect to him.'" "Zarqawi May Have Spawned an Army of Admirers," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 June 2006.

273. "Zarqawi was both a leader of and a problem for Al Qaeda in Iraq. Al Qaeda's international leadership – Egyptian-born Ayman al Zawahiri and Saudi native Osama bin Laden – wanted to rein in Zarqawi's vicious and savage attacks, including the videotaped beheadings of some of his victims. Zarqawi was truly terrorizing – but even the Al Qaeda leadership felt his brutality against fellow Muslims was counter-productive to their goal of defeating the West." "Osama Just Bin Given a Big Break," *New York Daily News*, 10 June 2006; www.dni.gov

274. Karen DeYoung, "Signs Point to a Surviving Terror Network," *Washington Post*, 11 August 2006, sec. A.

275. Craig Whitlock, "The New Al Qaeda Central: Far from Declining, the Network Has Rebuilt, with Fresh Faces and a Vigorous Media Arm," *Washington Post*, 9 September 2007, sec. A.

276. www.thinkexist.com

277. Marc Kaufman, "US Meeting Envisions Rebuilding Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 21 November 2001, sec. A; Keith B. Richburg and Colum Lynch, 2001. "Afghan

Victors Agree to Talks in Berlin.” 21 November 21. Accessed: 7 July 2007.

<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/90995237.html>; Peter Baker, “Uphill Battle Looms on Path to New Kabul,” *Washington Post*, 2 December 2001, sec. A; Karen DeYoung and Marc Kaufman, 2001. “Afghan Rebuilding Will Be Costly.” 10 December 10. Accessed: 9 July 2007.

<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/94157140.html>

278. Keith B. Richburg, “Karzai Officially Declared Winner,” *Washington Post*, 4 November 2004, sec. A.

279. Griff Witte, 2005. “Afghanistan’s Chance to Heal.” 18 December. Accessed: 19 July 2007. <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/943022291.html>;

Washington Post Editorial, 2005. “Afghanistan Votes.” 16 September. Accessed: 14 March 2007. <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/897230351.html>

280. Washington Post Editorial, “NATO’s Afghan Test: US, British and Canadian Troops Are Leading a Fierce Fight against the Taliban. They Need More Help from Their Allies,” *Washington Post*, 15 September 2006, sec. A; Pamela Constable, 2006. “Afghan City’s Rebound Cut Short: Battles between NATO Forces, Resurgent Taliban Make Ghost Town of Kandahar.” 19 August. Accessed: 23 March 2007.

<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/1097224541.html>; Reuters, “US to Give Afghans \$2 Billion in Additional Military Equipment,” *Washington Post*, 4 July 2006, sec. A; Thomas E. Ricks, “US Airstrikes Rise in Afghanistan as Fighting Intensifies: In Response to More Aggressive Taliban, Attacks Are Double Those in Iraq War,” *Washington Post*, 18 June 2006, sec. A.

281. Peter Baker, "Additional Troop Increase Approved: President Agrees to Send 8,200 More to Iraq, Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 11 March 2007, sec. A; Griff Witte, "Bombing Near Cheney Displays Boldness to Resurgent Taliban," *Washington Post*, 28 February 2007, sec. A; Peter Baker and Karen DeYoung, "Bush Promises Strong Effort to Counter Resurgent Taliban: US to Extend Troop Increase in Afghanistan, Take Fight to Enemy Forces before Their Spring Offensive," *Washington Post*, 16 February 2007, sec. A; Ann Scott Tyson, "General Warns of Perils in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 14 February 2007, sec. A; Reuters, "New Combat Brigade to Bolster NATO-Led Forces in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 26 January 2007, sec. A; Pamela Constable, "Afghan President, Besieged By Crises, to Meet with Bush," *Washington Post*, 4 August 2007, sec. A.

282. This article examined the number of troops that peacekeeping forces have historically needed to maintain order and cope with insurgencies. Mr. Quinlivan's comparisons suggested that even small countries might need large occupying forces. Specifically, Mr. Quinlivan did a historical survey of insurgencies and devised troop to population ratios. In his estimation, more peaceful situations necessitated from 4-10 troops per 1,000 inhabitants. More restive situations, such as the British campaign against communist guerillas in Malaya and the fight against the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland, however, necessitated 20 troops per 1,000 inhabitants. "The implication was clear: 'Many countries are simply too big to be plausible candidates for stabilization by external forces.'" James T. Quinlivan, 1995-1996. "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters* 25, Winter. Accessed: 17 July 2007. <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/parameters/1995/quinliv.htm>

283. "The Arithmetic of Failure," *New York Times*, 27 October 2006.
284. The combined strength of the US Army and Marine Corps is less than 700,000. The combination of other US military commitments as well as the need to rotate units home for retraining means that only a fraction of those forces can be deployed for stability operations at any given time. Of that number, the ratio of support to combat troops is at least three to one. Maintaining a 150,000 man force in Iraq, which is roughly one third as large as the Quinlivan analysis suggests is necessary, is forcing extended tour of duty and wearing down the army. www.army.mil; www.usmc.mil
285. F. Michael Maloof, a former senior security policy analyst in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, claims that this relationship, though publicly unmasked in the 2004-2005 winter, was known to the United States well before the October 2003 incident when Italian authorities seized a German ship carrying one thousand centrifuges destined for Libya. He alleges that previously turning a blind eye to Dr. Khan's activities due to a confluence of US and Pakistani interests while be able to monitor Dr. Khan finally proved to no longer be worth the cost when United States finally needed to both press and reward Pakistan for other issues. Nuclear Know-How Trail," *Washington Times*, 18 July 2006; Bill Powell and Tim McGirk, 2005. "The Merchant of Menace: How A.Q. Khan Became the World's Most Dangerous Nuclear Trafficker." 14 February. Accessed: 27 March 2007. <http://www.time.com>
286. Seymour Hersh, 2004. "Annals of National Security: The Deal." 8 March. Accessed 11 May 2007. <http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/03/08>
287. Ibid.

288. Washington Post Editorial, “A Problem of Passivity: Once again the United States Stands by While Al Qaeda Operates in a Safe Haven,” *Washington Post*, 21 February 2007, sec. A.

289. Ibid.

290. State Information Minister Tariq Azim Khan noted “I don’t think our long term strategy has changed.” Griff Witte, “Pakistani Government Seeks to Salvage Peace Deal,” *Washington Post*, 17 July 2007, sec. A.

291. Alfred Stepan and Aqil Shah, “Pakistan’s Real Bulwark,” *Washington Post*, 5 May 2004, sec. A; Washington Post Editorial, “The General under Siege: Pakistan’s Pervez Musharraf Is Running Out of Supporters—Except in Washington,” *Washington Post*, 9 July 2007, sec. A; Benazir Bhutto, “A False Choice for Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, 12 March 2007, sec. A; Fareed Zakaria, “The Real Problem with Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, 18 June 2007, sec. A.

292. Pakistan makes much political hay out of having handed over seven hundred Al Qaeda operatives since September 11th to the United States. By contrast, only a single major Taliban figure, Mullah Obeidullah Akhund, has been captured, and he was released three days after the departure of a US delegation to Pakistan that had traveled to Islamabad to press Musharraf for greater cooperation against the Taliban. N.C. Aizeman, “Musharraf’s Contradictory Crackdown on Radicals: Pakistani Groups Increase Power Despite a Ban,” *Washington Post*, 5 August 2005, sec. A.

293. Kamran Khan and John Lancaster “Top Al Qaeda Figure Is Held in Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, 5 May 2005, sec. A.

294. This understanding is derived from the author’s time spent in the region.

295. A September 2006 United Nations report notes that “‘there are few areas where the Taliban have lost ground’ ... Supported by non-Afghan foreign fighters, the Taliban and Al Qaeda ‘have not shortage of recruits or arms,’ and are thriving.” “UN Report Says U.S. Breaking Qaeda,” *New York Daily News*, 28 September 2006.
296. “CIA Closes Unit Focused on Capture of Bin Laden,” *New York Times*, 4 July 2006.
297. www.theatlantic.com
298. Benazir Bhutto, “A False Choice for Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, 12 March 2007, sec. A.
299. “One Bullet Away from What?” *New York Times*, 11 March 2007.
300. Ibid.
301. Benazir Bhutto, “A False Choice for Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, 12 March 2007, sec. A.
302. “One Bullet Away from What?” *New York Times*, 11 March 2007.
303. Griff Witte, “Musharraf, Bhutto Reach Tentative Deal to Let Her Return with Amnesty: Pakistan Supreme Court Rules that Scheduled Election Can Proceed,” *Washington Post*, 5 October, 2007, sec. A.
304. Griff Witte, “Musharraf Names Ex-Spy Chief to Lead Army: Charges against Bhutto May Be Dropped,” *Washington Post*, 3 October 2007, sec. A.
305. Michael Abramowitz and Robin Wright, “Bush to Add 21,500 Troops In an Effort to Stabilize Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 11 January 2007, sec. A; Steven J. Hadley, “Baghdad Is Key,” *Washington Post*, 29 January 2007, sec. A; Johnathan Weisman, “House Begin Debate on War,” *Washington Post*, 14 February 2007, sec. A; Peter Baker,

“Additional Troop Increase Approved: President Agrees to Send 8,200 More to Iraq, Afghanistan,” *Washington Post*, 11 March 2007, sec. A.

306. Joshua Partlow, “Top Iraqis Pull Back from Key U.S. Goal: Reconciliation Seen Unattainable Amid Struggle for Power,” *Washington Post*, 8 October 2007, sec. A.

307. Josh White, “Iraq Deaths Don’t Mean Failure, Pace Says,” *Washington Post*, 22 June 2007, sec. A; Joshua Partlow, “More Than 100 Killed in Baghdad, Nearby Town: Blast in Capital Hits Area Central to Security Plan,” *Washington Post*, 30 March 2007, sec. A.

308. Ann Scott Tyson, “Top US Officers See Mixed Results from Iraq ‘Surge,’” *Washington Post*, 22 April 2007, sec. A.

309. Ann Scott Tyson, “Sunni Fighters Find Strategic Benefits in Tentative Alliance with U.S.,” *Washington Post*, 9 August 2007, sec. A; Sudarsan Raghavan, “In Iraq, a Perilous Alliance with Former Enemies,” *Washington Post*, 4 August 2007, sec. A; Joshua Partlow, “U.S. Strategy on Sunnis Questioned: Loyalties at Issue in New Partnerships against Al Qaeda in Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 18 June 2007, sec. A.

310. Ann Scott Tyson, “Top US Officers See Mixed Results from Iraq ‘Surge,’” *Washington Post*, 22 April 2007, sec. A; Sudarsan Raghavan, “Weighing the ‘Surge’: The US War in Iraq Hinges on the Counterinsurgency Strategy of Gen. Petraeus. The Results Have Been Tenuous.” *Washington Post*, 4 September 2007, sec. A; Washington Post Editorial, “Accepting Iraqi Reality: Both President Bush and Congress Need to Adjust to the Mixed Results of the ‘Surge,’” *Washington Post*, 9 September 2007, sec. B; Walter Pincus, “NIE Cites ‘Uneven’ Security Gains, Faults Iraqi Leaders,” *Washington Post*, 24 August, 2007, sec. A; Thomas E. Ricks, “Politics Collide with Iraq Realities,”

Washington Post, 8 April 2007, sec. A; Washington Post Editorial, "Among Top Officials, 'Surge' Has Sparked Dissent, Infighting," *Washington Post*, 9 September 2007, sec. A.

311. Sudarsan Raghvan, "GAO Reports Iraq Has Failed to Meet 11 of 18 Benchmarks," *Washington Post*, 4 September 2007, sec. A.

312. Ibid.

313. Joshua Partlow, "Top Iraqis Pull Back from Key U.S. Goal: Reconciliation Seen Unattainable Amid Struggle for Power," *Washington Post*, 8 October 2007, sec. A; Michael Abramowitz, "Bush to Endorse Petraeus Plan: Democrats, Some Republicans Seek a Faster Withdrawal," *Washington Post*, 12 September 2007, sec. A.

314. Ibid.

315. Michael A. Fletcher and Ann Scott Tyson, "In Iraq, Bush Cites Gains: President Suggests Continuation Could Allow Drawdown," *Washington Post*, 4 September 2007, sec. A; Peter Baker, "Accord on Iraq War Slips Further Away," *Washington Post*, 16 September 2007, sec. A.

316. Walter Pincus, "A Cautious Approach to Troop Reduction," *Washington Post*, 24 September 2007, sec. A.

317. Bradley Graham, "Shortfalls of Special Operations Command Are Cited," *Washington Post*, 17 November 2005, sec. A.

318. Ibid.

319. Dana Priest, "Foreign Network at Front of CIA's Terror Fight: Joint Facilities in Two Dozen Countries Account for Bulk of Agency's Post 9/11 Successes," *The Washington Post*, 18 November 2005, sec. A. See also Dana Priest, "Help from France

Key in Covert Operations: Paris's 'Alliance Base' Targets Terrorists," *Washington Post*, 3 July 2005, sec. A and "Official Pariah Sudan Valuable to America's War on Terrorism: Despite Once Harboring Bin Laden, Khartoum Regime Has Supplied Key Intelligence, Officials Say," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 April 2005.

320. "The vast majority of our successes involved our CTICs,' one former counterterrorism official said. 'The boot that went through the door was foreign.'" Dana Priest, "Foreign Network at Front of CIA's Terror Fight: Joint Facilities in Two Dozen Countries Account for Bulk of Agency's Post 9/11 Successes," *The Washington Post*, 18 November 2005, sec. A.

321. Ibid. See also Dana Priest, "Help from France Key in Covert Operations: Paris's 'Alliance Base' Targets Terrorists," *Washington Post*, 3 July 2005, sec. A and "Official Pariah Sudan Valuable to America's War on Terrorism: Despite Once Harboring Bin Laden, Khartoum Regime Has Supplied Key Intelligence, Officials Say," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 April 2005.

322. See Appendix 1.

323. "Omaha Gets Terror War Think Tank," *Omaha World Herald*, 10 April 2005.

324. "Given the growing understanding of how terrorists 'exploit these global processes to do their bidding,' it's important for military leaders to partner with the private sector to strengthen the nation's defenses." said Col. Thomas K. Andersen, STRATCOM's director of intelligence. PTDT's roots go back to the weeks after 9/11, when a retired Marine Corps general working for credit-card giant MBNA contacted defense officials. At the same time, military officials in the terror fight were increasingly

looking for information on operation of the transportation, banking and communications industries.; “Omaha Gets Terror War Think Tank,” *Omaha World Herald*, 10 April 2005.

325. Ibid..

326. “The Bush team did not invent rendition. It was inherited and reauthorized by Bill Clinton in a 1995 policy directive and used more extensively during his administration than is generally recognized.” Jim Hoagland, “Pricey Rendition,” *The Washington Post*, 3 July 2005, sec. B. Mir Amal Kanshi is the individual who killed multiple federal employees outside of the Central Intelligence Agency in the early 1990’s.

327. “US Recruits a Rough Ally to Be a Jailer,” *New York Times*, 1 May 2005; “Terror Detainees Sent to Egypt,” *Washington Times*, 16 May 2005; “Ending Torture Outsourcing,” *Washington Times*, 11 April 2005.

328. “White House Has Tightly Restricted Oversight of CIA Detentions,” *New York Times*, 6 April 2005; Dan Eggen, “Congress Seeks Secret Memos on Interrogation,” *Washington Post*, 5 October 2007, sec. A; Michael Abramowitz, “Bush Defends US Interrogation Methods,” *Washington Post*, 6 October 2007, sec. A.

329. The CIA claims that its station chief in the countries to which these suspects are transferred must obtain assurances from that country’s security offices that rendered prisoners will not be tortured. “Ending Torture Outsourcing,” *Washington Times*, 11 April 2005.

330. Ibid.

331. The following articles exemplify this point: “2 Yemenis Allege Secret U.S. Detention,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 August 2005, sec. A; Craig S. Smith and Souad

Mekhennet, 2006. "Algerian Tells of Dark Odyssey in U.S. Hands." 7 July. Accessed 10 July 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/07/world/africa/07algeria.html>

332. Doug Struck, "Inquiry Exposes Canada's Role in 'Renditions,'" *Washington Post*, 26 June 2005, sec. A; Craig Whitlock, "New Swedish Documents Illuminate CIA Action," *The Washington Post*, 21 May 2005, sec. A; "Europe in Uproar over CIA Operations," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 November 2005; Craig Whitlock and Dafna Linzer, "Thirteen with the CIA Sought by Italy in a Kidnapping," *New York Times*, 25 June 2005, sec. A; "CIA Expanding Terror Battle under Guise of Charter Flights," *New York Times*, 31 May 2005.

333. Craig Whitlock, "Europeans Investigate CIA Role in Abductions," *Washington Post*, 13 March 2005, sec. A; Craig Whitlock, "Testimony Helps Detail CIA's Post 9/11 Reach," *Washington Post*, 16 December 2006, sec. A

334. Philipics, www.quotationspage.com

335. United States Army.

336. The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, more informally known as the 9/11 commission, has been very critical of the US government's counterterrorism policy and its implementation to date, yet it has rated the government's efforts against terrorist financing with the sole "A" (actually an "A-") in its report card evaluating how well the federal government has responded to commission recommendations to better secure the United States. Documented evidence shows that in excess of one hundred million dollars has been seized. "National Security Report Card," *Washington Post*, 9 December 2005, sec. A

337. www.dni.gov

338. “Reporting from November 1998 concluded that although the \$300 million figure probably originated from rumors in the Saudi business community, it was a ‘reasonable estimate’ as of a few years earlier, representing what would have been Bin Ladin’s share of his family’s business conglomerate in Saudi Arabia. The intelligence community thought it had adequately verified this number by valuing Bin Ladin’s investments in Sudan as well as what he could have inherited from his father’s construction empire in Saudi Arabia. Finished intelligence supported the notion that Bin Ladin’s ‘fortune’ was still intact by concluding that Bin Ladin could only have established al Qaeda so quickly in Afghanistan if he had ready access to significant funds.” U.S. Intelligence reporting, Nov. 17, 1998. Ibid.

339. As of April 2001, the CIA could not penetrate Usama’s finances. The CIA noted that Usama “uses a wide variety of mechanisms to move and raise money[;]...he capitalizes on a large, difficult-to-identify network with few long-lasting nodes for penetration.” Consequently, analysis was confounded by intelligence gaps and largely speculative. CIA did not have the reporting to determine Usama’s net worth, what percentage financed Al Qaeda, or alternate sources of support. Even after 9/11, the intelligence community could not readily estimate the total income or the relative importance of any source of Usama’s revenue stream.

340. Only after NSC-initiated interagency trips to Saudi Arabia in 1999 and 2000, and after interviews of Bin Ladin’s family members in the US, was the family fortune myth discredited. “Notwithstanding this information, some within the government continued to cite the \$300 million figure well after 9/11, and the general public still gives credence to the notion of a ‘multimillionaire Bin Ladin.’” National Commission on Terrorist Attacks,

The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), ch. 2.

341. Ibid.

342. Al Qaeda was able to derive a small amount of financial assistance from state backers. Directly, the government of Sudan reportedly directly provided Usama's organization with weapons and materiel assistance. This point, however, is in dispute. Indirectly, Al Qaeda received Pakistani assistance. The Taliban received large quantities of assistance from Pakistan, and they, in turn, passed small amount of their resources to Al Qaeda. How much of this was done with Pakistan's blessing is a matter of debate.

343. Saudi charities have been particularly lambasted for fostering a hostile political and religious environment conducive to terrorism. Saudi charity is an established source of humanitarian relief in the developing Islamic world. As no civic-religious divide exists, a major goal of Saudi charities is to spread Wahhabi beliefs and culture throughout the world. Saudi efforts have funded mosques and schools in Pakistan, Central Asia, Europe, and even the US. Saudi Wahhabi schools are sometimes the only education in poor areas, and they are sometimes the only Islamic schools available even in affluent countries.

The practical effect of fostering terrorism can be debated. Motive, however, cannot be easily ascribed. Any detrimental political or religious effects are subtly, indirectly shaping the environment and altering context vice blatantly programming terrorists.

344. "Flow of Terror Funds Being Choked, US Says: Intelligence Analysts Track Smuggled Cash," *USA Today*, 19 June 2006.

345. “UK/BM Translation.” n.d. In *The Al Qaeda Manual*.

http://www.justice.gov/ag/manualpart1_1.pdf

346. Ibid.

347. Ibid.

348. Islamic banks differ from Western banks in that they are based upon religious law, which prohibits usury. Islamic banks have a board of religious monitors to ensure compliance. Iran, Pakistan, and Sudan, in fact, have converted their entire banking system to Islamic dictates. As a result, Islamic banks derive their income and provide money to customers via different methods. These consist of: 1) profits and/or losses are shared between the bank and the loan recipient from the venture for which the loaned money was spent, 2) a no interest loan is simply given to a needy person, 3) the lending bank becomes a shareholder in the receiving institution, 4) the bank effectively buys the receiving institution for a price that includes the cost of the loan and then resells that institution at a mark-up, and 5) the bank essentially buys the receiving institution and leases it back to the loan recipient, who slowly pays off the loan. Three types of accounts exist: 1) a current account which bears no interest that the depositor controls and can close at any time, 2) a limited investment account that the bank controls and use to invest and both the bank and the depositor share any gains or losses, and 3) a limited investment account where the bank uses to invest only in concurrence with the depositor and any profits or losses are shared.

349. This statement is drawn from the author’s experiences and understanding gained from his time spent in Afghanistan following the September 11th attacks as a member of the Department of Defense.

350. This explanation is rooted in the author's experiences in Afghanistan since the September 11th attacks.

351. The official banking system processed roughly one billion US dollars while the hawala networks processed an estimated two and one half to three billion dollars.

352. Douglas Frantz, "Secretive Money Moving System Scrutinized for Bin Laden Funds," *International Herald Tribune*, 3 October 2001.

353. "For example, al Qaeda reportedly used a Pakistani-based money changer to move \$1 million from the UAE to Pakistan, at which point the money was couriered across the border into Afghanistan." National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004).

354. There is not, however, total agreement on this number. Some retro-active estimates post 2001 place annual operating costs at slightly less than 50,000,000.

355. Other than Bin Ladin, the person with the most important role in al Qaeda financing was reportedly Sheikh Qari Sa'id. Sa'id, a trained accountant, had worked with Bin Ladin in the late 1980s when they fought together in Afghanistan. He subsequently worked for one of Bin Ladin's companies in Sudan in the early to mid-1990s. Sa'id was apparently notoriously tightfisted with al Qaeda's money. He reportedly vetoed a \$1500 expense for travel to Saudi Arabia to get visas for the 9/11 attacks until Bin Ladin overruled him (although there is no reason to believe that Sa'id knew the reason for the travel at that time). Due to this extreme frugality, operational leaders may have occasionally bypassed Sa'id and the Finance Committee and requested funds directly from Bin Ladin.

356. A compilation of circumstantial and anecdotal evidence strongly suggests the assertion that Al Qaeda operatives are not given lavish and, if anything, are under-funded to the detriment of operational activity and security. “First the World Trade Center 1993 co-bomber Muhammad Salameh had to reclaim his \$400 deposit from Ryder truck rental in order to buy a plane ticket to leave the US...Second, the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam bombers in August 1998 received little funding. Third, Ahmed Ressam and his associates were arrested in the US and Canada in December 1999 for involvement in credit card fraud or petty theft. Fourth, Al Qaeda operatives arrested in Jordan while preparing attacks on the Millennium were mostly self-financed by bank robberies, burglaries and the forging of checks. Fifth, the 9/11 attacks, Al Qaeda’s most expensive operation, cost just under \$500,000, but even the unspent funds were remitted back to the parent organization.”

357. “Because of the pervasiveness and expansiveness of the financial foundation of foreign terrorists, financial sanctions may be appropriate for those foreign persons that support or otherwise associate with these foreign terrorists. I also find that a need exists for further consultation and cooperation with, and sharing of information by, United States and foreign financial institutions as an additional tool to enable the United States to combat the financing of terrorism.” Remarks by the President, Secretary of the Treasury O’Neill and Secretary of State Powell on Executive Order. The Rose Garden. 24 September 2001. Accessed: 2 May 2007.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010924-4.html>

358. US government officials “agree that any funds al Qaeda raises in the United States amount to much less than is raised by other terrorist groups, such as Hamas and

Hezbollah, and that the United States is not a primary source of al Qaeda funding.”

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), ch. 2.

359. Though there are many United Nations Security Council Resolutions pertaining to terrorism, please pay particular note to the following resolutions reference counterterrorism and financial matters: S/RES/1368(2001), S/RES/1456(2003), S/RES/1455(2003), S/RES/1535(2004), S/RES/1526(2004), S/RES/1617(2005), S/RES/1735(2006); <http://www.un.org/documents/scres.htm>

360. “U.N. Expands Sanctions,” *Los Angeles Times*, 30 July 2005.

361. <http://www.fatf-gafi.org>

362. Peter Baker, “Petraeus Backs Initial Pullout,” *Washington Post*, 11 September 2007, sec. A; Karen DeYoung, “Official Says Fewer Foreigners Crossing Into Iraq From Syria to Fight,” *Washington Post*, 16 September 2007, sec. A; Craig Whitlock, “For Saudi Arabia, Al Qaeda Threat Is Now Hitting Home,” *Washington Post*, 8 June 2004, sec. A.

363. Craig Whitlock, “From Iraq to Algeria, Al Qaeda’s Long Reach,” *Washington Post*, 30 May 2007, sec. A.

364. www.dni.gov

365. Stuart Levey, the Department of the Treasury’s Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, has stated, for example, that Al Qaeda financed bombings in Indonesia in 2002 and 2003 by smuggling \$30,000 in cash for each attack to allied

terrorists in Asia. “Flow of Terror Funds Being Choked, US Says: Intelligence Analysts Track Smuggled Cash,” *USA Today*, 19 June 2006.

366. Craig Whitlock, “The New Al Qaeda Central: Far from Declining, the Network Has Rebuilt, with Fresh Faces and a Vigorous Media Arm,” *Washington Post*, 9 September 2007, sec. A.

367. Ibid.

368. Ibid.

369. “Policymakers...were sometimes surprised to find that intelligence assessments were often supported by information far less reliable than they had presumed.” National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), ch. 3.

370. “The U.S. government had recognized the value of enlisting the international community in efforts to stop the flow of money to al Qaeda entities. U.S. diplomatic efforts had succeeded in persuading the United Nations to sanction Bin Ladin economically, but such sanctions were largely ineffective...Saudi Arabia and the UAE, necessary partners in any realistic effort to stem the financing of terror, were ambivalent and selectively cooperative in assisting the United States.” Ibid.

371. www.thinkexist.com

372. Steve Coll, “Attacks Bear Earmarks of Evolving Al Qaeda: Targets, Timing Both Familiar,” *Washington Post*, 8 July 2005, sec. A.

373. The 2006 Zogby asked: “When you think about Al Qaeda, what aspect of the organization, if any, do you sympathize with most?” Al Qaeda’s primary goal of creating

a Taliban-esque, pan-Islamic state received only single digit support (Lebanon 2%, Egypt 7%, Jordan 9%, Morocco 6%, UAE 1%, Saudi Arabia 9%). In fact, “none” of Al Qaeda’s aspects was the most popular answer by far (Lebanon 69%, Egypt 33%, Jordan 31%, Morocco 35%, UAE 40%, Saudi Arabia 22%). www.zogby.com, November 2006.

374. Gallup Poll Editorial Staff, 2002. “Blame for September 11 Attacks Unclear for Many in Islamic World.” 1 March. Accessed: 3 March 2007. <http://www.galluppoll.com>

375. This is especially true in the Muslim populations of Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey, where six in ten or more say that “suicide bombings and other forms of violence against civilian targets” are “never justified.” The TFT poll of Indonesia and Pakistan found even larger numbers rejecting all attacks on civilians. Pew also found a complete rejection of terrorism among very large majorities of Muslims living in Germany, Britain, Spain and France. Program on International Policy Attitudes. 2007. “Large and Growing Numbers of Muslims Reject Terrorism, Bin Laden.” 6 March. Accessed: 6 March 2007. <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

376. Steven Kull, 2007. “How Muslims and Americans View Each Other.” 18 February. Accessed: 1 March 2007. <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

377. The poll results showed Lebanon at 3% support, Egypt at 13% support, Jordan at 5% support, Morocco at 8% support, the UAE at 1% support, and Saudi Arabia at 13% support. November 2006, www.zogby.com

378. In 2005 Pakistan, for example, a Pew survey found less than half (46%) of Pakistani public opinion condemned terrorism under all circumstances. Previously domestically peaceful, infighting between Musharraf and Islamic militants brought a wave to terrorist attacks to Pakistan in 2006 and 2007. By spring 2007, that number

increased to 69%. Further, only 8% say terrorism is rarely justified. Conversely, only 14% of Pakistani Muslims “often” or “sometimes” condone terrorism, which is down from 25% in 2005 and 41% in 2004. Program on International Policy Attitudes. 2007. “Large and Growing Numbers of Muslims Reject Terrorism, Bin Laden.” 6 March. Accessed: 6 March 2007. <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

379. A Pew 2006 survey showed that 24% of Jordanians have “some confidence” in Usama while less than 1% claim “a lot of confidence.” By contrast, a 2005 survey showed 60% expressing “confidence” and 25% showing “a lot of confidence.” Ibid.

380. Ibid.

381. “Voice of the People, 2003.” 2003. Accessed: 25 June 2007. <http://www.gallup.com>

382. Pew Global Attitudes Project. 2006. “The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other.” 22 June. Accessed: 18 May 2007. <http://www.pewglobal.org>

383. Supporting these abstract sentiments, separate polling found secular political leaders clearly trumped religious ones. In a March 2003 Zogby poll about which world leaders elites most admired in Saudi Arabia, a relative hotbed of Al Qaeda support, Usama garnered only 8% of the vote. The name “George Bush,” without any further clarification, received 4% of the vote, which was higher than the Taliban’s Mullah Omar, HAMAS’s Ahmad Yassin, and religious authority Yusuf al Qaradawi combined. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2007. “Global Poll Finds that Religion and Culture are Not to Blame for Tensions Between Islam and the West.” 16 February. Accessed: 12 June 2007. <http://WorldPublicOpinion.Org>

384. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2007. "Global Poll Finds that Religion and Culture are Not to Blame for Tensions Between Islam and the West." 16 February.

Accessed: 12 June 2007. <http://WorldPublicOpinion.Org>

385. Pew Research Center for People and the Press, 2001. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism." 19 December. Accessed 12 June 2007.

<http://www.people-press.org>

386. Steven Kull, 2007. "America's Image in the World." 6 March. Testimony Before House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight. Accessed: 1 March 2007.

<http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

387. Thirty-nine percent of respondents stated that these minorities existed on both the Muslim and Western sides of the equation. Twelve percent said that they were only on the Muslim side. Seven percent said that these minorities existed only on the Western side. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2007. "Global Poll Finds that Religion and Culture are Not to Blame for Tensions Between Islam and the West." 16 February.

Accessed: 12 June 2007. <http://WorldPublicOpinion.Org>

388. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2007. "World View of US Role Goes from Bad to Worse." 22 January. Accessed: 21 June 2007 <http://worldpublicopinion.org>

389. Steven Kull, 2007. "America's Image in the World." 6 March. Testimony Before House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight. Accessed: 1 March 2007.

<http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

390. Heather Mason Kiefer, 2002. "Poll of Islamic World: Favorability Toward U.S., Britain." 26 February. Accessed: 24 March 2007. <http://www.galluppoll.com>
391. Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2007. "World Publics Reject US Role as the World Leader." 17 April. Accessed: 20 June 2007. <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>
392. Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2003. "American Public Diplomacy in the Islamic World." 27 February. Accessed 1 March. <http://www.pewglobal.org>
393. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2007. "World Publics See European Union as a 'Positive Influence.'" 21 March. Accessed: 27 June 2007. <http://www.worldopinion.org>
394. Pew Research Center for People and the Press, 2001. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism." 19 December. Accessed 12 June 2007. <http://www.people-press.org>
395. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2007. "Global Poll Finds that Religion and Culture are Not to Blame for Tensions Between Islam and the West." 16 February. Accessed: 12 June 2007. <http://WorldPublicOpinion.Org>
396. Pew Research Center for People and the Press, 2001. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism." 19 December. Accessed 12 June 2007. <http://www.people-press.org>
397. "Remarkably, in a poll conducted in France by Zogby in spring 2002, 70% of respondents said they would react more favorably toward the United States if it 'were to apply pressure to ensure the creation of an independent Palestinian state.'" Shibley

Telhami, *The Stakes: America and the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Westview, 2002), 43.

398. This poll conducted personal interviews in Egypt, France, Indonesia, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela between 4 March and 3 April 2002.

399. The representative countries were Kuwait, Pakistan, Morocco, Iran, Indonesia, Lebanon, and Turkey.

400. “This is the case in Kuwait (69% versus 37%), Pakistan (80% versus 61%), Morocco (86% versus 70%), Iran (78% versus 67%), and Indonesia (89% versus 85%). In Lebanon, condemnation is nearly evenly apportioned (68% versus 70%). Only in Turkey is this pattern reversed (60% versus 77%).” Gallup Poll Editorial Staff, 2002.

“Many in Islamic World Question Motives for US Military Campaign.” 1 March.

Accessed: 24 June 2007. <http://www.gallup.com>

401. “Of eleven Latin American countries surveyed by Gallup in November and December 2001, majorities in ten opposed the war in Afghanistan, including 76 percent in Argentina, 73 percent in Mexico, and 72 percent in Bolivia. Majorities in three of four African countries surveyed also opposed the war.” Shibley Telhami, *The Stakes: America and the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Westview, 2002), 42.

402. Pew Research Center for People and the Press, 2002. “Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues: Bush’s Ratings Improve but He’s Still Seen as Unilateralist.” 17 April. Accessed 12 June 2007. <http://www.people-press.org>

403. Steven Kull, 2007. “America’s Image in the World.” 6 March. Testimony Before House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations,

Human Rights, and Oversight. Accessed: 1 March 2007.

<http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

404. These numbers are drawn from the terrorism database maintained by the Rand Corporation and the Oklahoma City National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism. "Brutal Reality: The War Is Fueling Global Jihad," *New York Daily News*, 21 February 2007.

405. Ibid.

406. "Not only has (the war in Iraq) brought more recruits to Sunni terrorist groups, but the conduct of these groups in Iraq has energized militants elsewhere. This has particularly been the case in the Arab world, whose countries excluding Iraq have seen 783% more fatalities from jihadist terrorism since the U.S. invasion." Ibid.

407. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2007. "Muslims Believe US Seeks to Undermine Islam." 24 April. Accessed 24 April 2007.

<http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

408. Ibid.

409. Ibid.

410. For perspective, Allied forces in World War II fighting the Japanese in Southeast Asia via guerilla warfare cited a need of only 5-10% of the population to carry on a struggle. Dr. George Quester, University of Maryland, College Park, National Security class, Fall 1996.

411. When polling only Islamic countries, 64% of respondents stated that the ensuing conflict would be limited to the United States and Al Qaeda while only 29% predicted a major conflict between the West and Islam. When polling only Middle Eastern countries,

a majority (54%) saw a limited conflict while a minority (41%) saw a grander, civilizational clash portending. Pew Research Center for People and the Press, 2001.

“America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism.” 19 December. Accessed 12 June 2007. <http://www.people-press.org>

412. Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2007. “Global Poll Finds that Religion and Culture are Not to Blame for Tensions Between Islam and the West.” 16 February. Accessed: 12 June 2007. <http://WorldPublicOpinion.Org>

413. Ibid.

414. Ibid.

415. Ibid.

416. Several other US “high politics” policies also draw particular ire. Approximately 68% disapproved of the US handling of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon. The US handling of Iran’s nuclear program registered a 61% disapproval rating. And, on average, 69% believed the US military presence in the Middle East “provokes more conflict than it prevents” as compared to 16% who saw it as a stabilizing force.

Several US “low politics” choices are also negatively rated. Roughly 69% perceive Guantanamo Bay as violating international law. Human rights scandals, such as Abu Ghraib and secret CIA prisons, combine to tarnish the traditional US image as a human rights champion. In 1998, for example, USIA found that 59% of the British and 61% of Germans said the United States was doing a good job promoting human rights. As of 2007, however, 56% of the British and 78% of Germans say the US is doing a bad job. Steven Kull, 2007. “America’s Image in the World.” 6 March. Testimony Before

House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight. Accessed: 1 March 2007.

<http://www.worldpublicopinion.org>

417. Samuel P. Huntington, 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" Summer. Accessed: 19 June 2007. <http://www.foreignaffairs.org>

418. US standing in the Middle East has done an absolute reversal since World War II. During the 1950's and 1960's, the United States was revered for ending colonialism and bringing freedom and independence to the region. In contrast, the United States is now perceived as a "hated and feared advocate of anew imperial order, one that has much the same characteristics as nineteenth-century European imperialism: military garrisons; economic penetration and control; support for leaders, no matter how brutal and undemocratic, as long as they obey the imperial power; and the exploitation and depletion of natural resources." Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey's Inc., 2004), 15-16.

419. www.quotations.com

420. "Terrorist Threat Said to Persist," *Washington Post*, 18 July 2007.

421. A brief summary of the similarities is: 1) Though relevant powers appeared strong (France, England, Russia / China, Russia, Europe), internal tensions markedly weakened them. (Bismarck's enemies were weakened by challenges to the aristocratic order. America's enemies are weakened by the switch from communism to capitalism and the attending social and political strife that creates, and/or a lack of force projection capability to look after their own interests and politically confront America with an independent potential for military action. 2) Neither Bismarck's Prussia nor America

today faces any state capable of galvanizing a coalition against it. 3) Both possessed superior military power in their day. 4) External conflicts prompt unity over division. Bismarck used powerful neighbors to assimilate smaller German principalities. America is using regional threats with global significance, as in the Middle East regarding oil and weapons of mass destruction potential, to co-opt cultural antagonists to meet its' needs as shown by Gulf Cooperation Council alliances.

422. For a more in-depth discussion, please see Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004); Matthew Bunn, Anthony Weir, and John Holdren, *Controlling Nuclear Warheads and Materials: A Report Card and Action Plan* (Cambridge, MA: Project on Managing the Atom, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2004); Matthew Bunn, *The Next Wave: Urgently Needed New Steps to Control Warheads and Fissile Material* (Cambridge, MA: Project on Managing the Atom, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2000); and Bunn, Matthew, and Anthony Wier, 2005, April. "The Seven Myths of Nuclear Terrorism." Accessed: 28 July 2007. <http://www.bcsia.ksg.harvard.edu>

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