



LAWRENCE  
LIVERMORE  
NATIONAL  
LABORATORY

UCRL-SR-224072

# **The Jericho Option: Al-Qa'ida and Attacks on Critical Infrastructure**

*A report by the Center for Terrorism and  
Intelligence Studies, a division of the  
Akribis Group*

**June 2006**

**Disclaimer**

This document was prepared as an account of work sponsored by an agency of the United States Government. Neither the United States Government nor the University of California nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government or the University of California. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government or the University of California, and shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

**Auspices**

This work was performed under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Energy by University of California, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory under Contract W-7405-Eng-48.



CENTER FOR TERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE STUDIES

*A DIVISION OF THE AKRIBIS GROUP*

---

THE JERICHO OPTION\*:  
AL-QA`IDA AND ATTACKS ON CRITICAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE

*June 8, 2006*

\* “When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.” (Joshua 6:21)

INTERNATIONAL HEAD OFFICE  
227 DEVCON DRIVE, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95112 U.S.A  
PHONE: (831) 233-2220 FAX: (408) 937-7679  
EMAIL: ACKERMAN@CETISRESEARCH.ORG

The Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies (CETIS), an independent division of the Akribis Group, is a research center dedicated to identifying, better comprehending, and accurately assessing the present and future security threats stemming from a variety of violence-prone extremists and their enablers. In an effort to improve existing scholarship, inform policy, and provide guidance about these important, specialized, and often arcane topics, CETIS undertakes in-depth, cutting-edge research and prepares innovative analyses of terrorist groups, clandestine and covert operations, and political and religious extremism.

The Center brings together a unique group of scholars and analysts in order to investigate both existing and emerging asymmetrical and unconventional threats. CETIS currently receives project funding from a variety of sources, including scientific and academic foundations, government subcontractors, non-governmental organizations, private sector companies, and individual benefactors.

### **CETIS Core Project Team**

Gary Ackerman, Director  
Charles Blair, Deputy Director  
Jeffrey M. Bale, Research Director  
Gordon M. Hahn, Senior Researcher  
Elle DiLorenzo, Researcher  
Sundara Vadlamudi, Researcher  
Christopher Lunsford, Research Assistant

The contents of this report are based solely on the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies, the Akribis Group, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, or the United States Department of Homeland Security.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: WHY TARGET CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE?.....	8
Defining Critical Infrastructure.....	8
General Terrorist Motivations for Attacking Critical Infrastructure.....	11
CHAPTER THREE: AL-QA`IDA'S EVOLUTION AND JIHADIST STRATEGY .....	20
The Evolution of the al-Qa`ida Organization .....	20
Al-Qa`ida's Strategic Thinking and the Question of Critical Infrastructure .....	34
CHAPTER FOUR: EXPLORING HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS LINKS TO CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE .....	75
Religious Referents for Attacks on Critical Infrastructure.....	75
Islamic Historical Precedents for Attacks on Critical Infrastructure .....	82
CHAPTER FIVE: WHAT THEY SAY – AL-QA`IDA'S CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY AS REVEALED THROUGH ITS STATEMENTS.....	91
The Attitudes of Al-Qa`ida's Leaders .....	93
Al-Qa`ida "Strategic Studies" Literature.....	102
CHAPTER SIX: CAPABILITIES FOR ATTACKING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE .....	116
Al-Qa`ida Attack Planning.....	116
Critical Infrastructure Targets .....	118
Al-Qa`ida's Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure .....	138
CHAPTER SEVEN: AL-QA`IDA-LINKED TERRORIST ATTACKS ON CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES..	140
Successful al-Qa`ida Critical Infrastructure Attacks in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East & North Africa .....	142
Unsuccessful Critical Infrastructure Attacks Outside the U.S. ....	155
Analysis and Indications of Changing Trends .....	166
CHAPTER EIGHT: CASE STUDIES OF PRIOR AL-QA`IDA-LINKED CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ATTACKS ON U.S. SOIL.....	169

The 1993 World Trade Center Bombing (Ramzi Yusuf and “Nusayr Cell”).....	169
1993 Tunnel and Bridge Plot .....	178
Ahmad Rassam and the December 1999 “Millenium Plot” .....	193
The September 11, 2001 “Planes Operation” .....	208
The Ayman Faris Case: Al-Qa`ida Preparations to Attack a New York City Bridge and Derail Trains.....	221
False “al-Qa`ida” Claims of Responsibility for Accidental Critical Infrastructure Disasters.....	222
CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION.....	226
APPENDIX A: AL-QA`IDA CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ATTACK CHRONOLOGY .....	241
APPENDIX B: CETIS CORE PROJECT TEAM.....	253
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	257

# TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 3.1: Al-Qa`ida's Four-Tiered Structure.....	24
FIGURE 3.2. Al-Qa`ida Majlis Al-Shura & Committees .....	26
FIGURE 7.1: Successful Al-Qa`ida Related CI Attacks: by Region.....	141
FIGURE 7.2: Al-Qa`ida CI Attacks: Middle East & North Africa by Country.	151
FIGURE 7.3: Al-Qa`ida Successful CI Attacks: Middle East & North Africa by Country and Group.....	154
FIGURE 7.4: Al-Qa`ida CI Attacks: Middle East & North Africa by Country and Group (Excluding Iraq) .....	155
FIGURE 7.5: Successful Al-Qa`ida CI Attacks: Europe, Asia and The Middle East & North Africa by Year.....	167
FIGURE 7.6: Successful Al-Qa`ida CI Attacks: Europe, Asia and The Middle East & North Africa by Year (Excluding Iraq).....	167
FIGURE 7.7: Successful Al-Qa`ida CI Attacks: Asia by Group and Region	168
TABLE 6.1: Capability Requirements for Attacking Specific Critical Infrastructure Sectors .....	121
TABLE 9.1: Critical Infrastructure Risk Assessment Analysis .....	232
BOX 6.1: Al-Qa`ida Capabilities and 9/11.....	135
BOX 6.2: The July 7, 2005 London Bombings.....	137
BOX 7.1: The Madrid Train Attacks .....	143
BOX 7.2: The Macedonian Consulate in Pakistan.....	148
BOX 7.3: Saudi Arabia's Abqa`iq Oil Facility Attack.....	156
BOX 7.4: Saudi Hijacking Plot: "This is our 9/11" .....	159
BOX 7.5: Operation Bojinka .....	163

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is no doubt that al-Qa`ida and its affiliates have displayed, and continue to display, an acute interest in attacking targets that are considered to be important components of the infrastructure of the United States. What has not thus far been carried out, however, is an in-depth examination of the basic nature, historical evolution, and present scope of the organization's objectives that might help government personnel develop sound policy recommendations and analytical indicators to assist in detecting and interdicting plots of this nature. This study was completed with the financial support of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, through a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate. It is specifically intended to increase counterterrorism analysts' understanding of certain features of al-Qa`ida's strategy and operations in order to facilitate the anticipation and prevention of attacks directed against our most critical infrastructures.

The procedure adopted herein has involved consulting a wide variety of source materials that bear on the topic, ranging from sacred religious texts and historical accounts to al-Qa`ida-linked materials and the firsthand testimony of captured members of the group. It has also intentionally combined multiple approaches, including exploring the more esoteric religio-historical referents that have served to influence al-Qa`ida's behavior, providing a strategic analysis of its objectives and targeting rationales, closely examining the statements and writings of al-Qa`ida leaders and spokesmen (in part on the basis of material translated from primary sources), offering a descriptive analysis of its past global attack patterns, and producing concise but nonetheless in-depth case studies of its previous "infrastructural" attacks on U.S. soil.

The analyses contained herein tend to support the preliminary assessment made by some of the authors in an earlier report, namely, that transnational jihadist organizations are amongst the extremist groups that are most likely to carry out successful attacks against targets that U.S. officials would categorize as elements of this country's critical infrastructure. These networks clearly have the operational capabilities to conduct these types of attacks, even on a large scale, and they display a



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

number of ideological proclivities that may incline them to attack such targets. Although this seems self-evident, this study has also yielded more detailed insights into the behavior and orientation of al-Qa`ida and its affiliated networks. The remainder of this Executive Summary provides a precis of the information found in the successive chapters of the full report.

*Chapter One* introduces and explains the four basic “framing questions” that were selected for the purpose of guiding research and analysis of al-Qa`ida’s attitudes towards critical infrastructure, namely:

- 1. Does al-Qa`ida perceive “infrastructure” or “critical infrastructure” as a separate species of target distinct from other target types?**
- 2. To what extent do al-Qa`ida’s ideology, strategy and tactics cause the group to purposely target “critical infrastructure” or elements of what are considered critical infrastructure by the United States Government?**
- 3. Do recent trends in al-Qa`ida statements and behavior signify a major shift in the group’s strategy with respect to critical infrastructure?**
- 4. Can we learn anything about al-Qa`ida tactics and operations that would be useful in a counterterrorism context should al-Qa`ida or its affiliates target critical infrastructure?**

*Chapter Two* contains a brief introduction to the concept of critical infrastructure and discusses general terrorist motivations for targeting it. The concept of critical infrastructure and the systems this term was thought to encompass progressed through a number of iterations in the U.S., both before and after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. This process culminated in the draft National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) of 2005. The NIPP brought together previous definitions and codified the U.S. definition of critical infrastructure as:

Systems, assets, or functions, whether physical or virtual, publicly or privately owned, that are used by or provide benefit to the public and are so vital to the U.S. that the exploitation, destruction, or incapacitation of such systems, assets, or functions would have a debilitating impact on

## *Executive Summary*

security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters.

Before turning to al-Qa`ida's specific orientation towards infrastructural targets, it is instructive to highlight three points relevant to terrorist motivations, in the most general sense, for attacking critical infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on the factors that influence the terrorist target selection process.

First, basic threat assessments should be based on the consideration of three factors: the value of the target (or negative value, in the sense of the amount of harm expected if the target is attacked), the vulnerability of the target, and the likelihood of an attack on it. The likelihood of attack in turn depends upon both the motivations and capabilities of the attacker.

Unlike the capabilities of a terrorist group, which can mostly be measured in terms of its available resources, broadly defined, the motivations of a terrorist group are much more difficult to clarify, let alone represent or measure. Not surprisingly, many threat analyses focus primarily if not exclusively on the vulnerability and value of the target and the capabilities of terrorist groups for attacking it, in the process ignoring or underestimating the relevance of the motivations of those terrorist groups. As a result, all terrorist groups possessing similar capabilities are assumed to be equally willing and able to attack all highly vulnerable targets of proportionate value. Such a focus on more or less "tangible" factors tends to produce worst-case scenarios, an emphasis that can in turn result in the gross misallocation of available resources.

Second, it is important to examine the factors influencing the target selection process of terrorist groups. The key factors that influence their target selection process can be organized into three broad categories: Group Factors, External Factors, and Decision-Making Factors. Each of these categories contains several relevant sub-factors that are considered more fully in the Chapter and are listed below:

**Group Factors:** Ideology; Organizational Structure; Organizational Dynamics; Organizational Lifecycle status (a terrorist group's maturity); Demographics; Resources; and Operational Capabilities;

**External Factors:** Historical Context, Events, and Precedents; Relations with External Actors (such as sympathizers and supporters, the mass media, the general public, other extremist and criminal groups, and the

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

state apparatus); the Security Environment; and Target Characteristics (in the current case the characteristics of critical infrastructure); and

**Decision-Making factors:** General Planning Characteristics (such as decision-maker time horizons and risk thresholds); Perceptual Filter (how decision-makers perceive information obtained from outside the group); Operational Objectives (what a terrorist group hopes to achieve from its attacks); and Attack Modalities (the methods and techniques a terrorist group employs to attack targets).

Each of the sub-factors listed above, in combination with others, exerts varying degrees of influence on a particular group's target selection process.

Third, the conclusions of a previously conducted study, which comprised both a quantitative analysis of prior attacks on critical infrastructure and qualitative case studies of particular terrorist groups that have in the past focused on targeting critical infrastructure, reveal important information on trends in terrorist motivations.

This research indicates that terrorist groups generally attack infrastructure because: 1) they want to destroy certain important facilities; 2) they feel that they can obtain more publicity or external support than if they had attacked non-infrastructure targets; 3) they can cause even larger number of casualties – or avoid causing casualties altogether – by attacking such facilities; 4) the symbolic value of infrastructure targets is often greater than that of other targets; or 5) for a complex combination of general and very specific reasons. As one would expect, therefore, there is no single explanation that is applicable to all the prior cases of attacks on critical infrastructure.

Past trends indicated that secular left- or right-wing groups with utopian ideologies and religious groups have conducted the majority of attacks against critical infrastructure worldwide. The relative absence of operationally efficient secular utopian terrorist groups in the U.S., coupled with the increasing incidence of attacks by religious groups, suggests that there are three categories of terrorist groups that may have the highest disposition to attack U.S. critical infrastructure targets in the future: 1) transnational jihadist groups, 2) domestic right-wing "militias," and 3) the most violent fringes of the radical ecology movement.

Of the three categories of groups that are most likely to seek to conduct attacks against critical infrastructure, jihadist terrorist groups possess

## *Executive Summary*

both the ideological proclivities and the necessary operational capabilities to perpetrate large-scale critical infrastructure attacks. In terms of absolute numbers, groups generally classified as “religious” have accounted for roughly 73% of all casualties and 35% of all fatalities for confirmed major critical infrastructure attacks. If both major and minor attacks are included, the data reveal that these groups have accounted for 62% of all casualties, with the vast majority of these casualties being caused by groups in the “Islamic” subcategory. These statistics lend preliminary support to a worrisome hypothesis – that religious terrorist groups are more likely than other groups to mix critical infrastructure attacks with mass casualty attacks.

*Chapter Three* considers the organizational evolution of al-Qa`ida and explores the group's general “strategic” objectives and rationales in order that this knowledge can inform the remainder of the analysis. The chapter begins by examining al-Qa`ida's four-tiered organizational structure: 1) the al-Qa`ida leadership group, 2) the al-Qa`ida rank and file, 3) other jihadist terrorist groups throughout the world that are affiliated in some way with al-Qa`ida, and 4) ostensibly independent cells whose members have been inspired by Usama bin Ladin's ideology. This structure, however, has evolved markedly since the 9/11 attacks. In October 2001, following the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001, the U.S. attacked Afghanistan, removed the Taliban regime, and destroyed al-Qa`ida's safe sanctuaries in that country. As a result, al-Qa`ida lost much of its original organizational infrastructure, and many of its cadres were either killed, captured, or dispersed during the campaign. In looking at the organization's evolution since 9/11, three broad trends have become apparent. First, al-Qa`ida has adopted an increasingly decentralized organizational structure as a result of the loss of its sanctuaries in Afghanistan and other countries. Second, al-Qa`ida has suffered significant financial losses. Since 9/11, group assets worth more than \$120 million have been frozen. Third, and perhaps most importantly, Bin Ladin and other al-Qa`ida leaders have recast the organization as an international Islamic insurgent movement and have helped to spawn an unknown number of jihadist cells that adhere to its worldview and objectives, but which may or may not have any organic organizational or logistical connection with the core group and do not have to be subsidized by the latter's own resources.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

It is evident, therefore, that the initial phases of the “war on terrorism” succeeded in destroying al-Qa`ida’s original infrastructure in Afghanistan and severely disrupting its worldwide operational and support networks. However, the group has managed to survive the international campaign directed against it by adopting a more flexible organizational structure. During the past four years, aided by the Internet and the periodic appearance of audio and video messages from Bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and other al-Qa`ida spokesmen, the organization has been transformed into more of an international movement than a terrorist group in the narrowest sense of that term. The net impact of the U.S.-led war on terrorism on al-Qa`ida’s ability to carry out large-scale attacks against the U.S. homeland remains unclear.

In terms of the group’s strategic reasoning, assessing the degree to which al-Qa`ida is interested in targeting critical infrastructure, whether on American soil or overseas, is a difficult proposition. First of all, the pattern of al-Qa`ida attacks, to the extent that such a pattern exists and is discernable, has not only evolved over time but must be viewed from the enemy’s own point of view. Second, al-Qa`ida’s proclaimed rationales for carrying out its terrorist assaults, both those that it has launched in the past and those that it threatens to make in the future, can rarely if ever be taken at face value. These intrinsic problems have been further compounded because intelligence and military analysts in the U.S. and Europe who are charged with comprehending and interdicting jihadist terrorism have all too often employed entirely secular, materialistic types of reasoning and exclusively Western military frames of reference, above all – whether consciously or not – certain ideas derived from well-known nineteenth-century military theorists such as the Prussian officer Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), in an effort to explain what it is that al-Qa`ida is currently up to.

As is described in more detail in the full chapter, influential terrorism analysts cannot even agree on the most basic of questions: the extent to which al-Qa`ida’s objectives may be considered realistic and therefore realizable. Some view al-Qa`ida, through the prism of a conventional Western military perspective, as an essentially rational strategic actor, whereas others argue that the group and its leaders are essentially irrational. Still others seek to forge a middle ground by arguing that although al-Qa`ida may be said to operate more or less rationally as opposed to completely irrationally, it does so primarily within the restrictive confines of a basically non-rational theological framework.

## *Executive Summary*

The key point that needs to be emphasized is that, far from accepting modern Western conceptions of international law, which presuppose “the existence of a family of nations composed of a community of states enjoying full sovereign rights and equality of status” – the leaders of al-Qa`ida instead adhere to what they consider – quite rightly – to be authentically Islamic conceptions. Indeed, despite their often intimate familiarity with the functioning of complex modern Western societies, as well as their willingness to adopt modern technology and their penchant for periodically employing modern-sounding “anti-imperialist” rhetoric of the sort normally associated the secular revolutionary left and right, the jihadists are essentially living in a seventh-century mental universe.

Bin Ladin’s ultimate aims are to unite the Muslim *umma*, restore the power and glory of the Caliphate, and secure the triumph of the *dar al-islam* over the *dar al-kufr*. He recognizes, however, that this objective cannot be achieved until a truly Islamic state is established in the heart of the Muslim world and until the power of the United States is undermined and destroyed, two objectives that are viewed as closely interrelated. What, then, is al-Qa`ida’s basic strategy for accomplishing its ultimate objectives? Since at least the mid-1990s, its principal aim has been to precipitate a titanic “conflict of civilizations” between the Islamic world and the West, and in the process create a global Islamic insurgent movement that even the unmatched power and vast resources of America would be unable to cope with or quell. In order to accomplish this preliminary aim, al-Qa`ida has carried out a series of provocative attacks marked by increasing lethality, culminating in the 9/11 attacks, that were intended to goad the United States into launching a massive attack on the Islamic world, which would only serve to confirm Bin Ladin’s long-standing claims that the “Great Satan” and its allies were waging a war against Islam. An incautious, brutal response by the U.S. military would in turn hopefully have the effect of arousing the increasingly angry Muslim masses from their slumber and compelling them at long last to answer al-Qa`ida’s call to wage a “defensive *jihad*” against the invading “infidels,” who could then be more plausibly portrayed as trying to militarily subjugate the *dar al-islam* and directly exploit its resources.

Irrespective of whether its leaders always display a coherent and realistic “strategic” vision, which is not in fact the case, al-Qa`ida has repeatedly shown itself to be devastatingly effective on the operational and “tactical” levels. Indeed, it is precisely this combination of 1) delusional, utopian, and non-negotiable goals, which ultimately derive from a theologically-based and fanatical “fantasy ideology,” and 2) a ruthless

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

operational efficiency capable of causing tremendous damage, that makes al-Qa`ida such a dangerous and formidable adversary.

In the final analysis, there is one seemingly insurmountable difficulty that faces any state or society which is confronted by hostile, violence-prone religious extremists: their stubborn maintenance of faith that their agendas and actions are “divinely-sanctioned,” even in the face of looming defeat and disaster. To the extent that they are absolutely convinced that God is on their side and that the enemy is inherently evil and ungodly, they are unusually hard to deter or permanently undermine the morale of.

*Chapter Four* traces various religious and historical referents that might inform al-Qa`ida's attitudes towards critical infrastructure. In the case of the jihadists, it is critical to analyze Islam's original sources since, unlike more mainstream and traditionalist Islamic doctrines, jihadist thinkers promote opening the “doors of *ijtihad*” by returning almost exclusively to the *Qur'an* and *ahadith* as arbiters of the precepts of Islam. Most jihadists believe that all they need to know at all times – including in the realms of military strategy and tactics – is divinely laid out in Qur'anic revelations and embodied in the *sunna* (customary practices) of Muhammad, as interpreted by radical ideologues. Hence, for them “any action associated with jihad – when to fight, how to fight, what sort of treaties to conclude with the enemy – must find some support from the texts.” This makes it a necessity to examine the extent to which the original precepts of Islam – as they appear in the *Qur'an* and *ahadith* and have been interpreted by the jihadists – provide al-Qa`ida with incentives, justifications, or possibly even constraints on targeting critical infrastructure.

One can never be absolutely certain which religious referents al-Qa`ida's ideologues will use to guide or justify any particular action. Yet even without claiming any special insights into the particular religio-historical analogies flitting inside the heads of al-Qa`ida's operational chiefs, it is possible to discuss several elements within sacred Islamic texts and religious thinking that might influence their targeting decisions vis-à-vis critical infrastructure.

First, it should be noted that jihadists view Allah as “the true owner of all property, and man is allowed to use it only when he does so in an Islamically correct way.” There is therefore no inherent respect for

## *Executive Summary*

private or state property if the erstwhile owners are seen to be acting un-Islamically. Islamic laws governing the conduct of war, many of which are interpreted in the mainstream as specifically precluding attacks on certain elements of an enemy's infrastructure, are often circumscribed by the current incarnation of jihadists and are therefore unlikely to dissuade them from attacking critical infrastructure. Furthermore, verses can be found in the *Qur'an* that specifically allude to human-built spaces in the context of death or violence. These include Sura 2:190, which prescribes that under certain circumstances (namely, when acting in self-defense), the forces of Islam are even allowed to enter the most holy of places to fight their enemies – "Kill them wherever you find them and turn them out from where they have turned you out, for *fitna* is worse than killing, but do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there. But if they fight you, kill them. Such is the reward of the unbelievers." Even more telling is the following verse from the Sura al-Nisa' (The Women): "Wherever you are, death will find you out. Even if you are in towers built up strong and high" (4:78). While Qur'anic verses like these and others noted in the full chapter may be interpreted by the Islamic mainstream in a way which bears no connection at all to critical infrastructure, it is not difficult to see how the jihadists of al-Qa`ida could find in such verses either a prescription, or at the very least a justification, for attacking their enemies' societal edifices, which in modern times could easily be equated with the very systems and assets we conceive of as critical infrastructure.

Moreover, al-Qa`ida's leaders subscribe to the doctrine of retaliation in kind, at the same time perceiving the West as primarily responsible for the Islamic world's economic woes (through colonization and neo-imperialism), and specifically for the destruction of particular infrastructural targets (such as occurred in Iraq in both the first and second Gulf Wars and during the intervening years of sanctions). Insofar as they believe that the United States is at fault for harming Muslim societal and economic infrastructure, this may provide an incentive for them to attack their perceived American equivalents.

Just as a particular selection of religious referents serve to inform al-Qa`ida's religious, political, and social philosophies and prescriptions, so too do historical precedents in Islamic warfare and *jihad* from the era of the Prophet, the immediate post-Muhammad centuries, and even more modern experiences. This is not to say, necessarily, that al-Qa`ida will behave as other Arabs and Muslims have in the past. It is to say, however, that historical referents are important in Arab and Muslim culture and that various al-Qa`ida planners of today might well derive



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

inspiration (whether positive or negative) from past Islamic methods of warfare and rebellion.

As Mary Habeck points out, even jihadists' theoretical explanations for Islam's failure to restore the Caliphate are based largely on a return to ancient theological-ideological roots and a view of "history as a series of repetitious events" in which the struggle against the Pharaoh, the Mongol conquest, and especially the Crusades are "templates" upon which the present war against the West is laid out and interpreted.

Usama bin Ladin's repeated incantations regarding the West as 'Crusaders' is the most frequently made and obvious such reference, but there are many others. His deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri, for example, suggested in his July 2005 letter to Iraq's leading al-Qa`ida terrorist, Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, that the present-day battle to establish "a caliphate in the manner of the Prophet" is prophesied: "I want to be the first to congratulate you for what God has blessed you with in terms of fighting battle in the heart of the Islamic world, which was formerly the field for major battles in Islam's history...and what will happen, according to what appeared in the Hadiths of the Messenger of God about the epic battles between Islam and atheism."

Even at the tactical level, historical referents occur in al-Qa`ida's discourse. A pertinent example of how this occurs in practice is when al-Qa`ida drew a parallel between the successful use of trebuchets as heavy weapons by Muslim forces to conquer the high-walled city of Ta'if in 630 CE and the use of airplanes to attack American buildings in the 9/11 attacks. Even al-Qa`ida technical documents such as training manuals are replete with references to general propositions, such as the need to maintain the sort of secrecy, discipline, discretion, and the like that had been urged by Prophet Muhammad and both his more immediate and contemporary successors, as a means of supporting the rationale behind basic intelligence gathering, recruiting, military, and terrorist principles, if not methodologies. Attacking critical infrastructure could be a similar means by which al-Qa`ida can undermine the West's economic stability, its military capacity, and even its very way of life.

There is no doubt that Muhammad targeted the economic base and infrastructure of his new faith's enemies with both his words and deeds. The Prophet Mohammad's first forays into battle were attacks on the caravans that functioned as the "infrastructure," indeed the lifeline, of ancient desert city-states' food and other supplies. Muhammad also destroyed his enemies' fruit-trees that were an essential source of food

## *Executive Summary*

sustenance and of protection from the deadly desert sun, though there remains a debate among Islamic scholars to this day as to what circumstances permit such an act.

Islamic historical precedents long after Muhammad can be found for al-Qa`ida's endeavors to undermine the functioning of, or even destroy, key systems and infrastructures. Based on the Prophet's founding example, Muslim forces in both the early caliphal conquests of pagan lands and in intra-Islamic wars attacked enemy supply caravans. There are also numerous instances in which ancient Islamic armies poisoned or otherwise destroyed the water resources of their enemies. Attacks on infrastructure continued into modern times. The legendary T.E. Lawrence "of Arabia" relayed numerous instances of both the Ottoman Turks and his Arab legions plundering caravans and blowing up trains, railroads, bridges, and telegraph installations.

The Algerian revolution against French rule in the 1950s can be regarded as the first jihad to have taken place amidst modern material culture and infrastructure. The Algerian rebels' remarkably well-coordinated campaign saw hundreds of bombings, arsons, and other forms of attack on almost every form of infrastructure from telephone and telegraph lines, to power transmitters and food supplies. During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), both belligerents sought to destroy the other side's oil production and export infrastructures. In the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989), the *mujahidin* destroyed bridges, tunnels, and power transmission lines in addition to schools and health centers, which were viewed as places of Soviet indoctrination. Since al-Qa`ida emerged in part from the Afghan war and *mujahidin* milieu, these historical precedents may have a stronger salience among today's al-Qa`ida and its affiliates.

The link between religious and historical precedents, on the one hand, and target selection, on the other, is a significant and persistent one in the case of al-Qa`ida. Therefore, the numerous religious and historical elements that might be interpreted as justifying, prompting, or providing tactical guidance for attacks on critical infrastructure targets must be consistently borne in mind during efforts to protect America's critical infrastructure. Ignoring such justifications by the jihadists themselves could be a fatal mistake, since they claim to have selected every strategy and tactic from the examples set by the Muhammad and other "rightly-guided" Muslim leaders.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

*Chapter Five* examines various statements by al-Qa`ida and its affiliates relating to critical infrastructure, and on this basis provides a general analysis of how targeting critical infrastructure fits into al-Qa`ida's broader strategic outlook.

There is voluminous evidence indicating that al-Qa`ida desires and fully intends to damage the American economy, which it sees both as highly vulnerable and as the foundation of U.S. military and political power. In part this is because, ideologically speaking, the group perceives the U.S. as a crass, greedy, materialistic society whose morally corrupt members care only about their own economic well-being. For that very reason, al-Qa`ida is convinced that inflicting heavy damage on the American economy is the best way to exert an impact on the attitudes and behavior of both the elites and the masses within the U.S. The importance of attacking “Crusader” economic targets has been repeatedly emphasized by Bin Ladin himself, and at various times al-Zawahiri and other al-Qa`ida leaders have also stressed the value of attacking Western economies. These exhortations by Bin Ladin and his lieutenants contain several recurrent themes, including 1) that the U.S., despite all of its apparent power, is a “paper tiger” that can be defeated militarily, just as the Soviet superpower was defeated by the *mujahidin* in Afghanistan; 2) that damaging the economy is one of the best ways to defeat the U.S., since this will serve to undermine its military power; and 3) that attacking the oil infrastructure and driving up the price of oil is one of the best ways to weaken the American economy.

Despite the obvious awareness among al-Qa`ida leaders and strategists of the importance of attacking economic targets in the U.S. and the West, what is surprising is that there are apparently only a relatively small number of articles and treatises that are devoted exclusively to discussing infrastructure in this regard (with the exception of the oil infrastructure). Indeed, there seems to be little or no discussion of critical infrastructure in al-Qa`ida materials and other jihadist literature, at least in the specific technical sense in which people in the West – especially officials charged with protecting it – employ that term.

This seems to confirm that al-Qa`ida has no clear understanding of critical infrastructure in the Western sense, much less a coherent strategy for attacking critical infrastructure qua critical infrastructure. Still less does the group, at least in its public exhortations, seem to grasp the potential advantages of making compound attacks on critical infrastructure, i.e., using certain components of the infrastructure to

## *Executive Summary*

disrupt or destroy other key infrastructural elements. What al-Qa`ida does possess, however, is a strong desire to harm the economy of the United States and the West, and an increasingly sophisticated awareness that effectively targeting the oil infrastructure in the Gulf States will create serious economic burdens and dislocations in all of the world's industrialized societies, none of which are part of the relatively underdeveloped *dar al-islam*.

In sum, based on an analysis of the group's statements and manuals, there is an acute danger that al-Qa`ida will instigate, sponsor, and/or directly organize more and more attacks on vital oil facilities and pipelines, and that it will continue to attack sensitive infrastructural targets such as buildings, bridges, roadways, tunnels, and airports, places where large numbers of people tend to congregate. However, as in the past, such attacks are likely to be carried out for a multiplicity of reasons – to strike symbolically significant political, military, or cultural targets, kill large numbers of “infidels,” physically destroy property, traumatize and frighten enemy civilians, rally and embolden Islamist supporters, and cause tangible economic damage – rather than simply to disrupt or destroy infrastructure in the narrowest sense of that term.

*Chapter Six* offers a preliminary analysis of al-Qa`ida's capabilities with respect to attacks on critical infrastructure. Al-Qa`ida has already demonstrated its flexible and adaptive nature as a terrorist organization and its ability to conduct a wide range of attacks, including those on critical infrastructure targets, such as the Kenyan and Tanzanian embassies and the World Trade Center towers. In order to review al-Qa`ida's capabilities in more detail, this section first examines the development and execution of al-Qa`ida's attack planning. This is followed by a discussion of critical infrastructure targets and the range of baseline capability attributes necessary to make successful attacks on those targets.

The six capability categories below are examined in the context of the requirements necessary for attacking various infrastructure sectors, followed by a discussion of the current capability levels possessed by al-Qa`ida:

1. Physical and Logistical Resources
2. Weapons
3. Financial Resources

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

4. Ability to innovate/Technology Levels/Skill sets
5. Familiarity with the target environment
6. Communication

The evaluation of these capability requirements suggests that the capability levels required to attack most critical infrastructure targets under current levels of protection are sufficiently low to allow most fairly operationally sophisticated terrorist groups to conduct such attacks. While an exact measure of al-Qa`ida's capabilities in these areas is not currently quantifiable, a general calculation of its abilities supports the view that al-Qa`ida is capable of attacking a broad cross-section of critical infrastructure targets. It should also be remembered that large-scale attacks along the lines of the 9/11 attacks are not always necessary to further al-Qa`ida's short- or long-term goals. More recent attacks, such as the Bali bombings and the London subway bombings, may have lacked the scope and sophistication of the 9/11 attacks, but they were nonetheless successfully completed operations that returned al-Qa`ida to the forefront of political debate and the public eye. After all, even relatively small-scale attacks, while perhaps not optimal in the eyes of certain al-Qa`ida leaders, can further al-Qa`ida's goals of inciting fear in the West and slowly weakening the economic strength of Western nations.

*Chapter Seven* presents both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of past al-Qa`ida attacks outside the United States, in order to provide context for and additional details about the ways in which al-Qa`ida might carry out attacks against American-based infrastructure. To accomplish this, the Chapter provides a quantitative assessment of successful al-Qa`ida critical infrastructure attacks in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, combined with a more in-depth examination of certain notable attacks. Assessing the frequency of al-Qa`ida-related attacks on critical infrastructure outside the United States is complicated by the insurgency in Iraq, since it is often difficult to discern which groups are responsible for carrying out particular attacks, and which attacks technically fall into the insurgent category rather than the narrower terrorist category. If Iraq is excluded from the total, it is possible to draw three inferences from the data. First, Europe is now clearly being targeted by al-Qa`ida-linked groups. Second, of the four sub-regions of Asia – Central, South, Southeast, and East – South Asia is the locus of more al-Qa`ida-related critical infrastructure attacks than any other sub-region. Given the neuralgic regional context, it is likely

## *Executive Summary*

that this trend will continue. Finally, if Iraq is discounted, Saudi Arabia and Algeria lead all other states in al-Qa`ida-related critical infrastructure attacks in the Middle East and North Africa.

The chapter also investigates al-Qa`ida attacks targeting critical infrastructure components that were ultimately deemed unsuccessful, either because the attacks failed, were foiled, or otherwise were abandoned.

Finally, the chapter offers a comparative overview of al-Qa`ida's attack trends against critical infrastructure, both outside of and within the United States. Although al-Qa`ida's attacks against U.S. critical infrastructure have been devastating in their effects, successful attacks against critical infrastructure targets in America constitute just under 3 percent of all infrastructural attacks perpetrated by the group and its affiliates. In comparison to the five North American al-Qa`ida critical infrastructure attacks, which are detailed in the full study, al-Qa`ida has carried out successful attacks against critical infrastructural sectors in Europe (3 attacks), Asia (10 attacks), and the Middle East and North Africa (147 attacks).

*Chapter Eight* examines prior al-Qa`ida attacks and plots against critical infrastructure on U.S. soil, in the form of in-depth qualitative case studies. These include: 1) the 1993 World Trade Center (WTC) bombing, 2) the 1993 Tunnel and Bridge Plot, 3) the December 1999 "Millennium Plot" involving Ahmad Rassam, 4) the September 11, 2001 Attacks, and 5) the Ayman Faris Case that involved making preparations to attack the Brooklyn Bridge and derail trains, as well as several instances in which responsibility was claimed by Islamist groups for accidental critical infrastructure disruptions. In each case, the target selection processes are examined, along with the operational details of the plot and its most notable characteristics. The relevance of each plot to al-Qa`ida's targeting of critical infrastructure is highlighted below.

### **1. World Trade Center Attack (1993)**

The 1993 World Trade Center (WTC) bombing was the first major attack by jihadists in the U.S. Although the consequences of the attack paled in comparison to those that would occur at the very same location eight years later, the bombing is instructive in a number of respects. It seems, in this case at least, that "key resources" (nationally recognized structures) were singled out from the very beginning of the attack

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

process. Moreover, it appears as if the economic role played by the WTC and its environs was also a factor in its selection as the target. However, other elements of the target selection process had little or nothing to do with the infrastructural nature of the WTC – a large part of the reason Ramzi Yusuf chose it was because of the number of potential casualties that could be produced in a successful attack. In sum, there were multiple influences on the choice of the WTC as the target, only some of which related to its role as an element of the nation’s critical infrastructure.

At the level of operations and tactics, the 1993 WTC case is somewhat recondite. On the one hand, a small band of ad-hoc terrorists with one skilled operative came close to destroying one of America’s icons and killing thousands of people. The production and nature of the bomb itself evidenced sophisticated tradecraft, and the terrorists did their homework on their target. On the other hand, the amateurishness of some of the cell members was obvious, and the group struggled with the financing aspect of the operation, which perhaps would have succeeded in causing far more damage had Yusuf been given access to more funds.

### **2. Tunnel and Bridge Plot (1993)**

There is little evidence in the materials from the 1993 Tunnel and Bridge Plot to support or refute the view that targeting critical infrastructure stems from al-Qa`ida’s perception that such infrastructure constitutes a species of target different from other target types. The focus seems to have been on executing a spectacular attack and, more importantly, on carrying out one that would yield the maximum number of casualties. However, a 1980s al-Qa`ida training manual found by the police in Manchester, England, which recommends attacking bridges and tunnels that lead in and out of large cities, suggests that the disruption of transportation arteries may be among the goals of such operations. There is a reference to taking out the “federal system” in the terrorists’ discussions about attacking FBI headquarters on Federal Plaza in New York City, suggesting that there was a “larger” purpose involved in attacking the law enforcement infrastructure. This would mean, in this sense at least, that at times al-Qa`ida purposely targets critical infrastructure or elements of what the U.S. government would regard as such.

There are signs that al-Qa`ida and affiliated jihadists see the international value to the *jihad* of attacking critical infrastructure targets such as tunnels and bridges. Thus, the `Abd al-Rahman cell’s Hasan suggested sending copies of blueprints of the tunnels to *mujahid* countries like the Sudan so that future operations could be launched.

## *Executive Summary*

The bridge, tunnels, and attendant plots say something about more general issues of jihadist motivations and modes of operation. Although jihadists endeavor to maintain the greatest secrecy during the planning and preparation of their operations, they are often quite open about their overall intentions when they make public threats regarding future attacks. For instance, they acknowledge that one of their motivations for acting is responding to the “evils” of U.S. foreign policy. Even in private, cell members and `Abd al-Rahman seemed to be driven by a hatred of what they saw as U.S. interference in the Muslim world, including Bosnia, as well as of its support for Israel.

It needs to be emphasized, however, that stated intentions, even those of a movement’s leaders to their followers in private, and especially the statements of al-Qa`ida’s foot soldiers, cannot be taken to represent al-Qa`ida’s ultimate goals. The political rhetoric of al-Qa`ida and its affiliates, while focused on U.S. foreign policy, often seems to serve as a convenient cover for their underlying objective – Islam’s expansion at the expense of, and ultimate victory over, the *dar al-kufr*.

### **3. Millennium Plot (1999)**

The reasons why Ahmad Rassam’s December 1999 “Millennium Plot” is relevant to any evaluation of al-Qa`ida’s possible interests in targeting critical infrastructure are twofold. First, elements within the Algerian expatriate circles with which Rassam was associated were undoubtedly linked to al-Qa`ida. Second, as Rassam himself also acknowledged, he had received advanced training in manufacturing explosives at certain Afghan camps, training which was specifically designed to help him attack targets that fall into the infrastructural category. Indeed, Rassam’s statement that he was trained “how to blow up the infrastructure of a country” suggests that at least some portions of that training were specifically geared toward attacking infrastructure qua infrastructure.

However, that particular statement should probably not be interpreted too literally. As has been argued elsewhere, assaults on certain types of infrastructural targets enabled al-Qa`ida to achieve a multiplicity of operational objectives, including killing large numbers of people, exerting a profound psychological impact on hostile and friendly target audiences, striking famous symbolic targets, and physically damaging important buildings and facilities. Yet ironically, disrupting infrastructure in the narrow sense of that term seems not to have loomed particularly high in their considerations. That was seemingly true in this



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

case as well. Among the indications of this were that Rassam and his “brothers” debated attacking a number of targets that did not fall into the category of critical infrastructure, e.g., Jewish neighborhoods in Montreal. Moreover, even when they considered attacking targets that could technically be construed as critical infrastructure, such as the Bureau of Exchange in Montreal, LAX, and government buildings such as an office of the FBI and the Israeli embassy in Washington, DC, their main objectives were not in fact to disrupt the functioning of those facilities. For example, in the case of the Bureau of Exchange, the scheme was hatched as a possible means of stealing money that could thence be used to finance other jihadist operations, and both the planned bomb attack on LAX and the hypothetical plans to attack government buildings, including with cyanide, were viewed as good ways to kill large numbers of “infidel” enemies.

### **4. September 11 Attacks (2001)**

On the basis of the overview in the full chapter of the targeting decisions behind the September 11, 2001 “Planes Operation” and projected follow-up attacks, which was drawn largely from the testimony of its mastermind Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM), one can conclude that at least five direct objectives were being pursued by al-Qa`ida. The first was entirely practical: to attack targets that could be successfully attacked. Throughout KSM’s testimony there are indications that practical considerations influenced al-Qa`ida’s targeting decisions in this case, and that plans were altered to increase the likelihood of the success of the attacks. Second, the planners of the attack clearly wanted to produce a huge psychological impact on target audiences, both the American people and Muslim observers who al-Qa`ida hoped to inspire. Indeed, KSM specifically indicated that he wished to “maximize the psychological impact of the attack.” Elsewhere, he stated that the attacks were designed to create “havoc” and to “be a big slap for the American people on American soil,” as well as something calculated to “wake the American people up” to the supposedly anti-Muslim policies of their own government, which is why not only governmental or military targets were chosen. Third, the sponsors and planners of these attacks clearly wanted to cause “as many deaths as possible.” Fourth, KSM admitted that tall buildings and other high-profile targets were selected for their “symbolic” value and impact. It is this that serves to explain Bin Ladin’s expressed desire to attack well-known political, military, and economic targets in the U.S. Fifth, there is no doubt that al-Qa`ida wished to damage economically valuable American targets. KSM himself specifically acknowledged that New York City was “always the first

## *Executive Summary*

target on my mind” because it was the “economic capital of the U.S.” Moreover, among the potential follow-up attacks being considered were “subway strikes, poisoning of reservoirs, demolition of bridges, etc.,” all of which constitute part of the critical infrastructure of this country. This surely is indicative of the fact that one of the many objectives Bin Ladin was pursuing in carrying out the 9/11 attacks was to cause economic damage by striking infrastructural targets.

Even so, precisely because so many different motives were explicitly mentioned by the planners of the “planes operation,” it would be ill-advised to assume that the sole or even that the primary objective of the 9/11 attacks was to harm infrastructure qua infrastructure. Here, as in so many other instances, one can identify multiple motives behind the attack. In short, even when considering the most spectacular of all modern terrorist attacks, one which did in fact strike significant components of the critical infrastructure of the U.S., one is forced to acknowledge that this does not seem to have been the main purpose for carrying out these devastating assaults. Furthermore, although this was not specifically mentioned by KSM, in part because it is such a base, vulgar, and only partially conscious motive, there is no doubt that the 9/11 attacks were carried out in part to specifically express the jihadists’ outright hatred for Western “unbelievers” and to satisfy their overwhelming desire to avenge the “oppression” and “humiliation” of Muslims, real or imagined, at the hands of the “Great Satan” and its client regimes in the Middle East.

### **5. Ayman Faris Plots (2002-2003)**

It is clear from the Ayman Faris plot to attack the Brooklyn Bridge and derail trains that al-Qa`ida regards bridges as an important potential target. Aside from the call to destroy bridges providing routes into and out of large cities in at least one al-Qa`ida training manual, it is difficult to determine precisely whether the importance of bridges as a target for al-Qa`ida is because of the likelihood that lots of “infidels” might be killed, or because of the financial cost that would be incurred in rebuilding a similar structure, or because of the losses to the economy resulting from the disruption of transportation routes. It is nonetheless clear, depending upon the location and nature of the targeted bridge, that the desired damage could be financial, symbolic, or even security-related should it come on the eve of another form of attack on the city or cities which the bridge services. There is no reason to presume that the recent calls by al-Zawahiri to focus on oil targets, which perhaps suggest a revitalized interest in critical infrastructure writ large, would exclude renewed efforts to strike targets such as bridges and other transportation infrastructure.

*Chapter Nine* returns to the framing questions posed at the start of the study and presents broader conclusions and recommendations for threat analysis.

**1. Does al-Qa`ida perceive “infrastructure” or “critical infrastructure” as a species of target different from other target types?**

The question of whether al-Qa`ida as a whole perceives infrastructure as a distinct species of target is a rather complex matter. Al-Qa`ida sources do occasionally mention infrastructure, and to some extent evince an understanding of the “criticality” of certain infrastructures, but this does not necessarily mean that they perceive infrastructure in the same way that the U.S. government defines and analyzes it.

Within the broader Islamic historical and religious tradition there are many allusions to targets that can be broadly conceived of as infrastructure. Several of these referents provide a justification, explicitly or implicitly, for launching strikes against present-day infrastructural targets, and perhaps even for adopting specific types of plans of attack. In that sense, attacks on critical infrastructural clearly fall within the Islamic historical tradition, as embodied in the military actions taken or authorized by Muhammad himself, such as attacks on the caravan trade and the burning of date-palms.

What emerges from a close analysis, however, is something less than a full-blown prescription within the Islamic tradition for attacking critical infrastructures. What this tradition does provide is ample raw material from which al-Qa`ida, which has in fact radicalized Islamic traditions of warfare, can justify (at least to its own followers) attacking critical infrastructure targets should such targets be chosen. Moreover, it should be reiterated that its radicalization and selective reading of Islamic tenets mean that the group is unlikely to embrace or be bound by any religious prohibitions on attacking such targets.

In addition to providing legitimization for their attack choices, the Islamic historical record, real and imagined, can and does serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary jihadists. For this reason Islam’s historical “infrastructural” attacks could provide a kind of model for the zealous attack planner. As noted above, to the creative operative the

## *Executive Summary*

poisoning of water wells and the destruction of fruit trees might, for example, suggest attacks on water reservoirs and river dams, as well as on agricultural and food supplies with chemical or biological agents. However, these types of attacks are not the only kinds that were carried out by Muhammad and his commanders, and as such it is possible to justify attacking all sorts of targets on the basis of the Prophet's exhortations and actions. Therefore those historical episodes, which relate to critical infrastructure targets, only represent a single arrow amongst a quiver of targeting guideposts that can be drawn from early Islamic sources, above all the *Qur'an* itself and the collections of *ahadith*.

In terms of their own utterances, on the one hand, certain statements by jihadists seem to suggest that they view critical infrastructures as core elements of Western society. For example, would-be "millennium plot" bomber Rassam testified that he had been trained "how to blow up the infrastructure of a country" in al-Qa`ida's Afghan training camps, and Shaykh `Umar `Abd al-Rahman specifically referred to taking out the "federal system" in discussions with the cell members who were plotting to bomb FBI headquarters in New York City, thereby suggesting that there was a "larger" purpose in attacking this particular law enforcement facility. On the other hand, al-Qa`ida does not display a clear conception of infrastructure in the Western sense, much less a coherent strategy for attacking infrastructure qua infrastructure. What seems to be missing from al-Qa`ida's strategic repertoire is a focus on the overall functional aspects of infrastructure. Despite recognizing the importance of the psychological disruption brought about by the group's attacks, one finds very little evidence in al-Qa`ida sources that its leaders and strategists are thinking specifically in terms of disrupting the functions of infrastructural systems in the narrow sense of that phrase. Instead, al-Qa`ida's sense of infrastructure, such as it is, seems to be based primarily on either recognizing the practical or symbolic value of targeting discrete structures, especially landmarks such as buildings and bridges, or on the general economic importance of the prospective target.

In the final analysis, there is very little evidence suggesting that al-Qa`ida targets critical infrastructure as a category worthy of attack simply because it is critical infrastructure. Put another way, there is little to suggest that a target's status as critical infrastructure is alone sufficient to recommend it as a target. Indeed, al-Qa`ida normally targets infrastructure to achieve a variety of objectives, above all to kill large numbers of people and strike the symbols of "infidel" prestige and economic power.

**2. To what extent do al-Qa`ida ideology, strategy and tactics purposely target “critical infrastructure” or elements of what are considered critical infrastructure by the United States Government?**

One of the key findings from the analysis of al-Qa`ida’s statements, materials, and actions is that al-Qa`ida normally has a variety of objectives in mind when it carries out attacks, and that targets are, in the main, specifically chosen in order to maximize the attainment of as many of those objectives as possible. The multiplicity of operational objectives that al-Qa`ida seeks to achieve include killing large numbers of people, exerting a profound psychological impact on hostile and friendly target audiences, striking famous symbolic targets, causing widespread economic harm to the enemy, and physically damaging important buildings and facilities.

In the investigation of previous al-Qa`ida plots and attacks, the authors found that almost no targets were selected purely for their function as infrastructure. This does not mean, however, that al-Qa`ida’s targeting process will not often result in the selection of targets that fall within what the U.S. regards as its critical infrastructure. Critical infrastructure, as currently defined, encompasses a broad range of assets and systems, and it is therefore likely that several of these assets and systems will fulfill one or more of al-Qa`ida’s operational and strategic objectives. The set of targets favored by al-Qa`ida might then substantially intersect the set of assets and systems we think of as falling under the rubric of critical infrastructure.

There are also certain targets that fall within the U.S. conception of critical infrastructure that al-Qa`ida seems particularly drawn towards, as is evidenced either by ideological predilections or the fact that these targets have been specifically mentioned in al-Qa`ida statements and documents. For example, financial targets would fulfill the desire to wage economic *jihad* and to symbolically punish the usurious practices of Western society, and such targets have been specifically singled out in previous jihadist statements and writings.

Since al-Qa`ida does not seem to conceive of critical infrastructure as a distinctive target set, in order to reconcile al-Qa`ida’s strategic aims in target selection with the U.S. understanding of critical infrastructure, we need to disaggregate “critical infrastructure” into its component sectors

## *Executive Summary*

and examine which of these sectors fulfill which targeting goals of al-Qa`ida and to what extent.

In the following table, which is fully explained in the body of the study, al-Qa`ida's targeting goals, as determined in Chapter 3, are compared with individual, "officially designated" U.S. critical infrastructure sectors.

Al-Qa`ida Targeting by Infrastructure Sector

Table 9.1: Critical Infrastructure Risk Assessment Analysis

INFRASTRUCTURE CATEGORY	Casualties <sup>i</sup>	Economic Harm <sup>ii</sup>	Symbolic/Psychological Resonance <sup>iii</sup>	Inherent Attractiveness <sup>iv</sup>
AGRICULTURE	*	** / ***	*	*
BANKING & FINANCE	**	***	**	***
CHEMICAL INDUSTRY & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	***	**	**	*
DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE	*	**	*	*
EMERGENCY SERVICES	**	**	***	*
ENERGY <sup>v</sup>	* / ***	***	**	***
FOOD	***	**	***	*
GOVERNMENT (In the Sense Of COG)	*/**	**	***	**
INFORMATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS	*	***	**	**
KEY RESOURCES <sup>vi</sup>	*/**	*	***	*/**
POSTAL & SHIPPING	*	**	*	*
PUBLIC HEALTH	**/**	**/**	***	*
TRANSPORTATION	***	**	**	**
WATER	**	**	**	**

## Executive Summary

### *All effects are based on a large-scale, successful attack*

---

#### <sup>i</sup> **Casualties:**

- \* = Can be expected to cause low—moderate levels of fatalities (<100)
- \*\* = Can be expected to cause moderate—high levels of fatalities (100-1,000)
- \*\*\* = Can be expected to cause high—catastrophic levels of fatalities (>1,000)

#### <sup>ii</sup> **Economic Harm** (on a national level):

- \* = Unlikely that an attack on this infrastructure sector would cause national-level economic harm
- \*\* = Some possibility that an attack on this infrastructure sector would cause national-level economic harm
- \*\*\* = Likely that an attack on this infrastructure sector would cause national-level economic harm

#### <sup>iii</sup> **Symbolic / Psychological Resonance:**

- \* = Most targets falling in this infrastructure sector have low symbolic/psychological resonance
- \*\* = Most targets falling in this infrastructure sector have moderate symbolic/psychological resonance
- \*\*\* = Most targets falling in this infrastructure sector have high symbolic/psychological resonance

#### <sup>iv</sup> **Inherent Attractiveness:**

- \* = Infrastructure sector does not possess any inherent targeting attractiveness
- \*\* = Some indications that this infrastructure sector possesses some inherent targeting attractiveness
- \*\*\* = Definite indications that this infrastructure sector possesses specific inherent targeting attractiveness

<sup>v</sup> Variances found in the “casualties” column reflect the range of different types of facilities included in the energy infrastructure, e.g. oil pipeline vs. nuclear facility)

<sup>vi</sup> Variances found in the “casualties” and “inherent attractiveness” columns reflect the range of relative differences between specific targets in this category, e.g. Mt. Rushmore vs. the Empire State Building.

As highlighted in the table, the infrastructure sectors that in general have the greatest capacity to fulfill al-Qa`ida’s aims are: Banking & Finance; Energy (especially oil pipelines); Food; Continuity of Government (although this is unlikely to be a common target since it is especially difficult to attack); Public Health; Transportation; and Key Resources. However, one must be cautious about “adding up” or averaging across the different objectives and the table, as provided, is merely a means for exploring the intersection between the U.S.’s current official understanding of critical infrastructure and those targets which al-Qa`ida is likely to attack. Furthermore, specific targets in each sector may be so attractive along one objective dimension that it outweighs other considerations. Nonetheless, the table offers a more nuanced perspective on al-Qa`ida’s targeting as it relates to critical infrastructure, and if combined with vulnerability and consequence analysis, might prove to be a useful tool when analyzing al-Qa`ida attack patterns.



**3. Do recent trends in al-Qa`ida statements and behavior signify a major shift in al-Qa`ida's strategy with respect to critical infrastructure?**

Recent statements by al-Qa`ida spokesmen that exhort the group's followers to attack elements of the energy infrastructure, as well as recent attacks and plots by "homegrown" jihadists targeting the high-density public transportation targets, could conceivably be regarded as signaling a shift in al-Qa`ida's targeting strategy. A discussion of the nature and extent of this perceived shift is thus warranted.

First, the missives of Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri, especially those relating to targeting elements of the energy infrastructure, should be taken seriously. After all, past experience has shown that al-Qa`ida's leaders are often explicit, albeit in generalized terms, about their future plans. However, one should not take such comments out of context. While perhaps upgrading the attractiveness of oil and gas pipelines and facilities in the Middle East as al-Qa`ida targets (which may contribute to an overall rise in the attractiveness of infrastructural targets), this does not mean that the group's existing targeting priorities, including causing widespread economic damage and mass casualties, will be abandoned. These statements are therefore more likely to represent a tactical shift within a specific domain of targets (energy infrastructure) in a specified area (the Middle East), rather than a wholesale shift in targeting strategy. In other words, homeland security planners should certainly not shift their attention away from other target types, including other elements of critical infrastructure that have been identified as highly attractive targets above.

Second, one cannot ignore the potential impact of the increasing prevalence of self-radicalized jihadist entrepreneurs, who often include so-called "homegrown" jihadists, on the targeting of critical infrastructure. It is necessary to distinguish between attacks carried out by these self-radicalized cells and those carried out by "official" al-Qa`ida operatives, since the targets attacked by the latter have generally been carefully selected through a vetting process carried out by senior al-Qa`ida operatives and leaders, while the target selection of individual cells is more independent and idiosyncratic and therefore difficult to predict. In many cases, the influence of al-Qa`ida leaders might be restricted to general guidelines posted on Internet sites. This is not to say that al-Qa`ida proper does not support the actions of these local jihadists

## *Executive Summary*

– indeed, al-Qa`ida leaders probably view such actions as a valuable supplement to their efforts to “bleed America into bankruptcy” and humble the “infidels.”

However, the (d)evolution of the *jihad* in many cases to self-radicalized cells may have two important implications for target selection. The first is the likelihood that target selection, divorced from the direct control of al-Qa`ida’s leaders and ideologues, will become less sophisticated, in the sense of fine-tuning the selection of targets over a period of time in order to simultaneously attain multiple objectives, maximize the probability of success, and still remain concordant with perceived religious mandates. This might mean that targets are selected based more on practical factors, such as local knowledge or the desired attainment of only one or two primary objectives. It would also increase the saliency of statements and instructions purveyed by al-Qa`ida leaders on the Internet (particularly as these relate to infrastructural targets), since these might be all the guidance from their gurus that the relatively isolated, self-radicalized jihadist cells have access to. The continued monitoring of jihadist websites, specifically to detect any changes in targeting guidelines, might thus become more crucial than ever.

The second possible effect of a shift to actions initiated by self-radicalized jihadists relates to their capability to attack critical infrastructure targets. This is not to say that this face of al-Qa`ida, as represented by such cells, will be incapable of attacking critical infrastructure, but we may see less sophisticated asymmetrical attacks that require less planning and coordination than the large-scale operations undertaken by the al-Qa`ida core (i.e., attacks that are more along the lines of the 2005 London underground bombings than the 9/11 attacks). These “simpler” attacks by independent cells can still be extremely deadly and effective in terms of contributing to the economic weakening of Western nations and the evocation of feelings of terror in the Western public, but are more likely to require simpler materials and shorter lead times and to focus on relatively “soft” targets.

Besides the impact of these shifts in targeting statements and the nature of jihadist operatives, it is instructive to consider the general evolution of al-Qa`ida’s capabilities with regard to attacks against critical infrastructure. As can be seen from the discussion of the individual capabilities necessary for critical infrastructure sector attacks and the illustrative review of case studies of actual attacks (in Chapters 6, 7, and 8), both the capabilities maintained by al-Qa`ida and the capabilities required for a successful attack are constantly evolving. The most

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

obvious example is the increased emphasis placed on the protection of various targets since the 9/11 attacks, including elements of critical infrastructure.

As such, there is a great deal of speculation about whether al-Qa`ida's target selection will evolve to reflect these changes. Some experts assert that al-Qa`ida targeting will shift to unprotected or poorly defended targets. According to this logic, since military, diplomatic, and some transportation sector targets are receiving greater protection, terrorist attacks will shift to economic targets, such as banks and tourist locations, as well as religious targets and population centers. Likewise, since the United States has vastly increased domestic protection levels, attacks may also shift to American targets abroad and to the allies of the U.S.

Others maintain that al-Qa`ida will seek to acquire additional technology or employ new techniques in order to locate and exploit loopholes in infrastructure targets, even those that are currently provided with higher levels of protection. One of the chief questions in this regard is whether we will see a new focus on cyberterrorism. While there seems to be a general consensus that al-Qa`ida's large-scale employment of cyberterrorism could have potentially devastating consequences, there is less agreement on whether al-Qa`ida is actually moving in this direction.

Adding motivational concepts to the analysis of the cyber-debate, those who doubt that al-Qa`ida will focus on cyberattacks emphasize the notion that resorting to cyberterrorism would result in the loss of the physical "big bang" that a physical terrorist attack provides. The alternative position is that if one of al-Qa`ida's primary goals is truly the economic weakening of the United States, then cyberattacks would be likely to have a great appeal, especially if other types of attacks were to focus on causing casualties and symbolic targets. The ominous mid-way point between the two effects would be attacks on the combinations of virtual and physical critical infrastructure systems cited earlier in this report, such as the Internet or SCADA control systems.

In broad terms, it is unlikely that al-Qa`ida's strategy vis-à-vis critical infrastructure targets will undergo any radical changes in the near future. Specific targets (such as oil pipelines in the Middle East) may rise to the fore from time to time, the shift to self-radicalized local cells might affect attack modalities, and new techniques such as cyberattacks may become more common, but it is likely that al-Qa`ida's basic attack objectives will remain relatively constant, barring any major changes to its leadership or ideological outlook. Therefore, it will continue to pursue its broad strategy

## *Executive Summary*

of causing economic damage to the United States and “bleeding” the enemy, as well as its desire to inflict casualties and widespread psychological damage. Many assets within what the U.S. defines as critical infrastructures will thus continue to fall between al-Qa`ida’s cross-hairs, as was noted in the response to the second framing question above. Possible changes will most likely be at the tactical or operational levels, e.g., looking for loopholes in sectors with high security (imagine the psychological blow that would be dealt to the U.S. by another major attack on the aviation sector), as well as seeking “softer” targets with relatively lower protection levels or focusing on American targets overseas and the assets of America’s allies. Such actions would, after all, continue to force the United States to expend increasing revenue and resources to secure these expanding target categories.

### **4. Can we learn anything about al-Qa`ida tactics and operations that would be useful in a counterterrorism context should al-Qa`ida or its affiliates target critical infrastructure?**

This study has focused on gaining a better understanding of al-Qa`ida’s attitude towards critical infrastructure, but in so doing it has revealed several potentially salient features of its tactics and operations in the context of its attacks against critical infrastructure, and often more generally too. The most important of these are summarized below:

1. Al-Qa`ida’s past behavior has demonstrated that, in the main, it possesses adequate capability levels to attack almost all types of infrastructural targets. This does not necessarily mean that each group of operatives will be capable of attacking any potential target, but rather that, viewed as a whole, analysts should not exclude any target types from being attacked based on al-Qa`ida’s capabilities. Moreover, due to the rapid growth in online manuals and operational guides, it is unlikely that future would-be al-Qa`ida attackers would require the kind of personal training that cadres previously received in camps in Afghanistan and elsewhere. At the same time, the lack of centralized and direct tactical instruction may limit the scale or effectiveness of attacks carried out by disparate cells, at least for a time.
2. Al-Qa`ida is not afraid of imitating past successful attacks. The Saudi Airlines case detailed in Chapter 7 was starkly reminiscent of the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Therefore, one must not

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

assume that increasing protection levels will necessarily result in target substitution; as mentioned above, al-Qa`ida may be all too eager to exploit gaps in protection even in relatively well-defended sectors. The public transportation sector, especially commercial aviation, will thus continue to be a prime al-Qa`ida target, since this sector has the capacity to fulfill so many of al-Qa`ida's attack objectives.

3. In the era of globalized jihadist terrorism, attack groups can be made up of either local or foreign operatives, or a combination of the two. In other words, the persons involved in planning and carrying out attacks against critical infrastructure are not confined to a specific geographic location.
4. Based on past attacks and plots against critical infrastructure targets, the geography of attacks on critical infrastructure seems to be following that of al-Qa`ida attacks in general, namely continued attempts against U.S., Middle Eastern (especially Saudi Arabian and Iraqi), and South Asian targets, and a rise in attacks on targets in Europe, especially the United Kingdom.
5. Perpetrators, even the more "amateurish" self-radicalized cells, expend significant effort and resources on surveilling potential critical infrastructure targets and engaging in "dry runs." This may provide important opportunities for detection and interdiction by counterterrorist forces.
6. Despite the plethora of vulnerable targets available to would-be al-Qa`ida attackers and the difficulties associated with infiltrating disparate cells, many of the cases examined in this study reveal that al-Qa`ida operatives face substantial difficulties of their own in conducting effective attacks. Specifically, operations are often plagued by a lack of sufficient funds to carry out the desired scale of attack, as well as by the presence of incompetent cell members who can delay or compromise an operation before its execution. It is vital that authorities exploit these difficulties and errors in order to forestall attacks against critical infrastructures.

As has been stated previously, however, even as al-Qa`ida's strategy remains relatively constant, its tactics and capabilities are constantly evolving. Therefore, we are likely to see examples of innovation, adaptability, and development in the group's tactics and procedures,

## *Executive Summary*

especially as levels of protection around critical infrastructure targets increase.

In sum, this study has utilized various approaches in an attempt to trace al-Qa`ida's propensity to attack what has been characterized in the United States as critical infrastructure. Despite the finding that al-Qa`ida does not distinguish critical infrastructure as an independent category of targets and that disrupting the function of these infrastructures does not appear to be a primary targeting motivation, critical infrastructure targets will often fall into the set of targets that al-Qa`ida will find attractive in terms of fulfilling its broader strategic objectives. We have come to the conclusion that in counterterrorist efforts to forecast likely targets, it would be best to designate targets that, if attacked, would produce multiple effects simultaneously, including massive human casualties, severe economic disruption and damage, and maximum media attention and psychological terror. This was certainly the template for al-Qa`ida's attacks on the WTC twice, and it seems also to have driven the 2000 Millennium Plot, the 1993 Tunnels and Bridges Plot, and the Madrid train and London underground bombings, among others.

We believe that this study has brought considerable information to bear on this important topic and thereby contributed to the development of a more nuanced understanding of al-Qa`ida's intentions and operational objectives in relation to critical infrastructure. We are hopeful that this will in turn help to facilitate the development of better threat assessment procedures by relevant U.S. government agencies, as well as provide useful information for those making financial allocation determinations on protection measures for critical infrastructure sectors. Yet we are under no illusions that this study represents the final word in this regard. Continued monitoring of al-Qa`ida and its related networks' behavior and publications is essential, but if nothing else this study provides a baseline from which to track future al-Qa`ida targeting goals and preferences as these relate to critical infrastructure.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION\*

In August 1996, Usama bin Ladin issued a “Declaration of War” against the United States in which he cautioned Muslims not to exhaust their own economic and financial resources, damage the infrastructure in the Arabian Peninsula, or destroy the oil industry. As he put it,

I caution my brothers, the *mujahidin*, the sons of the *umma* [Islamic community], to protect the oil resources and not damage them. It is a great Islamic asset and represents critical economic power essential to the forthcoming pan-Islamic state, with God’s permission.<sup>1</sup>

Yet just over eight years later, on December 16, 2004, al-Qa`ida’s leader urged those very *mujahidin* to “make every effort in your power to stop the greatest theft in the history of the natural resources of both present and future generations” by focusing attacks on oil production facilities in Iraq and the Gulf area.<sup>2</sup> This was echoed the following year in a statement made by Bin Ladin’s deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri: “I call on the holy warriors [*mujahidin*] to concentrate their campaigns on the oil wells stolen from the Muslims, because most of the revenues from this oil go to the enemies of Islam...The enemies of Islam are exploiting such vital resources with incomparable greed, and we have to stop that theft with all we can to save this fortune for the nation [*umma*] of Islam.”<sup>3</sup>

---

\* This chapter was prepared by Jeffrey M. Bale and Gary A. Ackerman.

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Randall B. Hamud, ed., *Osama Bin Laden: America’s Enemy in His Own Words* (San Diego, CA: Nadeem, 2005), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Bruce Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden* (London; New York: Verso, 2005), p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> “Zawahiri urges attacks on Iraq’s Oil,” *Associated Press*, December 7, 2005. This headline is somewhat misleading, for Zawahiri also advocated attacks on Gulf oil facilities. This statement was made in a previously unaired segment from a 43-minute videotape, which was then subsequently broadcast by al-Jazira on December 7, 2005.

## *Introduction*

At first glance, the quotes cited above appear to suggest that between the mid-1990s and the first half-decade of the twenty-first century there has been a dramatic shift in the attitudes of al-Qa`ida's senior leaders concerning the value of attacking the world's oil infrastructure. In the first instance, Bin Ladin emphasizes the need to preserve and protect the oil industries located in the Gulf States, which he clearly views as the patrimony of the Arab people. Indeed, he specifically warns his followers against attacking oil facilities in Saudi Arabia despite his oft-proclaimed desire to overthrow the ruling al-Sa`ud family in that country, whom he regards as "apostates" because of their de facto deviation from Islamic precepts, egregious corruption, and alleged subordination to the interests of the "infidel" United States. In the second case, he argues that these facilities should be attacked in order to prevent the West from looting that patrimony.

However, this seemingly sharp contrast over the propriety and value of attacking the oil infrastructure only serves to disguise an important underlying reality, namely, that one of al-Qa`ida's long-standing objectives has been to damage the economy of the United States. This is an objective that Bin Ladin himself has often articulated. For example, in his December 26, 2001 statement celebrating the catastrophic attacks on September 11, 2001, he argues that "America, the Hubal of the age, is based on great economic power, but it is soft."<sup>4</sup> From this it follows that the "destructive, usurious global economy that America uses, together with its military force, to impose unbelief and humiliation on poor peoples, can easily collapse."<sup>5</sup> All that is needed is to deliver more blows against the U.S. economy, as the "nineteen students" did on 9/11. Hence Bin Ladin urges his followers to "strive to find the weak points of the American economy and strike the enemy there."<sup>6</sup> Since "it is possible to strike the economic base that is the foundation of the military base...it is very important to focus on attacking the American economy by any means necessary."<sup>7</sup> Among other things, this emphasis on damaging the U.S. economy means that supporters of al-Qa`ida may well consider making attacks on sensitive targets that fall broadly under the rubric of critical infrastructure, as this term has been defined by the U.S. and other Western governments. The purpose of this study is to try and assess the level of the threat posed by al-Qa`ida to critical infrastructure in

---

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 149. Hubal was a pagan pre-Islamic deity in Arabia whose idol, which was displayed prominently inside the Ka`ba in Mecca, was physically destroyed by Muhammad and his followers.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

America's homeland, both at the present time and in the foreseeable future.

In an earlier report, several of the authors of this study concluded that the terrorist groups that were most likely to be motivated to attack critical infrastructure on U.S. soil were transnational jihadist groups such as al-Qa`ida.<sup>8</sup> Therein we also cited several examples of jihadist statements and described select plots or attacks against critical infrastructure that seemed to support this preliminary conclusion. We also emphasized, however, that most of al-Qa`ida's assaults on targets that fall into the critical infrastructure category seemed to have been made for a multiplicity of reasons, and that the desire to attack infrastructure qua infrastructure was in many cases a relatively minor factor in the group's calculations.<sup>9</sup> The aim of this present study is to follow up on those initial findings by carrying out further research on jihadist intentions and activities in order to evaluate just how acute the threat from al-Qa`ida to critical infrastructure really is.

Since al-Qa`ida and affiliated Islamist terrorist organizations are focusing their attention on infrastructural targets, both within their own countries and beyond, any detailed investigation of al-Qa`ida's decisionmaking structures and operational capabilities in this regard should prove useful *ab initio* for counterterrorism officials seeking to prevent large-scale attacks on important components of America's critical infrastructure. Yet even though the U.S. currently spends at least \$16 billion<sup>10</sup> on protecting its critical infrastructure from this eventuality, there are a number of pertinent questions that remain unanswered with

---

<sup>8</sup> In this report the plural noun "jihadists" (and its adjectival form "jihadist") will be used to refer to Islamists who believe that waging armed struggle against unbelievers (*jihad bi-al-sayf*, i.e., "jihad of the sword") is the only path to victory over the forces of "unbelief." This is because other Islamist groups, whose ultimate objectives may be no less radical, have instead opted to employ a gradual "Islamization from below" strategy involving a combination of proselytization, ideological indoctrination, and the provision of social services in order to win "hearts and minds" and fulfill their agendas. The meaning of the term *jihad* will be discussed further below.

<sup>9</sup> [Gary, I can't seem to locate the portion of our earlier report where we drew these conclusions]

<sup>10</sup> Owing to the fact that critical infrastructure protection tasks are divided amongst several government agencies, obtaining accurate budget figures for the total amount spent on critical infrastructure protection is difficult. The above amount was derived from supplementary material to the President's 2007 budget request, which states that the 2007 budget "[i]ncreases funding by nearly \$500 million (3 percent) for protecting critical infrastructure and key assets." Office of Management and Budget, "Homeland Security," The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/pdf/Homeland-07.pdf>.

## *Introduction*

respect to this specific subset of al-Qa`ida's wider target selection. For example, when one extrapolates from its prior and ongoing terrorist operations, it seems clear that al-Qa`ida, despite recent diminutions in its global operations, still has the operational capability to carry out complex and sophisticated attacks against existing U.S. infrastructural targets if Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri really decided that they wanted to do so. Hence the key question is why they have not yet done this more frequently and systematically.

Further questions present themselves. If al-Qa`ida really is increasingly intent on attacking critical infrastructure, as seems to be the case, why is this so? Is there a growing awareness among its cadre of current American infrastructural vulnerabilities, or is it simply a question of pursuing an ongoing operational objective more aggressively for particular pragmatic or theological reasons? These are the types of questions that are crying out for answers, and addressing them in a reasonably comprehensive manner constitutes the principle goal of this study. This is also why it is absolutely crucial to shed more light on the motivations and intentions of the organization's leadership group in this context. The answers to such questions will better equip us to identify, anticipate, and forestall al-Qa`ida's plans in the context of critical infrastructure, and thus may ultimately help facilitate the prevention of such attacks.

The current study explores al-Qa`ida's motivations and capabilities for attacking critical infrastructure along a number of axes. The first set of issues concerns ideas about infrastructural targets held by al-Qa`ida's decisionmakers. One of the most common criticisms leveled against past counterterrorism efforts has been that U.S. analysts are prone to "mirroring" when assessing their opponents' intentions and strategies, i.e. that they project their own mental images, frameworks of knowledge, cultural values, and strategic worldviews onto foreign extremists and terrorists, who may in fact have a completely different way of looking at the world. This becomes especially significant when one realizes that "critical infrastructure," as a distinct security concept, is largely a construction of the United States government, with historical roots that can be traced back to the 1960s. The possibility must therefore be entertained that Usama bin Ladin and other operational and strategic leaders of al-Qa`ida may not even regard critical infrastructure as a distinct species of target, as is done in the U.S., but instead treat infrastructural targets no differently than any other target type, such as football stadiums, crowded marketplaces, or naval vessels. If this is indeed the case, critical infrastructural targets would have to "compete"

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

with all of the other target types on an equal playing field in al-Qa`ida's target selection evaluations. Here, broader questions of the strategic and tactical utility of each particular potential target would predominate. On the other hand, if – whether as a result of indigenous conceptual developments or learning from developments in the West – critical infrastructure is nowadays viewed as a distinct and distinctly attractive (or unattractive) target type by al-Qa`ida strategists, then under certain conditions al-Qa`ida leaders may be biased towards (or away from) attacking infrastructural targets in their selection of targets within or outside of the U.S. homeland. If the latter characterization is indeed a better reflection of reality, an ancillary question then involves the extent to which al-Qa`ida's conception of critical infrastructure accords with the prevailing official understanding and categorization of critical infrastructure within the United States. An examination of al-Qa`ida's own conception of critical infrastructure, assuming that the group has such a conception, is thus a prerequisite for a better understanding of their target selection processes.

The next broad issue to investigate is the extent to which al-Qa`ida's ideology, strategy, and tactics intentionally focus on those elements of American society that the U.S. government itself characterizes as critical infrastructure, irrespective of whether al-Qa`ida's commanders define or conceive of it as such. Even if al-Qa`ida does not consider critical infrastructure to be a separate target category, its leaders may still be drawn towards attacking particular targets or types of targets that fall within the rubric of what we define as critical infrastructure. Revealing any predilections on the part of al-Qa`ida towards attacking critical infrastructure, or specific types of critical infrastructure, is thus one of the central objectives of this study.

International terrorism can be viewed as a formally complex phenomenon<sup>11</sup> and, as such, the dynamics of various aspects of terrorism, including target selection, will always be a vital consideration. An important question addressed by this study, once al-Qa`ida's current orientation vis-à-vis critical infrastructure has been outlined, is therefore whether, in light of its organizational evolution since the advent of the “Global War on Terror” and the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, any major shifts in the group's targeting as it pertains to critical infrastructure

---

<sup>11</sup> See Nancy K. Hayden, “The Complexity of Terrorism,” in *Mapping Terrorism Research: State of the Art, Gaps and Future Direction*, ed. Magnus Ranstorp (London: Routledge, 2006).

## *Introduction*

are on the horizon. This must be considered in the context of recent trends discernable in al-Qa`ida's statements and behavior with respect to critical infrastructure, including the statements of key leaders such as Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri.

In addition to the broad questions identified above, by examining the historical record this study seeks to provide relevant information about a host of more detailed, "tactical" aspects of al-Qa`ida's attacks on critical infrastructure, including its actual operational methods, the types of critical infrastructure it is likely to target, and its probable attack modalities (such as whether suicide attacks are more likely than sabotage). In the process, it may be possible to discern broader patterns concerning the timing, location, or nature of future al-Qa`ida attacks against critical infrastructure.

The above discussion can be encapsulated within four basic "framing questions" which this study seeks to address. These questions have served to guide the research and analysis of al-Qa`ida's relationship to critical infrastructure, and will be revisited in the conclusion.

### **Basic Framing Questions:**

- 5. Does al-Qa`ida perceive "infrastructure" or "critical infrastructure" as a species of target different from other target types?**
- 6. To what extent do al-Qa`ida ideology, strategy and tactics purposely target "critical infrastructure" or elements of what are considered critical infrastructure by the United States Government?**
- 7. Do recent trends in al-Qa`ida statements and behavior signify a major shift in al-Qa`ida's strategy with respect to critical infrastructure?**
- 8. Can we learn anything about al-Qa`ida tactics and operations that would be useful in a counterterrorism context should al-Qa`ida or its affiliates target critical infrastructure?**

It is not difficult to recognize that al-Qa`ida and its affiliates have displayed and continue to display an acute interest in attacking elements of the U.S. infrastructure. What is required, however, is an in-depth exploration of the nature, origins, and direction of the group's objectives in order to derive policy recommendations and analytical indicators to

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

assist in detecting and interdicting plots of this nature. In sum, this study is specifically intended to increase counterterrorism analysts' understanding of certain features of al-Qa`ida's strategy and operations in order to facilitate the anticipation and prevention of attacks directed against our most critical infrastructures. In doing so, this report also aims to provide useful information for those making financial allocation determinations on protection measures for critical infrastructure sectors.

### **STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

This study was completed with the financial support of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, through a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate. The report is organized in the following manner. Chapter Two contains a brief introduction to the concept of critical infrastructure and discusses general terrorist motivations for targeting it. Chapter Three considers the organizational evolution of al-Qa`ida and explores the group's strategic rationale. The fourth chapter traces various religious and historical referents that might inform al-Qa`ida's attitudes towards critical infrastructure. Chapter Five examines various statements by al-Qa`ida and its affiliates relating to critical infrastructure, and based thereon provides a general analysis of how targeting critical infrastructure fits into al-Qa`ida's broad strategic outlook. A preliminary analysis of al-Qa`ida's capabilities with respect to attacks on critical infrastructure is then offered in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven presents both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of past al-Qa`ida attacks outside the United States, whereas Chapter Eight covers past al-Qa`ida attacks and plots against critical infrastructure on U.S. soil in the form of in-depth qualitative case studies. The final chapter will return to the framing questions above and present broader conclusions and recommendations for threat analysis. The report also contains an appendix consisting of a detailed chronology of al-Qa`ida-related attacks against critical infrastructure.

# CHAPTER TWO: WHY TARGET CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE?

## DEFINING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE\*

**B**efore turning to the attitudes displayed towards critical infrastructure by terrorist groups, above all by al-Qa`ida and other transnational jihadist groups, it is first necessary to briefly limn the concept of “critical infrastructure” as it has developed in the United States.<sup>12</sup> The notion that certain types of infrastructure (often taking the form of interconnected systems) play vital roles in underpinning our economy, security, and way of life can be traced back as far as the 1960s, when shortcomings in existing telecommunication systems complicated the communications between John F. Kennedy and Nikolai Khrushchev during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The 1980s saw much discussion of “infrastructure,” although the debate was dominated not so much by security concerns as by anxiety that various elements of the U.S. infrastructure were deteriorating and would be unable to sustain future growth.<sup>13</sup> It was not until 1996 that the term “critical infrastructure” in its

---

\* This section was prepared by Gary A. Ackerman.

<sup>12</sup> The concept of “critical infrastructure” in its current usage is largely the construct of American officials. Even though the concept (or something close to it) is embraced by several nations, the lion’s share of the discourse on critical infrastructure is still to be carried on in the United States. For a detailed discussion of the development of the concept of critical infrastructure, see Gary Ackerman, Jeffrey M. Bale, and Kevin Moran, “Assessing the Threat to Critical Infrastructure” in James J.S. Forest, ed., *Homeland Security: Protecting America’s Targets, Volume III: Critical Infrastructure* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006); and Ted G. Lewis, *Critical Infrastructure Protection in Homeland Security: Protecting a Networked Nation*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Interscience, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> As a 2003 Congressional Research Service report notes, “Nearly 20 years ago, infrastructure was debated because of concern that the nation’s public works infrastructure was believed to be suffering from severe problems of deterioration, technological obsolescence, and insufficient capacity to serve future growth.” See John

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

current usage entered into official discourse when, in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, President Clinton signed Executive Order (EO) 13010 – Critical Infrastructure Protection.

Thereafter, the concept of critical infrastructure and the systems this term was thought to encompass progressed through a number of iterations, both before and after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.<sup>14</sup> This process culminated in the draft National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) of 2005.<sup>15</sup> The NIPP brought together previous definitions and ended up defining critical infrastructure as:

Systems, assets, or functions, whether physical or virtual, publicly or privately owned, that are used by or provide benefit to the public and are so vital to the U.S. that the exploitation, destruction, or incapacitation of such systems, assets, or functions would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters.<sup>16</sup>

---

Moteff et. al., *Critical Infrastructures: What Makes an Infrastructure Critical?* Congressional Research Service (2003) p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> These are reflected in a number of official U.S. reports and strategies, including the 1997 “Marsh Report,” (“Critical Foundations: Protecting America’s Infrastructures: The Report on the President’s Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection,” (October 1997)

[http://www.dtra.mil/press\\_resources/publications/deskbook/full\\_text/Other\\_Relevant\\_References/PCCIP\\_Report.pdf](http://www.dtra.mil/press_resources/publications/deskbook/full_text/Other_Relevant_References/PCCIP_Report.pdf); “Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-63-Critical Infrastructure Protection Presidential Decision Directive 63,” The White House (1998).

<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/pdd-63.htm>; “Establishing the Office of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council,” *Executive Order 13228* (October 8, 2001). <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/orders/>; “Critical Infrastructure Protection in the Information Age,” *Executive Order 13231*.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/orders/>; Critical Infrastructures Protection Act (USA PATRIOT Act, Section 1016, H.R. 3162-130 (P.L. 107-56)); “Protecting Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets,” *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*. The White House (2002). <http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/book/sect3-3.pdf>;

“National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets,” *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*, The White House (2003).

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/pcipb/physical.html.2003>; and *Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 7: Critical Infrastructure Identification, Prioritization, and Protection*, The White House (December 17, 2003).

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/12/20031217-5.html>.

<sup>15</sup> *Draft National Infrastructure Protection Plan, Base Plan*, Department of Homeland Security (November 2, 2005). (review copy provided to authors, November 2005). As of the time of writing, the final version of the NIPP had not been released, and therefore it is possible, though unlikely, that the definitions included here might subsequently be amended.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

## *Why Target Critical Infrastructure?*

The societal sectors most commonly listed<sup>17</sup> as forming part of America's critical infrastructure were:

- Agriculture
- Food
- Water
- Public health
- Emergency services
- Government
- Defense industrial base
- Information and Telecommunications
- Energy, transportation
- Banking and finance
- Chemical industry and Hazardous Materials
- Postal and Shipping
- Key Resources<sup>18</sup>

The above definition and list of infrastructures will form the basis for the term critical infrastructure as it is used in this report.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that most official documents list these sectors as “examples,” thus allowing room for amending the list as society changes. In fact, since 1996, several new sectors have been added to the original listing of “critical” sectors. The list presented here relies primarily on HSPD 7.

<sup>18</sup> Starting with the 2002 *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, the concept of “key assets” (subsequently relabeled “key resources” or KR) was appended to the critical infrastructure list, and recent reports have referred jointly to “CI/KR”. Key assets are defined as “individual targets whose destruction would not endanger vital systems, but could create local disaster or profoundly damage our Nation’s morale or confidence.” “Protecting Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets,” *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*. p.30.

<sup>19</sup> Alternative definitions have been suggested by scholars. For instance, Ackerman, Bale, and Moran supply a definition which highlights the notion that what is considered to be a “critical” infrastructure to one community or part of society at one point in time may differ from what is considered critical by other communities. Their definition of critical infrastructure is as follows: “Critical infrastructures are those physical or digital systems that a community depends upon to maintain its security, governance, public health and safety, economy, and public confidence. The constituent parts of such systems will vary according to the community context in which they are viewed.” Ackerman, Bale, and Moran, *Assessing the Threat to Critical Infrastructure*, pp. XX.



## **GENERAL TERRORIST MOTIVATIONS FOR ATTACKING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE\***

Before turning to al-Qa`ida's relationship to critical infrastructure, it is instructive to examine terrorist motivations, in the most general sense, for attacking critical infrastructure, with particular emphasis on the factors that influence the terrorist target selection process. This section is divided into three parts that a) explain the importance of examining terrorist motivations in assessing the threat to critical infrastructure; b) provide an overview of the factors influencing the target selection process of terrorist groups; and c) present the conclusions of previously-conducted study, which comprised both a quantitative analysis of prior attacks on critical infrastructure and qualitative case studies of particular terrorist groups that have in the past focused on targeting critical infrastructure.

### **a) Terrorist Motivations in Threat Assessment**

Basic threat assessments should be based on the consideration of three factors: the value of the target (or negative value, in the sense of the amount of harm expected if the target is attacked), the vulnerability of the target, and the likelihood of attack. The likelihood of attack in turn depends upon both the motivations<sup>20</sup> and capabilities of the attacker. This can be represented as follows:

$$\text{LIKELIHOOD OF THREAT} = \text{MOTIVATION} \times \text{CAPABILITY}$$

Unlike the capabilities of a terrorist group, which can mostly be measured in terms of its available resources, broadly defined, the motivations of a terrorist group are much more difficult to clarify, let alone represent or measure. Not surprisingly, many threat analyses focus primarily if not exclusively on the vulnerability and value of the target and the capabilities of terrorist groups for attacking it, in the process ignoring or underestimating the relevance of the motivations of those terrorist groups. As a result, all terrorist groups possessing similar capabilities are assumed to be equally willing and able to attack all highly vulnerable targets of proportionate value. Such a focus on more or

---

\* This section was prepared by Sundara Vadlamudi.

<sup>20</sup> Distinguish intent from motivation.

## *Why Target Critical Infrastructure?*

less “tangible” factors tends to produce worst-case scenarios,<sup>21</sup> an emphasis that in turn can result in the gross misallocation of available resources. By eliminating numerous extremist groups from the list of potential terrorist threats, threat assessments that fully incorporate the motivations of terrorist groups will therefore greatly assist policymakers in the judicious allocation of scarce resources.

### **b) Factors Influencing Target Selection**

This section provides a broad overview of the factors that influence the target selection process of a terrorist group.<sup>22</sup> The key factors that influence the terrorist target selection process can be grouped under three broad categories: Group Factors, External Factors, and Decision-Making Factors. Each of these broader categories contains several relevant sub-factors that need to be considered. It must be emphasized that the list of sub-factors provided below should not be viewed as a comprehensive list of all of the factors influencing the terrorist target selection process. Rather, it is a representative list of those factors that the authors of this report have determined to be most important in the majority of cases.

**Group Factors:** Ideology; Organizational Structure; Organizational Dynamics; Organizational Lifecycle status (a terrorist group’s maturity); Demographics; Resources; and Operational Capabilities;

**External Factors:** Historical Context, Events, and Precedents; Relations with External Actors (such as sympathizers and supporters, the mass media, the general public, other extremist and criminal groups, and the

---

<sup>21</sup> For examples of the exclusion of motivations, see “Combating Terrorism: Threat And Risk Assessments Can Help Prioritize and Target Program Investments,” GAO/NSIAD-98-74, U.S. General Accounting Office (April 1998); Harry F. Martz and Mark E. Johnson, “Risk Analysis of Terrorist Attacks,” *Risk Analysis* 7, no.1 (1987); Nancy A Renfroe and Joseph L. Smith, “Threat/Vulnerability Assessments and Risk Analysis. Whole Building Design Guide,” <http://www/wbdg.org/design/res-print.php?rp=27>; and Office for Domestic Preparedness (OPD), “Vulnerability Assessment Methodologies Report,” *Phase I Final Report*, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (July 2003).

<sup>22</sup> This section summarizes the key findings of a previous study performed for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 2004. For a more detailed description of the factors listed in this section, see Ackerman, Bale, et al., “Assessing Terrorist Motivations to Attack Critical Infrastructure,” Report prepared by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Program (WMDTRP), Center for Nonproliferation Studies (August 2004).

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

state apparatus); the Security Environment; and Target Characteristics (in the current case the characteristics of critical infrastructure); and

**Decision-Making factors:** General Planning Characteristics (such as decision-maker time horizons and risk thresholds); Perceptual Filter (how decision-makers perceive information obtained from outside the group); Operational Objectives (what a terrorist group hopes to achieve from its attacks); and Attack Modalities (the methods and techniques a terrorist group employs to attack targets).

Each of the sub-factors listed above, in combination with others, exert varying degrees of influence on a particular group's target selection process. Some of the most important influences in this regard are:<sup>23</sup>

- *Ideology*, which provides the broad guidelines for identifying the enemy and the necessary legitimization for attacking the targets that are believed to represent the enemy.
- *Organizational Structure*, represented by factors such as group size and bureaucratic sophistication, which are indicative of an organization's level of resources, capabilities, and functional specialization. A group with a robust and a flexible organizational structure is capable of executing sophisticated and highly damaging attacks against large targets.
- *Organizational Dynamics* help in determining the target priorities. In particular, group leaders – especially if they are charismatic, authoritarian, or totalitarian in nature – may dominate their organization's decision-making processes and play decisive roles in target selection.
- The *Organizational Lifecycle Status* of a terrorist group can sometimes be used to gain insight into its general behavior. Successive generations that arise within terrorist groups, possibly due to internal divisions, often display a greater capacity for violence, which might well have an impact on their operational objectives and consequent target selection. Sometimes, a terrorist group might evolve into a criminal organization, which would then likely preclude certain types of destructive acts.

---

<sup>23</sup> This list is merely an attempt to highlight some of the most important factors. Any comprehensive threat assessment, however, should consider all the factors listed above.

## *Why Target Critical Infrastructure?*

- *Resources*, broadly defined, have a more or less direct correlation with the ability of a terrorist group to carry out an attack. Even if a group decides to carry out large and sophisticated attacks, its actual ability to launch such attacks is largely determined by the level of financial, physical, and logistical resources at its disposal.
- *Operational Capabilities* also affect a group's choice of targets, since few groups are likely to select targets that they knowingly lack the ability to attack successfully. In terms of developing new capabilities, terrorists have tended to rely on tried-and-true weapons and tactics for the simple reason that they have worked well in the past and continue to work well. Terrorists constantly try to develop their capabilities in response to the countermeasures implemented against the group. In that sense, there is an ongoing cycle of innovation, as those who seek to protect targets and those who seek to attack them try to outmaneuver one another.
- *Historical Context*, especially as framed by precedents and resonant prior events, influences terrorist behavior in crucially important ways. No terrorist group emerges with an entirely blank slate, since its members have invariably internalized, adopted, or adapted and modified many pre-existing ideas. Similarly, no terrorist group is entirely unaware of the methods and tactics employed by prior or existing terrorist organizations, especially those that have operated within its own political, intellectual, ethnic, religious, or cultural milieu.
- *External Relations* influence the target selection process, since the terrorist group must take into account the reactions of its supporters and sympathizers, its potential constituents, other extremist groups in its area, sponsoring states (if they exist), and above all the target "enemy" audience.
- *Target Characteristics* are among the most important factors in a terrorist group's decision to attack – or not attack – specific targets. The most important characteristics of an infrastructure target that tend to affect terrorist targeting are 1) its level of protection; 2) whether or not it has a high profile (which is in part a function of how much attention the media has paid to it); and 3) its actual function.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

- *General Planning Characteristics*, such as time horizons and risk thresholds, influence the target selection process, above all on the tactical level.
- *Operational Objectives* – the desired objectives of an attack, such as desired casualty levels, level of publicity sought, whether the target should be symbolic or instrumental, the type and extent of the reaction terrorists want to elicit from various audiences, expected secondary effects, and hoped-for scale of effects play a complex role in targeting decisions. Typically, a group’s operational objectives are shaped in large part by its ideology. In addition to the immediate objectives, other motives such as boosting group morale, demonstrating the uniqueness of the group in relation to other terrorist groups, or exhibiting leadership qualities will influence the target selection process.

### **c) Terrorists and Critical Infrastructure: Evidence from Case Studies and Quantitative Analyses**

In the study cited previously,<sup>24</sup> researchers collected evidence to study the influence of the factors listed above on the target selection process, using both quantitative analysis performed on a database of incidents involving attacks on critical infrastructure and detailed empirical case studies of past attacks on critical infrastructure.<sup>25</sup>

The quantitative analyses of the data revealed the following major trends in attacks on critical infrastructure:

- The number of attacks against critical infrastructure has increased significantly since the 1960s.
- Attacks on government-related facilities and energy infrastructure constitute the largest proportion of attacks on critical infrastructure.
- Bombing remains the preferred method of attacking critical infrastructure.

---

<sup>24</sup> Ackerman, Bale, and Moran, *Assessing the Threat to Critical Infrastructure*.

<sup>25</sup> The case studies included the following groups and attacks: the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JEM: Army of Muhammad) and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LET: Army of the Righteous) – attack on the Indian Parliament; the Front de Libération Nationale de la Corse (FLNC: National Liberation Front of Corsica) – hundreds of attacks targeting economic infrastructure; Chukaku-ha – attacks on the Japanese National Railways; and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – attacks on the Philippine power infrastructure.

## *Why Target Critical Infrastructure?*

- Secular utopian, particularly left-wing groups, and religious groups, particularly Islamist groups, have attacked critical infrastructure more frequently than other types of groups.
- Attacks on critical infrastructure by religious groups are increasing in number.

The examination of the case studies highlighted the role of several factors identified in the first part of this section in influencing the choice of critical infrastructures as targets. Some of the important conclusions of the assessment are:

- *Ideology* is one of the most significant factors in influencing a terrorist group's target selection process. For example, the National Liberation Front of Corsica (FLNC)'s ideology helped the group to determine the categories of targets that could legitimately be attacked. Generally speaking, the FLNC sought to minimize casualties and thus focused its efforts on attacking infrastructure-type targets. As a direct consequence, although it has conducted hundreds of attacks, the group appears to have intentionally killed fewer than fifty people between 1975 and 1995.
- *Knowledge of critical infrastructure* played a particularly important role in target selection and attack implementation. In the case of the attack on the Japanese National Railways, Chukaku-ha's detailed knowledge of the rail system allowed the group to significantly damage its target.
- *Characteristic of critical infrastructure*, in particular the symbolic nature and functional importance of such targets, are of tremendous importance in target selection, as was indicated by the Jaish-e-Muhammad/Lashkar-e-Tayyiba attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001. This case, however, also highlights the important long-term methodological challenge of categorizing terrorist attacks as "critical infrastructure attacks." Terrorists generally have multiple motives for attacking targets. In the case of critical infrastructure attacks, interfering with the operations of a vital infrastructure may be of secondary importance compared to other motives such as traumatizing a population psychologically or killing large numbers of people.
- *Relations with External Actors*, especially the enemy target audience, invariably played a crucially important role in the process of target selection. Terrorists also usually consider the impact of an

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

attack on their supporters, sympathizers, and proclaimed constituencies. For example, Chukaku-ha's avowed support for Japanese farmers and union members, and the group's decision to champion certain issues relating to these constituencies, probably influenced its target selection more significantly than any other single factor.

- *Factionalization* of a group is likely to have an impact on the target selection of newly formed splinter groups as well as on the original group. In particular, the existence of autonomous, localized cell structures and competitive inter-cell dynamics, such as those found in the FLNC, might force groups to carry out extremely violent attacks or attacks that produce severe consequences. Similarly, intense competition between rival groups sharing similar but distinct ideologies, as in the case of Chukaku-ha, might encourage groups to engage in particularly "spectacular" attacks designed to generate high levels of publicity and prestige.
- *Historical Events* are likely to be key factors in target selection. The MILF's tactic of attacking power grids, for example, was not novel. At least three other groups in the Philippines that the MILF was clearly aware of – the Communist New People's Army (NPA), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) – had previously conducted similar attacks. It is likely that the MILF's efforts were at least in part informed by such precedents.
- *The Ability to Innovate* within a group influences its decision to consider new targets and to identify novel and effective methods of attack that may have a greater likelihood of success. Chukaku-ha's initial attack on the Japanese National Railway system, for example, was unprecedented in scope and implementation, which may have been one of the reasons for its success.
- *Operational Objectives* played a very important role in target selection. The FLNC perhaps provides the most obvious example of the way in which operational objectives largely restricted the group's set of preferred targets to those involving physical assets such as critical infrastructure. The FLNC focused most of its attacks on targets that were seen as perpetuating the second-class status of native Corsicans, since its primary objective was to preserve the unique culture of Corsica and establish effective political and economic control over their homeland.

## *Why Target Critical Infrastructure?*

- *Organizational Structure* appeared to affect a terrorist group's capability to attack various critical infrastructure targets, but it is unclear whether it increases a group's specific propensity to attack critical infrastructure. Chukaku-ha's large size and cell-based structure, for example, provided it with the manpower, operational capabilities, and operational security necessary to conduct highly effective guerrilla actions that were especially successful against widely dispersed critical infrastructure targets such as the Japanese railway system.

Previous research thus indicates that terrorist groups will decide to attack infrastructural targets for a multiplicity of reasons, as is demonstrated by the 9/11 attacks, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, and the assault on the Indian Parliament. Hence it is probably safe to conclude that terrorists generally attack infrastructure because 1) they want to destroy certain important facilities; 2) they feel that they can obtain more publicity or external support than if they had attacked non-infrastructural targets; 3) they can cause even larger number of casualties – or avoid causing casualties altogether – by attacking such facilities; 4) the symbolic value of infrastructural targets is greater than that of other targets; or 5) for a complex combination of general and very specific reasons. As one would expect, there is no single explanation that is applicable to all the prior cases of attacks on critical infrastructure.

Past trends indicated that secular utopian and religious groups have conducted the majority of attacks against critical infrastructure worldwide. The relative absence of operationally efficient secular utopian terrorist groups in the U.S., coupled with the increasing incidence of attacks by religious groups, suggests that there are three categories of terrorist groups that may have the highest disposition to attack U.S. critical infrastructure targets in the future: 1) transnational jihadist groups, 2) domestic right-wing "militias," and 3) the most violent fringes of the radical ecology movement.

Of the three groups that are most likely to seek to conduct attacks against critical infrastructure, jihadist terrorist groups possess both the ideological proclivities and the necessary operational capabilities to perpetrate large-scale critical infrastructure attacks. Even the most cursory analysis of the previously cataloged attacks on critical infrastructure reveals that Islamist terrorist groups have significantly increased both the volume and lethality of their critical infrastructure attacks during the past two decades. In terms of absolute numbers, groups generally classified as "religious" have accounted for roughly



### *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

73% of all casualties and 35% of all fatalities for confirmed major critical infrastructure attacks. If both major and minor attacks are included, the data reveal that these groups have accounted for 62% of all casualties, with the vast majority of these casualties being caused by groups in the “Islamic” subcategory. These statistics support a frightening hypothesis – that religious terrorist groups are more likely than other groups to mix critical infrastructure attacks with mass casualty attacks.

# CHAPTER THREE: AL-QA`IDA'S EVOLUTION AND JIHADIST STRATEGY

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE AL-QA`IDA ORGANIZATION\*

In order to make an accurate assessment of the targeting proclivities of a particular terrorist group, it is first necessary to understand the general characteristics of that group. As detailed in the previous chapter, factors such as group ideology, organizational structure, organizational dynamics, capabilities, and access to resources exert an influence on both the nature and the extent of the threat posed by particular groups. This chapter provides a brief organizational outline of the development of the al-Qa`ida network and an extended discussion of whether al-Qa`ida has a clear strategic vision. This crucially important background information will provide the context for the assessment of the group's threat to U.S. critical infrastructure in the following chapter.

### **Al-Qa`ida: Origins and Early Period**

Al-Qa`ida (the "Base" or "Foundation") is a transnational Islamist terrorist organization that was created by Usama bin Ladin and his closest advisors near the end of the decade-long Afghan resistance war that took place between 1979 and 1989. Despite the availability of a wealth of information concerning al-Qa`ida's evolution during the 1990s, certain details about the organization's origins and early history still remain unclear. It is generally accepted that `Abdallah `Azzam, an early spiritual mentor of Bin Ladin's, and the wealthy scion of a construction empire in Saudi Arabia operated the Maktab al-Khidamat li-

---

\* This section was prepared by Sundara Vadlamudi.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

al-Mujahidin (MAK: Mujahidin Services Bureau) to help organize and administer the recruitment and deployment of Arab volunteers who wished to participate in the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviet Union. Following the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, `Azzam and Bin Ladin decided to make use of the MAK's infrastructure, which included a registry of Arab fighters, to create a transnational network of *mujahidin* known as al-Qa`ida.<sup>26</sup> Even though this version is not entirely inaccurate, it both overlooks and ignores certain key events and influences. A careful examination of the information recently revealed by captured al-Qa`ida operatives and former *mujahidin* who participated in the fight against the Soviet army provides new information regarding the origins of al-Qa`ida.

`Abdallah `Azzam was the ideational fountainhead for developing an Islamic army for fighting against the oppression of Muslims in every part of the world. In 1988, he outlined this concept in the *al-Jihad* magazine published by MAK:

Every principle needs a vanguard to carry it forward and, while focusing its way into society, puts up with heavy tasks and enormous sacrifices. There is no ideology, neither earthly nor heavenly, that does not require such a vanguard that gives everything it possesses in order to achieve victory for this ideology. It carries the flag all along the sheer, endless and difficult path until it reaches its destination in the reality of life, since Allah has destined that it should make it and manifest itself. This vanguard constitutes *al-Qa`idah al-Sulbah* [the solid foundation] for the expected society.<sup>27</sup>

Despite advocating the creation of an Islamic "rapid reaction force," `Azzam did not immediately intend to wage *jihad* against pro-Western Muslim regimes in the Middle East. Indeed, he was primarily interested in forming an Islamic government in Afghanistan and using Afghanistan as a launching pad for the liberation of Palestine.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004) p. 56; Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Berkley, 2002) pp. 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> `Abdallah `Azzam, "Al-Qa`ida al-Sulba," *Al-Jihad* 41 (April 1988) p. 46. Cited in Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, pp. 4-5. Emphasis added.

<sup>28</sup> Fawwaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (New York: Cambridge University, 2005), p. 135.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

Meanwhile, from the mid-1980s on,<sup>29</sup> Bin Ladin had established separate training camps for Arab volunteers and become increasingly influenced by operatives from the Egyptian Tanzim al-Jihad (Jihad Organization).<sup>30</sup> Towards the end of the Afghan war, differences emerged between `Azzam and Bin Ladin over the role of Arabs in the Afghan war and the future utility of the Arab *mujahidin* who had gained combat experience during the war.<sup>31</sup> `Azzam viewed the Arab volunteers' primary role as the provision of assistance to the Afghans in their efforts to reclaim their land from the occupying Soviet aggressors; whereas Bin Ladin began to view the Afghan war as a means by which the Arab volunteers could gain valuable combat experience that could then be used elsewhere. As a result of such differences, `Azzam's role in creating a transnational jihadist network to target the U.S., the network that eventually became known as al-Qa`ida, was clearly limited.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the minutes from one of the earliest meetings of al-Qa`ida does not even include `Azzam's name in the list of attendees.<sup>33</sup> In sum, Bin Ladin and his associates built upon and considerably expanded `Azzam's original concept for the creation of an Islamic army, and during the 1990s this embryonic paramilitary force evolved into a transnational terrorist organization.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> According to Hutayfa `Azzam, the son of `Abdallah `Azzam, Bin Ladin opened his first military camp in Jalalabad in 1987. See Peter Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al Qaeda's Leader* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. 62.

<sup>30</sup> Several sources indicate that Bin Ladin formed separate military training camps for the Arab volunteers, and he himself stated that "Abu Ubaidah al Banjshiri established the training camps for our mujahideen against Russia's terrorism during the 1980s. We used to call the training camp al Qaeda. And the name stayed." See Bin Ladin's interview with Taysir Alouni in October 2001. cited in Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, p. 74. Compare the comments of Abu Jandal, Bin Ladin's bodyguard, who described the latter's opening of a military training camp called al-Faruq. See Khalid al-Hamadi, "An Insider's View of Al-Qa`ida as Narrated by Abu-Jandal (Nasir al-Bahri), Bin-Ladin's Bodyguard (4)," *Al-Quds al-`Arabi*, March 22, 2005. p. 19; Another veteran Arab Afghan, `Abd al-Rabbuh al-Surayhi, who participated in the Afghan war along with Bin Ladin, also described the camps run by the latter, but provided different names for them. See Hasin al-Banyan, "The Oldest Arab Afghan Talks to Al-Sharq al-Awsat About his Career That Finally Landed him in Prison in Saudi Arabia," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, November 25, 2001, p. 6; For more information on the influence of the Egyptians on Bin Ladin, compare Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 81-3; and Gerges, *Far Enemy*, pp. 134-6.

<sup>31</sup> Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 47-8.

<sup>32</sup> In fact `Azzam eschewed terrorism and explicitly warned that without proper guidance the jihadists could be transformed into "bandits that might threaten people's security and would not let them live in peace." See Gerges, *Far Enemy*, p. 136.

<sup>33</sup> Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, p. 80. This meeting occurred on August 18-20, 1988.

<sup>34</sup> During the early years of al-Qa`ida, it could be argued that Bin Ladin did not intend to attack the United States. His overwhelming desire to attack U.S. targets developed

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

In its early years, al-Qa`ida operated military camps that provided rigorous physical and mental training. The characteristics of potential recruits were scrutinized in great detail, and the would-be applicants had to meet stringent selection criteria in order to be included in the organization.<sup>35</sup> After the selection process, those selected were forced to undergo a strict training regimen. Indeed, a former Arab veteran of the Afghan war even claimed that the selection process matched that of the U.S. Special forces in its emphasis on the ability to endure tough physical conditions.<sup>36</sup> The training camps were run by the Egyptians, and their salaries were paid by Bin Ladin.<sup>37</sup> These camps continued to operate even after al-Qa`ida's leader left Afghanistan in 1989.

### **Al-Qa`ida's Pre-9/11 Organizational Structure**

Efforts to describe al-Qa`ida's organizational structure during both the pre-9/11 and post-9/11 periods have been hampered by the lack of detailed information available in the public domain. Al-Qa`ida followed a combination of top-down and bottom-up decision-making processes, which serves to complicate the process of identifying the nodes of authority in the structure. Tribal and ethnic affiliations sometimes created parallel or alternate lines of authority that added additional "unofficial" layers of structural complexity.<sup>38</sup> In recent years, however, partial details of the group's organizational structure have been revealed during the interrogation of captured al-Qa`ida operatives, trial proceedings of several al-Qa`ida members, memoirs and interviews of several people belonging to al-Qa`ida or other groups that were affiliated

---

after Saudi Arabia agreed to the stationing of U.S. troops on its soil following Saddam Husayn's invasion of Kuwait. Gerges also stresses that militant Islamist groups only began to focus on the "far enemy," i.e., the United States, during the mid-1990s. See Gerges, *Far Enemy*, pp. 1-15. It should be emphasized that throughout the 1990s, al-Qa`ida operatives and affiliated group members participated in several conflicts around the world, which they viewed as involving the oppression of Muslims. Thus, al-Qa`ida *mujahidin* continued to operate as a paramilitary force even as they conducted terrorist attacks against the U.S.

<sup>35</sup> al-Banyan, *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, p. 6.

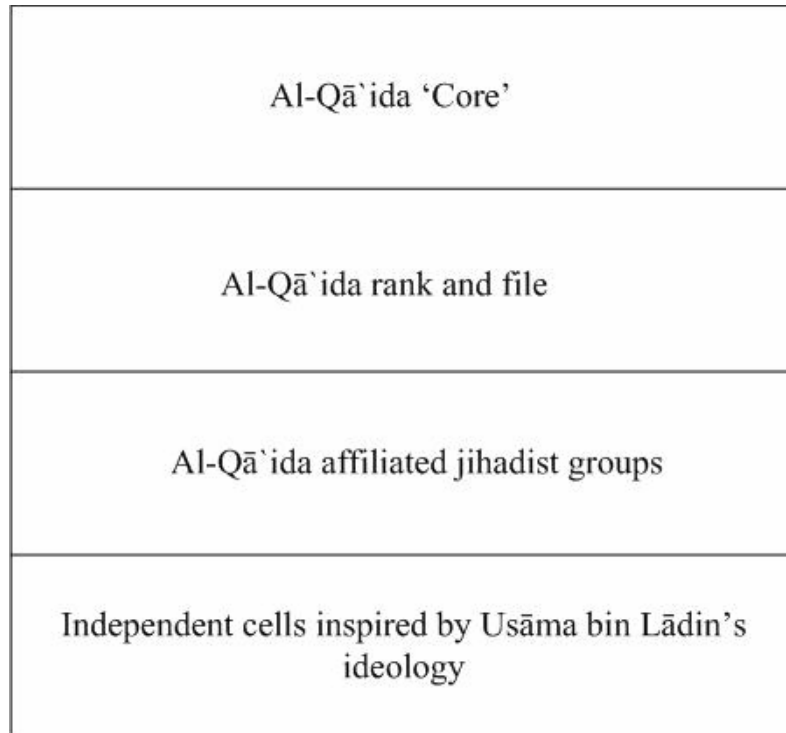
<sup>36</sup> See Ayman Faraj, *Memoirs of an Afghan Arab* [in Arabic] (Cairo, 2002), pp. 24-41. Cited in Gerges, *Far Enemy*, p. 308.

<sup>37</sup> al-Banyan, *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, p. 6; According to Abu Mus`ab al-Suri, a senior al-Qa`ida leader, the Egyptians, who were probably members of the Tanzim al-Jihad (author's note) and were not necessarily part of al-Qa`ida, greatly assisted Bin Ladin in building al-Qa`ida. See Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 114-16.

<sup>38</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, pp. 76-7.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

with al-Qa`ida, and the research conducted by investigative journalists. Based on the available information, al-Qa`ida's organizational structure can essentially be depicted as a four-tiered structure:<sup>39</sup>



**Figure 3.1: Al-Qa`ida's Four-Tiered Structure**

---

<sup>39</sup> This scheme has been outlined in various contexts by Jeffrey M. Bale. Several others have also attempted to describe the organizational structure of al-Qa`ida. For example, according to Gunaratna, “[Al Qaeda] comprised a core base or bases in Afghanistan, satellite terrorist cells worldwide, a conglomerate of Islamist political parties and other largely independent terrorist groups that it draws on for offensive actions and other responsibilities. Leaders of all of the above are co-opted as and when necessary to serve as an integral part of Al Qaeda’s high command, which is run via a vertical leadership structure that provides strategic direction and tactical support to its horizontal network of compartmentalized cells and associate organizations.” See Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, p. 73. In contrast, Jason Burke presents a model in which al-Qa`ida consists of three elements: the “al-Qa`ida hardcore” which consists of Bin Ladin’s aides who have remained with him since the Afghan war and about 100 skilled operatives who joined the group during the 1990s; a diffuse set of Islamist groups worldwide who are affiliated with al-Qa`ida at varying levels of collaboration; and lastly an al-Qa`ida ideology or worldview that is shared by many who have no organizational links to Bin Ladin. See Burke, *Al Qaeda*, pp. 13-16.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

### *Al-Qa`ida Core Leadership Group*

The al-Qa`ida core group consists of experienced members who were either associated with Bin Ladin since the founding of al-Qa`ida or highly skilled personnel whose utility and integrity were regarded as useful to the organization.<sup>40</sup> Bin Ladin is regarded as the *`amir* (commander) and is considered to be the final authority on all critical issues. The *majlis al-shura* (Consultative Council) consisted of a relatively small advisory group that discussed and deliberated on all important issues, but Bin Ladin had the power to overrule the others even if a majority in the *majlis al-shura* held a different opinion. Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, the chief 9/11 planner, indicated that

Shurah council in al Qaeda is not a Board of Directors or a war operations room as you know it. It is an advisory board for Bin Ladin or Abu Hafs al-Masri, unlike what you have in the West. For you, ruling is by the majority of votes. However, if the Shurah council at al-Qaeda, the highest authority in the organization, had a majority of 98 percent on a resolution and it is opposed by Bin Ladin, he has the right to cancel the resolution because it is only consultative to him and not binding.<sup>41</sup>

The *majlis al-shura* supervised the activities of several committees, and it is highly likely that the head of each committee was a member of the *majlis al-shura*, although the membership of the Council was not strictly limited in membership to the heads of the committees. Some reports have suggested that the hierarchical structure of al-Qa`ida's core developed after Bin Ladin returned to Afghanistan from the Sudan in 1996.<sup>42</sup> However that may be, al-Qa`ida possessed a strict hierarchical structure with a clear delineation of labor by the early 1990s.<sup>43</sup>

---

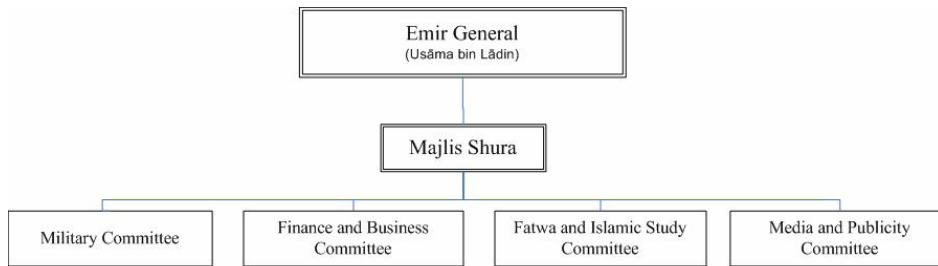
<sup>40</sup> Among the early members of the *majlis al-shura* were Abu Ubayda al-Banshiri, Abu Hafs al-Masri, Abu al-Walid al-Masri, and Ayman al-Zawahiri.

<sup>41</sup> [Central Intelligence Agency], "Substitution for the Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," *United States v. Zacarias Moussoui*. Defendant's Exhibit. Cr. No. 01-455-A.

<sup>42</sup> Burke, *Al Qaeda*, p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> According to Paulo Jose de Almeida Santos, an early al-Qa`ida member who tried to kill the exiled Afghan ruler King Zahir Shah, al-Qa`ida recruits were divided into several camps. Santos himself tried to gain membership into the technological group, but was assigned to an analysis group after he failed the test for entering the technology group. Even at that early date, around 1990, Santos claimed that he was assigned the task of reading newspapers and presenting analyses of current events. See Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, p. 118.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*



**Figure 3.2. Al-Qa`ida Majlis al-Shura and Committees**

### *Al-Qa`ida Rank and File*

The al-Qa`ida rank and file included between several hundred and a few thousand lower-ranking volunteers who were trained in al-Qa`ida's military camps. An accurate figure is not available, and the difficulty in determining the exact number is further compounded by the fact that only a small portion of the volunteers who received training in al-Qa`ida's camps became actual group members.<sup>44</sup> Strictly speaking, only the group's core leadership and its official rank-and-file members can be said to belong, organizationally speaking, to al-Qa`ida proper. Moreover, volunteers who wished to become al-Qa`ida members were urged to pledge an oath of personal allegiance (*ba`ya*) to Bin Ladin. Even though this was not a necessary condition for becoming a member, during his interrogations Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM) revealed that senior members were strongly advised to pledge allegiance to Bin Ladin.<sup>45</sup> The pledge of allegiance to bin Ladin was performed in secrecy, and for this reason even Bin Ladin's closest aides were not always aware of the identity of al-Qa`ida members among the multitudes of people who were present at the training camps.<sup>46</sup> The members were organized in a

---

<sup>44</sup> The International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) estimated that the number of trainees who passed through al-Qa`ida's training camps was roughly 18,000. The CIA estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 trainees passed through the group's training camps up until the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001. The CIA believes that the actual number of al-Qa`ida members ranges from a low of several hundred to a high of 5,000. For the IISS estimate, see Bruce Hoffman, "The Changing Face of al-Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27:6 (November-December 2004), p. 552.

<sup>45</sup> "Substitution for the Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," pp. 52-55.

<sup>46</sup> al-Hamadi, *Al-Quds al-`Arabi*. p. 19.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

hierarchical fashion and expected to perform a variety of tasks according to their abilities and predilections.

### *Al-Qa`ida-Affiliated Groups*

From the outset al-Qa`ida maintained loose affiliations with several jihadist groups and their members, despite the fact that they shared only a few common objectives. After Bin Ladin moved to the Sudan in 1991, he formed an “Islamic Army Shura,” composed of the al-Qa`ida *shura* and those of other groups, which was designed to serve as a coordinating body for a consortium of terrorist groups. Some of the groups that were affiliated with al-Qa`ida were chiefly interested in targeting “apostate” regimes in their own countries or in waging local conflicts, although al-Qa`ida itself was by then focused primarily on the “far enemy” – the United States. The Islamic Army Shura included groups from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Oman, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Somalia, and Eritrea.<sup>47</sup> In addition, Bin Ladin maintained loose collaborations with groups from Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Myanmar.<sup>48</sup> For example, he provided equipment and training to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines. Furthermore, al-Qa`ida and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI: Islamic Community) reached an agreement in which the latter organization promised to conduct surveillance of targets and help acquire bomb-making materials and other supplies, in exchange for which al-Qa`ida promised to finance operations in Southeast Asia, provide bomb-making expertise, and deliver operatives. In another instance, Bin Ladin provided the Groupe Islamique Combattant Marocain (GICM: Moroccan Islamic Combat Group) with \$3,000, and also promised to train its members.<sup>49</sup> The Algerian Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC: Salafist Group for Preaching and Fighting) has also publicly announced its support for al-Qa`ida’s policy of attacking the U.S.,<sup>50</sup> even though there is no evidence to suggest that leaders or members of the group have pledged personal allegiance to al-Qa`ida. Other groups with links to al-Qa`ida include the Groupe

---

<sup>47</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 58, p. 151; and Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, p. 279; In some circumstances, al-Qa`ida received assistance from its affiliated groups. For example, Tanzim al-Jihad members trained al-Qa`ida members to carry out specialized military and underground activities. See Gerges, *Far Enemy*, p. 119.

<sup>50</sup> “Algerian group backs al-Qaeda,” *BBC*, October 23, 2003.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3207363.stm>.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

Islamique Armé (GIA: Armed Islamic Group), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU),<sup>51</sup> the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, and `Usbat al-Ansar in Lebanon.<sup>52</sup>

In February 1998 Bin Ladin announced the formation of the World Islamic Front for Fighting Jews and Crusaders – later known as the World Islamic Front (WIF) – with four other Islamist groups, namely, a faction of the Tanzim al-Jihad, al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group), Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), and the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh. The statement, signed by Bin Ladin and representatives of each of the four groups, stressed that every Muslim is obligated to kill Americans and their allies wherever possible.<sup>53</sup> Since its formation, the composition of this coalition has undergone some changes. In July 1998 Rifa`i Ahmad Taha, who signed the statement on behalf of al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya, publicly retracted his signature and denounced the World Islamic Front's intentions to attack the U.S.<sup>54</sup> In the most recent incarnation, Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, the widely known Jordanian terrorist operating in Iraq, pledged allegiance to Bin Ladin in October 2004 and his inclusion into WIF was accepted by al-Qa`ida's historic leader.<sup>55</sup> In November 2005, the Moroccan authorities arrested 17 members of a cell that was attempting to form an al-Qa`ida-affiliated group in the Arab-Maghrib region. The members planned to model the group after al-Zarqawi's Al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Rafidayn (Al-Qa`ida in the Land of the Two Rivers, i.e., Mesopotamia), which they intended to

---

<sup>51</sup> After the death of Juma Namangani, the IMU's charismatic leader, its maintenance of links to al-Qa`ida seem to be less clear. The group has since changed its name to the Islamic Party of Turkestan, partly in an attempt to expand its scope of operations. See "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)," Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Accessible at <http://cns.miis.edu/research/wtc01/imu.htm>.

<sup>52</sup> Kenneth Katzman, "Al Qaeda: Profile and Threat Assessment," *CRS Report for Congress: RL33038*, August 17, 2005. pp. 10-11.

<sup>53</sup> The statement was signed by Bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri on behalf of Tanzim al-Jihad, Abu Yasir Rifa`i Ahmad Taha on behalf of al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group), Shaykh Mir Hamza on behalf of Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), and Fazlur Rahman representing the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh.

<sup>54</sup> See Gerges, *Far Enemy*, p. 155; and David Hirst, "Islam's Holy Warriors Break Ranks; A change of heart before the embassy bombings has exposed divisions among fundamentalists," *The Guardian*, August 15, 1998, p. 16.

<sup>55</sup> Dexter Filkins, "Wanted Rebel Vows Loyalty to bin Laden, Web Sites Say," *The New York Times*, October 18, 2004. After pledging allegiance to Bin Ladin, al-Zarqawi changed the name of his terror group from the Jama`at al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad (Unity of God and Jihad Association) to al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Rafidayn.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

call the Tanzim al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Maghrib al-`Arabi (the Al-Qa`ida Organization in the Arab Maghrib Countries).<sup>56</sup>

### *Independent Cells Inspired by al-Qa`ida*

The final tier in al-Qa`ida's organizational structure consists of individuals or groups of individuals who are inspired by al-Qa`ida's jihadist ideology and thence decide to carry out attacks in support of that ideology. Bin Ladin himself has claimed that his role is to increase the awareness of the *umma* about the plight of fellow Muslims, and stresses the importance of waging *jihad* to liberate the *umma*.<sup>57</sup> The proliferation of these independent "self-radicalized" cells arguably poses as much of a threat, if not more of one, to the U.S. and other countries than al-Qa`ida proper,<sup>58</sup> since these cells, united only by their anti-Western worldviews and inspired to take action by al-Qa`ida, present the greatest detection challenge for intelligence and law-enforcement agencies. The situation is exacerbated when these cells are formed by domestic volunteers who can blend into the local social and cultural setting. Such "al-Qa`idist" cells have already carried out several attacks in Europe.<sup>59</sup>

### **Al-Qa`ida since 9/11**

In October 2001, following the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001, the U.S. attacked Afghanistan, removed the Taliban regime, and destroyed al-Qa`ida's safe

---

<sup>56</sup> As part of the scheme, the cell members planned to formalize the relationship between the GSPC and al-Qa`ida by pledging an oath of allegiance to Bin Ladin. See "Moroccan Sources Detail Terrorist Cell's Plan for Saudi Arabia, Arab Maghreb," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 6, 2005; and "Al-Hayah Cites Detainees on Moroccan Al-Qa`da Group That Enlists Volunteers for Iraq," *Al-Hayah*, November 29, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> Michael Scheuer, "Coalition Warfare: How Al-Qaeda Uses the World Islamic Front Against Crusaders and Jews, Part I," *Terrorism Focus* [Jamestown Foundation] 2:7 (March 31, 2005).

<sup>58</sup> "PDDNI Address the AFCEA San Antonio Chapter," April 25, 2006. [http://www.dni.gov/speeches/20060425\\_speech.htm](http://www.dni.gov/speeches/20060425_speech.htm).

<sup>59</sup> The London train bombings in July 2005 were carried out by a local cell inspired by al-Qa`ida's ideology. Compare David Crawford and Keith Johnson, "New Terror Threat in EU: Extremists with Passports," *Wall Street Journal*, December 27, 2004; Mark Trevelyan, "Local cell, web role link London and Madrid probes," *Reuters*, April 11, 2006; and Mark Townsend, "Leak reveals official story of London bombings," *Observer*, April 9, 2006.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

sanctuaries in that country. As a result, al-Qa`ida lost much of its original infrastructure, and many of its cadres were either killed or captured during the campaign.<sup>60</sup> A recent report has stated that “about 3,000 suspected Al Qaeda members have been detained or arrested by about 90 countries, of which 650 are under U.S. control.”<sup>61</sup> However, several senior al-Qa`ida leaders, including Bin Ladin, al-Zawahiri, and Sayf al-Adl, and mid-level operatives managed to evade capture. In the months following the American attack on Afghanistan, al-Qa`ida’s ability to carry out attacks was greatly diminished. However, beginning in 2002, the organization and its affiliates have managed to carry out several successful operations.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, postings on al-Qa`ida forums have suggested that the group has emerged even stronger, since it has managed to carry out two major attacks every year since 9/11, as against carrying out a single major attack every two years prior to 9/11.<sup>63</sup>

The net impact of the U.S.-led war on terror on al-Qa`ida’s ability to carry out large-scale attacks against U.S. remains unclear. In looking at the organization’s evolution since 9/11, four broad trends become apparent. First, al-Qa`ida has adopted an increasingly decentralized organizational structure as a result of the loss of its safe operating sanctuaries in Afghanistan and other countries. Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, the operational planner of the 9/11 attacks, claimed that the

---

<sup>60</sup> The precise number of key al-Qa`ida members who have been captured or killed remains unknown. Some vague numbers are available in the public domain. President Bush, during his re-election campaign, stated that “more than three-quarters of al-Qaeda’s key members and associates have been detained or killed.” On earlier occasions, in a televised speech on September 7, 2003 and the State of the Union message on January 20, 2004, he claimed that more than two-thirds of “known al Qaeda members” have been captured or killed. Some experts have stated that the change in the terminology from “known al Qaeda members” to “al Qaeda’s key members and associates” increases the size of the group as well as the vagueness of the claim. See “President’s Remarks at the 2004 Republican National Convention,” September 2, 2004., available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/09/20040902-2.html>; Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball, “Catching Al Qaeda,” *Newsweek*, September 8, 2004, available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5945061/site/newsweek/>.

<sup>61</sup> Katzman, “Al Qaeda: Profile and Threat Assessment.” This report indicates that 37 top al-Qa`ida members have been identified by the U.S. government. A separate news report in 2004 claimed that 14 members on the then list of approximately 30 “high value targets” were dead or detained. See Barton Gellman and Dafna Linzer, “Afghanistan, Iraq: Two Wars Collide,” *The Washington Post*, October 22, 2004, p. A1.

<sup>62</sup> Since October 2001, al-Qa`ida and its affiliates have launched major attacks in Tunisia, Pakistan, Indonesia (Bali), Yemen, and Kuwait. See Hoffman, “The Changing Face of Al Qaeda,” p. 551.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 552.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

group was forced to provide more autonomy to field commanders due to destruction of its communication networks during the war in Afghanistan.<sup>64</sup> Al-Qa`ida also suffered a steady attrition of its top leadership.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the organization has managed to replace its senior and mid-level operational leaders from its vast reserves of trained cadres.<sup>66</sup>

Second, and closely linked to the first phenomenon, in recent years there has been a proliferation of al-Qa`ida cells and affiliated groups in several countries. To be sure, in some instances security agencies belatedly uncovered the presence of al-Qa`ida cells that had been established long before 9/11. Nevertheless, it appears that the group has increased its presence and established new operational and support networks in several regions, particularly East Africa, Western Europe, and Southeast Asia.

Third, al-Qa`ida has suffered significant financial losses. Since 9/11, group assets worth more than \$120 million have been frozen.<sup>67</sup> Even so, the destruction of training camps in Afghanistan is believed to have greatly reduced al-Qa`ida's annual operating costs.<sup>68</sup> Hence the organization has managed to survive financial sanctions as a result of the reduction in its financial needs. Moreover, information regarding al-Qa`ida's sources of funding has been relatively scarce, and this situation

---

<sup>64</sup> Christian Lamb, "Focus: The Confessions of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," *Times*, March 28, 2004. According to the interrogation reports, KSM claimed that "[after 9/11] we were immediately on the run ... there was no longer a war room or shura and operatives had more autonomy." See *ibid*.

<sup>65</sup> Since 9/11, al-Qa`ida has lost Abu Hafis al-Masri (the head of its military committee killed in a U.S. air strike), Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (the 9/11 planner captured in Pakistan), Abu Zubayda (a senior operational manager captured in Pakistan), and Ramzi bin al-Shayb (a key coordinator for 9/11 captured in Pakistan). Several other senior al-Qa`ida operatives have been captured or killed, but its figureheads, Bin Ladin himself and al-Zawahiri, remain at large. Moreover, several capable regional commanders (such as al-Zarqawi) have emerged to replenish the ranks of the group's operational commanders.

<sup>66</sup> Compare David Johnston and David E. Sanger, "New Generation of Leaders Is Emerging For Al Qaeda," *The New York Times*, August 10, 2004; and Dan Eggen and John Lancaster, "Al Qaeda Shows New Signs of Life," *The Washington Post*, August 14, 2004.

<sup>67</sup> Hoffman, "The Changing Face of Al Qaeda," p. 553.

<sup>68</sup> According to the CIA, prior to 9/11 al-Qa`ida needed about \$30 million annually to fund its activities. Of this amount, about \$10-\$20 million was paid to the Taliban for providing sanctuary. A major portion of the remaining sum was spent on managing the training camps. Only a small portion of the money was spent on financing terrorist attacks. See *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 171.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Indeed, Bin Ladin has acknowledged in an interview that al-Qa`ida possesses three alternative financial systems that are independent of each other.<sup>69</sup>

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, Bin Ladin and other al-Qa`ida leaders have recast the organization as an international Islamic insurgent movement and have helped to spawn an unknown number of jihadist cells that adhere to its worldview and objectives, but which do not have to be subsidized by the organization's own resources. Another key element in al-Qa`ida's ongoing transformation is its ever-increasing exploitation of the internet, which will be briefly summarized below.

### **Al-Qa`ida's Cyber Operations**

Prior to 9/11 al-Qa`ida operated only one website, al-Nida (www.alnida.com). Currently, more than 50 websites are linked to al-Qa`ida.<sup>70</sup> The organization is certainly not the only terrorist organization to use the internet, since these days almost every significant terrorist group has an internet presence.<sup>71</sup> Gabriel Weimann, who has extensively studied terrorist use of the internet, identifies eight different ways in which terrorists utilize the internet, for psychological warfare, publicity and propaganda, data mining, fundraising, recruitment and mobilization, networking, sharing information, and planning and coordination.<sup>72</sup> This is seconded by Bruce Hoffman, who notes that al-Qa`ida uses the internet to perform the following three critical functions.<sup>73</sup>

1. Propaganda for recruitment and fund-raising and to shape public opinion in the Muslim world
2. Terrorist training and instruction, and
3. Operational planning for attacks through both e-mail communication and the access it provides to an array of useful open source information.

---

<sup>69</sup> Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 315-16.

<sup>70</sup> Bruce Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists," *Testimony before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence*, U.S. House of Representatives, May 4, 2006, p. 6

<sup>71</sup> Gabriel Weimann, "www.terror.net: How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet," United States Institute of Peace (USIP), *Special Report 116*, March 2004, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-10.

<sup>73</sup> Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists," p. 6.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

These websites are multi-functional. Some of the sites act as message boards that serve as discussion areas in which members can request assistance on operational issues, discuss and debate the theological validity of certain operations, and express their opinions and concerns about current events. Other sites function as operational hubs and contain “strategic” and military jihadist literature. Still others serve as hosts for presenting the information of the group’s ideologues and theoreticians.<sup>74</sup> There are also some that perform all of these functions.

### **Al-Qa`ida Today**

Since the launch of the U.S.-led war on terrorism al-Qa`ida, through its autonomous field commanders, loosely connected affiliate groups, and independent “self-starter” cells, has carried out several major attacks and dozens of lesser attacks. Certain of al-Qa`ida’s strategists have suggested that the 9/11 attacks were part and parcel of a multi-stage effort to re-establish the Islamic caliphate.<sup>75</sup> Despite such post-facto rationalizations, it is evident that the war on terrorism succeeded in destroying al-Qa`ida’s original infrastructure in Afghanistan and severely disrupting its worldwide operational and support networks. However, the group has managed to survive the international campaign directed against it by adopting a more flexible organizational structure. During the past four years, aided by the internet and the periodic appearance of audio and video messages from Bin Ladin, al-Zawahiri, and other al-Qa`ida spokesmen, the organization has been transformed into more of an international movement than a terrorist group in the narrowest sense of that term. According to a U.S. State Department report, “[d]uring 2005...it appeared that al-Qa`ida senior leadership often inspired terrorist activity but could not direct it as fully as in the past.” The report goes on to suggest that “[in the future there] could be a larger number of smaller attacks, less meticulously planned, and local rather than

---

<sup>74</sup> Lawrence Wright, “The Terror Web,” *The New Yorker*, August 2, 2004.

<sup>75</sup> Muhammad Ibrahim Makkawi, alias Sayf al-Adl, formulated a seven-stage plan to re-establish the Islamic caliphate. Al-Adl states that “Al-Qa`ida leaders drew up a plan to deal a strike to the head of the serpent and cause it to lose consciousness and act chaotically against those who attacked it.” The plan, which was outlined in a book on Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi by Jordanian journalist Fu`ad Husayn, will be discussed in the section immediately below.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

transnational in scope.”<sup>76</sup> It remains to be seen whether this prognostication is warranted.

### **AL-QA`IDA'S STRATEGIC THINKING AND THE QUESTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE\***

Assessing the degree to which al-Qa`ida is interested in targeting critical infrastructure, whether on American soil or overseas, is a difficult proposition. The reason that it is so difficult is because properly assessing al-Qa`ida's general strategic objectives, much less the precise means it intends to employ in the future to achieve those objectives, is itself a formidable task.<sup>77</sup> This might appear to be a counterintuitive if not a nonsensical claim. After all, al-Qa`ida and the various Islamist terrorist organizations with which it is affiliated have been attacking the United States and its Arab and European allies for over a decade, and these attacks should in and of themselves reveal distinctive patterns of action and provide careful observers with a reasonably clear idea of what their operational objectives are. Moreover, Usama bin Ladin, his lieutenants, and his supporters have often publicly announced their supposed political and strategic objectives in an effort to influence the

---

<sup>76</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), chapter 2, available at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64332.htm>.

\* This section was prepared by Jeffrey M. Bale.

<sup>77</sup> Indeed, even using the term “strategy” is somewhat problematic when discussing relatively small, sectarian extremist groups which rarely if ever field conventional military forces or employ conventional military methods. The word, which derives from the ancient Greek term *strategia* (meaning “generalship”), has both a general meaning and one that is specifically related to the conduct of military operations. In the general sense, it can be defined as “a plan of action or policy designed to achieve a major or overall aim,” whereas in a narrowly military context it signifies “the art of planning and directing overall military operations and movements” in a war or campaign. See *The Oxford American English Dictionary* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 2002), p. 1361. In the latter context, it is usually distinguished from the term “tactics,” which refers to “the art of disposing armed forces in order of battle and of organizing operations, especially during contact with the enemy,” i.e., the actual disposition and maneuvering of forces on the battlefield. See *Ibid.*, p. 1407. There are, of course, further distinctions that can be drawn between “grand strategy” (which refers to the most general decisions made concerning the deployment of armed forces to achieve national policies), “strategy,” “grand tactics” (which concerns the maneuvering of forces in a particular region prior to engaging in battle), and “tactics,” but these not concern us here. For our purposes, the terms “strategy” and “strategic” will be used loosely to refer both to al-Qa`ida's broader political objectives and the quasi-military operational methods they have opted to employ to achieve those objectives.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

perception and behavior of their enemies and followers. Yet these sources alone cannot, if not properly interpreted, provide us with a clear picture of al-Qa`ida's strategic thinking. First of all, the pattern of al-Qa`ida attacks, to the extent that such a pattern exists and is discernable, has not only evolved over time but must be viewed from the enemy's own point of view. Second, al-Qa`ida's proclaimed rationales for carrying out its terrorist assaults, both those that it has launched in the past and those that it threatens to make in the future, can rarely if ever be taken at face value.

These intrinsic problems have been further compounded because intelligence and military analysts in the U.S. and Europe who are charged with comprehending and interdicting jihadist terrorism have all too often employed entirely secular, materialistic types of reasoning and exclusively Western military frames of reference, above all – whether consciously or not – certain ideas derived from well-known nineteenth-century military theorists such as the Prussian officer Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831),<sup>78</sup> in an effort to explain what it is that al-Qa`ida is currently up to.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, this is a classic case of analytical “mirror-imaging,” since to the extent that transnational jihadists operate on the basis of some sort of military logic and rationality, which remains debatable, it is often a logic and rationality rooted in a profoundly religious worldview that is intrinsically non-rational and arguably both utopian and delusional in terms of its intermediate and ultimate aims. Indeed, one might carry this argument further and suggest that al-Qa`ida

---

<sup>78</sup> For more on Clausewitz's ideas about war and its relation to politics, see especially Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University, 1989). For scholarly analyses of his ideas and their influence on modern strategic thought, see Peter Paret, *Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1993), especially Part Two; and idem and Gordon A. Craig, eds., *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1986), especially chapter 7. Clausewitz's most famous maxim is that “War is the continuation of politics by other means.” This alone should imply that his ideas have little or no relation to those held by Usama bin Ladin.

<sup>79</sup> Even al-Qa`ida military analysts have pointed out the shortcomings of Clausewitzian approaches. Note, e.g., the comments of Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, which in this case concern the impact of al-Qa`ida's organizational structure on U.S. military analyses and actions: “America today is facing a huge problem with Clausewitz's theories. The latter are premised on the existence of a centralized hostile power with a unified command. Assuredly, the mujahidin, with the al-Qa`ida organization in their vanguard, believe in decentralized organizations. Thus the enemy cannot ascertain the [mujahidin's] center of gravity, let alone aim a mortal blow at it.” See Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, “A Lesson War,” *Al-Ansar*, December 19, 2002.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

is prone to engage in a peculiar form of “magical thinking,”<sup>80</sup> in this case one that is derived from essentially theological precepts associated with Islam. Hence the group’s strategic reasoning, such as it is, is generally based on radically different principles than those which are characteristic of sovereign nation-states or conventional Western military forces.

### **Organizational Factors**

Before actually turning to the question of al-Qa`ida’s strategic concepts and objectives, it is necessary to highlight how the group’s complex organizational structure may affect the implementation of those objectives. As has been noted above, al-Qa`ida proper is a relatively small organization, numerically speaking, which is divided into two basic levels. First, there are a few dozen members of the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council), which is internally subdivided into several committees, one of which is concerned explicitly with military affairs.<sup>81</sup> This council effectively constitutes the strategic directorate or officer corps of the group. Second, al-Qa`ida consists of somewhere between several hundred and several thousand rank-and-file members who take their marching orders directly from leading figures in the Majlis al-Shura.<sup>82</sup> That is essentially all there is to al-Qa`ida as an actual organization. If Bin Ladin or his principal lieutenants wish to organize an attack themselves, they will either employ existing members of al-Qa`ida’s rank-and-file or recruit suitable volunteers who have already

---

<sup>80</sup> “Magical thinking” is a term that seems to have been used first by nineteenth-century cultural anthropologists who sought to explain how members of traditional societies viewed the world, in particular the manner in which they explained natural phenomena in a pre-scientific context. Perhaps the most notable characteristic of magical thinking has to do with misperceiving or misunderstanding causation processes by, e.g., confusing correlation with causation. One of the classic examples of magical thinking was provided by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Oracles among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), concerning the Azande’s explanation for why a roof collapsed onto a particular individual, which was attributed to witchcraft rather than natural causes.

<sup>81</sup> This is somewhat misleading, however, insofar as it suggests that the other committees of the Majlis al-Shura are concerned primarily with “non-military” affairs. In fact, what the military committee is concerned with are operational matters, whereas the financial committee and training committees are both concerned with logistical matters and the so-called *fatwa* committee is concerned with evaluating the religious appropriateness of the tangible actions to be undertaken by the group.

<sup>82</sup> The precise number of rank-and-file members has fluctuated considerably over time, and probably reached its lowest ebb after the U.S. military and its Afghan allies toppled the Taliban regime and drove the surviving al-Qa`ida fighters across the Afghan frontier into the Pushtun tribal zones of Pakistan.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

received – or are currently receiving – training from those rank-and-file members in the group’s camps. Strictly speaking, if one was limiting one’s analysis to al-Qa`ida as an organization, it would only be necessary to consider the actions carried out by its rank-and-file members or those seemingly promising individuals who its leaders had recruited specifically to carry out particular operations, wherever in the world they may be operating.

Unfortunately, there is much more to the Islamist terrorist threat than that which is represented by the leaders and rank-and-file members of the al-Qa`ida organization. The issue under consideration here is complicated enormously by two developments that have been discussed above in the section on al-Qa`ida’s historical evolution and transformation. First, al-Qa`ida has established affiliations with a host of other Islamist terrorist organizations or factions thereof, both within and outside of the Middle East. These affiliated groups and factions have more or less officially embraced al-Qa`ida’s transnational jihadist agenda, including its emphasis on attacking the “far enemy,” i.e., the United States. At the same time, they have not entirely abandoned their former local, national, or regional concerns and objectives, much less their armed struggles against the “near enemy” in their respective areas. There is no doubt, for example, that proclaimed supporters of a global jihad such as Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia, the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC: Salafist Group for Preaching and Fighting) in Algeria, the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines, and the Groupe Islamique Combattant Marocain (GICM: Moroccan Islamic Combat Group) are still interested, perhaps even more so, in eventually overthrowing the “infidel” regimes in their own areas or countries. This should not come as a surprise, since despite his advocacy of a worldwide *jihad* Bin Ladin himself has retained a particular interest in destabilizing the Saudi regime in his own homeland, the “Land of the Two Holy Places,” and Zawahiri still remains embroiled in Egyptian Islamist infighting despite having left Egypt and opted to merge his own “internationalist” faction of the Tanzim al-Jihad into the al-Qa`ida organization to form Qa`idat al-Jihad (the Base [or Foundation] of the Jihad).<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Bin Ladin’s obsession with the apostasy of the Saudi regime and its ongoing persecution of radicals is frequently reflected in his public statements. Likewise, to this day al-Zawahiri is engaged in polemics with former jihadist comrades in Egypt over tactics and decision to renounce violent struggle. See, e.g., his bitter polemics between Muntasir al-Zayyat, which can in part be followed by comparing Montasser al-Zayyat, *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of Bin Laden’s Right-Hand Man* (London: Pluto, 2004), especially chapters 4-8, and al-Zawahiri, *Fursan tahta rayat al-nabi* [*Knights under the Prophet’s Banner*], serialized in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* in December 2001, parts

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

Moreover, as many analysts have argued, in recent years al-Qa`ida has transmogrified from an actual, relatively delimited organization into a diffuse ideological current that nowadays serves to inspire hundreds of thousands if not millions of people across the Muslim world.<sup>84</sup> Although only a small segment of this radicalized population may end up having recourse to terrorism, the result is an ever-growing increase in the threat posed by “self-starter” groups inspired by Bin Ladin’s ideology – which some have referred to as “Bin Ladinism” – but that typically have few if any tangible organizational, operational, or logistical connections to al-Qa`ida itself. For example, although the final verdict is not yet in, it seems as though the March 11, 2004 Madrid bombings and the July 7, 2005 London bombings were carried out mainly by small cells composed of disaffected Muslim citizens or permanent residents who, inspired to respond to the exhortations of al-Qa`ida and other jihadist spokesmen, endeavored to carry out devastating acts of violence against “infidel” Westerners at home.<sup>85</sup> Although Bin Ladin has always claimed, sometimes disingenuously in an effort to conceal the actual operational involvement of al-Qa`ida, that his primary role was to function as an instigator rather than an actual organizer of jihadist actions, as time has gone on this has more and more turned out to be the case.<sup>86</sup> What this

---

8-9. Compare also Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad went Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), especially chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>84</sup> See, e.g., Jason Burke, *Al Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2003), pp. 7-22; Erik Schechter, “Generic Jihad,” *Jerusalem Post*, December 5, 2003.

<sup>85</sup> For the Madrid bombings as the product of a purely local cell, see Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack: The Failure of the War on Terror and a Strategy for Getting it Right* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005), pp. 3-16. For the view that the Madrid cell was intimately linked to broader jihadist networks, including those linked to al-Qa`ida, see Lorenzo Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2005), pp. 295-340. The most detailed accounts of the Madrid bombings are provided by Casimiro García-Abadillo, *11-M: La venganza* (Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2004); José Maria Irujo, *El agujero: España invadida por la yihad* (Madrid: Santillana, 2005); Miguel Platón, *11-M: Como la Yihad puso de rodillas en España* (Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2005). For the ideological background of jihadist animosity toward Spain, see Gustavo de Aristegui, *La Yihad en España: La obsesión por reconquistar Al-Andalus* (Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2005). For the 7/7 bombings, see the recent report by the British authorities, United Kingdom, House of Commons, Intelligence and Security Committee, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7 July 2005, 11 May 2006* (London: Stationery Office, 2006).

<sup>86</sup> For examples of Bin Ladin’s public and indeed proud claims to function as an instigator of jihadist terrorism, see Bruce Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden* (London and New York: Verso, 2005), pp. 69 (where he says it is his duty is to motivate the *umma* to wage *jihad* against the U.S., Israel, and their allies), 107-8 (where he admits that he incited “martyrs” to carry out the 9/11

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

means, effectively speaking, is that would-be “amateur” jihadists with no observable prior associations with al-Qa`ida or any other established Islamist terrorist groups may suddenly take it upon themselves to translate exhortations made by ideologues such as Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri into action – whether or not they understand or correctly interpret the strategic aims of those figures properly. In short, actions taken by individuals who claim to be inspired by Bin Ladin but who may not even be correctly divining his real aims can only complicate the analysis of the objectives of al-Qa`ida proper. That is why, for the purposes of this study, the focus has been on al-Qa`ida itself and its more or less “official” organizational branches.

### **Ideological Factors: Are Al-Qa`ida’s Objectives Truly “Strategic”?**

There can be no doubt that specific military or paramilitary actions and operations carried out within the context of what is generally referred to as unconventional, asymmetric, or “fourth generation” warfare, like those carried out in the course of conventional wars, are generally intended to accomplish some objective. Such actions are rarely if ever utterly random, purely pathological, entirely whimsical, or so idiosyncratic in their etiology as to be incomprehensible to others, nor are they generally undertaken with no purpose at all in mind, initiated simply “for their own sake,” or carried out just because of a perceived need to do something, anything. Unless a particular political or military leader has suddenly descended into outright madness, i.e., mental illness in the clinical sense of that term, it must be assumed that his actions are directed towards some purpose. This is all the more true of terrorism per se, which by definition involves the carrying out of acts of violence that are specifically intended to influence the perceptions and behavior of wider target audiences. Terrorism is thus indisputably a technique or tactic that various parties adopt for purposive reasons.<sup>87</sup>

---

attacks in “self-defense,” as well as inciting other attacks on Americans and Jews, which is a religious duty, and says that if this makes him a terrorist, so be it).

<sup>87</sup> Compare Daniel S. Gressang IV, “Audience and Message: Assessing Terrorist WMD Potential,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13:3 (Autumn 2001), p. 91: “Terrorist actions are purposive acts, designed to produce, directly or indirectly, expected outcomes...Each act serves a purpose, whether the audience understands that purpose or not.”

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

To put it another way, although terrorists and other non-state actors rarely if ever engage in the sort of formal “cost-benefit” analyses that many social scientists futilely seek to model, and their “rationality” may not be comprehensible to outsiders, they normally carry out their acts of violence in order to achieve more or less calculated operational objectives.<sup>88</sup> To the extent that this is true, whether terrorists choose to attack infrastructural targets will largely depend – assuming that a) they have the technical capabilities to do so, and b) targeting such facilities is not utterly antithetical to their ideological agendas and/or psychological make-up – on whether “the operational advantages that their use might be perceived to confer” is seen as outweighing “the operational disadvantages that their use might incur.”<sup>89</sup> From this perspective, a group’s decision to attack critical infrastructure, like its other decisions concerning targeting, weaponry, and tactics, will often be based on some degree of rational strategic calculation or choice.

This does not mean, however, that terrorists are entirely “rational” actors. Indeed, it would be incorrect to assume, as many observers have, that extremist groups behave and operate primarily if not exclusively in accordance with “rational choice” models, that the important actions they undertake are decided upon only after a careful calculation of “costs and benefits,” and consequently that those whose responsibility it is to counter their nefarious schemes will be able to ascertain their most likely potential targets simply by determining the tangible value of the targets themselves and the objective difficulties any attacker would encounter if they chose to attack those targets.<sup>90</sup> Since in the real world it appears self-evident that individuals and organizations rarely if ever make decisions based entirely on rational processes and objective calculations, the adoption of such an abstract, hyper-rational theoretical approach is

---

<sup>88</sup> See especially Martha Crenshaw, “The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice,” in *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, ed. by Walter Reich (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1998), pp. 7-24; McCormick, “Terrorist Decision Making,” p. 481.

<sup>89</sup> Compare, e.g., Nadine Gurr and Benjamin Cole, *The New Face of Terrorism: Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), p. 91. See also *Ibid.*, p. 80. Note, however, that these arguments were made in connection with terrorist use of CBRN weapons, not in the context of terrorist targeting of critical infrastructure.

<sup>90</sup> This is the approach that is typically adopted, for example, by the insurance industry. In that context it makes some degree of sense, since the industry is primarily concerned with assessing the objective value of potential targets, as well as determining the probabilities that certain targets or types of targets will be hit, in order to establish economically viable rates. When counterterrorism analysts rely entirely on the same more or less “objective” criteria, however, they are bound to make errors.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

not only quite unrealistic, but is more likely than not to yield results that are seriously misleading.

Artificially rational decision-making models are even more flawed when applied uncritically or mechanically to predict the behavior of extremist groups, which almost by definition are far more prone to carry out actions for arguably less rational – or at least less discernibly rational – “expressive” reasons than, say, staid business firms, entrenched policymaking bureaucracies, or conventional military units (although these latter entities do not invariably behave rationally either). Indeed, extremist groups tend to carry out acts of violence both 1) for reasons that one can characterize as broadly rational, in particular to produce certain tangible impacts (e.g., cause casualties or physical damage) and/or to provoke certain desired psychological responses in wider audiences (i.e., terrorism proper), and 2) to satisfy more arcane ideological, subjective, impulsive, or partially conscious and hence ostensibly less rational needs.<sup>91</sup> These latter “internal” motives, which are herein being characterized as “expressive,” include such things as doctrinal obsessions (e.g., compulsions to attack designated enemies or smite “evildoers,” longings to precipitate a prophesied Armageddon, injunctions promoting individual or collective martyrdom, technological fetishism), group pathologies (e.g., excessive insularity, charismatic and/or authoritarian leadership, extreme forms of peer pressure, suppression of internal dissent, “groupthink”), collective emotional impulses (e.g., a burning desire to get revenge, a passion for gaining glory or grabbing the spotlight, a perceived need to demonstrate prowess or outdo rival groups, a desire to evoke past triumphs or tragedies), or – in the case of “lone wolves” – an incalculably diverse range of potential

---

<sup>91</sup> From the days of Karl Heinzen in the mid-nineteenth century, certain radicals and observers have drawn a distinction between terrorism as a utilitarian and thus a relatively rational act and terrorism as an expressive act, above all an act of personal redemption. See Gordon H. McCormick, “Terrorist Decision Making,” *Annual Reviews in Political Science* 6 (2003), pp. 477-8. Although these two categories are not necessarily discrete, much less mutually exclusive, some scholars rightly emphasize the individual and collective (i.e., group-oriented) psychological functions terrorism serves rather than only its narrowly instrumental functions. See, for example, Jerrold M. Post, “Terrorist Psycho-Logic: Terrorist Behavior as a Produce of Psychological Forces,” in Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Washington, DC : Woodrow Wilson Center, 1998), pp. 25-40; and Walter Reich, “Understanding Terrorist Behavior: The Limits and Opportunities of Psychological Inquiry,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 261-79.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

personal idiosyncrasies.<sup>92</sup> It is in fact the varying importance, fluidity, and precise configuration of such “expressive” factors that serve to distinguish particular extremist groups from one another, including those operating within the same ideological milieu, and these very distinctions can be crucially important in terms of influencing a group’s selection of targets and/or its chosen methods for attacking those targets.

That is why the never-ending flood of terrorist threat assessments that are based primarily on rational choice models or on standard “Clausewitzian” strategic or geopolitical frames of reference, which almost invariably downplay or even ignore altogether the important “expressive” motivational factors that derive from a particular group’s ideologies, internal organizational dynamics, and general emotional orientation (which is in turn strongly influenced by regnant cultural values within their respective societies), are so often misguided or erroneous. As long as this type of analytical “mirror imaging” of the enemy persists, both inside and outside of the intelligence community, serious flaws in the ongoing assessment of future terrorist threats, whether to critical infrastructure or other targets, are likely to occur.

Again, this is not to say that extremist groups are entirely irrational or that they do not usually make various types of strategic calculations, especially on the operational level where they are often brutally effective, but simply that their reasoning processes and decision-making concerning target selection, weapons selection, and attack modalities are also influenced by a host of other, less predictable, and less recognizably rational if not predominantly semi-rational or non-rational factors, including their frequently obtuse ideological proclivities and their often unrealistic ultimate goals. This is especially true in the cases of secular or religious extremists who seek to achieve utopian and arguably delusional aims, i.e., those which promote what Lee Harris has referred to as “fantasy ideologies,” whether these envision the forging of preternaturally harmonious, cooperative, strife-free communities on the international level (communists) or the national level (fascists), the creation of racially “pure” havens (white and black supremacists), the extirpation of human “despoilers” of the environment (fringe eco-radicals), the precipitation or hastening of catastrophic “end times” prophecies (apocalyptic millenarians), or the restoration of the Caliphate, the unification of the Muslim *umma*, and ultimately the Islamization of

---

<sup>92</sup> For one such “expressive” motive, personal glorification, see Albert Borowitz, *Terrorism for Self-Glorification: The Herostratos Syndrome* (Kent, OH: Kent State University, 2005).



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

the entire world (the most radical elements within the global jihadist milieu).<sup>93</sup>

Nor does the fact that terrorism is by definition purposive mean that the short-term, intermediate, or long-term goals which the perpetrators of particular acts of violence are trying to accomplish are necessarily realistic, nor that the specific actions they carry out will necessarily produce the actual effects that they were designed to achieve. Indeed, in the real world it is very often the case that 1) the ultimate objectives pursued by terrorist groups and states are unrealizable, utopian, and indeed delusional, and/or that 2) their specific acts of violence regularly produce effects on wider audiences – both potential supporters and designated enemies – which are contrary if not antithetical to those they were aiming for. To the extent that particular parties, whether states or extremist groups, promote phantasmagoric, unachievable goals and regularly miscalculate the impact of and reactions to their acts of violence, they can be characterized as essentially non-rational or, at best, as only being rational within the framework or in accordance with the tenets of a “fantasy ideology.” It seems obvious that if a violence-prone group begins by embracing absurd notions or fundamentally flawed premises, then even if it acts perfectly logically on the basis of those premises, the results will inevitably be disastrous. Such a group cannot ultimately achieve its desired objectives, no matter how much mayhem it causes, but until it implodes or is effectively neutralized or destroyed it may well be capable of doing a tremendous amount of material and psychological damage to those it has designated as enemies.

With this background, the extent to which al-Qa`ida’s objectives may be considered realistic and therefore realizable can perhaps begin to be addressed. As it happens, influential terrorism analysts cannot even agree on this most basic of questions. Some view al-Qa`ida, through the prism of a traditional Western military perspective, as an essentially rational strategic actor, whereas others argue that the group and its leaders are essentially irrational. Still others seek to forge a middle ground by arguing that although al-Qa`ida may be said to operate more or less rationally as opposed to completely irrationally, it does so primarily within the restrictive confines of a basically non-rational theological framework.

---

<sup>93</sup> For the “fantasy ideologies” characteristic of extremists, see Lee Harris, “Al Qaeda’s Fantasy Ideology: War without Clausewitz,” *Policy Review* 114 (August-September 2002), pp. 19-36; and idem, *Civilization and its Enemies: The Next Stage of History* (New York: Free Press, 2004), pp. 1-20. His ideas will be discussed further below.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

The “rationalist” interpretation has been championed by analysts such as George Friedman, founder of the private Strategic Forecasting (Stratfor) firm, which generally promulgates a “realist” geopolitical and strategic perspective, and Michael Scheuer, the former head of the Bin Ladin Unit within the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Although Friedman acknowledges that al-Qa`ida ultimately aims to reestablish the Caliphate and restore it to its former position of greatness, an objective that is almost certainly unrealizable, he nevertheless gives the overall impression that Bin Ladin’s organization is an extraordinarily calculating if not a thoroughly rational strategic actor.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, he explicitly contrasts the often dramatic but less effective approaches adopted by terrorist groups that were active during the 1970s and 1980s, groups which he considers to have been overly hierarchical and dangerously dependent upon the support of various foreign intelligence services, with the strategic seriousness of al-Qa`ida. As he puts it, instead of devoting their energies primarily to “making symbolic gestures,” as earlier terrorists purportedly did, al-Qa`ida “saw itself as trying to put into motion certain political processes that would result in achieving its political goals.”<sup>95</sup> This is a rather peculiar statement insofar as it implies, falsely, that earlier generations of terrorists were not trying to set certain processes in motion in order to achieve specific political goals, however utopian those goals might have been. In reality, even the most “symbolic” and arguably “expressive” of the terrorist actions in previous decades, such as the demonstrative “propaganda of the deed” assassinations perpetrated by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anarchists, were intended to achieve certain hoped-for political results. Friedman is certainly correct to argue that al-Qa`ida is much more dangerous than most of the terrorist organizations in the past, but if one were to accept his general portrayal of al-Qa`ida at face value, one could easily be led to conclude that Bin Ladin has not only carefully planned out every phase of some ostensible strategic “master plan” in advance, but that his terrorist group has so far been singularly successful in carrying out the phases of that master plan and, consequently, in achieving its supposed strategic objectives. These claims are, to say the least, contestable.

Scheuer too rightly recognizes and indeed goes out of his way to emphasize that Bin Ladin and al-Qa`ida are motivated primarily by

---

<sup>94</sup> George Friedman, *America's Secret War: Inside the Hidden Worldwide Struggle between the United States and its Enemies* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), pp. 28, 33-8.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

religious imperatives.<sup>96</sup> Yet although he departs from this perfectly sound premise, he inexplicably draws a number of seriously flawed and misleading conclusions. For one thing, he argues that Bin Ladin does not preach or practice an “aberrant form” of Islam, and indeed that the al-Qa`ida leader is “in the Islamic mainstream.”<sup>97</sup> This statement is frankly astounding inasmuch as it erroneously conflates Islam with Islamism, an inherently radical political ideology with openly imperialistic aims. While it is certainly true that several of the traditional Islamic conceptions and generic anti-Western attitudes espoused by Bin Ladin are widely accepted by Muslims, this does not mean that the latter share his puritanical interpretation of the Islamic faith or his extremely radical ideology, much less that they generally support his utopian transnational jihadist agenda or his brutal terrorist methods. For another, despite highlighting Bin Ladin’s fundamentally religious motivations, which should have led him to expect the al-Qa`ida leader to periodically display faith-based and arguably non-rational patterns of behavior, Scheuer, like Friedman, nonetheless proceeds to ascribe far too much rationality and pragmatism to Bin Ladin and his fellow jihadists, especially in his second book. Therein he vehemently denies, despite the existence of masses of evidence to the contrary, that they have an intrinsic and theologically-based hatred towards the secular United States, an apocalyptic worldview, or fundamentally unrealistic ultimate objectives.<sup>98</sup> Quite the contrary, in fact: “Bin Laden and most Islamists, therefore, can be said to be motivated by their love of Allah and their hatred of a few, specific U.S. policies and actions they believe are damaging – and threatening to destroy – the things they love. Theirs is a war against a specific target and for specific, limited purposes.”<sup>99</sup> From this, it follows that if the United States and its key allies were willing to

---

<sup>96</sup> Anonymous [Micheal Scheuer], *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, 2002), pp. xvii-xviii, 3-5, and especially 16-17: “What must be understood is that what bin Laden has said and done has everything to do with religion... When U.S. and other Western leaders describe bin Laden as a terrorist problem, not a religious one, they mislead their publics.”; and idem, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2004), pp. xviii and passim, but especially xi: “The war bin Laden is waging has everything to do with the tenets of the Islamic faith.” Note that the author of this section shares Scheuer’s view that “ideas are the main drivers of human history” and that, as per historian Perry Miller, they are “coherent and powerful imperatives to human behavior.” See *Ibid.*, p. xvii. This is even more true for the leaders and members of extremist groups, whose *raison d’être*, identities, and purposes all derive primarily from their adherence to particular political and religious ideologies.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xviii, 8, 16-18.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

alter their foolish, counterproductive, oppressive, and exploitive policies towards the Muslim world, Bin Ladin would then cease attacking the West.<sup>100</sup> However, as will be argued below, what Scheuer does not seem to grasp is that the global jihadists' "love of Allah" is infused with extremely irrational notions that make their objectives anything but limited or fully rational. This immediately becomes apparent as soon as one carefully examines Bin Ladin's own pronouncements, provided that the reader is familiar enough with Islam and Islamic history to understand his historical references and code words.<sup>101</sup>

In marked contrast to this "rationalist" perspective, which might be more aptly characterized as "hyper-rationalist," both Lee Harris and Ralph Peters adopt the "non-rationalist" perspective in that they emphasize what they regard as the inherently irrational objectives and characteristics of global jihadists such as Bin Ladin. Harris begins by explicitly challenging the appropriateness of using Clausewitzian analytical frameworks to explain the 9/11 attacks, and by extension to understanding al-Qa`ida's entire agenda. Instead, he argues that al-Qa`ida operates in accordance with a "fantasy ideology," a phenomenon he considers operative whenever "political and ideological symbols and tropes [are] used not for political purposes, but entirely for the benefit of furthering a specific personal or collective fantasy."<sup>102</sup> Many individuals behave at least in part in accordance with their own personal fantasy ideology, but in most such cases – serial killers and other delusional maniacs excluded – they tend to be obnoxious but relatively harmless. However, such fantasy ideologies can become very dangerous indeed when they are embraced collectively by members of a certain group. This can occur when there is a "preexisting collective need" for such a fantasy that stems "from a conflict between a set of collective aspirations and desires, on one hand, and the stern dictates of brutal reality, on the other – a conflict in which the lack of realism is gradually transformed into a penchant for fantasy."<sup>103</sup> Moreover, according to Harris the groups that are especially prone to adopt fantasy ideologies are those which "history has passed by or rejected – groups that feel that they are under attack from forces which, while more powerful perhaps than they are, are nonetheless inferior in terms of true virtue." This is why the "theme of

---

<sup>100</sup> This is the clear implication of his analysis in *Ibid.*, pp. 11-15, 17.

<sup>101</sup> See, however, the cautionary note by Thomas Hegghammer, "Global Jihadism after the Iraq War," *Middle East Journal* 60:1 (Winter 2006), p. 15: "the study of ideology is not an exact science and...our current concepts do not adequately capture the complexity of the phenomenon of Islamist militancy."

<sup>102</sup> Lee Harris, "Al Qaeda's Fantasy Ideology: War without Clausewitz," *Policy Review* 114 (August-September 2002), p. 23.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25, for this and the two quotes immediately below.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

reviving ancient glory is an important key to understanding fantasy ideologies...” Just as “uncivilized” Ethiopia served as the prop for Mussolini’s fantasy of restoring the Roman Empire, so too does the United States, cast in the image of an inherently corrupt and imperialistic Crusader power out to destroy Islam, serve as the prop for Bin Ladin’s jihadist fantasy of purifying and unifying the *umma*, restoring the Caliphate, and regaining Muslim supremacy vis-à-vis the world of “unbelief.”<sup>104</sup> From this standpoint, the attacks on 9/11 were not really designed to achieve a concrete strategic objective, but instead constituted a spectacular and symbolic act of theatre designed to confirm al-Qa`ida’s fantasy that a few Muslim martyrs could defeat the “Great Satan” and, in the process, inspire and rouse the Muslim masses in support of that fantasy. Since al-Qa`ida supposedly “has no strategic purpose in anything [it] does” and is allegedly incapable of making a “realistic assessment,” Lee argues that there is nothing that the U.S. can do, policy-wise, to “change the attitudes of our enemies – short, perhaps, of a massive nationwide conversion to fundamentalist Islam.”<sup>105</sup> However, while the transnational jihadists do in fact adhere to a “fantasy ideology,” this does not mean that they do not eschew strategic calculations. Moreover, Lee commits the very same error that Scheuer makes in that he fails to draw a clear distinction between jihadist ideological vanguard organizations such as al-Qa`ida and the Muslim masses. Although no changes in U.S. foreign policies are likely to induce those vanguard groups to cease attacking us, the adoption of more sensible policies could very well help to reduce their growing base of popular support.

As for Peters, he makes an even harsher judgment about al-Qa`ida’s supposed rationality. He begins by drawing a relatively hard and fast distinction between what he terms “practical terrorists” and “apocalyptic terrorists.” He argues that the actions of the practical terrorist are “calculated to change political circumstances, while for the apocalyptic terrorist, destruction is an end in itself, despite his extravagant statements about strategic objectives.”<sup>106</sup> Practical terrorists “may behave savagely, but they have tangible goals and a logical approach to achieving them,”

---

<sup>104</sup> For al-Qa`ida’s desire to unite the *umma* and restore the historic power of the “righteous” Caliphate, and wage *jihad* against “Crusaders” and other unbelievers, compare the remarks of Bin Ladin in his October 21, 2001 interview for al-Jazira, cited in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 121; and those of al-Zawahiri in *Fursan*, part 11.

<sup>105</sup> Harris, “Al Qaeda’s Fantasy Ideology,” pp. 33, 32.

<sup>106</sup> Ralph Peters, “When Devils Walk the Earth: The Mentality and Roots of Terrorism, and How to Respond,” in idem, *Beyond Terror: Strategy in a Changing World* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2002), p. 22.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

and although ideology can “dominate their thinking...it does not break loose entirely from mundane reality.”<sup>107</sup> In contrast, apocalyptic terrorists like Bin Ladin are “mentally divorced from our world and its values...view the greater world as their enemy...[and] are merciless [because] they view themselves as tools of a divine and uncompromising retribution.”<sup>108</sup> Indeed, he goes so far as to claim, with considerable plausibility, that retribution against “unbelievers, heretics, and even their own brethren whose belief is less pure, is the real strategic goal of apocalyptic terrorists, even when they do not fully realize it themselves or cannot articulate it.” Hence “we cannot know apocalyptic terrorists by their pronouncements as well as by their deeds, since much of what they say is meant to make their intentions seem more innocent or justified than they are.”<sup>109</sup> For this reason Peters concludes, as Lee did concerning his fantasist, that “[n]o change in the world order will ever content the apocalyptic terrorist, since his actual discontents are internal to himself and no alteration in the external environment could sate his appetite for retribution against those he needs to believe are evil and guilty of causing his personal sufferings and disappointments.”<sup>110</sup> It follows that such people cannot be controlled, like practical terrorists, but instead need to be killed. There are, however, two fundamental problems with Peters’ analysis. First, his two categories of terrorists should be seen as representing Weberian “ideal types” rather than living human beings, who – apart from clinical lunatics – are never either entirely rational or entirely irrational in their behavior. Since in any given case it is difficult if not impossible for observers to artificially separate their “rational” from their “expressive” motives and actions, one simply cannot accept Peters’ overly sharp distinction between practical and apocalyptic terrorists. Second, even extremists who are in fact impelled by their adherence to Manichean ideological or theological doctrines (and perhaps also by personal demons) to smite “evildoers” are at times capable of rational calculation and understanding basic cause-and-effect relationships. Indeed, the historical record is replete with examples of violence-prone extremist groups whose members simultaneously espoused delusional worldviews and exhibited a ruthless efficiency on the operational level.

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 27, 28, 29.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 30. Peters further argues, persuasively, that since the “health of any religious community can be gauged by the degree to which it rejects these bloody apostles of terror...the Islamic world’s acceptance of apocalyptic terrorists as heroes is perhaps the most profound indicator of its spiritual crisis and decay.”

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Given such acute disagreements among analysts concerning the strategic rationality of al-Qa`ida, it should come as no surprise to learn that they cannot even agree on the most important fundamental questions. Take, for example, the seemingly straightforward matter of whether al-Qa`ida carried out the 9/11 attacks with the specific intention, among others, of provoking a massive and hopefully ham-fisted and therefore counterproductive American military invasion of Islamic territories. According to the “rationalists,” this was precisely Bin Ladin’s intention, and certain al-Qa`ida theorists even retrospectively claimed that this was indeed part of his original plan.<sup>111</sup> Yet many other high-ranking al-Qa`ida insiders have revealed that Bin Ladin had ignored the concerns expressed by his confidants and seriously miscalculated by believing that the Americans would not carry out aggressive actions against the group’s Afghan base and its Taliban hosts. Indeed, there was a good deal of retrospective bitterness and post-facto criticism of Bin Ladin for naively believing his own propaganda about American cowardice and weakness.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, it is also clear that Bin Ladin was himself surprised by the collapse of the Twin Towers, which he did not anticipate despite his relative optimism about the probable success of the “planes operation.”<sup>113</sup> This serves to illustrate just how difficult it is to divine the real intentions of the jihadist adversary, especially in lieu of inside information.

---

<sup>111</sup> For the rationalist view, see Friedman, *America’s Secret War*, pp. 34-6. Al-Qa`ida’s own retrospective claims have been reported by journalist Fu`ad Husayn in his recent biography of Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, *Al-Zarqawi, al-jil al-thani li-al-Qa`ida [Al-Zarqawi: Al-Qa`ida’s Second Generation]* (Beirut: Al-Khayal, 2005), as serialized in *Al-Quds al-`Arabi* in May 2005, part 14; and by Bassam al-Baddarin, “Al-Qa`ida Drew Up Working Strategy Lasting until 2020: Plans for Broad ‘Jihadist Front’ Covering Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon,” *Al-Quds al-`Arabi*, March 11, 2005, citing an internet text written by Muhammad Ibrahim Makkawi, “Al-Qa`ida’s Strategy to the Year 2020.” Compare Abdel Bari Atwan, editor-in-chief of that same newspaper, in his fascinating recent book, *The Secret History of al-Qa`ida* (London: Saqi, 2006), pp. 221-2.

<sup>112</sup> Compare Gerges, *Far Enemy*, pp. 191-9; Bari Atwan, *Secret History of al-Qa`ida*, p. 180; and the recent book by Abu al-Walid al-Masri, a top Afghan Arab operative, *Tarikh al-Afghan al-`Arab [The History of the Afghan Arabs]*, which was serialized in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* in December 2004, part 2. The author is highly critical of Bin Ladin’s judgment. Similar critiques were leveled against Bin Ladin and other global jihadists by Islamists who have repudiated violence and by jihadists who prefer to focus their efforts of overthrowing the apostate regimes in their own countries. See Gerges, *Far Enemy*, pp. 200-14, 218-28, 234-40.

<sup>113</sup> As his videotaped comments at a private November 9, 2001 dinner in Jalalabad, together with his lieutenants Sulayman Abu Ghayth and al-Zawahiri, clearly indicate. See Ben Fenton, “Damned by his Gloating Smile,” *The Telegraph*, December 14, 2001.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

In any case, in between these overly dichotomous postulations of either full strategic rationality or essential non-rationality lies a middle position. One version of such a stance, “pragmatic messianism,” has been proffered by Christopher Blanchard, who comes to the following eminently sensible conclusion:

Bin Ladin has outlined specific political demands that support the image of Al Qaeda as a pliable, pragmatic political actor. Nevertheless, Al Qaeda's operational record seems to indicate that its leaders' commitment to specific national causes and strategic objectives are *rhetorical tools designed to elicit support* for their broader ideological agenda of confrontation with the West and puritanical reform in the Islamic world.<sup>114</sup>

However, the version promoted here incorporates two distinct levels of activity – a “strategic” level that concerns the realism or lack thereof of Bin Ladin's ultimate goals, and an “operational” level that concerns al-Qa`ida's actual mechanics of planning and executing attacks. This is a considerably more nuanced approach that seems to more accurately reflect the mindset and behavior of al-Qa`ida and other transnational jihadist groups. From this point of view, al-Qa`ida can be said to behave rationally on the “strategic” level, at least in part, but that to the extent that this is the case it does so largely within certain historically- and culturally-conditioned theological and thus arguably non-rational parameters. In contrast, on the “operational” level, al-Qa`ida displays considerable sophistication, which allows it to plan and carry out devastatingly effective and often spectacular terrorist attacks which allow the group to achieve its narrowly “tactical” aims, if not to further its unachievable strategic goals. Let us begin by considering the “strategic” objectives of al-Qa`ida.

The key point that needs to be emphasized is that, far from accepting modern Western conceptions of international law, which presuppose “the existence of a family of nations composed of a community of states enjoying full sovereign rights and equality of status” – the leaders of al-

---

<sup>114</sup> See Christopher Blanchard, “Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology,” *CRS [Congressional Research Service] Report*, November 16, 2004, p. 5 (italics added). Compare also his further conclusions: “Experience suggests that Al Qaeda's leaders believe that regular attempts to characterize Al Qaeda's actions as defensive and religiously sanctioned will increase tolerance of and support for their broader ideological program. *The identification of limited political objectives and the implication that their fulfillment will resolve broader grievances may help to mask the group's underlying ideological agenda.*” See *Ibid.*, p. 6 (italics again added).



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Qa`ida instead adhere to what they consider – quite rightly – to be authentically Islamic conceptions.<sup>115</sup> These conceptions, which were first laid down in the era of the “virtuous forefathers” of the faith (*al-salaf al-salih*) – Muhammad and his “rightly-guided” caliphal successors – in order to govern the relations between the growing Islamic community and non-Muslims, do not involve the recognition of other sovereign states, since “the ultimate goal of Islam was the subordination of the whole world to one [universal] system of law and religion.”<sup>116</sup> This “classical” notion has in fact been augmented rather than abandoned by today’s jihadists, who regard modern nation-states as artificial creations that the “enemies of Islam” intentionally designed to prevent the restoration of a unified Muslim *umma*.

The first and most important of these traditional Islamic conceptions was clearly articulated in the *Qur’an* itself: one of the primary responsibilities incumbent upon all Muslims is to spread the divine word of Allah, which was thought to have been revealed directly by the archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad, throughout the entire world, since it was ostensibly meant for all of humanity, not restricted to Arabs alone.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, whenever the Muslims encountered “unbelievers,” they were admonished to offer them three options: convert to Islam, pay a poll tax (*jizya*) and accept a subordinate status in a Muslim-dominated society, or prepare to fight.<sup>118</sup> Second, the methods Muslims traditionally used to

---

<sup>115</sup> For the general Muslim rejection of Western and other non-Islamic international laws, norms, and institutions, see Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1955), pp. 44-6. Furthermore, in theory Muslims also reject standard Western conceptions of international relations, including notions such as the balance of power and *Realpolitik*. That this is also the jihadist and al-Qa`ida view is apparent. See Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven: Yale University, 2006), pp. 74-5. This is confirmed by the comments of Bin Ladin, who stated that “no sane Muslim should take his grievances to the United Nations” or any other international bodies, which are “infidel, man-made organizations.” See his December 1998 interview for al-Jazira, cited in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, pp. 67-8. Compare also the remarks of al-Zawahiri, who argues that the battle between unbelief and Islam is universal, and specifically identifies the U.N., multinational corporations, international communications and exchange systems, international news agencies and satellite channels, and international relief agencies, “which are being used as a cover for espionage, proselytizing, coup planning, and the transfer of weapons,” as being in the enemy camp. See *Fursan*, part 11. Ironically, it is Islamic relief agencies that are engaged in the sordid activities that he ascribes to their Western counterparts.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>117</sup> See, e.g., *Qur’an* 9.33.

<sup>118</sup> Compare *Qur’an* 9.5, 9.124, 47.4. The second option was originally confined to believers in the Abrahamic faiths or “people of the book” (*ahl al-kitab*), i.e., Christians

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

spread and universalize Islam involved a combination of proselytization (*da`wa*) and “jihad of the sword in the path of Allah” (*jihad bi al-sayf fi sabil Allah*), i.e., armed struggle for the faith.<sup>119</sup> During periods of relative weakness, Muslims tended to rely primarily on *da`wa*, but when they were militarily strong, they often waged *jihad bi al-sayf* in a frankly imperialistic effort to expand the boundaries of the Islamic world by conquest (*fatah*) at the expense of non-Muslims. Third, on the basis of the examples reportedly set by the Prophet himself or his close companions and successors,<sup>120</sup> medieval jurists soon formulated a geopolitical conception that was based upon a clear-cut division of the world into two antithetical parts: the *dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam), “territories in which the law of Islam prevails,” and the *dar al-harb* (Abode of War), “territories under perpetual threat of missionary

---

and Jews, but was subsequently extended to Zoroastrians and, at various times and places, even polytheists (such as Hindus).

<sup>119</sup> In recent years there has been a lot of nonsense written on the subject of *jihad*, both by Muslims who have intentionally sought to conceal its nature and by naive academic apologists for both Islam and Islamism. The term *jihad* is derived from the verbal root *jahada*, which means to “strive,” “struggle,” or “exert oneself,” especially in the path of Allah. While it is true that the *Qur'an* makes a distinction between the “greater jihad,” i.e., struggling against the evil within oneself, and the “lesser jihad,” i.e., waging armed struggle against unbelievers, and that medieval jurists recognized several distinct categories of *jihad* (e.g., *jihad* of the heart, of the tongue, of the hands, and of the sword), the fact remains that in early Muslim chronicles – apart from texts dealing exclusively with personal piety and Sufism – the term normally refers to armed struggle against unbelievers. See E[mile] Tyan, “Djihad,” in Bernard Lewis et al, *Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition* [hereafter *EI2*] (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983 [1965]), volume 2, p. 538: “In law, according to general doctrine and in historical tradition, the *djihad* consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam and, if need be, of its defence... The notion stems from the fundamental principle of the universality of Islam: this religion, along with the temporal power which it implies, ought to embrace the whole universe, if necessary by force.” Note that the *Encyclopedia of Islam* is the standard scholarly reference work on Islam, one that is aimed at scholars more than at students. For excellent analyses of the evolution of the meaning of *jihad*, see David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 2005); Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University, 1999); and Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton: Marcus Weiner, 1996). In any event, despite the existence of multiple meanings, it is undeniable that radical Islamists invariably use the term *jihad* to refer to armed struggle against unbelievers, and also that they have repeatedly sought to transform *jihad (bi-al-sayf)* from being a sixth “unofficial” pillar (*arkan*) of the Islamic faith into one of its official *de jure* pillars.

<sup>120</sup> The cases that are most often cited as examples of this practice are Muhammad’s invitation to the Persians and Jews to adopt Islam under pain of invasion. See, e.g., Muhammad ibn Isma`il al-Bukhari, *Kitab al Jihad*, 147, 148, 149, and 151. However, the prototype case is the invitation by a Muslim commander to the people of Yamama.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

war.”<sup>121</sup> The latter included all of the territories that were not ruled by the *khalif* (Caliph) or an imam in accordance with Islamic law (the *shari`a*). In theory, if the rulers who governed portions of the *dar al-harb* refused to allow Muslims to freely practice their religion within their realms, the leaders of the *umma* were obliged to wage war against those rulers, defeat them, and incorporate their lands into the *dar al-islam*. This was, if taken at face value, a doctrine that postulated a state of more or less permanent war against unbelievers, albeit one that could be periodically interrupted, until such time as they agreed to convert to Islam.

In practice, of course, the decision to initiate military action against segments of the *dar al-harb* was affected by a host of practical considerations, above all the existing correlation of forces between particular Muslim and non-Muslim rulers. Therefore, if non-Muslim rulers were simply too powerful to fight and defeat, or if they freely allowed Muslims to practice their religion, it was not considered necessary to fight them, at least not immediately. In fact, two new categories were developed by jurists to accommodate political and military realities and thereby allow Muslims to avoid having to wage war continually or at once: the concept of the *dar al-sulh* (Abode of Truce), “territories not conquered by Muslim troops but by buying peace by the giving of tribute, the payment of which guarantees a truce or armistice (*hudna, sulh*),” and that of the *dar al-`ahd* (Abode of the Covenant), territories existing under the temporary proprietorship of non-Muslims that fall neither within the boundaries of the Dar al-Islam nor of the *dar al-harb*.<sup>122</sup> Although rejected as legitimate by many influential jurists, these temporary and intermediate categories allowed Muslim rulers to maintain peaceful relations with non-Muslim rulers as long as the latter were not actively engaged in the repression of their co-religionists. However, despite these concessions to reality, in the pre-modern era Muslims were convinced that such arrangements were strictly temporary and that at some point these transitional territories would be incorporated, along with the remaining portions of the *dar al-harb*, into the *dar al-islam*. Indeed, for them “the duty of *djihad* exists as long as the universal domination of Islam has not been attained,” from which it follows that “[p]eace with non-Muslim nations is...a provisional state of

---

<sup>121</sup> See, respectively, A[rmand] Abel, “Dar al-Islam,” *EI2*, volume 2, p. 127; and idem, “Dar al-Harb,” *EI2*, volume 2, p. 126.

<sup>122</sup> See, respectively, D. B. McDonald and A[rmand] Abel, “Dar al-Sulh,” *EI2*, volume 2, p. 131; and Halil Inalcik, “Dar al-`Ahd,” *EI2*, volume 2, p. 116.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

affairs only...[and] there can be no question of genuine peace treaties” with such states.<sup>123</sup>

Such uncompromising, expansionist, and imperialistic notions were problematic enough during the extraordinary period of Arab conquest and rapid Islamization that lasted from the seventh to the tenth centuries, but maintaining them today, when the Muslim world is politically, economically, and militarily weak, can only be characterized as delusional and potentially suicidal. That is why most Muslim states, and indeed the vast majority of Muslims, have not only reluctantly abandoned their former universalist and expansionist pretensions but also accommodated themselves to the ever-growing power imbalances between the *dar al-kufr* (Abode of Unbelief) and the *dar al-islam*, as well as to international norms and institutions that are nowadays accepted throughout most of the rest of the world. Some Muslims may still secretly hope that, with the help of Allah, the status quo ante of Muslim glory and supremacy can one day be restored, but in the meantime they are generally willing to face reality.

Not so with Bin Ladin and the transnational jihadists, for whom such eminently practical considerations do not count for much. Indeed, despite their often intimate familiarity with the functioning of complex modern Western societies, as well as their willingness to adopt modern technology and their penchant for periodically employing modern-sounding “anti-imperialist” rhetoric of the sort normally associated the secular revolutionary left and right, the jihadists are essentially living in a seventh-century mental universe. As Walid Phares has rightly noted:

The jihadist logic is historicist and theological at the same time. In the mind of its authors, leaders, and militants, the initial *rissala* (mission) bestowed on the Prophet, and carried on by the caliphs for more than thirteen centuries, is also theirs...The jihadists believe that what was initiated in Muslim history ages ago is still moving forward today, just as it was in the beginning. They also believe that Allah is still commanding them to perform these *wajibat*, or duties, without interruption. And they are firmly convinced that the enemies of their ancestors as perceived in those times are still the enemies of

---

<sup>123</sup> Tyan, “Djihad,” p. 539. This traditional view is clearly accepted by Bin Ladin, who in an October 21, 2001 interview for al-Jazira argued that the clash of civilizations between the *dar al-islam* and the *dar al-kufr* (Abode of Unbelief) is a reality proven in the *Qur'an* and *ahadith* of Muhammad, in contrast to the “fairytale” of “world peace” promoted by the West. Cited in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, pp. 124-5.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

today, in a war that has not ended for the last millennium and a half...Put simply, in the mind of the jihadists...they are in line to fulfill a mission launched centuries ago.<sup>124</sup>

He adds that “[w]hen Osama bin Laden traveled to Afghanistan eight centuries later, he was executing the orders of [militant thirteenth-century century scholar] Ibn Taymiya: fighting the infidels, reestablishing the pure Islamic state, and laying the groundwork for the return of the Caliphate.”<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, having deluded themselves into thinking that their victory over the “atheistic” Soviet superpower in Afghanistan was due solely to their own divinely-sanctioned efforts and to the intervention of Allah, as opposed to the operational assistance provided by the Pakistani secret service and the external financial and logistical support they received from the Gulf States and the U.S., the “Afghan Arabs” became convinced that with Allah’s help they could also defeat the world’s only remaining superpower, the United States, which they viewed as unremittingly hostile to Islam but inherently corrupt, weak, and decadent. Although Phares acknowledges that it may be hard for Western analysts to accept the fact that “the modern jihadists of al Qaeda and its sister organizations embody thirteenth century jihad in the framework of twenty-first century global politics,” he nonetheless justly concludes that “this reality explains most of the irrational behavior of modern-day jihadists, including suicide bombers, and the litany of extreme, violent acts and statements for which they have been responsible – which to reasonable people seem to belong to another age.”<sup>126</sup>

Indeed, it is precisely their failure to recognize this fundamental reality that explains why the “rationalist” interpreters of al-Qa`ida have mistakenly projected their own modern Western military and strategic analytical frameworks onto the enemy and thereby seriously misconstrued jihadist objectives. Such a perspective is perhaps most clearly expressed by Scheuer, when he insists that Bin Ladin’s struggle has “specific, limited purposes” and is narrowly calculated to deter the U.S. from pursuing certain policies. Similarly, he scoffs at the view that al-Qa`ida has utopian imperialistic goals by arguing that “[a]t this point in history we need worry little about the threat of an offensive and expansionist jihad meant to conquer new lands for Islam and convert new peoples to the faith” since “[s]uch a jihad is the collective – not

---

<sup>124</sup> Phares, *Future Jihad*, pp. 50, 49.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

individual – responsibility of Muslims, and must be called by a Caliph...”<sup>127</sup> He also claims that the Islamists are “not so offended by our democratic...system of politics, guarantees of personal rights and civil liberties, and separation of church and state that [they are] willing to wage war against overwhelming odds in order to stop Americans from voting, speaking freely, and praying, or not, as they wish.”<sup>128</sup> These statements are both analytically problematic and in large part factually incorrect.

First, Scheuer accepts Bin Ladin's assertions that al-Qa`ida is waging a “defensive jihad” against the enemies of Islam at face value, which makes no sense at all.<sup>129</sup> The fact that Bin Ladin and other jihadists are convinced that Muslims are everywhere under attack, when in fact Muslims themselves are so often the party doing the attacking, and that they view American actions as intrinsically anti-Islamic, ignoring the fact that during the 1990s the U.S. militarily defended Muslims in Kuwait, Bosnia, and Kosovo, criticized brutal Russian policies and actions in Chechnya, and sought to provide humanitarian relief and a measure of security in Somalia, is a sign that they have collective, ideologically-derived paranoid delusions and are prone to adopt nonsensical conspiracy theories, not that they have accurately and realistically interpreted world events.<sup>130</sup> In this context it should be

---

<sup>127</sup> Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. In reality, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the jihadists are intrinsically and intransigently opposed to virtually every defining characteristic of modern Western civilization, including secularism (above all), pluralism, democracy, individual freedom (especially freedom of choice), materialism, and hedonism (which they regard as “immorality” and “decadence”). For an excellent overview, see Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, chapter 4. Anything that they perceive as undermining Allah's rule (*hakimiyya*) is anathema to them.

<sup>129</sup> He also fails to point out that Bin Ladin and his cohorts have consistently sought to alter the circumstances and terms under which *jihad* can legitimately be waged, specifically by arguing that “defensive jihad” is an individual duty (*fard `ayn*) that requires no authorization from above. See Gerges, *Far Enemy*, pp. 3-4. Note also that for the jihadists, as for most medieval jurists, forcibly recovering territories that were once under Muslim control but were subsequently lost to Islam is considered “defensive jihad.” Hence if the jihadists sought to expel the Spaniards from Spain, the Serbs and Croats from the Balkans, the Russians from Turkic Central Asia, the Chinese from Uighur territory, Christians from the southern Philippines, and the Indians from Kashmir and other Muslim-majority parts of northern India, from their point of view this would be considered “defensive” rather than “offensive” *jihad*.

<sup>130</sup> For the penchant of the Islamists, and indeed Muslims in general, to believe in a host of absurd conspiracy theories, in the pejorative sense of that term, see Daniel Pipes, *The Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996). However, the remarks above are not meant to imply that U.S. policies toward the

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

remembered that political and religious extremists of all varieties almost invariably portray themselves as victims of persecution, oppression, and aggression in order to rationalize and justify their own initiation of violence and aggression against real and imagined enemies. For example, Hitler and Stalin – the two biggest mass murderers of the twentieth century – both portrayed themselves and their nations, also not without some justification, as targets and victims of Western imperialism. Even the worst, most bellicose tyrants and fanatics often manage to delude themselves that they are the real victims, and Bin Ladin is no exception.

Second, Scheuer is on decidedly shaky ground when he argues that Bin Ladin is “a practical warrior, not an apocalyptic terrorist in search of Armageddon.”<sup>131</sup> As both David Cook and Timothy Furnish have documented, there is no doubt at all that apocalyptic, messianic, and millenarian themes are common within today’s Sunni jihadist circles, including those close to al-Qa`ida, just as they have always been intrinsic to the Shi`i tradition and have been systematically stoked since the late 1970s by certain Khomeini-linked and -inspired Islamist milieus.<sup>132</sup> For an example of such themes on al-Qa`ida-linked websites, note the March 9, 2003 article by Usama `Azzam, who made the following statement on the eve of the American invasion of Iraq:

Is there anyone who still doubts that we are approaching the end of the world? Does anyone think the hour is far? We are on the eve of the total dismantling that will be followed by our clear victory...After this war, which has no precedence in human history and in the fight between the community of

---

Muslim world have not often been foolish and counterproductive, or that Muslims do not have many legitimate complaints and grievances about those policies.

<sup>131</sup> Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris*, p. xviii.

<sup>132</sup> See David Cook, *Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 2005), especially chapters 6-9, which reveal, somewhat surprisingly, that such literature is filled with apocalyptic notions stemming from the Christian, Jewish, and secular Western as well as the Islamic traditions; and Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars: Islamic Mahdis, their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), especially chapters 4 and 6. The term *mahdi* (literally “rightly guided one”) applies above all to the prophesied redeemer of Islam who is destined to emerge and transform the world into a perfect Islamic society before the Day of Resurrection (*Yawm al-Qiyama*), at which point he will fight alongside the returned Jesus against the Dajjal (Antichrist or false messiah). The word does not appear first in the *Qur’an* itself, but rather in early collections of *ahadith* that are considered reliable. See W[ilferd] Madelung, “Al-Mahdi,” *EI2*, volume 5, pp. 1230-8.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

believers and the Devil and his followers, does anyone doubt that these are the days of the Mahdi?<sup>133</sup>

`Azzam then adds the following revealing remark: "I have no doubt that the leaders of the mujahidin of al-Qa`ida and the Taliban are the owners of the black banners who will assist the Mahdi."<sup>134</sup> In support of these apocalyptic notions, `Azzam cited the now famous work by Abu Qatada al-Filastini, the imprisoned "spiritual leader" of al-Qa`ida in Europe, *Ma`alim al-Ta`ifa al-Mansura (Signs of the Victorious Side)*. Nor was `Azzam alone in predicting imminent "end of the world" scenarios that would pave the way for the prophesied return of the Mahdi, notions which at that moment apparently caught the imagination of many young anti-Western Saudis. See, for example, the postings on the Muntada al-Jinn wa al-`Afarit internet forum, a section of which deals primarily with dreams and visions. In the words of the Saudi supervisor of this particular section:

These [apocalyptic] visions and their like, many of which were sent to me, propagate the destruction of this evil country [the United States] and the punishments, disasters, and dismantling that will occur there. This is the way Allah deals with oppressors...The punishment of this super oppressor is very close. We ask Allah to heal the hearts of the believers of its influence, and grant the Muslims all of its finance and equipment as booty.<sup>135</sup>

Indeed, such notions had become so widespread, along with the idea that Bin Ladin himself was the Mahdi, that al-Qa`ida's leaders felt compelled to openly criticize them, in part because they were afraid that overly optimistic expectations of Islam's looming final triumph might induce jihadist supporters not to take action and in part because Bin Ladin has never claimed to be the Mahdi and almost certainly does not believe that he is. Thus, in February 2003, on the website of the Markaz al-Dirasat wa al-Buhuth al-Islamiyya (Center for Islamic Studies and Research), a

---

<sup>133</sup> Usama `Azzam, "Are the Taliban and al-Qa`ida those who will Raise the Black Banners?," *al-Da`wa* website, March 9, 2003. Cited by Reuven Paz, "Global Jihad and the Sense of Crisis: Al-Qa`idah's Other Front," undated [but 2003] report, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies, p. 1, available at: [www.intelligence.org.il/g\\_j/rp\\_d\\_11\\_03.html](http://www.intelligence.org.il/g_j/rp_d_11_03.html).

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Muntada al-Jinn wa al-`Afarit website, available at [www.jazanvoice.net/vb/forumdisplay.php?s=09676bd441afa83467c79a96220906c1&forumid=32](http://www.jazanvoice.net/vb/forumdisplay.php?s=09676bd441afa83467c79a96220906c1&forumid=32). The name of the website means The Jinn [Spirits] and the Demons. Cited in Ibid., p. 2.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Saudi-based entity closely linked to al-Qa`ida, an anonymous author leveled an attack on such apocalyptic ideas, firstly by claiming that the *ahadith* concerning “the black banners that will appear in the East” are very weak, and secondly by advising would-be supporters to “support the jihad against Allah’s enemies rather than harm the jihad and the mujahidin with nonsensical ideas.”<sup>136</sup> Alas, this is an inordinately complex matter that can only be touched upon here, but suffice to say that Scheuer is as wrong to deny that there are any apocalyptic tendencies observable in the al-Qa`ida milieu as Peters is to argue that Bin Ladin and his cohorts are entirely apocalyptic.

Third, there is plenty of evidence indicating that the global jihadists are pursuing an expansionist imperialistic agenda, though the cleverer ones like Bin Ladin seek to divert attention from or otherwise disguise their aggressive and expansionist underlying designs by continually harping on their more reasonable and legitimate grievances in an effort both to rally support from the Muslim masses and foment divisions within “infidel” ranks in order to prevent the formation of a common anti-jihadist front.<sup>137</sup> However, even in his own public propaganda statements, Bin Ladin regularly juxtaposes seemingly rational and morally justifiable objectives with bizarre theological imperatives that can only be said to “make sense” within an Islamic cultural and historical context that has long since been superseded. Indeed, even the most restrained and *proximate* demands of al-Qa`ida and other global jihadist groups – the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from “Muslim lands,” the abandonment of all Western support for “apostate” Muslim regimes and Israel, the elimination of all “corrupting” Western cultural influences from the *dar al-islam*, and the end of Western “exploitation” of Muslim resources, above all the paying of artificially low prices for oil – are in large part non-negotiable and therefore virtually impossible to achieve, whatever their moral merits or demerits might be.

Worse still, when one considers jihadist *long-term* objectives, one has truly entered the realm of total unreality. These long-term goals can be divided into three categories: minimal, intermediate, and maximal. The *minimal* objective of the jihadists is to “liberate” all Muslim-majority

---

<sup>136</sup> “Allah has not assigned our umma to know the person of the Mahdi prior to his Appearance,” Markaz al-Dirasat wa al-Buhuth al-Islamiyya website, February 2003, previously available at: [www.conrado.net/\\_vit\\_inf/print.php?id=989&ty=pr&img=no](http://www.conrado.net/_vit_inf/print.php?id=989&ty=pr&img=no). Cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>137</sup> The more rational grievances expressed by Bin Ladin have been usefully categorized and summarized by Scheuer in *Imperial Hubris*, pp. 11-14.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

territories that are currently “occupied” by hostile “infidel” military forces, including Palestine, Iraq, Chechnya, Kashmir, southern Thailand, the southern Philippines, and “Eastern Turkestan,” which effectively brings them into direct contact with Israel, the United States, Russia, India, the Thai and Philippine governments, and China.<sup>138</sup> The *intermediate* long-term objective of the global jihadists is to recover all of the territory that was once under Muslim control but then subsequently lost to “infidel” powers, including Spain, Sicily and parts of southern Italy, a substantial portion of the Balkans, huge swaths of territory in Turkic Central Asia, all of northern India, and large segments of northwestern China, which adds Spain, Italy, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece to their list of enemies.<sup>139</sup> Their *maximal* long-term goal, of course, is the very same one promoted by both the “rightly-guided” Caliphs and several later Umayyad, `Abbasid, and Ottoman rulers – to spread the word of Allah to the “unbelievers” (*kuffar*), by force if necessary, and ultimately to Islamize every corner of the globe at the expense of both the *ahl al-kitab* and the “polytheists,” which in practice would nowadays amount to completely overturning and transforming the existing world order. As Phares sums it up, al-Qa`ida aims to humiliate and ultimately destroy America, the military and economic bastion of the *dar al-harb*, in order to lay the groundwork for Islam’s final triumph over the West and other non-Muslims.<sup>140</sup> It was this very decision to shift the target of jihadist terrorism away from the

---

<sup>138</sup> This was essentially the objective of `Abdallah `Azzam, who sought to form a jihadist “rapid deployment force” that could come to the aid of Muslims being subjected to “infidel” military control. See Gerges, *Far Enemy*, pp. 135-8. Compare also the key texts of `Azzam himself, such as *Ilhaq bi-ilqafila [Join the Caravan]* (London: Azzam, 2001); and idem, *Al-difa' `an ard al-muslimin, aham furud al-`ayn [The Defense of Muslim Lands: The Most Important of the Individual Duties]* (Jedda: Dar al-Mujtama', 1987). Both can also be found online, with partial English translations, on the Islamist Watch website: [www.islamistwatch.org](http://www.islamistwatch.org).

<sup>139</sup> For one illustrative example, note the Islamist obsession to recover control over al-Andalus, i.e., Spain. See Aristegui, *Yihad en España*, especially pp. 119-55. Compare Bin Laden’s remarks in his December 1994 letter to Saudi religious scholar `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Baz, head of the pro-regime “palace `ulama,” which he closes by asking Allah to help the *umma* re-establish *tawhid* (belief in the unity of God) in “stolen” Islamic lands such as Palestine and Spain. Cited in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 14.

<sup>140</sup> Phares, *Future Jihad*, pp. 134-5, 161-9. Compare al-Zawahiri, *Fursan*, part 11; and Bari Atwan, *Secret History of al-Qa`ida*, p. 222, who, on the basis of Muhammad Makkawi’s strategic treatise, notes that al-Qa`ida intends to bring down the U.S., just as it previously brought down the Soviet Union, after which an “ultimate, definitive military clash between a mighty Islamic army and the ‘nonbelievers,’ often mentioned by bin Laden, will result in the victory and *global dominance of the Caliphate*. This is, at any rate, al-Qa`ida’s dream.” Italics added.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

“near enemy” (*al-`adu al-qarib*), i.e., “apostate” Muslim regimes, and instead strike directly at the “far enemy” (*al-`adu al-ba`id*), the United States, that constituted Bin Ladin’s chief strategic innovation, one which has already had incalculable geopolitical implications.<sup>141</sup> Lest anyone doubt that this is the global jihadists’ ultimate objective, one might wish to consider the inflammatory, unequivocal remarks of the aforementioned Abu Qatada:

We must destroy Rome. The destruction must be carried out by sword. Those who will destroy Rome are already preparing the swords. Rome will not be conquered with the word but with the force of arms...Muslims’ target is the West. We will split Rome open.<sup>142</sup>

Equally explicit are two August 2002 articles penned by Sayf al-Din al-Ansari, which appeared in the al-Qa`ida-linked journal *Majallat al-Ansar* (*The Magazine of the Supporters*) and openly advocated the extermination of infidels by means of *jihad*. In one such article, he wrote the following:

Just as the law of extermination was applied to the infidel forces among the nations in previous days and no one could escape it, so it will be applied to the infidel forces in our day and no one will escape it. Namely, similar to the fate of the Thamud and `Ad peoples, so the American state, the Jewish state, and all other infidel countries will surely be destroyed.<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> For analyses of this crucial reorientation of jihadist objectives, based primarily upon internal jihadist sources, compare Gerges, *Far Enemy*, especially pp. 143-50; and al-Zayyat, *Road to Al Qaeda*, pp. 68-70.

<sup>142</sup> Cited by Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe*, p. 135. In this passage the term “Rome” refers not simply to the capital of Italy and the locale of the Papal States, but to Christendom as a whole, i.e., the West. Similar sentiments concerning the coming “conquest” (*fatah*) of the West appear frequently on jihadist websites.

<sup>143</sup> Sayf al-Din al-Ansari, “Wa yimhaq al-kafirin [And Exterminate the Infidels],” *Majallat al-Ansar* 16, August 10, 2002, pp. 4-8, cited by Jonathan D. Halevi, “Al-Qaeda’s Intellectual Legacy: New Radical Islamic Thinking Justifying the Genocide of Infidels,” *Jerusalem [Center for Public Affairs] Viewpoints* 508, December 1, 2003, electronic pp. 10-11. The `Ad and the Thamud were pagan Arab tribes that were totally destroyed by God because they both rejected the efforts of ancient Arabian prophets, respectively Hud (Hebrew `Eber) and Salih (Hebrew Shelah), to call them to abandon polytheism and embrace the one true God. Allusions to these stories can be found in the *Qur’an* 7:65-7, 11:58-9, and 26: 124-5, 142-3. Note also that the term *al-ansar* (the supporters) has a very precise and historically important meaning for Muslims, in that it was the name given to Muhammad’s earliest supporters in the town of Medina, in contradistinction to the earliest Meccan Muslims who emigrated with the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in 622, who were known as *al-muhajirun* (the émigrés).

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

In the second article, he claims that Allah has the power to exterminate the infidels directly, without using intermediaries, but that instead He has laid down that “the infidels’ extermination is part of Islamic law, which is operative until the Day of Judgment” and that its “principal element will be fulfilled only at the hands of the believers, meaning through *jihad*, which is also to be operative until the Day of Judgment.”<sup>144</sup> This is meant as a direct criticism of those Islamist scholars and organizations which argue that gradual, less violent approaches involving missionary work, education, and the provision of social services are nowadays the preferred methods for expanding the faith and ensuring the ultimate victory of Islam.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that even these ostensibly non-violent Islamist groups, such as the *Jam`iyyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Society of the Muslim Brothers, or Muslim Brotherhood) and *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami* (HT: Islamic Liberation Party), likewise intend to spread the faith and eventually raise the banner of Islam over the “infidel” world by means of a combination of *da`wa*, infiltration and penetration operations, demographic “reconquest,” and/or outright armed struggle (*jihad*).<sup>145</sup> See, for example, the illustrative remarks of the Muslim Brotherhood’s supposedly “moderate” spiritual guide, Yusuf al-Qaradhawi:

Islam will return once more to Europe as a conqueror and as a victorious power after it was expelled twice from the continent...I assume that next time the conquest will not be achieved by the sword but by preaching [*da`wa*] and spreading the ideology [of Islam]...The conquest of Rome and the expansion of Islam will reach all the areas where the sun shines and the moon appears [i.e., the entire world]...That will be the result of a planted seed and the beginning of the righteous Caliphate’s return...[The Islamic Caliphate] deserves to lead the umma to the plains of victory.<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>144</sup> Sayf al-Din al-Ansari, “Yi`adhibuhum Allah bi-`aydikum,” *Majallat al-Ansar* 16, August 24, 2002, pp. 4-9, cited in Halevy, “Al-Qaeda’s Intellectual Legacy,” p. 11.

<sup>145</sup> For a secret Muslim Brotherhood plan to gain influence and eventual supremacy in the West via stealth and subversion, see Sylvain Besson, *La conquête de l’Occident: Le projet secret des islamistes* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), especially chapters 1-2, 5-7. The actual document, entitled “The Project,” appears in French translation on pp. 193-205. For the universalist and frankly imperialistic objectives of HT, it is sufficient to visit their website, which among other items contains PDF files of numerous brochures put out by the group. See <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org>.

<sup>146</sup> Cited by Halevi, “Al-Qaeda’s Intellectual Legacy,” electronic p. 4.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Compare further the even more militaristic June 2003 remarks of Anjem Choudray, one of the leaders of the radical London-based group al-Muhajirun (The Émigrés), an offshoot of Hizb al-Tahrir:

One day the black flag of Islam will be flying over Downing Street. Lands will not be liberated by individuals, but by an army. Eventually there'll have to be a Muslim army. It's just a matter of time before it happens.<sup>147</sup>

How anyone can characterize such extreme views as “limited” in their focus and aims is beyond comprehension.

Indeed, Scheuer fails even to acknowledge, much less give sufficient weight to, al-Qa`ida's less-than-rational “expressive” motives for carrying out attacks, above all 1) its religiously-grounded obsession with cleansing the world of “apostates” and “infidels,” and 2) its burning desire to exact revenge against “Crusaders” and perfidious Jews for a host of proclaimed “crimes,” real or imagined, that these “servants of Satan” are supposed to have committed against innocent Muslims. Such atavistic or retribitional impulses are well-expressed by numerous al-Qa`ida-linked spokesmen. For example, in his book *Ayman al-Zawahiri* perfectly captures both sentiments. He advocates that the *mujahidin* inflict massive casualties on the enemy whenever possible, since this is supposedly the only language that the West understands, and also clearly reveals his thirst for revenge when he opines that the jihadist movement

promises destruction and ruin for the new Crusades against the lands of Islam. It is ready for revenge against the heads of the world's gathering of infidels, the United States, Russia, and Israel. It is anxious to seek retribution for the blood of the martyrs, the grief of the mothers, the deprivation of the

---

<sup>147</sup> Cited by Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe*, p. 171. Another al-Muhajirun member, Abu Yusuf, made the following alarming statement in April 2004: “I would to see the Mujahidin coming into London and killing thousands, whether with nuclear weapons or germ warfare. And if they need a safehouse, they can stay in mine.” See *ibid*. This is the very same group that organized demonstrations in Britain in early 2006, ostensibly to protest the Danish cartoons satirizing Muhammad, at which marchers carried signs with messages such as “Islam Will Dominate the World,” “Exterminate Those Who Slander Islam,” “Be Prepared for the Real Holocaust,” “Freedom Go to Hell,” “Europe is the Cancer, Islam is the Answer,” and “Europe You Will Pay, Your 9/11 is on Its Way!” Author's personal observation.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

orphans, the suffering of the detainees, and the sores of the tortured people throughout the land of Islam.<sup>148</sup>

Nor are al-Zawahiri's sentiments unique in jihadist circles. Sayf al-Din al-Ansari, in a book entitled *Ghazwa 11 Sibtimber (The September 11 Raid)*, claimed that the deaths of nearly 3,000 Americans in the attacks on New York and Washington, DC, was justified both in accordance with the principle of retaliation and because Islamic doctrine approves the destruction of enemy fortresses, even in circumstances where it may be impossible to distinguish between soldiers and civilians.<sup>149</sup> Still more radical are the views expressed in a series of public letters by al-Qa`ida spokesman Sulayman Abu Ghayth, a Kuwaiti *shaykh*, who argues that the number of American casualties resulting from the 9/11 attacks was not nearly high enough to balance the historical ledger. As he sees it, the *mujahidin* have a right to kill at least four million Americans (including one million children), displace eight million, and maim hundreds of thousands more, since this is approximately how many Muslim deaths, displacements, and injuries he calculates have been directly or indirectly attributable to anti-Islamic U.S. policies and actions.<sup>150</sup> Saudi scholar Nasir ibn Hamid al-Fahd, in a May 2003 *fatwa*, approved the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against the U.S., since a combination of military necessity and the law of retaliation supposedly gave Muslims the right to kill as many as ten million Americans.<sup>151</sup> Again, one would think that such blatant justifications and open calls for revenge might temper Scheuer's overemphasis on al-Qa`ida's rationality, but this is not the case. In that sense the attitudes of the "rationalists" are reminiscent of those observers in the 1930s who insisted, despite massive evidence to the contrary, that Hitler had pragmatic goals which could actually be satisfied rather than an irrational hatred of real and

---

<sup>148</sup> Al-Zawahiri, *Fursan*, part 11.

<sup>149</sup> Sayf al-Din al-Ansari, "Ghazwa 11 Sibtimbir. Kitab al-ansar li-muwajahat al-harb al-salibiyya," September 2002, pp. 10-11. In pre-Islamic Arabia, the noun of unity *ghazwa* (pl. *ghazawat*) referred to an "expedition, usually of limited scope, conducted with the aim of gaining plunder." However, after the triumph of Islam, it was used specifically to refer to Muhammad's expeditions against "infidels." See T. M. Johnstone, "Ghazw," *EI2*, volume 2, p. 1055.

<sup>150</sup> Sulayman Abu Ghayth, "In the Shade of the Lances: Why We Fight America," which first appeared on jihadist websites on June 2002. Portions of this text have since been translated into English and published in Ben N. Venzke, ed., *The Al-Qaeda Documents, Vol. 3* (Alexandria, VA: Tempest/IntelCenter, 2003), pp. 107-10.

<sup>151</sup> The actual text was formerly available at <http://www.al-fhd.com/rsayl/doc/rsayl.damar.doc>. It has been usefully cited and analyzed by Reuven Paz, "Yes to WMD: The first Islamist Fatwah on the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction," *PRISM Special Dispatches* 1: 1 (May 2003), pp. 4-7.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

imagined enemies, a passionate desire to exact revenge against them, and an outright will to exterminate them. It was precisely their failure to take Nazi ideological fanaticism seriously that led to misplaced efforts to appease the German chancellor.

Unfortunately, the “non-rationalist” interpreters have themselves only gotten things partially right. After all, it is a fairly short step between arguing that the jihadists’ basic worldview is not only archaic and anachronistic but delusional, which is essentially true, and concluding – wrongly – that this means that they are incapable of displaying any strategic rationality. This unwarranted leap is perhaps best epitomized by French Arabist Olivier Roy, who like Lee claims that al-Qa`ida “has no strategic vision” at all, and that “most of its targets have no military or strategic value.”<sup>152</sup> To say the least, this is an overstatement, even if one is willing to admit that Bin Ladin’s organization has carried out particular actions in part for ideologically-induced “expressive” reasons, such as a compulsion to smite “infidels” or obtain retribution, rather than for purely rational “strategic” reasons.

Bin Ladin’s ultimate aims, as noted above, are to unite the Muslim *umma*, restore the power and glory of the Caliphate, and secure the triumph of the *dar al-islam* over the *dar al-kufr*. He recognizes, however, that this objective cannot be achieved until a truly Islamic state is established in the heart of the Muslim world and until the power of the United States is undermined and destroyed, two objectives that are viewed as closely interrelated.<sup>153</sup> What, then, is al-Qa`ida’s basic strategy for accomplishing its ultimate objectives? Since at least the mid-1990s, its principal aim has been to precipitate a titanic “conflict of civilizations” between the Islamic world and the West, and in the process create a global Islamic insurgent movement that even the unmatched power and vast resources of America would be unable to cope with or quell.<sup>154</sup> In order to accomplish this preliminary aim, al-Qa`ida carried

---

<sup>152</sup> Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University, 2004), p. 294. Compare also pp. 55-6.

<sup>153</sup> See the extended discussion of al-Zawahiri, *Fursan*, part 11.

<sup>154</sup> For example, Bin Ladin has explicitly stated that his goal was to “move, incite and mobilize the umma” until such time as it reached a “revolutionary ignition point.” See, respectively, “Usama Bin Ladin’s Message to Iraq,” *Al-Jazira*, February 11, 2003; and “Bin Ladin Interviewed on Jihad Against US,” *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, November 27, 1996. Both of these quotes are conveniently cited in Blanchard, “Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology,” p. 6. Compare the remarks of Bari Atwan, *Secret History of al-Qa`ida*, p. 225: “Al-Qa`ida wishes to foment a ‘clash of civilizations,’ with Christian fundamentalism opposed to Islamic fundamentalism, resulting in an eventual all-out war between the ‘believers’ and the *kafir*.”

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

out a series of provocative attacks marked by increasing lethality, culminating on 9/11, that were intended to goad the United States into launching a massive attack on the Islamic world, which would only serve to confirm Bin Ladin's long-standing claims that the "Great Satan" and its allies were waging a war against Islam.<sup>155</sup> An incautious, brutal response by the U.S. military would in turn hopefully have the effect of arousing the increasingly angry Muslim masses from their slumber and compelling them at long last to answer al-Qa`ida's call to wage a "defensive *jihad*" against the invading "infidels," who could now be more plausibly seen as trying to militarily subjugate the *dar al-islam* and directly exploit its resources.

The beauty of this scheme, apart from its breathtaking simplicity, was that it provided the transnational jihadists with a virtual "win-win" situation. If the United States lashed out indiscriminately, on the one hand, or did not react forcefully at all, on the other, it would inadvertently hand a huge propaganda victory to al-Qa`ida. Only a measured, precisely targeted, and quietly lethal response might have foiled Bin Ladin's plan, since such a relatively restrained but highly efficacious middle course would have served to demonstrate American power and resolve without causing unnecessary civilian casualties, in the process further radicalizing the Muslim "street" and providing al-Qa`ida with new recruits. For several years the United States actually failed this test, in that it did not respond decisively or effectively to jihadist attacks, thereby repeatedly allowing al-Qa`ida to display its operational prowess and also serving as an inspiration both to jihadists and other anti-Western Muslims by mistakenly giving them the impression that America really was a weak, decadent "paper tiger" which had no stomach for fighting or taking casualties, just as Bin Ladin had been saying ever since the 1993 Somali debacle. After 9/11, however, by cracking down on anti-Muslim vigilante violence inside the U.S. and precisely targeting al-Qa`ida and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, America for a time deprived Bin Ladin of such an easy anticipated victory.<sup>156</sup> It was only later, when the U.S. military failed to seal off the retreat of the *mujahidin* at Tora Bora, thereby not dealing al-Qa`ida a knockout blow,<sup>157</sup> and when the Bush Administration embarked on its ill-conceived invasion and occupation of Iraq, that Bin Ladin was handed a golden opportunity to rally his

---

<sup>155</sup> See al-Zawahiri, *Fursan*, part 11. On this point, many analysts who otherwise disagree seem to concur.

<sup>156</sup> Phares, *Future Jihad*, pp. 166-8.

<sup>157</sup> For the factors involved in the U.S. failure to trap Bin Ladin's fighters at Tora Bora, a military blunder of tremendous import, see Philip Smucker, *Al Qaeda's Great Escape: The Military and the Media on Terror's Trail* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2004).



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

scattered, disillusioned fighters, recruit new generations of *mujahidin*, and more effectively tap and exploit Muslim popular anger.<sup>158</sup>

It has been argued above that al-Qa`ida has extremely utopian aims, rooted in “classical” Islamic juridical and political conceptions about the relations between the Islamic world and the non-Islamic world, that could only be achieved in the present era if some unanticipated combination of natural and human cataclysms brought about the collapse of the existing world order. However, this does not mean that Bin Ladin and his principal lieutenants are incapable of formulating particular strategic concepts in an effort to achieve those fundamentally unrealistic goals. In his recent assessment of global jihadist objectives, Thomas Hegghammer argues that there are “five principal categories of actors that shape contemporary global jihadist ideology” and, more narrowly, endeavor to define global jihadist strategy. The first is “represented by the leadership of the ‘old al-Qa`ida,’” i.e., Bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri, who communicate primarily through sound and visual recordings diffused on Arab television stations. According to Hegghammer,

The statements by Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri are often quite general in content, and their main purpose seems to be to convince and motivate believers to take up arms against the enemy. Their approximately 40 statements since the Autumn of 2001 have focused on the political reasons to fight the Crusaders. They rarely provide specific strategic or tactical advice, and hence their declarations are always subject to interpretation by other writers.<sup>159</sup>

This does not mean that they do not discuss specific strategic matters at all,<sup>160</sup> but that the primary responsibility for defining and clarifying

---

<sup>158</sup> On the disastrous impact of the invasion of Iraq on support for global jihadism, see, e.g., Benjamin and Simon, *Next Attack*, pp. xiv, 31-50; and Gerges, *Far Enemy*, pp. 251-76. There is no doubt that jihadist leaders see the U.S. invasion of Iraq as a golden opportunity to “bleed” the Crusaders and eventually erect an Islamic state in the historic heart of the *dar al-islam*. See Hegghammer, “Global Jihadism after the Iraq War,” pp. 17-24.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>160</sup> See, e.g., al-Zawahiri’s comments on the potential geostrategic impact should the Caucasus fall into the hands of local and global jihadists: “The liberation of the Caucasus would constitute a hotbed of jihad (or fundamentalism as the United States describes it) and that region would become the shelter of thousands of Muslim *mujahidin* from various parts of the Islamic world, particularly Arab parts. This poses a direct threat to the United States represented by the growing support for the jihadist movement everywhere in the Islamic world. If the Chechens and other Caucasian

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

global jihadist strategy falls to the other four categories, namely, pro-jihadist religious scholars (the *ulama al-jihad*), actual military and strategic thinkers linked to al-Qa`ida, members of other active militant organizations (including branches of al-Qa`ida), and what Hegghammer refers to as “grassroots radicals, i.e., the thousands of anonymous participants on radical Islamist discussion forums on the Internet.”<sup>161</sup>

In this context, there is no need to devote any attention to the exhortative and juridical materials produced by the jihadist *ulama*, most of whom have in any case since been arrested by the Saudi or European authorities, nor to focus on the voluminous materials produced by Islamist terrorist groups with their own agendas or by jihadist sympathizers who post all sorts of messages on jihadist forums and blogsites. Rather, what is perhaps most significant is that since 9/11, and especially since the Autumn of 2002, the number of texts produced by the third group above, which can be broadly characterized as “strategic studies” texts, has increased considerably. In particular, the online magazine *Majallat al-Ansar* and the website of the Markaz al-Dirasat wa al-Buhuth al-Islamiyya have provided forums for materials of this type. Unlike other jihadist materials, these strategic analyses tend to be more “secular in style, academic in their approach, and objective in their assessments.”<sup>162</sup> One indication of this is that the authors of some of these works have evidently examined and analyzed Western military writings, as the example of Sayf al-Ansar’s article on “Fourth Generation Warfare” indicates.<sup>163</sup> Hence it cannot be denied that certain al-Qa`ida military leaders, such as Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi and the recently captured Abu Mus`ab al-Suri, do possess a relatively clear strategic vision, one that is informed by years of operational experience.

---

mujahidin reach the shores of the oil-rich Caspian Sea, the only thing that will separate them from Afghanistan will be the neutral state of Turkmenistan. This will form a mujahid Islamic belt to the south of Russia that will be connected in the east to Pakistan, which is brimming with mujahidin movements in Kashmir. The belt will be linked to the south with Iran and Turkey that are sympathetic to the Muslims of Central Asia. This will break the cordon that is struck around the Muslim Caucasus and allow it to communicate with the Islamic world in general, but particularly with the mujahidin movement.” See *Fursan*, part 7.

<sup>161</sup> Hegghammer, “Global Jihadism after the Iraq War,” pp. 16-17. For the *fatawa* of the radical *ulama*, see the new book by Shmuel Bar, *Warrant for Terror: The Fatwas of Radical Islam and the Duty to Jihad* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 2006).

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>163</sup> Sayf al-Ansar, “Hurub al-jil al-rabi,” *Majallat al-Ansar* 2, January 28, 2002). Compare also Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, “Amrika wa Mabadi’ al-Harb: Bayna al-Nazariyya ila al-Tatbiq [“America and the Principles of War: From Theory to Practice],” *Majallat al-Ansar* 24, January 2, 2003.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

However, the extent to which al-Qa`ida engages in coherent strategic thinking should not be exaggerated. Three examples should suffice to demonstrate that limitations in al-Qa`ida's strategic thinking.<sup>164</sup> First, there is a 113-page strategic treatise written by Abu Bakr Naji, *Idarat al-Tawahhush (The Management of Savagery)*, which was produced by the aforementioned Markaz and posted in March 2005 on the al-Ikhlās online forum by someone using the moniker "Irhabi3," i.e., "Terrorist 3." The jihadist strategic plan outlined by Naji is extremely schematic, so much so that one wonders how seriously to take it. He begins by hypothesizing a three-phase strategy. In the first phase, the disruption and exhaustion phase, the jihadists will bleed "infidel" forces and rally Muslim youth by means of exemplary targeting (such as the 2002 Bali bombing); in the second, the "management of savagery" phase, they will establish zones under their own control, where they can establish authentically Islamic institutions and impose the *shari`a*; and in the third, the empowerment phase, they will extend the above phases and link up various jihadist zones of control.<sup>165</sup> Among the targeting objectives Naji lists are tourist resorts, "Crusader" banks, and oil installations (in order to force the enemy to expend resources to raise security for refineries, pipelines, and shipping), and he especially advocates striking hard, since a superior enemy can only be defeated by means of economic and military attrition.

Second, in another text posted on the internet, "Al-Qa`ida's Strategy to the Year 2020," Muhammad Ibrahim Makkawi – a pseudonym used by

---

<sup>164</sup> Three unresolved questions concerning the texts cited below are 1) whether they amount to different versions of the same basic strategy, which may well be the case; 2) whether they constitute hyper-rationalist *post-facto* analyses of what has already occurred that are designed to retrospectively display al-Qa`ida's supposed "prescience," together with future optimistic prognostications; and 3) the extent to which they can be said to reflect al-Qa`ida's "official" strategy. The fact that they all surfaced around the time period suggests that there was an effort by the group to make its strategic intentions known.

<sup>165</sup> Compare the brief analyses by Stephen Ulph, "New Online Book Lays Out al-Qaeda's Military Strategy," *Terrorism Focus* [Jamestown Foundation] 2:6 (March 17, 2005), pp. 4-6; Bruce Tefft, "Al-Qa`ida Book on Managing Savagery," *Israel Alert*, March 8, 2005; and Jarrett M. Brachman and William F. McCants, "Stealing Al-Qa`ida's Playbook," *CTC [West Point Counterterrorism Center] Report*, February 2006, pp. 6-10. This scheme echoes traditional guerrilla warfare strategies, which likewise involve weakening the enemy and rallying the masses, gradually establishing "liberated zones," and then expanding those zones at the enemy's expense until such time as the latter is fatally weakened.. In short, this is little more than an Islamic version of the classic "oil spot" strategy.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

Sayf al-Adl – outlined a similar five-phase strategy.<sup>166</sup> In the first phase, the goal was to induce the “ponderous American elephant” to invade Muslim lands. In the second phase, this invasion would in turn anger and galvanize the resistance of the *umma*, in the process providing more jihadist recruits. In the third, the conflict with the Crusaders would be expanded throughout the region, thereby trapping and bleeding U.S. forces within a “*jihad* triangle of horror” running through Afghanistan, currently neutral Iran and southern Iraq, then into southern Turkey, southern Lebanon, and Syria. In the fourth phase, the movement would be expanded globally, with the result that independent jihadist cells would spring up autonomously, including in the West. In the fifth and phase, the U.S. will become so overextended militarily that its economy will collapse, paving the way for the final victory of the *mujahidin* over the *dar al-kufr*.

Third, in a 2005 book by journalist Fu`ad Husayn, which is entitled *Al-Zarqawi, al-jil al-thani li-al-Qa`ida (Al-Zarqawi: Al-Qa`ida's Second Generation)*, the author purports to describe a strategy for victory that has been carefully outlined by al-Qa`ida's own leaders.<sup>167</sup> This particular scheme has seven rather than three phases, and is thus even more elaborate – and arguably more of an exercise in wishful thinking – than Naji's. The first is the “awakening” stage from 2000 to 2003, during which the *umma* will be awakened from its state of hibernation by the jihadist precipitation of an American invasion of the Muslim world. The second is the “eye-opening” stage from 2003 to 2006, during which the U.S. will open the eyes of the believers by occupying Muslim lands and thence be engaged directly by the *mujahidin* on Muslim soil. The third is the “standing upright” stage from 2007-2010, during which the jihadist vanguard and the *umma* will develop the capacity to take effective offensive action, especially in the al-Sham region (Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan). The fourth is the “recuperation of power” stage from 2010 to 2013, during which apostate Muslim regimes will be overthrown by means of direct combat, thereby accelerating the deterioration of U.S. power and influence in the region. The fifth is the “declaration” and establishment of an Islamic state stage from 2013 to 2016, during which the Caliphate will be restored even as American and European power

---

<sup>166</sup> See the analysis in Bari Atwan, *Secret History of al-Qa`ida*, pp. 221-2. Compare al-Baddarin, “Al-Qa`ida Drew Up Working Strategy,” *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, March 11, 2005.

<sup>167</sup> See Husayn, *Al-Zarqawi*, parts 14-15. This analysis may well represent a synthesis of the two texts cited directly above, as opposed to being based on other, unspecified jihadist sources. Unfortunately, the CETIS team was unable to obtain a copy of the actual book, given its relative scarcity in Western libraries.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

declines in relation to that of China, India, and the Islamic world. The sixth is the “all-out confrontation” stage from 2017 to 2020, during which there will be total war between the *dar al-islam* and the *dar al-kufr* and the creation of a new balance of power. The seventh and last is the “final victory” stage after 2020, during which the unbelievers will suffer complete defeat at the hands of the Islamic *umma*. Interestingly, from the second stage on, the *mujahidin* plan to “burn” Arab oil in order to deprive the West of vital revenues and to wage a campaign of electronic *jihad*, i.e., cyber-sabotage, against the U.S. economy. More bizarrely, in the fourth stage they plan to gradually reinstitute the gold standard in order to devalue Western currency, an idea first proposed by Hizb al-Tahrir. What particularly strikes the outside observer is not only the overly schematic and absurdly optimistic “strategy” outlined here, but also the apparent reliance on a vaguely numerological system to determine the length of the successive stages. In short, beyond the most rudimentary and seemingly unrealistic projections and prognostications, one finds precious little coherent strategic thinking in these two works.<sup>168</sup>

Nevertheless, al-Qa`ida has repeatedly shown itself to be devastatingly effective on the operational and “tactical” levels, irrespective of whether its leaders always display a coherent and realistic “strategic” vision. As is now well-known, the principal modus operandi employed by al-Qa`ida, especially in the major attacks officially authorized by Bin Ladin and his Majlis al-Shura, is characterized by thorough, time-consuming, and at times meticulous planning, the careful surveillance of prospective targets, and the gradual insertion of operatives into the target zone, followed by the sudden execution of near simultaneous attacks by well-prepared “martyrs” (*shuhada*), i.e., suicide terrorists. These salutary traits were clearly displayed in, among other actions, the destructive 1998 attacks on the two U.S. embassies in Africa, the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*, and the “planes operation” on 9/11, and they have since been adopted by other jihadist organizations that are affiliated with or directly inspired by al-Qa`ida, e.g., by Jemaah Islamiyah in its horrific 2002 and 2005 attacks on areas frequented by tourists in Bali. On the operational level, al-Qa`ida generally displays a serious, realistic, and fundamentally rational approach. This is illustrated by a series of articles authored by Sayf al-Adl, who was appointed head of al-Qa`ida’s military committee after the death of Muhammad Atif, that appeared during 2004 in *Mu`askar al-Battar*, an important but now defunct al-Qa`ida military

---

<sup>168</sup> Ironically, because of the Bush Administration’s terrible mistakes in Iraq, the initial phases of these projected schemes seem to be developing according to jihadist projections.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

and operations journal.<sup>169</sup> In one such article, al-Adl urged the *mujahidin* to develop a “creative” and “flexible” attack plan marked by the following characteristics:

1. A plan should be reasonable. In other words, alternatives should be examined properly and weighed carefully so that the best of them can be chosen.
2. There should be a major – specific – target and other secondary targets for the operation.
3. The plan should be realistic.
4. It should be coherent, tight, and accurate. There should be no gaps in it. Rather, each part of the plan should complement the other part. It should appear to the enemy as a connected sequence of events.
5. It should be simple. In other words, every member [of the operational cell] should easily understand it and be able to implement it without difficulty.<sup>170</sup>

Such an approach is unfortunately typical of the sound, realistic (para)military thinking that permeates al-Qa`ida's operational and tactical planning. Therefore, no matter how bizarre and absurd the maximal objectives of the global jihadists may in fact be, it would be a terrible mistake to underestimate their undeniably effective operational methods and capabilities.

Indeed, it is precisely this combination of 1) delusional, utopian, and non-negotiable goals, which ultimately derive from a theologically-based and fanatical “fantasy ideology,” and 2) a ruthless operational efficiency capable of causing tremendous damage, that makes al-Qa`ida such a dangerous and formidable adversary. If the group actually had rational, limited, negotiable aims, as Scheuer insists, it would be vastly preferable.<sup>171</sup> In that case, compromises could be made by both sides, and it might well be possible to come to some sort of acceptable

---

<sup>169</sup> Some of his analyses have been conveniently quoted verbatim in Micheal Scheuer, “Assessing London and Sharm al-Sheikh: The Role of Internet Intelligence and Urban Warfare Planning,” *Terrorism Focus* 2:15 (August 15, 2005), pp. 6-8. A total of 22 issues of *Mu`askar al-Battar* were produced.

<sup>170</sup> Sayf al-Adl, “Planning Special Operations,” *Mu`askar al-Battar*, September 13, 2004.

<sup>171</sup> Compare Harris, “Al Qaeda's Fantasy Ideology,” p. 33. Even Bari Atwan, whose portrayal of Bin Ladin and his group is relatively sympathetic, is forced to admit that “the prospect of opening negotiations with al-Qa`ida seems remote indeed...[although] this notion should not be completely ruled out...The problem, of course, is that al-Qa`ida's demands are global...” See *Secret History of al-Qa`ida*, p. 234.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

agreement or settlement that would serve to limit the ongoing campaign of jihadist violence that is nowadays being incited and partially organized and executed by Bin Ladin. No serious observer can honestly believe, however, that even if the United States and its allies suddenly acceded to all of Bin Ladin's proximate and relatively limited but still expansive demands, that the *mujahidin* affiliated with al-Qa`ida and the other Islamist terrorist groups would then be willing to lay down their arms, say "thank you," and initiate peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with the *dar al-kufr*.<sup>172</sup> Such a naive illusion, which completely ignores their underlying religious intolerance and fanaticism, can scarcely be reconciled with the ongoing flood of utterly uncompromising statements that Bin Ladin and other jihadist spokesmen have made over the years, above all in Arabic-language materials that most Westerners cannot read. Yet even in his December 1998 interview for al-Jazira, Bin Ladin made the following revealing statement: "Every Muslim, from the moment they realize the distinction in their hearts, hates Americans, hates Jews, and hates Christians. That is part of our belief and our religion." Or elsewhere in that same interview, when he refers to non-Muslims as mankind's "devils and demons" and boasts that "we are continuing on this path [of *jihad*] until we meet God Almighty."<sup>173</sup> Nor is his meaning any less clear in another interview for al-Jazira, this one dating from October 21, 2001, when he says that the "disbelieving fornicators" may choose whether or not to fight Muslims, but the latter have no choice but to fight everyone in the "ranks of the Jews."<sup>174</sup> Needless to say, when the only alternatives that presently remain open to Western "infidels" are capitulating and converting to a strict, puritanical version of Islam, on the one hand, or fighting to defend the values, interests, and territories of Western civilization, on the other, there is absolutely no choice but to fight, and to fight ruthlessly and effectively. This, in turn, requires that we understand the true nature of our enemy, properly interpret his intentions and objectives, and take appropriate counteractions. Up until now, governments in the West have generally failed on all three counts.

In the final analysis, there is one seemingly insurmountable difficulty that faces any state or society which is confronted by hostile, violence-

---

<sup>172</sup> Bin Ladin occasionally gives the impression that he is reasonable and would stop attacking "unbelievers" if only they would cease and desist. In his October 21, 2001 interview for al-Jazira, e.g., he said "if our violators stop violating us, there is a way out." Cited in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 126. This also partially explains his occasional offers of "truces" to the West in his speeches.

<sup>173</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 92.

<sup>174</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 128.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Evolution and Jihadist Strategy*

prone religious extremists: their stubborn maintenance of faith that their agendas and actions are “divinely-sanctioned,” even in the face of looming defeat and disaster. This is because when things are going their way, they attribute all of their good fortune to the support and will of God, but when things cease going their way, they rarely draw the equally logical but opposing conclusion – that God, in His infinite wisdom, has decided to withdraw that favor because they have sinned or are otherwise no longer worthy of it. On the contrary, they almost invariably conclude that God is increasing their suffering and misfortune precisely in order to test their faith, and then respond by renewing and redoubling their efforts to achieve their goals. In short, to the extent that they are absolutely convinced that God is on their side and that the enemy is inherently evil and ungodly, they are unusually hard to deter or permanently undermine the morale of.



# CHAPTER FOUR:

## EXPLORING HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS LINKS TO CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

### RELIGIOUS REFERENTS FOR ATTACKS ON CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE\*

One of the first places to look for influences on al-Qa`ida's decisionmaking more generally, and target selection with regards to critical infrastructure in particular, is Islamic religious sources, primarily the basic texts – the *Qur'an* and the collections of reports on Muhammad's purported words and deeds, i.e., the *hadith* (pl., *ahadith*) – as interpreted by jihadists. The relevance of historical religious texts for the operations and tactics of al-Qa`ida today might at first seem rather tenuous; after all, even terrorist groups professing the most archaic and abstruse ideologies rarely forego the strategic efficacy of modern tactics and technology. Yet in the case of the jihadists, it is critical to analyze Islam's original sources since, unlike more mainstream and more traditionalist Islamic doctrines, jihadist thinkers promote opening the “doors of *ijtihad*”<sup>175</sup> by returning almost exclusively to the *Qur'an* and *ahadith* as arbiters of the precepts of Islam.<sup>176</sup> Most jihadists believe that

---

\* This section was prepared by Gary A. Ackerman.

<sup>175</sup> *Ijtihad* can loosely be described as Islamic juridical reasoning. Around the 10th century, Islamic jurists declared that the “gates of *ijtihad* were closed,” meaning that all important legal questions in Islam had been decided, and all future Muslims could do was to emulate learned religious leaders (the *ulema*). Jihadists, in contrast, (represented by ideologues such as Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Maulana Maududi) reject this view (and over a millennium of Islamic thought) and believe that it is possible to rely on their own interpretations of the *Qur'an* and *ahadith* to find the truth by asserting that *ijtihad* is not necessary where the meaning of the original text is clear. See Mary R. Habeck. *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*. New Haven: Yale University, 2006), pp. 10-13.

<sup>176</sup> They also follow certain scholars, especially the *salaf* (“forefathers” or “ancestors”) who collected the *ahadith*, but do so very selectively. See *ibid.*, p. 43.

## *Historical and Religious Links to Critical Infrastructure*

all they need to know at all times – including in the realms of military strategy and tactics<sup>177</sup> – is divinely ordained in Qur’anic revelations and embodied in the *sunna* (customary practices) of Muhammad. Hence for them, “any action associated with jihad – when to fight, how to fight, what sort of treaties to conclude with the enemy – must find some support from the texts.”<sup>178</sup> This makes it a necessity to examine the extent to which the original precepts of Islam – as they appear in the *Qur’an* and *ahadith* and have been interpreted by the jihadists – provide al-Qa`ida with incentives, justifications, or possibly even constraints on targeting critical infrastructure.

Salafist movements in Egypt, Wahhabi movements from the Arabian Peninsula, and even Sufi movements have influenced al-Qa`ida’s messianic and apocalyptic theology and ideology.<sup>179</sup> Specifically, al-Qa`ida’s theology and ideology are rooted in these movements’ belief that Islam needs renewal through a return to the principles and practices of early Islam. At the most basic level, al-Qa`ida’s leaders believe that Islam is locked in an eternal struggle with the evil forces of *jahiliyya* (“ignorance” or “barbarism”), which is presently represented by the West and most egregiously by the United States.<sup>180</sup> By characterizing the current status of Muslims as oppressed and under attack by, variously, the Judeo-Christian world, modernization, and the Muslim world’s own “unbeliever” and “apostate” rulers, the jihadists in groups like al-Qa`ida promote the carrying out of a violent, religiously-sanctioned *jihad*

---

<sup>177</sup> Indeed, the conduct of war (and particularly of *jihad*) has been a prevalent theme in Islamic writings. To cite but a few prominent examples, see the treatises of `Abd al-Rahman Awza`i (d. 774) and Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 804), as described in Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam: A Reader* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner, 1996), p. 3; and the 14<sup>th</sup>-century classic, *Tafrij al-qurub fi tadbir al-hurub* [*Dispelling Fears in the Management of Wars*] by `Umar ibn Ibrahim al-Awasi al-Ansari, which deals with such issues as cavalry tactics, infantry deployments, espionage, and selection of encampments (see Youssef H. Aboul-Enein and Sherifa Zuhur, *Islamic Rulings on Warfare* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2004), p.2.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>179</sup> Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2005).

<sup>180</sup> These ideas have been expounded upon at length in the previous chapter and are reiterated only insofar as they bear on the following discussion.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

against their perceived oppressors.<sup>181</sup> By appealing to Islamist thinkers like Mawlana Mawdudi, Hasan al-Banna, and Sayyid Qutub, al-Qa`ida's ideologues justify their way around several religious obstacles presented by traditional interpretations of Islamic law (the *shari`a*). For instance, al-Qa`ida characterizes the current *jihad* against the West as “defensive” rather than “offensive,” which arguably allows the group's members a greater latitude in terms of recruitment and tactics. Indeed, jihadists – including the supporters of al-Qa`ida – often cite the following verse from the Sura al-Baqara (The Cow): “and fight in the way of God those who will fight you, but transgress not, for God does not like the transgressors” (2:191) as a basis for their actions, but neglect to address the latter half of the verse, from which early Islamic scholars inferred the Islamic concept of “just war.”<sup>182</sup> They also draw a marked distinction between the *dar-al-Islam* (Abode of Islam) and the *dar-al-harb* (Abode of War, a reference to the non-Islamic world), treating the latter and all it contains with contempt.<sup>183</sup> As we shall see, within al-Qa`ida's milieu, not only theology and ideology but also goals, strategy, and tactics are derived in part from carefully selected words and actions of the Prophet, his companions, and his immediate successors.

One can never be absolutely certain which religious referents al-Qa`ida's ideologues will use to guide or justify any particular action. The allusion to the conquest of Ta`if cited in the following section illustrates just how creative the extremists can be when referencing their sacred texts. Yet even without claiming any special insights into the particular religio-historical analogies flitting inside the heads of al-Qa`ida's operational chiefs, it is possible to discuss several elements within sacred Islamic texts and religious thinking that might influence their targeting decisions vis-à-vis critical infrastructure.

First, it should be noted that jihadists view Allah as “the true owner of all property, and man is allowed to use it only when he does so in an

---

<sup>181</sup> An in-depth discussion of Islamist ideology is beyond the scope of this study; therefore, only those aspects most relevant to the current discussion are presented. For a general introduction to these topics, compare Habeck, *Knowing Thy Enemy*; Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam*; Roy, *Globalized Islam*; Gerges, *Far Enemy*; and Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder* (Berkeley: University of California, 2002).

<sup>182</sup> Aboul-Enein and Zuhur, *Islamic Rulings on Warfare*, p. 8.

<sup>183</sup> The ultimate goal, of course, is to bring the entire world within the fold of the *dar-al-Islam*, after which a new and peaceful global *umma* (Islamic community) can be established in which everyone will accede to the will of Allah.

## *Historical and Religious Links to Critical Infrastructure*

Islamically correct way.”<sup>184</sup> There is therefore no inherent respect for private or state property if the erstwhile owners are seen to be acting un-Islamically. Furthermore, verses can be found in the *Qur’an* that specifically allude to human-built spaces in the context of death or violence. These include Sura 2:190, which prescribes that under certain circumstances (namely, when acting in self-defense), the forces of Islam are even allowed to enter the most holy of places to fight their enemies – “Kill them wherever you find them and turn them out from where they have turned you out, for *fitna* is worse than killing, but do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there. But if they fight you, kill them. Such is the reward of the unbelievers.”<sup>185</sup> Even more telling is the following verse from the Sura al-Nisa’ (The Women): “Wherever you are, death will find you out. Even if you are in towers built up strong and high” (4:78). While Qur’anic verses like these may be interpreted by the Islamic mainstream in a way which bears no connection at all to critical infrastructure, it is not difficult to see how the jihadists of al-Qa`ida could find in such verses either a prescription, or at the very least a justification, for attacking their enemies’ societal edifices, which in modern times could easily be equated with the very systems and assets we conceive of as critical infrastructure.

As we have seen above, however, Islamic tradition does place some limits on behavior in war. One source of these restrictions is found in the exhortations of Abu Bakr, the first Caliph and Muhammad’s immediate successor, to a Muslim army setting off to war:

I advise you ten things: Do not kill women or children or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place. Do not slaughter sheep or camels except for food. Do not burn bees and do not scatter them. Do not steal from the booty, and do not be cowardly.<sup>186</sup>

However, this statement of Abu Bakr is arguably at variance with the actual practice of the Prophet Muhammad, who in hadith 4324<sup>187</sup> is said

---

<sup>184</sup> Habeck, *Knowing Thy Enemy*, p. 76.

<sup>185</sup> Translation found in Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York: Oxford University, 1999), p. 58.

<sup>186</sup> *Malik’s Muwatta, Book 21: Jihad, Section 3: Prohibition against Killing Women and Children in Military Expeditions, Number 21.3.10*. Translated by `A`isha `Abd al-Rahman al-Tarjumana and Ya`qub Johnson, available at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/muwatta/021.mmt.html>.

<sup>187</sup> *Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Jihad wa al-Siyar [The Book of Jihad and Expedition]*, book 19.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

(by the authority of `Abdallah ibn `Umar) to have ordered the date-palms of the Banu Nadir to be burnt and cut. At the time, fruit-bearing trees were sources of both food and shade in the desert, and could thus be construed as the contemporaneous version of critical infrastructure. Rudolph Peters notes that these actions were justified in this instance only because the date-palms in question were being used as protection during battle and were not a source of sustenance for the enemy.<sup>188</sup> Other scholars bring up the arguments that either Muhammad's order applied only to the specific circumstances of the Banu Nadir, or that Abu Bakr would never have countermanded Muhammad, and therefore that Muhammad's policy had been abrogated at a later date.<sup>189</sup> More generally, there is a divergence of opinion amongst the different schools of Islam about exactly what kinds of damage can be inflicted on an enemy's property (including buildings, cattle, and crops).<sup>190</sup> Al-Qa`ida and other jihadists, who in any event have a proclivity for both interpreting the scriptures so as to allow them as much latitude of action as possible and deferring to the "original" practices of Muhammad, can exploit this difference of opinion to negate the aforementioned restrictions on military conduct, especially as these pertain to critical infrastructure. In fact, they may even derive from passages like hadith 4324 the idea that they are being divinely guided towards considering critical infrastructure targets.

Moreover, al-Qa`ida's leaders subscribe to the doctrine of retaliation in kind,<sup>191</sup> believing that they are justified in "meet[ing] an action with an action: killing with killing, taking prisoners with taking prisoners, and *causing wreckage and destruction with causing wreckage and destruction*"<sup>192</sup> [emphasis added]. At the same time, they perceive the

---

<sup>188</sup> Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam*, pp. 172-3.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., pp 36-7.

<sup>190</sup> Peters (ibid., pp. 36-37) describes the situation as follows: "Malik allowed the felling of trees, the picking of fruits and the demolishing of buildings, but not the slaughter of cattle and the burning of date-palms. Awza'i disapproved of the felling of fruit-trees and the demolishing of buildings, regardless of whether the buildings in question were churches or not. According to Shafi'i, dwellings and trees may be burnt as long as the enemy have (*sic*) the disposal of fortresses. When that is not the case, he considers it reprehensible to demolish buildings and to fell trees."

<sup>191</sup> `Usama bin Muhammad ibn Ladin, "A Message to the American People," trans. Jihad Unspun, (October 7, 2002).

<http://www.jihadunspun.com/BinLadensNetwork/statements/amta.html>.

<sup>192</sup> Safir ibn `Abd al-Rahman al-Hawali, "A Statement to the Umma Concerning the Recent Events."

<http://www.islamicawakening.com/viewarticle.php?articleID=720&pageID=40&pageID=41&>.

## *Historical and Religious Links to Critical Infrastructure*

West as primarily responsible for the Islamic world's economic woes (through colonization and neo-imperialism), and specifically for the destruction of particular infrastructural targets (such as occurred in Iraq in both the first and second Gulf Wars and during the intervening years of sanctions). It is therefore likely that they will continue to invoke the doctrine of retaliation in kind and – as evinced by al-Qa`ida spokesman Sulayman Abu Ghayth<sup>193</sup> and discussed previously - seek to exact retribution for the damage they believe the West has caused the Islamic world.<sup>194</sup> Insofar as they believe that the United States is at fault for harming Muslim societal and economic infrastructure, this may provide an incentive for them to attack their perceived American equivalents.

There are also Islamic religious ideas that appertain to specific critical infrastructure sectors. For example, some Islamic writers dealing with military practice are of the opinion that it is not permissible to attack ambulances, stretchers, medical orderlies, and the like.<sup>195</sup> This might suggest an aversion for launching an attack specifically on the public health or emergency services sectors, although it is doubtful whether jihadists share the views of these writers, as can be seen from the recent attacks on such facilities in Iraq.<sup>196</sup>

Something that the *Qur'an* speaks especially loudly against is the practice of usury<sup>197</sup> and, indeed, this is one of the crimes that al-Qa`ida and Bin Ladin have charged the Sa`udi royal family and the United States with,<sup>198</sup> often tying these statements to conspiracies involving international Jewry.<sup>199</sup> Al-Qa`ida and its supporters have projected the opprobrium reserved for usurers to Western financial institutions in

---

<sup>193</sup> “We have not reached parity with them. We have the right to kill four million Americans – two million of them children – and to exile twice as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands...,” Sulayman Abu Ghayth, *In the Shadow of the Lances*, cited by IntelCenter.com, June 2002, <http://www.intelcenter.com/alqaedathreat/excerpts.html>.

<sup>194</sup> Indeed, this is the justification many jihadists give for apparently ignoring Islamic strictures on killing women and children, i.e., they state that this does not apply if one is retaliating for harm done to Muslim women and children.

<sup>195</sup> Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam*, p. 146.

<sup>196</sup> JTJ bombed a hospital on 6/24/2004, and on 6/26,2005 al-Qa`ida in Iraq conducted a suicide bombing of a hospital at a police station. See: Critical Infrastructure Terrorist Attack Database; Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism - Terrorism Knowledge Base.

<sup>197</sup> See, for example, *Qur'an* 2:275, 2:276, and 3:13.

<sup>198</sup> `Usama bin Muhammad ibn Ladin, “Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places,” *The Idler* 3:165, September 13, 2001.

<sup>199</sup> “Statement by al-Qa`ida,” *The Observer*, November 24, 2002.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

general. In fact, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, Safir ibn `Abd al-Rahman al-Hawali, a Saudi cleric who is a supporter of Bin Ladin, referred to the World Trade Center as “that center of usury.”<sup>200</sup> Another telling example of the aversion to such institutions can be found in a website testament to an al-Qa`ida martyr:

The year before his martyrdom, Suraqah decided to make Hajj [the pilgrimage to Mecca] and up to this point, this was the trip that had the most impact on him. ... There he saw the ignorance of the Muslims... He saw their innovations and Shirk [associating others with God] when performing the Hajj. He saw outside the Sacred Mosque of Makkah, the interest-based banks in the very same land which 1400 years ago was purified from Shirk by the first group of Muslims led by the Prophet [...] His blood boiled about how this sacrifice, purchased for the Ummah by the sweat and blood of thre Companions [of Muhammad] had been affronted by the establishment of interest-based institutions everywhere. This consolidated his commitment to this path.<sup>201</sup>

Since interest-charging Western banks, stock markets, and other financial institutions are regarded by most jihadists as inherently evil enterprises, elements of the Banking and Finance sector represent especially attractive targets for al-Qa`ida.

The above religious references illustrate some of the ways in which the religious aspects of the sacred Islamic texts might inspire modern jihadists to attack critical infrastructure. Yet the Islamic world, from its very beginnings, has placed almost as much emphasis on history as on religion.<sup>202</sup> It is therefore advisable to consider potential lessons relating to infrastructural targets that could conceivably be drawn from the 1400 years of Islamic military history.

---

<sup>200</sup> al-Hawali, “Statement to the Ummah.”

<sup>201</sup> “Azzam.com correspondent Suraqah al-Andalusi, killed by cluster bomb in Battle for Tora Bora 14 December 2001 at 28 years,” p.10.

[http://www.zawaj.com/azzam/suraqah\\_alandalusi.html#brother](http://www.zawaj.com/azzam/suraqah_alandalusi.html#brother).

<sup>202</sup> Indeed, religion and history are deeply intertwined in Islam, beginning with the fact that much of the *Qur`an* and *ahadith* relate to historical events in the life of Muhammad.

## *Historical and Religious Links to Critical Infrastructure*

### **ISLAMIC HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS FOR ATTACKS ON CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE\***

Just as a particular selection of religious referents serve to inform al-Qa`ida's religious, political, and social philosophies and prescriptions, so too do historical precedents in Islamic warfare and *jihad* from the era of the Prophet, the immediate post-Muhammad centuries, and even more modern experiences. These seminal historical events provide some of the tactical and strategic rationale behind al-Qa`ida's efforts to attack critical infrastructure.

This is not to say, necessarily, that al-Qa`ida will behave as other Arabs and Muslims have in the past. It is to say, however, that historical referents are important in Arab and Muslim culture and that various al-Qa`ida planners of today might derive inspiration (whether positive or negative) from past Islamic methods of warfare and rebellion. As Mary Habeck points out, even jihadists' theoretical explanations for Islam's failure to restore the Caliphate are based largely on a return to ancient theological-ideological roots and a view of "history as a series of repetitious events" in which the struggle against the Pharaoh, the Mongol conquest, and especially the Crusades are "templates" upon which the present war against the West is laid out and interpreted.<sup>203</sup>

Usama bin Ladin's repeated incantations regarding the West as 'Crusaders' is the most frequently made and obvious such reference, but there are many others.<sup>204</sup> His deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri, for example, suggested in his July 2005 letter to Iraq's leading al-Qa`ida terrorist, Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, that the present-day battle to establish "a caliphate in the manner of the Prophet" is prophesied: "I want to be the first to congratulate you for what God has blessed you with in terms of fighting battle in the heart of the Islamic world, which was formerly the field for major battles in Islam's history...and what will happen, according to

---

\* This section was prepared by Gordon M. Hahn.

<sup>203</sup> Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, pp. 165-6. See, for example, "'Text' of Al-Zarqawi Message Threatening More Attacks," Federation of American Scientists Website, April 6, 2006. [www.fas.org/irp/world/para/zarqawi040604.html](http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/zarqawi040604.html).

<sup>204</sup> For example, see Bin Ladin's famous February 1998 *fatwa*, "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," co-signed by al-Zawahiri, Abu Yasir Rifa'i Ahmad Taha (of al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya), Shaykh Mir Hamza (secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan), and Fazlur Rahman (*amir* of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh), which declared war on the U.S. and Israel. See "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders – World Islamic Front Statement," Federation of American Scientists Website, February 23, 1998. [www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm).



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

what appeared in the Hadiths of the Messenger of God about the epic battles between Islam and atheism.”<sup>205</sup> In an earlier message to the “Islamic nation,” al-Zawahiri sought to rally the *umma* against the “hordes of the neo-Tatars” (i.e., Western forces in Iraq), thereby making a specific reference to the ancient Muslim “assassins” and Ibn Taymiyya: “We tell them, as Shaykh-al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said in his message to the King of Cyprus: Muslims have commandos that can kill kings in their beds and on their horses.”<sup>206</sup>

Even at the tactical level, historical referents occur in al-Qa`ida’s discourse. A pertinent example of how this occurs in practice is when al-Qa`ida drew a parallel between the successful use of trebuchets as heavy weapons by Muslim forces to conquer the high-walled city of Ta’if in 630 CE, and the use of airplanes to attack American buildings in the 9/11 attacks.<sup>207</sup> Even al-Qa`ida technical documents such as training manuals are replete with references to general propositions, such as the need to maintain the sort of secrecy, discipline, discretion, and the like that had been urged by Prophet Muhammad and both his more immediate and contemporary successors, as a means of supporting the rationale behind basic intelligence gathering, recruiting, military, and terrorist principles, if not methodologies.<sup>208</sup>

Attacking critical infrastructure could be a similar means by which al-Qa`ida can undermine the West’s economic stability, its military capacity, and even its very way of life. However, in trying to specify particular episodes or methods of Islamic warfare and *jihad* that may serve as historical precedents for the types of targets or attacks al-Qa`ida might apply to contemporary critical infrastructure, a certain interpretative extrapolation must be employed in order to flesh out how past practice relates to present practice given the rather different material cultures and infrastructural landscapes extant during the periods under consideration. Nevertheless, the tactics and targets of what was regarded as “sabotage” in antiquity, not to mention recent history’s more familiar material culture and landscape, may have some relevance for al-Qa`ida

---

<sup>205</sup> Translation of July 9, 2005 letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi, Federation of American Scientists, [www.fas.org/irp/news/2005/10/letter\\_in\\_english.pdf](http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2005/10/letter_in_english.pdf).

<sup>206</sup> “‘Text’ of Al-Zarqawi Message Threatening More Attacks.”

<sup>207</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz and John Kaltner, “Killing in the Name of Islam: Al-Qaeda’s Justification for September 11.” *Middle East Policy* 10:2 (Summer 2003), pp. 89-90.

<sup>208</sup> Translation of Entire Al Qai’da Training Manual, pp. 13, 17-18, 20-1 94-100, and 113-14. [www.fas.org/irp/world/para/aqmanual.pdf](http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/aqmanual.pdf).

## *Historical and Religious Links to Critical Infrastructure*

strategists and decision-makers and suggest or serve as a models for future attacks on critical infrastructure.

### **Precedents from the Life of Muhammad**

The above discussion regarding religious precepts conveyed by Muhammad can thus be supplemented by the historical precedents set by Islam's Prophet. In this respect, Muhammad can serve as a source of both religious and historical referents for al-Qa`ida behavior, with the line between the two not always being clear. Indeed, it is the Prophet's deeds, as much as his words, that are likely to function as precedents and form the basis of al-Qa`ida's military and terrorist arts and the tactical and strategic rationale for its attacks on critical infrastructure. For Islamists of all stripes, precedents set by Muhammad are deemed the most authoritative for dictating the limits of correct conduct in all spheres of life.

There is no doubt that Muhammad targeted the economic base and infrastructure of his new faith's enemies with both his words and deeds. The Prophet's propaganda attacks on the polytheist essence of the Ka`ba were part of a much larger strategy of undermining the Quraysh's economic hegemony over Mecca, which he sought to wrest control from Arab pagans. As Reza Aslan notes:

“...Muhammad understood...the only way to bring about radical social and economic reform in Mecca was to overturn the religio-economic system on which the city was built; the only way to do that was to attack the very source of the Quraysh's wealth and prestige—the Ka`ba.”<sup>209</sup>

The Prophet Mohammad's first forays into battle were attacks on the caravans that functioned as the “infrastructure,” indeed the lifeline, of ancient desert city-states' food and other supplies. Moreover, the attack “was not just a looting foray, but a strike at the vital commercial interests of the Meccans,” particularly those of the aristocratic and influential Umayyad branch of the Quraysh, who stood against Muhammad because of the threat posed to them by his new religion.<sup>210</sup> As noted above in the

---

<sup>209</sup> Reza Aslan, *No God But God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York: Random House, 2005), pp. 44-5.

<sup>210</sup> George F. Nafziger and Mark W. Walton, *Islam at War: A History* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), pp. 2, 5.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

discussion of religion, Muhammad also destroyed his enemies' fruit-trees that were an essential source of food sustenance and of protection from the deadly desert sun, though there remains a debate among Islamic scholars to this day as to what circumstances permit such an act.<sup>211</sup>

### **Early Islamic World after Muhammad, 700-1900 AD**

Islamic historical precedents long after Muhammad can be found for al-Qa`ida's endeavors to undermine the functioning of, or even destroy, key systems and infrastructures. Given the desert landscape, caravan "infrastructure" remained essential for survival in most Arab and Muslim regions long after Muhammad's death. Based on the Prophet's founding example, Muslim forces in both the early caliphal conquests of pagan lands and in intra-Islamic wars attacked enemy supply caravans.<sup>212</sup> The Muslim Seljuk Turks continued this practice and, in seizing full control of Khurasan from the Ghaznavids during the Seljuk-Ghaznavid War (1030-1040), deliberately attacked the enemy's food infrastructure by destroying outlying oases, thereby cutting off food supplies to the Ghaznavid cities and army. Nur al-Din of Aleppo also used the Prophet's tactic of attacking food caravans in expanding the Zengid state's dominion from present-day Iraqi Mosul over all of the Muslim areas of Syria and Jazira, and particularly in his capture of Damascus in 1154.<sup>213</sup>

There are numerous instances in which ancient Islamic armies poisoned or otherwise destroyed the water resources of their enemies. For example, in the May 1038 battle at Sarakhs, the Seljuk victory was delivered in part by their destruction of the Ghaznavids' water wells and the ensuing collapse of morale among pro-Ghaznavid Mas`ud's *ghulams* (Turkish "slave" soldiers).<sup>214</sup> Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, Islam's most admired military leader, defended Islam from the Third Crusade by

---

<sup>211</sup> Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam*, p. 14. On the debate see idem, pp. 36-37 and 172-73.

<sup>212</sup> It should be noted that this was a weapon of anti-Islamic forces as well. During his rebellion, Babak deployed attacks on caravans in his contest with the army of the Caliph's commander Khaydar ibn Qawus al-Afshin around the Azerbaijan fort of Arshaq in the early ninth century. Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: The Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 132, 186.

<sup>213</sup> Martin Sicker, *The Islamic World in Ascendancy: From the Arab Conquests to the Siege of Vienna* (New York: Praeger, 2000), p. 81.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., pp. 52-3.

## *Historical and Religious Links to Critical Infrastructure*

conducting a comprehensive “scorched earth” policy that included “poisoning all wells.”<sup>215</sup>

There are several historical precedents for Islamic assaults on what can be regarded as the cultural, informational, and educational infrastructure of ancient times. The destruction by Muslim forces of the great ancient Egyptian library of Alexandria during Islam’s first expansionist wave into northern Africa is well-known. Less well-known is the destruction of the great Buddhist library at Bihar in 1193 by the great Muslim general Muhammad Khilji, who was sent by Qutb al-Din Aibak to the northern Indian state of Bihar to further spread Islam’s domain.<sup>216</sup>

### **Modern Islamic World, 1900-1990**

Attacks on infrastructure continued into modern times. The legendary T.E. Lawrence “of Arabia” relayed numerous instances of both the Ottoman Turks and his Arab legions plundering caravans and blowing up trains, railroads, bridges, and telegraph installations. Lawrence summed up the strategic thinking this way: “In Turkey things were scarce and precious, men less esteemed than equipment. Our cue was to destroy, not the Turk’s army, but his minerals. The death of a Turkish bridge or rail, machine or gun or charge of high explosive was more profitable to us than the death of a Turk.”<sup>217</sup> To sum up briefly his tactics in demolishing railways and trains: he usually took a small- to medium-size detail to carry out reconnaissance on a railway or bridge, set the charges, waited until the locomotive engine passed over the demolition site (or, sometimes, an automatic mine), and blew the charge. Once the initial blast had gone off, his teams would open fire on the survivors and remove the booty (guns, ammunition, food, and sometimes prisoners) from the train. They then beat a hasty retreat to avoid counter-attack. This was classic guerilla warfare, and it proved very effective.<sup>218</sup>

During the first Jewish-Palestinian war (1947-1949), there were Palestinian (and Israeli) attacks on infrastructural sites such as oil refineries, transportation, and mass media organizations, though it

---

<sup>215</sup> R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C. to the Present* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), p. 319.

<sup>216</sup> Nafziger and Walton, *Islam at War: A History*, p. 226.

<sup>217</sup> Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, pp. 194.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 211, 287, 291, 342, 380, 424, 456-57.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

remains unclear in many cases whether these attacks were inspired by a desire to destroy infrastructure or lives.<sup>219</sup>

The Algerian revolution against French rule in the 1950s can be regarded as the first jihad to have taken place amidst modern material culture and infrastructure. It saw further “refinements” in the conduct of Islamic total guerrilla warfare and terrorism, and in many ways set the standard for contemporary jihadist terrorism and attacks on targets that fall into the category of critical infrastructure. Documents found in a cave abandoned by one Algerian rebel leader read like an al-Qa`ida manual: “Any zone remaining inactive is considered to be high treason...Any utility belonging to the enemy must be destroyed...The permanence of action on the roads, with the participation of the civilians; destroy the telephone poles and attack those who repair them, and roads. No prisoners except big chiefs.”<sup>220</sup> The Algerian rebels’ remarkably well-coordinated first onslaught in the war for independence on the evening of October 30, 1954 included, among some 70 separate attacks, an attempt to set a railway station afire and bomb attacks on an oil depot, gas works, and a radio station. This set the tone for the entire war, which saw hundreds of bombings, arsons, and other forms of attack on telephone and telegraph lines, zinc and coal mines, power transmitters, police stations, schools, and trolleybus stations, not to mention bus stops and numerous other public venues. Economic targets and food supplies were targeted, including vineyards and orchards. Reserves of cork and esparto grass were burned, and livestock was poisoned. Police reported plans to attack railway lines.<sup>221</sup> Produce sellers at markets were called upon in rebel circulars to poison vegetables sold to French soldiers.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>219</sup> Motti Goliani, “The ‘Haifa Turning Point’: The British Administration and the Civil War in Palestine, December 1947-1948,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:2 (April 2001), pp. 93-130. Goliani notes that during the height of the civil war between Palestinian and Jewish forces, from December 1947 to May 1948, in addition to events in Jerusalem, there “were mutually murderous attacks at the Haifa oil refineries,” though it is unclear from the brief reference whether the target was the refineries or civilians [Goliani, “The ‘Haifa Turning Point’,” p. 101. citing D. Koren, *The Massacre at the Oil Refineries and Security at Mixed Places of Work – 1948*, Galilee Center, 1988 (Hebrew)]. Goliani also claims (without providing details) that “the two sides ... deliberately targeted each other’s holy places” and “transportation came under attack by both Jews and Arabs.” He notes: “On the night of 1-2 February an explosion ripped through the building that housed the *Palestine Post*.” Goliani, “The ‘Haifa Turning Point’,” p. 101.

<sup>220</sup> Michael K. Clark, *Algeria in Turmoil: A History of the Rebellion* (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 220.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-9, 154, 174-76, 181, 198, 204, 244, 297, 323-28.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

## *Historical and Religious Links to Critical Infrastructure*

During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), both belligerents sought to destroy the other side's oil production and export infrastructures. Even before the war, according to Rajaei, a Saddam-backed terrorist organization, the Arabistan Liberation Front, conducted sabotage and terrorist operations in Iran, including attacks on oil pipelines as well as bridges, mosques, and public transportation.<sup>223</sup> During the war, Iran attacked Iraq's northern oil pipeline and oil export terminals at Mina al Bakr and Al Faw.<sup>224</sup> For its part, Iraq carried out thousands of bombing sorties on oil terminals and pumping stations, including hundreds on the key Kharq Island terminal alone, as a result of which its capacity was immediately halved and later nearly eliminated. Iraq also bombed power generation facilities, communications centers, and hydro-electric schemes.<sup>225</sup> The "tanker war" in the Gulf that emerged from the larger war was akin to a war on "sea caravans." It included assaults by both sides not only on enemy ships, but on neutral shipping as well. Initially Iraq alone engaged in the tanker war, but by April 1984 Iran had joined the fray. From May 1981 to 1988, several hundred ships were attacked.<sup>226</sup> By the time the war neared its end in 1988, ten Western navies and eight regional navies had been drawn into patrolling the Gulf to protect oil tankers, and the Iranian government was claiming several hundred billion dollars in damages and losses for its oil production and export infrastructure alone.<sup>227</sup>

In the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989), the *mujahidin* destroyed bridges, tunnels, and power transmission lines in addition to schools and health centers, which were viewed as places of Soviet indoctrination.<sup>228</sup> There were also reports of Afghan rebels poisoning wells, as their Arabian Muslim ancestors had over a millennium earlier, and using unidentified

---

<sup>223</sup> Farhang Rajaei, *The Iran-Iraq War: The Politics of Aggression* (Tallahassee, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993), pp. 20, 62.

<sup>224</sup> "The Iran-Iraq War," *The History of Iran*, The Iran Chamber Society, [www.iranchamber.com/history/iran\\_iraq\\_war/iran\\_iraq\\_war1.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/history/iran_iraq_war/iran_iraq_war1.php).

<sup>225</sup> Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War* (Boulder: Westview, 1988), pp. 64, 134-36.

<sup>226</sup> One source notes that 152 ships were attacked from May 1981 to December 1985 and that 1986 saw an escalation to 105 ships being attacked. Chubin and Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War*, p. 173. Another source notes that 48 ships were attacked the first three years of the war, and 71 were attacked in 1984 alone. "The Iran-Iraq War," *The History of Iran*.

<sup>227</sup> Chubin and Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War*, p. 127.

<sup>228</sup> Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham: Duke Press Policy Studies, 1983), pp. 207, 230.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

gases to attack Kabul schools and other institutions.<sup>229</sup> Since al-Qa`ida emerged in part from the Afghan war and *mujahidin* milieu, these historical precedents may have a stronger salience among today's al-Qa`ida and its affiliates.

Certainly there is much in al-Qa`ida's repertoire of guerilla and terrorist strategy and tactics that resembles previous methods of Islamic warfare. However, it remains unclear whether these historical precedents serve as models or directly inform al-Qa`ida's activity to any extent. The most plausible conclusion at this point is one that views al-Qa`ida as following in, but radicalizing, an Islamic tradition of total war; a tradition that can and has been drawn from Islamic texts as interpreted by radical Islamic scholars, teachers, and political strategists. Al-Qa`ida and other Islamists have and still are creating a new ideology to circumvent the body of Qur'anic verses and prophetic sayings that do not support their goals and methods. In this effort, as has been seen above, they draw selectively on the Islamic tradition and interpretations that suit their own purposes. Certainly, Muslim successes in the Algerian and Afghan wars for independence can only redound to the credit of their version of *jihad*, often taking the form of a total terrorist war waged by any means against any and all targets, including critical infrastructure.

It should be noted, however, that technological advances are forcing rapid changes in the material culture that shapes critical infrastructure, making the drawing of direct lessons by al-Qa`ida or other Islamists more difficult. Notwithstanding this hurdle, Islamists could very well draw some specific tactical lessons, and in line with the demand for more imaginative threat assessments, analysts need to make some tentative extrapolations from the historical record available to al-Qa`ida and its affiliates the world over. Certainly Muhammad's and his successors' attacks on caravans can justify and inspire attacks on various forms of contemporary infrastructure, including food distribution, energy transmission, transportation, and communications. To the creative operative, the poisoning of water wells and the destruction of fruit trees can suggest attacks on water reservoirs and river dams, as well as the agriculture and food supplies, with chemical or biological agents. Islam's destruction of great libraries in Egypt and India may be precursors of contemporary Islamist efforts at cyber-sabotage on Silicon Valley that would cripple one of the main engines of the information and technological infrastructure upon which so much of Western business

---

<sup>229</sup> Nafziger and Walton, *Islam at War: A History*, p. 195 and Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, p. 230.

## *Historical and Religious Links to Critical Infrastructure*

and indeed civilization now depends. One must also remember that, irrespective of technological changes, al-Qa`ida will continue to derive justifications and “spiritual guidance” from their particular interpretation of Islam and its sacred texts.

The link between religious and historical precedents, on the one hand, and target selection, on the other, is a significant and persistent one in the case of al-Qa`ida. Therefore, the numerous religious and historical elements that might be interpreted as justifying, prompting, or providing tactical guidance for attacks on critical infrastructure targets must be consistently borne in mind during efforts to protect America’s critical infrastructure. Ignoring such justifications by the jihadists themselves could be a fatal mistake, since they claim to have selected every strategy and tactic from the examples set by the Muhammad and other “rightly-guided” Muslim leaders.<sup>230</sup>

---

<sup>230</sup> Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, p. 18.



# CHAPTER FIVE:

## WHAT THEY SAY – AL-QA`IDA'S CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY AS REVEALED THROUGH ITS STATEMENTS\*

Since the historical record suggests that al-Qa`ida generally carries out major attacks for a multiplicity of reasons, it would be unwise to assume – in the absence of evidence to the contrary – that the group had only one goal in mind in launching a particular attack. Indeed, evidence continues to appear in jihadist sources that lends support to this very interpretation. For example, in a summary report based on the “debriefings” of Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM), the operational mastermind of the 9/11 “planes operation,” it is revealed that KSM stated that Bin Ladin had insisted on striking three types of targets, one political, one economic, and one military, which is why the hijacked planes were assigned the missions of attacking, respectively, the U.S. Capitol building, the two World Trade Center towers, and the Pentagon. At the same time, KSM made it clear that his own goal was to launch spectacular attacks on vulnerable “symbolic targets” that would “wake the American people up,” i.e., produce a huge psychological impact, but also added that New York City, the “economic capital of the U.S.,” was “always the first target on his mind.”<sup>231</sup>

In addition to seeking to achieve multiple objectives by means of a single attack, global jihadists also promote the adoption of a broad and diverse

---

\* This chapter was prepared by Jeffrey M. Bale, with Sundara Vadlamudi.

<sup>231</sup> See [Central Intelligence Agency], “Substitution for the Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed,” pp. 11-14. This is a formerly classified document that was later submitted to the court handling the Zakhariyya Mussawi case in lieu of allowing KSM to testify. Al-Qa`ida’s diverse motives for carrying out the 9/11 attacks are discussed further below, in the case study section.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

overall operational approach that includes, among other objectives, killing “infidels,” destroying their facilities, and attacking their symbols. This can be seen in a May 2002 article written by Abu Ayman al-Hilali, which appeared on the al-Uswa website and was said to be representative of the views of hardline al-Qa`ida leaders:

Our solution is organized *jihad* that sets at the head of its priorities the attack against American and Zionist interests. It should not just boycott their goods, but explode their headquarters, centers, and industries, and everything that symbolizes them, such as McDonald's, etc. We should add to that the killing of Americans and Zionists, and their loyal agents, in order that they will not feel safe anywhere...<sup>232</sup>

Still another example is provided by Abu Mu`sab al-Suri in the following passage, wherein he advises al-Qa`ida recruits to carry out attacks that

1. cause as much pain as possible
2. awaken Muslims as much as possible

At the same time, he also compiled a broad list of target types that he believed should be attacked, including

1. Missionary centers and cultural missions because they manufacture enemies [of Islam] and secularism.
2. Companies, mines, engineers and agents of foreign companies, representatives of the Aramco company [in Saudi Arabia] that steal Muslim oil.
3. All forms of diplomatic facilities and consulates.
4. All forms of military facilities, including the homes of families on bases.
5. All forms of foreign security, all Western teachers and doctors are actually in disguise as spies.
6. All forms of tourism.<sup>233</sup>

---

<sup>232</sup> Abu Ayman al-Hilali, article posted on the al-Uswa website, May 2002, cited in Reuven Paz, “Qa`idat al-Jihad: A New Name on the Road to Palestine,” Report, May 7, 2002, electronic p. 5.

<sup>233</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al Qaeda's Leader* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. 245. The excerpt above is drawn from videotapes seized at al-Qa`ida camps in Afghanistan.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

These excerpts suggest, once again, that even attacks that end up being made on so-called infrastructural targets are not necessarily intended to destroy infrastructure per se.

### **THE ATTITUDES OF AL-QA`IDA'S LEADERS**

What, then, is al-Qa`ida's attitude toward attacking infrastructural targets? Here it is crucially important to make an analytical distinction between having an interest in attacking "economic" targets in order to inflict grave damage on the enemy, and having an interest in attacking critical infrastructure with the specific intention of destroying or disrupting the functioning of key enemy facilities or systems in the narrowest, most technical sense of that term. There is voluminous evidence indicating that al-Qa`ida desires and fully intends to damage the American economy, which it sees both as highly vulnerable and as the foundation of U.S. military and political power.<sup>234</sup> In part this is because, ideologically speaking, the group perceives the U.S. as a crass, greedy, materialistic society whose morally corrupt members care only about their own economic well-being.<sup>235</sup> For that very reason, al-Qa`ida is convinced that inflicting heavy damage on the American economy is the best way to exert an impact on the attitudes and behavior of both the elites and the masses within the U.S. Its view seems to be that if the *mujahidin* can make the American people suffer enough materially, the latter will eventually force their government adopt new, less intrusive, and less belligerent policies towards Islam and the Muslim world. However, as the American reaction to the 9/11 attacks itself demonstrated, al-Qa`ida's belief that the American people would display moral cowardice in order to secure their narrow economic interests rather than a sense of patriotism, national solidarity, and a collective desire to punish those responsible demonstrates that Bin Ladin and his advisors had again fundamentally misread the character and mood of their principal declared enemy.

However that may be, the importance of attacking "Crusader" economic targets has been repeatedly emphasized by Bin Ladin himself, and at

---

<sup>234</sup> See Bin Ladin's December 2001 statement, "Nineteen Students," which was broadcast on al-Jazira: "it is possible to strike the economic base that is the foundation of the military base, so when the economy is depleted they will be too busy with each other to be able to enslave poor peoples." Cited in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 151.

<sup>235</sup> For example, in the course of Bin Ladin's December 1998 interview on al-Jazira, he accused America of worshipping money. Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 83.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

various times Ayman al-Zawahiri and other al-Qa`ida leaders have also stressed the value of attacking Western economies.<sup>236</sup> These exhortations by Bin Ladin and his lieutenants contain several recurrent themes, including 1) that the U.S., despite all of its apparent power, is a “paper tiger” that can be defeated militarily, just as the Soviet superpower was defeated by the *mujahidin* in Afghanistan; 2) that damaging the economy is one of the best ways to defeat the U.S., since this will serve to undermine its military power; and 3) that attacking the oil infrastructure and driving up the price of oil is the one of the best ways to weaken the American economy.

Several of these themes were highlighted by Bin Ladin in the following statement issued in February 2003:

They [19 hijackers] carried out the raid [9/11] by means of enemy planes in a courageous and splendid operation the like of which mankind had never before witnessed. They smashed the American idols and damaged its very heart, the Pentagon. They struck the very heart of the American economy, rubbed America's nose in the dirt and dragged its pride through the mud. The towers of New York collapsed, and their collapse precipitated an even greater debacle: the collapse of the myth of America the great power and the collapse of the myth of democracy; people began to understand that American values could sink no lower. The myth of the land of freedom was destroyed, the myth of American national security was smashed, and the myth of the CIA collapsed, all praise and thanks to Allah.<sup>237</sup>

It is now time to provide illustrative examples of the attitudes of al-Qa`ida's leaders concerning all three of the themes identified above.

---

<sup>236</sup> Indeed, according to Bari Atwan, al-Zawahiri is much impressed by Yale historian Paul M. Kennedy's book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Vintage, 1989), wherein it is argued that great empires have fallen due to a combination of growing costs for the maintenance of internal security, an expanding global military presence and the financial burdens this entails, and intensifying foreign competition in trade and commerce. Bin Ladin's deputy reportedly believes that the U.S. is just such an empire in decline, and that Kennedy's first two conditions have already been met. See *Secret History of al-Qa`ida*, pp. 227-8.

<sup>237</sup> Randall B. Hamud, ed., *Osama Bin Laden: America's Enemy in his Own Words* (San Diego, CA: Nadeem, 2005), p. 121.

## **America is a “Soft,” Fragile Superpower that can be Defeated Militarily**

In Bin Ladin’s statements, the United States has often been characterized as a “paper tiger” that cannot survive more than a few major terrorist blows.<sup>238</sup> Indeed, America’s supposed inability to withstand repeated terrorist attacks was discussed at length by al-Qa`ida’s Majlis al-Shura in the years leading up to the September 11, 2001 assaults. During those debates, Bin Ladin is reported to have asserted that the U.S. was a weak power, and that he cited as evidence the hasty departure of American troops from Lebanon, Somalia, and Yemen in the wake of terrorist attacks.<sup>239</sup> He apparently believed at the time – and may still believe – that the U.S. could only tolerate “two or three strong” strikes.<sup>240</sup> As a consequence, he seems to have fashioned al-Qa`ida’s spectacular attacks as a means of achieving that objective.<sup>241</sup>

Indeed, Bin Ladin is convinced that, with Allah’s help, that al-Qa`ida can defeat the U.S. militarily. In his will, which was supposedly written in December 2001, he indicates that he viewed past attacks against America as part of an operational continuum that would eventually lead to the destruction of the U.S.:

The New York and Washington action represented the third of the increasing blows dealt to the United States. The first was the bombing of the Marines in Lebanon and the second was the bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi from where the US invasion of Somalia was launched during which 31,000 of our brothers were killed under UN flag. Despite the setback that Allah, praise and glory be to Him, has tried us with, this battle

---

<sup>238</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Al Qaeda, Trends in Terrorism, and Future Potentialities: An Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), p. 11.

<sup>239</sup> In December 2004, *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* published serialized versions of a book entitled *The Story of the Arab-Afghans From the Time of Arrival I Afghanistan Until Their Departure With the Taliban*. The book’s author, whose identity was not revealed in the serialized excerpts, is Abu al-Walid al-Masri. For internal discussions on the wisdom of attacking the U.S., see part 2 of the serialized excerpts, “Al-Qa`ida’s Hawks Sought Weapons of Mass Destruction through Fighter Khattab in Chechnya,” *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 9, 2004, p. 15.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> This is not to imply that Bin Ladin actually believed that the U.S. would be destroyed simply due to the immediate effects of these attacks, but rather that a combination of the effects of those attacks and the U.S. responses to them would eventually lead to its destruction.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

will lead to the disappearance of the United States and the infidel West, even after dozens of years.<sup>242</sup>

In order to justify such a seemingly astounding claim, he frequently refers to the victory of the *mujahidin* against the Soviet Union, the other former superpower:

Muslims defeated the Soviet empire when it was the superpower, so defeating America is an achievable task.<sup>243</sup>

Indeed, he seems to believe that the U.S. will be easier to defeat than the old Soviet Union:

I took up arms against the Soviets in Afghanistan for ten years, and we believe that our battle with the United States is easy compared with the battles in which we engaged in Afghanistan.<sup>244</sup>

At first sight, such a superficial conclusion seems to be an example of wishful thinking, if not of outright “magical thinking.”

Yet there is an underlying logic to it, for Bin Ladin believes that the U.S., despite its apparent economic power and military might, has an inherently “soft” or fragile nature that makes it highly vulnerable:

[the 9/11 attacks] came by the grace of God Almighty, showing very clearly that this haughty, domineering power, America, the Hubal of the age, is based on great economic power, but it is soft. How quickly it fell from the sky, by the grace of God Almighty.

...

It was nineteen post-secondary students – I beg God Almighty to accept them – who shook America’s throne, struck its economy right in the heart, and dealt the biggest military power a mighty blow, by the grace of God Almighty.<sup>245</sup>

We can conclude that America is a superpower, with enormous military strength, and vast economic power, but that all is built

---

<sup>242</sup> Al-Majallah Obtains Bin Ladin’s Will,” *Al-Majallah*, October 27, 2002. pp. 22-6. It should be pointed out that the October 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marines’ barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, was carried out by an Iranian-backed Hizballah front group, not by al-Qa`ida.

<sup>243</sup> Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, pp. 108-9.

<sup>244</sup> *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, November 27, 1996.

<sup>245</sup> Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 149.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

on foundations of straw. So it is possible to target these foundations and focus on their weakest points which even if you strike only one-tenth of them, then the whole edifice will totter and sway, and relinquish its unjust leadership of the world.<sup>246</sup>

One of the best ways to accomplish this objective, according to Shaykh Usama, is to bring down the American economy.

### **The Importance of Damaging and Undermining the U.S. Economy**

Bin Ladin has repeatedly emphasized the economic aspects of the conflict with the “Great Satan,” and indeed has often urged volunteers from the Muslim *umma* to carry out operations in such a way as to increase their economic costs to the U.S. Moreover, he has openly gloated about the American economic losses that supposedly resulted from previous al-Qa`ida attacks. In his calculation of the costs of the 9/11 operation, for example, he provided the following exaggerated figures:

The share of the losses on the Wall Street Market reached 16 percent. They said that this number is a record, which has never happened since the market opened more than 230 years ago. A collapse of this scale has never happened before. The gross amount that is traded in that market reaches \$4 trillion. So if we multiply 16 percent with \$4 trillion to find out the loss that affected the stocks it reaches \$640 billion of losses from stocks, with God’s grace, an amount that is equivalent to the budget of Sudan for 640 years. They have lost this through an attack that happened with the permission of God, lasting one hour only. The daily income of the American nation is \$20 billion. The first week [after the attack] they didn’t work at all as a result of the psychological shock of the attack, and even today some still don’t work because of it. So if you multiply \$20 billion by 1 week, it comes to \$140 billion, we’ve reached how much? Approximately \$800 billion. The cost of building and construction losses? Let us say more than \$30 billion. So far, they have fired or liquidated more than 170,000 employees from airline companies, including airfreight companies and commercial airlines...the amount reaches no less than \$1

---

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

trillion by the lowest estimate due to these successful and blessed attacks.<sup>247</sup>

Similarly, in urging the people of Iraq to continue their fight against American troops, Bin Ladin portrayed the U.S. as a weak country burdened by its economic losses:

Muslims [in Iraq]...those infidels will not scare you with their weapons, for God has weakened their schemes and stopped their progress. Don't let their numbers frighten you, for their hearts are empty and they are falling into military and economic disarray, especially after the blessed day in New York, by the grace of God. After the attack and its repercussions, their losses reached over a trillion dollars...and they have recorded a budget deficit for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year running, breaking the record this year with more than 450 thousand million dollars in deficit, thanks and blessings to God.<sup>248</sup>

In addition to the economic damage caused by direct attacks, Bin Ladin also includes terrorism-related defense expenditures in his estimates of the costs incurred by the U.S. As a result, he has specifically advocated that the *mujahidin* make empty threats so as to “frighten” the U.S. into spending even more money in an effort to guarantee its security:

It [is] easy for us to bait this administration. All that we have to do is send *Mujahideen* to the farthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written “Al Qaeda” in order to cause the American generals to race there, causing America to suffer economic and political losses without its achieving anything other than some financial benefits for their private companies.<sup>249</sup>

Bin Ladin seems convinced that al-Qa`ida's policy of bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy is succeeding because, as a result of the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. had supposedly lost a million dollars for every dollar spent by al-Qa`ida.<sup>250</sup>

---

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., pp. 111-12.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>249</sup> Hamud, *Osama bin Laden*, p. 163.

<sup>250</sup> Bin Ladin justified this conclusion by pointing to a study by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIS), which concluded that al-Qa`ida spent \$500,000 for the 9/11 attacks. He then used this figure and his previously calculated losses of \$1 trillion to reach the ratio cited above. See Ibid., p. 164.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

For this reason, Bin Ladin continues to urge his followers and supporters to attack the American economy, which he anticipates will eventually collapse. In a December 2001 letter to Mullah Umar, for example, he made the following suggestions:

A campaign against Afghanistan will impose great long-term economic burdens, leading to further economic collapse, which will force America, God willing, to resort to the former Soviet Union's only option: withdrawal from Afghanistan, disintegration, and contraction...Our plan in the face of the campaign should focus on...[s]erving a blow to the American economy, which will lead to:

- a) Further weakening of the American economy
- b) Shaking the confidence in the American economy. This will lead investors to refrain from investing in America or participating in American companies, thus accelerating the fall of the American economy.<sup>251</sup>

He also emphasizes that attacks on the American economy will adversely affect the performance of the U.S. military, thereby compensating – at least in part – for the huge disparity between the capabilities of the U.S. military and the forces available to al-Qa`ida:

One possibility of prevailing in spite of the gap between us and the American military establishment...is to attack the economic base at the foundation of the military establishment. When their financial reserves are spent, they will bicker among themselves and refrain from enslaving the weaker nation...it is critical to concentrate on striking the American economy by every possible means.<sup>252</sup>

Thus Bin Ladin has never ceased stressing the need to continue the *jihad* against the “far enemy,” both “militarily and economically.” Although he believes that America is already in decline and that its economy is even now in the process of hemorrhaging, he insists that further attacks are necessary to bring it to the point of total collapse. As he expressed it, young Muslim warriors must target the pillars of U.S. economy.<sup>253</sup>

In addition to seeking to harm the U.S. economy directly by carrying out actual terrorist attacks, Bin Ladin has also advocated waging economic

---

<sup>251</sup> Alan Cullison, “Inside Al-Qaeda’s Hard Drive,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (September 2004).

<sup>252</sup> Hamud, *Osama bin Laden*, p. 88.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

warfare by boycotting American goods. In 1996, in his “declaration of war” against the United States, Bin Ladin argued that a combination of terrorist attacks and the boycotting of American products would expedite the departure of U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia. To justify promoting such a boycott, he made the following arguments:<sup>254</sup>

The money you spend on American goods will be converted into bullets to be used against our brothers in Palestine and tomorrow against our sons in Saudi Arabia. By buying these goods we strengthen their economy, while increasing our own poverty...denying these occupiers the enormous revenues derived from trading with our country is most important in helping out *jihad* against them.<sup>255</sup>

Eight years later, in October 2004, Bin Ladin boasted that al-Qa`ida would “bleed America to the point of bankruptcy,” just as the Afghan *mujahidin* and Arab Afghans had bled Russia to the point of bankruptcy during their ten-year war, thereby forcing that former superpower to withdraw from Afghanistan.<sup>256</sup> There is no doubt, then, that al-Qa`ida’s leader appreciates the overall military value of damaging the U.S. economy. And oil seems to play an increasingly important role in achieving that goal.

### **The Value of Attacking the Oil Infrastructure to Damage the United States Financially**

On the issue of oil, Bin Ladin has repeatedly stressed that the United States is stealing Saudi Arabia’s wealth by paying less for its oil than it is worth on the open market. He blames Saudi Arabia’s ruling regime for varying the production levels of oil to suit America’s needs. In 1997, while making a case against the United States for stealing oil, Bin Ladin adduced the following “evidence”:

Since 1973, prices of all other items have increased but oil prices did not rise much. Since 1973, the price of petrol has increased only 8 dollars per barrel while the prices of other items have gone up three times. The oil prices should also have gone up three times but this did not happen. Price of American wheat has increased three-fold but the price of Arab oil has not

---

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

risen three-fold. The increase was not more than a few dollars over a period of 24 years because the United States is dictating to the Arabs at gunpoint. We are suffering a loss of 115 dollars per barrel every day. Only Saudi Arabia produces 10 million barrels per day and thus the loss is one billion dollars per day. Total loss is more than 2 billion dollars. In the past 13 years, the United States has caused Saudi Arabia a loss of more 1,100 billion dollars. We must get this money back from the United States. The total population of Muslims all over the world is more than 1 billion. If every Muslim family is given 11,000 dollars then the 1,100 billion dollars will be repaid. Muslims are starving to death and the United States is stealing their oil. It buys oil from us at low prices and then makes us buy its tanks and fighter airplanes by projecting Israel as a threat. In this manner the United States takes all its money back.<sup>257</sup>

According to Bin Ladin, it is justifiable to target the American economy since the U.S. “steals” the wealth of Muslims by purchasing oil at such low prices.<sup>258</sup>

Despite these sentiments, Shaykh Usama did not initially advocate attacking Saudi Arabia’s oil facilities, and in fact specifically urged the *mujahidin* to protect such facilities, which he regarded as a “great Islamic asset [that] represents critical economic power essential to the forthcoming pan-Islamic state.”<sup>259</sup> As was mentioned at the outset of this report, however, Bin Ladin has recently reversed this stand and begun urging his followers to attack the oil facilities in Iraq and the Gulf region:

Bleeding (exhausting) the United States which is currently in Iraq economically, militarily and morally is a golden opportunity that you should not miss or you will regret it. One of the foremost motivations of our enemies is the desire to subjugate our lands and to steal our oil, for that, you should spare no effort in stopping the greatest theft in history from current and future generations through the work of collaborators. They take it for cheap knowing that the price of every other commodity has multiplied many times except for oil which is the base of industry. Its price has been reduced numerous times, while it was sold for \$40 two decades ago; it was sold for \$9 in the last decade. Its price today should be at

---

<sup>257</sup> “Interview with Osama bin Laden by Hamid Mir,” *Pakistan*, March 18, 1997.

<sup>258</sup> Hamud, *Osama bin Laden*, p. 97.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

least \$100 per barrel. Be vigilant to put a distance between them and oil, and concentrate your operations on it especially in Iraq and the Gulf. This would be their end.”<sup>260</sup>

Some analysts have attempted to explain this shift by interpreting his words to mean that Bin Ladin has decided to target the oil infrastructure needed for refining and transporting oil but to avoid attacking the oil wells themselves.<sup>261</sup> Echoing Bin Ladin, in an interview conducted in September 2005 and posted on the internet in December 2005, Ayman al-Zawahiri also urged the *mujahidin* to

Focus their attacks on the stolen oil of the Muslims. Most of its revenue goes to the enemies of Islam, and most of what they leave is plundered by the thieves who rule our countries. This is the greatest theft in the history of humanity. The enemies of Islam are consuming this vital resource with unparalleled greed. We must stop this theft any way we can, in order to save this resource for the sake of the Muslim nation.<sup>262</sup>

In short, having long advocated launching terrorist attacks on and organizing boycotts of the American economy, Bin Ladin and his chief advisors have now shifted their focus to targeting components of the oil lifeline in an effort to undermine the viability of the economies of the U.S. and its European and “apostate” Arab allies.

## **AL-QA`IDA “STRATEGIC STUDIES” LITERATURE**

Apart from the statements by al-Qa`ida’s leaders, there are a number of other al-Qa`ida texts, which can best be classified as strategic or operational studies, that devote considerable space to discussing the wisdom of jihadist targeting of the U.S. economy. Five examples should serve to illustrate this point. First, in an undated issue of one of al-

---

<sup>260</sup> “The Complete Text of Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin, especially to the Muslims of Saudi Arabia and General Muslims Elsewhere,” *al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad* website, December 15, 2004.

<sup>261</sup> See Michael Scheuer’s section in Michael Scheuer, Stephen Ulph, and John C.K. Daly, “Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities: The Achilles Heel of the Western Economy,” The Jamestown Foundation, May 2006: available at <http://www.jamestown.org/docs/Jamestown-SaudiOil.pdf>

<sup>262</sup> “Newly-Released Video of Al-Qaeda’s Deputy Leader Ayman al-Zawahiri’s Interview to Al-Sahab TV,” Special Dispatch No. 1044, *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, December 8, 2005, available at: <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP104405>.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Qa`ida's official magazines, *Sawt al-Jihad (Voice of the Jihad)*, the pseudonymous author Akhu Man Ta`a Allah provides a retrospective assessment of the economic impact and operational value of the 9/11 attacks:

Since September 11 America has been spending billions of dollars to protect its infrastructure and interests around the world...The attacker determines the timing of the strike. He will carry out a concentrated strike one time at a weak point and then sit in ambush again. So the enemy will look for a gap and close it, [but] this is not necessarily where he was hit but [applies also to] all other similar targets. So striking the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania means protecting every American embassy in the world. Striking the [U.S.S] Cole at sea means protecting all American assets in the seas. Diversifying targets means protecting all American things in every land that may contain terrorists!

If the enemy used his economy to rule the world and hire collaborators, then we need to strike this economy with harsh attacks to bring it down on the heads of its owners. If the enemy has built his economy on the basis of open markets and free trade by getting the monies of investors, then we have to prove to these investors that the enemy's land is not safe for them, that his economy is not capable of guarding their monies, so they would abandon him to suffer alone the fall of his economy.

This is about jihad against the Crusader enemy, so what about the September 11 operation? Hijacking planes is a well known tactic, which was used by various fighters and freedom fighters, so what's new about this operation? People used to hijack planes and consider them a target, but those who are willing to put in the extra effort turned these planes into a method only, a projectile shot into the heart of the enemy...The enemy used to protect his external interests and spend exorbitant sums for this protection, so he was surprised when he was struck inside his borders. The enemy used to protect a thousand interests outside his county, now he has to protect a million interests inside his country that need continuing protection! The attack on the Trade Center forced America since that day to spend billions to protect the huge economic infrastructure that runs the American economy. Using planes in this attack has forced America to spend billions to protect the planes and airports in all possible ways. This protection is not limited to the hundreds of American airports, but also [applies]

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

to every airport in the world. Anyone related to the aviation field is spending excessive amounts to guard air travel; the matter has reached [the point of] protecting the [very] skies... This is how America was transformed after one strike, protecting all that can be struck, as they guard all that can be used to strike with! This related to armed protection. As for surveillance, now America monitors everything, it even needed to change its laws and to give up on what it used to pride itself on: civil rights and personal freedoms. It has violated all previous taboos searching for terrorists.<sup>263</sup>

It is clear from his remarks that the author believes that it would be very beneficial for the *mujahidin* to make follow-up attacks that likewise have the effect of forcing the “Great Satan” to expend huge sums of money to protect itself and its allies. He is therefore clearly cognizant of the economic impact of the 9/11 attacks, and if such views are widespread within jihadist circles it is likely that they will carry out other economically damaging assault.

Second, in October 2003 a booklet by Abu Mus`ab al-Najdi was posted on the Al-Firdaws (Paradise) jihadist website that explicitly advocated “economic warfare” against the United States. This text is so relevant that it deserves to be quoted at length:

The Islamic umma has entered, through al-Qa`ida's war with America, a new period that is different from all the other periods experienced by Muslims against their enemies. This period is based on economic warfare due to the peculiar nature of the adversary in this ferocious battle. Usually, wars are based on military strength, and victory belongs to those who are militarily superior on the battlefield.

But our war with America is fundamentally different, for the first priority is defeating her economically. For this reason, anything that negatively affects their economy is considered for us a step in the right direction on the path to victory. Military defeats do not greatly affect how we measure total victory, but these defeats indirectly affect the economy, which can be demonstrated by breaching [i.e., undermining] the confidence of capitalists and investors in this nation's ability to safeguard

---

<sup>263</sup> Akhu Man Ta`a Allah, “What Else is There to Say About September 11,” *Sawt al-Jihad* 26, undated, chapter 2, pp. 35-42. Translated by Sammy Salama. A total of 29 issues of *Sawt al-Jihad*, which was produced by the al-Qa`ida branch operating in the Arabian Peninsula, appeared up until October of 2005.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

their various trade and dealings. As for the infrastructure or machinery that is affected on the battlefield, it does not signify anything for two reasons:

1. It is relatively affordable for the world's largest economy
2. America did not enter this war alone; rather, it is supported by many nations such as Japan and Germany [and even] the traitors [i.e., the Arab Gulf states]

In light of this matter, the difficulty and ease of the task becomes apparent. In addition, it becomes apparent why additional al-Qa`ida strikes inside the United States have been delayed. When thinking about military strikes, it is not difficult to carry out an attack that would kill a good number of American civilians, but in my opinion this is a waste of resources without much benefit. However, directing these resources against economic targets is more effective and can get us many steps closer toward victory. An attack that kills a large number of Americans cannot achieve a tenth of this effectiveness. This reveals the importance of the blessed September 11 attacks, which is not that they killed a large number of infidels but, what is more important, the economic impact that this strike achieved.

I would not be exaggerating if I said that striking the Pentagon was purely symbolic and had no noticeable effect on the course of the battle. It is symbolic, for it shows the Americans that their foremost military facility can be destroyed by handful of individuals, which is a blow to their morale and a point of pride for the Islamic peoples who have been drowning in defeat for many years.

The ease of our battle is that [only] a few strikes are sufficient to exhaust the American budget, leading to its downturn and eventual fall. For that, all who are concerned with our battle with America should comprehend this strategy well. By doing so, with God's permission, we can reduce the length of the battle by directing all our power and resources against economic targets, which unfortunately many see as insignificant, while directing a small part of these resources against other targets that serve a symbolic purpose in the battle.

When looking at the battlefronts that al-Qa`ida is involved in, we can divide them into two:

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

First, battlefronts aimed at indirectly exhausting the enemy economically. Many will be surprised by this uncommon categorization. These battlefronts serve as the beginning, not for the direct exhaustion of the enemy, but for informing the public, which serves [to harm] the economic target indirectly. For example, the battle in Saudi Arabia and all operations carried out previously are more directed at clarifying and revealing to the people the extent of the collaboration of the ruling regime, and the treason of the religious clerics that serve under this regime, who are silent about the regime's crimes toward the mujahidin. This causes the Saudi people to experience the climate of the battle, and to donate their sons as fuel to this battle, which is what is truly occurring in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. By doing so, we have invested this battle for our benefit; for what the enemy does not realize is that we were able to awaken a considerable number of Saudi youth who will carry forward the battle as indicated by Shaykh Usama (May God Save Him): "by entering the battle against the sons al-Haramayn [i.e., *mujahidin* from the Arabian peninsula], America will forget the hell of Vietnam."

We can say that the blessed Madrid operations were not aimed at exhausting the enemy, but rather to motivate the Spanish people to break ranks with the American thieves, which serves the economic interest indirectly by isolating America on the battlefield. As for the attack on England, it was aimed at punishing the United Kingdom for its aid to the American thieves, to embarrass its security services, and to rub its noses in the dirt in front of the European nations. [This is] because they turned down the ceasefire offered by Shaykh Usama.

Second, battlefronts aimed at directly exhausting the enemy economically. We can categorize the battle in Iraq as one of the fronts that are economically exhausting the enemy, because the mujahidin, with God's glory, prevented America from controlling a large segment of the Iraqi oil which they hoped would compensate for their economic losses on September 11. While currently they control the oil in Saudi Arabia, which amounts to two thirds of the pie, they hoped to control the whole pie after they controlled Iraq.

Any operation targeting a field of infrastructure in a new country that does not have a history of countering these operations is considered to be bleeding (exhausting) the greater enemy, America, and the targeted nation itself. It is so because



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

these nations will be required to protect all similar potential targets, which results in economic exhaustion (bleeding). Moreover, the effect will be on America [because] when the target nation is incapable of doing so, they will turn over the mission to the Americans, who will need to personally defend their interests. This is what is occurring in a number of countries, like some of the African nations. For example, if a hotel that caters to Western tourists in Indonesia is targeted, the enemy will be required to protect all hotels that cater to Western tourists in all countries which may become a target of similar attacks. You can say the same thing about living residences, economic establishments, embassies, and other [targets].

I conclude by taking a look at the future operations of al-Qa`ida, which I can predict based on their communiqués and past operations. I predict that they will concentrate on the oil infrastructure in one of the following three nations: Kuwait – Venezuela – Saudi Arabia. In addition, there is a possibility that al-Qa`ida will, one way or another, target the Wall Street stock exchange, which represents the nerve center of the American domestic economy. Finally, continuing to prevent the American thieves from benefiting from Iraqi oil by concentrating a large effort [there]...

Warning:

When I indicated that the battle with the U.S. and others is economic, I do not mean that it is for the sake of the economy itself; rather, [it is important] because they use the economy to control Muslims and destroy them. This is first and last a religious war in all its forms.<sup>264</sup>

There are three important lessons that can be drawn from this relatively short text. First, it demonstrates that certain figures associated with al-Qa`ida have explicitly recognized the strategic and military importance of targeting and inflicting damage on the American economy. This is clearly problematic, given that the American economy is now overstretched – and, according to some economists, in serious long-term trouble – since it indicates that the enemy has not only recognized but intends to exploit an inherent vulnerability in modern Western societies. Second, al-Najdi’s complaint that many jihadists see his emphasis on targeting the economy as “insignificant” suggests that for many

---

<sup>264</sup> Abu Mus`ab al-Najdi, “Al-Qa`ida’s Battle is Economic, Not Military,” *Al-Firdaws* website, October 3, 2005. Translation by Sammy Salama.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

*mujahidin*, either traditional wartime objectives of a strictly military or primarily political nature, or “expressive,” atavistic desires to kill large numbers of “infidel” Americans and/or exact revenge, take precedence over mundane tasks like exploiting the enemy’s economic vulnerabilities, which is viewed as less important or less psychologically satisfying. To the extent that this is true, it may militate against the future targeting of economic infrastructural targets inside the U.S. Third, and especially revealing, are the comments made by al-Najdi at the very end of his booklet. Despite his apparent rationality, like all committed global jihadists al-Najdi is imbued with a religious worldview and therefore feels compelled to insist that the *jihād* against the U.S. is and will always remain essentially a religiously-mandated struggle between Muslims and world of “unbelief.” This only serves to confirm the argument above that the rationality of the jihadists, such as it is, is severely constrained by theological imperatives which may have only a tenuous relation to international political realities.

Beyond these relatively extended treatments of the value of economic targeting, there are many other al-Qa`ida-linked texts that discuss economic targets in conjunction with military, political, and symbolic ones. Although these materials are not focused exclusively on economic targets, they are nonetheless indicative of the growing awareness within jihadist circles of the importance of attacking such targets. A representative example is provided by the article written by the deceased former head of Al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Haramayn (Al-Qa`ida in the Land of the Two Holy Places, i.e., the Arabian peninsula), Abu Hajir `Abd al-`Aziz al-Muqrin, which appeared in the al-Qa`ida military journal *Mu`askar al-Battar (Al-Battar Camp)*.<sup>265</sup>

Second, economic targets. The objective of attacking these targets: breaching the security and climate of stability that is necessary for economic growth, such as the bombing of oil pipelines in Iraq which has made it less appealing for foreign corporations.

Additional objectives include:

---

<sup>265</sup> Al-Battar was the name of one of Muhammad’s many swords. This particular sword, which was known as the “sword of the prophets” because it was engraved with a picture of King David and inscribed in Arabic with the names of many Jewish and Christian prophets, was one of three seized as booty after Muhammad suppressed the rebellious Jewish Banu Qaynaqa tribe in Medina. Some believe that al-Battar will eventually be wielded by Jesus when he returns to Earth to fight the Antichrist.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Removal of foreign capitalists from domestic markets; also negative economic consequences on their native lands, as occurred very quickly following the blessed strikes in Madrid, which affected the entire European economy. Among these are double strikes that affect the economy of the Crusader or Jewish or apostates regimes.

Among the Examples of Such Strikes:

- Striking Jewish-Crusader investments in Muslim lands.
- Striking international corporations.
- Striking international economists and business experts.
- Striking imports from Crusader nations through military means (as occurred in the bombing and burning of certain American restaurants), or through political means like boycotts.
- Striking raw materials stolen from Muslim lands, such as the strike on the French oil carrier or the strikes on Iraqi oil pipelines. These kinds of economic strikes are determined by the high leadership, who wait for the appropriate time and place.
- Assassinating Jews who work in business and disciplining those who cooperate with them economically, following a proper warning. Only those who are proven to be collaborating apostates should be assassinated.

Third, human targets. We should target and kill Jews and Christians. We say to all who fight God and his Prophet, we bring you slaughter. In our current reality we should not be deterred by borders or geography, all Muslim dwellings and lands are ours. We should turn the lands of the infidels into a Hell, just as they have turned our lands into a Hell. For that, all operational cells should not pay attention to geographic borders as described by the enemies, but aim to transform infidel lands into battlefronts, as they have turned Muslim lands into fields of experimentation for their weapons and inventions.

The priority in these operations should be given to Jews and Christians with official connection to Muslim lands. It is advisable to start with targeting unprotected, easy targets. Priority is given to the dependants of infidel nations that are directly involved in supporting local apostates. For example, in Saudi Arabia first target Americans, then the English. In Iraq, the Americans. In Afghanistan, the Americans. In Algeria, the French. In Indonesia, the Australians, etc.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

Categorizing Human Targets by Importance:

1. Jews: they are divided into various degrees of importance. First American and Israeli Jews, then British Jews, then French Jews, etc.

2. Christians: they are categorized by order of importance, as follows:

- Americans.
- Britons.
- Spaniards.
- Australians.
- Canadians.
- Italians.

These groups are further divided into:

- Businessmen. For business has global importance in this age.
- Diplomats, politicians, intellectuals, analysts, and political emissaries.
- Scientists and experts.
- Military commanders and soldiers.
- Tourists, visiting entertainers, and all who have received a warning from the mujahidin to abstain from or evacuate Muslim lands.

3. Apostates: They are categorized by order of importance as follows:

- The most important targets are those who are close to Jewish and Christian governments, such as Husni Mubarak, the rulers of the Arabian Peninsula, and their advisors.
- Secularists and modernists who criticize believers and ridicule religion.
- Intelligence professionals and spies, they are the armor and protection fence of the Jews and Christians. They are also the striking arms of the apostates.<sup>266</sup>

---

<sup>266</sup> Abu Hajir `Abd al-`Aziz al-Muqrin, "Military Sciences: Targets in the Cities," *Mu`askar al-Battar Magazine* 7, pp. 23-27. Translation by Sammy Salama.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

This passage indicates that al-Muqrin, an experienced operational commander, clearly understood the importance of striking economic targets, including facilities such as banks and oil pipelines, means of transportation such as tankers, foreign and native personnel who worked in various vital sectors of the economy, and foreign tourists who provided income for apostate regimes. At the same time, he advocated attacking obvious military and political targets (such as soldiers, officers, intelligence officers and agents, diplomats, scientists, etc.) on pragmatic grounds, but also Jews, “infidels,” “apostates,” “secularists,” “modernists,” and “intellectuals,” in large part for religious reasons.<sup>267</sup> Thus, even in texts that focus more narrowly on operational matters, one typically finds injunctions to target enemies on essentialist religious grounds.

The same mixture of pragmatic and curious religious considerations can be seen in a short text prepared by Abu Mus`ab al-Suri, one of the most important al-Qa`ida operatives and strategic thinkers prior to his 2005 arrest in Pakistan:

All Western Christian and Jewish presence on Muslim lands is a legitimate target....Some will argue that the military presence is the most dangerous; actually, it is the least dangerous. Cultural and missionary presence on our land is far more dangerous. The second most dangerous are the economic thieves, the third are the diplomats.

Even the most benign tourist, the old man who does not deal with politics and is only here to visit is a danger to our land. For he is coming to our land to entertain himself after his ancestors subjugated, ruled, and stole from our land.

Have you ever seen a tourist who comes back after he is told that he will be slaughtered? Tourists continue to come back in spite of the warnings because they have ulterior economic and political goals in our lands.

This is the rational argument. As for the religious argument, infidels are in a perpetual war with the Muslim umma. There are two exceptions to this. First, the dhimmi [Christians and Jews who reside in Muslim lands in exchange for accepting second-class status] have long term immunity from this, and

---

<sup>267</sup> These religious motivations are even more apparent in the section dealing with “sectarian targets,” which was the first category mentioned, and in the last section entitled “The Benefits of Special Operations in the Cities.” See *ibid.*

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

travelers have short term immunity. However, this immunity is only valid if the land is ruled by a legitimate Muslim ruler who rules in accordance with the shari`a. Only he can grant such an immunity, and only if the infidels pay a jizya [poll tax].

Let's look at the current situation. Where is the [true] Muslim ruler? The current leaders who gave these infidels immunity should be killed. Are these people paying jizya [in exchange] for their presence on Muslim lands? We are the ones who are paying the jizya for their presence.<sup>268</sup>

Once again, there is a reference to “economic thieves” in amongst the other alleged threats to the *mujahidin*.

A third example is an article by Nur al-Din al-Kurdi, which appeared in the *Dharwat al-Sanam (Peak of the [Camel's] Hump)* journal, which discusses several “arenas of jihad,” specifically the military arena, the security and intelligence arena, the propaganda arena, the ideological arena, and the economic arena. Here are al-Kurdi's comments regarding the latter:

It [the economic arena] is the most dangerous and effective arena of jihad, because we live in a materialistic world...A boycott is still an effective weapon that we possess, which we can use without negative effects on us. For that, we have to benefit from this weapon, knowing that it would have no effect unless everybody participates in it. Muslims need to boycott the products of the infidel and hostile nations, knowing that with God's grace we have numerous substitutes in our bountiful lands. We remind the Muslims how the unbelieving American people boycotted French cheeses in solidarity with their government against the policy of France, which opposed the U.S. involvement in Iraq.

If someone says boycotting the products of infidel nations does not affect their economies, we tell him and others that the *al-Quds* newspaper published in its economic pages that the American tobacco corporation Philip Morris annually sells about \$6 billion [worth of cigarettes] in Arab markets. In the

---

<sup>268</sup> “The Propaganda Front Presents the Second Episode: Lectures by Shaykh Abu Mus`ab al-Suri,” *al-Faruq* website, May 10, 2005. Translation by Sammy Salama. Unfortunately, the CETIS research team received a copy of Abu Mus`ab al-Suri's 1,600-page strategic treatise, *Da`wat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya al-`Alamiyya (The Call for International Islamic Resistance)*, too late to be able to incorporate the information contained therein into this report.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Muslim world as a whole, their sales reach \$26 billion. These are of course the profits of only one corporation, selling one commodity. If the sales of tobacco can bring in such profits, let us imagine the volume of profits achieved by the infidels in the sale of necessities such as foods and communications...the truth will be bitter and sad.

Let us not forget that the thing which will unravel the grip of the Americans and their servants and will result in the deterioration of their ability to conduct their operations in Muslim lands is the brothers aiming their fire at their economic interests in the region. That includes attacking the oil wells and pipelines, and targeting the supply and logistical lines of the Crusader army.<sup>269</sup>

In short, in jihadist publications the waging of economic *jihad* in various forms is recommended together with other types of *jihad*. This should hardly come as a surprise, since both pre-Islamic and early Islamic campaigns had important economic dimensions, which is why several sections of the *Qur'an* endeavor to provide guidelines concerning the seizure and distribution of enemy booty.

Clearly, then, al-Qa`ida leaders and strategists are aware, perhaps increasingly so, of the importance of attacking economic targets in the U.S. and the West. Yet what is surprising is that there are apparently only a relatively small number of articles and treatises that are devoted exclusively to this subject. A native Arab speaker working with the preparers of this report systematically monitored 42 jihadist websites and examined thousands of pages of documents prepared by al-Qa`ida and its affiliates, yet he was unable to find very much material that was focused narrowly on attacking economic targets. Such material surely exists, but it constitutes only a drop in the bucket within the total corpus of jihadist literature, most of which is devoted to other matters, ranging from arcane disputes about theological matters and religious exhortations to practical instruction.

There has, of course, been a voluminous amount of literature generated by al-Qa`ida and other Islamist terrorist groups over the years that has been specifically designed to provide practical instruction to would-be jihadists on a wide variety of technical, tradecraft, and operational or

---

<sup>269</sup> Nur al-Din al-Kurdi, "The Arenas of Jihad," *Dharwat al-Sanam* 3, pp. 27-28. Translation by Sammy Salama. This particular journal is published by Abu al-Mus`ab al-Zarqawi's al-Qa`ida in Iraq organization.

## *Al-Qa`ida's Critical Infrastructure Strategy Through Statements*

narrowly tactical matters, such as how to make explosive devices, employ different types of weapons, provide for organizational security, carry out the surveillance of prospective targets, and launch attacks on different types of targets.<sup>270</sup>

What is most surprising, however, is that there seems to be little or no discussion of critical infrastructure in al-Qa`ida materials and other jihadist literature, at least in the specific technical sense in which people in the West – especially officials charged with protecting it – employ that term. Here it is worth quoting from the notes prepared by our Arab translator:

Following an extensive search and reading of al-Qa`ida primary source literature and websites in the past few months, I was surprised to find that the topic of critical infrastructure is nearly absent from al-Qa`ida's own literature. While the network has extensive operational and ideological literature...very limited information actually touched on the topic of critical infrastructure...This term is all but absent from al-Qa`ida's lexicon, as I have yet to come across it in any of the group's manuals, literature, or speeches. The group's materials do not specifically discuss this topic, although specific references are made to certain critical industries or facilities (namely the oil industry, tourism, religious facilities, diplomatic facilities, and vague references to attacks on transportation).

This summation seems to confirm the tentative conclusions herein that al-Qa`ida has no clear understanding of critical infrastructure in the Western sense, much less a coherent strategy for attacking critical infrastructure qua critical infrastructure. Still less does the group seem to grasp the potential advantages of making compound attacks on critical infrastructure, i.e., using certain components of the infrastructure to disrupt or destroy other key infrastructural elements. What al-Qa`ida does possess, however, is a strong desire to harm the economy of the United States and the West, and an increasingly sophisticated awareness that effectively targeting the oil infrastructure in the Gulf States will create serious economic burdens and dislocations in all of the world's

---

<sup>270</sup> Compare, e.g., the al-Qa`ida jihadist encyclopedia found in a British apartment, *l'alan al-Jihad `ala al-Tawaghit al-Bilad [Declaration of Jihad against the Tyrants of the Land]*; the *Mawsu`at al-I`adad [Preparation Encyclopedia]*; and "Destroying Train Tracks," *Al-Firdaws* website, undated.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

industrialized societies, none of which are part of the underdeveloped *dar al-islam*.

In sum, there is an acute danger that al-Qa`ida will instigate, sponsor, and/or directly organize more and more attacks on vital oil facilities and pipelines, and that it will continue to attack sensitive infrastructural targets such as buildings, bridges, roadways, tunnels, and airports, places where large numbers of people tend to congregate. However, as in the past such attacks are likely to be carried out for a multiplicity of reasons – to strike symbolically significant political, military, or cultural targets, kill large numbers of “infidels,” physically destroy property, traumatize and frighten enemy civilians, rally and embolden Islamist supporters, and cause tangible economic damage – rather than simply to disrupt or destroy infrastructure in the narrowest sense of that term.

However that may be, having analyzed al-Qa`ida’s ideological, strategic, and operational objectives, it is now necessary to look at the recent historical record in an effort to determine whether their doctrinal and strategic pronouncements have influenced their actual behavior. To what extent have the concrete actions undertaken by al-Qa`ida and its closest affiliates, in the context of critical infrastructure, mirrored the exhortations and proclaimed objectives of their leaders and principal thinkers?

## CHAPTER SIX:

# CAPABILITIES FOR ATTACKING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE\*

**B**efore turning to examinations of prior attacks on critical infrastructure by al-Qa`ida and its affiliates, another important facet in an analysis of al-Qa`ida's threat to critical infrastructure involves an examination of the capabilities required to perform such acts and the extent to which al-Qa`ida possesses those capabilities.

Al-Qa`ida has already demonstrated its flexible and adaptive nature as a terrorist organization and its ability to conduct a wide range of attacks, including those on critical infrastructure targets, such as the *U.S.S. Cole*, the Kenyan and Tanzanian embassies, and the World Trade Center towers. In order to examine al-Qa`ida's capabilities in more detail, this section will first examine how the generally develops and executes its attack plans. A discussion of critical infrastructure targets and the capability attributes necessary for successful attacks on it will follow, along with a short case-study discussion of the capabilities required in two specific attacks.

### **AL-QA`IDA ATTACK PLANNING**

Once target selection has occurred, most al-Qa`ida operations are divided into three general phases: surveillance, preparation, and the execution of the attack. First, intelligence teams conduct surveillance on the target. This is followed by a preparatory stage, encompassing rehearsals of the operation (perhaps at an al-Qa`ida camp), the organization of safe houses, vehicles, and other logistical necessities by a support team, and the final preparation of weapons and explosives. Finally, the attack team performs the operation. If the incident is not a suicide mission, extraction

---

\* This chapter was prepared by Elle DiLorenzo.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

is the final step.<sup>271</sup> However, suicide attacks have been and are likely to continue to be a preferred tactic, given the high level of difficulty involved in executing exit strategies for perpetrators.<sup>272</sup>

Emphasis is placed on thoroughness and a high level of pre-attack preparation. An examination of the following excerpt from an al-Qa`ida training manual supports this characterization of the group's planning:

The Organization's command needs detailed information about the enemy's vital establishments, whether civilian or military, in order to make safe plans, reach firm decisions, and avoid surprises. Thus, the individual who gathers information about a desired location should, in addition to drawing a diagram, describe it and all its details.

The Drawing: The brother should draw a diagram of the area, the street, and the location which is the target of the information-gathering. He should describe its shape and characteristics. The drawing should be realistic so that someone who never saw the location could visualize it. It is preferable to also put on the drawing the directions of traffic, police stations, and security centers.

The Description: It is necessary to gather as much information about the location as possible. For instance:

1. Traffic directions and how wide the streets are
2. Transportation leading to the location
3. The area, appearance, and setting of the place
4. Traffic signals and pedestrian areas
5. Security personnel centers and government agencies
6. Embassies and consulates
7. The economic characteristics of the area and traffic congestion times
8. Public parks
9. Amount and location of lighting

It is preferable to photograph the area as a whole first, then the street of the [desired] location. If possible, panoramic pictures should be taken. That is, the collection of views should be continuous in such a way that all pictures are taken from one location and that the ending of one picture is the beginning of the next. The photographer should be experienced with and

---

<sup>271</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

proficient in film processing and developing. It is risky to use an outside film processing service. When observing a military installation or camp, we discourage taking pictures where it is forbidden. The brother/photographer should use a modern camera that can photograph at night or from a distance and only the lens of the camera should be visible. When gathering information about a military camp, the brother should draw a diagram of the camp's overall area, the camp itself, and its interior, if possible.<sup>273</sup>

A review of al-Qa`ida training materials and tactics, along with information from organization members, reveals a high level of planning and organization in the development of al-Qa`ida attack plans. According to Abu Jandal, bin Ladin's former bodyguard, al-Qa`ida adopts a strategy of "centralization of decision and decentralization of execution" while carrying out attacks. By this Abu Jandal meant that, "the decision was made centrally, but the method of attack and execution was the duty of field commanders." In the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole*, field commanders selected the target and presented their findings to the Military Affairs Committee that approved the operation and provided funds for the attack.<sup>274</sup> Similarly, in the attack on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the attack cell was made up of four separate sections: the intelligence section, the administration section, the planning section, and the execution section.<sup>275</sup>

There are many additional variables required for a successful attack against critical infrastructure. To fully understand al-Qa`ida's capabilities in relation to critical infrastructure, it is not only important to examine how the group operates, but it is equally crucial to review the types of targets in question and the range of capabilities required for a successful attack of them. This will permit a thorough evaluation of the extent to which al-Qa`ida meets those capability requirements.

## **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE TARGETS**

General definitions of critical infrastructure have already been discussed in earlier sections of this report. However, a short examination of

---

<sup>273</sup> Jerrold M. Post, ed., *Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants: The Al-Qaeda Training Manual* (Alabama: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2005), pp. 95-6.

<sup>274</sup> Bergen, p.253.

<sup>275</sup> See testimony of FBI agent Stephen Gaudin at the trial of *U.S. v. Usama bin Ladin*. Quoted in Bergen, pp. 220-221.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

different types of critical infrastructure will provide an important backdrop for the subsequent discussion and evaluation of capability traits.

Below is an illustrative list of various types of critical infrastructures:

- *Aviation Infrastructure*
- *Chemical Plant*
- *Communication Infrastructure*
- *Dams and Waterways*
- *Embassies/Consulates*
- *Financial Institutions*
- *Police Stations*
- *Oil/Gas Infrastructure*
- *Power Infrastructure*
- *Public Service/ Government Office*
- *Military Bases*
- *Railways/Railroads/Rail lines*
- *Roadways*
- *Subways*
- *Train/Bus Stations*
- *Water Treatment/ Storage Facility*

In examining critical infrastructure targets, it must be remembered that **all critical infrastructures are NOT the same**. As represented in this list, there are many different kinds of critical infrastructures, so it is logical to assume that different capabilities are required to attack these entities. Moreover, each element of a critical infrastructure sector may possess different levels of protection, consisting of both passive and active defenses. It is almost trite to state that the level of protection is usually positively correlated with the capabilities required to conduct a successful attack.

Critical infrastructure can take the form of *facilities*. Institutions such as banks, ports, universities, hospitals, police stations, and government buildings fall into this general category. Critical infrastructure can also consist of a collection of *dispersed components*, such as many transportation networks, like highways or public transportation systems.

Some critical infrastructure targets may encompass a *combination of virtual and physical systems*. The Internet is one such entity, since it consists of physical units such as servers together with virtual elements across the world. Another example is SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) systems. These are computer systems of varying levels of complexity, which are used for large-scale data measurement and analysis. SCADA systems monitor and control plants and equipment, and can be found in a number of infrastructure sectors, including water

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

and waste control, energy, oil and gas refining, telecommunications, and transportation.

Keeping these differences in mind, a baseline analysis of the capability requirements for attacking various types of critical infrastructure can be helpful in determining the minimum necessary capabilities for attacks against specific infrastructural targets. Analysis has already been conducted on evaluating the general capabilities needed to successfully attack and damage various categories of infrastructure. What follows is a summary of the empirically-derived determinations resulting from the analyses found in a prior report conducted by CETIS researchers.

Table 6.1 summarizes the types of resources required to attack *specific* critical infrastructures. A more in-depth analysis of the capability categories necessary to attack critical infrastructure targets follows in the next section of this report.

*It should be remembered that these criteria and the analysis that follows are based on the evaluation of past attacks against critical infrastructure. The table provides only very crude estimations derived from empirical data. For example, protection levels in the table are classed very broadly as being either “low” or “high.” In reality, the defensive posture of each target is likely to differ considerably along a continuum, and for that very reason the table is meant to serve as a general guide to required capabilities for the purposes of this analysis rather than as a blueprint for force protection. Furthermore, any future changes in relevant factors, such as new developments in technology or changes in the vulnerabilities of various infrastructures, may make it easier or more difficult to attack each individual type of critical infrastructure.*

Table 6.1: Capability Requirements for Attacking Specific Critical Infrastructure Sectors

Infrastructure Type	Protection Level	Physical Resources	Weapons	Financial Resources	Logistical Resources	Ability to innovate	Technology level	Skill set (esp. military-type skills)	Familiarity with Target Environment	Communications
Aviation Infrastructure	High Low	High Medium	Medium Medium	Low Low	Medium Medium	Medium Low	Medium Medium	High Medium	High Medium	Medium Unknown
Chemical Plant	Low	Medium	Low-Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Communication Infrastructure	Low	Low	Low-Medium	Low	Low	High	High	Medium	High	Unknown
Dams and Waterways	Low	Medium	Unknown	Low	Unknown	Unknown	Medium	Medium	High	Unknown
Embassies/Consulates	Low	Low	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	High
Financial Institutions	High Low	Medium Low-Medium	Medium Medium	Low Low	Medium Medium	Medium Medium	Medium Medium	Medium Medium	High High	Medium Medium
Police Stations (low impact only)	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Unknown	Unknown	Medium	Medium	Unknown	Medium
Oil/Gas Infrastructure	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
Power Infrastructure	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium-High	Medium
Public Service/ Government Office	High Low	Medium Medium	Medium Low-Medium	Low Low	Medium Medium	Medium Medium	Medium Medium	Medium Medium-High	High Medium-High	Medium Unknown
Military Bases	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Railways/Railroads/Rail lines	Low	Medium	Low-Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Roadways (low impact only)	Low	Medium	Unknown	Low	Unknown	Unknown	Medium	Unknown	Medium	Unknown
Subways	Low	Medium	Medium-High	Low-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	High	High	Medium
Train/Bus Stations	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	Medium
Water Treatment/ Storage Facility (low impact only)	Low	Low	Low	Low	Unknown	Unknown	Low	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
GENERAL	HIGH LOW	MEDIUM LOW	MEDIUM LOW-MEDIUM	LOW LOW	MEDIUM LOW	MEDIUM LOW	MEDIUM MEDIUM	MEDIUM MEDIUM	HIGH MEDIUM	MEDIUM MEDIUM

**Physical Resources (equipment, vehicles, etc.):**

High: Plentiful vehicles, sophisticated equipment  
 Medium: Standard equipment, some vehicles  
 Low: Basic, minimal equipment

**Weapons:**

High: Sophisticated conventional explosives, WMD  
 Medium: Large-scale simple conventional explosives  
 Low: Small-scale IEDs, guns, mortars, grenades

**Financial Resources:**

High: >\$50,000 available to carry out any attack.  
 Medium: \$10,000 – \$50,000 available to carry out single attack  
 Low: <\$10,000 available to carry out attack

**Logistical Resources (safehouses; fake passports etc.):**

High: Vast: Competent logistical network with high redundancy  
 Medium: Some safehouses and logistical competence  
 Low: Minimal support network; difficulty coordinating anything other than basic attack

**Ability to innovate:**

High: Easily embraces new technologies and techniques; quickly gains tacit knowledge

Medium: Competent at adopting new technologies and techniques, although not a particular strength

Low: Difficulty adopting new technologies or techniques

**Technology level:**

High: High technical skill; aware of and capable of using newest technologies  
 Medium: Standard technological level – commercial off-the-shelf technologies  
 Low: Only rudimentary equipment and techniques – low-tech only

**Skill set (esp. military-type skills):**

High: Highly trained members with diverse relevant skills (e.g. explosives production, electronics)

Medium: Some paramilitary type training, basic tradecraft  
 Low: Amateurish, little to no formal training

**Familiarity with Target Environment:**

High: Intimately familiar with target environment, can blend in easily  
 Medium: Some familiarity with target environment, but not perfect  
 Low: Unfamiliar with target environment – easily noticeable

**Communications:**

High: Robust and extensive communications networks  
 Medium: Workmanlike communications capabilities but no redundancy  
 Low: only primitive, limited-channel communications possible

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

### **Capabilities Needed for Critical Infrastructure Attacks**

The general types of resources and operational capabilities required, to varying degrees, for carrying out critical infrastructure attacks include:<sup>276</sup>

7. Physical and Logistical Resources
8. Weapons
9. Financial Resources
10. Ability to innovate/Technology Levels/Skill sets
11. Familiarity with the target environment
12. Communication

These capabilities will be examined, in turn, as they apply to specific types of infrastructure targets, followed by a discussion of the capability level possessed by al-Qa`ida.

*It should be noted that the degree to which these capabilities are required might change given the level of protection available for a particular type of critical infrastructure, i.e. the degree to which the infrastructure is protected against harm.<sup>277</sup> This can be seen comparatively across countries, or across regions within countries (e.g., varying levels of protection and security at ports around the world), or over time (e.g., aviation security in a given U.S. airport before and after the 9/11 attacks).*

#### *1. Physical and Logistical Resources*

Physical resources refer to items such as equipment and vehicles, which are necessary in to prepare for and carry out attacks. A group's degree of resources can range from very minimal to highly sophisticated. Generally, a medium level of physical resources is required for most

---

<sup>276</sup> The ratings for each capability were determined after a review of historical cases, during which the researchers noted or estimated the required levels of both capabilities and resources and then averaged them. The ratings are categorized as high, medium, or low.

<sup>277</sup> Gary Ackerman, Jeffrey M. Bale et al, "Assessing Terrorist Motivations for Attacking Critical Infrastructure: Final Report," Research project sponsored by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for the Department of Homeland Security, Unpublished (August 2004).



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

critical infrastructure attacks.<sup>278</sup> The amount of physical resources available is generally amplified in relation to the size of the organization. Logistical resources such as safehouses and counterfeit passports allow a terrorist organization to more easily coordinate its activities and proceed with attacks without detection. Logistical resources are closely linked to other categories, such as physical resources and weaponry, in that they often facilitate the use or transfer of these other resources. Logistical capabilities can be vast, consisting of an advanced network with a high level of redundancy, or they can be quite low, providing a minimal level of support. Generally a level in-between these two is required for most infrastructure attacks.<sup>279</sup>

As part of its logistical efforts, al-Qa`ida has employed a comprehensive system to acquire identity documentation for its operatives. For example, under the authority of its security committee, the group maintained an office of passports and host country issues at Qandahar airport. There the committee “altered papers, including passports, visas, and identification cards.”<sup>280</sup> Al-Qa`ida training courses also include lessons in passport alteration methods.

Al-Qa`ida has also enhanced its logistical network through the use of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the International Islamic Relief and the Refugee Services Center in Brooklyn, as operational fronts. These NGOs allowed al-Qa`ida operatives to acquire identity papers and gain legitimate employment, thereby facilitating the movement of funds and equipment.<sup>281</sup>

However, since the 9/11 attacks many of these avenues have been compromised. In particular, the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan destroyed al-Qa`ida’s stronghold and operations base in that country, greatly degrading its logistical, communication, and training capabilities. The arrests and killings of a significant percentage of the known pre-9/11 leaders and the arrests of over 4,000 suspected members worldwide since those attacks, together with the detection and disruption of cells in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and the freezing of over \$140

---

<sup>278</sup> Calculation based on prior case analyses in *ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> Intelligence report, “Interrogation of Khalid Shaykh Muhammad,” Sept. 9, 2003 and CIA analytic report, “Al Qaeda travel issues,” Jan. 2004, p. 1. In *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 169.

<sup>281</sup> Miller and Stone, *The Cell*, p. 138.

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

million in assets, have significantly added to the disruption of its logistical procedures and networks.<sup>282</sup>

To cope with these problems, al-Qa`ida has taken on an increasingly cellular structure, building upon the ideals found in its pre-9/11 training, which taught members to operate as small autonomous units. While cells do rely on the main al-Qa`ida structure and key figures for certain things – such as speeches and teachings for motivation and new recruitment, and assistance for initial financing, networking, and training – the pre-9/11 training camp system prepared members to act in small groups and learn to conduct their own operations. As will be discussed in more detail below, al-Qa`ida has also developed an increasing reliance on the Internet to support its cells as needed, using the Web both as a communications tool and as a vehicle for “virtual” training, recruitment, and inspiration for its members.

In the current system, the overall physical and logistical capabilities of each cell become a function of the environment in which they operate, and highly skilled groups learn to adapt their tactics as a criminal network might. For example, a well-developed network would be very adept at operating under the radar of law enforcement, possibly even operating through corrupt means, with the knowledge and support of law enforcement and security officials when and where this is advantageous. Solid networks would provide an almost watertight system for acquiring weapons, forged documents, safehouses, and information on targets. Cells may even be able to take advantage of traditional shipping and trading, as well as illicit goods, drugs, and human smuggling routes to conduct such activities. A cell with an advanced network of this type would most likely be able to acquire a high level of physical and logistical capabilities.

Cells can also take advantage of the presence of extremists and extremist networks where they are located. Although a majority of Muslims worldwide would not support the actions of al-Qa`ida or other extremist groups, some level of support does exist in most Muslim communities and this can therefore be exploited by adept cells. The highly communal nature of the Islamic community makes it easy to identify mosques, mullahs, and followers of the cause, thereby simplifying a cell’s search for supporters. Cell supporters need not participate directly in operations, but can provide a range of logistical support. For instance, networking

---

<sup>282</sup> James Phillips, “The Evolving Al-Qaeda Threat,” *Heritage Lecture #928*, The Heritage Foundation. <http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl928.cfm>.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

cell members with “insiders” in a critical infrastructure facility would ease access and enhance the cell’s capabilities to conduct an attack. Supporters could provide physical or financial support as well.

### *2. Weapons*

Obtaining weaponry is another requirement for committing attacks against infrastructural targets. This can include anything from guns, grenades, and small-scale Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to large-scale but simple conventional explosives, more sophisticated conventional explosives, or chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) materials. Generally speaking, a medium- to low-level of weapons availability is required to attack most critical infrastructure targets.<sup>283</sup> Furthermore, the ability of terrorists to adapt relatively simple weaponry to their needs allows them to carry out attacks without pursuing highly advanced types of weapons. The 9/11 hijackers’ reliance on the small box cutters, etc., that they were able to bring onto aircraft is a case in point.

Al-Qa`ida clearly possesses low- to medium-weapons capabilities, such as small arms, and basic conventional explosives. The group also encourages its members to create new weaponry to enhance its missions. For example, as depicted in a British documentary by reporter Deborah Davies, Abu Hamza is shown at a conference explaining the diagram for a Muslim Anti-Aircraft Net, which is a floating net laced with mines designed to trap and destroy civilian aircraft in the U.S. and Great Britain. According to the video, “[t]hese nets, if mass produced, can cost less than £10 and are undetected by radar. They can be launched from any point, and move to anywhere in the world. We urge all brothers and sisters to also being [sic] thinking of designs and techniques such as these, because the time for talking has long since passed.”<sup>284</sup>

Likewise, when al-Qa`ida is not already in possession of a particular weapon, it has demonstrated its ability to adapt its attacks to fit its current resource levels. Following the increased protection levels in the aviation industry, the low-level weapons used to conduct an attack such as 9/11 are no longer adequate. As such, terrorists have begun investing in MAN-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) in response to

---

<sup>283</sup> Calculation based on CrITIC database analysis.

<sup>284</sup> Kohlman, *Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe*, p. 190.

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

difficulties in smuggling weapons aboard an aircraft.<sup>285</sup> Efforts have also been made to attack commercial airliners in countries with less-secure aviation systems, such as in Iraq in 2003 and in Kenya in 2002.<sup>286</sup> Attacking airport targets while they are on the ground or are airborne with Rocket-Propelled Grenades (RPGs) or Light Anti-tank Weapons (LAWs) are other foreseeable possibilities.<sup>287</sup>

### *3. Financial Resources*

It is no surprise that possessing greater financial resources offers benefits to a terrorist organization, but only a low level of funding is required for most infrastructure attacks. Al-Qa`ida has repeatedly shown itself to be able to marshal sufficient funds to carry out attacks, taking advantage of globalization and informal financial networking such as the *hawala* system and Islamic charities to finance its activities. Furthermore, despite efforts by the United States and other nations to curtail funding for terrorist organizations, through means such as stricter regulations to monitor both the traditional and non-traditional movement of money, increased due diligence requirements, as well as the creation of terrorist financing watch lists and international task forces, al-Qa`ida is still thought to be able to raise sufficient funds for even large-scale critical infrastructure attacks or attacks against well-protected targets. The only uncertainty in this vein is whether the group would have sufficient funds for high-cost CBRN attacks.

This capability is facilitated by the low cost of most actual attacks, including large scale ones. According to *The 9/11 Commission Report*, “the 9/11 plotters eventually spent somewhere between \$400,000 and \$500,000 to plan and conduct their attack.”<sup>288</sup> Likewise, the cost of the 2004 Madrid bombings is estimated at \$10,000, while terrorists spent approximately \$2,000 on the London bombings in 2005.<sup>289</sup>

---

<sup>285</sup> Gunaratna, *Changing Face of Terrorism*, p. 26.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 169.

<sup>289</sup> Compare Joshua Prober, “Accounting for Terror: Debunking the Paradigm of Inexpensive Terrorism,” *PolicyWatch #1041*, *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, November 1, 2005. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2389>; and Tariq Panja, “London Bombings Were Low-Cost Operation,” *Associated Press*, January 3, 2006.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

### *4. Ability to Innovate/Technology Levels/Skill Sets*

These three categories can be considered complementary in a number of ways. For instance, the desire for innovation can lead an organization to more readily embrace new technologies and new techniques. Likewise, if an organization maintains members with both technological know-how and tactical skills, their overall attack capabilities will be enhanced.

Individually, a medium level of innovation is required for attacking most infrastructural targets.<sup>290</sup> This in turn entails a general competence in terms of adopting new technologies and techniques. Medium levels of technology and skill sets (especially military-type skills) are also required for attacks on critical infrastructure targets.<sup>291</sup> There are several outside attributes that may affect these capabilities. For instance, the ideology or philosophy of a group can affect the level to which they will embrace innovation.<sup>292</sup> Also, the larger the group, the greater the likelihood that its members will have higher levels of technical and other skills.<sup>293</sup>

Al-Qa`ida's adaptable and flexible nature also demonstrates its ability to innovate. The fact that the group has adapted to the environment of the post-9/11 world by changing its structure and operational techniques is a testament to its attributes in this regard. The evolution of al-Qa`ida into a loosely-linked worldwide network of cells, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is the most obvious and profound example of this. In fact, al-Qa`ida's training methodologies, both before and after 9/11, provided a foundation of autonomy and self-sufficiency in its members that has eased the organization's transformation into many small cells. To increase the group's capabilities in innovation – as well as in technology and other necessary skills - al-Qa`ida has employed various training methods that will be discussed below.

---

<sup>290</sup> Calculation based on CrITIC database analysis.

<sup>291</sup> Calculation based on CrITIC database analysis.

<sup>292</sup> Brian A. Jackson, "Technology Acquisition by Terrorist Groups: Threat Assessment Informed by Lessons from Private Sector Technology Adoption," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24 (2001) p. 193.

<sup>293</sup> Jackson, "Technology Acquisition by Terrorist Groups," p. 202.

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

### *Training Camps*

The use of training camps has enabled al-Qa`ida to increase the innovation, technical, and other skill capabilities of both its own members and the members of affiliated and allied organizations.

Al-Qa`ida training is reportedly divided into three main courses:

1. *Basic Training*, focusing on guerilla warfare and Islamic law
2. *Advanced Training* in the areas of explosive use, heavy weapons, and assassination techniques
3. *Specialized Training* in surveillance and counter-surveillance, counterfeiting identity documents, and conducting maritime or vehicle-based suicide attacks.<sup>294</sup>

In reference to critical infrastructure, take for example the testimony of Ahmad Rassam, who received his training primarily at the Khaldan training camp in Afghanistan. Rassam has revealed that his training included approximately one-month of sabotage training, during which trainees learned “how to blow up the infrastructure of a country.”<sup>295</sup> Targets included “electric plants, gas plants, airports, railroads, large corporations, gas installations and military installations also...Hotels where conferences are held.”<sup>296</sup> This highlights a specific emphasis placed by al-Qa`ida on the development of specific know-how and skills that are required for attacking critical infrastructural targets.

A further look at Rassam’s testimony demonstrates the range of skills taught at such camps. Rassam, who was arrested for an attempted plot to blow up LAX airport in Los Angeles in 2000, began his training in 1998, joining the Khaldan camp, which housed approximately 100 men, who were subdivided into cells of 6-14 trainees. The camp emphasized independent cell operation separate from any central command system.<sup>297</sup> Rassam’s initial training focused on light weapons, handguns, machine guns, and RPG rocket launchers.<sup>298</sup> The next phase of his training involved hands-on instruction in the use of explosives, including

---

<sup>294</sup> Jerrold M. Post, *Killing in the Name of God: Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2002), p. 35.

<sup>295</sup> Compare *ibid.*, pp.549-50; and Kohlman, *Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe*, p. 206.

<sup>296</sup> Testimony of Ahmad Rassam, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp.549-50.

<sup>297</sup> Kohlman, *Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe*, p. 206.

<sup>298</sup> Testimony of Ahmad Rassam, *U.S. v. Haouari*, p.549.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

C4, TNT, and “black plastic,” as well as the aforementioned instruction on infrastructural sabotage.<sup>299</sup>

Other aspects of Rassam’s training dealt with urban guerrilla warfare, tactical methods for assassination, procedures for conducting bombings, and security and assimilation methods to avoid being conspicuous and attracting suspicion.<sup>300</sup> Rassam’s training concluded with advanced-level training on explosives manufacturing at the Darunta training camp.<sup>301</sup>

Muhammad `Attiyya, an imprisoned Egyptian Tanzim al-Jihad operative, described similar features when he described his training in the al-Qa`ida-associated Badr camp. His training included

[t]he use of weapons inside cities. I also studied topography, military tactics, how to ambush patrols, and how to shoot with the left hand in case the right hand was hit. I was taught how to shoot while riding a motorcycle or in a speeding car and how to rescue a hostage from [a] kidnapper by blocking roads and pointing guns at the kidnappers... There was also training in attacking police stations on [sic] a similar way.<sup>302</sup>

The high level of training described here demonstrates the emphasis that al-Qa`ida places on the development of highly-skilled operatives who are proficient in combat-related skills such as weaponry, explosives production, surveillance, and military tactics, as well as with techniques for conducting attacks against infrastructural and other targets and the means for assimilating into a target environment.

### *Training Manuals and Operational Internet Websites*

In addition to the use of training camps, examinations of al-Qa`ida training manuals, Internet sites, and information from interrogations and testimonies of the group’s members have revealed countless examples of a clear and comprehensive understanding of the tactics needed to attack various types of critical infrastructure, along with the ability to train its members in these steps.

In fact, since the U.S.-led operation in Afghanistan, the Internet has emerged as a distance learning facility for operational terrorist

---

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., pp.549-50

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., pp.550-2.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., pp.554-5.

<sup>302</sup> Scheuer, *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes*, pp. 142-3.

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

techniques, often with lessons written by high level al-Qa`ida operational planners, such as Sayf al-Adl (alias Muhammad Ibrahim Makkawi), al-Qa`ida's chief of operations and the man who trained Muhammed `Ata and other 9/11 hijackers.<sup>303</sup>

Two examples of tactical training provided via the Internet are highlighted below:

a) Topic "Suggested Methods and Techniques for Disguising Explosive Charges"

***First, Operations inside markets:***

1. One can enter the market as a shopper carrying shopping bags (not Samsonite [i.e. business handbag]) filled with explosive charges. He can put the bag in one of the places pretending to purchase other products. He should choose a hectic place where no one will notice that he left a bag.
2. It is possible to bring in large explosive charges into busy markets by putting them inside large boxes such as butter boxes and to push them on a cart while pretending to be a distributor. This is to be done following surveillance of the market and learning distribution times, types of products and entry points.
3. It is possible to place large explosive charges in large cartons that contain Cola bottles or canned goods. It is preferred to use new boxes that contain a drawing of the goods, such as Cola cartons.
4. Electronic goods boxes can also be used, by placing an explosive into a stereo or printer box.

**Things to watch for when disguising explosive charges:**

1. Need to pay attention to the weight of the charges, to make sure they are consistent with the weight of the original product.
2. Need to pay attention to the size of the charges, to make sure they are consistent with the size of the original product.
3. Need to avoid gaps in the boxes to prevent the charges from moving around, use a sponge or corks to fasten it firmly inside the container.

---

<sup>303</sup> Gary Ackerman, Jeffrey M. Bale et al, "Report on CBRN Terrorism For Risk Management Solutions," Research project sponsored by Risk Management Solutions, Unpublished, May 2006.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

4. Keep some of the original material (laundry soap ...etc) in the top of the container to aid in disguising the charges.
5. Insure even distribution of weight.
6. Avoid having anything abnormal in the container, such as activation button, wires or lamp.

### ***Second, operations inside buses and bus stations:***

1. If the operation is to take place in a bus station or inside a bus, then it is preferable for the explosive charges to be placed inside a handbag or a Samsonite bag.
2. If the plan is to detonate inside a bus station in a meeting place, then it is possible to place the explosives in a large travel suitcase. This should only be done if the buses transport passengers to long distances, and a large suitcase does not look out of place.

Note: Car bombs can be used to break into large meeting areas (open markets, open bus stops, closed markets, closed bus stops ... etc).

### ***Third, operations in public places, restaurants or general buildings:***

1. If the operation is inside a restaurant, then you can place the explosives inside a handbag (on the shoulder) or inside a Samsonite bag, making sure that the perpetrator is dressed appropriately to carry a Samsonite [business handbag].
2. If the operation is inside an official building such as post office, banks, civil buildings, then it is possible to use a Samsonite.

### ***Fourth, using car bombs in operations (remote controlled or timed):***

1. Place the explosives in the car doors, front part and in the front or back bumpers especially if they are made of plastic.
2. Place an amount of explosives in the trunk with gasoline and gas cylinders.
3. Place the explosives in the Taxi sign on top of the car. This way you can direct the shrapnel to the heads.
4. Place a suitcase filled with explosives on the top of the car.
5. If the car has black windows, you can place cartons or boxes filled with explosives on the seats close to the glass.

### **Appropriate targets for car bombs:**

1. Entrances to markets.

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

2. Exits of sport stadiums.
3. Entrances or exits of colleges.
4. Entrances to movie theatres.
5. Bus stops.
6. Gathering places (protests, celebrations, fairs ... etc).<sup>304</sup>

b) Topic: “Destroying Train Tracks”

### **Train Tracks Should be Blown up at the Curve Point [i.e. the juncture where tracks are directed]:**

1. Lubricating the train tracks at the juncture points with grease, oil or fine soap for a distance of at least 100 meters. Adding some fine sand on the grease to make the tracks impossible to control.
2. Cutting a large tree trunk and putting a large obstacle in front of the train.
3. Knowing that the train is nearing the tracks (put your ear on the tracks to listen to the movement of the train).
4. If you want to destroy the train itself, you should use explosives that can be detonated from a distance through wireless or electric wires.

#### **Notes:**

- The mujahidin should organize themselves in linked cells for sabotage operations.
- The best sabotage operations target military supplies, including taking the enemy’s goods and funds.
- Realistic planning for these operations.
- The mujahid needs to develop more effective sabotage methods that are quicker and more powerful.<sup>305</sup>

## *5. Familiarity with Target Environment*

Greater familiarity with the environment of the target can increase the likelihood of success for an operation. Generally a high level of familiarity, i.e., the ability to blend in easily, is required for critical

---

<sup>304</sup> Jund al-Islam, “Suggested Methods and Techniques for Disguising Explosive Charges.” *Al-Firdaws (Paradise)* website, March 24, 2005. Translation by Sammy Salama.

<sup>305</sup> “Destroying Train Tracks.” *Al-Firdaws* website, undated. Translation by Sammy Salama.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

infrastructure attacks<sup>306</sup> Depending upon the target, familiarity can be localized, such as familiarity with a particular chemical plant that is to be attacked. However, familiarity with a wide range of attributes and the ability to blend into different environments would be required if an attack were to be conducted on foreign soil, such as with the 9/11 bombings and in many other al-Qa`ida attacks.

It should be noted, especially in terms of the narrower definition of target environment, that the use of insiders could dramatically increase a group's capability in this category. The use of insiders can occur either before or after the selection of the target. The group may select the target in part because it already has an insider in that facility. Or the group may place an insider into the target environment after choosing to conduct an attack on it.

Al-Qa`ida has proven itself to be highly skilled in this category, as exemplified by the operatives in the 9/11 hijacking. Overall, these individuals were able to live in the U.S., receive flight training, and board the target planes without problems, which presupposes a relatively high degree of familiarity with the target environment the availability of logistical resources such as counterfeit identity documentation. It should be noted, however, that due to the high level of vigilance and attention to details such as documentation, communications, etc., since the 9/11 attacks, operating long-term in the U.S. and in many countries worldwide without detection has become increasingly difficult.

### *6. Communications*

The ability to maintain robust and secure communications at various stages during attack preparations and operations is another important capability in coordinating and carrying out any attack plan. Communication levels can be anything from extensive networks with a great deal of redundancy to primitive systems supporting only limited levels of communications. Generally, a medium level of communication is required for infrastructural attacks.<sup>307</sup> Varying communication levels will likely be required at different stages of planning and execution. The organization of a group is an important factor in the level of communications required for an incident. A group, such as al-Qa`ida, which trains its members to operate within smaller cells will probably

---

<sup>306</sup> Calculation based on CrITIC database analysis.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

## *Capabilities for Attacking Critical Infrastructure*

not require high levels of communication after initial training and briefings in order to coordinate the details of an attack.

Interrogation testimony from Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, an integral member of al-Qa`ida, reveals that oral, and not written, reports were generally used by the organization:

I conducted the September 11 operation by submitting only oral reports. I would travel for a day-and-a-half until I reach [sic] Bin Ladin, and I inform him what was happening. Sometimes I scratched down my notes on a small piece of paper about 10cm long ... We spoke nonsense on the telephone with the operatives and the go-between people like Ramzi Bin al-Shibh. But in the end the operation was a success. I know that running an operation in the West demands specific administrative work. Yet, you must believe that the same operation could be run successfully with simple primitive means.<sup>308</sup>

This lack of extensive communication and reporting simplifies the way in which al-Qa`ida conducts its operations. It minimizes opportunities for detection by the authorities and presupposes a great deal of autonomy for cells and cell members conducting operations. However, it should be remembered that to conduct whatever communication is needed without detection is much more difficult in the post-9/11 environment, so communication between leaders and operational cells is likely to become even less formal and prevalent than it was previously.

It should also be noted that the Internet has enhanced many of the capacities of terrorist organizations, especially in terms of communications methods and logistical planning. According to Vincent Cannistraro, the former chief of counterterrorism at the CIA, it seems that a great number of al-Qa`ida members and allies are adept at computer science, and they appear to be focusing their attention on ensuring secure communications between al-Qa`ida cells.<sup>309</sup> To that end, there have been indications that al-Qa`ida has been using the Internet to disseminate messages and strategic documents by utilizing encryption

---

<sup>308</sup> "KSM Testimony," pp. 55-6.

<sup>309</sup> Dan Verton, "Experts: Don't dismiss cyberattack warning," *Computerworld*, November 18, 2002, [www.computerworld.com/securitytopics/security/story/0,10801,76000,00.html](http://www.computerworld.com/securitytopics/security/story/0,10801,76000,00.html).

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

software or posting these documents on the web coded in other digital packets, thereby enhancing their overall communications capabilities.<sup>310</sup>

### **BOX 6.1: AL-QA`IDA CAPABILITIES AND 9/11**

The development of the 9/11 operation illustrates the generally high level of al-Qa`ida planning and organization discussed earlier. During this operation, there was a great deal of compartmentalization of information among those involved in the attack. According to Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, 34 people knew about the attack, with only five having the full details: Usama bin Ladin, Abu Hafs al-Masri, Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, Ramzi bin al-Shayb, and Abu Turab al-Urduni.<sup>1</sup> In addition, to minimize the need for constant communications once the operatives were in the United States, Khalid Shaykh Muhammad gave hijacker Muhammed `Ata the authority to act as a decision-maker on the ground, thus encouraging the members to be as normal as possible in their dealings, to never contact Pakistan, and keep communications short.<sup>2</sup>

This attack also demonstrates al-Qa`ida's capacity for limiting or altering its targets based on its perceived capabilities (along with other factors). For example, according to KSM, the al-Qa`ida military committee held a meeting two and a half years before 9/11 to discuss a martyrdom attack inside the U.S. The committee originally chose to attack U.S. nuclear facilities, but changed its mind, "fearing that the attack would go out of control."<sup>3</sup> Later, the initial vision of a two-stage 9/11 operation, with a second set of attacks in the Pacific region, was reduced by Bin Ladin to only one geographical area.

In terms of the use of skilled operatives, there is evidence that various hijackers were tasked according to their skills. For example, Sa`id Bahaji, who studied computer engineering at the Technical University in Harburg, was skilled at organization. As such, he was placed in charge of communications, as well as the handling of personalized money transfers.<sup>4</sup> However, logistical exigencies at times outweighed desired skill levels. According to KSM, whether the operatives selected as hijackers had any talents or previous aptitude as pilots was not taken into account, either by him or by Bin Ladin. Instead, operatives such as

---

<sup>310</sup> Gary R. Bunt, *Islam In The Digital Age: E-jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London: Pluto, 2003), p. 57.

**BOX 6.1 *Cont.: Capabilities and 9/11***

Nawaz al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mikhdhar were selected primarily because they had U.S. visas.<sup>5</sup>

Familiarity with the target environment was also a consideration in the planning phase, and the use of members with experience in the West was emphasized.<sup>6</sup> To that end, operatives Muhammad `Ata, Ramzi bin al-Shayb, Marwan al-Shahhi, and Ziyad al-Jarrah were ideal candidates for this attack, since they possessed fluent English language skills and had lived in Germany for several years.<sup>7</sup> Three of the four went on to participate in the hijackings as pilots, although Bin al-Shayb did not end up participating in the attacks because he was unable to obtain a U.S. visa despite multiple attempts.

For those less familiar with Western life, the initial step upon arrival in the country for al-Hazmi and al-Mikhdhar, two of the other potential pilots, was to enter an English-language school in order to improve their language skills before enrolling in flight school.<sup>8</sup> Despite this attempt at compensation for the lack of prior English-language ability, neither al-Hazmi nor al-Mikhdhar ever mastered enough English to succeed in their flight training. They instead participated in the attacks as “muscle” hijackers.<sup>9</sup>

There were other difficulties with operatives which reduced al-Qa`ida's capabilities to conceal its activities and blend into its surroundings, and which therefore could have hindered the success of the attack. For example, the selection of Zakhariyya Mussawi as an al-Qa`ida operative can be viewed as a mistake. Mussawi did not sufficiently blend into his surroundings, and especially stood out due to his bizarre conduct at the Pan Am International Flight Academy in Minnesota. This included his lack of previously attained flight credentials, the fact that he paid \$9,000 in cash for his training, and that he focused his interest solely on learning how to take off and land Pan Am's Boeing 747. His unusual behavior and circumstances led the Minneapolis FBI Field Office to initiate an investigation on Mussawi on August 15, 2001, and they were able to arrest him shortly thereafter because of a visa overstay.<sup>10</sup> The implications of this weakness in the selection of al-Qa`ida operatives were not fully realized by law enforcement officials until after the attack and thus did not negatively impact on al-Qa`ida's capabilities as much as it could and indeed should have.

**BOX 6.1 Cont.: Capabilities and 9/11**

In sum, the above information reveals that a great deal of planning, training, skill development, security in communications, and assimilation to the target environment were evident in the “planes operation.” Indeed, all of these capabilities contributed to the success of the 9/11 attacks.

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> “KSM Testimony,” p.24

<sup>2</sup> “KSM Testimony,” p.10

<sup>3</sup> Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> Miller and Stone, *The Cell*, p.256.

<sup>5</sup> “KSM Testimony,” pp. 17-18.

<sup>6</sup> Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, p.160.

<sup>8</sup> “KSM Testimony,” pp.8-9.

<sup>9</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 221-223; p.231.

<sup>10</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, p.169; *DOJ IG 9/11 Report*, July 2, 2004, pp. 109-197  
In *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 540.

**BOX 6.2: THE JULY 7, 2005 LONDON BOMBINGS**

While there is still much that remains unknown about the planning of the London bombings – including the confirmation of credit claimed by Abu Hafs al-Masri<sup>1</sup> – a review of several key details begins to reveal a picture about the capabilities of those who committed the attacks. In terms of financing, the attacks required a relatively low-level of financial resources, with the homemade bombs costing approximately \$2,000 to produce.<sup>2</sup> The bombers – Muhammad Siddiq Khan from Dewsbury, Shehzad Tanweer from Beeston, Hasib Husayn from Beeston, and Jermaine Lindsay from Huddersfield – were clearly familiar with their target environment, having gained this from being born in Britain.

Some technical skill in bomb-making was required, but it should be remembered that these bombs were relatively simple knapsack devices that were made with peroxide-based chemicals and detonated by cell phones.<sup>3</sup> There has also been speculation that the operatives acquired the know-how to create these bombs from information available on the

**BOX 6.2 Cont.: London Bombings**

Internet.<sup>4</sup>

Photographic evidence of a trip to Pakistan by Khan and Tanweer in November 2004, along with records of a trip to Pakistan by Husayn, has lead to suspicions that the trio traveled to Afghanistan for suspected training by al-Qa`ida or other jihadist groups.<sup>5</sup> Links to al-Qa`ida, if they do in fact exist, may have provided the bombers with additional training as well as financial, logistical, and other capabilities.

What these scant details reveal is the relatively low level of capabilities required to commit a small-scale attack on the London subway system. The low levels of protection provided in most subway systems, with their unrestricted public access, lack of security screening, and generally large crowds, further reduced the need for high levels of various capability traits.

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Although credit for the London attacks was taken by Abu Hafs al-Masri (the same group that claimed the 2004 Madrid attacks), it is likely that the perpetrators of the London attacks did not have any formal relations with the Spanish al-Qa`ida related cell.

<sup>2</sup> Tariq Panja, "London Bombings Were Low-Cost Operation," *Associated Press*, January 3, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> "CIA: Bomber tape 'appears genuine'", *CNN.com*, September 2, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> "Leak Gives Official Story Of London 7/7 Attacks" *Intelligence Wire, China Daily Source: Financial Times Information Limited – Asia*, April 10, 2006; "London bombings low budget affair, no Al-Qaeda link: report," *Agence France Presse – English*, April 9, 2006

<sup>5</sup> Photographic records are taken through the *Pisces* system of all individuals traveling to and from Pakistan through legal points of entry. "Killers' journey to heart of evil - London 7/7 Terror Threat," *Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)*, July 20, 2005.

**SUMMARY: AL-QA`IDA'S CAPABILITIES FOR ATTACKING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

The above evaluation of the baseline capability requirements to conduct attacks against critical infrastructure suggests that these levels are



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

sufficiently low to allow terrorists groups to conduct the majority of such attacks. While an exact measure of al-Qa`ida's capabilities in these areas is not currently quantifiable, a general calculation of its abilities supports the view that al-Qa`ida is capable of attacking a broad cross-section of critical infrastructure targets. It should also be remembered that large-scale attacks along the lines of the 9/11 attacks are not always necessary to further al-Qa`ida's short- or long-term goals. More recent attacks, such as the Bali bombings and the London bombings, may have lacked the scope and sophistication of the 9/11 attacks or the *U.S.S. Cole* attack in 2000, but these were nonetheless successfully completed operations that brought al-Qa`ida back to the forefront of political debate and the public eye.<sup>311</sup> These incidents also served as a reminder that the U.S. and other "enemy nations" must be constantly vigilant and increasingly devote resources to protect themselves against new attacks. After all, even relatively small-scale attacks can further al-Qa`ida's goals of inciting fear in the West and slowly weakening the economic strength of Western nations.

---

<sup>311</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Al Qaeda, Trends in Terrorism, and Future Potentialities: An Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003).

# CHAPTER SEVEN:

## AL-QA`IDA-LINKED TERRORIST ATTACKS ON CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES<sup>312\*</sup>

Attacks and plots by al-Qa`ida against critical infrastructure targets in the United States will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, but in order to provide context for these and to provide additional details about the ways in which al-Qa`ida might carry out attacks against American infrastructure, this chapter will discuss the past record of al-Qa`ida-related attacks against non-U.S. targets. Although al-Qa`ida's attacks against U.S. critical infrastructure have been devastating in their effects, successful attacks against critical infrastructure targets in America constitute just under 3 percent of all such attacks perpetrated by the group and its affiliates (see Figure 7.1). In contrast to the five successful North American al-Qa`ida critical infrastructure attacks examined later in the study, this chapter examines regions that have witnessed 3, 10, and 147 successful al-Qa`ida attacks against critical infrastructural sectors – respectively, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa. This allows for some degree of quantitative analysis when looking at these attacks.

This chapter has three sections. Section I provides a quantitative assessment of successful al-Qa`ida critical infrastructure attacks in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa, with a more in-

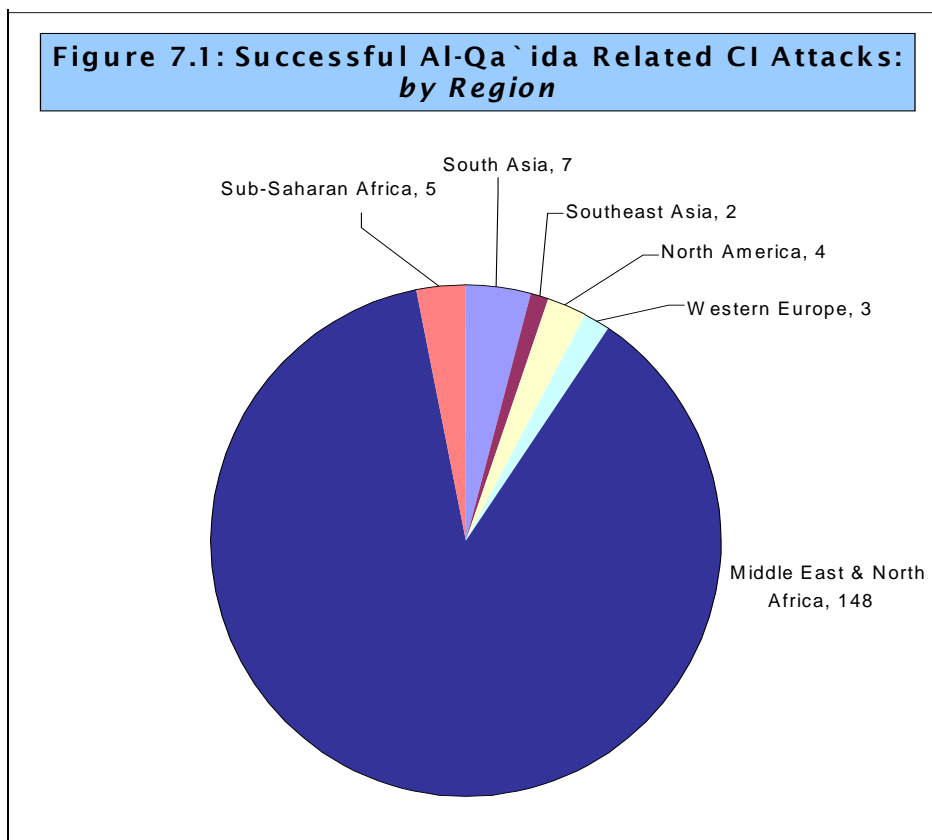
---

<sup>312</sup> This section is mainly drawn from the Critical Infrastructure Terrorist Attack (CrITerA) database, created by analysts at the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies (CETIS). The database includes over 7,000 cases of attacks on critical infrastructure (CI) by non-state actors (e.g. plots, failed and successful attacks, etc.).

\* This chapter was prepared by Charles Blair, with Elle DiLorenzo and Christopher Lunsford.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

depth examination of certain notable attacks. Section II investigates al-Qa`ida attacks targeting critical infrastructure components that were ultimately deemed unsuccessful, either because the attacks failed or were foiled, or because they never proceeded beyond the plot phase and were interdicted by the authorities or otherwise abandoned.<sup>313</sup> Finally, section III of this chapter offers an overview of al-Qa`ida's quantitative attack trends against critical infrastructure in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa.



<sup>313</sup> The quantitative aspects of this chapter differ from the chronology. In the latter, cases are included that were ultimately unsuccessful, such as the attempted bombing of Air France Flight 63 by the so-called “shoe bomber” (Richard Reid). See Section II of this chapter for an explanation of why a statistical analysis of plots, threats, hoaxes and failed attacks, on the basis of open source investigations, is inherently problematic.

## **SUCCESSFUL AL-QA`IDA CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ATTACKS IN EUROPE, ASIA, AND THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA**

### **Europe**

Despite more than a dozen years of simmering jihadist activity, Europe was slow to confront the dangers posed by al-Qa`ida.<sup>314</sup> Ironically, until its displacement by the Middle East and North Africa in 2004, Europe as a region saw the greatest number of attacks on critical infrastructure – 29% of the global total. Yet these attacks were almost all at the hands of ethno-nationalist or secular utopian (particularly extreme left) terrorist groups, e.g. Action Directe (AD: Direct Action), the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF: Red Army Faction), the Front de Libération Nationale de la Corse (FLNC: National Liberation Front of Corsica), the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA: Basque Fatherland and Freedom), and various individuals. In short, despite a long history of critical infrastructure attacks, it was not until 2004 that Europe witnessed attacks on its critical infrastructure perpetrated by jihadists seeking to cause mass casualties. Even after the shocking attacks of 9/11, which demonstrated that Europe was a nucleus in almost all of al-Qa`ida's operations, Europeans in general were reticent to view al-Qa`ida as a serious security threat.<sup>315</sup> In contrast, following the March 2004 Madrid train attacks (see Box 7.1) and the July 2005 London Tube and bus attacks, Europeans have begun to awaken to the grim threat that al-Qa`ida poses to the continent's critical infrastructure. For statistical purposes, the Madrid attacks (four train bombings) and London attacks (one bombing of a double-decker bus and three bombings of cars in separate underground trains) constitute all eight of al-Qa`ida's successful attacks in Europe.<sup>316</sup>

---

<sup>314</sup> Certainly this is not to say that Europe was unaware of the dangers of jihadism. For example, among the many terrorist groups active in Europe throughout the mid- and latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA: Armed Islamic Group) provided a preview of al-Qa`ida's future attack modality on 9/11. In December of 1994, the GIA hijacked an Air France Airbus in Algiers. Although its plan was ultimately foiled, the GIA's apparent intent was to "crash a fully fueled plane onto the Eiffel Tower in the heart of Paris." Moreover, there was speculation that the terrorists also had plans to "blow the plane up in midair over Paris." See Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, p. 164.

<sup>315</sup> See Bruce Bawer, *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West from Within* (New York: Doubleday, 2006).

<sup>316</sup> As noted earlier, there is no open-source information directly linking the al-Qa`ida core to the planning or financing of the Madrid or London attacks. The perpetrators

### **BOX 7.1: THE MADRID TRAIN ATTACKS**

The Thursday morning commute on March 11, 2004 was proceeding normally; the trains were arriving and departing like clockwork, as they did every day, laden with workers and students making their daily journey into Madrid. Running fifteen minutes apart from one another, four separate trains stopped at the Alcalá de Henares Station to transfer passengers before heading toward the Spanish capital.

As the first train pulled into Madrid's Atocha Station at 7:37 a.m., explosions erupted, blasting the third, fourth and sixth carriages of the train. Almost simultaneously, four bombs exploded in the first, fifth and sixth carriages of a second train, which followed behind the first and stood only 500 meters outside the Atocha Station. Only a few minutes later, the air erupted with the sound of two more explosions at the El Pozo del Tio Raimundo Station three miles away, where the fourth and fifth carriages of a double-decker train had been ruptured. At 7:42 a.m. one final explosion demolished the steel hull of a fourth train heading from Guadalajara to Principe Pio in Santa Eugenia Station.<sup>1</sup>

In total, 10 bombs exploded on four trains, claiming the lives of 191 people and injuring more than 2,000.<sup>2</sup> The bombs were carried onto the trains at the Alcalá de Henares Station in duffel bags, one of which was discovered at the El Pozo Station containing a bomb which had failed to detonate. This bag contained approximately 10 kg (22 lb) of Goma-2 explosives, a copper detonator, and metal fragments, mostly nails and screws, designed to create shrapnel.<sup>3</sup>

On March 11, 2004, the same day as the bombings, the London-based Arab newspaper *Al-Quds al-`Arabi* received a letter from a group calling itself the Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri (Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades). The group was claiming responsibility, on al-Qa`ida's behalf, for the Madrid attacks, as well as for a suicide attack in Istanbul two days earlier.<sup>4</sup> The letter went on to demand the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq and warned of future attacks in retaliation for non-compliance.<sup>5</sup>

---

were members of independent cells that were, however, beholden to the same jihadist ideology.

**BOX 7.1 *Cont.: The Madrid Train Attacks***

The attack in Madrid possessed many of the hallmarks of a classic al-Qa`ida operation – numerous attacks on multiple critical infrastructural targets carried out at approximately the same time. Carrying out several attacks nearly simultaneously accords every strike the element of surprise, preventing other planned targets from being hardened with increased security before a subsequent attack can take place. By attacking multiple trains in multiple locations at a specific time when casualties would be greatest, the suspects not only incapacitated the transportation infrastructure,<sup>6</sup> but indirectly affected other critical infrastructure sectors, such as emergency first responders, law enforcement, and hospitals, by straining the limits of their resources in terms of equipment, supplies, and personnel. In this case, there were so many people requiring medical attention that medical teams were forced to use a nearby stadium to treat the wounded because the logistics of taking everyone to various hospitals around the city would have been overwhelming.

Two salient points stand out regarding the Madrid train bombings. First, in the past al-Qa`ida had often targeted Western, especially U.S., embassies and other targets that were directly associated with Western governments and interests. As a reactive and preventative measure, those governments have significantly increased security procedures and defenses at such sites. Al-Qa`ida, in turn, may have been adapting to this fact by going after “softer” targets.<sup>7</sup> The Madrid and London bombings,<sup>7</sup> both of which targeted the transportation infrastructure, are examples of such planning and may constitute part of a broader, ongoing trend to identify “soft” critical infrastructure targets for attack.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, the attackers clearly sought to manipulate the political landscape in Spain.<sup>9</sup>

The Madrid attack was strategically devised to take place three days before the general elections. Prime Minister José María Aznar’s ruling conservative Partido Popular (PP: Popular Party) was leading in the polls by a slim margin of four and a half points against the Socialist Party.<sup>10</sup> The attackers were presumably well aware that the majority of the populace in Spain opposed Aznar’s decision to send troops to Iraq, and was therefore likely to blame the ruling party, at least indirectly, for the attack. In addition, PP spokesmen initially accused ETA of involvement in the attacks, even as evidence to the contrary was beginning to mount, which gave the public the impression that Aznar was more concerned

**BOX 7.1 Cont.: The Madrid Train Attacks**

with political gain than with bringing the true perpetrators to justice.<sup>11</sup> Aznar's party consequently lost the elections, and Spanish troops were subsequently withdrawn from Iraq. The terrorists were seemingly astute in their expectations of manipulating the Spanish masses and the political scene to achieve their goals.<sup>12</sup>

Adapting to the post-9/11 hardening of Western targets, al-Qa`ida-related groups are opting for a leaner approach: striking softer, less fortified targets, and causing mass casualties. Transportation infrastructure, excluding aviation, is especially vulnerable, and the future may reveal a rise in maritime attacks, a sector that has seen relatively few terrorist attacks in comparison with other elements of the transportation infrastructure.<sup>13</sup> The most striking point about the Madrid bombings was the attackers' success, inadvertent or otherwise, in manipulating the political landscape. Such calculations will likely play a larger role in future attacks.

In more symbolic terms, the Madrid attacks may portend the passing of the al-Qa`ida mass-casualty attack torch from the United States to Europe. Muhammad Ashraf – the leader of the Madrid attack cell – reportedly received a letter from Muhammad Salama in February 2003 (Salama, as will be noted later in this study, is currently imprisoned in Supermax for his involvement in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing). “Make us live with happiness, make us die as martyrs,” Salama wrote to Ashraf, “may we be united on the Day of Judgement.”<sup>14</sup>

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> “The Attacks,” In Depth: Madrid Train Attacks, *BBC News*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/05/madrid\\_bombings/html/1d.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/05/madrid_bombings/html/1d.stm).

<sup>2</sup> Blake D. Ward, *Osama's Wake: The Second Generation of Al Qaeda*. (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> “The Investigation,” In Depth: Madrid Train Attacks, *BBC News*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/05/madrid\\_bombings/html/2.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/05/madrid_bombings/html/2.stm).

<sup>4</sup> In the November 20, 2003 bombing in Turkey, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device in downtown Istanbul near buildings housing the British and Israeli Consulates (Some reports promulgate the idea that the Islamic militant group IBDA-C may have carried out the attacks, but this is highly questionable). According to reports, the explosion was so big that buildings hundreds of meters away had their windows blown out. The attack killed an estimated 28 people and injured 450.

<sup>5</sup> “Al-Qaida letter claims Spain bombings,” *Al-Jazira*, March 12, 2004,

**BOX 7.1 Cont.: The Madrid Train Attacks**

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/8FE71593-885E-48E2-9B7F-AE0D4C817D9D.htm>. Last Accessed May 13, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Not only were those particular rail lines affected, but nearly all rail traffic in and out of the city was effectively shut down due to the implementation of a “cage operation,” or “operación jaula,” designed to prevent the terrorists from fleeing the city.

<sup>7</sup> Jihadists struck the transportation system in central London on July 7, 2005, killing 52 people and injuring more than 770. Although using the same moniker as those that struck in Madrid (Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri), it seems clear that the perpetrators of the London attacks were members of a different al-Qa`ida-related cell.

<sup>8</sup> It has been noted that “Spanish investigators believe that the group [responsible for the attack] had been studying the Spanish railway system for a possible attack for almost three years.” See Lorenzo Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad* (New York: Prometheus, 2006), p. 298.

<sup>9</sup> In a larger sense, it has been argued that Spain is a particularly appealing target to jihadists because Spain was a home to Islam for more than 500 years. The expulsion of Muslims from the Iberian peninsula in 1492 “resonates in the fundamentalist imagination,” writes David Remnick, “like the defeat of the Muslim armies in Vienna in 1683 and the end of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924.” David Remnick, “Comment After Madrid,” *The New Yorker*, March 29, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence Wright, “A Reporter At Large, The Terror Web,” *The New Yorker*, August 2, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> There was, however, good reason to initially doubt the claim of responsibility by the Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri. Other than claiming accountability for the November 20 bombing in Turkey, an assertion that was weakened somewhat by a similar claim of responsibility by another group, Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri had already issued a blatantly false statement. The group claimed initial responsibility for the August 2003 blackout that hit the northeastern United States – a power failure that was, in fact, caused by a grid overload and “communications failures.” Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe*, pp. 294-5.

<sup>12</sup> Jihadists had been active in Madrid, however, since the mid-1980s. Indeed, Madrid had some of Europe’s most active al-Qa`ida cells. One of those charged in the Madrid attacks, `Amir Azizi, has been accused by Spanish magistrates of organizing the July 2001 *tête-à-tête* between 9/11 hijackers Muhammad `Ata and Ramzi bin al-Shayb in Cambrils, Spain. Moreover, as noted above, the planning for attacks on the Spanish railway system, according to Spanish intelligence officials, was underway for almost three years prior to its culmination in Madrid – long before the U.S. war in Iraq. See Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe*, p. 321 and *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), pp. 243-7.

<sup>13</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *The Changing Face of Terrorism*, (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004), p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> As quoted in Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe*, p. 329.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

### **Asia**

CETIS researchers identified a total of nine successful critical infrastructure attacks by al-Qa`ida-related terrorists in Asia as a whole.

- **Southeast Asia** has experienced two successful al-Qa`ida-related critical infrastructure attacks; both of which took place in Indonesia and were perpetrated against government targets by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI: Islamic Community). The first was the bombing of the Indonesian Parliament building in July 2003, which was followed by the September 2004 car bombing of the Australian Embassy.
- **South Asia** has had a total of seven successful critical infrastructure attacks at the hands of al-Qa`ida-related groups.
  - Al-Qa`ida was responsible for two of the attacks: the 1999 rocket attack on the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, and another rocket strike, this time in 2003, on an airport in Afghanistan.
  - Harkat-ul Mujahidin (HuM: Mujahidin Movement) – an al-Qa`ida affiliate – staged two major attacks, both in Pakistan. One was a bombing at Karachi's main port and the other was the gruesome and bizarre attack on the Macedonian Consulate in Karachi (see Box 7.2).
  - Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM: Army of Muhammad) – another group affiliated with al-Qa`ida – conducted three major attacks in India against targets that can be construed to constitute critical infrastructure; most notably the December 13, 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament building and the attack on the Kashmir State Assembly in October of that year. The third attack involved the destruction of a critical rail line and the consequent crash of a large freight train.

**BOX 7.2: THE MACEDONIAN CONSULATE IN PAKISTAN**

As investigators entered the gruesome scene at the consulate, their attention was drawn to one side of the room. Scrawled in blue ink across one wall still standing amongst the rubble were the words “Al-Qa`ida Pakistan, result of infidelity,” and an admonition entitled “Message for Infidels” that included the following couplet:

Loyalty will be returned in loyalty.  
Oppression in oppression.  
We are men like you.  
We will do what you do.<sup>1</sup>

A few hours earlier on that December 5, 2002 evening, the Macedonian Consulate in Pakistan had been infiltrated by suspected members of the al-Qa`ida-affiliated group Harkat-ul Mujahidin (HuM: Mujahidin Movement), a militant Islamist network based in Pakistan that operates primarily in Kashmir. Three bodies were found inside the building – two Pakistani men and a woman – each with their hands and feet bound and their throats slit. The victims included a security guard at the consulate and two of his acquaintances.<sup>2</sup> After executing the three individuals, the attackers stole computer equipment and other property before detonating a bomb that officials believe was constructed of dynamite strips.<sup>3</sup>

On the most basic level, the bombing is widely believed to have been an act of retaliation for the killing of seven Pakistani men by Macedonian Special Police Officers (SPOs) on March 2, 2002. The facts surrounding the March 2002 incident, known as the Rastanski Lozja case, were extremely controversial. The officers involved claimed that they had fired on a van as it attempted to drive through a roadblock in the capital city of Skopje. The Pakistanis inside the van were reportedly planning attacks on Western embassies. Investigations later revealed that they were merely migrant workers who had been lured by SPOs into a deceptive plot and a deadly ambush. The ploy’s rationale was reportedly to gain international attention for Macedonian efforts in fighting terrorism and, in doing so, to curry favor with the U.S., which was seeking partners for its new anti-terrorism campaign.<sup>4</sup> Many Pakistanis suspected foul play even before the outcome of the official investigation, and this incident likely catalyzed the targeting of the Macedonian Consulate in Pakistan.

**BOX 7.2 Cont.: The Macedonian Consulate in Pakistan**

The Rostanski Lozja incident is also a reflection of Macedonia's alliance with the West's "War on Terror." The perception that Macedonia was so eager and willing to use deceptive means to "prove its loyalty" as a partner with the U.S. undoubtedly angered those who carried out the attack on the Macedonian Consulate, as indeed it angered many others throughout the world. The incident identified Macedonia as a "co-conspirator" with the West, and therefore marked it as a legitimate and noteworthy target for al-Qa`ida and its associates.

The Macedonian Consulate bombing, though carried out by an al-Qa`ida-affiliated group, did not share the characteristic, common features of many other al-Qa`ida strikes – simultaneous attacks on multiple Western targets (often soft targets) carried out by a handful of radical suicide bombers, ideally creating fear and chaos across a city or country and also overextending the emergency response and medical infrastructure. Why, indeed, were the victims bound and their throats cut? Why did the attackers take the time to write a message on the wall? Why not simply drive a car laden with explosives into the consulate? Though the attack was in line with al-Qa`ida's greater goal of jihad – waging war against Western "infidels" – the Macedonian Consulate attack in Pakistan was exceptionally personal and visceral, and its message was unequivocal and direct: "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."<sup>5</sup>

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Zahar Khan, "Pakistan Questions Militants on Killings," *The Associated Press*, December 10, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> "Pakistan Court Sentences Nine Over Macedonian Mission Attack," *BBC Monitoring*, August 26, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> "US Interferes in Pakistan's Affairs as FBI Visits Macedonia Consulate," *Financial Times Information*, *Global News Wire*, December 11, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Harry de Quetteville, "Macedonia 'staged fake terror plot to woo US,'" *The Daily Telegraph (London)*, May 22, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> The entire verse reads, "But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." Exodus 21:23-25 (NIV).

## *Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks Outside the U.S.*

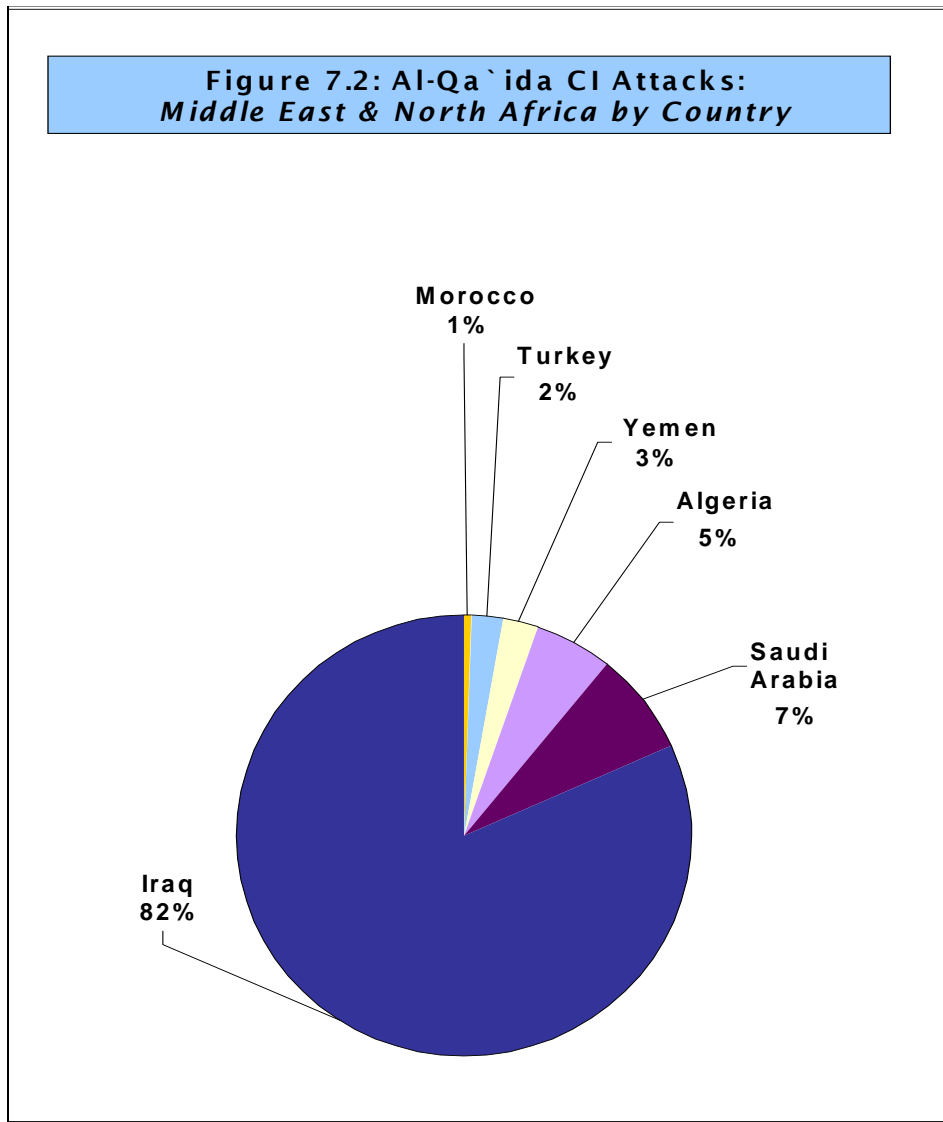
### **Middle East and North Africa**

CETIS researchers have identified 145 successful al-Qa`ida-related critical infrastructure attacks in the Middle East and North Africa. Not surprisingly, Iraq dwarfed all other states in the region, as it experienced 121 total attacks; 80% of the region's total (see Figure 7.2). Due to the opaque qualities of the insurgency in relation to accurate attack ascriptions, Iraq may well represent somewhat of a statistical outlier in any attempt to represent critical infrastructure attacks by al-Qa`ida-linked groups.<sup>317</sup> Accordingly, this section offers quantitative figures that include Iraq critical infrastructure attacks, as well as calculations that omit Iraq (see Figures 7.3 and 4.4).

A detailed examination of the data reveals that the attacks represented in Figure 7.2 were committed by al-Qa`ida and a number of its affiliate groups, as highlighted below:

---

<sup>317</sup> The difficulty here lies in differentiating between the actions of Ba`thist and nationalist insurgents in Iraq and those actions taken by al-Qa`ida-related groups in Iraq. CETIS analysts have made every effort to validate that the recorded attacks on critical infrastructure in Iraq were actually perpetrated by al-Qa`ida-related jihadists, as opposed to other types of insurgents. However, it is impossible to completely separate these two groups, as it is likely that their contacts and actions dovetail frequently.



- **Al-Qa`ida** (the Base). Although having only launched eight successful attacks in the region, al-Qa`ida proper has struck the greatest number of countries in the region: five. The May 2003 Morocco attacks included an assault on the Belgian Consulate (see Box 7.5); Saudi Arabia has been struck twice – the first attack was against a Saudi National Guard facility (jointly operated with the United States) in 1995; the diplomatic district of Damascus, Syria was struck in April of 2004; Yemen has borne the brunt of three attacks, the most notable being the bombing of the *U.S.S. Cole* in October 2000. Finally, Iraq has had one attack by al-Qa`ida proper;

## *Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks Outside the U.S.*

in October 2003, the group struck a hotel facility that was temporarily serving as a center for senior Iraqi governmental leaders.

- **Al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Haramayn** (Al-Qa`ida in the Land of the Two Holy Places); also known as al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qa`ida in Saudi Arabia. This group has successfully struck Saudi Arabian critical infrastructure on three occasions. On December 6, 2004, it attacked the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah. On December 29, 2004, the Interior Ministry building was attacked, followed 30 minutes later by a military recruitment center.
- **Al-Qai`da fi Bilad al-Rafidyan** (Al-Qa`ida in the Land of the Two Rivers); also known as al-Qa`ida in Iraq, al-Qa`ida in Mesopotamia, and the Zarqawi group. Formerly known as the Jama`at al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad (JTJ: Unity of God and Jihad Association). CETIS researchers have identified 84 critical infrastructure attacks directly attributable to al-Qa`ida in Iraq. Thirty-four of these attacks (40%) occurred in the weeks leading up to the January 30, 2005 Iraqi National Assembly Elections, all of which were on polling stations. Police infrastructural targets have been attacked 20 times (24%), and critical military-related infrastructure has been attacked on six occasions (7%). The remaining 24 attacks (28%) mostly targeted governmental (non-military) critical infrastructure.
- **Ansar al-Islam** (Supporters of Islam). Ansar al-Islam has attacked critical infrastructure on three occasions, all in Iraq and all in 2003. Two of the attacks were suicide car bombings: on September 10, 2004, Ansar al-Islam attacked a U.S. military intelligence facility, and on October 14, 2003, they struck the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad. The third attack – on November 17, 2003 – was against an oil pipeline.
- **Ansar al-Sunna** (Supporters of the Sunna). Ansar al-Sunna has recorded 18 attacks against critical infrastructure, all of them in Iraq. Six of the attacks have been directed against critical police infrastructure, whereas nine attacks were visited upon elements of Iraq's political infrastructure – polling places, political party headquarters and, on one occasion, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry. Three attacks were against critical oil infrastructure, i.e., pipelines and storage tanks.
- **Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat** (GSPC: Salafist Group for Preaching and Fighting). The GSPC has struck critical infrastructure in the region (North Africa and the Middle East) on eight occasions, all of them in Algeria. Five of the attacks were against critical components of Algeria's energy sector (electrical power stations and power plants). The groups' remaining

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

attacks against critical infrastructure were against a water supply, an oil pipeline, and the railroad infrastructure, all on one occasion.

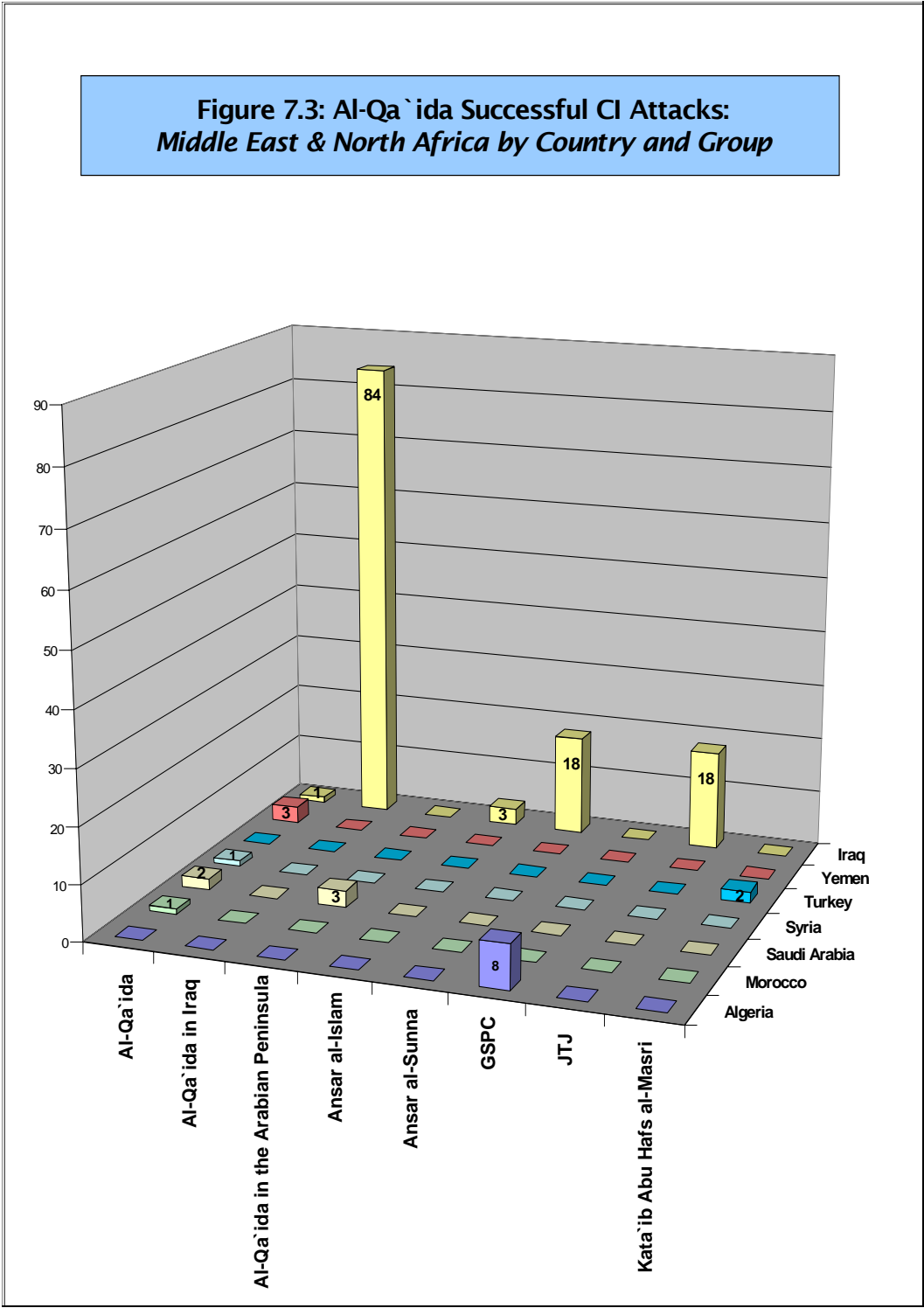
- **Jama`at al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad** (JTJ: Unity of God and Jihad Association). Prior to changing its name to al-Qa`ida in Mesopotamia, the JTJ conducted 17 attacks on critical infrastructure, all of them in Iraq.<sup>318</sup> Eight of the attacks were on police-related critical infrastructure; four on Iraqi military-related critical infrastructure. In addition, the JTJ struck the Green Zone and a U.S.-Iraqi air base. Finally, the JTJ attacked a bridge, a hospital, a water-treatment plant, and an oil terminal.

---

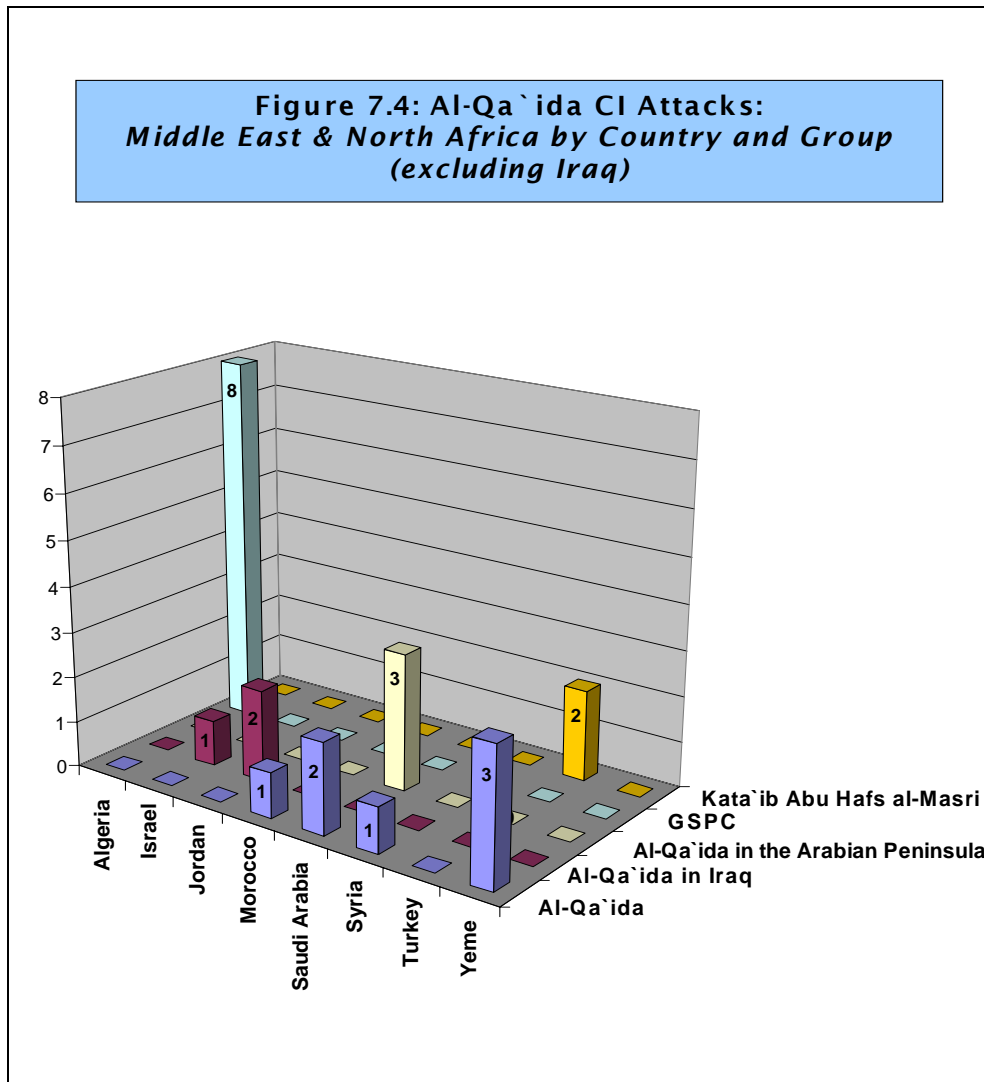
<sup>318</sup> On October 17, 2004, the JTJ proclaimed its full allegiance to Usama bin Ladin and al-Qa`ida, and pledged to follow the former's orders and instructions. As noted in the Chronology, the JTJ was putatively responsible for an attack on Iraqi critical infrastructure after it changed its name. This attack was most likely carried out by a splinter faction, or was the result of inaccurate reporting.

Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks Outside the U.S.

**Figure 7.3: Al-Qa`ida Successful CI Attacks: Middle East & North Africa by Country and Group**







## UNSUCCESSFUL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ATTACKS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

A statistical analysis of plots, threats, hoaxes, and failed attacks, on the basis of open source investigations, is inherently problematic for two reasons. First, CETIS researchers are acutely aware that plots to attack critical infrastructure may be abandoned during their planning or operational phases and thus never come to the attention of outsiders. Second, numerous plots have undoubtedly been thwarted by the authorities, and their very existence has never left the classified realm and made it into the public record. This unavoidable lack of

## *Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks Outside the U.S.*

comprehensiveness severely compromises any attempts at a quantitative analysis of foiled and failed attacks, plots, hoaxes, threats, etc.

While a robust quantitative analysis of unsuccessful critical infrastructure attacks is therefore beyond the scope of this study, open source information about plots and failed attacks – as evidenced throughout this study – is extremely valuable in assessing al-Qa`ida's goals, methods, and attitudes toward critical infrastructure. In addition to those plots discussed below in the section dealing with American targets outside the U.S., the Middle East and North Africa region has experienced several noteworthy plots and unsuccessful attacks, two of which are discussed below in Boxes 7.3 and 7.4.

### **BOX 7.3: SAUDI ARABIA'S ABQA`IQ OIL FACILITY ATTACK**

February 24, 2006 marked an important milestone for al-Qa`ida. On that day its operatives attacked Saudi Arabia's Abqa`iq oil facility, which marked the very first attack on an oil facility in that country. Abqa`iq is the largest oil refinery in the world: it generates approximately two-thirds of Saudi Arabia's oil output, and processes 5-7 million barrels of oil per day.<sup>1</sup> Responsibility for the Abqa`iq attack was claimed by al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Haramayn (Al-Qaida in the Land of the Two Holy Places) on an Islamic website shortly after the incident.<sup>2</sup> The message called the attackers "holy warriors" and said that the attack was "part of a series of operations that al-Qa`ida is carrying out against the crusaders and the Jews to stop their plundering of Muslim wealth."<sup>3</sup>

The attack occurred on a Friday afternoon at approximately 3 p.m. local time, several hours after daily prayers.<sup>4</sup> The perpetrators approached the facility in two or three vehicles laden with explosives and bearing the logo of Aramco, the state oil company and owner of the facility.<sup>5</sup> The operatives attempted to drive through the gate of the outermost of three fences circling the perimeter of the compound, but were halted by security guards who opened fire on the vehicles. One bomber's car collided with the gate, causing an explosion and blowing a hole in the fence. A second car drove through the hole, exploding as a result of police gunfire. Two of the attackers, Abdallah `Abd al-`Aziz al-Tuwajri and Muhammad Salih al-Ghayth, were killed in the blasts.<sup>6</sup>

A two-hour gunfight ensued between the guards and the remaining

**BOX 7.3 Cont.: Abqa`iq Oil Facility Attack**

operatives, and ended when, almost unbelievably, the militants escaped. Two security guards were fatally wounded during the attack, which also caused a small fire that was quickly brought under control. No other damage and no disruption in oil production occurred.

Three days later, on February 27, 2006, Saudi security forces killed five suspects who were allegedly linked to the attack during a raid on their hideout in the al-Yarmuk district of Riyadh. Three of the five had been tracked after having fled the scene of the foiled attack, including Fahd Faraj al-Juwayr, the leader of al-Qa`ida's network in Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom's most wanted terrorist suspect. The others were Saudi Jaffal Rafi` al-Shamari, Sulayman `Abd al-Rahman Sulayman al-Talaq, Ibrahim Abdallah Ibrahim al-Mutayr, and Abdallah Muhiyya Shalash al-Sulayti al-Shamari. The latter two were suspected al-Qa`ida militants on the Saudi most-wanted list. A vehicle that had been used in the Abqa`iq operation was also found at the scene.<sup>7</sup>

Saudi investigations have also led to the arrests of many others with suspected links to the attacks. A sixth suspect was arrested in Riyadh directly after the February raid, and on March 29, 2006,<sup>8</sup> 40 suspected terrorists were arrested, eight of whom were allegedly connected to the Abqa`iq attack.<sup>9</sup> An additional five suspects in the Abqa`iq operation were arrested in mid-April 2006.<sup>10</sup>

The modus operandi of this attack can be seen as a new and lethal tactic of al-Qa`ida and its affiliates. Indeed, two car bombs and weapons near the Abqa`iq oil refinery complex that were discovered by the Saudi security forces on March 28, 2006 were suspected munitions for a second attack on the facility.<sup>11</sup> In addition, two days after the thwarted attack, Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Rashid al-Anzi, a cleric affiliated with al-Qa`ida, posted a statement on the Internet entitled "The Religious Rule on Targeting Oil Interests," which provided religious justification for attacks on oil-related targets.<sup>12</sup> This statement complemented others by Usama bin Ladin and his associates, urging their followers to bleed the enemy by economically weakening the U.S. and the West.

Attacks on the oil industry could significantly further this economic goal. Despite the failure of the February 24, 2006 plot, the Abqa`iq incident affected the global energy market, in that oil futures immediately jumped

**BOX 7.3 Cont.: Abqa`iq Oil Facility Attack**

by \$2.31, raising prices to \$62.85 per barrel.<sup>13</sup> Further attacks could lead to greater spikes in oil prices, resulting in higher costs for the U.S. and other oil-importing nations.

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Department of Energy (DOE) Country Analysis Briefs, Saudi Arabia, August 2005. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/saudi.html>; See also Hasan Jamali, "Al-Qaida Claims Attack on Saudi Refinery," *Associated Press Online*, February 25, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Scheuer, Stephen Ulph and John C.K. Daly, "Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities: The Achilles Heel

of the Western Economy," *The Jamestown Foundation*, May 2006, p.30.; and "Al-Qaida Claims

Responsibility for Attack on Saudi Oil Facility," *Voice of America News*, February 24, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Donna Abu Nasr, "Al-Qaida threatens more attacks on Saudi oil sites in Web posting, two wounded guards die," *The Associated Press*, February 25, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Jamali, "Car bombers attack world's largest oil processing facility in eastern Saudi Arabia."

<sup>5</sup> Ibid; and Scheuer, Ulph and Daly, "Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities," p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Abdullah Al-Shihri, "Saudis say kingdom's al-Qaida leader, two oil complex attackers slain in raids," *The Associated Press*, February 28, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Abdullah Al-Shihri, "Saudis identify fifth wanted al-Qaida militant killed in Riyadh raids," *Associated Press Worldstream*, March 1, 2006; and "Five oil plot suspects killed in Saudi clashes," *Agence France Presse - English*, February 27, 2006; Abdullah Al-Shihri, "Saudis say kingdom's al-Qaida leader, two oil complex attackers slain in raids," *Associated Press*, February 28, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Shihri, "Saudis say kingdom's al-Qaida leader, two oil complex attackers slain in raids."

<sup>9</sup> Scheuer, Ulph and Daly, "Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Shihri, "Saudis arrest five suspects linked to attack on Abqaiq oil processing facility in February.

<sup>11</sup> Scheuer, Ulph and Daly, "Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities, p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> Shaykh `Abd-al-`Aziz ibn Rashid al-Anzi, "The Religious Rule on Targeting Oil Interest," February 26, 2006, <http://www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums>; compare also Scheuer, Ulph and Daly, "Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> *Arab News*, February 28, 2006, cited in Scheuer, Ulph and Daly, "Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities, p. 31.

**BOX 7.4: SAUDI HIJACKING PLOT: “THIS IS OUR 9/11”**

The three Moroccan nationals were “behaving suspiciously” on May 21, 2003, according to passport clearance officials at Saudi Arabia’s Jeddah Airport.<sup>1</sup> When asked if they were traveling together, one of the three men answered in the affirmative, while another answered “no.” When they were subsequently arrested and questioned, the trio ultimately admitted to having a close affiliation with al-Qa`ida. The men – armed with knives and carrying forged documents and copies of the *Qur’an* bookmarked with their last will and testaments – admitted intricate plans to hijack their Saudia Airlines flight on its scheduled service to Khartoum and crash the plane into a Saudi landmark. Though the intended landmark was undisclosed, some suggested the headquarters of the National Commercial Bank in Jeddah or the Kingdom Centre, a 300-meter tall skyscraper and the largest tower in Riyadh, as plausible targets.<sup>2</sup>

Earlier that same day, the Arab satellite station *al-Jazeera* broadcast a three-and-a-half minute audio tape purportedly from Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qa`ida’s second-in-command. Zawahiri, while praising the actions of the suicide hijackers who attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, urged Muslims to attack American, Jewish, and other Western interests. “O Muslims,” the message said, “muster your resolve and hit the embassies of America, England, Australia and Norway, their interests, their companies and their employees. . . learn the lesson from your 19 brethren who attacked America with their planes, in New York and Washington, wreaking on it unprecedented havoc from which it is still reeling.”<sup>3</sup> The tape also reproached Arab countries for allowing the U.S. military to use Arab land and facilities. Specifically, al-Zawahiri announced, “Here is Saudi Arabia, where [U.S.] planes are launched from their airports.”<sup>4</sup> Al-Zawahiri’s call to action may well have inspired the would-be attackers to strike in the “exemplary” style of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. Indeed, it may be no coincidence that mere hours later, the suspects’ intent was to hijack a plane belonging to Saudi Arabia’s largest national airline carrier and collide into a major Saudi edifice.

The arrests of the three Moroccan men at Jeddah Airport came less than two weeks after Western-occupied residential compounds in Riyadh were attacked by suspected al-Qa`ida suicide bombers in explosive-laden vehicles, killing a total of 34 people and injuring 60.<sup>5</sup> Four days

**BOX 7.4 *Cont.: Saudi Hijacking Plot***

following the May 12, Riyadh bombings, 14 suicide bombers attacked multiple Western and Jewish targets in Casablanca, Morocco (see Box 7.3). Informed of the hijacking plot, Saudi Foreign Minister Sa`ud al-Faysal told reporters, “This is our 9/11.”<sup>6</sup> While Saudi authorities believe that the three men arrested in Jeddah took part in the May 12, attack, it remains unclear whether the previous attacks and the hijack plot were coordinated events.<sup>7</sup> What is clear is that all were carried out (or were intended to be carried out) by suicide operatives, all with links to al-Qa`ida.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that whereas the Riyadh and Casablanca bombings explicitly targeted Western sites in Muslim countries, the Saudi hijack plot did not target Western or Jewish interests. Al-Zawahiri’s message communicated the indignation felt by Islamic fundamentalists toward Arab countries for their collaboration with the West and their perceived maladministration or outright “apostate” secular abandonment of the *shari`a* (Islamic law).

Within a day of the Jeddah arrests, the U.S. State Department closed its consulates in Jeddah and Dhahran and its embassy in Riyadh. The event arguably contributed to the decision by U.S. officials to raise the American terrorist threat level the same day. Britain and Germany also closed their embassies.<sup>8</sup>

Also significant is the redundancy of the plan itself in the Saudi Airlines case. The hijack plot was to be carried out in a style starkly reminiscent of the 9/11 attacks in the U.S. The success of these attacks made that particular style of operation worthy of imitation, as al-Zawahiri emphasized. Transportation infrastructure, which has often been targeted by al-Qa`ida and its affiliates, remains a sector of critical infrastructure that is highly vulnerable to attack and where successful terrorist attacks often yield an excessive loss of life. The aviation infrastructure is a particularly vulnerable arena, since once they are hijacked planes can then be used as a weapon themselves against land-based and maritime targets. Although aviation security has been tightened in many Western countries, continued vigilance is needed to limit the possibility of a successful repeat of the 9/11 attacks. Any weak link in the transportation chain near a target, or even in an adjacent state, is likely to pave the way for successful catastrophic attacks.<sup>9</sup>

**BOX 7.4 Cont.: Saudi Hijacking Plot**

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> “Airport trio ‘planned hijack,’” *Daily Mail (London)*, May 22, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Brian Whitaker, “Al-Qaida tape calls for more attacks,” *The Guardian (London)*, May 22, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Audio tape of Ayman al-Zawahiri, quoted in Omar Hasan, “Saudi Arabia continues to crackdown in bid to thwart new terror threats,” *Agence France Presse*, May 22, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Audio tape of Ayman al-Zawahiri, quoted in Brian Whitaker, “Al-Qaida tape calls for more attacks,” *The Guardian (London)*, May 22, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> “Airport trio ‘planned hijack,’” *Daily Mail (London)*, May 22, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Saudi Foreign Minister: “This is our 9/11,” *CNN.com*, May 21, 2003.

<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/05/21/saudi.alqaeda/index.html>.

<sup>7</sup> “This is our 9/11.”

<sup>8</sup> “This is our 9/11.”

<sup>9</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *The Changing Face of Terrorism*, (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004), p. 26.

**Miscellaneous Plots Involving American Targets Overseas**

While the primary operations against critical infrastructure targets on American soil will be detailed below, several other attempted attacks and plots against American infrastructural targets elsewhere in the world have been linked to al-Qa`ida or its affiliates. Examples include the following:<sup>319</sup>

- After the embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 the CIA, along with foreign police and intelligence services, began breaking up terrorist cells in Uganda, India, and Albania. A computer confiscated during an Albanian raid revealed surveillance on hundreds of al-Qa`ida-approved targets worldwide, including a plan to bomb the *U.S. Embassy in Tirana*, the Albanian capital.<sup>320</sup>
- The arrest of a French Algerian named Jamal Baghal in July 2001 for passport fraud in the United Arab Emirates eventually led to the discovery of a plan to attack the *U.S. Embassy in Paris and a nearby*

<sup>319</sup> For a comprehensive list of attacks committed by al-Qa`ida or its affiliate groups, please refer to the Chronology at the end of this report.

<sup>320</sup> John Miller and Michael Stone with Chris Mitchell. *The Cell: Inside the 9/11 Plot, and Why the FBI and CIA Failed to Stop It* (New York: Hyperion, 2002), p. 212-13.

## *Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks Outside the U.S.*

*U.S. cultural center.* After interrogation, Baghal confessed details of the plot, stating that he was acting on orders from al-Qa`ida. In September 2001, several men were arrested in connection with the plot, including Nizar Trabalsi, who confessed to a second planned attack on the *Kleine-Brogel Air Base in Belgium*, where American nuclear weapons are allegedly stored. Six men were convicted in the Paris plot, including Baghal, while Trabalsi was convicted for the planned Belgium attack. Baghal later recanted parts of his confession.<sup>321</sup>

- NATO officials broke up an al-Qa`ida cell in October 2001, finding plans to attack *Eagle Base*, an installation in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina that housed 3,000 U.S. peacekeeping forces.<sup>322</sup>
- On December 22, 2001, Richard Reid attempted to blow up *American Airlines Flight 63* by igniting explosives in his shoes. The flight, which originated in Paris, was destined for Miami. Reid's attempt was foiled when crewmembers and fellow passengers subdued him before he could activate the bomb. Reid stated that he acted alone, but also declared that he was a member of al-Qa`ida. Reid pled guilty, receiving three life sentences plus an additional 110 years in prison for his crimes.<sup>323</sup>
- A plan to bomb *U.S. and British warships in the Strait of Gibraltar* was foiled by Western and Moroccan officials in June 2002. The terrorist operatives would have sailed small dinghies with explosives alongside the vessels and exploded them there. Three members of an al-Qa`ida cell living in Morocco were arrested for the plot.<sup>324</sup>

---

<sup>321</sup> See "Man 'planned attack' on US embassy in Paris," *The Guardian*, October 2, 2001; Jon Henley, "Paris plot reveals link to terror chief: Bombs aimed at embassy and cultural centre," *The Guardian*, October 3, 2001; Pierre-Antoine Souchard, "Six Convicted in Alleged Paris Bomb Plot," *Associated Press Online*, March 16, 2005; Constant Brand, "Al-Qaida suspect: Belgian air base was his target, not U.S. embassy in Paris," *Associated Press Worldstream*, November 15, 2002.

<sup>322</sup> Andrew Purvis, "The Suspects: a Bosnian Subplot," *Time*, November 12, 2001, p. 10.

<sup>323</sup> Richard A. Serrano, "The Nation: 'Shoe Bomber' Reid Given 3 Life Terms," *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 2003.; Denise Lavoie, "Shoe bomber gets life for trying to blow up trans-Atlantic flight," *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*, January 30, 2003.

<sup>324</sup> Richard Norton-Taylor, Giles Tremlett and Julian Borger, "MI6 hunts terror plot network: Al-Qaida cell planned Gibraltar attacks," *The Guardian*, June 12, 2002; Patrick Sawyer, "Terror plot to blow up Navy warships is foiled," *The Evening Standard*, June 11, 2002.



### **BOX 7.5: OPERATION BOJINKA**

Another major foiled plot was *Operation Bojinka* or *Oplan Bojinka*. This was a 1995 plan for a large-scale attack centered on destroying twelve airliners on January 21 and 22, 1995. The wider plot included the assassination of Pope John Paul II and a plane crash attack on the CIA headquarters. The Bojinka plot, whose name may have had its roots in the Serbo-Croatian word for *explosion* or *loud bang*, was devised by Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM) and Ramzi Yusuf.

#### **The Assassination of Pope John Paul II**

The papal assassination plot would have taken place on January 15, 1995, while Pope John Paul II was in the Philippines for World Youth Day 1995. In one version of the plan, a suicide bomber dressed as a priest would hide a bomb in the sleeves of his robes. Once the Pope approached the supposed priest to kiss him, the operative would detonate the explosion.<sup>1</sup> A second adaptation involved the planting of a remote-controlled bomb on the Pope's scheduled route.<sup>2</sup> This assassination would also serve to divert attention from the second phase of the plot, the airline bombings.

#### **The Airliner Bombings**

Planning for the airliner bombings began in the summer of 1994, when KSM and Yusuf started acquiring bomb-making materials and began casing flights and testing airport security. While he was involved in early stages of the plot and in the recruitment of Wali Khan `Amin Shah, KSM returned to Qatar, leaving the main preparations to Yusuf.<sup>3</sup>

In the fall of 1994, Yusuf, Shah, and `Abd al-Hakim Murad traveled to Pakistan, where Yusuf trained the others in building explosives and timing devices.<sup>4</sup> In late October 1994, the operatives formed the Bermuda Trading Company as a front to procure chemicals and other bomb-making raw materials.<sup>5</sup> The bombs would be nitroglycerin based – the chemical smuggled onboard concealed in contact solution bottles – with timing devices that were constructed from Casio watches.<sup>6</sup> According to most experts, these bombs would have been undetectable to even the most skilled and motivated security screeners.<sup>7</sup>

During the attack, five operatives would place bombs on twelve U.S.

**BOX 7.5 *Cont.: Operation Bojinka***

carrier airplanes, all scheduled to fly over the Pacific Ocean within a 48-hour timeframe. Eleven of the twelve were ultimately destined for U.S. cities. The bombers would board the planes in Southeast Asia, assemble the bombs while onboard, and then exit the plane during the first layover. All bombs would be timed to detonate almost simultaneously.<sup>8</sup> If successful, the plot would have resulted in up to 4,000 deaths.<sup>9</sup>

Yusuf conducted in-depth planning for the operation. He obtained blueprints for the Boeing 747 in order to calculate the most devastating locations to plant his bombs; by choosing a seat adjacent to the wing and above the central fuel tank, this would allow the explosion to detonate the fuel on board.<sup>10</sup> Several tests were also conducted to prepare for the airline attack. On December 1, 1994, Yusuf and Shah exploded a sample bomb under a seat at a Manila movie theater, injuring several patrons. On December 11, 1994, Yousef conducted a small-scale trial of the operation, planting a test bomb under a seat during the first leg of a Philippine Air Lines (PAL) flight from Manila to Japan. Yusuf disembarked during the stopover, and the bomb exploded on the second leg of the flight, resulting in the death of one passenger and the injuring of others.<sup>11</sup>

**The Attack on CIA Headquarters**

Plans for the CIA attack were divulged by Murad after his arrest in Manila. According to Murad, he was to rent, buy, or hijack a small plane, which would then be filled with explosives. He would then pilot the plane, crashing it into CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.<sup>12</sup> Another conception of this attack was that the twelfth airliner from the bombing attack would be diverted and crashed into the CIA building. Other targets for this phase had also been discussed, including the U.S. Congress, the White House, and the Pentagon, but there were difficulties in gathering enough trained pilots.<sup>13</sup>

**Detection and Capture**

The Bojinka plot was uncovered on January 6, 1995, when Yusuf and Murad accidentally caused a fire in their Manila apartment while burning chemicals for the operation. The Philippine police arrived on the scene and discovered incriminating evidence, including chemicals, bomb components,

**BOX 7.5 Cont.: Operation Bojinka**

and a laptop computer that contained the plans for the bombing.<sup>14</sup>

In the laptop, a letter was also found that described the rationale for the attack. The letter, purportedly prepared by a group calling itself the Fifth Battalion Liberation Army, proclaimed that the attack was “in retaliation for the financial, political, and military support extended by the American government to the Jewish state, which occupies the land of Palestine.”<sup>15</sup> The letter further rationalized attacks against the American public, stating that U.S. citizens were responsible for the actions of their government since the “government represents the will of the people.”<sup>16</sup>

Police arrested Murad when he came back to the apartment to retrieve the laptop.<sup>17</sup> Shah was also captured, though he escaped from custody and was arrested again in Malaysia a year later. Yusuf managed to flee the country, but was apprehended in Pakistan the next month.<sup>18</sup> All three received life sentences for their parts in the plot.

Despite the failure of the attacks to materialize, the core ideas were used as the foundation for the 9/11 attack plan, especially in the development of a later-cancelled scheme with attacks both inside the U.S. and in Asia. This phase, which was proposed by Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, but never fully planned, would have involved blowing up U.S. airplanes in the Pacific region.<sup>19</sup>

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Doug Struck, Howard Schneider, and Karl Vick, et.al, “Borderless Network of Terror; Bin Laden Followers Reach Across Globe,” *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 147-8.

<sup>4</sup> “Prosecution’s Statement.” *United States v. Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, Eyad Ismoil, Abdul Hakim Murad, Wali Khan Amin Shah*. [henceforth *USA v. Yousef, et al.*] United States District Court, Southern District of New York, S1293cr.180 (KTD), May 29, 1996, pp. 12-13.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Gunaratna, *Changing Face of Terrorism*, pp. 97-8.

<sup>8</sup> *United States v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, Eyad Ismoil, also known as Eyad Ismail, and Abdul Hakim Murad, also known as Saeed Ahmed*, [henceforth *USA v. Yousef*] United States Court Of Appeals For The Second Circuit, August Term 2001, Docket Nos. 98-1041 L. (Argued: May 3, 2002 Decided: April 4, 2003)

<http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/terrorism/usyousef40403opn.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Gunaratna, *Changing Face of Terrorism*, pp. 97-8.

**BOX 7.5 Cont.: Operation Bojinka**

<sup>10</sup> Simon Reeve, *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama Bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism*. (Boston: Northeastern University, 1999), pp. 85-6.

<sup>11</sup> *USA v. Yousef*, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Brzezinski, "Bust And Boom: Six years before the 9/11 attacks, Philippine police took down an al-Qa`ida cell that had been plotting, among other things, to fly explosives-laden planes into the Pentagon---and possibly some skyscrapers." *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Brzezinski, "Bust And Boom."

<sup>14</sup> *USA v. Yousef*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> "Prosecution's Statement." *USA v. Yousef, et al.*, pp. 23-4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-4.

<sup>17</sup> Paul J. Smith, "Transnational Terrorism and The Al Qaeda Model: Confronting New Realities," *Parameter: US Army War College Quarterly* (Summer 2002), pp. 33-46.

<sup>18</sup> *USA v. Yousef*, p. 10.

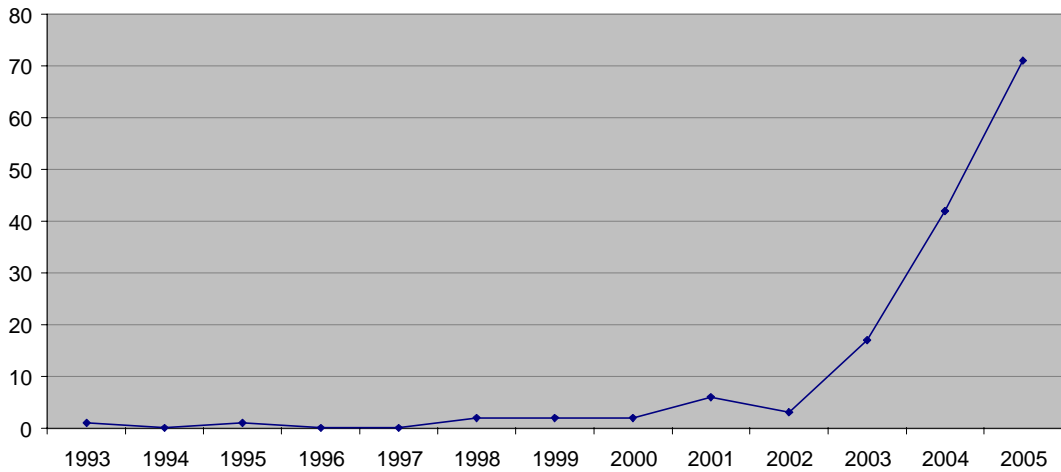
<sup>19</sup> "Substitution for the Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed." *United States v. Zacarias Moussaoui*. Defendant's Exhibit. Cr. No. 01-455-A, pp. 5-6.

**ANALYSIS AND INDICATIONS OF CHANGING TRENDS**

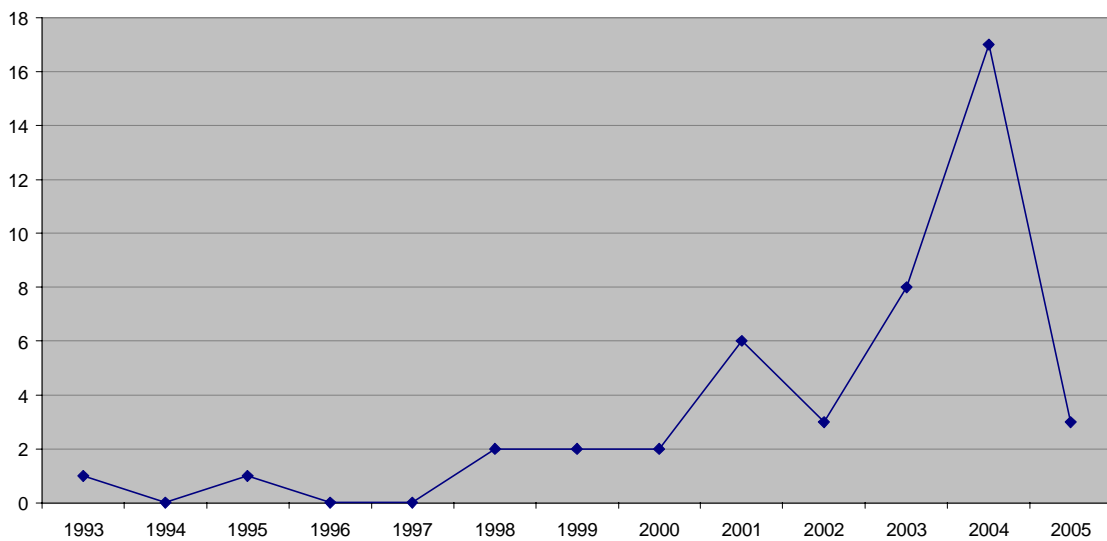
Assessing the frequency of al-Qa`ida-related attacks on critical infrastructure outside the United States is complicated by the insurgency in Iraq. When Iraq is included in the totals, the indication is that critical infrastructure attacks are sharply rising in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa as a whole (see Figure 7.5). If, however, Iraq is excluded from the dataset, the trends become less distinct and one gets the impression that that they rose from 2002 to 2004 – peaking at close to 18 critical infrastructure attacks per year – and then sharply dropped in 2005 to the base level of around two attacks seen from 1998-2000 (see Figure 7.6). Indeed, if Iraq is excluded from the total, it is possible to draw three inferences from the data. First, Europe is now clearly being targeted by al-Qa`ida-linked groups. Second, of the four regions of Asia – Central, South, Southeast, and East – South Asia is home to more al-Qa`ida-related critical infrastructure attacks than any other region in Asia (see Figure 7.7). Given the neuralgic regional context, it is likely that this trend will continue. Finally, if Iraq is discounted, Saudi Arabia and Algeria lead all other states in al-Qa`ida-related critical infrastructure attacks in the Middle East and North Africa (see Figure 7.4).

*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

**Figure 7.5: Successful Al-Qa`ida CI Attacks:  
Europe, Asia and the Middle East & North Africa  
by Year**

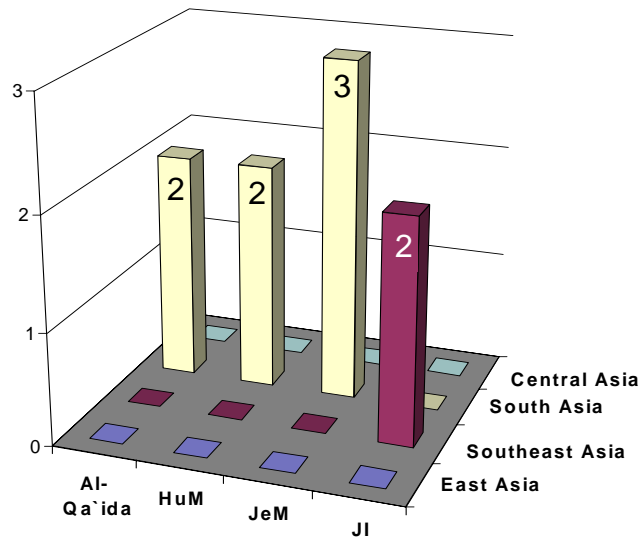


**Figure 7.6: Successful Al-Qa`ida CI Attacks:  
Europe, Asia and the Middle East & North Africa  
by Year (excluding Iraq)**



*Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks Outside the U.S.*

**Figure 7.7: Successful Al-Qa`ida CI Attacks:  
Asia by Group and Region**



# CHAPTER EIGHT:

## CASE STUDIES OF PRIOR AL-QA`IDA-LINKED CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ATTACKS ON U.S. SOIL

In the last chapter, the attacks on critical infrastructure by al-Qa`ida and affiliated groups outside the U.S. were discussed, totaled, and briefly analyzed. Now it is time to turn to major al-Qa`ida attacks, whether planned or executed, against significant infrastructural targets in America itself. These attacks will be described in a succession of case studies.

### **THE 1993 WORLD TRADE CENTER BOMBING (RAMZI YUSUF AND “NUSAYR CELL”)\***

The 1993 World Trade Center (WTC) bombing<sup>325</sup> was the first attack on American critical infrastructure in which al-Qa`ida (or what would later become known as al-Qa`ida) was involved, although the degree of influence of al-Qa`ida leaders on the actual target selection process is debatable.<sup>326</sup> The immediate precursor to the 1993 plot was the indictment and conviction of Al-Sayyid Nusayr, an Egyptian, for the November 5, 1990 shooting in New York of the radical Jewish ideologue

---

\* This section was prepared by Gary A. Ackerman.

<sup>325</sup> The 1993 WTC attack will only be briefly outlined here insofar as it possesses features relevant to al-Qa`ida's overall strategy and tactics with respect to critical infrastructure. For a more detailed discussion of the attack, including its perpetrators and aftermath, see Miller et al, *The Cell*, Chapters 1 through 8; Jim Dwyer, David Kocieniewski, Deidre Murphy, and Peg Tyre, *Two Seconds Under the World* (New York: Ballantine, 1994); and Reeve, *New Jackals*.

<sup>326</sup> This aspect will be discussed further below.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

Rabbi Meir Kahane.<sup>327</sup> Materials seized from Nusayr's home in 1990 contained manuals for making urea-nitrate bombs (the kind eventually used in the WTC bombing<sup>328</sup>) as well as a long list of targets he might have been considering, which included the names of local Jewish leaders, politicians, and New York landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, the Empire State Building, the Rockefeller Center and, most portentously, the World Trade Center.<sup>329</sup> Unfortunately, most of these materials went untranslated until after the WTC was bombed. Before striking out on his own personal *jihād*, Nusayr had been a follower of the radical Egyptian cleric, Shaykh `Umar `Abd al-Rahman, and even after he was jailed, Nusayr continued to surround himself with a coterie of `Abd al-Rahman's supporters. Chief among these was Mahmud Abu Halima, a burly, red-bearded Egyptian who had fought in Afghanistan against the Soviets. The group began to plan to carry out acts of *jihād* against the U.S.<sup>330</sup> It was joined some time later by Ramzi Yusuf,<sup>331</sup> a skilled bombmaker, who arrived in the U.S. on September 1, 1992 and within a short space of time took de facto control over the group's planning and activities.<sup>332</sup>

Soon Yusuf had put a plan together to conduct a large-scale bombing, including settling on the World Trade Center as the target. The core group of conspirators now consisted of Yusuf, Abu Halima, a simpleton named Muhammad Salama, Salama's close friend Nidal `Ayyad (who was a chemical engineer and worked for the chemical company Allied Signal), and an Iraqi named `Abdul Rahman Yasin. Operating out of an

---

<sup>327</sup> Technically speaking, due to a capable defense attorney, the jury did not convict Nusayr for killing Kahane, but rather for shooting two bystanders while fleeing the scene and being in possession of an illegal weapon.

<sup>328</sup> Dwyer et al, *Two Seconds*, pp. 170-1.

<sup>329</sup> Miller et al, *The Cell*, p.45.

<sup>330</sup> One of the members of this group, Imad Salim, actually turned out to be an FBI informant, although amidst disagreements with his FBI handlers his warnings about an incipient plot went largely unheeded by the authorities, and Salim ceased congregating with the conspirators before the WTC attack plans were finalized. See Dwyer et al, *Two Seconds*, pp. 170-1.

<sup>331</sup> To this day, Yusuf's true identity remains somewhat shrouded in mystery. While involved in the WTC plot he used the name "Rashid," whereas investigators believe his true name to be Abdul Basit. The obscurity surrounding his identity has led to a host of alternative, if tenuous, theories about his origins, including that he was an Iraqi intelligence agent acting at the behest of Saddam Husayn. See, e.g., Laurie Mylroie, *Study of Revenge: The First World Trade Center Attack and Saddam Hussein's War Against America* (Lanham, MD: AEI, 2001).

<sup>332</sup> Yusuf's traveling partner, one Ahmad Ajaj, was arrested upon their entrance to the U.S. at John F. Kennedy Airport with a fake passport and several bomb-making and other military-type manuals. See Miller et al, *The Cell*, pp. 76-7.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

apartment in Jersey City, in October 1992 Salama and `Ayyad opened a series of bank accounts with Salama and Yusuf spending thousands of dollars every month on overseas phone calls.<sup>333</sup> Beginning in November Yusuf and Salama had begun ordering chemicals from chemical suppliers, and on November 30, 1992 Salama rented a storage shed on Mallory Avenue in Jersey City under an assumed name. On December 1, 1,000 pounds of urea and 1,500 pounds of nitric acid were delivered to the storage shed.<sup>334</sup>

In early January 1993 Salama rented an apartment on Pamrapo Avenue, which would serve as the group's bomb-making laboratory. The most difficult part of preparing the bomb would be the production of the notoriously unstable nitroglycerine needed to detonate the larger urea-nitrate portion of the bomb. `Ayyad used his access at his employer to acquire "restricted chemicals" like lead nitrate, phenol, and methylamine.<sup>335</sup> Salama, a somewhat incompetent driver, involved himself and Yusuf in a car accident in late January, resulting in Yusuf's hospitalization, thus nearly derailing the entire plot. After returning from the hospital, Yusuf continued work on the bomb. On February 15, Salama and `Ayyad drove into Manhattan to surveil the target, entering the B-2 level of the WTC parking garage and studying the location.

Then, on February 26, 1993, having loaded the bomb into a rented Ryder Ford Econoline van, the conspirators drove the van into the parking garage, lit four fuses, and left. At 12:17 pm the bomb exploded, creating a huge crater in the parking garage of 1 World Trade Center and collapsing several floors. However, it did not succeed in bringing down either of the twin towers. Ultimately, six people lost their lives and over 1,000 were injured in the blast.<sup>336</sup>

---

<sup>333</sup> Dwyer et al, *Two Seconds*, pp. 205, 207.

<sup>334</sup> Miller, et al, *The Cell*, p.86.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>336</sup> Soon after the bombing, the attackers sent a letter to the *New York Times* claiming responsibility on behalf of the Liberation Army: "We are, the fifth battalion in the LIBERATION ARMY, declare our responsibility for the explosion on the mentioned building. This action was done in response for the American political, economical and military support to Israel the state of terrorism and to the rest of the dictator countries in the region.

OUR DEMANDS ARE:

1. Stop all military, economical and political aids to Israel.
2. All diplomatic relations with Israel must stop.
3. Not to interfere with any of the Middle East countries interior affairs.

If our demands are not met, all of our functional groups in the army will continue to execute our missions against military and civilians targets in and out the United States.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

In the aftermath of the bombing investigators recovered, by dint of good fortune, the identification number from a portion of the Ryder van's wreckage and were therefore able to trace the van to the rental company, which had previously received a report from Salama that the van had been stolen. When Salama foolishly returned to collect his deposit on the van, he was arrested and the perpetrators revealed. However, by that time two of the ringleaders, Yusuf and Abu Halima, had already fled the country. Both would eventually be captured and brought back to the U.S. for trial, but in the case of Yusuf only after several infamously active years on the run as the world's most wanted terrorist.

A note on the extent of al-Qa`ida's involvement in the 1993 WTC bombing is warranted. In 1992-1993, al-Qa`ida was still in the process of coalescing as a distinct organization pursuing *jihād* against the U.S. and the West. Although it is possible, there is no concrete evidence to confirm that the 1993 WTC bombing was an "al-Qa`ida operation" in the sense that it was planned and directed by al-Qa`ida's leadership and used al-Qa`ida-trained recruits (as was the case in the 2001 WTC attack). Nonetheless, there was certainly some degree of al-Qa`ida involvement in the attack – Yusuf had been seen in Bin Ladin's training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan,<sup>337</sup> there was a trail of money leading to Bin Ladin,<sup>338</sup> and Yusuf was in constant contact with several overseas parties during the course of the plot, including his uncle Khalid Shaykh

---

This also will include some potential Nuclear targets. For your own information, our army has more than 150 suicidal soldiers ready to go ahead. The terrorism that Israel practices (Which is supported by America) must be faced with a similar one. The dictatorship and terrorism (also supported by America) that some countries are practicing against their own people must also be faced with terrorism.

The American people must know that their civilians who got killed are not better than those who are getting killed by the American weapons in support. The American people are responsible for the actions of their government and they must question all the crimes that their government is committing against other people. Or they – Americans – will be the targets of our operations that could diminish them.

We invite all the people from all countries and all the revolutionaries in the world to participate in this action with us to accomplish our just goals.

“IF THEN ANYONE TRANSGRESSES THE PROHIBITION AGAINST YOU  
TRANSGRESS YE LIKEWISE AGAINST HIM . . .”

LIBERATION ARMY FIFTH BATTALION

AL-FAREEK AL-ROKN, Abu Bakr Al-Makee.” See *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Eyad Ismoil*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), September 17, 1997.

<sup>337</sup> Reeve, *New Jackals*, p. 136.

<sup>338</sup> Investigators believe that at least some of the \$20,000 Bin Ladin gave to Ibrahim al-Jabrawni, ostensibly for Nusayr's legal defense, was used in making the WTC bomb. See *ibid.*, p. 79.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Muhammad and perhaps even bin Ladin himself. Moreover, there can be little doubt that the 1993 WTC bombing influenced later al-Qa`ida attacks, especially considering that KSM was the architect of the 9/11 attacks that eventually brought the towers down. Therefore, even though the direct hand of al-Qa`ida is not completely clear in the case of the WTC 1993 bombing, there is sufficient evidence to confirm a substantial al-Qa`ida connection to the plot, making inclusion of this episode important in understanding al-Qa`ida methods and orientation concerning critical infrastructure.

### **Target Selection**

Various factors contributed to the selection of the WTC as the target for the 1993 bombing. First, from the very beginning of the planning process, attacks against large buildings were on the table. Amongst the materials confiscated from Nusayr's apartment were diagrams and photographs of prominent New York landmarks (including the WTC), a copy of a sermon in which `Umar `Abd al-Rahman encouraged his followers to “destroy the edifices of capitalism,”<sup>339</sup> and a manifesto in which jihadists were urged to topple the “tall buildings of which Americans are so proud.”<sup>340</sup> To the extent that Nusayr influenced the planning process from prison, the group was initially encouraged to seek out a target bearing characteristics similar to those of the WTC.

Second, it appears as if the World Trade Center was not the original target. Before the arrival of Yusuf, there was a plan to detonate bombs at twelve unspecified “Jewish locations,” including synagogues, banks, and Jewish centers around Brooklyn and Manhattan.<sup>341</sup> This plan did not materialize, and although Yusuf initially agreed to follow along, once he was in control of the group, the focus shifted squarely to the WTC.

Yusuf himself was something of an enigma in that, unlike many of his associates, he did not practice Islam devoutly. For instance, like his uncle KSM, he engaged in frequent womanizing. Nevertheless, he harbored an intense hatred for the U.S. Part of his reason for choosing the WTC was punitive – he wanted to topple one of the towers into the other, causing

---

<sup>339</sup> Dwyer et al, *Two Seconds*, p. 170.

<sup>340</sup> Miller et al, *The Cell*, p. 46.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

as many as 250,000 fatalities to punish America for supporting Israel.<sup>342</sup> He reasoned that only by sustaining a level of casualties on the scale of that inflicted by the U.S. on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, would the American public realize it was at war.<sup>343</sup> Yusuf apparently wanted to shatter America's will by destroying "the symbol of its greed and power."<sup>344</sup> Kohlman suggests that he also wanted to destroy Wall Street during the attacks and cripple "the economic heart of America."<sup>345</sup> Assuming that these assessments are correct, Yusuf selected the WTC for a mixture of reasons – punitive (killing America's citizens in a retaliatory attack), symbolic (attacking a national symbol to spread fear and undermine the national psyche), instrumental (crippling the U.S. economy), and practical (since he regarded Israeli targets as being too well defended).

On the other hand, Mahmud Abu Halima reportedly told his cellmate that the goal of the bombing was to force the U.S. government to release Nusayr from prison.<sup>346</sup> While it is true that Nusayr concocted several schemes by which to leverage his release, it is unlikely that Yusuf, who was responsible for the ultimate targeting decision, gave these considerations much weight. Perhaps he merely allowed Nusayr's friends such as Abu Halima to believe that freeing Nusayr was the primary motive behind the bombing.

## **Operational Details**

In addition to the central issue of target selection already discussed, the 1993 WTC bombing also revealed several operational details worthy of mention:

- 1) *Incompetent group members can derail a plot.* No matter how good a plan may be, it is up to the available operatives to carry it out. Muhammad Salama was a completely incompetent conspirator whose shoddy driving landed Yusuf in hospital and whose foolish return to the rental company resulted in the rapid

---

<sup>342</sup> Testimony of Brian Parr, *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Eyad Ismoil*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), October 22, 1997. When asked why he did not select an Israeli target, Yusuf replied it was too difficult to attack them.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Dwyer et al, *Two Seconds*, p. 215

<sup>345</sup> Evan Kohlman, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (New York: Berg, 2004).

<sup>346</sup> Dwyer et al, *Two Seconds*, p. 314.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

identification of the perpetrators. Despite the direction of a professional terrorist like Yusuf, the group made a number of errors which could have brought them to the attention of law enforcement. It is these mistakes that may provide the opening for security agencies to interdict future plots against critical infrastructure.

2) *Ad-hoc group of perpetrators are potentially dangerous, but technical expertise is required.* The group that participated in the 1993 WTC plot was not composed of “regular” terrorists in the sense of individuals who formally belonged to a given organization. Some of them, for instance Mahmud Abu Halima, had some experience fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan, but the group was very much an ad-hoc affair made up of like-minded amateur jihadists among Nusayr’s wider circle of acquaintances. Despite much experimentation, they were unable to produce explosives on their own, and as a result Abu Halima reportedly asked his contacts to send Yusuf. The amount of explosives required to bring down something like a skyscraper (over 1,500 pounds of urea-nitrate were used and yet proved to be insufficient) required a highly-skilled explosives expert like Yusuf to construct, especially when it involved producing volatile substances like nitroglycerin.

3) *Simple, yet secure detonators work well.* Instead of relying on unreliable electronics or a suicide detonation, the bombers used the simple but effective mechanism of lighting four fuses simultaneously, which increased the probability of success through redundancy. Moreover, the fuses were packed in surgical tubing, which slowed their burn rate to allow sufficient time for the perpetrators to escape, as well as minimizing smoke and hence the risk of premature detection.

4) *The bomb itself was fairly sophisticated, but this did not guarantee success.* In addition to adding aluminium azide and magnesium azide to enhance the effects of the urea nitrate explosive,<sup>347</sup> Yusuf also included in his bomb compressed hydrogen tanks, which were intended to create a second, phased explosion. The idea was to distort the superstructure of the WTC tower with the first blast, and then to detonate the secondary

---

<sup>347</sup> Reeve, *New Jackals*, p. 25.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

explosion before the steel could contract.<sup>348</sup> Fortunately, this did not work as planned, and the addition of the hydrogen merely enhanced the initial blast.

5) *Finances were available but limited the scale of the weapon.* It is known that more than \$100,000 was deposited and withdrawn from the bank accounts Salama and `Ayyad opened in October 1992. The money came from sources throughout the Middle East, although a sizeable portion of the funds apparently was drawn from leftover money in Nusayr's defense fund.<sup>349</sup> However, following his capture in Pakistan, Yusuf admitted to FBI agents that his intent had been to bring down the towers and that if he had had access to more funds, he would have been able to develop a more efficient bomb, one that would have concentrated more of the blast horizontally to bring down one tower on top of the other.<sup>350</sup> Yusuf also admitted that he would have liked to have developed a bomb that would have released cyanide gas, but that it was "too expensive to implement."<sup>351</sup> If Yusuf's statements can be taken at face value, it would seem that funding sources, while numerous, were not quite sufficient to attain the desired result. Moreover, funds were not distributed to all group members – one of the reasons Salama returned to the rental company was because he did not have enough money for a plane ticket out of the U.S.

6) *Use of an "insider".* Nidal `Ayyad was by all accounts a successful young professional, with a chemical engineering degree from Rutgers University and a \$35,000 a year job,<sup>352</sup> yet he played a major role in the execution of the bomb plot. Not only did he use his position to procure difficult-to-acquire chemicals for the bomb, he also rented cars and even scouted out the target location before the bombing. One should bear the example of `Ayyad in mind when tempted to rely on a certain "profile" of terrorists and their capabilities. He is an early example of an individual who seems well-established in

---

<sup>348</sup> Dwyer et al, *Two Seconds*, p. 217.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>350</sup> Kohlman, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, p. 72. Apparently Yusuf even had to borrow money for his plane ticket out of the U.S.

<sup>351</sup> Testimony of Brian Parr.

<sup>352</sup> Jim Dwyer et al, *Two Seconds*, p. 205.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

American society, but whose ideological proclivities resulted in his participating in terrorist acts.<sup>353</sup>

7) *Thorough surveillance of the target is necessary.* Despite consisting mostly of amateurs (Salama's fool's errand to the rental company after the bomb being but one example), the group conducted advanced surveillance of their target. During his trial, Yusuf admitted that he had visited the WTC four or five times prior to the bombing<sup>354</sup> and `Ayyad even visited the WTC ten days before the bombing and sketched the layout of the parking garage.

### **Relevance for Critical Infrastructure Protection**

The 1993 WTC bombing was the first major attack by jihadists in the U.S. Although the consequences of the attack paled in comparison to those that would occur at the same location eight years later, the bombing is instructive in a number of respects. It seems, in this case at least, that "key resources" (nationally recognized structures) were singled out from the very beginning of the attack process. Moreover, it appears as if the economic role played by the WTC and its environs was also a factor in its selection as the target. However, other elements of the target selection process had little or nothing to do with the infrastructural nature of the WTC – a large part of the reason Yusuf chose it was because of the number of potential casualties that could be produced in a successful attack. In sum, there were multiple influences on the choice of the WTC as the target, only certain of which related to its role as an element of the nation's critical infrastructure.

At the level of operations and tactics, the 1993 WTC case is somewhat recondite. On the one hand, a small band of ad-hoc terrorists with one skilled operative came close to destroying one of America's icons and killing thousands of people. The production and nature of the bomb itself evidenced sophisticated tradecraft, and the terrorists did their homework on their target. On the other hand, the amateurishness of the some group members showed, and the group struggled with the financing aspect of the operation, which perhaps would have succeeded in causing far more damage had Yusuf been given access to more funds.

---

<sup>353</sup> A similar situation came to light when the identities of the suicide bombers of the London underground in 2005 were revealed.

<sup>354</sup> Testimony of Brian Parr.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

### **1993 TUNNEL AND BRIDGE PLOT\***

In 1992-93 an al-Qa`ida terrorist cell based in the U.S. planned a series of terrorist attacks that targeted key transportation, commercial, law enforcement, and international governmental infrastructure in New York City. One of the plots would come to fruition on February 23, 1993 as the first World Trade Center bombing, in which a truck bomb was driven into the underground parking garage of the WTC. However, Al-Sayyid Nusayr, the assassin of the Rabbi Kahane, would remain active even from his Attica prison cell. Indeed, he conceived of a new plot – a “day of terror” in New York City during which there would be a series of 12 terrorist attacks, including bombings of the Lincoln Tunnel, the Holland Tunnel, and if possible the George Washington Bridge, FBI headquarters at 26 Federal Plaza, and the United Nations building, along with the assassination of Jewish leaders and the judge who presided in his own trial.<sup>355</sup>

The New York City cell’s spiritual leader during the conception, planning and preparation of these plots was the Egyptian Shaykh `Umar `Abd al-Rahman, the infamous “Blind Shaykh.” However, `Abd al-Rahman had long been much more than the spiritual guide of this particular cell in terms of the global *jihād*. He was the spiritual and political leader of the terrorist group *al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya*, and by 1990 was regarded by no less of an authority than Usama bin Ladin as the *jihād*’s spiritual and organizational leader after the death of Usama’s mentor, the Jordanian Palestinian Shaykh Dr. `Abdallah `Azzam. `Abd al-Rahman was born in Egypt in 1938, and as a baby was blinded by diabetes. Mastering the Qur’an through the Braille method by age eleven, he was imprisoned by the Egyptian government in 1970 for condemning the holding of prayers for assassinated Egyptian President Jamal `Abd al-Nasir as sinful. After his release, `Abd al-Rahman traveled across the world preaching and gathering volunteers and funding for the Egyptian and then the global *jihād*. In 1989, having been recognized as a key leader of Egypt’s Islamic opposition, `Abd al-Rahman was placed under house arrest for inciting civil unrest by the

---

\* This section was prepared by Gordon M. Hahn.

<sup>355</sup> Prosecution’s Opening Statement, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, *United States of America v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman* [hereafter *USA v. Rahman*], S5 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), January 30, 1995, pp. 1584 and 1597.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Egyptian government. He soon managed to escape from house arrest and made his way to Sudan, where he obtained a U.S. visa with the help of fellow Egyptian Mustafa Shalabi, the representative of the Afghan Services Bureau (MAK) in New York. Bin Ladin had developed a close relationship with `Abd al-Rahman from the time of his first visit to Pakistan in 1985. The two men also met in Afghanistan in 1990, after Usama had approved, if not organized, the November 24, 1989 assassination of `Azzam.<sup>356</sup>

Shaykh `Abd al-Rahman entered the U.S. in 1990 and settled in Jersey City, New Jersey, where he continued to organize for the global *jihād*.<sup>357</sup> His role in the run-up to the day of terror was one of spiritual leader and teacher, ideologist, motivator, and ultimate decision-maker and arbiter. He lectured on Islamism and the religious meaning and political goals of *jihād*, approved targets, resolved disputes, and steadied wavering doubters. He encouraged his followers to make attacks on the enemies of Islam and provided consultation on whether or not it was permissible according to Islamic law to strike certain targets.<sup>358</sup>

Abd al-Rahman's cell was already actively training before his arrival in the U.S. It reported back to him on the members' progress in military and terrorist training, which they were conducting in a secret training camp located in a remote area near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The plot to bomb the tunnels proceeded so far that the conspirators had made dry runs, driving through and simultaneously videotaping the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels, and had already begun mixing the bombs that would be loaded into the car bombs when they were arrested by the FBI on June 24, 1993. Another plan was to drive car bombs into the underground parking garages beneath the UN building, using diplomatic license plates so that they could enter without suspicion. Still another was to kill the guards outside FBI HQ at 26 Federal Plaza with an Uzi machine gun, drive explosives-laden cars into the underground garage, and then take flight in a backup car. In both cases, the goal was to make the buildings collapse.<sup>359</sup>

---

<sup>356</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, pp. 32-3 and 135-6.

<sup>357</sup> Testimony of FBI Special Agent Harlen Bell, *USA v. Rahman*, January 30, 1995, pp. 1959-60.

<sup>358</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 1583-4.

<sup>359</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1582.

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

The FBI's foiling of the day of terror and its investigation of the WTC bombing would eventually yield the arrest of the Blind Shaykh and all the known members of his NYC cell in June 1993. Indeed, the plot was uncovered early on when its operational organizer Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali approached Imad Salim about building the necessary bombs. Salim was an FBI informant who agreed to "assist" the terrorist plotters. Salim, working with the FBI, rented the garage, which was wired with surveillance equipment, thus allowing law enforcement authorities to record the plotting and preparations and ultimately prevent the attack by arresting the terrorists as they moved toward implementation of their plans. Salim also agreed to wear a tape recorder to the cell's meetings. Although Salim eventually ceased acting as an informant, refused to testify in open court, and "disappeared" into the government's witness protection program fearing for his family's safety, his and other tapes provided incontrovertible evidence of the defendants' active involvement in terrorist plots.<sup>360</sup> The prosecution's tapes and the trial transcripts provide a rare glimpse into the jihadist mode of leading and organizing terrorist cells and of planning and preparing attacks on critical infrastructure targets such as tunnels and bridges.

After the trial of the cell members began, key member Siddiq `Ali withdrew his earlier not guilty plea and entered a guilty plea on seven of fifteen charges against him, including conspiring to wage a terrorist war, conspiring to assassinate President Mubarak of Egypt, conspiring to bomb buildings and other facilities used in commerce, participating in an attempted bombing in the spring of 1993 (the "day of terror" tunnels and bridges plot), transporting an Uzi machine gun to be used in that bombing, using and carrying an Uzi in connection with that bombing, and carrying a destructive device to be used in that bombing.<sup>361</sup> His testimony further corroborated the government's charges against `Abd al-Rahman and the other members of his New York cell.

The cell consisted of ten members besides Shaykh al-Rahman and mastermind of the World trade center bombing Ramzi Yusuf: Nusayr,

---

<sup>360</sup> As discussed above, Salim at one stage left the cell following disagreements with the FBI. He was replaced and the first World Trade Center bombing ensued. After the bombing, Salim agreed to reacquaint himself with the cell members in order to prevent further attacks.

<sup>361</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, [hereafter *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*] February 6, 1995, pp. 2221 and 2227-30.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Ibrahim al-Jabrawni, Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, Muhammad Salih, American citizen Clement Hampton-El (alias Dr. Abdul Rashid Abdullah), Viktor Alvarez, Tariq al-Hasan, `Amir `Abd al-Ghani, Fadhl `Abd al-Ghani, Faris Khallafalla, and latecomer to the cell Wahid Salih. Three others in the group – Mahmud Abu Halima, Nidal `Ayyad, and Muhammad Salama – were involved in the 93 WTC plot. There was some degree of hierarchy and a certain division of labor within the cell. Ibrahim al-Jabrawni was Nusayr's relative and principal lieutenant, following the pattern of kinship ties prevalent in the al-Qa`ida terrorist network.<sup>362</sup> He obtained detonators and a safe house for the bombing plot, and agreed to assist Nusayr in breaking out of prison.<sup>363</sup> Next in the hierarchy came Siddiq `Ali. He had three years of college education, in part received in his native Sudan and in part in the U.S.<sup>364</sup> He conducted military training for the cell's foot soldiers, helped one of the 93 WTC bombers flee the country, and devised the scheme for the day of terror to bomb tunnels, bridges, and buildings. The local New York City foot soldiers were Victor Alvarez and Clement Hampton-El, who worked in a hospital and supplied the group with detonators, explosive materials, and training. Alvarez provided the Uzi that the group planned to use, mixed chemicals, and tried to find cars for the car bombings. Wahid Salih agreed to provide the cars to be used for the bombings. The cell's foreign Muslim foot soldiers Tariq al-Hasan, the `Abd al-Ghani brothers `Amir and Fadhl, and Faris Khallafalla were Sudanese, like Siddiq `Ali.<sup>365</sup>

The group came together gradually, as it gathered the personnel needed to carry out its still unformulated but ambitious plans. In late 1990 Shaykh `Abd al-Rahman met with Siddiq `Ali, Hampton-El, al-Hasan, and Abu Halima for the first time. Siddiq `Ali, who became `Abd al-Rahman's bodyguard and later his translator, and these others soon grew close to their new mentor, who brought them tightly under his fold as he preached theology and lectured on politics to them. During Nusayr's trial for the murder of Rabbi Kahane, this portion of the cell came to know Nusayr, al-Jabrawni, Salama, and `Ayyad. During 1992, acquaintances were made with Ramzi Yusuf, the `Abd al-Ghani brothers, Khallafalla, Salih, and U.S. government informant Salim. In 1993 the group was rounded out by Alvarez and finally Salih.<sup>366</sup>

---

<sup>362</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), pp. 112-13.

<sup>363</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 1584-85.

<sup>364</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, p. 2222.

<sup>365</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 1585-88.

<sup>366</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, pp. 2234-5.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

### **Target Selection**

The plot to attacks tunnels and bridges emerged in the course of the training and discussions that evolved over a period of time and produced the World Trade Center bombing. Proposals emerged and plans developed, as events inspired and conspired against some but not others. In 1992, Siddiq `Ali and the others engaged in firearms training at Abu Bakr mosque in Brooklyn, the aim of which – known to the `Abd al-Ghani brothers, Khallafalla, and al-Hasan – was to prepare for the assassination of American officials who supported Israel. In late 1992 and early 1993, further military training was conducted at the cell's clandestine camp near Harrisburg. This was to prepare the group for assassinations and other operations in the U.S. and overseas, including the assassination of Mubarak, U.S. officials who supported Israel, and unspecified Israeli officials. Among the attendees were the `Abd al-Ghani bros, al-Hasan, and Ahmad Hajjaj. At this time, Siddiq `Ali first raised the idea of bombing tunnels and a bridge with al-Hasan, the `Abd al-Ghani bros, and others, and soon Siddiq `Ali, Abu Halima, and Hampton-El were discussing the testing of explosives and participated later at some at the camp conducted tests.<sup>367</sup>

Meanwhile, `Abd al-Rahman had issued a *fatwa* authorizing the assassination of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. After the arrest in Egypt of fellow cell member Abu Halima in March 1993 for his involvement in the February World Trade Center bombing, the cell developed a plan to assassinate Mubarak during his visit to New York, which was scheduled for April. Abu Halima had escaped from the U.S. to Egypt in February in the wake of the WTC bombing, with Siddiq `Ali's direct assistance. Now Siddiq `Ali discussed the specifics with Hampton-El and another individual first, then with Hajjaj, al-Hasan, and the `Abd al-Ghani brothers. The latter were very enthusiastic about the plan, though Fadhl was less so, as he wanted to go back to the Sudan. However, he agreed to participate if requested. Hampton-El agreed to provide the firearms and grenades, but said he would need a few days to procure them and told the others to prepare to appear on a specific date to pick them up. Siddiq `Ali had devised two plans to assassinate Mubarak, in which cell members dressed as waiters would enter his hotel room and spray it with bullets. A second plan involved using a sniper in a stolen UPS van with a hole in the side to shoot him outside his hotel. The assassination plots were aborted when they were leaked to the FBI

---

<sup>367</sup> Ibid., pp. 2235-6.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

(presumably by Salim), and shortly thereafter Mubarak's trip to NYC was canceled.<sup>368</sup> Although there seems to have been little or no discussion later of a plot to attack nuclear power plants, the group carried out a "simulation" of such an attack in woods near their Pennsylvania training camp, which was located five miles from such a plant.<sup>369</sup>

After Abu Halima was returned to the US for trial, Siddiq `Ali spoke with `Abd al-Rahman and Salim about attacking military targets such as armories in the U.S. The Blind Shaykh said this would be permissible under Islamic law. Indeed, Salim and al-Jabrawni were already making bombs at the request of Nusayr, who Saddiq `Ali and al-Jabrawni intended to help escape from prison. However, after hearing an anti-UN sermon by `Abd al-Rahman, Siddiq `Ali proposed to shift from military targets to the UN building. Again, `Abd al-Rahman gave his blessing for such an act, after which Siddiq `Ali proposed adding 26 Federal Plaza, the Holland and Lincoln tunnels, and the George Washington bridge to the list. With this, the general contours of the planned "day of terror" were in place. One minor change was under consideration, because `Abd al-Rahman and Nusayr seemed to nix the idea of bombing the UN building for different reasons.<sup>370</sup> However, Salim testified that Saddiq `Ali nevertheless still hoped and indeed expressed his intent to implement that part of the plan.<sup>371</sup>

---

<sup>368</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 1593 and 1595-6 and testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, pp. 2236-7.

<sup>369</sup> Testimony of Tariq al-Hasan, *USA v. Rahman*, August 21, 1995, pp. 16993-5.

<sup>370</sup> This occurred during a May 1993 visit to Nusayr in prison. Siddiq `Ali proposed attacking the UN building by driving a car with a bomb into its garage on the model of the WTC bombing. However, Nusayr argued that stepped up security measures in the wake of the WTC attack made a similar attack too risky, and proposed instead kidnapping former President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger in order to trade their release for changes in the United States' Bosnia policy. The plan may have been revived when Siddiq `Ali received assistance from representatives of a foreign government in connection with surveillance of the garage, obtaining access to the garage, and the use of diplomatic license plates. One of those representatives had introduced him to Muhammad Salih, supposedly a representative of HAMAS who was engaged in raising money in the U.S. Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, pp. 2238-40.

<sup>371</sup> Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, April 5, 1995, pp. 7162-3 and idem, *USA v. Rahman*, March 28, 1995, p. 6040.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

### **Operational Details**

#### *The Pennsylvania Training Camp*

As noted above, even before `Abd al-Rahman's arrival in New Jersey, the cell's operatives had established a military training camp in a remote wooded area not far from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The American Clement Hampton-El provided an American face and cover in finding a good location and setting up the military training camp, which he implemented. The cell's foot soldiers – al-Hasan, the `Abd al-Ghani brothers, and Khallafalla – trained at the camp under the leadership of Siddiq `Ali. They practiced using firearms, tested explosives, and as noted above, even executed a “simulation” of an attack on a nuclear power plant.<sup>372</sup>

#### *Planning and Preparing Execution of the “Day of Terror”*

By May 1993 the plotters were already deep in their preparations for executing the “day of terror.” The plan was to drive getaway cars and car bombs filled with barrels of an explosive mix of diesel fuel and fertilizer through the tunnels, feigning an auto breakdown and switching to the getaway cars. Abandoning the car bombs would block up traffic behind them, maximizing the death toll caused by the explosion and resultant flooding.<sup>373</sup> They hoped to maximize damage to the tunnel by placing the bombs such that the tunnel's structure was compromised in four or five places.<sup>374</sup> Each aspect of the operation was tested beforehand in order to probe the viability of the plan and provide those executing the plot with as much practice and familiarity with the task and object at hand as was possible without risking the operation's secrecy.

On June 23, 1993, daring preparatory steps were taken. In addition to carrying out surveillance of the UN building, `Amir `Abd al-Ghani and Khallafalla did a dry run through the Holland Tunnel, in the midst of

---

<sup>372</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 1585-88; Testimony of Tariq al-Hasan, *USA v. Rahman*, August 21, 1995, pp. 16993-5, 17007, and 17047-58; and Testimony of Fadhl `Abd al-Ghani, *USA v. Rahman*, August 22, 1995, pp. 17190-8. The cell also carried out training exercises in Lincoln Park in Jersey City, New Jersey. Testimony of Tariq al-Hasan, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 17047.

<sup>373</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1582 and Testimony of Clement Hampton-El, *USA v. Rahman*, August 3, 1995, pp. 15797-9.

<sup>374</sup> Testimony of Tariq al-Hasan, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 16993-5 and 17047-58.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

which they stopped and switched cars.<sup>375</sup> In another car ride, Siddiq `Ali and Salim videotaped the Holland and Lincoln tunnels. During that ride Salim secretly recorded their conversations.<sup>376</sup> The purpose of the videotape (government Exhibit 369) was so that members of the group could watch the tape later at the safe house and make decisions about the operation. The videotape showed the police checkpoints at the entrance to the tunnels, the cameras positioned inside, where the bombs were to be placed inside the tunnels, and the escape routes that the drivers would take after placing the bombs in both the tunnels. The camera panned along the walls of the tunnel so that they could identify the locations of tunnel security cameras and the traffic monitoring booths along the side. One important piece of information they sought to get from the filming was the duration of time that the tunnel monitors would need to get to the stopped vehicle where the bomb would be placed, so they could set the timer in the bomb appropriately. They also shot the green road signs that one sees coming out of the tunnel in order to identify the route to be taken by the bombers in their escape. Noting the police booths, they discussed the vital importance of not attracting attention, since the police might decide to search for hazardous materials and discover the bombs and weapons. Siddiq `Ali asked Salim to take pictures of the inside traffic booths and designated a blue sign where he said the bomb should be placed.<sup>377</sup>

The plotters were meticulous about planning the explosion so as to maximize casualties. Salim had a conversation with al-Hasan in the safe house about the structure of bridges and tunnels, with Siddiq `Ali and `Amir present. Al-Hasan said he knew a civil engineer who was a good “brother” and loved *jihad* and that he would “make a study to bring the blueprints of the tunnels and bridges so we can see the weak points.”<sup>378</sup> Al-Hasan consulted his civil engineer friend to get advice, and was informed that tunnels had strong and weak sides.<sup>379</sup> The car bombs, it was decided, were to be timed to detonate five minutes apart, as it had been calculated that the tunnels’ structural integrity was vulnerable to a dispersed, staggered explosion. In this way, they hoped the explosions

---

<sup>375</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, p. 2240.

<sup>376</sup> These were videotaped and audiotaped by Salim. Prosecutor’s Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1680.

<sup>377</sup> Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, pp. 5637-9 and 5643-7.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5652-4.

<sup>379</sup> Prosecution’s Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1598.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

would thereby collapse the tunnels and drown people trapped in their cars.<sup>380</sup>

Careful planning and the desire to maximize casualties did not seem necessarily to trump religious considerations. When discussing what time of day would be best for the explosions to detonate, the first suggestion was that it be done in the middle of the night, between 2 and 4 am, and Siddiq `Ali decided that 2:30 am would be good. Al-Hasan's view was that this would be a particularly good time, since Muslims believe that the most effective time to pray to Allah for success is in the early morning, when one wakes. This idea seemed to reinforce the decision.<sup>381</sup>

### **Bomb-Making**

Securing materials for making the car bombs was the most challenging and risky part of the operation, one fraught with the danger of raising suspicions or exposing their activities. Some elements were relatively easy to acquire. Khallafalla bought the timers, and Hampton-El supplied the detonators.<sup>382</sup> Members of the cell also underwent detailed training regarding the setting of timers.<sup>383</sup> The bomb components were to be the rather standard car bomb materials: fuel, in this case diesel fuel, and fertilizer.<sup>384</sup>

Most sensitive was the procurement of large amounts of diesel fuel and its transporting to the garage/safe house in Queens. In May 1993 Siddiq `Ali and Salim met with Salih, and Salih later supplied the group with the necessary fuel free of charge. The fuel was picked up on two separate occasions, once by Siddiq `Ali and `Amir `Abd al-Ghani, and once by the two `Abd al-Ghani brothers. These latter, who played leading roles in this aspect of the operation, felt during one fuel pick up and transport that they were being watched.<sup>385</sup> They nevertheless succeeded in picking

---

<sup>380</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1582; Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, April 5, 1995, pp. 7153-4 and 7162-3; and Testimony of Clement Hampton-El (Dr. Rashid), *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 15797-9.

<sup>381</sup> Testimony of Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, April 5, 1995, pp 7163-6.

<sup>382</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, p. 2241.

<sup>383</sup> Testimony of Tariq al-Hasan, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 17014.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17078.

<sup>385</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, pp. 2240-1 and Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, p. 5617.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

up fuel oil and delivering it to the Queens safe house.<sup>386</sup> Siddiq `Ali and the `Abd al-Ghanis then mixed the bomb chemicals.<sup>387</sup> The bomb components were being mixed in a rented garage in Queens in June 1993, in preparation for what was apparently the imminent execution of the operation. On June 24, 1993 Joint Terrorist Task Force agents burst into the Queens safe house and arrested all but three members of the cell as they were again mixing the bomb components.<sup>388</sup>

The other key ingredient in the car bomb was the cars into which the barrels of explosives would be loaded and in which they would be delivered to the targets, as well as the other vehicles in which the terrorists would make their getaway. Alvarez and Salih agreed to provide untraceable cars, and Khallafalla collected money to buy them.<sup>389</sup>

### **Financial and Other Resources**

The financing of the operation seems to have come from numerous sources, including from al-Qa`ida, from local contributions raised ostensibly for the *mujahidin* in Bosnia, and from the conspirators themselves. During the June 24, 1993 FBI search of `Abd al-Rahman's Jersey City apartment, agents uncovered \$61,000 in \$100 bills.<sup>390</sup> However, much of this money clearly was intended for maintaining the Blind Shaykh himself, i.e., providing for his living expenses. Therefore, in order to fund the "day of terror," the cell sought funding from and through cell members and those participating in the plot. In June 93, Siddiq `Ali and Salim met with Salih to request funding for the operations, at which time they provided the latter with a list of their prospective targets. Salih agreed to assist with the financing. However, he never actually contributed money for the plot, but only supplied the diesel fuel for building the bombs free of charge.<sup>391</sup> As discussed above,

---

<sup>386</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1598.

<sup>387</sup> Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, pp. 5652-4.

<sup>388</sup> Salih, who was the only cell operative not present (besides `Abd al-Rahman and Nusayr) at the safe house at that time, went into hiding and was arrested a month later. Prosecutor's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1601.

<sup>389</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, pp.1600-1 and Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, p. 2241.

<sup>390</sup> Testimony of FBI Special Agent David Frasca, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 2038-45.

<sup>391</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, pp. 2240-1 and Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, p. 5617.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

Khallafalla collected money to buy stolen cars. He also paid for the first batch of fertilizer. Alvarez offered to bring guns to help neutralize potential sentries, and provided an Uzi which Siddiq `Ali and Salim then transported from New Jersey to a safe house in Queens.<sup>392</sup>

### **Cell Functioning**

Although much of the planning was impressive in its thoroughness and efficiency, the cell did exhibit weaknesses. Some of the cell's members appeared to be less than well prepared for the tasks they were assigned. Thus, when Siddiq `Ali assigned to Khallafalla the task of purchasing the timers for the bombs, the latter had some problems getting to the store before it closed and buying the right timers. Salim had to pick him up at the Port Authority (PATH) station on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, accompany him to the store, and point out which timer he should buy.<sup>393</sup> People like Hampton-El and Alvarez appeared to be lost souls who were easily manipulated but also less than permanently committed. There was also some contestation and conflict, with members even coming to blows at times. For example, at the Pennsylvania training camp Fadhl `Abd al-Ghani questioned Siddiq `Ali's military expertise and character, which provoked the latter to physically assault the former.<sup>394</sup>

Not surprisingly, `Abd al-Rahman and his New York cell were especially vigilant regarding the maintenance of secrecy surrounding the cell and its operations. Cell members seemed to be constantly on alert against any infiltration by informants or other breaches of cell security. Thus, when Siddiq `Ali and Salim visited `Abd al-Rahman's Jersey City apartment to discuss their activities, the latter told Siddiq `Ali to warn Salim to be cautious and not to speak about such matters in the apartment, because he thought it was bugged.<sup>395</sup> During the FBI's June 24, 1993 search of `Abd al-Rahman's Jersey City apartment, apart from jihadist materials and documents, a device for detecting listening devices was found.<sup>396</sup> During a visit to Salih's Yonkers apartment, Siddiq `Ali maintained the secrecy of the "project" by first writing down for him the

---

<sup>392</sup> Idem, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, p. 2241.

<sup>393</sup> Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, pp. 5624-6; and Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1598.

<sup>394</sup> Testimony of FBI informant Fadhl `Abd al-Ghani, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 17190-8.

<sup>395</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, p. 2241.

<sup>396</sup> Testimony of FBI Special Agent Harlen Bell, *USA v. Rahman*, January 30, 1995, p. 1964.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

projected bombing targets in a notebook, including the UN building and the two tunnels; then he tore out and crumpled up that particular piece of paper and asked Salih to eat and thereby dispose of it, which he did.<sup>397</sup> `Abd al-Rahman's al-Qa`ida cell used code to refer to various elements of the plot in order to maintain secrecy. For example, the word *haduta* (Arabic for "fairy tale") was their code name for bombs, "kid's toys" was code for "weapons," and "salt" was code for the fertilizer needed for the bomb.<sup>398</sup> According to FBI informant Salim, Siddiq `Ali was cautious about providing information to other members of the group (for example, concerning someone in Abu Dhabi who was involved in financing terrorist operations), including Salim himself, even though the two men spent about eight hours per day together throughout May 1993 discussing plans to blow up bridges, tunnels, and buildings.<sup>399</sup>

Suspicious that an informant was in their midst even led `Abd al-Rahman to conduct a trial at one point. After the Mubarak assassination plot had to be at least postponed when Mubarak's trip to NYC was canceled, Hajjaj informed the group that the FBI was on to the plan, so in the end Hampton-El did not provide the plotters with any weapons. These events sparked a crisis of mutual confidence within the cell, as Hajjaj had made an allegation that the reason why information on the plot had been leaked and Abu Halima had been arrested was because Siddiq `Ali was an FBI informant.<sup>400</sup> `Abd al-Rahman convened a trial in his apartment to ferret out the informant, but to no avail.<sup>401</sup>

Despite the prosecution's claims to the contrary, there was something of a hierarchical pecking order within the cell. `Abd al-Rahman obviously stood atop the organization as chief, religious authority, ideologist, arbiter, and strategic decision-maker. For example, as has been mentioned, he vetoed or provided religious justification for types and targets of attack. His importance was underscored by a certain distance he maintained from the operational details. This was clearly a measure intended to protect the Shaykh, who also took measures to protect

---

<sup>397</sup> Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, pp. 5611-12.

<sup>398</sup> Idem, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, pp. 5637-9 and 5643-7; Testimony of Tariq al-Hassan, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 17093; and testimony of FBI informant Fadhl `Abd al-Ghani, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 17671.

<sup>399</sup> Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, April 3, 1995, pp. 6729-30.

<sup>400</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, pp. 2236-8.

<sup>401</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 1596 and 1607.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

himself. For example, apparently no bomb manuals and blueprints or lists of targets were discovered in the search of `Abd al-Rahman's Jersey City apartment.<sup>402</sup> In the event that the cell was uncovered by U.S. law enforcement agencies, this would have provided him with some credible deniability of any knowledge regarding the plot, potentially limiting his legal liability. He was also the ultimate authority reinforcing the chain of command and discipline when members wavered.

Clearly, after `Abd al-Rahman and Nusayr came Siddiq `Ali, who served as the main link between his two superiors and the cell's more rank-and-file operatives. Not only did Siddiq `Ali run the Pennsylvania training camp, he also conceived of specific plots, organized them, and could command the cell's foot soldiers. It was he who organized the logistics for implementing the "day of terror," including drafting the diagrams mapping the targets. He also decided when the bombs should go off in the tunnels, and where they should be placed.<sup>403</sup> He instructed Khallafalla to purchase the timers. One incident clearly demonstrated Siddiq `Ali's authority. When he told Salim to swallow a piece of paper on which he had written a list of bombing targets, the latter warned that the pen ink might be poisoned. Siddiq `Ali retorted that if he ordered Salim to eat the paper, he had to comply.<sup>404</sup> Senior operatives like Siddiq `Ali used the religious faith of those who wavered to reinforce their commitment to *jihad* and the often distasteful tasks at hand. For example, when al-Hasan began to doubt the propriety of the planned attacks, Siddiq `Ali gave him a "long lecture" on Islam, faith, and the impermissibility of doubting or thinking badly of a fellow Muslim.<sup>405</sup>

## **The Role of Mosques**

It is apparent from the al-Qa`ida operatives' use of the Abu Bakr mosque in Brooklyn that jihadists view mosques as legitimate venues and good covers for the most nefarious of their activities. As has been noted, `Abd al-Rahman's New York cell conducted firearms training in the Abu Bakr mosque. More generally, the Blind Shaykh's sermons served to inspire the terrorists in their activities, and the mosque was a frequent meeting

---

<sup>402</sup> None were found during the FBI's June 24, 1993 search. Testimony of FBI Special Agent Harlen Bell, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1996.

<sup>403</sup> See the description of Government Exhibit 676 in the transcript of the Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, pp. 5698-701.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5615.

<sup>405</sup> Testimony of Tariq al-Hasan, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 17024.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

place for the plotters. Thus, Siddiq `Ali was able to confirm from unidentified persons at the Abu Bakr mosque that Salim and the by then arrested al-Jabrawni were making bombs.<sup>406</sup> Cell members often met at the mosque for prayer, and then proceeded to the safe house for planning and preparation meetings and activities. Thus, in the spring of 1993 `Amir `Abd al-Ghani and Faris Khallafalla were introduced to Salim by Siddiq `Ali after evening prayers at the mosque on First Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street. They then all drove over to the Queens safe house, where `Abd al-Ghani and Khallafalla were shown around the safe house and told about the group's projected targets.<sup>407</sup> The mosque served as an ideal locale for `Abd al-Rahman to reach out to Americans as potential recruits to the *jihad*.<sup>408</sup>

### **Relevance for Critical Infrastructure Protection**

There is little evidence in the materials from the tunnels and bridges plots to support or refute the view that targeting critical infrastructure results from al-Qa`ida's perception that such infrastructure constitutes a species of target different from other target types. The focus seems to have been on executing a spectacular attack and, more importantly, on carrying out one that would yield the maximum number of casualties. However, a 1980s al-Qa`ida training manual found by the police in Manchester, England, which recommends attacking bridges and tunnels that lead in and out of large cities, suggests that this may be among the goals of such operations, but one that the top leadership is especially concerned with, leaving the specifics of the operation to lower-level operatives who are encouraged to implement attacks designed to destroy or disrupt infrastructure in such a way that they also kill and injure as many people as possible. There is a reference to taking out the "federal system" in the terrorists' discussion of attacking the FBI headquarters on Federal Plaza in NYC,<sup>409</sup> suggesting that there was a "larger" purpose in attacking the law enforcement infrastructure. This would mean, in this

---

<sup>406</sup> Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, pp. 2238-9.

<sup>407</sup> See, for example, testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, pp. 5621-3.

<sup>408</sup> In the early spring 1993, for example, `Abd al-Rahman gave a speech at the Muhammad mosque in New Jersey on *jihad*, and praised HAMAS as a good example for *mujahidin* to follow. Salim was asked to translate `Abd al-Rahman's words into English for the benefit of the Americans in the audience. Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, pp. 5617-21.

<sup>409</sup> Testimony of Clement Hampton-El (Dr. Rashid), *USA v. Rahman*, pp. 15798-9.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

sense at least, that at times al-Qa`ida purposely targets critical infrastructure or elements of what the U.S. government would regard as such.

There are signs that al-Qa`ida and affiliated jihadists see the international value to the *jihād* of attacking critical infrastructure targets such as tunnels and bridges. Thus, the `Abd al-Rahman cell's Hasan suggested sending copies of such blueprints of the tunnels to *mujahid* countries like the Sudan so that future operations could be launched.<sup>410</sup> This may have been picked up recently by Chechen jihadists. It appears that in late May 2005, Russian law enforcement officials stumbled upon a plot to blow up the Gimri Tunnel in Russia's predominantly Muslim and terrorist-ridden republic of Dagestan. Destruction of the tunnel would cut off the mountainous part of Dagestan, where 720,000 people reside, from the rest of the republic.<sup>411</sup>

The bridge, tunnels, and attendant plots say something about more general issues of jihadist motivations and modes of operation. Although during the planning and preparation of operations jihadists endeavor to maintain the greatest secrecy, they are often quite open about their overall intentions in making public threats regarding future attacks. After the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, `Ayyad wrote a letter to the *New York Times* explaining that the act was designed as a punishment for U.S. policies in the Middle East, that future attacks would be more lethal, and that there were 150 suicide bombers ready to launch them. The prosecution noted this article during the `Abd al-Rahman cell's trial.<sup>412</sup> The jihadists were at the time also quite open in acknowledging one of their motivations for their actions: the "evils" of U.S. foreign policy. Even in private, cell members and `Abd al-Rahman seemed to be driven

---

<sup>410</sup> Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim, *USA v. Rahman*, March 22, 1995, p. 5654.

<sup>411</sup> At 5:30 in the morning on 29 May, Buinaskii district criminal investigation department chief Asker Askerov and a group of policemen attempted to stop three suspicious persons near the entrance to the Gimri (Gimrinskiy) Tunnel. The three suspects opened fire, killing Askerov. A search of the area uncovered 23 artillery shells hidden five kilometers from the tunnel's entrance. One of the three terrorists, Derbishgadzhi Gazimagomedov, was apprehended. See *Russia and Eurasia Terror Watch (Retwa.com)*, May 29, 2005, [www.retwa.com/index1.cfm?pgmName=month&postcat=NewsTerror&month=5&year=2005](http://www.retwa.com/index1.cfm?pgmName=month&postcat=NewsTerror&month=5&year=2005). While the officers were checking Gazimagomedov's papers, his apparent accomplices shot officer Askerov dead. However, Gazimagomedov was acquitted in May 2006 of terrorism charges but found guilty of possessing false identity papers. See Paul Murphy, "Jury Acquits Suspected Gimrinskiy Tunnel Terrorist," *Retwa.com*, May 12, 2006, [www.retwa.com/home.cfm?articleId=2336](http://www.retwa.com/home.cfm?articleId=2336).

<sup>412</sup> Prosecution's Opening Statement, *USA v. Rahman*, p. 1594.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

by hatred of what they saw as U.S. interference in the Muslim world, including Bosnia, as well as its support for Israel.<sup>413</sup>

It needs to be emphasized, however, that stated intentions, even those of a movement's leaders to their followers in private, and especially the statements of al-Qa`ida's foot soldiers, cannot be taken to represent al-Qa`ida's ultimate goals. The political rhetoric of al-Qa`ida and its affiliates, while focused on U.S. foreign policy, often seem to serve as a convenient cover for their broader objective – Islamism's expansion.

### **AHMAD RASSAM AND THE DECEMBER 1999 “MILLENIUM PLOT”\***

At around 6 pm on Tuesday, December 14, 1999, an Algerian national named Ahmad Rassam drove off of the docked *M. V. Coho* ferry that had just arrived from Victoria, British Columbia. As he was trying to pass through a United States border checkpoint in Port Angeles, Washington, his rented dark green Chrysler 300M with B.C. plates was stopped by U.S. Customs Inspector Diana Dean. When he grew agitated and began rummaging in the vehicle's console in response to her simple, straightforward questions concerning his destination and purposes for visiting America, she became suspicious, asked him for his driver's license, and gave him a customs declaration form to fill out to keep his hands busy. The license identified him as Benni Antoine Noris, a Canadian citizen from Montreal. As the man was slow to comply when she ordered him to turn off the engine, pop open the trunk, and step out of the car, Dean called for the assistance of nearby inspectors. After failing to communicate with Rassam in Spanish and also coming to the conclusion that his behavior was “hinky,” Inspector Mark Johnson took

---

<sup>413</sup> This is evident from defense's opening statements as well as testimony in the *USA v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman* trial and the trials of the other cell members. Defense Opening Statement on behalf of Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel al-Rahman, *USA v. Rahman*, January 30, 1995, pp. 1622; Defense Opening Statement on behalf of Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Rahman*, 31 January 1995, pp. 1730-1; Defense Opening Statement on behalf of Hampton-El), *USA v. Rahman*, 31 January 1995, pp. 1737-8 and 1743-6; Defense Opening Statement on behalf of `Amir `Abd al-Ghani, *USA v. Rahman*, 31 January 1995, pp. 1785-7; pp. Defense Opening Statement on behalf of Khallafalla), *USA v. Rahman*, 31 January 1995, pp. 1805-6; Defense opening statement (London on behalf of Tariq al-Hasan), *USA v. Rahman*, 31 January 1995, pp. 1834-6; and Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali, *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali*, 6 February 1995, pp. 2238-40.

\* This section was prepared by Jeffrey M. Bale.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

his arm and escorted him from the car over to a table so that he could search the pockets of his trench coat. Meanwhile, inspectors Dan Clem and Mike Chapman removed a suitcase from his trunk and unscrewed the covering over the spare tire. To their surprise, the wheel well was loaded with “ten plastic garbage bags filled with white crystals, two olive jars with amber liquid, black boxes, [and] two pill bottles.”<sup>414</sup> Clem assumed these were ingredients for manufacturing illegal drugs and alerted Johnson, who grabbed Rassam by both shoulders and walked him over to the trunk. While Johnson was patting him down, Rassam suddenly slipped out of his oversized trench coat and began running through the streets of Port Angeles. After a four-block, more or less circular chase, the inspectors managed to catch and subdue him.

Unbeknownst to any of them at the time, what had begun as a seemingly uneventful day had ended with their nabbing of a terrorist with links to both the Algerian Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA: Armed Islamic Group) and al-Qa`ida, a man who was planning to detonate an explosive device at Los Angeles airport (LAX). It turned out that the Tylenol bottle contained a powerful, military-grade explosive known as cyclotrimethylenetrinitramine or RDX, whereas the smaller zinc lozenge bottle contained hexamethylentriperoxodiamin or HMTD, an unstable explosive so dangerous that it is not manufactured commercially. The two olive jars each contained 50 ounces of ethylene glycol dinitrate or EGDN, a chemical similar to nitroglycerin that is also highly sensitive. The garbage bags contained 118 pounds of urea fertilizer and 14 pounds of sulfate powder which, when mixed properly with the other chemicals, results in the manufacture of a very powerful bomb.<sup>415</sup>

This strange saga had in fact begun years earlier, in Algeria, where Rassam was born into a modest middle class family in 1967. His father, a chauffeur who had fought the French during the Algerian war of independence, had high hopes that his first-born son, a “lively child” and a “decent student,” would pass the tough qualifying examinations that would allow him to obtain a free university education that would in turn

---

<sup>414</sup> The details in the first two paragraphs are drawn from Paula Bock, “An Otherwise Ordinary Day,” *Pacific Northwest*, a magazine inserted into the *Seattle Times*, November 25, 2001, available at: [www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/pacificnw/2001/1125/html](http://www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/pacificnw/2001/1125/html); supplemented by Hal Bernton et al, “The Terrorist Within,” chapter 12, *Seattle Times*, July 2002, available at: [www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/news/nation-world/terroristwithin/chapter12.html](http://www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/news/nation-world/terroristwithin/chapter12.html).

<sup>415</sup> For more on these materials, compare Rassam’s own testimony in U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, *United States v. Mokhtar Haouari [Mukhtar Hawari]*, S4 00 Cr. 15 (JFK) [hereafter *U.S. v. Haouari*], June 29, 2001, pp. 575-7.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

provide him with a good middle class living.<sup>416</sup> However, young Ahmad was so afflicted by stomach cramps that he was sent for medical treatment to France, where he was treated for a festering ulcer. His long convalescence forced him to repeat a year of high school, and he ended up failing his final examination in mathematics, which effectively prevented him going on to get a university education. He also failed to get a job as a policeman, further limiting his options. As Algeria's economy precipitously declined, and radical Islamist movements arose preaching *jihad*, Rassam instead worked in his father's cafe, drank wine, smoked hashish, wore Western clothes, flirted with girls at nightclubs, and dreamed of escaping to France or French-speaking Canada.

On September 5, 1992, as violence escalated between the radicals in the Front Islamique de Salut (FIS: Islamic Salvation Front) and the socialist-oriented government and its military forces, Rassam took the bus to Algiers, from where he caught a ferry to Marseilles.<sup>417</sup> After his 30-day visa expired, he became an illegal immigrant, traveled to Corsica, and found work picking grapes and painting houses. Despite having obtained a fraudulent French passport, he was arrested in November 1993 and charged with immigration violations, then released on his own recognizance until his scheduled March 1994 trial date. Unwilling to risk deportation to Algeria, which had by then descended into outright civil war, he obtained another false passport in February and managed to secure an Air Canada flight to Montreal. Although he admitted under questioning by a Canadian immigration official that his passport was not genuine, he appealed for political asylum by falsely claiming to have been mistakenly arrested for selling firearms to a terrorist and then tortured by the Algerian police.<sup>418</sup> He was then detained briefly, released

---

<sup>416</sup> See Bernton et al, "Terrorist Within," *Seattle Times*, chapter 2, June 2002, for the details in this paragraph.

<sup>417</sup> For the details in this paragraph, see *ibid.*, chapters 3-4, 6; Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp. 536-8. For political developments in Algeria during this and subsequent periods, see Martin Stone, *The Agony of Algeria* (New York: Columbia University, 1997); Michael Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History* (New York: New York University, 1996); and Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield Algeria, 1988-2002: Studies of a Broken Polity* (London and New York: Verso, 2003).

<sup>418</sup> Note, however, that both the French internal security agency, the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire (DST: Directorate of Territorial Surveillance), and a French investigative journalist reported that Rassam really was involved in selling arms to Islamist guerrillas in 1992, and the latter added that he was then imprisoned for thirteen months at a prison in Blida before being released. Compare Cour d'Appel de Paris, Tribunal de Grand Instance de Paris, *Requisitoire definitif contre Salah Achour + 27*, P96 263 390LZ, undated [hereafter *Requisitoire*], p. 142; and Ali Laïdi, *Le jihad en Europe: Les filières du terrorisme islamiste* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), pp. 231-2. However,

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

on bond, and told to hire a lawyer for the upcoming March 28 hearing, the standard and absurdly lax Canadian policy vis-à-vis asylum seekers. Like hundreds of other cagey illegals whose claims were never confirmed, Rassam was released and allowed to collect monthly welfare checks. He soon found a room at a local YMCA, where he encountered a fellow Algerian. This individual then invited Rassam to move into his small, squalid apartment, where several other Algerian expatriates also lived. Meanwhile, Rassam failed to attend his scheduled hearing, was rejected for asylum, and was then rearrested, but he was simply given a new hearing date and released again.

Rassam soon began regularly attending the Masjid [mosque] al-Salam in Montreal, initially for social reasons, since there he was able to make contact both with “struggling immigrants like himself and successful, confident Muslims who had woven their way into the fabric of French-Canadian culture.”<sup>419</sup> During this period Rassam befriended a number of small-time criminals, as well as certain key activists linked to Islamist terrorist groups. Shortly thereafter, having been employed as a distributor of advertising leaflets for only a single week, he embarked on an extended career as a petty thief. In the course of engaging in these illegal activities, which involved around forty incidents of shoplifting, pickpocketing, stealing the luggage of tourists, or taking traveler’s checks, passports, and credit cards and then selling them, he was arrested four times, fined a few times, and even convicted once, but was invariably released instead of being deported.<sup>420</sup> Alas, such activities were far from atypical in the Algerian immigrant community within which he found refuge. The key question was whether particular disaffected individuals were engaged in criminal activities of this sort primarily for personal gain, or whether they carried them out consciously in support of radical political agendas.

In fact, Rassam’s life was about to change course. In late 1994 and early 1995 he increasingly socialized with certain influential members of jihadist cells linked to al-Qa`ida. Two of these individuals were particularly important. First, among the persons to whom Rassam sold stolen passport and identity cards in exchange for money was Fatih Kamal, an Algerian veteran of the Afghan and Bosnian *jihads* who has

---

Laïdi also claims that Rassam later traveled to Barcelona, where he was put up by jihadist “brothers,” before moving on to Paris, an itinerary that has not been confirmed by other sources.

<sup>419</sup> Bernton et al, “Terrorist Within,” chapter 6.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid; Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, p. 538, 631-6, 639.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

been described as the “operational chief” of the al-Qa`ida network in Europe and North America.<sup>421</sup> Kamal was born in Algiers in March 1960, but traveled to Canada in 1987 or 1988, where some friends of his already lived, in order to pursue business opportunities. However, in 1990 he returned to Algeria to join the armed Islamist resistance movement, which was then waging a guerrilla war against the ruling military regime. In the course of fighting in the ranks of this movement Kamal met many “Afghan Arabs,” i.e., Algerians who had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan and later returned, radicalized and battle hardened, with the aim of overthrowing the government and establishing a puritanical Islamic state in their home country. He himself was then sent to al-Qa`ida training camps in the Hindu Kush, where his intelligence, courage, and Canadian citizenship attracted the favorable attention of both operations chief Abu Zubayda and military committee head Muhammad Atif, who ensured that he was rapidly promoted. In 1993 Kamal was sent to join the international Katiba al-Mujahidin (Mujahidin Brigade) in Zenica, Bosnia, where he operated under the orders of Anwar Sha`ban, a senior member of the Egyptian terrorist group al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya, and `Abd al-Qadir Mukhtari (alias Abu al-Ma`ali), an Algerian “Afghan Arab” and militant in the GIA. Although Kamal was anxious to engage in combat, Mukhtari recognized his talents and appointed him as the logistical officer of the unit, in which capacity he was responsible for organizing an external support apparatus to funnel false documents, money, weapons, and recruits into the group’s ranks.<sup>422</sup>

In order to accomplish this important mission, Kamal was not based permanently in Bosnia but instead regularly traveled back and forth to places such as Zagreb, Montreal, Paris, Milan, Ancona, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Istanbul, as well as to locales in Austria, Belgium, Slovenia, and Morocco. Indeed, a French judicial investigation revealed that Kamal had “multiple links” to “diverse Islamic terrorist organizations around the world, and particularly in Bosnia, in Pakistan, in Germany, and in London.”<sup>423</sup> Among the many components of Bin Ladin’s jihadist international that he was connected to were the Istituto Culturale Islamico on Viale Jenner in Milan, a hotbed of Islamist subversion, and the violent “Roubaix gang” in France, which was composed primarily of *mujahidin* who had

---

<sup>421</sup> Laïdi, *Jihad en Europe*, p. 225.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-8.

<sup>423</sup> *Requisitoire*, p. 126.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

fought in Bosnia and led by Christophe Caze, a French medical student who had converted there to a radical version of Islam.<sup>424</sup>

In the mid-1990s, Kamal returned to Montreal. With the help of a Moroccan named Muhammad `Umari, he created an elaborate “humanitarian” support network called Save Bosnia Now, bought a small craft shop on St. Laurent boulevard in the center of Montreal, Artisanat Nord-Sud, and became the co-partner of an export-import firm known as Société Mandingo. Under the cover of these seemingly innocuous front organizations, Kamal built up an international network of “aid workers” and “business associates” who were actively engaged in the trafficking of arms, documents, and jihadist fighters to Bosnia and other hotspots. Although he frequently left Canada and traveled abroad in order to manage these far-flung organizing activities, Kamal arranged for several jihadist “brothers” who were on the run, such as Labsi Mustafa and La`ifa Khabu, to take refuge in Canada and stay for a time in an apartment at 6301 Place de la Malicorne, where Rassam, Adl Abu Mazbur, and Kamal’s assistant Sa`id Atmani (alias Karim) by then all resided. Following Kamal’s arrest by the Jordanian authorities on April 8, 1999, after which he was interrogated and extradited to France, his Canadian cell and its activities were taken over and run by his lieutenants Murad Ikhlaf, who had carried out a deadly bombing at the Algiers airport in 1992, and Mukhtar Hawari, another well-integrated Algerian who subsequently purchased the Artisanat Nord-Sud firm from Kamal’s wife. After doing so, Hawari used the company as a means of obtaining genuine identification card and credit card numbers that he then made use of to forge fraudulent cards.<sup>425</sup> Rassam was one of the thieves who sold stolen credit and identification cards such as driver’s licenses to Hawari.<sup>426</sup> As for Kamal, after being sentenced to ten years in prison on April 6, 2001, by a Parisian court, he was released early for good

---

<sup>424</sup> For the Milan cultural center, see Lorenzo Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2005), pp. 217-33; Guido Olimpio, *La rete del terrore: Come nascono e agiscono I militanti delle Guerre Sante* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 2002), pp. 87-97; Magdi Allam, *Bin Laden in Italia: Viaggio nell’islam radicale* (Milan: Mondadori, 2002), pp. 62-72. For the Roubaix gang, see Hassane Zerrouky, *La nébuleuse islamiste en France et en Algérie: Enquête* (Paris: Editions 1, 2002), pp. 218-20; Evan F. Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2004), pp. 188-97.

<sup>425</sup> Laïdi, *Jihad en Europe*, pp. 231-2. For the case against Hawari, see *U.S. v. Haouari*, passim.

<sup>426</sup> Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp. 539-41.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

behavior and thence made his way back to Canada on January 29, 2005.<sup>427</sup>

The second key figure who Rassam encountered in Montreal was `Abd al-Ra`uf Hannashi, an al-Qa`ida recruiter in his mid-40s and “jolly uncle” figure who openly expressed his hatred for the West and frequently regaled select congregants at the al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya mosque about the training he had received in Bin Ladin’s camps in Afghanistan, where he had learned how to fire assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers, manufacture explosives, and wage urban guerrilla warfare.<sup>428</sup> Like Kamal, Hannushi was a man who was well-respected in the local Muslim community, which gave him a certain cachet amongst alienated individuals like Rassam. As a result, the latter and his roommates became increasingly obsessed with traveling to Afghanistan for training and waging *jihād* themselves. Unbeknownst to them, their apartment had by then been placed under surveillance by the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), which had received a warning from both French anti-terrorist judge Jean-Louis Bruguière and the Italian secret services about the dangers posed by Kamal and his Montreal associates. Even so, the CSIS officers involved were so contemptuous of the group’s potential for mayhem that they referred to its members derisively as the “Bunch of Guys” (or “BOG.”) rather than as jihadist cell members. Of all the members of the group, they considered Rassam to be the least likely to cause serious trouble.

During the summer and early fall of 1997, after having been inspired by Hannashi and other friends who had recently returned from Afghanistan, Rassam became increasingly interested in traveling there to receive training. Ostensibly, his original goal in obtaining such training was so that he would become capable of returning home and waging *jihād* in Algeria itself.<sup>429</sup> However that may be, he flew from Toronto via Frankfurt, Germany to Karachi on March 17, 1998, with the assistance of Hannashi, who had arranged the details and functioned as an intermediary between Rassam and Abu Zubayda. The Algerian met next

---

<sup>427</sup> Stewart Bell, *Cold Terror: How Canada Nurtures and Exports Terrorism around the World* (Mississauga, Ontario: Wiley & Sons Canada, 2005), p. 159.

<sup>428</sup> For the information in this paragraph, see Bernton et al, “Terrorist Within,” chapter 7.

<sup>429</sup> Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp. 545-55. Compare also his December 17, 2002, testimony in United States District Court, Western District of Washington at Seattle, *In Re: Letter Rogatory from Germany to the United States dated October 2, 2002*, pp. 17-19, 113. The latter deposition is focused primarily on the training that Rassam received in Afghanistan and his operational objectives following his return.

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

in Islamabad or Peshawar with Abu Zubayda, who was in charge of the training program along with his deputy Ibn Shaykh al-Libi, and it was decided that Rassam should receive training at al-Qa`ida's Khaldan camp near Khost. After being provided with a letter, an Afghan guide, and Afghan clothes, Rassam was driven in an automobile to the Afghan frontier. He crossed the Khyber pass with a group of Afghans to Jalalabad, then traveled on to the Khaldan camp, where he arrived at the end of April 1994. Together with a contingent of thirty other Algerians headed by someone named al-Mu`taz – who were organized into cells according to their intended regions of operation – he received training in light weapons, handguns, small and large machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPG's), how to make charges and explosives (specifically TNT, C4, and “black plastic”), sabotage operations, urban guerrilla warfare, assassinations, and security measures. He was also taught covert tradecraft techniques that would enable him to approach and enter prospective targets and carry out bombings without calling attention to himself. Rassam finished his basic training at the Khaldan camp in September 1998, and with the blessings of Ibn Shaykh al-Libi he was then sent first to a Kurdish camp for two weeks to receive pistol training and then on to another camp called Darunta to receive further training in the manufacture of explosives. There, under the direction of Abu Sulayman, he spent about a month and a half learning how to mix chemical substances together and how to build detonators and electronic circuits for bombs.<sup>430</sup>

The question of critical infrastructure is directly alluded to in this context by Rassam, who defined “sabotage training” as “how to blow up the infrastructure of a country” and included targets such as the enemy’s “installations, special installations and military installations...such as electric plants, gas plants, airports, railroads, large corporations, gas, gas installations...[and] hotels where conferences are held.” Urban guerrilla warfare referred to “how to carry out operations in cities, how to block roads, how to assault buildings, and the strategies used in these operations.”<sup>431</sup> In another deposition, he added a few more interesting details. For example, he admitted that at the Khaldan camp he had received training “in theory” about where to place explosives in the best manner to destroy tanks, military bases, “a place where there are airplanes”, and possibly automobiles and infrastructural facilities such as

---

<sup>430</sup> Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp. 554-5. It was also there that he witnessed the release of a chemical agent, which he identified as cyanide, which resulted in the death of a dog. See *ibid.*, pp. 620-6.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 549-51.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

“a power facility”.<sup>432</sup> Moreover, he indicated that the trainees were taught how to examine and evaluate targets in order to determine whether or not they were suitable for attack. This depended above all on whether they constituted “military bases and sensitive areas that are crucial” to the enemy, specifically “anything that relates to the economy and anything related to the military things.”<sup>433</sup> Rassam himself considered airports to be economic targets, but claimed he could not recall whether targeting airports was actually discussed at the camps. He also said he could not remember if businesses owned by Jews were identified as especially valuable targets, or whether he heard anything in the camps about plans to attack the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, or the Capitol building in Washington, DC.<sup>434</sup> Later, at the Darunta camp where Rassam received advanced training, one of the schemes discussed was the releasing of cyanide gas into the air intake vents of a building, such as a government office, in order to kill large numbers of people inside without endangering themselves or being detected. However, they did not actually practice carrying out such an operation.<sup>435</sup>

During his sojourn in Afghanistan, Rassam and four other Algerian “brothers” discussed possible future operations, including returning to Canada and carrying out a series of bank robberies to obtain the funding to launch an attack inside America, ideally before the end of 1999. The members of this prospective Canadian jihadist cell were four “Afghan Arabs” – Rassam himself (alias Nabil), Mustafa Labsi, Fuda’il, and Abu Ahmad – and Atmani, a former *mujahid* in Bosnia. Afterwards, they hoped to be able to escape from the U.S. and make their way back to Algeria. Among the potential targets they discussed striking were airports and consulates.<sup>436</sup> In early November 1998, after completing their training, they arranged to travel individually and then meet up in Canada, but in the end two of the principal cell members were unable to make it through customs in Britain and were therefore not able to reach Canada. Worse still, in October 1998 Atmani was arrested in Niagara Falls in possession of stolen credit cards, and was thereafter deported first to Bosnia and then to France, where he was wanted in connection with the crimes committed by the Roubaix gang. Since the members of this particular cell had originally planned to make their final targeting and operational decisions collectively after they had reconvened in

---

<sup>432</sup> Rassam testimony, October 2, 2002, *Letter Rogatory*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 111-12.

<sup>435</sup> Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, p. 624.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 555-61.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

Montreal, in the end Rassam was left to his own devices and forced to plan the North American operation himself.<sup>437</sup>

In early February 1999 Rassam met one final time in Pakistan with Abu Zubayda, who arranged for his flight home and asked him to acquire Canadian passports for the use of other *mujahidin* when he got there. Al-Mu`taz, the *amir* based in Jalalabad who oversaw training at the Khaldan camp, had previously provided Rassam with 12,000 Canadian dollars, two chemical substances to make explosives (hexamine and glycol), and a notebook with instructions on how to manufacture those explosives.<sup>438</sup> Rassam then flew back on Asiana Airlines via Seoul, South Korea, and Los Angeles airport to Vancouver, where he stayed with a friend named `Abd al-Majid Dahoumane before returning to Montreal and finding a succession of new apartments, the first on Sherbrooke Avenue and another on Rue du Fort. He claimed that he had not been given any specific instructions about what targets to attack by higher-ups, and at that time had still not developed a concrete plan for a terrorist strike.<sup>439</sup>

Between February and December 1999, Rassam involved himself in making preparations to carry out a terrorist attack on American soil.<sup>440</sup> He endeavored to acquire passable false documents, identify places where he could obtain chemical materials, and procure weapons for the other cell members that he still expected to arrive. However, in the early summer he phoned both Labsi and the cell's al-Qa`ida liaison Abu Duha (alias Dr. Haydar) in London, at which point he learned that Labsi and Fuda'il had both failed to make it through customs and would therefore be remaining in Britain. Realizing that he was now on his own, in

---

<sup>437</sup> For these details, see Rassam testimony, *Letter Rogatory*, pp. 87-90, 92-4.

<sup>438</sup> For the materials provided to Rassam by al-Mu`taz, see *ibid.*, pp. 73-4, 114-5; and Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp. 559-60.

<sup>439</sup> Rassam testimony, *Letter Rogatory*, pp. 81-2. Note that these claims have been contested by the U.S. government, which charges Abu Duha, a senior al-Qa`ida operative who handled networks of Algerian jihadists, with having discussed an attack on an American "airport or other large facility" with Rassam in mid-1998, at the Khaldan camp in Afghanistan, as well as with having conspired to provide logistical and material support for the Canadian cell. See United States District Court, Southern District of New York, *United States v. Abu Doha*, Indictment, 01 Cr., undated, p. 3. For more on Abu Duha, see Laïdi, *Jihad en Europe*, p. 234, where he is identified as a key logistical operative in al-Qa`ida's Europe network, one of whose tasks was facilitating the transfer of Algerian *mujahidin* to and from Afghan training camps and battle zones such as Chechnya.

<sup>440</sup> See Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp. 570-4; and Bernton et al, "Terrorist Within," chapter 10, for his preparations and planning.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

August 1999 he made a decision to attack the Los Angeles airport (LAX), both because he had stopped over there and scouted the premises on his return flight from Pakistan and because he considered it to be “sensitive politically and economically.”<sup>441</sup> He thence bought a French-language tourist guide to North America along with a map, on which he circled three separate Los Angeles-area airports as potential targets even though he only intended to attack one of them. His plan was extremely simple: he would do a test run at LAX by placing a normal unattended bag on a luggage cart and then observing how long it took security officials to notice and examine it. If the time lag was sufficient, he would return later and surreptitiously place a bag laden with explosives on a similar cart, walk away, and arrange it so that the bomb would detonate after he had left the terminal. Two other “brothers” provided him with operational advice in connection with his projected future terrorist attack. Samir Ait Muhammad, a close friend who wanted to establish his own training camp in Afghanistan, recommended that Rassam carry out an attack in the affluent Jewish Montreal suburb Outremont, specifically by placing a bomb inside a gasoline truck so as to cause a larger and deadlier explosion. Rassam’s roommate Ikhlaf, the Algiers airport bomber, instead provided him with advice on his planned bombing of LAX. Rassam was considering using a secondary explosion to kill rescue workers as they responded to the initial blast. However, Ikhlaf counseled him to wear a disguise, use one large explosive device instead of two (since the more devices used, the more likely they were to be discovered), place it near a crowded security checkpoint to maximize casualties, and set the timer of the device so that it would detonate thirty minutes after it was positioned there.<sup>442</sup> Nevertheless, Rassam later implausibly claimed that had the LAX operation not been interdicted he would have tried to avoid causing unnecessary civilian deaths.<sup>443</sup>

During that same summer of 1999 Rassam re-established contact with his friend Mukhtar Hawari, in part because, as an illegal subject to deportation, he needed to obtain a bogus Canadian visa card. It turned out that Hawari himself was an advocate of *jihad* in places like Chechnya, praised the terrorist bomb attacks carried out in France and against the U.S. embassies in Africa, expressed a personal desire to travel to Afghan camps for training, and allegedly took an interest in

---

<sup>441</sup> Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, p. 572.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 647-54; Bernton et al, “Terrorist Within,” chapter 10. In his testimony, Rassam also revealed that Ikhlaf – who he did not actually name – had provided him with other logistical assistance and operational advice.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 626-9.

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

Rassam's plans to carry out an action in America. Therefore, he not only agreed to let the younger man claim that he was working at the Artisanat Nord-Sud store (so he would have a good pretext to apply for a visa under a phony name), but even filled out the visa application for him. Subsequently, in late October, Hawari, Samir Ait Muhammad, and another "brother" named Sa'id Harrar asked Rasm to open a new store for them under his fake Benni Noris visa name, so that they would be able to utilize this business to collect credit and ATM card information, a scheme that Rasm agreed to in exchange for payment. He was already aware that Hawari manufactured counterfeit documents in his Sherbrooke home, and had actually seen him mail the completed false documents overseas to the United States and other countries.<sup>444</sup>

In early November 1999, Rasm told Hawari that he had to carry out some "very important and dangerous business" in America and asked the latter to manufacture both a fake driver's license and a bogus Algerian passport for him.<sup>445</sup> He also asked if he could cash in his interest in their newly-opened Marche Benni store so that he could obtain some ready money. Hawari agreed to both requests, and shortly thereafter provided Rasm with a driver's license in the name of Mario Roig along with 3,000 Canadian dollars. During this same time period, Hawari indicated that he had a friend named `Abd al-Ghani Maskini who knew English well, lived in Brooklyn in the United States, loved American beer and Hollywood movies, had been involved in cons and bank fraud, wanted to travel to Afghanistan to train for *jihad*, and was willing to help Rasm carry out his mission. Rasm agreed to contact the man, took his contact information, and phoned him solely because his friend Hawari had vouched for him, and indicated that if he proved helpful there would no problem arranging for his travel to Afghanistan. Indeed, soon after Rasm contacted his al-Qa`ida liaisons Abu Ja'afar and Abu Duha to inform them of his plans and obtain visas for both Maskini and Dahoumane, with the result that Mustafa sent him two blank visas from London which he in turn passed on to Hawari so that forged stamps could be prepared for them. Rasm's tentative plan was to meet up with Maskini after he entered the United States.

Even before he flew from Montreal to Vancouver on November 17, 1999, Rasm had purchased electronic components that he used to make circuits and four timing devices. He stayed in Vancouver for two weeks, during which time he and Dahoumane collected chemical materials from

---

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., pp. 561-6, 589-91, 636-42.

<sup>445</sup> For the information in this paragraph, see *ibid.*, pp. 577-84, 591, 594-7.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

garden stores, including two fertilizers used in agriculture known as urea and aluminum sulfate, and both nitric and sulfuric acid, which they stole from companies that manufactured agricultural fertilizers.<sup>446</sup> They then rented a room at the Motel 2400, where they began preparing the explosives. Rassam paid for the chemicals, motel, plane tickets, and auto rental with the money that both al-Mu`taz and Hawari had given him. When he returned to Montreal for the last time, he asked Hawari to send his proceeds from the store to his comrades in Britain, and advised him and Samir to lie and deny having known who he was if the police later questioned them. He then left Montreal for good and flew back to Vancouver on December 6 or 7, after which he and Dahoumane spent the following week completing the manufacture of the explosives before placing them in garbage bags or other containers and stuffing them into the wheel well of the trunk of Rassam's rental car. On December 14, the two men drove from Vancouver to Victoria to catch an auto ferry to Port Angeles. In Victoria Rassam bought a ticket for the ferry, reserved a hotel room in Seattle, and bought Dahoumane – for whom he had already rented a motel room back in Vancouver and a plane flight to Montreal – a bus ticket for the return trip to Vancouver.<sup>447</sup> As described above, when Rassam arrived in Port Angeles later that day, he panicked at the checkpoint and was arrested.

Had he not been arrested, Rassam's plan was to meet up with Maskini in Seattle, have him help transfer the explosives to some suitcases, return the rental car, and then take the train separately to Los Angeles. It was a long distance from Washington state to southern California, and Rassam was concerned that the explosives-laden trunks might be dangerously sensitive to shock, impact, or sudden motion. When he arrived in LA, he intended to make contact again with Maskini, get a hotel room, go with his new friend to get a rental car (using his fake name), and then head to the airport to follow through on his simple but potentially devastating plan. After carrying out the bombing, he hoped to make his way back to Montreal, say good bye to his friends, pick up the Algerian passport that Hawari had made for him, and then fly on to Europe and Algeria.<sup>448</sup>

In the end, however, Rassam was arrested as he tried to enter the United States. In April 2001, he was convicted in a Los Angeles courtroom on nine criminal counts, including conspiracy to commit an act of international terrorism. Facing a sentence of between 57 and 130 years in

---

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., pp. 574-7, 591-3, 658; Bernton et al, "Terrorist Within," chapter 11.

<sup>447</sup> Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp. 593-4, 600-6.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid., pp. 606-8;

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

prison, he was ready to listen when Department of Justice officials offered him a deal to reduce his sentence: in exchange for testifying against his friend Hawari and revealing everything he knew about al-Qa`ida's plots, training, and tactics, they offered to cut his minimum sentence by more than half, to 27 years. On May 10, 2001, the first of dozens of interviews with Rassam was conducted, in the course of which most of the details enumerated above emerged.<sup>449</sup> In the end, even though he endeavored to conceal the identities and activities of some of his associates despite his agreement to reveal everything, and from 2003 on became increasingly uncooperative, on July 27, 2005 Rassam was given only a 22-year sentence by a Seattle judge instead of the 35-year sentence that the prosecutors asked for. Since the judge's leniency meant that Rassam might be released after spending only 14 years in jail (for time already served and good behavior), on August 26, 2005, the U.S. government decided to appeal that sentence.<sup>450</sup>

### **Relevance for Critical Infrastructure Protection**

The reasons why this particular case is relevant to any evaluation of al-Qa`ida's possible interests in targeting critical infrastructure are twofold. First, elements within the Algerian expatriate circles with which Rassam was associated were undoubtedly linked to al-Qa`ida. Not only had several of them received training in Bin Ladin's Afghan camps, but their recruiters or handlers were key al-Qa`ida operations and logistics officers, such as Hannushi and Kamal. Rassam himself met personally in Pakistan with Abu Zubayda, a very senior operational leader of al-Qa`ida, and was thereafter in semi-regular contact with two key al-Qa`ida liaison officers, Abu Ja`afar in Pakistan and Abu Duha in London, from whom he periodically received assistance. Indeed, according to a formerly classified and now infamous intelligence memo concerning al-Qa`ida's intentions, entitled "Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in US," which was made available to President George W. Bush and his national security team on August 6, 2001, Rassam admitted both that Abu Zubayda had "encouraged him" to carry out an attack on American soil and "helped facilitate" it, and that Bin Ladin himself was

---

<sup>449</sup> Bernton et al, "Terrorist Within," chapter 16.

<sup>450</sup> Gene Johnson, "Would-Be Millenium Bomber Gets 22 Years," Associated Press, July 27, 2005; Mike Carter, "US seeks longer sentence for Ahmed Ressim millennium bomb plot terrorist," *Seattle Times*, August 26, 2005.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

“aware of the Los Angeles operation.”<sup>451</sup> Second, as Rassam himself also acknowledged, he had received advanced training in manufacturing explosives at certain Afghan camps, training which was specifically designed to help him attack targets that fall into the infrastructural category. Indeed, Rassam’s statement that he was trained “how to blow up the infrastructure of a country” suggests that at least some portions of that training were specifically geared toward attacking infrastructure *qua* infrastructure.

However, that particular statement should probably not be interpreted too literally. As has been argued elsewhere, assaults on certain types of infrastructural targets enabled al-Qa`ida to achieve a multiplicity of operational objectives, including killing large numbers of people, exerting a profound psychological impact on hostile and friendly target audiences, striking famous symbolic targets, and physically damaging important buildings and facilities. Yet ironically, disrupting infrastructure in the narrow sense of that term seems not to have loomed particularly high in their considerations. That was seemingly true in this case as well. Among the indications of this were that Rassam and his “brothers” debated attacking a number of targets that did not fall into the category of critical infrastructure, e.g., Jewish neighborhoods in Montreal. Moreover, even when they considered attacking targets that could technically be construed as critical infrastructure, such as the Bureau of Exchange in Montreal, LAX, and government buildings such as an office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Israeli embassy in Washington, DC, their main objectives were not in fact to disrupt the functioning of those facilities.<sup>452</sup> For example, in the case of the Bureau of Exchange, the scheme was hatched as a possible means of stealing money that could thence be used to finance other jihadist operations, and both the planned bomb attack on LAX and the hypothetical plans to attack government buildings, including with

---

<sup>451</sup> “Transcript: Bin Ladin determined to strike in US,” CNN, April 10, 2004. This memo later became a subject of political controversy, since it revealed that the Bush team’s post-9/11 claims not to have received any warnings about al-Qa`ida’s intentions of carrying out attacks on American soil were not, strictly speaking, true. Apparently, the reason why Bin Ladin knew about the North American Algerian cell’s plans was because in the summer of 1998 Abu Duha visited the al-Qa`ida leader in Qandahar and personally informed him. See Bernton et al, “Terrorist Within,” chapter 8.

<sup>452</sup> Schemes to attack an FBI office and the Israeli embassy in Washington, DC, are mentioned in Bernton et al, “Terrorist Within,” chapter 16.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

cyanide, were viewed as good ways to kill large numbers of “infidel” enemies.<sup>453</sup>

### **THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 “PLANES OPERATION”\***

In the early morning of September 11, 2001, four teams of al-Qa`ida terrorists boarded four U.S. commercial jetliners, seized control of their cockpits, altered their courses, and flew them towards high-profile targets that had been pre-selected by the planners of the operation. The first aircraft to be seized was American Airlines flight 11, which was scheduled to take off at 7:45 am and fly directly from Boston’s Logan International Airport to Los Angeles airport. It was taken over by five hijackers – Muhammad `Ata, `Abd al-`Aziz al-`Umari, Sultan al-Suqami, Wa`il al-Shahri, and his brother Walid al-Shahri – at around 8:14, re-routed to New York, and flown into the North Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46. The second aircraft seized was United Airlines flight 175, which was scheduled to depart from Logan at 8:00 and fly directly to Los Angeles. It was taken over by five hijackers – Marwan al-Shihi, Muhand al-Shahri, Fayaz Rushd al-Qadi, Ahmad al-Ghamdi, and his brother Hamza al-Ghamdi – between 8:42 and 8:46, re-routed to New York, and flown into the South Tower of the World Trade Center at 9:03. The third flight seized was American Airlines flight 77, which was scheduled to take off from Dulles airport outside Washington, DC, at 8:10 and fly on to Los Angeles. It was seized by five hijackers - Hani Hanjur, Khalid al-Mikhdhar, Majid ibn Muqid al-Harbi, Nawaf al-Hazmi, and his brother Salim al-Hazmi – between 8:51 and 8:54, redirected back to D.C., and flown into the Pentagon at 9:37. The fourth aircraft seized was United Airlines flight 93, which was scheduled to depart from Newark airport at 8:15 and fly directly to San Francisco airport. It was taken over by four hijackers – Ziyad al-Jarrah, Ahmad al-Haznawi, Sa`id al-Ghamdi, and Ahmad al-Na`mi – at 9:28 and rerouted towards D.C., but the passengers prevented the terrorists from flying the aircraft into the Capitol Building by storming the cockpit, which in turn caused al-Jarrah to crash the plane into a field in

---

<sup>453</sup> Rassam testimony, *U.S. v. Haouari*, pp. 624, 648-50. Note that the cyanide attack scheme directly conflicts with Rassam’s claims to have intended to avoid causing unnecessary casualties by, e.g., attacking a government building at night. See *ibid.*, pp. 626-7.

\* This section was prepared by Jeffrey M. Bale.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Pennsylvania.<sup>454</sup> As a result of these attacks, nearly 3,000 American citizens lost their lives.

Given the unusually spectacular, destructive, and traumatic nature of these particular terrorist attacks, which constituted the most effective surprise attack on American soil since the Japanese aerial assault on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i on December 7, 1941, the basic course of the events that transpired on September 11, 2001 are etched in the minds and emotions of most Americans, perhaps above all those of the personnel in the U.S. counterterrorism community who were and remain responsible for preventing such attacks. Hence there is no real need to reconstruct the operational mechanics of these attacks in further detail, all the more so because the U.S. government has produced several "official" reports that have not only provided a thorough description of the attacks themselves, but also of a number of related matters, including the failure of the American intelligence community to respond appropriately to the many warning signs that such an attack was in the offing.<sup>455</sup>

Consequently, the aim of this particular section is not to go over the very same ground that has already been covered by others with a reasonable degree of thoroughness – albeit perhaps not exhaustively, given the persistence of certain unanswered or inadequately answered questions – but rather to focus specifically on the objectives of the sponsors and actual planners of the attacks: Usama bin Ladin, the military committee of al-Qa`ida's Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council), and the actual architects of the attack plan, above all Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM) and his lieutenant Ramzi bin al-Shayb. The aim herein will be to try and determine whether the 9/11 attacks were conceived and prepared, narrowly speaking, as attacks on critical infrastructure. The best way to answer this question is to examine and analyze the statements made by KSM and Bin al-Shayb, both in the April 2002 interviews they solicited and then gave to Yosri

---

<sup>454</sup> For the basic facts concerning the hijackings, see United States Government, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States, *Final Report* [hereafter *9/11 Commission Report*] (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), pp. 1-14. Compare also Der Spiegel [Editorial Team], *Inside 9/11: What Really Happened* (New York: St. Martin's, 2001), esp. Part I and the two appendices, "Chronology of the Attacks" and "Timetables of the Hijacked Flights," pp. 255-62; and Yosri Fouda and Nick Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror: The Truth Behind the Most Devastating Terrorist Attack the World Has Ever Seen* (New York: Arcade, 2003), esp. pp. 142-5.

<sup>455</sup> See, e.g., *ibid*; and United States Government, Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001, *Report of the U.S. Select Committee on Intelligence and U.S House Permanent Committee on Intelligence*, 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2002).

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

Fouda, an investigative reporter for al-Jazira, and/or in the course of a series of interrogations following their capture in Pakistan.

As is well-known, and in accordance with its custom at the time, al-Qa`ida did not immediately claim responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. Hence despite the certainty expressed by both terrorism experts and by the governments of the U.S. and Britain that Bin Ladin and his group had been responsible, all sorts of bogus “conspiracy theories” were soon concocted, whether disingenuously or sincerely, that suggested that other parties – most often the Americans themselves or the Jews and Israeli secret services – were secretly behind the catastrophic attack.<sup>456</sup> Such lies and delusions should have been dispelled immediately when Bin Ladin openly admitted, during a videotaped private dinner on November 9, 2001 with Sulayman Abu Ghayth and Ayman al-Zawahiri, that he had not expected the two towers to collapse, but some observers nevertheless insisted that the recovered and subsequently broadcast tape was a forgery.<sup>457</sup> However, this sort of deception and self-deception became virtually impossible for rational people when on June 7, 2002, al-Jazira broadcast the videotaped last will and testament of Ahmad al-Haznawi,

---

<sup>456</sup> For the distinction between bogus, all-encompassing “conspiracy theories” and the serious analysis of real-world covert and clandestine politics, see Jeffrey M. Bale, “Political Paranoia versus Political Realism: On Distinguishing between Bogus “Conspiracy Theories” and Genuine Conspiratorial Politics,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 41:1 (February 2007), forthcoming. For representative examples from what has become a veritable cottage industry of recent conspiratorial books suggesting that someone other than al-Qa`ida was behind the 9/11 attacks – most often the Bush Administration itself and Israeli intelligence – or at least that Usama bin Ladin’s network was aided and abetted by more powerful and sinister forces operating behind the scenes, compare Thierry Meyssan, *L’effroyable imposture: 11 September 2001* (Chatou: Carnot, 2002); idem, *Le Pentagate* (Chatou: Carnot, 2003); Eric Hufschmid, *Painful Questions: An Analysis of the September 11<sup>th</sup> Attack* (no place: Ink and Scribe, 2002); Jim Marrs, *Inside Job: The Shocking Case for a 9/11 Conspiracy* (San Rafael: Origin, 2005); David Icke, *Alice in Wonderland and the World Trade Center Disaster: Why the Official Story of 9/11 is a Monumental Lie* (Wildwood, MO: Bridge of Love, 2002); Arnold Schölzel, ed., *Das Schweigekartell: Fragen und Widersprüche zum 11. September* (Berlin: Homilius, 2002); Andreas von Bülow, *Die critical infrastructureA und der 11. September* (Munich: Piper, 2004); Maurizio Blondet, *11 settembre: Colpo di stato in USA* (Milan: Effedieffe, 2002); idem, *Osama bin Mossad* (Milan: Effedieffe, 2003); Bruno Cardeñosa, *11-S, historia de una infamia: Las mentiras de la “versión oficial”* (Madrid: Corona Borealis, 2003); and Robin de Ruiter, *11 settembre: Il Reichstag di Bush* (Frankfurt: Zambon, 2003).

<sup>457</sup> For a media report on Bin Ladin’s remarks at that dinner, see Ben Fenton, “Damned by his Gloating Smile,” *The Telegraph*, December 14, 2001. Compare also Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, pp. 134-5.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

one of the 9/11 hijackers.<sup>458</sup> Further proof was presented in September of 2002, when al-Jazira journalist Fouda publicly reported on his secret journey to Pakistan five months earlier to meet with KSM and Bin al-Shayb, who had both proudly acknowledged their roles in planning the “planes operation.” Fouda and his fellow journalist Nick Fielding first published an article with these revelations in the London *Sunday Times* on September 8, 2002, and Fouda then followed this up on September 11 and 12, 2002, by broadcasting a two-part television documentary on al-Jazira that contained, amongst much other evidence, direct statements by KSM and Bin al-Shayb claiming responsibility for “Holy Tuesday.” In between those two dates, on September 9, 2002, al-Jazira broadcast a propaganda video on the “planes operation” that had been prepared by KSM and Bin al-Shayb and released by al-Qa`ida’s own television production company, al-Sahab (The Clouds). Clearly, the two al-Qa`ida operatives had grown more and more concerned about the ongoing “attempts to strip the brothers of the credit” for carrying out the attacks, and wanted both to set the historical record straight and boast about their own roles in the event.<sup>459</sup> What, then, can be learned from their firsthand accounts?

Before turning to this question, some basic background information needs to be provided about KSM and Bin al-Shayb. KSM was an intelligent “terrorist entrepreneur” who, like his nephew Ramzi Yusuf, the ostensible planner of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was a Baluchi who grew up in Kuwait.<sup>460</sup> He claims to have been brought up in a religious family, to have joined the Jami`yyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Society of the Muslim Brothers, or Muslim Brotherhood) at age 16, and to have become enamored of violent *jihad*. In 1983 he came to the U.S. to attend colleges in North Carolina, and in December 1986 earned a degree in

---

<sup>458</sup> For the details in this paragraph, see *ibid.*, pp. 151, 157-9. All but one of the 9/11 hijackers had prepared such videotaped statements. However, as coincidence would have it, Bin al-Shayb was arrested after a shootout with Pakistani security forces on September 11, the very same day that Part I of Fouda’s documentary was shown on al-Jazira. In order to head off increasing Muslim speculation that Fouda had somehow arranged to set up Bin al-Shayb, on September 21, 2002, al-Qa`ida released an official statement absolving Fouda of guilt. See *ibid.*, pp. 161-2.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28 (quote), 114-15. To prove their involvement, Bin al-Shayb showed Fouda a briefcase full of 9/11 planning materials that had been used by `Ata and the other pilots, which included flight manuals, Boeing brochures, textbooks about how to fly, compact discs, flight simulator CD-ROMs. He had taken them from the Hamburg apartment shared by `Ata and other cell members.

<sup>460</sup> Much of the biographical information in the following paragraph is derived from the account in the *9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 145-7, which is in turn based on information provided in KSM’s interrogation reports and other U.S. intelligence sources. Compare Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, pp. 88-92.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

mechanical engineering. In 1987 he traveled to Peshawar to participate in the anti-Soviet Afghan *jihād*, where he came under the influence of Afghan *mujahidin* commander Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. Sayyaf, a Pashtun professor who had trained at al-Azhar University in Egypt, converted to Wahhabism during a sojourn in Saudi Arabia, was sent back to Afghanistan by the Saudi intelligence service to organize a Wahhabi political party known as the Ittihad-i Islami Bara-yi Azadi-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Union for the Freedom of Afghanistan), and in 1986 established the “university” of Da`wa al-Jihad (Call to Jihad) outside Peshawar, where 20,000 *mujahidin* are said to have received guerrilla training.<sup>461</sup> KSM was one of those who received such training, and he claims to have then fought on the frontlines for three months before being recruited by the famous Shaykh `Abdallah `Azzam to perform administrative duties. Between 1988 and 1992 he worked at an Islamic NGO sponsored by Sayyaf that was designed to aid Arab volunteers. After going to Bosnia to fight for a period, KSM took a position in Qatar as a project engineer in a government ministry. However, this phase of relative normalcy and inaction was not destined to last.

For his part, Ramzi bin al-Shayb was a Yemeni whose family members and boyhood friends recall as being friendly, likable, mischievous, and “religious, but not too religious.”<sup>462</sup> After working as a clerk for the International Bank of Yemen between 1987 and 1995, Bin al-Shayb applied for but ultimately failed to obtain a U.S. visa. Instead, in September 1995 he traveled to Germany under a false name, claimed to be a Sudanese citizen, and requested asylum. He lived for a while in a Hamburg flat on Zimmerstrasse with Muhammad ibn Nasir Balfas, an unofficial “minister of [Islamic] immigrants,” worked a few odd jobs, and hung out at local mosques together with other alienated Muslim émigrés, including Muhammad `Ata. Investigators now believe that it was at the al-Quds mosque, a fundamentalist haven established by

---

<sup>461</sup> For the background of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, see *ibid.*, pp. 91, 93; John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto, 2000), pp. 232, 237-8; Mary Anne Weaver, *A Portrait of Egypt: A Journey Through the World of Militant Islam* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000), pp. 180, 210-12; and Terry McDermott et al., “The Plots and Designs of Al Qaeda’s Engineer,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 2002. Later on, appalled by the Saudi regime’s decision to allow U.S. troops to use the kingdom as a military base to repel Saddam Husayn from Kuwait, Sayyaf made an ideological transition from Wahhabism to jihadist Salafism.

<sup>462</sup> For the basic biographical information below, see *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 161; Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, pp. 73-5; and Terry McDermott, *Perfect Soldier. The Hijackers: Who They Were, Why They Did It* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), pp. 36-46.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Moroccan radicals on Steindammstrasse in Hamburg, that `Ata and the other members of his group – including Bin al-Shayb – were recruited by al-Qa`ida.<sup>463</sup> In any event, when his asylum appeal was denied in 1997, Bin al-Shayb briefly went home to Yemen, but soon returned under his true name to Germany, where he registered as a student. His energies were never devoted to academic pursuits, however, and as a result he was expelled from school in September 1998. By then, Bin al-Shayb and `Ata had become itinerant teachers in their own extremist Islamic study group, were core members of an al-Qa`ida cell in Hamburg centered at the so-called *bayt al-ansar* (House of the Supporters) apartment at 54 Marienstrasse, traveled to Afghanistan for further training, and at the end were busily engaged in preparing for the “planes operation.” Bin al-Shayb himself was originally slated to be the “twentieth hijacker,” but after repeated failures to obtain entry into the U.S. he instead became one of the key logistical operatives and intermediaries between KSM and the various 9/11 hijacker teams.<sup>464</sup>

### **Target Selection**

In order to assess the operational objectives of the “planes operation” properly, it is necessary to consider the other terrorist actions that KSM and his close associates had planned and/or actually carried out in the years leading up to September 11, 2001. Otherwise, there is a danger of artificially extracting the 9/11 attacks from their context, i.e., the overall pattern of spectacular plots that the two men devised over the years, which might conceivably lead observers to misinterpret the motivations and objectives of what jihadists nowadays refer to as the “blessed operation” and “Holy Tuesday.” The first question that needs to be addressed, however, is whether it was KSM or his nephew Ramzi Yusuf who was the real instigator of this series of plots, or whether both jointly contributed to their development. Unfortunately, it is difficult to resolve this matter on the basis of the currently available information. According to the reconstruction of the *9/11 Commission Report*, KSM was himself inspired to plan operations against the U.S. by his nephew Yusuf’s bold 1993 attack on the WTC, after which he accompanied his relative to the

---

<sup>463</sup> For the al-Quds [Jerusalem] mosque, see *ibid.*, pp. 1-5; and *Inside 9/11*, pp. 187-8. It is, however, possible that some members of the cell had been recruited even before they arrived in Germany.

<sup>464</sup> [Central Intelligence Agency], “Substitution for the Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed” [hereafter “KSM Testimony”], pp. 29-30. Bin al-Shayb expressed regret to Fouda that he had not been able to take part in the 9/11 operation. See Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 119.

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

Philippines in 1994.<sup>465</sup> In contrast, Fouda and Fielding suggest that KSM may have been the person who actually came up with idea of attacking the WTC in 1993, whereas Yusuf functioned essentially as the attack's "main planner and organiser" within the U.S.<sup>466</sup> Indeed, in the two journalists' depiction, KSM is portrayed as someone who probably played a role in tempering Yusuf's hotheadedness and initial lack of strategic forethought. Among the many reasons why it is difficult to shed more light on this matter is that the two relatives were very close when they were growing up, and that they subsequently operated in small, tight-knit cells made up primarily of their own family members and close friends, which implies that they most likely bounced ideas off one another in the course of regular interactions over a period of years.<sup>467</sup> However that may be, both men were apparently determined to make a name for themselves in jihadist circles, and thus spent time coming up with innovative and often spectacular schemes.

When one considers the various plots hatched and attacks carried out by Yusuf and KSM between the 1993 WTC bombing and 9/11, it soon becomes evident that their most noticeable common denominator was their relatively innovative and potentially spectacular nature. Having settled in Manila in 1994, since al-Qa`ida was then making strenuous efforts to solidify links with regional jihadist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI: Islamic Community) in Indonesia and both the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines, the two men were soon involved in the execution of a series of terrorist attacks, including the 1994 bombings of an important Shi`i shrine in the Iranian city of Mashad, the Greenbelt Theatre in Manila, and a Philippines Air Line (PAL) passenger jet destined for Japan. (Some have also blamed KSM for organizing twenty simultaneous bombings in ten different Indonesian cities on Christmas Eve of 2000, as well as five bombings in Manila less than a week later.) They also planned numerous other strikes, including the assassinations of Pakistani leader Benazir Bhutto, U.S. President Bill Clinton, Pope John Paul II, Philippine President Fidel Ramos, and an Iranian government official, and the bombings of international schools, Catholic churches, other Shi`i shrines, nuclear plants, Israeli and American embassies, local government installations, and U.S.-bound cargo carriers. Perhaps most

---

<sup>465</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 147. This interpretation seems to be seconded by McDermott, *Perfect Soldiers*, p. 139.

<sup>466</sup> Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 95.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90, 92-3. For example, two of KSM's brothers and several of Yusuf's younger brothers were involved in interrelated jihadist activities, and their cell in the Philippines incorporated two old friends.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

ambitious of all, the crown jewel of the so-called “Oplan Bojinka” plot envisioned the blowing up of twelve U.S. passenger jets in flight over the Pacific during a two-day period.<sup>468</sup>

However, several of the most spectacular of these projected actions collapsed in the wake of a chemical fire that erupted in Yusuf’s Manila apartment in January 1995, immediately after which his bomb-making lab was discovered by police, forcing both men to hastily leave the Philippines. Although Yusuf himself was arrested at the Su Casa guesthouse in Islamabad by Pakistani authorities on February 7, 1995, KSM managed to escape to Qatar. However, in January 1996, aware that the Americans were after him, KSM fled to Afghanistan and renewed his relationship with Abdul Sayyaf. Shortly thereafter, Bin Ladin and the cadres from al-Qa`ida began arriving in the area after having departed from the increasingly inhospitable Sudan. It was not long before KSM, taking advantage of the fame accrued by his nephew Yusuf, managed to make contact with al-Qa`ida’s leader.

What is most striking about this list of projected actions, apart from their grandiose scope, operational creativity, and potentially devastating human and material costs, is the tremendous diversity of the targets chosen by the individuals who later masterminded the catastrophic “Holy Tuesday” assaults. This alone provides a clear indication that KSM and Yusuf were not thinking exclusively about damaging critical infrastructure in selecting their targets, which in turn suggests that the 9/11 “planes operation” was also not conceived with such a narrow purpose in mind. Such a conclusion appears even more probable when one considers 1) the range of targets discussed in connection with the prospective “martyrdom” operation on U.S. soil, and 2) the diverse motives expressed by the actual planners for launching them.

In terms of the phases in the evolution of the plan, the initial idea may have been that of `Abd al-Hakim Murad, a close friend of Yusuf’s and a

---

<sup>468</sup> For more on this, see Simon Reeves, *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism* (Boston: Northeastern University, 1999), pp. 65-93; Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2003), esp. pp. 101-10; *9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 147-8. The name “Oplan Bojinka” combines the Bahasa Malay term for “operation” and the Bosnian term for “explosion,” and therefore means “Operation Explosion.” The relatively small bomb detonated by Yusuf on the PAL jetliner, which killed a Japanese businessman, was intended as a test run for the preparation of the explosive devices that were to be used in the grand plan to down twelve U.S. planes. For more information on this plot, please refer to *Box 7.5* in chapter 7 of this report.

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

trained pilot, who revealed that he had discussed flying an explosives-laden plane into the headquarters of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) with KSM in 1994. Furthermore, both KSM and Murad later told interrogators that they themselves, together with Yusuf and Wali Khan `Amin Shah, initially conceived of “Oplan Bojinka” in that same year, after they had gathered in the Philippines to form a terrorist operational cell.<sup>469</sup> This is very important because, according to the Philippine National Police, the laptop found in Yusuf’s Manila apartment contained a good deal of revealing operational information, including the outline of an “alternate plan” in the event that “Oplan Bojinka” could not be carried out. This alternate plan was a veritable blueprint for 9/11, in that it discussed crashing jetliners into the World Trade Center, the White House, the Pentagon, the John Hancock Building and Sears Tower in Chicago, and the Transamerica Building in San Francisco. In short, if Philippine police sources can be trusted, the outline of a 9/11-style plan had been formulated as early as 1994, and information regarding that plan had been provided to U.S. intelligence officials by 1995.<sup>470</sup>

Next, in the middle of 1996, during a meeting with Bin Ladin in Tora Bora that had been arranged by Muhammad Atif, the head of al-Qa`ida’s military committee, KSM took the opportunity to brief the wealthy Saudi *mujahid* on the 1993 WTC bombing and the various plots that he and Yusuf had hatched in the Philippines. At this initial meeting KSM, in an effort to secure funding, claims to have outlined several prospective terrorist operations, including a bold scheme to hijack ten U.S. airliners and fly them into high-profile targets on American soil, five on the East Coast and five on the West Coast.<sup>471</sup> Bin Ladin was initially skeptical about the feasibility of such an operation and was therefore non-committal, but two years later, in the wake of his “declaration of war” on America and the 1998 bombings of the two U.S. embassies in Africa, he summoned KSM to a meeting and asked him to plan an operation involving the hijacking of jetliners and flying them into American targets. The al-Qa`ida leader stated that he wished to attack the Pentagon, the White House, and the Capitol Building simultaneously.<sup>472</sup> Shortly thereafter, when Muhammad `Ata was selected as a key participant in the operation, Bin Ladin convened another meeting at which he, Abu Hafs, `Ata, and KSM were all present. At that point,

---

<sup>469</sup> Compare “KSM Testimony,” pp. 4, 27; and Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, pp. 98-9. For the context, see Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia*, pp. 101-6.

<sup>470</sup> Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 99.

<sup>471</sup> “KSM Testimony,” pp. 4-5, 10. Compare *9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 148-9.

<sup>472</sup> “KSM Testimony,” pp. 4-5, 11-12.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

operating under the assumption that only three pilots would be available, Shaykh Usama indicated that he wanted to hit one military, one political, and one economic target. The men then discussed dozens of potential targets, including the World Trade Center, a nuclear reactor, the Empire State Building, the headquarters of the CIA and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a foreign embassy in Washington, DC, and a location with a “large Jewish population.” At this meeting, KSM expressed the view that large U.S. buildings were both vulnerable to attack and easy to strike.<sup>473</sup> Finally, before KSM moved from Afghanistan to Pakistan, Bin Ladin gave him a list of targets and specifically told him that four targets must be hit: both towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the Capitol Building.<sup>474</sup>

Other specifics are of interest in this context. First, KSM passed Bin Ladin’s list and instructions on to `Ata, who was told that, apart from the four targets that had already been pre-selected by al-Qa`ida’s leader, he was free to choose from among various other targets. These latter included the White House, the Sears Tower, and a foreign embassy in DC. Using a computer program, `Ata also managed to locate a nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania, which Bin Ladin agreed to add to the target list.<sup>475</sup> This is significant, because at their earlier target selection meeting, the principal planners of the “planes operation” had discussed attacking a couple of nuclear facilities but had rejected the idea because they thought it might be too risky. However, in 2002 KSM told Fouda that this idea was only temporarily abandoned – “for now,” as he put it – thereby strongly implying that it might well be resuscitated in the future.<sup>476</sup> Bin Ladin’s decision to add the nuclear plant suggested by `Ata suggests that by 1999 he had already overcome his earlier reservations about targeting such a facility.

Second, as has long been typical of al-Qa`ida attacks, in order to maintain compartmentalization and thereby ensure the operation’s overall security, individuals were informed about the 9/11 plot on a need-to-know basis. The particular operational details were as usual left to the actual executors of the plan, to the extent that higher-up leaders and planners were themselves generally only informed about them at the last minute or after the fact. Thus, in this instance the specific distribution of the hijacking teams was left to `Ata, who had been

---

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>476</sup> Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 114.

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

appointed by Bin Ladin as the *`amir* (commander) of the “planes operation,” whereas the decisions about which planes would strike which targets were left to `Ata and the other pilots.<sup>477</sup>

Third, in the Spring and Summer of 1999, after two of the initial four pilots selected for the 9/11 attacks found themselves unable to obtain U.S. visas, KSM altered the initial scheme and developed a two-prong plan. In the first phase, American airliners would be hijacked, turned into missiles, and flown into major targets within the U.S. In the second, Muhammad Salih ibn Attash and Abu Bara al-Yamani – the two Yemenis who were not allowed to enter the U.S. – were assigned the task of hijacking and blowing up planes in flight over the Pacific Ocean in Asia, which essentially constituted an attempt to revive “Oplan Bojinka.” The purpose of carrying out two separate terrorist spectacles, in the words of KSM, was to “maximize the psychological impact of the attack.” In the Spring of 2000, however, Bin Ladin canceled the Asian portion of the plan because he thought it would be too difficult to synchronize the two actions.<sup>478</sup>

Finally, plans were set in motion by KSM and al-Qa`ida’s military leaders to launch a series of “second wave” attacks to follow up the 9/11 strikes. Initially, the term “second wave” referred to any and all actions that might be taken in the wake of the “planes operation” to multiply its impact, including aerial attacks, “subway strikes, poisoning of reservoirs, demolition of bridges, etc.”<sup>479</sup> However, it was later used in a more restrictive fashion to refer to 9/11-style attacks carried out elsewhere within the U.S. In contrast to the initial attacks, the hijackers in the “second wave” attacks were selected because they held passports from Western or Asian rather than Arab countries, which is one reason why French passport-holder Zakhariyya Mussawi was one of the two pilots that had been lined up for this phase despite his haughty attitude and consistently poor tradecraft. Although the exact targets had not been determined when Mussawi’s arrest caused KSM to abandon the whole “second wave” operation, which was in any case in only a rudimentary stage of preparation, a number of targets had been considered, including the “tallest building in California,” a bridge in the San Francisco or San

---

<sup>477</sup> “KSM Testimony,” pp. 28-9, 32. The one exception is that KSM assigned Hani Hanjur, the most experienced of the four pilots, to target the Pentagon, a lower building that was more difficult to hit with a jetliner. See *ibid.*, pp. 23-4.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-8.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Mateo area, the Sears Tower in Chicago, the White House, and a foreign embassy in DC.<sup>480</sup>

### **Relevance for Critical Infrastructure Protection**

On the basis of this overview of the targeting decisions for the 9/11 operation and projected follow-up attacks, which has been drawn almost entirely from the testimony of its mastermind KSM, one can conclude that at least five direct objectives were being pursued by al-Qa`ida.<sup>481</sup> The first was entirely practical: to attack targets that could be successfully attacked. Throughout KSM's testimony there are indications that practical considerations influenced al-Qa`ida's targeting decisions in this case, and that plans were altered to increase the likelihood of the success of the attacks. To provide just one additional illustrative example, it was decided to target the Capitol Building rather than the White House for essentially navigational reasons, i.e., the latter was smaller and harder to strike.<sup>482</sup> Second, the planners of the attack clearly wanted to produce a huge psychological impact on target audiences, both the American people and Muslim observers who al-Qa`ida hoped to inspire. As noted above, KSM specifically indicated that he wished to "maximize the psychological impact of the attack."<sup>483</sup> Elsewhere, he stated that the attacks were designed to create "havoc" and to "be a big slap for the American people on American soil," as well as something calculated to "wake the American people up" to the supposedly anti-Muslim policies of their own government, which is why not only governmental or military targets were chosen.<sup>484</sup> This proclaimed emphasis on generating psychological effects on wider target audiences is precisely why the 9/11 attacks can be described, in the technical sense, as acts of terrorism. Third, the sponsors and planners of these attacks clearly wanted to cause "as many deaths as possible."<sup>485</sup> Fourth, KSM admitted that tall buildings and other high-profile targets were selected for their "symbolic" value and impact.<sup>486</sup> It is this that serves to explain Bin Ladin's expressed desire to attack well-known political, military,

---

<sup>480</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15, 37, 40-1, 43, 52.

<sup>481</sup> The author is here distinguishing between *direct* objectives and *indirect* objectives, such as provoking an American overreaction at home and invasion of Muslim territory.

<sup>482</sup> Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 127.

<sup>483</sup> "KSM Testimony," pp. 5-6.

<sup>484</sup> See, respectively, Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 114; and "KSM Testimony," p. 11.

<sup>485</sup> Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, p. 114.

<sup>486</sup> "KSM Testimony," p. 14.

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

and economic targets in the U.S. Fifth, there is no doubt that al-Qa`ida wished to damage economically valuable American targets. KSM himself specifically acknowledged that New York City was “always the first target on my mind” because it was the “economic capital of the U.S.”<sup>487</sup> Moreover, among the potential follow-up attacks being considered were “subway strikes, poisoning of reservoirs, demolition of bridges, etc.,” all of which are constitute part of the critical infrastructure of this country.<sup>488</sup> This surely is indicative of the fact that one of the many objectives Bin Ladin was pursuing in carrying out the 9/11 attacks was to cause economic damage by striking infrastructural targets.

Even so, precisely because so many different motives were explicitly mentioned by the planners of the “planes operation,” it would be ill-advised to assume that the sole or even that the primary objective of the 9/11 attacks was to harm infrastructure qua infrastructure. Here, as in so many other instances, one can identify multiple motives behind the attack. In short, even when considering the most spectacular of all modern terrorist attacks, one which did in fact strike significant components of the critical infrastructure of the U.S., one is forced to acknowledge that this does not seem to have been the main purpose for carrying out these devastating assaults. Furthermore, although this was not specifically mentioned by KSM, in part because it is such a base, vulgar, and only partially conscious motive, there is no doubt that the 9/11 attacks were carried out in part for less-than-rational “expressive” reasons, specifically to express the jihadists’ outright hatred for Western “unbelievers” and to satisfy their overwhelming desire to avenge the “oppression” and “humiliation” of Muslims, real or imagined, at the hands of the “Great Satan” and its client regimes in the Middle East. This is implied by Fouda and Fielding, who characterized Yusuf as a “desperately angry man” who displayed “little strategic thought” prior to falling under KSM’s influence.<sup>489</sup> Perhaps this compulsion to deal out death and destruction to the “enemies” of Islam is why Yusuf – and, by extension, many other jihadists – had “no qualms about mass murder, indeed he wanted to be sure everyone on the [Bojinka] planes would die...”<sup>490</sup>

---

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid., pp. 37-8.

<sup>489</sup> Fouda and Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror*, pp. 97.

<sup>490</sup> Reeve, *New Jackals*, p. 77.

**THE AYMAN FARIS CASE: AL-QA`IDA  
PREPARATIONS TO ATTACK A NEW YORK CITY  
BRIDGE AND DERAIL TRAINS\***

The general goal of destroying or disrupting transportation infrastructure, most notably the destruction of bridges that provide vital transportation routes in and out of major cities, was laid out in a the already-cited 1980s al-Qa`ida training manual found by police in Manchester, England. A recent plot to destroy New York City's Brooklyn Bridge provides evidence of ongoing al-Qa`ida intent, specific plans, and preparations for carrying out such attacks. In 2003, U.S. authorities arrested and convicted Pakistani-born American citizen, Ohio truck driver, and al-Qa`ida operative Ayman Faris for assisting a foreign terrorist organization and planning to commit a terrorist act by providing material support and resources to al-Qa`ida in the plot. Faris won a plea bargain in exchange for cooperating with federal authorities. Since then, however, his lawyers have sought to overturn the verdict by contesting the legality of the state's evidence, which was gathered using the infamous NSA surveillance "wiretaps."

The prosecutor's statement of facts in "USA v. Iyman Faris", to which Faris pled guilty under the plea bargain, charged that in early 2002 Faris had been informed by a top al-Qa`ida operative (unnamed in the court transcripts<sup>491</sup>) of a plan to bring down an unidentified New York City bridge by severing its suspension cables, as well as about a plot to derail trains. Faris was asked to procure equipment for these operations. In April 2002, Faris returned to the U.S. from Pakistan and carried out internet research on the targeted bridge and the so-called "gas cutters" needed for severing its suspension cables. He then approached an acquaintance with a technical background and inquired how he might obtain the gas cutters. Between April 2002 and March 2003, Faris communicated via email with an unnamed top al-Qa`ida operative regarding his continuing efforts to obtain the equipment for both the bridge attack and train derailment operations. When one al-Qa`ida operative who was handling Faris during the operation's planning and preparations was arrested in the U.S., Faris inquired about the arrest with another unnamed top al-Qa`ida leader. In late 2002, Faris traveled to New York City to make an onsite assessment of the bridge's

---

\* This section was prepared by Gordon M. Hahn.

<sup>491</sup> Several news articles have identified the al-Qa`ida operative in question as Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, see *Newsweek* "Terrorists in Our Midst" and "Al Qaeda in America."

### *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

vulnerability to the attack as planned. In a coded message to his al-Qa`ida mentors, he concluded that the bridge's structure and security were such that the plot's success was "very unlikely" to succeed.<sup>492</sup>

It is clear from this case involving plots to destroy bridges that al-Qa`ida regards this element of infrastructure as an important potential target. Aside from the call to destroy bridges providing routes into and out of large cities in the al-Qa`ida training manual cited earlier, it is difficult to determine precisely whether the importance of bridges as a target for al-Qa`ida is because of the likelihood that lots of "infidels" might be killed, or because of the financial cost that would be incurred to rebuild a similar structure, or because of the losses to the economy resulting from the disruption of transportation routes. It is nonetheless clear, depending upon the location and nature of the targeted bridge, that the desired damage could be financial, symbolic, and even security-related should it come on the eve of another from of attack on the city or cities which the bridge services. There is no reason to presume that the recent calls by al-Zawahiri to focus on oil targets, which perhaps suggest a renewed interest in critical infrastructure writ large, would exclude renewed efforts to strike targets such as bridges and other transportation infrastructure.

### **FALSE "AL-QA`IDA" CLAIMS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACCIDENTAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DISASTERS\***

In addition to actually attacking critical infrastructure, al-Qa`ida and its associates have also falsely claimed responsibility for accidents or other incidents involving infrastructural targets. The attraction behind taking credit for incidents that inflict damage on the United States or other areas should not be surprising. If such claims were to be believed, al-Qa`ida and its affiliates would be able to further their psychological warfare against target populations and demonstrate their continued presence – all without actually making the effort to orchestrate the attacks in question. A short examination of two occasions where terrorist claims have been proven false will highlight this phenomenon:

---

<sup>492</sup> Prosecution's Statement of Facts in the Case of "USA v. Iyman Faris," *Findlaw.com*, <http://files.findlaw.com/news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/faris/usfaris603sof.pdf>, pp. 3-4.

\* This section was prepared by Elle DiLorenzo.

## **The 2003 Blackouts**

The Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades, an avowed affiliate of al-Qa`ida, claimed responsibility for the August 14, 2003 power blackouts that stretched across the Northeast and Midwest of the United States and into parts of Canada. The claim came one week after the blackout, while both Americans and Canadians were having trouble explaining the cause of the incident. The Brigades published an Internet communiqué claiming responsibility for “Operation Quick Lightning in the Land of the Tyrant of this Generation.” The group stated that they had triggered the blackout by attacking two electrical generators on the East Coast, adding that they could not reveal how these plants were struck because they planned to use the same method again. The message also asserted that the attack was carried out on orders from Usama bin Ladin to target the U.S. economy, and represented a “realisation of bin Laden’s promise to offer the Iraqi people a present.”<sup>493</sup> The communiqué added, “let the criminal Bush and his gang know that the punishment is the result of the action, the soldiers of God cut the power on these cities, they darkened the lives of the Americans as these criminals blackened the lives of the Muslim people in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. The Americans lived a black day they will never forget. They lived a day of terror and fear...a state of chaos and confusion where looting and pillaging rampaged the cities, just like the capital of the caliphate Baghdad, and Afghanistan and Palestine were. Let the American people take a sip from the same glass.”<sup>494</sup>

However, a U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) investigation found that the blackouts, which left 50 million people without electricity and cost between \$4-10 billion dollars, were caused by a series of human and system failures at the utility companies that combined to transform a potentially small outage into a major blackout. In addition, a complementary investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, the North American Electrical Reliability Council, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police did not discover “any evidence indicating that the outages were the result of activity by international or

---

<sup>493</sup> “Al-Qa`ida Claims Responsibility for Last Week’s Blackout,” The Middle East Media Research Institute,” *Special Dispatch Series - No. 553*, August 19, 2003, <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP55303>, Last Accessed May 11, 2006.

<sup>494</sup> Mohamad Saleh, “Al Qaeda Claims Responsibility For Power Blackout In U.S.!” Dar Al-Hayat Website, August 18, 2003, [http://english.daralhayat.com/arab\\_news/08-2003/Article-20030818-14bdd659-c0a8-01ed-0079-6e1c903b7552/story.html](http://english.daralhayat.com/arab_news/08-2003/Article-20030818-14bdd659-c0a8-01ed-0079-6e1c903b7552/story.html).

## *Prior Al-Qa`ida-linked Critical Infrastructure Attacks in the U.S.*

domestic terrorists or other criminal activity.”<sup>495</sup> FBI officials further added that “the claim of the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigade to have caused the blackout appears to be no more than wishful thinking.”<sup>496</sup>

## **The British Petroleum Oil Refinery Explosion**

Another such case occurred when two previously unknown groups claimed responsibility for an explosion at the British Petroleum (BP) oil refinery in Texas City, Texas, on March 23, 2005. The incident killed 15 and injured 170 others. Both the Al-Qaeda Organization for Holy War in the United States of America and the militant group Jund al-Sham (Soldiers of the Levant) took credit for the blast.

Jund al-Sham, a group operating under the greater al-Qa`ida “umbrella,” posted their claim on an Islamist Internet website the day after the attack. The message stated that the attack “was a new kind of operation as we promised before.”<sup>497</sup> It went on to say that “Jund al-Sham is able to attack with an iron fist all the enemies of Allah wherever they are. This operation was a big surprise, which we spoke of in other statements, and we will continue our suicide operations inside and outside America, and we will attack the economy of America as America did the economies of the Muslims.”<sup>498</sup> The statement also contained threats to carry out attacks in Italy and Britain, claiming that these actions would continue “until the last soldier of the Crusaders or Jews is no longer in an Islamic country.”<sup>499</sup>

The FBI rejected both claims for the incident, having “found no evidence to support criminal or terrorist activity.”<sup>500</sup> BP’s investigation into the event revealed that the fluid levels in a splitter tower were 20 times

---

<sup>495</sup> “FBI Infrastructure Awareness,” Testimony of Larry A. Mefford, Executive Assistant Director, FBI, Before the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Science, and Research and Development, and the Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, September 4, 2003. <http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress03/mefford090403.htm>.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> “Group claiming Qatar bombing says it carried out Texas refinery blast,” Agence France Presse – English, March 25, 2005.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>500</sup> Statement by Al Tribble, Houston FBI office spokesman. “FBI rejects Islamic terror link to Texas refinery blast,” AFX International Focus, March 28, 2005.

*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

higher than they should have been. This caused overheating and led to the explosion.<sup>501</sup>

---

<sup>501</sup> “BP Issues Final Report on Fatal Explosion, Announces \$1 billion Investment at Texas City,” British Petroleum Press Release, December 9, 2005.  
<http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7012963>.  
Accessed May 10, 2006.

## CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION\*

In light of the massive spending on and resource allocation towards protecting our nation's critical infrastructure, including the creation of a dedicated division within the Department of Homeland Security, the development of a National Infrastructure Protection Plan, and the maintenance of a plethora of joint public-private advisory boards representing individual infrastructures, one might assume that there is a comprehensive understanding of the threat posed by terrorist adversaries to this target set. Yet the vast majority of the theoretical and analytical work dealing with critical infrastructure protection has focused on the vulnerability and consequence aspects of the overall risk equation, with relatively little serious study of terrorist motivations as they relate to critical infrastructure targets. This study represents an effort to delve more deeply into the extent of the threat posed by al-Qa`ida, arguably the single most dangerous terrorist organization operating at present, to critical infrastructure on American soil, both now and in the future.

The approach adopted herein has been an open-ended one that has involved examining the question from various perspectives and consulting a wide variety of source materials that bear on the topic, ranging from sacred religious texts and historical accounts to al-Qa`ida-linked source materials and the firsthand testimony of captured members of the group. It has also intentionally combined multiple approaches, including exploring the more esoteric religio-historical referents that serve to influence al-Qa`ida's behavior, providing a strategic analysis of its targeting, closely examining the statements and writings of al-Qa`ida leaders and spokesmen (including primary source translations), offering a descriptive analysis of its past global attack patterns, and producing concise but nonetheless in-depth case studies of its previous attacks on U.S. soil.

---

\* This chapter was prepared by Gary A. Ackerman and Jeffrey M. Bale, with Charles Blair and Elle DiLorenzo.



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

At the outset, the above analyses tend to support the preliminary assessment made by some of the authors in an earlier report, namely, that transnational jihadist organizations are amongst the most likely extremist groups to conduct successful attacks against targets that U.S. officials would categorize as elements of this country's critical infrastructure. These networks clearly have the operational capabilities to carry out such attacks, even on a large scale, and they display a number of ideological proclivities that may incline them to attack such targets. Yet, the study has also yielded more detailed insights into the behavior and orientation of al-Qa`ida and its affiliated networks. In order to synthesize these findings, we now revisit the framing questions listed in the introductory chapter and address each one in turn.

### **1. Does al-Qa`ida perceive “infrastructure” or “critical infrastructure” as a species of target different from other target types?**

The question of whether al-Qa`ida as a whole perceives infrastructure as a distinct species of target is a rather complex matter. Al-Qa`ida sources do occasionally mention infrastructure, and to some extent evince an understanding of the “criticality” of certain infrastructures, but this does not necessarily mean that they perceive infrastructure in the same way that the U.S. government defines and analyzes it.

Within the broader Islamic historical and religious tradition there are many allusions to targets that can be broadly conceived of as infrastructure. Several of these referents provide a justification, explicitly or implicitly, for launching strikes against present-day infrastructural targets, and perhaps even for adopting specific types of plans of attack. In that sense, attacks on critical infrastructural clearly fall within the Islamic historical tradition, as embodied in the military actions taken or authorized by Muhammad himself, such as attacks on the caravan trade and the burning of date-palms.

What emerges is something less than a full-blown prescription within the Islamic tradition for attacking critical infrastructures. What this tradition does provide is ample raw material from which al-Qa`ida, which has in fact radicalized Islamic traditions of warfare, can justify (at least to its own followers) attacking critical infrastructure targets should such targets be chosen. Moreover, it should be reiterated that its radicalization

## *Conclusion*

and selective reading of Islamic tenets mean that the group is unlikely to embrace or be bound by any religious prohibitions on attacking such targets.

In addition to providing legitimization for their attack choices, the Islamic historical record, real and imagined, can and does serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary jihadists. For this reason Islam's historical "infrastructural" attacks could provide a kind of model for the zealous attack planner. As noted above, to the creative operative the poisoning of water wells and the destruction of fruit trees might, for example, suggest attacks on water reservoirs and river dams, as well as on agricultural and food supplies with chemical or biological agents. However, these types of attacks are not the only kinds that were carried out by Muhammad and his commanders, and as such it is possible to justify attacking all sorts of targets on the basis of the Prophet's exhortations and actions. Therefore historical episodes only represent a single arrow amongst a quiver of targeting guideposts that can be drawn from early Islamic sources, above all the *Qur'an* itself and the collections of *ahadith*.

In terms of their own utterances, on the one hand, certain statements by jihadists seem to suggest that they view critical infrastructure as core elements of Western society. For example, would-be "millennium plot" bomber Ahmad Rassam testified that he had been trained "how to blow up the infrastructure of a country" in al-Qa`ida's Afghan training camps, and Shaykh `Umar `Abd al-Rahman specifically referred to taking out the "federal system" in discussions with the cell members who were plotting to bomb FBI headquarters in New York City, thereby suggesting that there was a "larger" purpose in attacking this particular law enforcement facility. On the other hand, al-Qa`ida does not display a clear conception of infrastructure in the Western sense, much less a coherent strategy for attacking infrastructure qua infrastructure. What seems to be missing from al-Qa`ida's strategic repertoire is a focus on the overall functional aspects of infrastructure. Despite recognizing the importance of the psychological disruption brought about by the group's attacks, one finds very little evidence in al-Qa`ida sources that its leaders and strategists are thinking specifically in terms of disrupting the functions of infrastructural systems in the narrow sense of that phrase. Instead, al-Qa`ida's sense of infrastructure, such as it is, seems to be based primarily on either recognizing the practical or symbolic value of targeting discrete structures, especially landmarks such as buildings and bridges, or on the general economic importance of the prospective target.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

In the final analysis, there is very little evidence suggesting that al-Qa`ida targets critical infrastructure as a category worthy of attack simply because it is critical infrastructure. Put another way, there is little to suggest that a target's status as critical infrastructure is alone sufficient to recommend it as a target. Indeed, al-Qa`ida normally targets infrastructure to achieve a variety of objectives, above all to kill large numbers of people and strike the symbols of "infidel" prestige and economic power.

### **2. To what extent do al-Qa`ida ideology, strategy and tactics purposely target "critical infrastructure" or elements of what are considered critical infrastructure by the United States Government?**

One of the key findings from our analysis of al-Qa`ida's statements, materials, and actions is that al-Qa`ida normally has a variety of objectives in mind when it carries out attacks, and that targets are, in the main, specifically chosen in order to maximize the attainment of as many of those objectives as possible. The multiplicity of operational objectives that al-Qa`ida seeks to achieve include killing large numbers of people, exerting a profound psychological impact on hostile and friendly target audiences, striking famous symbolic targets, causing widespread economic harm to the enemy, and physically damaging important buildings and facilities.

In the investigation of previous al-Qa`ida plots and attacks, the authors found that almost no targets were selected purely for their function as infrastructure. This does not mean, however, that al-Qa`ida's targeting process will not often result in the selection of targets that fall within what the U.S. regards as its critical infrastructure. Critical infrastructure as currently defined<sup>502</sup> encompasses a broad range of assets and systems, and it is therefore likely that several of these assets and systems will fulfill one or more of al-Qa`ida's operational and strategic objectives. The set of targets favored by al-Qa`ida might then substantially intersect the set of assets and systems we think of as falling under the rubric of critical infrastructure.

---

<sup>502</sup> Cf. Chapter 2, p. 9 above: "Systems, assets, or functions, whether physical or virtual, publicly or privately owned, that are used by or provide benefit to the public and are so vital to the U.S. that the exploitation, destruction, or incapacitation of such systems, assets, or functions would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters."

## Conclusion

There are also certain targets that fall within the U.S. conception of critical infrastructure that al-Qa`ida seems particularly drawn towards, as is evidenced either by ideological predilections or the fact that these targets have been specifically mentioned in al-Qa`ida statements and documents. For example, financial targets would fulfill the desire to wage *economic jihad* and to symbolically punish the usury of Western society, and such targets have been specifically singled out in previous jihadist statements and writings.

Since al-Qa`ida does not seem to conceive of critical infrastructure as a distinctive target set, in order to make more sense of the discrepancy, i.e., to reconcile al-Qa`ida's strategic aims in target selection with the U.S. understanding of critical infrastructure, we need to disaggregate "critical infrastructure" into its component sectors and examine which of these sectors fulfill which targeting goals of al-Qa`ida and to what extent.

Table 9.1 compares al-Qa`ida's targeting goals, as determined in Chapter 3, with individual, "officially designated" U.S. critical infrastructure sectors.

The goal types taken into account are:

1. *Punitive* – the desire to kill or injure as many "infidels" as possible.
2. *Economic* – the desire to cause national-level (or at least far-reaching) economic harm to the U.S.
3. The desire to select targets that have high *symbolic or psychological resonance*, either for the American people, in order "to wake them up" to their governments purported injustices against Muslims, or for al-Qa`ida's own perceived audience (the putative *umma*).
4. *Inherent factors* making a particular infrastructure more attractive, as may be suggested by Islamic religious or historical referents, al-Qa`ida's past targeting behavior, or the group's statements and writings.

Certain targeting factors are not included in this table:

1. Practical considerations – for current purposes, since the table considers general targeting behavior (target types as opposed to specific targets), we assume that the infrastructures listed can be successfully attacked. Obviously, the level of vulnerability of a

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

particular target at a particular point in time and the perceived likelihood of the success of an attack on it are extremely important factors in terrorist target selection, but we are here focused more on target orientation than the specifics of individual targets, which will vary dramatically even within the same sector.

2. The notion that some targets are specifically chosen in order to provoke a particular desired government or social response (such as may have been the case with the March 2004 Madrid bombings). In these cases target selection is closely related to other factors, such as the number of expected fatalities and the symbolic resonance of the target, as well as particular sets of political circumstances. While it is important for analysts to take these considerations into account, they are too context-specific to be included in a more generalized representation such as the table below.

## Conclusion

### *Al-Qa`ida Targeting by Infrastructure Sector*

*Table 9.1: Critical Infrastructure Risk Assessment Analysis*

INFRASTRUCTURE CATEGORY	Casualties <sup>i</sup>	Economic Harm <sup>ii</sup>	Symbolic/Psychological Resonance <sup>iii</sup>	Inherent Attractiveness <sup>iv</sup>
AGRICULTURE	*	** / ***	*	*
BANKING & FINANCE	**	***	**	***
CHEMICAL INDUSTRY & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	***	**	**	*
DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE	*	**	*	*
EMERGENCY SERVICES	**	**	***	*
ENERGY <sup>v</sup>	* / ***	***	**	***
FOOD	***	**	***	*
GOVERNMENT (In the Sense Of COG)	*/**	**	***	**
INFORMATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS	*	***	**	**
KEY RESOURCES <sup>vi</sup>	*/**	*	***	*/**
POSTAL & SHIPPING	*	**	*	*
PUBLIC HEALTH	**/**	**/**	***	*
TRANSPORTATION	***	**	**	**
WATER	**	**	**	**

*All effects are based on a large-scale, successful attack*

---

<sup>i</sup> **Casualties:**

- \* = Can be expected to cause low—moderate levels of fatalities (<100)
- \*\* = Can be expected to cause moderate—high levels of fatalities (100-1,000)
- \*\*\* = Can be expected to cause high—catastrophic levels of fatalities (>1,000)

<sup>ii</sup> **Economic Harm** (on a national level):

- \* = Unlikely that an attack on this infrastructure sector would cause national-level economic harm
- \*\* = Some possibility that an attack on this infrastructure sector would cause national-level economic harm
- \*\*\* = Likely that an attack on this infrastructure sector would cause national-level economic harm

<sup>iii</sup> **Symbolic / Psychological Resonance:**

- \* = Most targets falling in this infrastructure sector have low symbolic/psychological resonance
- \*\* = Most targets falling in this infrastructure sector have moderate symbolic/psychological resonance
- \*\*\* = Most targets falling in this infrastructure sector have high symbolic/psychological resonance

<sup>iv</sup> **Inherent Attractiveness:**

- \* = Infrastructure sector does not possess any inherent targeting attractiveness
- \*\* = Some indications that this infrastructure sector possesses some inherent targeting attractiveness
- \*\*\* = Definite indications that this infrastructure sector possesses specific inherent targeting attractiveness

<sup>v</sup> Variances found in the “casualties” column reflect the range of different types of facilities included in the energy infrastructure, e.g. oil pipeline vs. nuclear facility)

<sup>vi</sup> Variances found in the “casualties” and “inherent attractiveness” columns reflect the range of relative differences between specific targets in this category, e.g. Mt. Rushmore vs. the Empire State Building.

## *Conclusion*

According to the above table, then, the infrastructure sectors that in general have the greatest capacity to fulfill al-Qa`ida's aims are: Banking & Finance; Energy (especially oil pipelines); Food; Continuity of Government (although this is unlikely to be a common target since it is especially difficult to attack); Public Health; Transportation; and Key Resources.

However, one must be cautious about "adding up" or averaging across the different objectives. For instance, a particular infrastructure category may be so vulnerable to attack and be capable of causing so many casualties (e.g., an attack on a chemical plant) that al-Qa`ida selects that target, since in this specific case practical considerations and a preponderance of effect along a single objective might outweigh more general considerations. Thus the table, as provided, is merely a means for exploring the intersection between the U.S.'s current official understanding of critical infrastructure and those targets which al-Qa`ida is likely to attack. Nonetheless, it offers a more nuanced perspective on al-Qa`ida's targeting as it relates to critical infrastructure, and when combined with vulnerability and consequence analysis, might prove to be a useful tool when analyzing al-Qa`ida attack patterns.

### **3. Do recent trends in al-Qa`ida statements and behavior signify a major shift in al-Qa`ida's strategy with respect to critical infrastructure?**

Recent statements by al-Qa`ida spokesmen that exhort the group's followers to attack elements of the energy infrastructure, as well as recent attacks and plots by "homegrown" jihadists targeting the high-density public transportation targets, could conceivably be regarded as signaling a shift in al-Qa`ida's targeting strategy. A discussion of the nature and extent of this perceived shift is thus warranted.

First, the missives of Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri, especially those relating to targeting elements of the energy infrastructure, should be taken seriously. After all, past experience has shown al-Qa`ida's leaders are often explicit, albeit in generalized terms, about their future plans. However, one should not take such comments out of context. While perhaps upgrading the attractiveness of oil and gas pipelines and facilities in the Middle East as al-Qa`ida targets (which may contribute to an overall rise in the attractiveness of infrastructural targets), this does not mean that the group's existing targeting priorities, including causing



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

widespread economic damage and mass casualties, will be abandoned. These statements are therefore more likely to represent a tactical shift within a specific domain of targets (energy infrastructure) in a specified area (the Middle East), rather than a wholesale shift in targeting strategy. In other words, homeland security planners should certainly not shift their attention away from other target types, including other elements of critical infrastructure that have been identified as highly attractive targets above.

Second, one cannot ignore the potential impact of the increasing prevalence of self-radicalized jihadist entrepreneurs, who often include so-called “homegrown” jihadists, on the targeting of critical infrastructure. It is necessary to distinguish between attacks carried out by these self-radicalized cells and those carried out by “official” al-Qa`ida operatives, since the targets attacked by the latter have generally been carefully selected through a vetting process carried out by senior al-Qa`ida operatives and leaders, while the target selection of individual cells is more independent and idiosyncratic and therefore difficult to predict. In many cases, the influence of al-Qa`ida leaders might be restricted to general guidelines posted on Internet sites. This is not to say that al-Qa`ida proper does not support the actions of these local jihadists – indeed, al-Qa`ida leaders probably view such actions as a valuable supplement to their efforts to “bleed America into bankruptcy” and humble the “infidels.”

However, the (d)evolution of the *jihad* in many cases to self-radicalized cells may have two important implications for target selection. The first is the likelihood that target selection, divorced from the direct control of al-Qa`ida’s leaders and ideologues, will become less sophisticated, in the sense of fine-tuning the selection of targets over a period of time in order to simultaneously attain multiple objectives, maximize the probability of success, and still remain concordant with perceived religious mandates. This might mean that targets are selected based more on practical factors, such as local knowledge, or the attainment of only one or two primary objectives. It would also increase the saliency of statements and instructions purveyed by al-Qa`ida leaders on the Internet (particularly as these relate to infrastructural targets), since these might be all the guidance from their gurus that the relatively isolated, self-radicalized jihadist cells might have access to. The continued monitoring of jihadist websites, specifically to detect any changes in targeting guidelines, might thus become more crucial than ever. The second possible effect of a shift to actions initiated by self-radicalized jihadists relates to their capability to attack critical infrastructure targets. This is not to say that

## *Conclusion*

the face of al-Qa`ida, as represented by such cells, will be incapable of attacking critical infrastructure, but we may see less sophisticated asymmetrical attacks that require less planning and coordination than the large-scale operations undertaken by the al-Qa`ida core (i.e., attacks that are more along the lines of the 2005 London underground bombings than the 9/11 attacks). These “simpler” attacks by independent cells can still be extremely deadly and effective in terms of contributing to the economic weakening of Western nations and the evocation of feelings of terror in the Western public, but are more likely to require simpler materials and shorter lead times and to focus on relatively “soft” targets.

Besides the impact of these shifts in targeting statements and the nature of jihadist operatives, it is instructive to consider the general evolution of al-Qa`ida’s capabilities with regard to attacks against critical infrastructure. As can be seen from the discussion of the individual capabilities necessary for critical infrastructure sector attacks and the illustrative review of case studies of actual attacks (in chapters 6, 7, and 8 above), both the capabilities maintained by al-Qa`ida and the capabilities required for a successful attack are constantly evolving. The most obvious example is the increased emphasis placed on the protection of various targets since the 9/11 attacks, including elements of critical infrastructure.

As such, there is a great deal of speculation about whether al-Qa`ida’s target selection will evolve to reflect these changes. Some experts assert that al-Qa`ida targets will shift to unprotected or poorly defended targets. According to this logic, since military, diplomatic, and some transportation sector targets are receiving greater protection, terrorist attacks will shift to economic targets, such as banks and tourist locations, as well as religious targets and population centers.<sup>503</sup> Likewise, since the United States has vastly increased domestic protection levels, attacks may also shift to American targets abroad and to the allies of the U.S.<sup>504</sup>

Others maintain that al-Qa`ida will seek to acquire additional technology or employ new techniques in order to locate and exploit loopholes in infrastructure targets, even those that are currently provided with higher levels of protection. One of the chief questions in this regard is whether we will see a new focus on cyberterrorism. While there seems to be a general consensus that al-Qa`ida’s large-scale employment of

---

<sup>503</sup> Gunaratna, *The Changing Face of Terrorism*, p.11.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

cyberterrorism could have potentially devastating consequences, there is less agreement on whether al-Qa`ida is actually moving in this direction.

A CIA analysis paper submitted to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in 2002 stated that “[v]arious terrorist groups, including al-Qa`ida and Hizballah, are becoming more adept at using the Internet and computer technologies. These groups have both the intentions and the desire to develop some of the cyberskills necessary to forge an effective cyber attack modus operandi.”<sup>505</sup> Others, including Vince Cannistraro, the former chief of counterterrorism at the CIA, believe that al-Qa`ida is using cyberskills to increase the security of communications between its cells.<sup>506</sup>

Adding motivational concepts to the analysis of the cyber-debate, those who doubt that al-Qa`ida will focus on cyberattacks emphasize the notion that resorting to cyberterrorism would result in the loss of the physical “big bang” that a physical terrorist attack provides. The alternative position is that if one of al-Qa`ida’s primary goals is truly the economic weakening of the United States, then cyberattacks would be likely to have a great appeal, especially if other types of attacks were to focus on causing casualties and symbolic targets. The ominous mid-way point between the two effects would be attacks on the combinations of virtual and physical critical infrastructure systems cited earlier in this report, such as the Internet or SCADA control systems.

In broad terms, it is unlikely that al-Qa`ida’s strategy vis-à-vis critical infrastructure targets will undergo any radical changes in the near future. Specific targets (such as oil pipelines in the Middle East) may rise to the fore from time to time, the shift to self-radicalized local cells might affect attack modalities, and new techniques such as cyberattacks may become more common, but it is likely that al-Qa`ida’s basic attack objectives will remain relatively constant, barring any major changes to its leadership or ideological outlook. Therefore, it will continue to pursue its broad strategy of causing economic damage to the United States and “bleeding” the enemy, as well as its desire to inflict casualties and widespread psychological damage. The targets within what the U.S. defines as critical infrastructures will thus continue to fall within al-Qa`ida’s cross-hairs, as was noted in the response to the second framing question above. Possible changes will most likely be at the tactical or operational levels, e.g., looking for loopholes in sectors with high

---

<sup>505</sup> Verton, “Experts: Don’t dismiss cyberattack warning.”

<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

## *Conclusion*

security (imagine the psychological blow that would be dealt to the U.S. by another major attack on the aviation sector), as well as seeking “softer” targets with relatively lower protection levels or focusing on American targets overseas and the assets of America’s allies. Such actions would, after all, continue to force the United States to expend increasing revenue and resources to secure these expanding target categories.

### **4. Can we learn anything about al-Qa`ida tactics and operations that would be useful in a counterterrorism context should al-Qa`ida or its affiliates target critical infrastructure?**

This study has focused on gaining a better understanding of al-Qa`ida’s attitude towards critical infrastructure, but in so doing it has revealed several potentially salient features of its tactics and operations in the context of its attacks against critical infrastructure, and often more generally too. The most important of these are summarized below:

- a. Al-Qa`ida’s past behavior has demonstrated that, in the main, it possesses adequate capability levels to attack almost all types of infrastructural targets. This does not necessarily mean that each group of operatives will be capable of attacking any potential target, but rather that, as a whole, analysts should not exclude any target types from being attacked based on al-Qa`ida’s capabilities. Moreover, due to the rapid growth in online manuals and operational guides, it is unlikely that future would-be al-Qa`ida attackers would require the kind of personal training that cadres previously received in camps in Afghanistan and elsewhere. At the same time, the lack of centralized and direct tactical instruction may limit the scale or effectiveness of attacks carried out by disparate cells, at least for a time.
- b. Al-Qa`ida is not afraid of imitating past successful attacks. The Saudi Airlines case detailed in Chapter 7 was starkly reminiscent of the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Therefore, one must not assume that increasing protection levels will necessarily result in target substitution; as mentioned above, al-Qa`ida may be all too eager to exploit gaps in protection even in relatively well-defended sectors. The public transportation sector, especially commercial aviation, will thus continue to be a prime al-Qa`ida

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

target, since this sector has the capacity to fulfill so many of al-Qa`ida's attack objectives.

- c. In the era of globalized jihadist terrorism, attack groups can be made up of either local or foreign operatives, or a combination of the two. In other words, the persons involved in planning and carrying out attacks against critical infrastructure are not confined to a specific geographic location.
- d. Based on past attacks and plots against critical infrastructure targets, the geography of attacks on critical infrastructure seems to be following that of al-Qa`ida attacks in general, namely continued attempts against U.S., Middle Eastern (especially Saudi Arabian and Iraqi), and South Asian targets, and a rise in attacks on targets in Europe, especially the United Kingdom.
- e. Perpetrators, even the more "amateurish" self-radicalized cells, expend significant efforts and resources on surveilling potential critical infrastructure targets and engaging in "dry runs." This may provide important opportunities for detection and interdiction by counterterrorist forces.
- f. Despite the plethora of vulnerable targets available to would-be al-Qa`ida attackers and the difficulties associated with infiltrating disparate cells, many of the cases examined in this study reveal that al-Qa`ida operatives face substantial difficulties of their own in conducting effective attacks. Specifically, operations are often plagued by a lack of sufficient funds to carry out the desired scale of attack, as well as by the presence of incompetent cell members who can delay or compromise an operation before its execution. It is vital that authorities exploit these difficulties and errors in order to forestall attacks against critical infrastructures.

As has been stated previously, however, even as al-Qa`ida's strategy remains relatively constant, its tactics and capabilities are constantly evolving. Therefore, we are likely to see examples of innovation, adaptability, and development in the group's tactics and procedures, especially as levels of protection around critical infrastructure targets increase.

## *Conclusion*

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study has utilized various approaches in an attempt to trace al-Qa`ida's propensity to attack what has been characterized in the United States as critical infrastructure. Despite the finding that al-Qa`ida does not distinguish critical infrastructure as an independent category of targets and that disrupting the function of these infrastructures does not appear to be a primary targeting motivation, critical infrastructure targets will often fall into the set of targets that al-Qa`ida will find attractive in terms of fulfilling its broader strategic objectives. We have come to the conclusion that in counterterrorist efforts to forecast likely targets, it would be best to designate targets that, if attacked, would produce multiple effects simultaneously, including massive human casualties, severe economic disruption and damage, and maximum media attention and psychological terror. This was certainly the template for al-Qa`ida's attacks on the WTC twice, and it seems also to have driven the 2000 Millennium Plot, the 1993 Tunnels and Bridges Plot, and the Madrid train and London underground bombings, among others.

We believe that this study has brought considerable information to bear on this important topic and thereby contributed to the development of a more nuanced understanding of al-Qa`ida's intentions and operational objectives in relation to critical infrastructure. We are hopeful that this will in turn help to facilitate the development of better threat assessment procedures by relevant U.S. government agencies. Yet we are under no illusions that this study represents the final word in this regard. Continued monitoring of al-Qa`ida and its related networks' behavior and publications is essential, but if nothing else this study provides a baseline from which to track future al-Qa`ida targeting goals and preferences as these relate to critical infrastructures.

# APPENDIX A:

## AL-QA`IDA CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ATTACK CHRONOLOGY\*

The chronology that follows records attacks that – primarily or secondarily – targeted components of critical infrastructure (CI). Critical infrastructure is defined as those physical systems that a community depends on to maintain its security, governance, public health and safety, economy, and public confidence.<sup>507</sup> The constituent parts of such systems will vary according to the community contexts in which they are embedded.

Accordingly, the ensuing chronology, listed alphabetically by group, is divided into two categories:

- “Primary CI Attacks” are attacks in which the perpetrators attempted to and/or succeeded in destroying or significantly damaging an element of a sector of infrastructure, *or* attacks in which the perpetrators sought to cause some degree of damage to a physical (non-human) target because of its symbolic value (e.g., embassies, the Pentagon, etc.).
- “Secondary CI Attacks” are attacks carried out primarily for other purposes which inadvertently ended up damaging CI.

---

\* This appendix was prepared by Charles Blair and Elle DiLorenzo.

<sup>507</sup> Attacks aimed at individuals, even if their work serves some infrastructure, have not been considered as CI attacks unless in the course of those attacks CI was damaged, destroyed, or seriously disrupted.

## Appendix A: Chronology

This chronology includes all CI attacks that have been creditably attributed to two types of al-Qa`ida-related groups:<sup>508</sup>

1. “Core” al-Qa`ida organizations, networks, or branches.
  - A. **Al-Qa`ida** (The Base); now known, since its fusion with Ayman al-Zawahiri’s faction of the Egyptian Tanzim al-Jihad, as **Qa`idat al-Jihad**.
  - B. **Al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Haramayn** (Al-Qa`ida in the Land of the Two Holy Places); also known as al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qa`ida in Saudi Arabia
  - C. **Al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Rafidyan** (Al-Qa`ida in the Land of the Two Rivers); also known as al-Qa`ida in Iraq, al-Qa`ida in Mesopotamia and the Zarqawi group. Formerly known as the **Jama`at al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad** (JTJ: Unity of God and Jihad Association).\*
  - D. **Ansar al-Islam** (Supporters of Islam) \*
  - E. **Ansar al-Sunna** (Supporters of the Sunna) \*
  - F. **Jama`at al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad** (JTJ: Unity of God and Jihad Association). \* Later changed its name to al-Qa`ida in the Land of the Two Rivers.
  - G. **Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri** (Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades)<sup>509</sup>

---

<sup>508</sup> This listing is not intended to represent all al-Qa`ida-associated groups; rather, it lists those al-Qa`ida-related groups that have been known to engage in attacks that have either directly or indirectly had an impact on CI. Groups seemingly far removed from any al-Qa`ida input—the Groupe Islamique Combattant Marocain (GICM: Moroccan Islamic Fighting Group), for example—are not considered. Nor are groups with questionable, tenuous, or outdated links to al-Qa`ida.

\* The attacks listed for these groups are arguably examples of insurgent actions as well as terrorist attacks. Thus, their goals, tactics, and targets may differ significantly from other groups considered by this study. “The resistance is not a unified movement directed by a leadership with a single ideological vision,” writes Ahmed Hashim with regards to the insurgent side of the resistance coin. “Indeed,” he asserts, “the insurgents may have calculated that their success does not require an elaborate political and socioeconomic vision of a ‘free’ Iraq; articulating the desire to be free of foreign occupation has sufficed to win popular support. Because they wish to avoid fratricidal conflict, these groups are mostly cooperating with one another and coordinating attacks at the operational and tactical levels despite profound political differences.” Ahmed S. Hashim, “Iraq: From Insurgency to Civil War?” *Current History* 104 (2005): 1018, p. 10.

<sup>509</sup> Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri is not considered to be an operational group; rather it is the proclaimed mouthpiece of al-Qa`ida in Europe. Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri almost



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

2. Independent groups that have been very closely affiliated with al-Qa`ida.
  - A. **Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat** (GSPC: Salafist Group for Preaching and Fighting)
  - B. **Harkat-ul Mujahidin** (HuM: Mujahidin Movement)
  - C. **Jaish-e Muhammad** (JeM: Army of Muhammad)
  - D. **Jaysh Adan-Abyan al-Islami** (AAIA: Aden-Abyan Islamic Army)
  - E. **Jemaah Islamiyah** (JI: Islamic Community)

### **Al-Qa`ida**

#### **PRIMARY CI ATTACKS**

- 2/26/1993: Bombing of World Trade Center – United States
- 8/7/1998: Bombing of U.S. Embassy – Kenya
- 8/7/1998: Bombing of U.S. Embassy – Tanzania
- 11/12/1999: Rocket attack on U.S. Embassy, World Bank, etc. – Pakistan
- 6/14/2001: Thwarted car bombing of U.S. Embassy – India
- 9/11/2001: Hijacking and crashing of two jets into the World Trade Center – United States
- 9/11/2001: Hijacking and crashing of jet into Pentagon – United States
- 9/11/2001: Hijacking and crashing of jet over unintended target (open-field) – United States
- 04/16/2002: Bombings of Yemeni Intelligence Services compound and Civil Aviation Department – Yemen

---

certainly had no *direct* involvement in the attacks listed in this chronology— the attacks carried out in their name were done so by individual cells. However, in addition to sharing its *weltanschauung*, the cells have active links with al-Qa`ida. Four of the Madrid bombers, for example, are believed to have “had help from highly trained bomb makers with ‘a clear Al Qaeda [sic] link.’ ” Fawaz Gergez quoting British authorities, Fawaz A. Gergez, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, (Cambridge University Press): New York, 2005), p. 247.

## *Appendix A: Chronology*

- 5/16/2003: Suicide bombings of various sites, including Belgian Embassy – Morocco
- 5/21/2003: Thwarted hijacking and crashing of jet into unknown building – Saudi Arabia
- 8/19/2003: Truck bombing of United Nations (UN) Headquarters – Iraq
- 8/20/2003: Rocket strike on airport – Afghanistan
- 11/20/2003: Bombings of U.K. and Israeli consulates and banks – Turkey
- 12/07/04: Assault on U.S. Consulate – Saudi Arabia
- 2/24/2006: Suicide bombing of oil processing facility – Saudi Arabia

### **SECONDARY CI ATTACKS**

- 11/13/1995: Bombing of Saudi National Guard's training facilities – Saudi Arabia
- 12/31/1999: Thwarted plot to bomb Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) – United States
- 10/12/2000: Suicide bombing of *USS Cole* – Yemen
- 9/15/2001: Reconnaissance for attack on Heathrow Airport – United Kingdom
- 12/22/2001: Attempted bombing of Air France flight (the so-called "shoe bomber") – France
- 4/16/2002: Bombing of intelligence and security facilities – Yemen
- 11/28/2002: Unsuccessful rocket attack on airliner – Kenya
- 10/12/2003: Bombing outside hotel housing Iraqi government leaders and US contractors – Iraq
- 11/5/2003: Alleged plan to attack U.S. military base – Kyrgyzstan
- 4/13/2004: Shooting of security officers, followed by siege and shootout – Saudi Arabia
- 4/27/2004: Bomb and gun attack on diplomatic district – Syria

## **Al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Haramayn**

### **PRIMARY CI ATTACK**

- 12/6/2004: Attack and hostage taking at U.S. Embassy – Saudi Arabia

### **SECONDARY CI ATTACKS**

- 12/29/2004: Suicide car bombing of Interior Ministry building, aimed at Interior Minister – Saudi Arabia
- 12/29/2004: Suicide car bombing of security forces recruitment center – Saudi Arabia

## **Al-Qa`ida fi Bilad al-Rafidyan**

### **PRIMARY CI ATTACKS**

- 11/6/2004: Car bombing of police station – Iraq
- 11/6/2004: Car bombing of police station – Iraq
- 11/6/2004: Car bombing of police station – Iraq
- 11/6/2004: Car bombing of police station – Iraq
- 12/3/2004: Attack on police station – Iraq
- 12/3/2004: Attack on police station – Iraq
- 1/4/2005: Suicide car bombing of Iraqi special forces' headquarters – Iraq
- 1/11/2005: Suicide car bombing near police station – Iraq
- 1/16/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/16/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/16/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/24/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/24/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/24/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq

## Appendix A: Chronology

- 1/25/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Rocket attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Rocket and mortar attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Rocket and mortar attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Mortar attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Mortar attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Bomb attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/25/2005: Bomb attack on voting station – Iraq
- 1/26/2005: Suicide tractor bombing outside the Kurdistan Democratic Party office – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Bombing near polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Mortar attack on polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Mortar attack on polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Mortar attack on polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Mortar attack on polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Mortar attack on polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Mortar attack on polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Mortar attack on polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Mortar attack on polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Suicide bombing near polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Suicide bombing near polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Suicide bombing near polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Suicide bombing near polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Suicide bombing near polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Suicide bombing near polling station – Iraq
- 1/30/2005: Suicide bombing near polling station – Iraq
- 2/8/2005: Suicide bombing of military recruiting center – Iraq
- 2/23/2005: Mortar attack on television station – Iraq
- 3/2/2005: Suicide car bombing of military recruiting center – Iraq
- 3/3/2005: Suicide car bombing of emergency police headquarters – Iraq
- 3/3/2005: Suicide car bombing targeting Interior Ministry headquarters – Iraq
- 3/7/2005: Suicide car bombing of police station – Iraq
- 3/20/2005: Suicide bombing of police station – Iraq
- 4/14/2005: Attack on police station – Iraq (Joint with: Ansar al-Sunna)
- 4/19/2005: Suicide car bombing of military recruiting center – Iraq

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

- 4/24/2005: Suicide car bombing of checkpoint at police academy – Iraq
- 4/29/2005: Suicide car bombing near Interior Ministry special forces' headquarters – Iraq
- 4/29/2005: Suicide car bombing of Interior Ministry's Special Forces' headquarters – Iraq
- 5/25/2005: Attack on Al-Anbar Governorate building – Iraq
- 5/29/2005: Attack on police station – Iraq
- 5/29/2005: Attack on police station – Iraq
- 6/11/2005: Suicide car bombing in front of Slovak Embassy – Iraq
- 6/26/2005: Suicide bombing of hospital at police station – Iraq
- 6/26/2005: Suicide car bombing of police station – Iraq
- 7/2/2005: Suicide bombing of police recruitment center – Iraq
- 7/10/2005: Suicide bombing of military recruiting center – Iraq
- 7/15/2005: Suicide car bombing of former Defense Ministry headquarters – Iraq
- 7/29/2005: Suicide bombing of military recruiting center – Iraq
- 9/5/2005: Rocket, mortar, and gunfire attack of Interior Ministry building – Iraq
- 9/28/2005: Suicide bombing of military recruiting center – Iraq
- 10/25/2005: Suicide car bombing of security building – Iraq (Joint with: Jihad Pegah)
- 10/30/2005: Mortar attack on security forces' headquarters – Iraq
- 12/1/2005: Mortar attack at an Iraqi registration office – Iraq
- 12/1/2005: Mortar attack at the governor's office – Iraq
- 12/6/2005: Suicide bombing of police academy – Iraq
- 2/22/2006: Bombing inside `Askariyya ("Golden Dome") Mosque – Iraq

### **SECONDARY CI ATTACKS**

- 2/28/2005: Suicide car bombing of medical clinic – Iraq
- 4/29/2005: Car bombing near telephone exchange – Iraq
- 6/1/2005: Car bombing at airport checkpoint – Iraq
- 6/11/2005: Suicide bombing of police assembly, targeting commanding officer – Iraq
- 7/15/2005: Suicide car bombing on bridge near Iraq's presidential residence – Iraq

## *Appendix A: Chronology*

- 7/16/2005: Suicide bombing next to oil tankers, in front of mosque – Iraq
- 9/14/2005: Suicide car bombing near gas station – Iraq
- 9/29/2005: Car bombing near bank – Iraq
- 1/9/2006: Suicide bombing of National Police Day celebration – Iraq

### **Ansar al-Islam**

#### **PRIMARY CI ATTACKS**

- 10/14/2003: Suicide car bombing of Turkish Embassy – Iraq
- 11/17/2003: Bombing of oil pipeline – Iraq

#### **SECONDARY CI ATTACK**

- 9/10/2003: Suicide car bombing of U.S. intelligence headquarters – Iraq

### **Ansar al-Sunna**

#### **PRIMARY CI ATTACKS**

- 10/7/2003: Explosion at Iraqi Foreign Ministry – Iraq
- 11/20/2003: Suicide bombing of political party headquarters – Iraq
- 11/23/2003: Suicide car bombings of police station – Iraq
- 12/19/2003: Attack on oil pipeline – Iraq
- 12/21/2003: Attack on large fuel storage tanks – Iraq
- 2/1/2004: Suicide bombing of political party headquarters – Iraq
- 1/3/2005: Suicide bombing of political party headquarters – Iraq
- 1/23/2005: Suicide car bombing of polling station – Iraq
- 4/13/2005: IED attack on oil pipeline – Iraq (Joint with: al-Qa`ida in Iraq)
- 4/14/2005: Attack on police station – Iraq (Joint with: al-Qa`ida in Iraq)

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

- 5/4/2005: Suicide bombing of police recruitment center – Iraq
- 5/11/2005: Suicide bombing of police recruitment center – Iraq
- 5/11/2005: Suicide car bombing of marketplace, likely attempting to hit nearby police station – Iraq
- 6/14/2005: Mortar attack and car bombing of police station – Iraq
- 1/17/2006: Attack on election commission office – Iraq
- 1/17/2006: Bombing of political party headquarters – Iraq

### **SECONDARY CI ATTACKS**

- 1/19/2005: Killing of Internet specialists setting up elections network – Iraq
- 5/23/2005: Car bombing of municipal office, likely targeting Kurdish official – Iraq

## **Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC)**

### **PRIMARY CI ATTACKS**

- 06/21/04: Bombing of Hama power plant – Algeria
- 06/27/04: Destruction of two large electricity pylons – Algeria
- 3/22/2000: Bombing of oil pipeline – Algeria
- 4/28/2004: Bombing of railroad tracks, subsequently causing the destruction of large freight train – Algeria
- 6/21/2004: Truck bombing of power station – Algeria
- 9/15/2005: IED bombing of high-tension electrical energy transformation station – Algeria
- 2/23/2006: Sabotage of National Gas Company's electrical plant – Algeria

### **SECONDARY CI ATTACKS**

- 5/21/2003: Attack on city water supply – Algeria
- 06/04/2005: Large attack on Mauritanian Army base – Mauritania

## Appendix A: Chronology

### Harkat-ul Mujahidin

#### PRIMARY CI ATTACKS

- 12/5/2002: Bombing/killing at Macedonian Consulate – Pakistan
- 5/25/2004: Bombing at Karachi port – Pakistan

### Jaish-e Muhammad

#### PRIMARY CI ATTACKS

- 10/1/2001: Car bombing/shooting at Kashmir State Assembly building – India
- 12/13/2001: Shooting attack on Indian Parliament – India (With Logistical Support from Lashkar-e-Tayyiba)
- 3/12/2003: Bombing of Mumbai commuter train – India

### Jama`at al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad\*

\*On 17 October 2004, Jama`at al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad announced its total allegiance to Usama bin Ladin and al-Qa`ida, renaming the group al-Qai`da fi Bilad al-Rafidyān (i.e., al-Qa`ida in Mesopotamia). However, as the chronology below demonstrates, one more attack was nominally conducted by the Jama`at al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad after October 2004.; this was most likely the effort of a splinter group or a consequence of reporting errors.

#### PRIMARY CI ATTACKS

- 4/24/2004: Suicide boat bombings of oil terminals – Iraq
- 5/4/2004: Suicide car bombing of bridge – Iraq
- 6/24/2004: Attack on police station – Iraq
- 6/24/2004: Attack on police station – Iraq
- 6/24/2004: Car bombing of hospital – Iraq
- 6/24/2004: Car bombing of Mosul Police Academy – Iraq
- 6/24/2004: Car bombing of police station – Iraq
- 6/24/2004: Car bombing of police stations – Iraq
- 6/24/2004: Car bombing of police stations – Iraq



## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

- 9/14/2004: Car bombing of police recruitment center – Iraq
- 10/6/2004: Suicide vehicle-borne IED attack of National Guard camp – Iraq
- 10/10/2004: Suicide car bombing of police recruitment center – Iraq
- 3/16/2005: Suicide car bombing of Iraqi Army checkpoint – Iraq

### **SECONDARY CI ATTACKS**

- 6/6/2004: Car bombing outside U.S.-Iraqi air base – Iraq
- 6/17/2004: Car bombing near an Iraqi Army recruitment center – Iraq
- 9/12/2004: Mortar attack on Green Zone – Iraq
- 9/22/2004: Car bombing near National Guard recruiting center – Iraq
- 9/30/2004: Car bombing at opening ceremony of water treatment plant – Iraq

### **Jaysh Adan-Abyan al-Islami**

#### **SECONDARY CI ATTACK**

- 10/6/2002: Bombing of oil tanker (possibly accidental, targeting U.S. Naval ship) – Yemen

### **Jemaah Islamiyah**

#### **PRIMARY CI ATTACKS**

- 7/14/2003: Bombing at Indonesian Parliament – Indonesia
- 9/9/2004: Car bombing of Australian Embassy – Indonesia

## Appendix A: Chronology

### Jundallah

#### **SECONDARY CI ATTACK**

- 07/00/2004: Plot to attack U.S. Consulate – Pakistan

### Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri\*

Regarding the operational status of Kata`ib Abu Hafs al-Masri *See footnote #504.*

#### **SECONDARY CI ATTACK**

- 11/20/2003: Suicide bombing near British Consulate – Turkey
- 11/20/2003: Bombing of HSBC Headquarters (whose effect was, *inter alia*, the suspension of Istanbul's stock exchange and devaluation of the Turkish lira) – Turkey
- 3/11/2004: Bombing of commuter trains (10 bombs on four separate trains) – Spain
- 4/16/2004: Threats to Spanish diplomats – Pakistan
- 7/7/2005: Suicide bombing of subway trains (three separate bombs) – United Kingdom
- 7/31/2005: IED attack on bus – United Kingdom

## APPENDIX B:

# CETIS CORE PROJECT TEAM

**Gary Ackerman** is Director of the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies. Prior to taking up his current position as Director, Mr. Ackerman was Director of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Program at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, California, and he earlier served as the Chief of Operations of the South Africa-based African-Asian Society. He received his M.A. in International Relations (Strategic Studies – Terrorism) from Yale University and his Bachelors (Law, Mathematics, International Relations) and Honors (International Relations) degrees from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. Originally hailing from South Africa, Mr. Ackerman possesses an eclectic academic background, including past studies in the fields of mathematics, history, law, and international relations, and has won numerous academic awards. His research encompasses various areas relating to terrorism and counterterrorism, including terrorist threat assessment, terrorist technologies and motivations, terrorism involving chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons, terrorist financing, environmental extremism, and the modeling and simulation of terrorist behavior.

**Charles Blair** is Deputy Director of the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies. A specialist on radiological and nuclear weapons, Mr. Blair has focused primarily on the nexus between diverse non-state actors and so-called Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). He was born and raised in Los Alamos, New Mexico, and has consequently had a long and enduring interest in national security issues. As an exchange student in Moscow in the mid-1980s, Mr. Blair witnessed first hand the closing salvos of the Cold War and, since the end of that era, has worked on issues relating to the diffusion and diversification of WMD in the context of the rise of mass casualty terrorism incidents. His most recent publication examines the evolution of US nuclear doctrine since the end of the Cold War amid efforts to develop so-called “earth penetrating”

## *Appendix B: CETIS Core Project Team*

nuclear weapons: “Visions of Fission: The Demise of Nuclear Negative Security Assurances on the Bush Administration’s Pentomic Battlefield,” *Nonproliferation Review* 12:1 (March 2005) (with Jean P. du Preez). In addition to attending university classes within the former Soviet Union, Mr. Blair has studied in India and France. He holds a B.A. in History from the University of Colorado at Boulder and an M.A. from the Monterey Institute of International Studies in International Policy Studies with a focus on the technical issues and policies surrounding WMD.

**Dr. Jeffrey M. Bale** is Research Director of the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies. He is also a Senior Researcher and Assistant Professor in the Terrorism Research and Studies Program (TRSP), a research center and curricular component of the Graduate School of International Policy Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, where he teaches a variety of courses on extremism and terrorism (including “Introduction to Terrorism,” “Militant Islamic Organizations,” “The Radical Right since 1945,” “WMD Terrorism”, and “Advanced Studies in Terrorism”). Dr. Bale obtained his B.A. in Middle Eastern and Central Asian History at the University of Michigan, his M.A. in Social Movements and Political Sociology at the University of California at Berkeley, and his Ph.D. in Contemporary European History at Berkeley. He has taught at Berkeley, Columbia University, and the University of California at Irvine and was the recipient of postdoctoral fellowships from the Society of Fellows in the Humanities at Columbia, the Office of Scholarly Programs at the Library of Congress, and the Center for German and European Studies at Berkeley. He reads numerous European languages and has also studied the Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish languages. Dr. Bale has been studying extremist and terrorist groups for nearly two decades - long before it suddenly became “fashionable” in the wake of the catastrophic al-Qa`ida attacks of 11 September 2001 - and has published numerous articles on terrorism, right-wing extremism, Islamism, and covert operations.

**Dr. Gordon Hahn** is a Senior Researcher for the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies. Dr. Hahn is an Academic Fellow at Smolny College, St. Petersburg State University, Russia. He has taught Russian domestic and foreign policy and international and comparative politics at Stanford University and St. Petersburg State University (Russia), as well as at Boston University, American University, and San Jose State University. Dr. Hahn received both his B.A. (in 1986) and his M.A. (in 1988) from Boston College, and his Ph.D. from Boston

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

University in 1995. He is author of *Russia's Revolution From Above, 1985-2000: Reform, Transition and Revolution in the Fall of the Soviet Communist Regime* (Rutgers, N.J.: Transaction, 2002), and *The Bear and The Crescent: Russia's Rising Islamist Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University, 2006). He has published in the scholarly journals *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *Demokratizatsiya*, *East European Constitutional Review*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Problems of Post-Communism*, *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, *The Russian Review*, *The Journal of Cold War Studies*, and numerous other English- and Russian-language newspapers, magazines, and newsletters.

**Elle DiLorenzo** is a Researcher at the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies. Before joining CETIS, Ms. DiLorenzo worked at Interpol in the Criminal Analysis Sub-Directorate, focusing on tracking global radiological trafficking and preparing strategic threat assessments for law enforcement use. Prior to that, she was a Research Associate for the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Project at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) where she also collaborated with public health and law enforcement community leaders on bioterrorism emergency preparedness. In 2004 Ms. DiLorenzo was awarded a grant through the Freeman Foundation to conduct primary-source research in the Russian Far East on Chinese migration into that area. Her experience in Russia also includes two years of Peace Corps service. Ms. DiLorenzo received her M.A. in International Policy Studies from The Monterey Institute of International Studies, with a specialization in International Security. She also graduated Magna cum Laude from Boston University with a B.A. in International Relations. Her research has focused on so-called Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), trafficking, threat assessment, and terrorism, with a regional emphasis on Russia, Central Asia, and Northeast Asia.

**Sundara Vadlamudi** is a Researcher at the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies. He obtained his B.E. in Computer Science from Thiagarajar College of Engineering, India, and he has significant programming experience in Java Script, Java Server Pages (JSP), Java, C, C++, HTML, PL/SQL, and Visual Basic. He is also familiar with managing databases, such as MS Access and Oracle, and currently supervises the maintenance of the WMD Terrorism Database at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. Mr. Vadlamudi received his M.A. in International Policy Studies, with a Certificate in Nonproliferation, from the Monterey Institute. His research is focused on terrorist groups in South Asia, the linkages between South Asian terrorists and both transnational and regional terrorist networks,

## *Appendix B: CETIS Core Project Team*

technology assimilation by terrorist organizations, and the ideologies and motivations of terrorist groups. He has studied religious fundamentalism (especially militant Hindu fundamentalism), Hindu-Muslim relations in South Asia, and other types of sectarian strife in the region, and is also interested, more broadly, in proliferation issues and U.S. policies that concern South Asia.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## PRIMARY SOURCES

Abu Ghayth, Sulayman. *In the Shadow of the Lances*. IntelCenter.com, June 2002, <http://www.intelcenter.com/alqaedathreat/excerpts.html>.

Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Isma`il. *Kitab al Jihad [The Book of Jihad]*, hadith collection.

Al-Adl, Sayf. "Planning Special Operations." *Mu`askar al-Battar*, September 13, 2004.

Al-Ansar, Sayf. "Hurub al-jil al-rabi," *Majallat al-Ansar* 2 (January 28, 2002).

Al-Ansari, Sayf al-Din. "Ghazwa 11 Sibtimbir. Kitab al-ansar li-muwajahat al-harb al-salibiyya." September 2002.

Al-Hawali, Safir ibn `Abd al-Rahman. "A Statement to the Ummah Concerning the Recent Events." <http://www.islamicawakening.com/viewarticle.php?articleID=720&pageID=40&pageID=41&>.

Al-Kurdi, Nur al-Din. "The Arenas of Jihad," *Dharwat al-Sanam [Peak of the [Camel's] Hump]* 3: 27-8. [Translated by CETIS].

Al-Masri, Abu al-Walid. *Tarikh al-Afghan al-`Arab [The History of the Afghan Arabs]*. *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* part 2 (December 2004).

Al-Muqrin, Abu Hajir `Abd al-`Aziz. "Military Sciences: Targets in the Cities," *Mu`askar al-Battar Magazine* 7: 23-7. [Translated by CETIS].

Al-Najdi, Abu Mus`ab. "Al-Qa`ida's Battle is Economic, Not Military," *Al-Firdaws* website, October 3, 2005. [Translated by CETIS].

## Bibliography

[Al-Qa`ida]. *ʿAlan al-Jihad `ala al-Tawaghit al-Bilad* [Declaration of Jihad against the Tyrants of the Land], al-Qa`ida manuscript found in Manchester, no publication information.

[—]. *The Al Qaeda Manual*. Washington, D.C.: Dept. of Justice, 2001.

[http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/manualpart1\\_1.pdf#search='Al%20Qaeda%20training%20manual'](http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/manualpart1_1.pdf#search='Al%20Qaeda%20training%20manual'). (translation of above)

[—]. *Translation of Entire Al Qai`da Training Manual*, [www.fas.org/irp/world/para/aqmanual.pdf](http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/aqmanual.pdf). (translation of above)

[—]. “Statement by al-Qa`ida.” *The Observer*. November 24, 2002.

[—]. “Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders - World Islamic Front Statement.” Federation of American Scientists Website. February 23, 1998. [www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm).

Al-Qurashi, Abu Ubayd. “Amrika wa mabadi’ al-harb: bayna al-nazariyya ila al-tatbiq” [America and the Principles of War: From Theory to Practice]. *Majallat al-Ansar* 24, January 2, 2003.

—. “A Lesson War,” *Al-Ansar*, December 19, 2002.

Al-Tarjumana, `Abd al-Rahman. *Malik’s Muwatta, Book 21: Jihad, Section 3: Prohibition against Killing Women and Children in Military Expeditions, Number 21.3.10*.

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/muwatta/021.mmt.html>.

[Al-Zarqawi, Abu Mus`ab]. “‘Text’ of Al-Zarqawi Message Threatening More Attacks.” Federation of American Scientists Website. April 6, 2006.

<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/zarqawi040604.html>.

[—]. “Part 15 of Serialized Book: ‘Al-Zarqawi ...The Second Generation of Al-Qa`ida’ by Fu`ad Husayn, Jordanian writer and journalist.” *Al-Quds al-Arabi*. May 30, 2005.



*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

[—]. “Part 14 of Serialized Book: ‘Al-Zarqawi ...The Second Generation of Al-Qa`ida’ by Fu`ad Husayn, Jordanian writer and journalist.” *Al-Quds al-Arabi*. May 28, 2005.

[Al-Zawahiri, Ayman]. “Zawahiri urges attacks on Iraq’s Oil.” *Associated Press*. December 7, 2005.

[—]. *Translation of July 9, 2005 letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi*, Federation of American Scientists, [www.fas.org/irp/news/2005/10/letter\\_in\\_english.pdf](http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2005/10/letter_in_english.pdf).

Al-Zawahiri, Ayman. *Fursan tahta rayat al-nabi` [Knights under the Prophet’s Banner]*, serialized in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 2001.

Al-Zayyat, Montasser. *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of Bin Laden’s Right-Hand Man*. London: Pluto, 2004.

`Azzam, `Abdallah. *Al-difa` `an ard al-muslimin, aham furud al-`ayn [The Defense of Muslim Lands: The Most Important of the Individual Duties]*. Jedda: Dar al-Mujtama`, 1987. (Partial English translation available at [www.islamistwatch.org](http://www.islamistwatch.org).)

—. *Ilhaq bi-al-qafila [Join the Caravan]*. London: Azzam, 2001. (Partial English translation available at [www.islamistwatch.org](http://www.islamistwatch.org).)

Bin Ladin, Usama bin Muhammad. “The Complete Text of Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin, Especially to the Muslims of Saudi Arabia and General Muslims Elsewhere.” *al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad* Website. December 15, 2004.

[—]. “Transcript: Bin Ladin determined to strike in US.” *CNN*. April 10, 2004.

[—]. “Usama Bin Ladin’s Message to Iraq.” *Al-Jazira*. February 11, 2003.

[—]. “A Message to the American People,” Trans. Jihad Unspun, October 7, 2002. <http://www.jihadunspun.com/BinLadensNetwork/statements/amta.html>.

[—]. “Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places,” *The Idler* 3, no. 165, September 13, 2001.

## Bibliography

[—]. “Bin Ladin Interviewed on Jihad Against US,” *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, November 27, 1996.

[Central Intelligence Agency]. “Substitution for the Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.” *United States v. Zacarias Moussoui*. Defendant’s Exhibit. Cr. No. 01-455-A.

Cour d’Appel de Paris, “Tribunal de Grand Instance de Paris,” *Requisitoire définitif contre Salah Achour + 27*, P96 263 390LZ, undated.

“Critical Infrastructure Protection in the Information Age.” *Executive Order 13231*. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/orders/>. *Critical Infrastructures Protection Act*. USA PATRIOT Act. Section 1016. H.R. 3162-130. (P.L. 107-56).

“Destroying Train Tracks,” *Al-Firdaws* website, undated. [Translated by CETIS].

*Draft National Infrastructure Protection Plan, Base Plan*. Department of Homeland Security, November 2, 2005.

“Establishing the Office of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council.” *Executive Order 13228*, October 8, 2001. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/orders/>.

“FBI Infrastructure Awareness,” *Testimony of Larry A. Mefford, Executive Assistant Director, FBI, Before the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Science, and Research and Development, and the Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security of the Select Committee on Homeland Security*, September 4, 2003. <http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress03/mefford090403.htm>. Last Accessed May 11, 2006.

Hoffman, Bruce. “The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists.” *Testimony before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. House of Representatives*, May 4, 2006.

*Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 7: Critical Infrastructure Identification, Prioritization, and Protection*. The White House, December 17, 2003. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/12/20031217-5.html>.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Jund al-Islam, "Suggested Methods and Techniques for Disguising Explosive Charges." *Al-Firdaws* website, March 24, 2005. [Translated by CETIS].

Muslim, *Sahih.Kitab al-Jihad wa al-Siyar* [The Book of Jihad and Expedition], hadith collection.

"National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets." *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*. The White House, 2003. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/pcipb/physical.html.2003>.

"O, al-Qa`ida: The Time has Come for the Comprehensive Weapon - it is the Following." *Al-Mir* website. September 15, 2005.

"President's Remarks at the 2004 Republican National Convention." September 2, 2004. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/09/20040902-2.html>.

"Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-63-Critical Infrastructure Protection Presidential Decision Directive 63." The White House, 1998. <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/pdd-63.htm>.

"The Propaganda Front Presents the Second Episode: Lectures by Shaykh Abu Mus`ab al-Suri." *Al-Faruq* website. May 10, 2005. [Translated by CETIS].

"Prosecution's Opening Statement," *United States of America v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman*, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, S5 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), January 30, 1995.

"Prosecution's Statement," *United States v. Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, Eyad Ismoil, Abdul Hakim Murad, Wali Khan Amin Shah*, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, S1293cr.180 (KTD), May 29, 1996.

"Prosecution's Statement of Facts." *United States of America v. Iyman Faris a/k/a Mohammad Rauf*. United States District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, <http://files.findlaw.com/news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/faris/usfaris603sof.pdf>.

## Bibliography

“Protecting Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets.” *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*. The White House, 2002. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/book/sect3-3.pdf>.

Ta`a Allah, Akhu Man. “What Else is There to Say About September 11.” *Sawt al-Jihad [Voice of the Jihad]*26: 35-42. [Translated by CETIS].

“Testimony of Ahmad Rassam.” *In Re: Letter Rogatory from Germany to the United States dated October 2, 2002*. United States District Court, Western District of Washington at Seattle, December 17, 2002.

“Testimony of Brian Parr.” *United States of America v Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Eyad Ismoil*, S1293CR.180 (KTD), October 22, 1997.

“Testimony of Clement Hampton-El (Dr. Rashid).” *United States of America v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman*, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, S5 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), August 3, 1995.

“Testimony of FBI informant Fadhl `Abd al-Ghani,” United States District Court, Southern District of New York, *United States of America v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman*, S5 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), August 22, 1995.

“Testimony of FBI informant Imad Salim.” *United States of America v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman*, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, S5 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), March 22, 1995.

——. March 28, 1995.

——. April 5, 1995.

“Testimony of FBI Special Agent David Frasca.” *United States of America v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman*, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, S5 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), January 30, 1995.

“Testimony of FBI Special Agent Harlen Bell,” *United States of America v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman*, United States District

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Court, Southern District of New York, S5 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), January 30, 1995.

“Testimony of Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq `Ali,” *USA v. Siddiq Ibrahim Siddig Ali*, *United States District Court, Southern District of New York*, February 6, 1995.

“Testimony of Tariq al-Hasan.” *United States of America v. Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman*, *United States District Court, Southern District of New York*, S5 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), August 2, 1995.

*United States v. Abu Doha*, *Indictment, United States District Court, Southern District of New York*, 0 Cr., undated.

*United States v. Mokhtar Haouari*, *United States District Court, Southern District of New York*, S4 00 Cr. 15 (JFK), June 29, 2001.

*United States vs. Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, Eyad Ismoil, also known as Eyad Ismail, and Abdul Hakim Murad, also known as Saeed Ahmed*. *United States Court Of Appeals For The Second Circuit*, August Term 2001, Docket Nos. 98-104 L. (Argued: May 3, 2002 Decided: April 4, 2003)

<http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/terrorism/usyousef40403opn.pdf>

United States Government, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004.

United States Government, *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001, Report of the U.S. Select Committee on Intelligence and U.S House Permanent Committee on Intelligence*, 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2002.

## **SECONDARY SOURCES**

Aboul-Enein, Youssef H., and Sherifa Zuhur. *Islamic Rulings on Warfare*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, October 2004.

## Bibliography

Abu Nasr, Donna. "Al-Qaida threatens more attacks on Saudi oil sites in Web posting, two wounded guards die." *The Associated Press*, February 25, 2006.

Abuza, Zachary. *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.

Ackerman, Gary, et al. "Report on CBRN Terrorism For Risk Management Solutions." Research project sponsored by Risk Management Solutions, Unpublished, May 2006

Ackerman, Gary, Jeffrey M. Bale et al. "Assessing Terrorist Motivations for Attacking Critical Infrastructure: Final Report," Research project sponsored by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for the Department of Homeland Security, Unpublished, August 2004.

Ackerman, Gary, Jeffrey M. Bale and Kevin Moran, "Assessing the Threat to Critical Infrastructure" in *Homeland Security: Protecting America's Targets, Volume III: Critical Infrastructure*, James J. S. Forest (ed), Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers, 2006.

"Airport trio 'planned hijack.'" *Daily Mail (London)*. May 22, 2003.

Al-Anzi, Sheikh Abd-al-Aziz bin Rashid. "The Religious Rule on Targeting Oil Interest." February 26, 2006.  
<http://www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums>.

Al-Baddarin, Bassam. "Al-Qa`ida Drew Up Working Strategy Lasting until 2020: Plans for Broad 'Jihadist Front' Covering Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon," *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, March 11, 2005.

Al-Banyan, Hasin. "The Oldest Arab Afghan Talks to Al-Sharq al-Awsat About his Career That Finally Landed him in Prison in Saudi Arabia." *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, November 25, 2001.

"Algerian group backs al-Qaeda," *BBC*, October 23, 2003.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3207363.stm>.

Al-Hamadi, Khalid. "An Insider's View of Al-Qa'ida as Narrated by Abu-Jandal (Nasir al-Bahri), Bin-Ladin's Bodyguard (4)." *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, March 22, 2005.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

“Al-Hayah Cites Detainees on Moroccan Al-Qa`ida Group That Enlists Volunteers For Iraq,” *Al-Hayah*, November 29, 2005.

Allam, Magdi. *Bin Laden in Italia: Viaggio nell'islam radicale*. Milan: Mondadori, 2002.

“Al-Majallah Obtains Bin Ladin’s Will,” *Al-Majallah*, October 27, 2002.

“Al-Qaida Claims Responsibility for Attack on Saudi Oil Facility.” *Voice of America News*, February 24, 2006.

“Al-Qa`ida Claims Responsibility for Last Week’s Blackout,” *The Middle East Media Research Institute Special Dispatch Series - No. 553* (August 19, 2003)  
<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP55303>.

“Al-Qa`ida’s Hawks Sought Weapons of Mass Destruction Through Fighter Khattab in Chechnya,” *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 9, 2004.

“Al-Qaida letter claims Spain bombings.” *Al-Jazeera*, March 12, 2004, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/8FE71593-885E-48E2-9B7F-AE0D4C817D9D.htm>. Last Accessed May 13, 2006.

Al-Shihri, Abdullah. “Saudis identify fifth wanted al-Qaida militant killed in Riyadh raids.” *Associated Press Worldstream*. March 1, 2006.

Al-Shihri, Abdullah. “Saudis say kingdom’s al-Qaida leader, two oil complex attackers slain in raids.” *The Associated Press*. February 28, 2006.

Aslan, Reza. *No God But God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*. New York: Random House, 2005.

“The Attacks.” In *Depth: Madrid Train Attacks*, *BBC News*.  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/05/madrid\\_bombings/html/1d.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/05/madrid_bombings/html/1d.stm). Last Accessed May 9, 2006.

Azzam, Maha. *Al-Qaeda the Misunderstood Wahhabi Connection and the Ideology of Violence*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003.

## Bibliography

“Azzam.com correspondent Suraqah al-Andalusi, killed by cluster bomb in Battle for Tora Bora 14 December 2001 at 28 years.” [http://www.zawaj.com/azzam/suraqah\\_alandalusi.html#brother](http://www.zawaj.com/azzam/suraqah_alandalusi.html#brother).

Bale, Jeffrey M. “Political Paranoia versus Political Realism: On Distinguishing between Bogus “Conspiracy Theories” and Genuine Conspiratorial Politics.” *Patterns of Prejudice* 41:1, February 2007, forthcoming.

Bar, Shmuel. *Warrant for Terror: The Fatwas of Radical Islam and the Duty to Jihad*. Stanford: Hoover Institution, 2006.

Barber, Benjamin R. *Jihad vs. McWorld*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2001.

Bari Atwan, Abdel. *The Secret History of al-Qa`ida*. London: Saqi, 2006.

[—]. “Interview with Saudi oppositionist Usamah bin-Ladin by chief editor Abd-al-Bari Atwan “in Afghanistan’s mountains,” *Al-Quds al-`Arabi*, November 27, 1996.

Bawer, Bruce. *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West from Within*. New York: Doubleday, 2006.

Bell, Stewart. *The Martyr’s Oath: The Apprenticeship of an Al Qaeda Terrorist*. Mississauga, Ontario.: Wiley & Sons, 2005.

—. *Cold Terror: How Canada Nurtures and Exports Terrorism around the World*. Mississauga, Ontario: Wiley & Sons, 2005.

Benjamin, Daniel and Steven Simon. *The Next Attack: The Failure of the War on Terror and a Strategy for Getting it Right*. New York: Henry Holt, 2005.

—. *The Age of Sacred Terror*. New York: Random House, 2002.

Bergen, Peter L. *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al Qaeda’s Leader*. New York: Free Press, 2006.

—. *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden*. New York: Free Press, 2001.



*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Bernstein, Richard. *Out of the Blue: The Story of September 11, 2001, from Jihad to Ground Zero*. New York: Times Books, 2002.

Bernton, Hal, et al., "Chapter 12: The Crossing," in "The Terrorist Within: The Story Behind One Man's Holy War Against America." *Seattle Times*, July 2002,  
<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/news/nation-world/terroristwithin/>.

Besson, Sylvain. *La conquête de l'Occident: Le projet secret des islamistes*. Paris: Seuil, 2005.

Blanchard, Christopher. "Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology." *Congressional Research Service Report*, November 16, 2004.

Blondet, Maurizio. *11 settembre: Colpo di stato in USA*. Milan: Effedieffe, 2002.

———. *Osama bin Mossad*. Milan: Effedieffe, 2003.

Bülow, Andreas von. *Die critical infrastructureA und der 11. September*. Munich: Piper, 2004.

Bock, Paula. "An Otherwise Ordinary Day," *Pacific Northwest*, In *Seattle Times*, November 25, 2001.  
[www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/pacificnw/2001/1125/html](http://www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/pacificnw/2001/1125/html).

Bonney, Richard. *Jihād: from Qur`ān to Bin Laden*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Borowitz, Albert. *Terrorism for Self-Glorification: The Herostratos Syndrome*. Kent, OH: Kent State University, 2005.

"BP Issues Final Report on Fatal Explosion, Announces \$ billion Investment at Texas City," *British Petroleum Press Release*, December 9, 2005.  
<http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7012963>. Last Accessed May 10, 2006.

Brachman, Jarrett M., and William F. McCants. "Stealing Al-Qa`ida's Playbook." *CTC [West Point Counterterrorism Center] Report*, (February 2006): 6-10.

## Bibliography

Bradsher, Henry S. *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*. Durham: Duke University, 1983.

Brand, Constant. "Al-Qaida suspect: Belgian air base was his target, not U.S. embassy in Paris," *Associated Press Worldstream*, November 15, 2002.

Brisard, Jean-Charles and Damien Martinez. *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda*. New York: Other Press, 2005.

Brzezinski, Matthew. "Bust And Boom: Six years before the September 11 attacks, Philippine police took down an al Qaeda cell that had been plotting, among other things, to fly explosives-laden planes into the Pentagon---and possibly some skyscrapers," *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2001.

Bunt, Gary R. *Islam in the Digital Age: e-jihad, Online Fatwas, and Cyber Islamic Environments*. London: Pluto, 2003.

Burke, Jason. *Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

———. *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow Of Terror*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003.

Cardeñosa, Bruno. *11-S, historia de una infamia: Las mentiras de la "versión oficial."* Madrid: Corona Borealis, 2003.

Carter, Mike. "US seeks longer sentence for Ahmed Ressam millennium bomb plot terrorist," *Seattle Times*, August 26, 2005.

"Chapter 2: Strategic Assessment," *Country Reports on Terrorism*. U.S. Department of State, 2005.  
<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64332.htm>.

Chubin, Shahram and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War*. Boulder: Westview, 1988.

"CIA: Bomber tape 'appears genuine.'" *CNN.com*, September 2, 2005.

Clark, Michael K. *Algeria in Turmoil: A History of the Rebellion*. New York: Praeger, 1959.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*, Trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University, 1989.

Collins, Aukai. *My Jihad: The True Story of an American Mujahid's Amazing Journey from Usama Bin Laden's Training Camps to Counterterrorism with the FBI and CIA*. Guilford, CT.: Lyons, 2002.

"Combating Terrorism: Threat And Risk Assessments Can Help Prioritize and Target Program Investments." *GAO/NSIAD-98-74*, United States General Accounting Office, April 1998.

Cook, David. *Understanding Jihad*. Berkeley: University of California, 2005.

———. *Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 2005.

Cooley, John K. *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*. London: Pluto, 2000.

Corbin, Jane. *Al-Qaeda: In Search of the Terror Network that Threatens the World*. New York: Thunder Mouth/Nation Books, 2002.

Craig, Gordon A., ed. *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1986.

Crawford, David, and Keith Johnson. "New Terror Threat In EU: Extremists with Passports," *Wall Street Journal*, December 27, 2004.

Crenshaw, Martha. "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice," in Walter Reich, ed. *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1998.

"Critical Foundations: Protecting America's Infrastructures: The Report on the President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection." October 1997.

[http://www.dtra.mil/press\\_resources/publications/deskbook/full\\_text/Other\\_Relevant\\_References/PCCIP\\_Report.pdf](http://www.dtra.mil/press_resources/publications/deskbook/full_text/Other_Relevant_References/PCCIP_Report.pdf).

## *Bibliography*

Cullison, Alan. "Inside Al-Qaeda's Hard Drive," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 2004.

Curci, Michael A. *Transnational Terrorism's Affect on the U.S. Economy*. Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2004.

de Arístegui, Gustavo. *La Yihad en España: La obsesión por reconquistar Al-Andalus*. Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2005.

DeLong-Bas, Natana J. *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University, 2004.

Department of Energy (DOE) Country Analysis Briefs, Saudi Arabia, August 2005. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/saudi.html>.

de Quetteville, Harry. "Macedonia 'staged fake terror plot to woo US.'" *The Daily Telegraph (London)*, May 22, 2004.

Der Spiegel [Editorial Team]. *Inside 9/11: What Really Happened*. New York: St. Martin's, 2001.

de Ruitter, Robin. *11 settembre: Il Reichstag di Bush*. Frankfurt: Zambon, 2003.

Devji, Faisal. *Landscapes of Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 2005.

Drake, C.J.M. *Terrorists' Target Selection*. New York: St. Martin's, 1998.

Dupuy, R. Ernest, and Trevor N. Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C. to the Present*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.

Dwyer, Jim, David Kocieniewski, Deidre Murphy, and Peg Tyre. *Two Seconds Under the World*. New York: Ballantine, 1994.

Eggen, Dan, and John Lancaster, "Al Qaeda Shows New Signs of Life," *The Washington Post*, August 14, 2004.

Emerson, Steven. *American Jihad: the Terrorists Living Among Us*. New York: Free Press, 2002.

*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *Witchcraft, Magic, and Oracles among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967.

“FBI rejects Islamic terror link to Texas refinery blast.” *AFX International Focus*, March 28, 2005.

Fenton, Ben. “Damned by his Gloating Smile,” *The Telegraph*, December 14, 2001.

Figuerira, Darius. *The al Qaeda Discourse of the Greater Kufr*. New York: iUniverse, 2004.

Filkins, Dexter. “Wanted Rebel Vows Loyalty to bin Laden, Web Sites Say,” *The New York Times*, October 18, 2004.

Firestone, Reuven. *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam*. New York: Oxford University 1999.

“Five oil plot suspects killed in Saudi clashes.” *Agence France Presse – English*. February 27, 2006.

Fouda, Yosri and Nick Fielding. *Masterminds of Terror: The Truth Behind the Most Devastating Terrorist Attack the World Has Ever Seen*. New York: Arcade, 2003.

Friedman, George. *America’s Secret War: Inside the Hidden Worldwide Struggle between the United States and its Enemies*. New York: Doubleday, 2004.

Furnish, Timothy R. *Holiest Wars: Islamic Mahdis, their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005.

García-Abadillo, Casimiro. *11-M: La venganza*. Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2004.

Gellman, Barton, and Dafna Linzer. “Afghanistan, Iraq: Two Wars Collide,” *The Washington Post*, October 22, 2004.

Gerges, Fawaz A. *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad went Global*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005.

## *Bibliography*

Goliani, Motti. "The 'Haifa Turning Point': The British Administration and the Civil War in Palestine, December 1947-1948," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37, no. 2 (April 2001): 93-130.

Gressang IV, Daniel S. "Audience and Message: Assessing Terrorist WMD Potential," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13:3 (Autumn 2001).

"Group claiming Qatar bombing says it carried out Texas refinery blast." *Agence France Presse - English*, March 25, 2005.

Gunaratna, Rohan. *The Changing Face of Terrorism*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004.

———. *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*. New York: Columbia University, 2002.

Gurr, Nadine, and Benjamin Cole. *The New Face of Terrorism: Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2002.

Habeck, Mary. *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*. New Haven: Yale University, 2006.

Halevi, Jonathan D. "Al-Qaeda's Intellectual Legacy: New Radical Islamic Thinking Justifying the Genocide of Infidels," *Jerusalem [Center for Public Affairs] Viewpoints* 508, December 1, 2003.

Hammes, Thomas X. *The Sling and the Sword: on War in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. St. Paul, MN: Zenith, 2004.

Hamud, Randall B., ed. *Osama Bin Laden: America's Enemy in his own Words*. San Diego, CA: Nadeem, 2005.

Harris, Lee. *Civilization and its Enemies: The Next Stage of History*. New York: Free Press, 2004.

———. "Al Qaeda's Fantasy Ideology: War without Clausewitz," *Policy Review* 114 (August-September 2002).

Hashim, Ahmed S. "Iraq: From Insurgency to Civil War?" *Current History* 104 (2005): 1018.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Hasan, Omar. "Saudi Arabia continues to crackdown in bid to thwart new terror threats," *Agence France Presse*, May 22, 2003.

Hassan, Hamdi A. *Al-Qaeda: The Background of the Pursuit for Global Jihad*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2004.

Hayden, Nancy K. "The Complexity of Terrorism." in Magnus Ranstorp, ed., *Mapping Terrorism Research: State of the Art, Gaps and Future Direction*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Hegghammer, Thomas. "Global Jihadism after the Iraq War," *Middle East Journal* 60: (Winter 2006).

Henley, Jon. "Paris plot reveals link to terror chief: Bombs aimed at embassy and cultural centre," *The Guardian*, October 3, 2001.

Hewitt, Christopher. *Understanding Terrorism in America: from the Klan to al Qaeda*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Hirst, David. "Islam's Holy Warriors Break Ranks; A change of heart before the embassy bombings has exposed divisions among fundamentalists," *The Guardian*, August 15, 1998.

Hoffman, Bruce. "The Changing Face of al-Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27:6 (November-December 2004).

———. *Al Qaeda, Trends in Terrorism, and Future Potentialities: An Assessment*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003.

Hufschmid, Eric. *Painful Questions: An Analysis of the September 11<sup>th</sup> Attack*. Ink and Scribe, 2002.

Husayn, Fu`ad. *Al-Zarqawi, al-jil al-thani li-al-Qa`ida [Al-Zarqawi: Al-Qa`ida's Second Generation]*. Beirut: Al-Khayal, 2005.

Icke, David. *Alice in Wonderland and the World Trade Center Disaster: Why the Official Story of 9/11 is a Monumental Lie*. Wildwood, MO: Bridge of Love, 2002.

"The Investigation." In *Depth: Madrid Train Attacks*, *BBC News*. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/05/madrid\\_bombings/html/2.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/05/madrid_bombings/html/2.stm). Last Accessed May 9, 2006.

## Bibliography

“The Iran-Iraq War.” *The History of Iran*. The Iran Chamber Society, [www.iranchamber.com/history/iran\\_iraq\\_war/iran\\_iraq\\_war1.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/history/iran_iraq_war/iran_iraq_war1.php).

Irujo, José Maria. *El agujero: España invadida por la yihad*. Madrid: Santillana, 2005.

Isikoff, Michael, and Mark Hosenball, “Catching Al Qaeda,” *Newsweek*, September 8, 2004.  
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5945061/site/newsweek/>.

“Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).” Center for Nonproliferation Studies,  
<http://cns.miis.edu/research/wtc01/imu.htm>.

Jackson, Brian A. “Technology Acquisition by Terrorist Groups: Threat Assessment Informed by Lessons from Private Sector Technology Adoption.” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24 (2001).

Jalalzai, Musá Khan. *The Holy Terror: al-Qaeda, Taliban and its Roots in Pakistan and Afghanistan*. Lahore: Dua, 2002.

Jamali, Hasan. “Al-Qaida Claims Attack on Saudi Refinery.” *Associated Press Online*, February 25, 2006.

Johnson, Gene. “Would-Be Millenium Bomber Gets 22 Years,” *Associated Press*, July 27, 2005.

Johnston, David, and David E. Sanger. “New Generation of Leaders Is Emerging For Al Qaeda,” *The New York Times*, August 10, 2004.

Katz, Samuel M. *Jihad in Brooklyn: The NYPD Raid that Stopped America's First Suicide Bombers*. New York: New American, 2005.

———. *Relentless Pursuit: The DSS and the Manhunt for the al-Qaeda Terrorists*. New York: ForgeTom Doherty, 2002.

Katzman, Kenneth. “Al Qaeda: Profile and Threat Assessment,” *CRS Report for Congress: RL33038*, August 17, 2005.

Keegan, John. *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to al-Qaeda*. New York: Knopf, 2003.



*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Kennedy, Hugh. *The Armies of the Caliphs: The Military and Society in the Early Islamic State*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Kepel, Gilles. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University, 2002.

Khadduri, Majid. *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1955.

Khan, Zahar. "Pakistan Questions Militants on Killings." *The Associated Press*, December 10, 2002.

"Killers' journey to heart of evil - London 7/7 Terror Threat." *Daily Telegraph*. Sydney, Australia, July 20, 2005.

Kohlmann, Evan. *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2004.

Laïdi, Ali. *Le jihad en Europe: Les filières du terrorisme islamiste*. Paris: Seuil, 2002.

Lamb, Christian. "Focus: The Confessions of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," *Times*, March 28, 2004.

Laqueur, Walter. *Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Other Terrorists From Around the World and Throughout the Ages*. New York: Reed, 2004.

———. *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Continuum, 2003.

Lavoie, Denise. "Shoe bomber gets life for trying to blow up trans-Atlantic flight," *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*, January 30, 2003.

Lawrence, Bruce, ed. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*. New York: Verso, 2005.

Lawrence, T. E. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. New York: Random House, 1935.

## *Bibliography*

“Leak Gives Official Story Of London 7/7 Attacks.” *Intelligence Wire, China Daily Source: Financial Times Information Limited – Asia*. April 10, 2006.

Lewis, Bernard, et al., *Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954-2002.

Lewis, Ted G. *Critical Infrastructure Protection in Homeland Security: Protecting a Networked Nation*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Interscience, 2006.

Linden, Edward V. *Foreign Terrorist Organizations: History, Tactics and Connections*. New York: Nova Science, 2004.

“London bombings low budget affair, no Al-Qaeda link: report.” *Agence France Presse – English*. April 9, 2006.

Mackey, Chris and Greg Miller. *The Interrogators: Inside the Secret War against Al Qaeda*. New York: Little, Brown, 2004.

Macko, Steve. *Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda: Compendium of Reports by the EmergencyNet News Service, Analysis by the Emergency Response & Research Institute (ERRI), February 1997 to February 1999*. Chicago, IL: Emergency Response & Research Institute, 1999.

“Madrid train bomb attacks accused.” *BBC News*, April 11, 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/europe/4899544.stm>.

Majumadara, Suhasa. *Jihad: The Islamic Doctrine of Permanent War*. New Delhi: Voice of India, 1994.

“Man ‘planned attack’ on US embassy in Paris.” *The Guardian*. October 2, 2001.

Mannes, Aaron. *Profiles in Terror: The Guide to Middle East Terrorist Organizations*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

Marlin, Robert O. *What Does Al Qaeda Want?: Selected Communiqués and Commentary*. Berkeley, CA.: North Atlantic, 2005.

## *The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Marmie, Nicolas. "Police sweeps around Morocco to track down suspects in suicide bombings." *The Associated Press*, May 21, 2003.

Marrs, Jim. *Inside Job: The Shocking Case for a 9/11 Conspiracy*. San Rafael: Origin, 2005.

Martz, Harry F. and Mark E. Johnson. "Risk Analysis of Terrorist Attacks," *Risk Analysis*. Vol.7 No. (1987).

McCormick, Gordon H. "Terrorist Decision Making," *Annual Reviews in Political Science* 6 (2003).

McDermott, Terry, et al. "The Plots and Designs of Al Qaeda's Engineer." *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 2002.

McDermott, Terry. *Perfect Soldier. The Hijackers: Who They Were, Why They Did It*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

Meysan, Thierry. *L'effroyable imposture: 11 September 2001*. Chatou: Carnot, 2002.

Meysan, Thierry. *Le Pentagate*. Chatou: Carnot, 2003.

Miller, John, and Michael Stone, with Chris Mitchell. *The Cell: Inside the 9/11 Plot, and Why the FBI and CIA Failed to Stop It*. New York: Hyperion, 2002.

"Moroccan Sources Detail Terrorist Cell's Plan for Saudi Arabia, Arab Maghreb." *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*. 6 (December 2005).

Moteff, John, et al. "Critical Infrastructures: What Makes an Infrastructure Critical?" *Congressional Research Service Report*, 2003.

Murphy, Paul. "Jury Acquits Suspected Gimrinskiy Tunnel Terrorist." *Retwa.com*, May 12, 2006, [www.retwa.com/home.cfm?articleId=2336](http://www.retwa.com/home.cfm?articleId=2336).

Myroie, Laurie. *Study of Revenge: The First World Trade Center Attack and Saddam Hussein's War Against America*. Lanham, MD: AEI, 2001.

## Bibliography

Nafziger, George F., and Mark W. Walton. *Islam at War: A History*. Westport, CT.: Praeger, 2003.

“Net closes in on bombers.” *Expatica*, March 16, 2004. [http://www.expatica.com/source/site\\_article.asp?subchannel\\_id=82&story\\_id=5644](http://www.expatica.com/source/site_article.asp?subchannel_id=82&story_id=5644).

“Newly-Released Video of Al-Qaeda’s Deputy Leader Ayman al-Zawahiri’s Interview to Al-Sahab TV.” *Special Dispatch No. 1044*. The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), December 8, 2005. <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP104405>.

Norton-Taylor, Richard, Giles Tremlett and Julian Borger. “MI6 hunts terror plot network: Al-Qaida cell planned Gibraltar attacks,” *The Guardian*, June 12, 2002.

Office for Domestic Preparedness (OPD). “Vulnerability Assessment Methodologies Report.” *Phase I Final Report*. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, July 2003.

Office of Management and Budget. “Homeland Security.” The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/pdf/Homeland-07.pdf>. Last Accessed on May 16, 2006.

Olimpio, Guido. *La rete del terrore: Come nascono e agiscono I militanti delle Guerre Sante*. Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 2002.

“Pakistan Court Sentences Nine Over Macedonian Mission Attack.” *BBC Monitoring*. August 26, 2004.

Panja, Tariq. “London Bombings Were Low-Cost Operation.” *Associated Press*. January 3, 2006.

Paret, Peter. *Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1993.

Pargeter, Alison. “The Islamist Movement in Morocco,” *Terrorism Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation 3, no. 10 (May 19, 2005). [http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/uploads/ter\\_003\\_010.pdf](http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/uploads/ter_003_010.pdf).

*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Paz, Reuven. "Global Jihad and the Sense of Crisis: Al-Qa`idah's Other Front." Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies. Undated [2003].

[http://www.intelligence.org.il/Eng/g\\_j/rp\\_d\\_11\\_03.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/Eng/g_j/rp_d_11_03.htm).

———. "Yes to WMD: The first Islamist Fatwah on the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction," *PRISM Special Dispatches* 1 (May 2003).

———. "Qa`idat al-Jihad: A New Name on the Road to Palestine," *Institute for Counterterrorism Report*, May 7, 2002. <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articleid=436>.

"PDDNI Address the AFCEA San Antonio Chapter." April 25, 2006. [http://www.dni.gov/speeches/20060425\\_speech.htm](http://www.dni.gov/speeches/20060425_speech.htm).

Peters, Ralph. "When Devils Walk the Earth: The Mentality and Roots of Terrorism, and How to Respond," in idem, *Beyond Terror: Strategy in a Changing World*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2002.

Peters, Rudolph. *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam: A Reader*. Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1996..

———. *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History*. The Hague and New York: Mouton, 1979.

———. *Jihad in Medieval and Modern Islam: The Chapter on Jihad from Averroes' Legal Handbook 'Bidayat al-mudjtahid' and the Treatise 'Koran and fighting' by the late Shaykh-al-Azhar, Mahmud Shaltut*. Averroës. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977.

Phares, Walid. *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies Against America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Phillips, James. "The Evolving Al-Qaeda Threat," The Heritage Foundation, *Heritage Lecture* #928, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl928.cfm>.

Pipes, Daniel. *The Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy*. New York: St. Martin's, 1996.

Platón, Miguel. *11-M: Como la Yihad puso de rodillas en España*. Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2005.

## Bibliography

Post, Jerrold M. *Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants: The Al-Qaeda Training Manual*. Maxwell Air Force Base, AL.: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2005

———. *Killing in the Name of God: Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda*. Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2002.

———. “Terrorist Psycho-Logic: Terrorist Behavior as a Produce of Psychological Forces,” in Walter Reich, ed. *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. Washington, DC : Woodrow Wilson Center, 1998.

Prober, Joshua. “Accounting for Terror: Debunking the Paradigm of Inexpensive Terrorism,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *PolicyWatch #1041*, November 1, 2005.  
<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2389>.

Purvis, Andrew. “The Suspects: a Bosnian Subplot.” *Time*. November 12, 2001.

Qureshi, M. M. *Landmarks of Jihad*. Lahore, Sh. Muahammad Ashraf, 1971.

Rajaei, Farhang. *The Iran-Iraq War: The Politics of Aggression*. Talahassee, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993.

Reeve, Simon. *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama Bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism*. Boston: Northeastern University, 1999.

Reich, Walter, ed. *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1998.

Remnick, David. “Comment After Madrid.” *The New Yorker*, March 29, 2004.

Renfro, Nancy A, and Joseph L. Smith. “Threat/Vulnerability Assessments and Risk Analysis. Whole Building Design Guide.”  
<http://www/wbdg.org/design/res-print.php?rp=27>.

*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

Roberts, Hugh. *The Battlefield. Algeria, 1988-2002: Studies of a Broken Polity*. London and New York: Verso, 2003.

Roy, Olivier. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*. New York: Columbia University, 2004.

Rubin, Barry. Ed. *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Contemporary Islamist Movements in the Middle East*. Albany, NY: SUNY, 2003.

Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004.

Saleh, Mohamad. "Al Qaeda Claims Responsibility For Power Blackout In U.S.!" *Dar al-Hayat* Website, August 18, 2003, [http://english.daralhayat.com/arab\\_news/08-2003/Article-20030818-14bdd659-c0a8-01ed-0079-6e1c903b7552/story.html](http://english.daralhayat.com/arab_news/08-2003/Article-20030818-14bdd659-c0a8-01ed-0079-6e1c903b7552/story.html).

"Saudi Foreign Minister: 'This is our 9/11.'" *CNN.com*, May 21, 2003.

Sawer, Patrick. "Terror plot to blow up Navy warships is foiled." *The Evening Standard*, June 11, 2002.

Schanzer, Jonathan. *Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups & the Next Generation of Terror*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2005.

Schechter, Erik. "Generic Jihad," *Jerusalem Post*, December 5, 2003.

Scheuer, Michael, Stephen Ulph, and John C.K. Daly, "Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities: The Achilles Heel of the Western Economy," *The Jamestown Foundation*. May 2006. <http://www.jamestown.org/docs/Jamestown-SaudiOil.pdf>. Last Accessed on May 27, 2006.

Scheuer, Michael. "Assessing London and Sharm al-Sheikh: The Role of Internet Intelligence and Urban Warfare Planning," *Terrorism Focus* 2:15 (August 15, 2005)

———. "Coalition Warfare: How Al-Qaeda Uses the World Islamic Front Against Crusaders and Jews, Part I," *Terrorism Focus*, 2:7 (March 31, 2005).

## Bibliography

———. *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terrorism*. Washington, DC: Potomac, 2004).

———. *Through Our Enemies' Eyes*. Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2006.

Schneider, Barry R. and Jerrold M. Post. *Know Thy Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and their Strategic Cultures*. Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: USAF Counterproliferation Center; Wash. D.C.

Schölzel, Arnold, ed. *Das Schweigekartell: Fragen und Widersprüche zum 11. September*. Berlin: Homilius, 2002.

Serrano, Richard A. "The Nation: 'Shoe Bomber' Reid Given 3 Life Terms." *Los Angeles Times*. January 31, 2003.

Sicker, Martin. *The Islamic World in Ascendancy: From the Arab Conquests to the Siege of Vienna*. New York: Praeger, 2000.

Sifaoui, Mohamed. *Inside Al Qaeda: How I Infiltrated the World's Deadliest Terrorist Organization*. New York: Thunder's Mouth, 2004.

Smith, Paul J. "Transnational Terrorism and the Al Qaeda Model: Confronting New Realities." *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* (Summer 2002): 33-46.

Smucker, Philip. *Al Qaeda's Great Escape: The Military and the Media on Terror's Trail*. Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2004.

Souchard, Pierre-Antoine. "Six Convicted in Alleged Paris Bomb Plot." *Associated Press Online*, March 16, 2005.

Stone, Martin. *The Agony of Algeria*. New York: Columbia University, 1997.

Struck, Doug, Howard Schneider, and Karl Vick, et al., "Borderless Network of Terror: Bin Laden Followers Reach Across Globe," *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2001.

Tefft, Bruce. "Al-Qa`ida Book on Managing Savagery." *Israelert*, March 8, 2005.



*The Jericho Option: Al-Qa`ida & Attacks On Critical Infrastructure*

*The Oxford American English Dictionary*. New York: G. P. Putnam, 2002.

Tibi, Bassam. *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2002.

Townsend, Mark. "Leak reveals official story of London bombings," *The Observer*, April 9, 2006.

Trevelyan, Mark. "Local cell, web role link London and Madrid probes," *Reuters*, April 11, 2006.

Ulph, Stephen. "New Online Book Lays Out al-Qaeda's Military Strategy." *Terrorism Focus* Jamestown Foundation 2, no. 6 (March 17, 2005).

"US Interferes in Pakistan's Affairs as FBI Visits Macedonia Consulate." *Financial Times Information, Global News Wire*. December 11, 2002.

Venzke, Ben N., ed. *The Al-Qaeda Documents, Vol. 3*. Alexandria, VA: Tempest/IntelCenter, 2003.

Venzke, Ben N., ed. *The Al-Qaeda Documents. Vol. 2*. Alexandria, VA.: Tempest/IntelCenter, 2002.

Venzke, Ben N., ed. *The Al-Qaeda Documents. Vol. 1*. Alexandria, VA.: Tempest/IntelCenter, 2002.

Verton, Dan, *Black Ice: The Invisible Threat of Cyber-Terrorism*. New York: McGraw-Hill Osborne, 2003.

———. "Experts: Don't dismiss cyberattack warning," *Computerworld*, 18 November 2002,  
[www.computerworld.com/securitytopics/security/story/0,10801,7600,0,00.html](http://www.computerworld.com/securitytopics/security/story/0,10801,7600,0,00.html).

Vidino, Lorenzo. *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2005.

## *Bibliography*

Ward, Blake D. *Osama's Wake: The Second Generation of Al Qaeda*. Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2005.

Weaver, Mary Anne. *A Portrait of Egypt: A Journey Through the World of Militant Islam*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.

Weimann, Gabriel. "www.terror.net: How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet," *United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Special Report 116*. March 2004.

Whitaker, Brian. "Al-Qaida tape calls for more attacks." *The Guardian (London)*, May 22, 2003.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan, and John Kaltner. "Killing in the Name of Islam: Al-Qaeda's Justification for September 11." *Middle East Policy* 10:2 (Summer 2003).

Willis, Michael. *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*. New York: New York University, 1996.

Wright, Lawrence. "A Reporter At Large, The Terror Web." *The New Yorker*, August 2, 2004.

Wright, Lawrence. "The Terror Web," *The New Yorker*, August 2, 2004.

Zerrouky, Hassane, *La nébuleuse islamiste en France et en Algérie: Enquête*. Paris: Editions 1, 2002.