

# The Global War On Terrorism: An Assessment

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# I. THE WAR ON VIOLENT ISLAMIC RADICALISM— KEY JUDGMENTS

Our enemies have fought relentlessly these past five years, and they have a record of their own. Bin Laden and his deputy Zawahiri are still in hiding. Al Qaeda has continued its campaign of terror with deadly attacks that have targeted the innocent, including large numbers of fellow Muslims. The terrorists and insurgents in Iraq have killed American troops and thousands of Iraqis. Syria and Iran have continued their support for terror and extremism. Hezbollah has taken innocent life in Israel, and succeeded briefly in undermining Lebanon's democratic government. Hamas is standing in the way of peace with Israel. And the extremists have led an aggressive propaganda campaign to spread lies about America and incite Muslim radicalism. The enemies of freedom are skilled and sophisticated, and they are waging a long and determined war.<sup>1</sup> —President George W. Bush, September 7, 2006

In some ways the violent radicalism that is wracking the Muslim world today is nothing new. Since the death of Muhammad in 632, Islamic history has been punctuated by many periods in which various heterodox sects have emerged and clashed violently with mainstream Muslims, as well as with the West. Indeed, as will be detailed in Chapter II, the ideological roots of today's Salafi-jihadi movement reach back to the Islamic scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah, who wrote at the dawn of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. The practice of *takfir*, declaring fellow Muslims to be apostates deserving death for failing to adhere to specific interpretations of the Quran and hadith, is frequently invoked by al Qaeda and other terrorist groups today in much the same way as it was by the kharijites in the late 7<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>2</sup>

What makes contemporary violent Islamic radicalism threatening to the West is the following:

- Deep-seated, popular frustration across much of the Muslim world stemming from five centuries of civilizational decline fused with resentment and anger toward the West for its economic, scientific/technological, and military success, exacerbated by lingering hostility engendered by European colonization and exploitation of Muslim lands and, more recently, the creation and support of Israel;<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> President George W. Bush, "President Bush Discussed Progress in the Global War on Terror," Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, September 7, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Mary R. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy—Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> Assuming that Islamic radicalism is indeed fueled by frustration and anger stemming from the failure of the Islamic world to compete effectively against the West over the past half millennia, it is almost certain to remain a long-term problem because ongoing demographic and economic trends strongly suggest that the downward spiral of Islamic civilization relative to the West will continue, and may even accelerate in the decades ahead. Demographically the Arab/Muslim world is in a difficult situation. The relative size of the current youth cohort is unprecedented—most are single urban males, almost half have not received a secondary education, and many are unemployed or underemployed. Over the next two decades, the largest proportional youth populations will be located in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Iraq. The sex ratio in several of these states is tilted heavily toward males. A large cohort of young, unemployed, single males has been linked to increased political instability in the past. This

- Globalization of communications, transportation, and trade which, paradoxically, the jihadis view as both a perilous threat to the ummah (i.e., increased exposure to corrupting Western influences) and as a critical enabler of their own defensive jihad (i.e., making it possible to spread their radical ideology more quickly and widely than in the past); and
- The emergence and diffusion of technologies that make it possible for small groups to carry out mass-casualty and catastrophic attacks (e.g., chemical high explosives, fuel-laden jet aircraft, and weapons of mass destruction).

Radical Islam's current war with the West began well before September 11, 2001. It started by and large with the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Key developments in this war include the taking and holding for 444 days of American hostages in Iran and the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979, the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, the successful campaign of Hezbollah in Lebanon in the 1980s to first drive out the United States (through the Beirut bombings, hostage taking, and the torture and murder of Americans)<sup>4</sup> and eventually the Israelis, and the rise of al Qaeda in the late 1990s and their sustained campaign of attacks against US interests, including the 1998 bombings of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as the small-boat attack on the USS *Cole* off Yemen on October 12, 2000.<sup>5</sup> Most notably, in 1996, Osama bin Laden declared war against "Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places" and in 1998, the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders issued a *fatwa* that ruled that killing "Americans and their allies—both civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim..."<sup>6</sup>

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cohort also provides a convenient pool from which to recruit terrorist operatives. Economic growth has not kept pace with population growth over the last several decades in most of the Islamic world. As a result, real per capita income has fallen substantially and will likely continue to fall. According to the United Nations Development Program, the combined GNP of all Arab countries stood at \$531.2 billion in 1999, which is less than that of Spain. The average annual rate of growth since 1975 has been about 3.3 percent. However, that figure masks wide variations over time: from 8.6 percent in 1975-1980 during the oil boom to less than one percent in the 1980s. Throughout the 1990s, exports from the Arab region (over 70 percent of which were oil related) grew at only 1.5 percent per year, which is far below the global average of six percent. In short, barring a dramatic economic turnaround, the standard of living for the average Muslim in most Arab states will likely get worse before it gets better. As a result of anemic growth, unemployment has soared. At about 15 percent, average unemployment in Arab countries is among the highest in the developing world. Unemployment is more than 30 percent in Algeria and more than 50 percent in Gaza. As the CIA has concluded: "High structural unemployment at a time when the national age distribution is highly skewed in favor of 18-to-24-year-olds provides exceptional fodder for radical movements in many developing countries." See UN Arab Development Report; and Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic*, September 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Islamic terrorists killed almost 600 people over the course of the 1980s, which is more than five times as many fatalities as caused by either the IRA or groups associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More than half of the people who lost their lives to Islamic terrorists during this period were American. Owing in large measure to extensive support from Iran, the militant group Hezbollah grew rapidly in strength and conducted a string of high-profile, mass-casualty attacks against American targets between 1983 and 1984 (e.g., the truck bombing of the USMC barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, which killed 241 Americans on October 23, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Although radical Islam was generally on the ascendancy in the 1990s, it did encounter several setbacks, including government crackdowns against the Islamic Group and Islamic Jihad in Egypt and against the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria.

<sup>6</sup> World Islamic Front, "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders," February 23, 1998.

Until September 11, 2001, US counter-terrorism policy, however, was based principally (and ineffectively) on cooperative diplomacy and limited retaliatory responses. US diplomacy suffered from a chronic inability to secure decisive international cooperation. US military strikes against terrorists were neither decisive nor a deterrent against future terrorist action or state sponsorship of terrorism. More aggressive US strategies were constrained by a Cold War-policy overhang that viewed terrorism within a superpower, proxy war and crisis management context and as fundamentally a law-enforcement problem. As then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice testified before the 9/11 Commission:

The terrorists were at war with us, but we were not yet at war with them. For more than 20 years, the terrorist threat gathered, and America's response across several administrations of both parties was insufficient. Historically, democratic societies have been slow to react to gathering threats, tending instead to wait to confront threats until they are too dangerous to ignore or until it is too late.<sup>7</sup>

September 11<sup>th</sup> was, in short, a strategic failure as much as an intelligence failure. It also marked an important turning point in the war with radical Islamic terrorists in that the United States struck back in a meaningful way for the first time and is now on the offensive on several fronts. The defeat of the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan was an important first victory in what will be a protracted campaign.

There are two branches of the radical Islamic threat today: heterodox Salafi-jihadi groups within the Sunni Muslim community and "Khomeinist" Shiite groups that strive to impose their brand of sharia justice on the entire world.<sup>8</sup> Al Qaeda is an example of the former, while Iranian-backed Hezbollah is an archetype of the latter. There are radical Islamist insurgencies of varying stages underway in nearly a score of countries around the globe—most notably in Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Lebanon. The operating environment spans developed Europe to the most underdeveloped parts of the world, and ranges from densely populated urban areas and mega-cities, to remote mountains, deserts and jungles. It encompasses permissive, semi-permissive, and non-permissive environments, as well as hostile or denied areas. Partner capacity ranges from sophisticated to almost non-existent, but even in the most capable partner areas (i.e., Europe), Islamist terrorist cells have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to operate.

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Condoleezza Rice, Opening Remarks to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, Hart Senate Office Building, April 8, 2004. Available online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/print/20040408.html>

<sup>8</sup> "Jihad," which literally means "struggle," is often over-simplified as "holy war." Actually, the term refers both to the internal struggle of all Muslims to live according to Quran and sunna (ways or customs) of Muhammad, which is considered the great jihad (*jihad al-akbar*), as well as an external struggle to the spread the faith to unbelievers. The latter, which is considered the lesser jihad (*jihad al-asgar*), can be achieved in myriad ways, including: proselytizing, preaching sermons, conducting scholarly study, performing social work, and engaging in armed warfare. The term "Salafist" is derived from the word *Salaf*, which refers collectively to the companions of Muhammad, the early Muslims who followed them, and the first three generations of Islamic scholars. The terms "Salafist" and "jihadist" are often used almost interchangeably; this is no doubt because most jihadist groups advocate a return back to the practices of the early Islamic society of the *Salaf*, and many self-described Salafists believe that some form of *jihad* is needed to restore the original purity of Islam.

While the United States and its partners in the war on terrorism have made important strides in combating jihadi groups worldwide since September 11th, they have not weakened the jihadi's will or their ability to inspire and regenerate. The high-water mark for the United States in the war on terrorism was arguably reached by 2002-2003. By that time, the Taliban government had been overthrown and al Qaeda stripped of its sanctuary in Afghanistan; ten of al Qaeda's senior-most leaders had been captured or killed, including Abu Zubaydah, Ramzi bin al Shibh, and Khalid Sheik Mohammad; dozens of jihadi cells had been rolled up worldwide; actions had been taken to seize the vast majority of terrorist finances frozen to date; and several partner countries around the world had taken steps to enhance their counter-terrorism (CT) capabilities.

Since 2002-2003, however, the overall US position in the GWOT has slipped. To be sure, the United States has made considerable progress capturing or killing terrorist leaders and operatives, disrupting terrorist operations, seizing assets, and building partner CT capabilities. Those gains, however, have been offset by the metastasis of the al Qaeda organization into a global movement, the spread and intensification of Salafi-jihadi ideology, and the growth in number and political influence of Islamist fundamentalist political parties throughout the world.<sup>9</sup> Both Salafi-jihadi and "Khomeinist" branches of Islamic radicalism have spread rather than receded since 2003. The continued presence of US military forces in Iraq has been a boon for the jihadi movement's propaganda effort and bolstered the legitimacy of its call to defensive jihad. While the war in Iraq has certainly contributed to the radicalization of the Muslim world, it is by no means the primary cause of Islamic radicalization. The goals of the jihadi movement are much larger than evicting US forces from Iraq or even from the broader Middle East. As detailed in Chapter II, the Salafi-Jihadi branch also seeks the overthrow of all apostate regimes in Muslim states, meaning all those that do not govern solely by the sharia; the creation of an Islamic "caliphate" ruling over all current and former Muslim lands, including Israel; and, in time, the conquest or conversion of all unbelievers. The constitutional charter of al Qaeda describes its strategic goal simply as "the victory of the mighty religion of Allah, the establishment of an Islamic Regime and the restoration of the Islamic caliphate, God willing."<sup>10</sup> The long-term goals of the Khomeinists are not any more limited. They are committed to spreading what they consider to be two universally applicable ideas: Islam is relevant to all aspects of life and the sharia alone provides a sufficient blueprint for living a just life on Earth.<sup>11</sup> While the initial goal is to unite and liberate "oppressed Muslims," the ultimate objective is to bring all of humanity under the umbrella of a Shi'a version of Islamic justice.

From a global perspective, the jihadist threat has, on balance, remained constant or declined slightly in four regions since September 11<sup>th</sup>: Africa, with the notable exception of Somalia; Russia and Central Asia; Southeast Asia; and the Americas. In contrast, it has intensified, in some cases sharply, in Southwest Asia, South Asia, and Europe. As the declassified version of

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<sup>9</sup> Examples include the Justice and Prosperity Party and the Mujaheddin Council (MMI) in Indonesia, the Party Islam in Malaysia, the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam faction led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) in Pakistan, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Raphael Perl, "Trends in Terrorism: 2006," *CRS Report to Congress*, RL33555, July 21, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> DIA, translation of "Al-Qaida: Constitutional Charter, Rules, and Regulations," Translation No. AFGT-2002-600175, August 2002, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> "Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran," *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1980, p. 185.

the recent National Intelligence Estimate on “Trends in Global Terrorism,” concluded: “a large body of all-source reporting indicates that activists identifying themselves as jihadists, although a small percentage of Muslims, are increasing in both number and geographic dispersion.”

The GWOT is likely to be protracted and increasingly fought within states with which the United States is not at war. To prevail in this war, the United States will need to mount a multifaceted global smother campaign against jihadis and sustain it for the foreseeable future, while simultaneously isolating, dividing, and otherwise weakening the jihadi movement. To do so, it will be essential for the United States to rally as many allies as possible to the cause, including non-violent Salafis who are best positioned to lure conservative Muslims away from the jihadi camp. During this protracted global war, the United States will need to ensure that the key terrain of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan does not fall into jihadi hands. Most critically, the US government must avoid making statements or taking any actions that legitimize the call to defensive jihad. In summary form, the seven pillars of US strategy should be to:

- Sustain a global smother campaign on radical Islamic terrorists to include relentless manhunting, comprehensive sanctuary denial, disruption operations, severing transnational links, and impeding recruitment and training;
- Employ unconventional warfare (UW) and covert action against state sponsors of terrorism and transnational terrorist groups globally;
- Defend and hold the “key terrain” of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan;
- Maintain a significant “surge” capability for responding to protracted COIN and state-failure contingencies;
- Create and exploit divides within and among jihadi groups;
- Discredit Salafist-Jihadi and “Khomeinist” ideology and covertly promote credible, alternative Islamic voices (i.e., engage in the counter-*fatwa* war); and
- Isolate Islamic extremists from mainline, conservative Muslims and avoid legitimizing the call to defensive jihad.

Each of these strategic pillars is described in more detail in Chapter IV of this report. It should be noted at the outset that clandestine and covert capabilities—frequently exercised through surrogates and partner states—will play an increasingly central role in the execution of US strategy. It is assumed, moreover, that the United States continues to take prudent steps to protect the US homeland and safeguard US and allied interests overseas. Since compelling the United States to spend disproportionately to defend against low-level threats globally is an integral element of al Qaeda’s “bleed-until-bankruptcy” strategy, care should be exercised in overspending on defensive measures. While it is obviously desirable to make it as difficult as possible for terrorists to strike the US homeland or American interests overseas, the opportunity cost and defensive “return” on such investments must be carefully assessed.

The next chapter of this report examines in detail the Sunni-based, Salafi-jihadi threat, including its ideological roots, key actors, goals, strategy, lines of operations, and relevant capabilities. Chapter III examines the same topics, but focused on violent Shi'a extremism or "Khomeinism." Chapter IV provides a quick overview of the status of Islamic radicalism in key regions of the world with increased emphasis on selected "front line" countries. The report concludes with an elaboration of the five strategic pillars for prevailing in the long war mentioned above and, where appropriate, their implications for US government investment and organization.

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## II. THE SUNNI-BASED, SALAFI-JIHADI THREAT

The Sunni-based, Salafi-jihadi threat, while substantially different in form, has not abated since September 11, 2001. One could argue that, while significant progress has been made in dismantling the al Qaeda organization, the overall situation is considerably worse for two reasons: the metastasis of al Qaeda from a highly centralized organization headquartered in Afghanistan into a growing, stateless, loosely coupled “franchise” with global reach; and the success of al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in inflicting American casualties (and thus, demonstrating US vulnerability), promulgating al Qaeda’s call to defensive jihad, recruiting and training fighters for operations in Iraq and elsewhere, and waging a well-crafted “media war” portraying the United States and its allies as new “crusaders” that threaten the very survival of Islam.<sup>12</sup>

In December 2001, Ayman al-Zawahiri characterized the current conflict as “a battle of ideologies, a struggle for survival, and a war with no truce.”<sup>13</sup> Ideology is central. Accordingly, the first section of this chapter provides an overview of the ideological roots of today’s Salafi-jihadi movement to provide valuable context for comprehending the movement’s goals and strategies for achieving them. The second section will examine how the very centralized al Qaeda organization has changed over the past five years. While a central core remains, the organization has spawned a number of independently operated “franchises” and inspired small cells to strike out on their own in furtherance of the cause. The chapter concludes with a detailed examination of the movement’s goals, strategy, and lines of operations, as well its capabilities (i.e., leadership; command, control, and communications; fundraising; recruitment, indoctrination, and training; and current operations) for realizing them. This discussion, however, should not be construed as suggesting that the Salafi-jihadi movement is monolithic. While constituent groups share many beliefs, there are important ideological divides within and among them. Since it is impractical to address all of these competing views, al Qaeda is used as the archetype Salafi-jihadi group and the work of ideologues and strategists associated with the broader movement are incorporated when relevant.

### IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS

Nearly all of the ideas espoused by al Qaeda and other violent jihadi groups today are nothing new; they are borrowed from the works of Islamic scholars writing at least as far back as the Middle Ages. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed history of more than a millennium of radical Islamic thought, offering a brief overview of a few seminal thinkers will pay handsome dividends in terms of understanding the thinking and behavior of modern

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<sup>12</sup> Al Qaeda in Iraq is also referred to currently as al Qaida in Mesopotamia. It was formerly named the al Qaida Jihad Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers, as well as Jama’at al-Tawhid wa’al-Jihad. In mid-2005, al Qaeda in Iraq joined an umbrella organization called the Mujahideen Shura Council, which comprises seven additional jihadi groups operating in Iraq: Victorious Army Group, the Army of al-Sunnah Wal Jama’a, Jama’a al-Murabiteen, Ansar al-Tawhid Brigades, Islamic Jihad Brigades, the Strangers Brigade, and the Horrors Brigade.

<sup>13</sup> Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*, Part VI.

jihadis.<sup>14</sup> The ideas motivating today's jihadis are derived, in large part, from the works of Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1794), and Sayyid Qutb (1903-1966). Among other important influences, which will not be addressed in detail here, are the 20<sup>th</sup> century revivalists:<sup>15</sup>

- Muhammad Rashid Rida, who was the first modern Islamic scholar to rediscover the works of Ibn Taymiyya and apply them to the modern day;
- Hassan al-Banna, who not only created the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, but also argued that the West posed both a physical and intellectual threat (“mental colonization”) to Islam that had to be combated internally through *da'wa* (revival through education, application of sharia law, social reformation, and missionary work) and externally through jihad; and
- Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, who called for an internal Islamic revival to resist foreign occupiers, sought the creation of a true Islamic state through the imposition of the sharia, and asserted that as “God’s representatives on earth,” Islamic rulers had plenary authority to regulate the public and private life of Muslims.

While the writings of these three men are often quoted by modern jihadis—including Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri—most of their ideas are either derivative of Ibn Taymiyya and Wahhab, or assimilated into the work of the more influential Qutb.

### **Ibn Taymiyya**

Ibn Taymiyya was a widely respected Islamic scholar who grew up in Damascus, Syria while Mongol armies were invading the Muslim heartland.<sup>16</sup> Having already conquered much of Central Asia, Mongols captured Baghdad, the seat of the Abbasid caliphate, in 1258, and after consolidating their control over Mesopotamia, advanced into Syria and Palestine. While Ibn Taymiyya was at the pinnacle of his career near the turn of the century, the Mameluks of Egypt, then protectors of Mecca and Medina in Arabia, were under mounting pressure. Many of his contemporaries asserted a defensive jihad was not justified since the Mongol king, Ghazan Khan, had already converted to Islam. Ibn Taymiyya argued that the Quran requires Muslims to follow and implement all of God’s commandments; none could be ignored or disobeyed in even the smallest way.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, since Mongol rulers failed to enforce the entire sharia code and

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<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see Mary R. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy—Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006). See also: Youssef Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Pinter, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> For an expanded discussion of 20<sup>th</sup> century revivalists, see: Habeck, pp. 27-39.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Taymiyya is recognized as a “Shaikh al-Islam,” the highest Sunni title for a cleric. For additional information on the life and writings of Ibn Taymiyya see: Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought from the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2001); Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam—Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 94-100; and Abdelwahab Meddeb, *The Malady of Islam* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2003), pp. 44-49.

<sup>17</sup> Shaykh al-Imam Ibn Taymiyya, *Public Duties in Islam – The Institution of the Hisba* (Leicester, UK: Islamic Foundation, 1982), pp. 22-23, and 117.

continued to use their native system of laws (*yasa*) to make some legal judgments, they were not Muslims at all, but infidels who should be fought and killed.<sup>18</sup> As he put it:

Any group of people that rebels against any single prescript of the clear and reliably transmitted prescripts of Islam has to be fought...even if members of this group publicly make a formal confession of the Islamic faith by pronouncing the shuhada [There is no god but the true God and Mohammed is His prophet].<sup>19</sup>

As will be discussed later, today's jihadis use this argument frequently to charge Muslim rulers who do not rule *exclusively* by the sharia with apostasy. Arguably the most influential Salafi-jihadi theologian living today, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, frequently cites Ibn Taymiyya when condemning democracy, denouncing Arab regimes for their apostasy, and providing ideological guidance for jihadis.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Osama bin Laden has stated in no uncertain terms that "the text of the Quran, the sunna, and the sayings of the nation's scholars all say that anyone who legislates human laws that are contrary to the laws of Allah is an infidel and is outside the faith."<sup>21</sup>

Unsurprisingly, given the times in which he lived, Ibn Taymiyya extolled the virtue of jihad. He called it the "best of all the voluntary (good actions) which man performs," even better than the *hajj* (one the five obligatory duties of every Muslim who can afford it). He equated jihad with love of God, writing that "Jihad involves absolute love for that which Allah has commanded and absolute hatred for that which He has forbidden."<sup>22</sup> Based on his interpretation of the Quran and Sunna, Ibn Taymiyya also significantly broadened the scope of jihad. Not only should every able-bodied Muslim fight against all heretics, apostates, hypocrites, sinners, and unbelievers until "all religion was for God alone," but also any Muslim who refused to participate in the jihad.<sup>23</sup> This reconsideration, which was revolutionary at the time, is used by al Qaeda and other jihadi groups today to justify attacks against Muslim "supporters" of apostate regimes, as well as against fellow Muslims judged to be heretical in some way (i.e., Shiites and Sufis) or those who fail to engage in militant jihad against the West. Salafi-jihadi ideologues, who elevate jihad to a virtual sixth pillar of Islam, frequently cite Ibn Taymiyya in their writings. His voice reverberates, for example, in Maqdisi's assertion that:

I believe and continuously pronounce that carrying out jihad against the enemies of Allah who substitute [their own laws for] His sharia and are overpowering the Umma today, is one of the most important

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<sup>18</sup> Habeck, pp. 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> As quoted in J.G. Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> William McCants et al, *Militant Ideology Atlas* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Usamah bin Muhammad bin Ladin, "Open message to King Fahd on the Occasion of the Last Ministerial Shuffle," see Harmony Database, Document AFGP-2002-003345.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Ibn Taymiyya on Public and Private Law in Islam* as translated by Omar A. Farrukh (Beirut, Lebanon: Khayats, 1966), p. 138; and Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Ubudiyyah—Being A True Slave of Allah* (London, Ta-Ha Publishers, 1999), pp. 112-113.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Ubudiyyah—Being A True Slave of Allah*, pp. 140-148; and Habeck, p. 21.

obligations...of the Muslims. In fact, in my opinion, it is more important than and [should be] given preference over the jihad against the Jews who occupy Palestine.<sup>24</sup>

### **Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab**

The writings of Ibn Taymiyya gathered dust for several hundred years before being uncovered by Wahhab in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After the humiliating defeat of the 140,000-man army under the command of Kara Mustafa during the Battle of Vienna in 1683, the Ottoman Empire entered a period of a decline relative to its European rivals. In 1699, under the Treaty of Karlowitz, the Ottomans ceded large territories in Eastern Europe to Austria, Poland, and the Republic of Venice. Wahhab's explanation for this decline was that the ummah had wandered off the true path of Islam. His remedy was to purify the faith, stripping away innovations (*bidah*) and idolatrous practices (*shirk*) that had accumulated since the first century after the *Hijra* (Mohammed's migration from Mecca to Medina in 622). In his effort to guide Muslims back to the original principles of Islam, he denounced Sufism and called for the destruction of religious images, tombs, and shrines. Echoing Ibn Taymiyya, Wahhab interpreted the doctrine of *tawhid*, the belief in the absolute unity of God, to mean that no human being could make laws or alter in any way the God-given *sharia*, for to do so was to set oneself up as a god in the place of the true divinity—the worst form of apostasy. Leaders who refused to implement the *sharia* without deviation, and misguided Muslims who persisted in idolatry and heresy, were “unbelievers” who should be fought and killed.<sup>25</sup>

Wahhab's heterodox ideology did not have a major influence of Islamic thought in his day. His vision of “true Islam,” however, did take root in pockets of the Arabian Peninsula. Most critically, he forged a pact with a rising chieftain in the Najd region, Muhammad Ibn Saud, who agreed to spread Wahhab's vision to lands that his tribe conquered. Over the next 140 years, Ibn Saud and his descendants gained control of the Peninsula and outlying areas, which were unified into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. With the discovery of oil in the Kingdom in 1938, the state was able to provide Wahhabi muftis and Imams the resources needed to fund madrassas to teach Wahhabist interpretations of Islam, as well as to proselytize abroad. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s, however, when Muslims migrated in large numbers to the Kingdom for employment in its burgeoning oil industry, were exposed to the Wahhabist ideas, and returned home that the movement gained a truly international character. Since then, Saudi Arabia has spent over \$80 billion promoting Wahhabism, including building and operating schools, charities, and mosques.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> As quoted in Steven Brooke, “The Preacher and the Jihadi,” in Hillel Fradkin et al, *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology—Volume 3* (Washington, DC: Hudson Institute, 2006), p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> Habeck, p. 23-24. For additional discussion on Wahhabism, see: Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Oneonta, NY: Islamic Publications International, 2002); Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 7-11; and Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> Zeyno Baran, Nixon Center, “Combating al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat,” Prepared Statement for House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, February 16, 2005, p. 4.

Wahhab's interpretation of *tawhid* is often cited by al Qaeda as justification for attacks on apostate regimes and Muslims who have failed to embrace "true" Islam. His condemnation of idolatry was the inspiration for the Taliban's destruction of the Bamyán Buddhas, as well as for Zarqawi's antipathy toward Shiites, who, in his view, give far too much veneration and supplication to Ali (and his descendants) and Shi'a clergy.

### Sayyid Qutb

Qutb, a revivalist and early member of the Muslim Brotherhood, was a contemporary of Al-Banna and Mawdudi. While in prison in Egypt between 1954 and 1964, Qutb wrote his multi-volume masterwork on the Quran, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, which was subsequently abridged and widely disseminated as *Milestones Along the Way*. With *Milestones*, Qutb provided the ideological and theological foundation of the modern jihadist movement.<sup>27</sup>

Most of his ideas, however, were repackaged versions of those put forth by Ibn Taymiyyah and Wahhab. Like his predecessors, he argued that a state was not Islamic unless it fully and exclusively implemented sharia law; and that Muslims who did not strictly follow the sharia were unbelievers, and thus, subject to attack. In his view, any state that was not ruled by the sharia, regardless of whether a majority of its people viewed themselves as Muslims, was part of the house of war (*dar al-harb*); and thus, neither their lives nor property were protected.<sup>28</sup> He asserted that Muslims had to reject democracy not only as a false idea, but as a false religion. Building upon al-Banna, Qutb held that Muslims had an obligation to engage in a continuous jihad—both armed and intellectual—to eliminate the worship of anyone or anything other than God. Violence, in his view, was not only justified, but demanded against everyone—unbelievers, apostate rulers, and Muslims who had fallen into a state of "ignorance"<sup>29</sup>—who rejected his vision of "true" Islam.<sup>30</sup> The latter was adopted as the core "theology" of al Qaeda. In *Knights under the Prophet's Banner*, for example, al-Zawahiri borrows directly from Qutb, declaring that the "battle between Islam and its enemies is primarily an ideological one over the issue of unification [*tawhid*]. It is also a battle over to whom authority and power should belong—to God's course and the shari'ah, to man-made laws and material principles, or to those who claim to be intermediaries between the Creator and mankind."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Habeck, pp. 35-39.

<sup>28</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Vol. 4 (Markfield/Leicester, England: The Islamic Foundation, 2001), pp. 81-82, 88; and Habeck, pp. 36-37, 166.

<sup>29</sup> A term used to refer to the pre-Mohammed period.

<sup>30</sup> Habeck, pp. 36-37.

<sup>31</sup> Zawahiri, *Knights under the Prophet's Banner*, Part III.

## **KEY ACTORS IN THE SALAFI-JIHADI “MOVEMENT”**

The ideas espoused by Ibn Taymiyya, Wahhab, Qutb, and others have inspired a new generation of violent jihadists. Currently, the Salafi-Jihadi “movement” among Sunni Muslims can be disaggregated into three types of groups:

- Surviving core elements of al Qaeda that offer inspiration and ideological guidance for the militant jihadi movement, and may retain limited capabilities for global coordination and execution of high-profile attacks;
- Independently operated “franchises,” several with sworn allegiances to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, that conduct jihad operations mostly at the country and sub-regional level, but whose resources could potentially be tapped for global operations; and
- Small cells and individuals with weak or no links to al Qaeda inspired by its call to defensive jihad.

Together, these three groups constitute what is often referred to as the Al Qaeda Associated Movement (AQAM). The goals, grand strategy, lines of operation, capabilities, and vulnerabilities of AQAM will be summarized later in this assessment.

### **The Al Qaeda Core**

Several senior level al Qaeda leaders remain at large—most notably: Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Saif al-Adel, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, and Suleiman Abu Ghaith. Aside from Saif Al Adel and Suleiman Abu Ghaith who are believed to have found sanctuary in Iran, there is a good chance the surviving core is hiding out in urban areas, especially ones in Pakistan, based on the location of other senior al Qaeda leaders when they were arrested or killed over the past four-plus years. As will be discussed in more detail later, while these high-ranking individuals are on the run and under-pressure, they retain a limited ability to monitor and coordinate the activities of al Qaeda’s global franchises. Although Saif al-Adel and other senior al Qaeda leaders are supposedly under arrest by the Iranian government, according to some reports, they have considerable freedom of movement and access to communications. Based on communications intelligence and other sources, it is believed that Saif al-Adel planned and organized the bombings of three housing compounds in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on May 12, 2003, as well as several attacks in Europe, while in Iran.<sup>32</sup> In 2005, he posted a lengthy dispatch on operations in Iraq and Iran on a jihadist website that detailed how he was able to meet repeatedly with Zarqawi and his lieutenants.<sup>33</sup> Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, in addition to trying to maintain

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<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Katzman, *Al Qaeda: Profile and Threat Assessment*, CRS Report for Congress, RL33038, p. 6; J. Cofer Black, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, US Department of State, Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Hearing on “Al Qaeda: The Threat to the United States and its Allies,” April 1, 2004, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> See Peter Finn, “Al Qaeda Deputies Harbored by Iran,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2002, p. 1; Aamir Latif, “Al Qaeda Said to Have Migrated to Iran,” *Washington Times*, July 6, 2003, p.1; Robin Wright, “U.S. Ends Talks with Iran over Al Qaeda Links,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 2003, p. 1; Barbara Slavin, “Iran Might Swap Terrorists for Help From U.S.,” *USA Today*, August 4, 2003, p. 7; John Mintz, “Saudi Says Iran Drags Feet Returning Al Qaeda

some measure of strategic oversight over high-profile operations underway in Iraq and Afghanistan, have continued to provide ideological inspiration to the jihadist movement, primarily through more than a dozen audio- and video-recordings. Their statements have been played and replayed repeatedly on *Al-Jazeera* and other channels, and have been posted and distributed widely on the Internet for easy, global access.

Reinforcing this surviving central core, several former lower level members have risen quickly through the ranks to replace commanders that have been captured or killed. In addition, many of the mujahideen recruited, trained, and indoctrinated by al Qaeda in Afghanistan between 1995 and 2001 remain committed to the organization. Although estimates vary widely, less than 1,000 of these dedicated al Qaeda fighters probably remain operational. They are, however, believed to have a presence in more than 60 countries around the world.<sup>34</sup>

Both Bin Laden and Zawahiri have repeatedly threatened new, large-scale attacks against the West, and the United States in particular. Whether or not the Al Qaeda core still has the independent capability to plan, organize, fund, and execute a large-scale attack within the US homeland is very much an open question. While it could sub-contract out an attack to one of its “franchises,” only a few of them have anything close to the capabilities required to carry out an attack approaching the sophistication of September 11<sup>th</sup>. The National Counterterrorism Center reported in its annual report for 2005, not a single attack worldwide “can be definitively determined to have been directed by the Al Qaeda central leadership.”<sup>35</sup>

The plot to blow up commercial airliners while in flight from Great Britain to United States, which was disrupted by British authorities on August 9, 2006, however, may be an ominous sign of al Qaeda central’s resurgence. In what was essentially a replay of the failed 1995 Bojinka plot to down aircraft over the Pacific Ocean,<sup>36</sup> the plan was to smuggle liquid-explosive devices aboard as many as ten US-bound flights in drink bottles, contact lens solution bottles, or other containers in carry-on luggage. The explosive solutions would be detonated, using either a heat source or an electrical charge, as simultaneously as possible while the aircraft were over the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>37</sup> Had it been successful, more than 2,500 people might have perished—rivaling

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Leaders,” *Washington Post*, August 12, 2003, p. 2; and Josh Meyer, “Some U.S. Officials Fear Iran is Helping Al Qaeda,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example: James Phillips, “The Evolving Al Qaeda Threat,” Testimony before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities, February 16, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> National Counterterrorism Center, *Reports on Incidents of Terrorism—2005*, April 11, 2006, p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> The Bojinka Plot was devised in 1995 by Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and his uncle, Khalid Sheik Muhammad. The plot was nearly identical except that the airliners were to be downed while flying over the Pacific Ocean. The plot was aborted, however, after a fire erupted in the Yousef’s Manila apartment while he was attempting to prepare the bombs.

<sup>37</sup> According to a Joint Homeland Special Assessment, drafted by the FBI and Department of Homeland Security, entitled “Possible Terrorist Use of Liquid Explosive Materials in Future Attacks,” the London bombers intended to use a hydrogen-peroxide based explosive—either triacetone triperoxide (TATP) or hexamethylene triperoxide diamine (HMTD) in the attack. Both of these chemicals, however, are extremely sensitive to heat, shock, and friction—making them very unstable, and thus, difficult to use operationally. To avoid this problem, several sources have suggested that the terrorists planned to carry precursors aboard targeted aircraft and produce the explosive in-flight, presumably in the cabin lavatory. This process, however, would require an ice-bath to control temperature, demand careful acid titration and laborious stirring, and would release noxious, easily detected fumes. It would take

the attack on September 11<sup>th</sup>. What is especially disturbing about the plot are the apparent links both to al Qaeda franchises and its senior leadership. The British plotters had ties to al Qaeda linked terrorist operatives in Pakistan and Germany. Pakistan quickly rounded up ten suspects, including two British citizens of Pakistani descent, believed to be involved in the plot. One of those Britons, Rashid Rauf, who is the brother of one of the 24 plotters (Tayib Rauf) arrested in the United Kingdom, trained in al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan in the late 1990s and was affiliated at the time with Islamic terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM).<sup>38</sup> Rashid Rauf later aligned himself with al Qaeda. During the planning phase of the plot, which appears to have commenced as early as 2003, he met with Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, the leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba (renamed Jamaat ud-Dawa), which also has ties to al Qaeda. According to Pakistani officials, Rashid Rauf had an "Afghanistan-based Al Qaeda connection," possibly Matiur Rehman or Ayman al Zawahiri.<sup>39</sup> Rauf was also related by marriage to another veteran terrorist, Maulana Masood Azhar, who reportedly played a role in the attack on US troops in Somalia in 1993 and the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.<sup>40</sup> At least two plotters arrested in the United Kingdom traveled to Pakistan in the weeks prior to their arrest and may have received explosives training.<sup>41</sup> In addition to the Pakistan connections, at least one of the men arrested in the United Kingdom had contact with the wife of Said Bahaji in Germany, who is alleged to have been the link between the Hamburg al Qaeda cell that organized the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and Osama bin Laden.<sup>42</sup> Consistent with al Qaeda modus operandi, several of the suspects recorded martyrdom videotapes as part of their preparations for the attack.

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several hours, moreover, to combine the precursors and dry the explosive precipitate. Given those inherent difficulties, carrying the explosive itself onboard, possibly slightly dampened with water or acetone for enhanced stability, would have offered better odds of success. While prone to accidental detonation, terrorists have used TATP successfully in the past as a main explosive charge: a mixture of TATP and ammonium nitrates was used by suicide bombers in Casablanca in May 2003, four of the suicide bombers in the London subway attack in July 2005 reportedly used peroxide-based explosives, and Palestinian suicide bombers have used TATP for years in carrying out attacks against Israel. See Brian Bennett and Douglas Waller, "Thwarting the Airline Plot: Inside the Investigation," *Time* (on-line), August 10, 2006; and "Details Emerge in British Terror Case," *New York Times*, August 28, 2006.

<sup>38</sup> JEM, founded by Masood Azhar, is focused primarily on contesting Indian rule of Kashmir. It has openly declared war against the United States. JEM is reported to be involved in or responsible for numerous suicide car bombings in Kashmir, the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament, two assassination attempts against Musharraf in December 2003, and the abduction and murder of US journalist, Daniel Pearl.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Watson and Mubashir Zaidi, "7 British Terror Suspects Also Pakistani Citizens," *Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 2006, p. 1; Munir Ahmad, "Al Qaeda's No. 2 Linked to London Terrorism Plot," *Miami Herald*, August 18, 2006; Alyssa Ayres, "Regional Terror Goes Global," *Wall Street Journal*, August 18, 2006; Dan Murphy, "A New Generation of Jihad Seekers," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 18, 2006, p.1; Paul Watson and Mubashir Zaidi, "British Case Renews Focus on Pakistan," *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 2006; Bryan Bender and Susan Milligan, "Terror Inquiry Expands Globally," *Boston Globe*, August 13, 2006, p. 1; and Daniel McGrory, Zahid Hussain, and Karen McVeigh, "Top Al Qaeda Trainer 'Taught Suspects to Use Explosive'," *London Times*, August 12, 2006.

<sup>40</sup> Watson and Zaidi, "7 British Terror Suspects Also Pakistani Citizens," p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Alan Cowell, Dexter Filkins, and Mark Mazzetti, "Suspect Held in Pakistan Is Said to Have Ties to Al Qaeda," *New York Times*, August 12, 2006, p. 1; and McGrory, Hussain, and McVeigh, "Top Al Qaeda Trainer 'Taught Suspects to Use Explosive'."

<sup>42</sup> Bender and Milligan, "Terror Inquiry Expands Globally," p. 1.

In short, while al Qaeda's operational capabilities are much reduced relative to 2001, its global ideological influence has spread geographically and intensified. As the US State Department assesses in its 2004 report on global terrorism:

...the core of al-Qa'ida has suffered damage to its leadership, organization, and capabilities...At the same time, however, al-Qa'ida has spread its anti-US, anti-Western ideology to other groups and geographic areas. It is therefore no longer only al-Qa'ida itself but increasingly groups affiliated with al-Qa'ida, or independent ones adhering to al-Qa'ida's ideology, that present the greatest threat of terrorist attacks against US and allied interests globally.<sup>43</sup>

It is to those affiliated groups or "franchises" motivated by the violent, Salafi-jihadi ideology that is aggressively promoted by al Qaeda that we now turn.<sup>44</sup>

### **Independently Operated "Franchises"**

As intended by its founders, al Qaeda, which literally translates as "the base," has spawned dozens of violent, jihadi groups across Europe, Africa, and Asia (see Figure 1 and Table I). While most of these groups are focused at the sub-regional, national, or sub-national level, several have an international presence with operatives in Europe (particularly the United Kingdom), North America, Africa, Southwest Asia, and Central Asia—most notably: Al Jihad (AJ), the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM), and Takfir wa Jijra.

AJ, which was formerly headed by al-Zawahiri and officially merged with al Qaeda in 2001, is based in Egypt, but is believed to have members in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, and the United Kingdom. Since 1992, GIA has focused on overthrowing the Algerian government and creating an Islamic state. In response to a ruthless but effective crackdown by the government, GIA members went underground in Algeria and fled to Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and several countries in Europe. GSPC, a splinter group of GIA, is currently the largest and most effective terrorist group operating in Algeria. While its attacks are focused primarily against Algerian government and military targets, it publicly declared its support for al Qaeda in late 2003 and announced a formal alliance in September 2006. It is believed to have a presence not only in Algeria, but also in Mali, Mauritania, Canada, and Western Europe. Although LIFG is focused primarily on overthrowing the apostate regime of Muammar Qadhafi, a portion of the group has committed itself to al Qaeda's broader defensive jihad against the West. While LIFG almost certainly has clandestine presence in Libya, most of its members currently reside in countries in Europe, the Persian Gulf, Africa, and Asia. It is believed to have planned the May 2003 suicide bombings in Casablanca. A splinter group of Shabiba Islamiya, GICM seeks to establish an Islamic state in Morocco and actively supports the defensive jihad against the West championed by al Qaeda. Its members interact regularly with other terrorists groups operating in

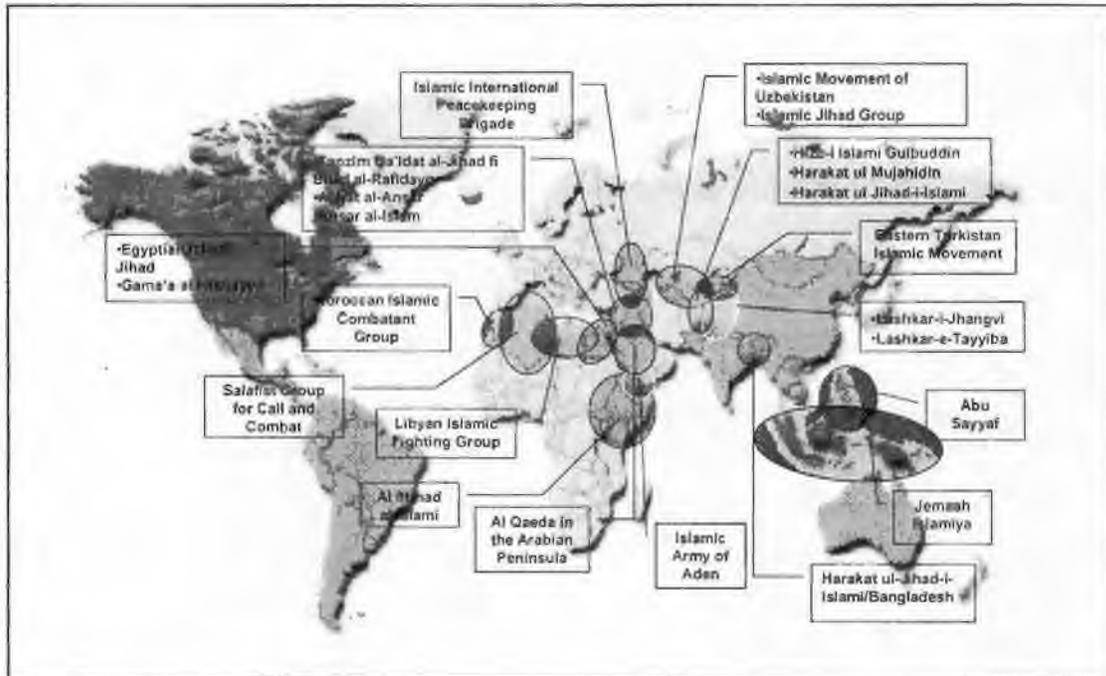
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<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2004* (Washington, DC: Department of State, April 2005), p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Grier, "The New Al Qaeda: Local Franchiser," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 11, 2005.

North Africa and it may have played a role in the 2003 bombings in Casablanca.<sup>45</sup> The membership of Takfir wa Jijra, which is more of an extremely fundamentalist sect than an organized terrorist group, includes Egyptians, Syrians, Palestinians, Lebanese and other Arabs. It operates throughout the Muslim world and has numerous cells in Europe. Members of the group were linked to the November 2004 murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh.

Figure 1: Known Terrorist Organizations Linked to al Qaeda



<sup>45</sup> For expanded descriptions of all of these groups, as well as other terrorist groups closely linked to al Qaeda, see: U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2004*, pp. 92-129.

**Table 1: Terrorist Groups Closely Linked to Al Qaeda**

<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Estimated Strength*</b>	<b>Primary Operating Area</b>
Al Jihad (AJ) / Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ)	> 300	Global presence
Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula	<100	Saudi Arabia
Al Qaeda in Iraq (formerly <i>Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad</i> )	Unknown	Iraq, Jordan
Ansar al-Islam / Ansar al-Sunna	500-1,000	Iraq
Armed Islamic Group (GIA)	<100	Algeria, Pan-Sahel, and Europe
Asbat al-Ansar	~300	Lebanon
Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM) / Jamiat ul-Ansar (JUA)	~300	Pakistan / India
Hizb-l-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG)	Several hundred	Afghanistan
Islamic Army of Aden	Unknown	Southern Yemen
Islamic Group (IG) / Gama'a al-Islamiyya (GAI)	<500	Southern Egypt
Islamic Movements of Uzbekistan	<500	Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan
Jemaah Islamiya (JI)	100s-1,000s	Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Southern Philippines
Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)	~300	Global presence
Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)	Unknown	Western Europe, Afghanistan, and Morocco
Salafia Jihadia	>700	Morocco
Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC)	~300	Algeria, pan-Sahel, Canada, and Western Europe
Takfir wa Hijra	Unknown	Algeria, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Netherlands, Spain, and United Kingdom

\* Based on US Department of State estimates (April 2005) and National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) Terrorism Knowledge Base.

In addition to the groups listed in Table 1, nearly a score of other terrorist groups have been identified with weak or suspected links to al Qaeda.<sup>46</sup> Looking across al Qaeda's global franchise, the following characteristics stand out:

- Nearly all of the groups are focused primarily on the "local" enemy, overthrowing "apostate" regimes in their native country;
- Most groups, thus far, appear to be providing only rhetorical support to al Qaeda's defensive jihad against the West;
- The vast majority of attacks carried out by these groups are relatively unsophisticated (i.e., suicide bombings, car bombs, ambushes, and assassinations);
- With the possible exception of GSPC, none of the groups are believed to have a significant presence in North America;
- Several groups have a growing presence in Western Europe, and in the United Kingdom in particular, which could provide them with a "springboard" for operations against the United States; and
- Barring the existence of large, unknown groups or wildly inaccurate estimates of the strength of known groups, the aggregate manpower of the global "franchise" is very likely less than 10,000 dedicated fighters and probably less than 5,000.

### **Individuals and Small Cells Inspired by Al Qaeda**

Over the past several years, a number of individuals, with distant or no links to al Qaeda and scant terrorist training, have responded to its call to defensive jihad against the West. Inspired by a common cause, these individuals coalesce for a limited campaign or even a single operation.<sup>47</sup> Some have loose associations with organized Islamic groups of various kinds while others do not. Although Osama bin Ladin, Zawahiri, and other al Qaeda leaders have praised these "mujahideen" for their initiative and dedication to the jihad, al Qaeda central does not have effective control over them.

While it is difficult to generalize, it appears that the majority of these "grass roots" terrorists have been excluded from mainstream society for ethnic, economic, and religious reasons. In some cases, such as in Europe, they have grown up in relatively impoverished, segregated urban enclaves, exacerbating their sense of alienation. One should be wary, however, about over-attributing their radicalization to socio-economic factors. The spread of effective propaganda on

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<sup>46</sup> Abu Haps al Masiri Brigades, Abu Nayaf al-Afgani, Al Sala Haljatayah, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Battalion of the Martyr Abdullah Azzam, Eastern Turkey Islamic Movement, Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM), Hizbul Mujahideen, Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade, Islamic Jihad Group, Islamic Movement for Change, Jaish al-Taifa al-Mansoura, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Lasker Jihad, Pattani United Liberation Organization, Riyadh us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade, Tawhid and Jihad, Tunisian Combatant Group, and al-Ittihaad al-Islami.

<sup>47</sup> Phillips testimony, p. 4.

the Internet, the creation and expansion of radical countercultures, and recruitment based on established social networks appear to be major contributing factors. Many of the “amateur” terrorists that have emerged to date have recently “rediscovered” their faith and have been radicalized by al Qaeda’s on-line propaganda, in formal and informal prayer groups, and by sermons delivered in radical mosques. As a group, they are motivated by a shared sense of enmity toward the United States and the West.<sup>48</sup> Without access to formal training, they have taken advantage of detailed “handbooks” on jihadi websites to gather information on how to plan and conduct terrorist attacks.

Despite their lack of training and resources, these small cells and committed individuals can have a major impact—as evidenced by both the March 2004 attack on the train system in Madrid, Spain, which killed 191 people and injured another 1,800; and the July 2005 bombing of the London mass-transit system, which killed 49 people and injured more than 700 others. In both cases, the individuals involved were inspired by al Qaeda, but their links to the central organization were indirect.

The Madrid attack, for example, was organized and executed by a small cell, comprised mainly of Moroccan immigrants, which was able to barter 35-40 kilograms of smuggled hashish and a stolen Toyota Corolla for about 210 kilograms of stolen dynamite. The dynamite was then packed into rucksacks, carried aboard and left on Madrid trains, and set off by home-made cell phone detonators.<sup>49</sup> It was initially believed that the group, led by Serhane bin Abdelmajid Fakhet, a Tunisian, had no links to al Qaeda. Subsequent investigations, however, revealed otherwise: Fakhet was a member of GICM and his brother-in-law was Mustapha el-Mimouni, the leader of GICM’s Madrid cell; two Syrian radicals, Moutaz and Mohammad Almallah Dabas, with established links to al Qaeda, played an important role in the indoctrination of the group’s members; and one member, Allekema Lamari, was a former member of GIA.<sup>50</sup> When police raided Fakhet’s residence on April 3, 2004, they found a written al Qaeda ultimatum to the Spanish government, a car packed with explosives, two backpack bombs, 10 kilograms of dynamite, and 200 detonators.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the four suicide bombers responsible for the July 2005 attacks in London were radicalized British nationals of Pakistani descent. They were not members of any organized terrorist group and took advantage of the Internet for instructions on procuring the bomb parts and assembling them. Two of the bombers, however, did travel to Lahore, Pakistan in November 2004 and met with members of Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT), who may have provided them with some training. It appears that they also met with al Qaeda operatives to

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<sup>48</sup> Hoffman, p. 5; and Javier Jordan and Robert Wesley, “The Madrid Attacks: Results of Investigations Two Years Later,” *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 4, Issue 5, March 9, 2006.

<sup>49</sup> Although 13 rucksacks were prepared, only 10 were successfully detonated.

<sup>50</sup> Several members of the group also had some sort of link to GICM. Interestingly, the socio-economic situation of most of the cell members was modest. Several had above-average livelihoods and were married with children. Serhane was a student at Madrid University having received a scholarship from the Spanish government to pursue a doctorate in economics, and was working as a real estate agent. There is some circumstantial evidence that the attack may have been directed by al Qaeda central through GICM. Jordan and Wesley, “The Madrid Attacks: Results of Investigations Two Years Later,” p. 1; and MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, “Serhan ben Abdelmajid Fakhet.”

<sup>51</sup> MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, “Serhan ben Abdelmajid Fakhet.”

receive explosives training and record farewell “martyrdom” videos.<sup>52</sup> The British government estimated that the total cost of the attack was less than \$15,000.<sup>53</sup>

The current composition of AQAM can be summarized as follows:

- The al Qaeda core survives and continues to operate at a low level—providing a source of inspiration and limited tactical support to franchises and small cells, as well as possible coordination for large-scale attacks (e.g., the August 2006 aircraft downing plot);
- Several established franchises have expanded over the past 2-3 years (e.g., al Qaeda in Iraq) and new ones are opening for business in a few areas (e.g., Africa and Central Asia); and
- Autonomous, home-grown cells inspired by al Qaeda’s violent jihadist ideology have emerged, most notably in Europe, and have demonstrated that a few committed individuals can inflict large numbers of casualties with no structured training and minimal resources.

The centralized, hierarchical al Qaeda organization that was built prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, however, no longer exists. As one well-respected terrorism expert explains: “The current al Qaeda thus exists more as an ideology than as an identifiable, unitary terrorist organization. It has become a vast enterprise—an international franchise with like-minded local representatives, loosely connected to a central ideological or motivational base, but advancing the remaining center’s goals at once simultaneously and independently of each other.”<sup>54</sup>

## **GOALS, STRATEGY, AND LINES OF OPERATION**

Salafi-jihadi groups are motivated by a similar set of core beliefs: Islam is the one true faith that will, in time, dominate the world; the Quran and *hadith* (statements and practice of Muhammad) contain all the guidance necessary for living a righteous life; there is no separation between religion and the rest of life; and Muslim rulers must govern by the *sharia*.<sup>55</sup> Derivative of these core beliefs, most groups share two overarching goals: expelling foreign military forces and influences from Muslim lands; and overthrowing apostate regimes that have misled the ummah and allowed Islamic society to retrograde back to the “period of ignorance” that preceded Muhammad. More extreme groups, of which al Qaeda is an archetype, believe that a violent

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Block, “Al Qaeda or Not? U.S., U.K Differ On Its Likely Role,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 12, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Glenn Simpson, Zahid Hussein, and Keith Johnson, “Officials Seek Links to Al Qaeda in Blasts,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2005, p. 3; Glenn Simpson, David Crawford, and Jay Solomon, “Al Qaeda’s Hand Seen in Attacks,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 2005, p. 3; and Cassell Bryan-Low and David Crawford, “Terrorist Profile Gains Disturbing Features,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Bruce Hoffman, “Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat,” Testimony before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, February, 16, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, p. 17.

jihad is required to revive and protect “true” Islam; seek to establish a new caliphate that encompasses all lands that have ever been under Islamic control; and to convert or conquer all unbelievers.

The Sunni-based, radical Islamic threat is far from monolithic, however. Significant differences exist across, and sometimes even within, groups with regard to strategic goals and how the struggle should be waged. As will be discussed later, these and other differences could and should be exploited by the United States to weaken and divide the enemy. While the differences between various Salafi-jihadi groups should not be minimized, neither should they be overly magnified. The following discussion of goals, strategy, and lines of operations will focus on the dominant jihadi voice and gravest Islamic terrorist threat facing the United States today: AQAM. While focusing on this threat certainly helps to narrow the discussion, AQAM does not speak for all groups in the broader Salafi-jihadi movement and AQAM itself does not speak with one voice. Owing to aggressive US-led manhunting operations, al Qaeda’s strategists have few opportunities to meet secretly behind closed doors to hammer out their differences. Instead, they are forced share their ideas by publishing in on-line Internet journals (e.g. *al-Ansar*, *al-Neda*, and *Mu’askar al Battar*), writing newspaper articles, recording videotapes and audiotapes, and, less frequently, writing letters to specific individuals. Scattered far and wide across the globe, they have struggled to make their case for how the movement should pursue its goals—oftentimes, this means critiquing the work of competing strategists. Much of this discourse is publicly available.<sup>56</sup> The discussion that follows draws primarily from the writings of Al Qaeda’s most influential strategists: Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, the late Abu-Hajer Abd-al-Aziz al-Muqrin, Abu Ubyad al-Qurashi, Abu-Ayman al-Hilali, Abd-al-Hadi, Sayf-al-Din-al-Ansari, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Bakr Naji, Abu Mus’ab al-Suri, and the late Abu Musab Al Zarqawi.

As will be explained, below, while there are many common strategic themes and approaches in this cacophony of voices, so too is there discord. What follows is a composite picture of the movement’s goals, strategy, and lines of operation.

### **The Evolution of AQAM Goals**

Immediately following its founding in 1989, the core goals of al Qaeda were the withdrawal of US military “occupation” forces from the “Land of the two Holy Places” in the wake of the first Gulf War and the imposition of sharia law, untainted by man-made laws, in Saudi Arabia.<sup>57</sup> By 1996, calls for myriad government reforms in Saudi Arabia evolved into a declaration of takfir against the Saudi regime. In Osama bin Laden’s “Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places,” he chronicled the abuses of the ruling regime and

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<sup>56</sup> FBIS has translated a large corpus of al Qaeda documents. Transcripts of selected captured documents have been released by the US government through the Combating Terrorism Center at the US Military Academy at West Point. See: “Compilation of Usama Bin Ladin Statements 1994-January 2004,” FBIS Report – GMP20040209000243, February 9, 2004; Combating Terrorism Center, *Harmony and Disharmony—Exploiting al’Qa’ida’s Organizational Vulnerabilities* (West Point, NY: US Military Academy, 2006); Christopher Blanchard, *Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology*, CRS Report for Congress, June 20, 2005.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, the letter of Shawwaal, May 1991; the Memorandum of Advice, July 1992; and a series of letters written by Osama bin Laden on behalf of “The Committee for Advice and Reform” to various Saudi Arabian government officials between April 1994 and May 1998 in Harmony Database, AFGP-2002-003345.

charged it with apostasy. He stated, for example, that “it is not a secret that to use man-made law instead of the Shari’a and to support the infidels against the Muslims is one of the ten ‘voiders’ that would strip a person from his Islamic status.”<sup>58</sup> At this time, al Qaeda also called for a defensive jihad against “the main enemy,” defined as “the armies of the American crusaders and their allies” defiling the holiest of Muslim lands and the “Zionist-Crusader alliance” that has “divided the Ummah into small and little countries and pushed it, for the last few decades, into a state of confusion.”<sup>59</sup> Joining with other jihadist groups in 1998 under the banner of “The World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders,” al Qaeda called not only for the liberation of the holy sites in Arabia, but also the withdrawal of infidel forces “out of all the lands of Islam.”<sup>60</sup> With the official merger of al Qaeda with Ayman al-Zawahiri’s Egyptian Islamic Jihad in 2001, the organization’s current goals solidified:

- Eviction of military forces and corrupting foreign influences from all Muslim lands, most especially Saudi Arabia;
- The overthrow of apostate regimes, meaning all those that do not govern solely by the sharia; and
- Creation of an Islamic “caliphate” ruling over all current and former Muslim lands, including Israel (see Figure 2); and, in time, the conquest or conversion of all unbelievers.

Al Qaeda’s constitutional charter summarizes its goal as “the victory of the mighty religion of Allah, the establishment of an Islamic Regime and the restoration of the Islamic caliphate, God willing.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Osama bin Laden, “Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places,” originally published in *Al Quds Al Arabi* (London, in Arabic), August 1996.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Other groups included Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Group, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan, and the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh. See Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, et al, “Fatwah Urging Jihad Against the Americans,” originally published in *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, February 23, 1998.

<sup>61</sup> DIA, translation of “Al-Qaida: Constitutional Charter, Rules, and Regulations,” Translation No. AFGT-2002-600175, August 2002, p. 2.

Figure 2 – United States of Islam (from Muttahid Jihad Council website)



In an audiotape released on January 30, 2005 on the al Qaeda affiliated website ([www.almijlah.net](http://www.almijlah.net)) and subsequently aired several times by *Al Jeezerah* television in various forms, Zawahiri attempted to repackage earlier al Qaeda's statements to make its vision of an Islamic caliphate more attractive to the Muslim masses globally. He also sought to define the al Qaeda "brand" more clearly, contrasting its core principles with those of other Salafist groups. He explained that all of al Qaeda's reform efforts were focused on realizing "three foundations," none of which was subject to compromise:<sup>62</sup>

- "The Rule of the Shariah," which ineluctably follows from belief in God;<sup>63</sup>
- "The Liberation of the Homelands," defined as the "the freedom of Muslim lands and their liberation from every aggressor, thief, and plunderer";<sup>64</sup> and

<sup>62</sup> "Al-Zawahiri Denounces US, Argues for Reign of Islamic Law and Caliphate, Jihad Against Crusaders and Jews," FBIS Report – GMP20050131000021, January 31, 2005; and "Al-Jazirah TV's Treatment of Al-Zawahiri's Statement; Comparison," FBIS Report GMP20050210000280, February 10, 2005.

<sup>63</sup> "Al-Jazirah TV's Treatment of Al-Zawahiri's Statement; Comparison," pp. 1-2. The central ideological motivation for al Qaeda is the Islamic principle of *tawhid*, which is belief in the absolute unity of God and adoption of Islam as an all-encompassing religious, political, social, and economic system. Reflecting this, a frequent refrain of Osama bin Laden is that "Islam is one unit that can not be divided" and Islam is "a way of life revealed by God for men to abide by all o f its aspects in all of their affairs." See FBIS Report FEA2004122700076, December 27, 2004.

<sup>64</sup> "Al-Jazirah TV's Treatment of Al-Zawahiri's Statement; Comparison," pp. 3-4.

- “The Liberation of the Human Being,” which is essentially the “freedom” to live under sharia law.<sup>65</sup>

The first bullet casts Al Qaeda’s extreme position on *tawhid* and its litmus-test for “Islamic” rule being governance based exclusively on a strict, literalist interpretation of the *sharia* as a necessary extension of belief in God. Creating a false dichotomy, Zawahiri contends that “either you believe in God and abide by His judgment, or you have no faith in God” and asserts that “the Islamic faith denies unequivocally discrimination between belief in the existence of God and acknowledgement of His right to rule and legislate.”<sup>66</sup> For al Qaeda, there is no middle ground; either a ruler governs exclusively by their inflexible interpretation of the God-given sharia or he is an apostate deserving death.

The “Liberation of the Homelands” slogan essentially recasts an offensive war to re-establish a caliphate spanning from Morocco to the Philippines into a defensive, liberation movement. Zawahiri believes that this liberation is a prerequisite to all reform, observing that “we should not imagine that we can carry out any reform so long as we are under the yoke of the US and Jewish occupation.” He goes on to explain that “it is not possible to hold any free elections, establish any independent government, or safeguard our dignity and sanctities while the Crusader forces desecrate our land, kill whomever they want, bombard whatever targets they want, detain and torture whomever they want, and divide the people...”<sup>67</sup>

Zawahiri asserts that the “liberation of the human being” demands that the Muslim nation “forcibly seize its right to chose the ruler, hold him accountable, criticize him, and depose him.” He then urges that the Muslim nation “seize its right to promote virtue and prohibit vice,” “resist all forms of aggression against the people’s sanctities, liberties, and rights,” and “resist oppression, tyranny, thievery, forgery, corruption, and hereditary rule.”<sup>68</sup> It is worth noting that Zawahiri refers to protecting “*the people’s* sanctities, liberties, and rights,” not those of individuals. Moreover, while paying lip service to the collective “rights” of the ummah, he creates a positive religious obligation for every Muslim to resist and overthrow regimes that are deemed insufficiently Islamic.

In an effort to make the al Qaeda “brand” appear more mainstream, Zawahiri is silent about some of the implications of al Qaeda’s ideological underpinnings that might alienate his audience; including, for example, that: Muslim “supporters” of apostate regimes are legitimate targets of jihad operations; self-identified Muslims who fail to abide by the *sharia* in all aspects of their lives, including those who fail to engage in a defensive jihad against the West, are infidels that should be attacked and killed; participation in the democratic process and support for freedom of speech and religion is tantamount to apostasy; and that all Shiites are infidels owing to their idolatry of Ali, his descendants, and Shia clerics.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

## Al Qaeda's Strategy

The centerpiece of al Qaeda's strategy for the "long war" is exploiting Muslims' sense of individual religious obligation (*fard ayn*) by declaring a defensive jihad (*jihad al-daf*) against the West and apostate regimes. It is hoped that by "moving, inciting, and mobilizing" the ummah to this call, the Islamic nation will eventually reach a revolutionary "ignition point," at which time the faithful will join forces globally to pursue al Qaeda's core goals.<sup>69</sup>

One of al Qaeda's central arguments has been that the presence of US and allied troops in Muslim lands (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia), especially America's supposed "occupation of the land of the two Holy Places," is sufficient cause for a defensive jihad in and of itself. Using the writings of al-Banna and Qutb for legitimacy, al Qaeda leaders assert that the cultural, political, and economic "invasion" of Muslim lands by the West imperils Islam and the ummah just as much, if not more than, a physical attack. Democracy, in their view, is a direct threat to "true" Islam because it gives sovereignty to the people and allows them to make their own laws rather than relying upon the God-given legal system of Islam, the *sharia*. Maqdisi argues that democracy is the preeminent threat to the *tawhid* of Allah. He asserts that since "democracy is a religion, but it is not Allah's religion," all faithful Muslims must "destroy those who follow democracy, and we must take their followers as enemies—hate them and wage a great jihad against them."<sup>70</sup> Since the United States is perceived as the principal exporter of this "false religion," it is singled out for attack.<sup>71</sup> Drawing from Ibn Taymiyya, Wahhab, and Qutb, al Qaeda leaders argue that the failure of current rulers of Muslim lands to govern solely by the *sharia* is apostasy; and thus, they too are infidels and legitimate targets of defensive jihad.<sup>72</sup> While, in theory, this charge would be applicable to every Muslim country in the world, the jihadis reserve their strongest vitriol for the governments of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> "Bin Ladin Interviewed on Jihad Against U.S.," *Al Quds Al Arabi (London)*, November 27, 1996. See also: "Usama Bin Laden's Message to Iraq," *Al-Jazirah Television*, February 11, 2003.

<sup>70</sup> Borrowing directly from Maqdisi, Zarqawi compared democracy to a rival "religion" and declared that adherence to democratic principles like freedom of speech and religion is apostasy punishable by death. Osama bin Laden has taken a similar, but less hard-line view, arguing the Muslims have a right to participate in the selection of their rulers, but only when Muslim lands are free from the influence of occupying powers, broadly defined, and candidates have committed to rule solely according to Islamic law. Abu Musab al-Suri espouses yet another view, arguing that al Qaeda should exploit democracy because it provides "a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere to spread out, reorganize their ranks, and acquire broader public bases." See Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Democracy: A Religion!*, translated by Abu Muhammad al-Maleki and Abu Sayf Muwahhid (At-Tibyan Publications, no date), pp. 5, 16; Steven Brooke, "The Preacher and the Jihadi," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Volume 3, 2006, p. 54; "Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi's Message on Democracy, Iraqi Elections, Shiites," FBIS Report GMP20050123000140, January 23, 2005; "Al-Zarqawi's Group Issues Post Election Statement, Claims Attacks Against US Embassy, Mosul Targets," FBIS Report FEA20050201001026, February 1, 2005; FBIS Report FEA20041227000762, December 27, 2004; and Abu Musab al-Suri, "Call for Worldwide Islamic Resistance," December 2004.

<sup>71</sup> Habeck, p. 162.

<sup>72</sup> Ayman Zawahiri, "Response to the Serious Accusations against Sheikh Albani," date unknown. Harmony Database, document AFGP-2002-601041.

<sup>73</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Letters from bin Laden: A Collection of Letters from Osama Bin Laden to various persons in Saudi Arabia," April 21, 1994 to May 7, 1998. Harmony Database, document AFGP-2002-003345.

Al Qaeda statements repeatedly assert that it is the religious obligation of every Muslim to join the struggle to expel American forces and corrupting foreign influences from Muslim lands. If individuals are too infirm to take up arms, they are expected to donate financially to the cause, provide safe haven to fighters, or offer other forms of support. Osama bin Laden's "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places" in 1996 restates these themes dozens of times—holding, for example, that "there is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the holy land."<sup>74</sup> Similarly, the 1998 *fatwa* written by Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and several others asserts that:

The ruling to kill the American and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim.... We call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. We also call on Muslim ulema, leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's U.S. troops and the devil's supporters allying with them...so that they may learn a lesson.<sup>75</sup>

Al-Muqrin has called this the "first axis of jihad" and has asserted that it demands complete victory over the infidels. This goal, he argues, "is not subject to discussion" and permits "no half-solutions" and "no bargaining."<sup>76</sup>

Al Qaeda leaders have emphasized, however, that the call for universal participation in the jihad does not mean that each Muslim should act on his or her own, but rather in unity with other Muslims. "A feeling of [individual responsibility]," al-Ansari has cautioned, "does not mean embodying jihad in scattered individual actions. The feeling needs to be deepened by striving for well-planned actions emanating from a position of collective activity."<sup>77</sup> Al Muqrin, Abu-Ayman al Hilali, and other strategists have noted that the form of this "collective activity," which is often referred to as the "second axis of jihad," is flexible and should be adapted to exploit local conditions and circumstances. Al Qaeda considers this operational and tactical flexibility to be a major strategic strength. Abu-Ubayd al-Qurashi has remarked, for example, that "jihadi military doctrine is constantly changing, thus denying America the chance to know it well or train its troops how to confront it decisively and permanently."<sup>78</sup>

It is important to highlight the fact that most al Qaeda strategists take a very long view with respect to the implementation of this strategy. They view the defensive jihad as a multi-

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<sup>74</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," *Al Quds Al Arabi* (London), August 1996.

<sup>75</sup> Sheikh Usamah Bin-Muhammad Bin-Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri, et al, "Fatwa Arguing Jihad against Americans," *Al Quds Al Arabi* (London), February 23, 1998.

<sup>76</sup> Michael Scheuer, "Al Qaeda's Insurgency Doctrine: Aiming for a 'Long War'," *Terrorism Focus* (Jamestown Foundation), February 28, 2006, Volume III, Issue 8, p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

generational struggle between “infidelity and Islam.” In *The Management of Barbarism*, Abu Bakr Naji stresses that while today’s mujahideen may not live long enough to see al Qaeda’s vision fulfilled, they should find solace in the knowledge that future generations of Muslims will benefit from their actions.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, al-Muqrin has advised that the mujahideen must be prepared to fight a “long war of attrition,” a struggle in which “the enemy of God will feel that it is impossible to finish off the mujahideen’s military power.”<sup>80</sup> He goes on to advise jihadi commanders to “know the enemy” they are fighting, to be “psychologically prepared for the worst,” and to be build an organization “so if one link fails, whatever its organizational size is, the organization [as a whole] does not suffer lethal blows.”<sup>81</sup>

While Osama bin Laden has referred several times to the jihadi movement eventually reaching an “ignition point,” he has never given any indication as to when that point will arrive. In contrast, both he and Zawahiri have frequently held up the Crusades between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries as analogous to the contemporary jihad.<sup>82</sup> In *Knights under the Prophet’s Banner*, for example, Zawahiri reminds his audience that “the Crusaders in Palestine and Syria left after two centuries of continued jihad” and calls for patience and resolve in the present struggle: “We must not despair of the repeated strikes and calamities. We must never lay down our arms no matter how much losses or sacrifice we endure. Let us start again after every strike, even if we have to begin from scratch.”<sup>83</sup>

In 2005, Fouad Hussein, a radical Jordanian journalist, wrote a book entitled, *Al Zarqawi: The Second Generation of Al Qaeda*, which purports to provide the movement’s long-term plan for war against the West. The book is reportedly based on Hussein’s extensive interviews with Maqdisi, Zarqawi, Abu-al-Muntasir Billar Muhammad, and Saif al-Adl, as well as primary source documents. Hussein presents a time-phased plan, which is summarized below in Table 2.<sup>84</sup> Whether Hussein’s plan represents anything more than his thoughts, inspired by the musings of Zarqawi, Maqdisi, Saif al-Adl, and others remains an open question. It has, however, been widely circulated among jihadi websites and appears to have some credence among movement strategists and ideologues.

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<sup>79</sup> The identity of Abu Bakr Naji is not known with any certainty. Some commentators describe him as a Tunisian, while others claim he is a Jordanian. What is known, however, is that he has high standing within the Salafi-jihadi movement and his works have been published on *Sawt al-Jihad*, which is al Qaeda’s authoritative Internet magazine.

<sup>80</sup> Scheuer, “Al Qaeda’s Insurgency Doctrine,” p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Al Qaeda strategists also frequently compare the current jihad with that waged in the 1980s against the Soviet Union, which they portray as a far more formidable threat than the United States today.

<sup>83</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights under the Prophet’s Banner* (2001), Part VI and Part XI.

<sup>84</sup> A serialized version of Hussein’s book has been translated by the Open Source Center. Table 2 draws mainly from Parts 14-15. “Fourteenth Part of Serialized Book on Al-Zarqawi and Al-Qa’ida Published,” from Al-Quds al-Arabi (in Arabic), May 28, 2005, p. 17; and Part 15, published on May 30, 2005, p. 17. Open Source Center Document Numbers: GMP20050601712014 and GMP20050601712013.

**Table 2—Fouad Hussein’s Timeline for Implementing al Qaeda’s Long-Term Strategy**

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Defining Characteristic or Goal</b>
2001-2003	“The Awakening”	America is lured into striking a Muslim country, Afghanistan and then Iraq, to “awaken” the “Islamic nation” from a “state of hibernation.” The truth that a “Zionist-Anglo-Saxon” coalition is at war with the Islamic nation is revealed.
2003-2007	“Eye Opening”	Al Qaeda is transformed from a “network into a mushrooming invincible and popular trend” that deprives the West of energy, denies “proxy regimes” oil revenue, prepares for “the stage of electronic jihad via the Internet,” establishes power in “vital areas of the Arab and Islamic world,” exploits Iraq as “a base to build an army of jihad of new blood,” and disseminates “shari’ah studies” to encourage charitable donations to the movement.
2007-2010	“Re-Awakening and Standing Upright”	The movement creates “a major transition in the process of change” in “Al-Sham,” meaning Syria, Lebanon, and northern Jordan. “By the end of this stage, Al Qa’ida will have completed its preparations to engage in direct clashes with the State of Israel, both in Palestine and on Israel’s border,” as well as within “some Islamic countries where Jews have powerful influences,” meaning Turkey. Al Qaeda will amass a “huge supply of human and financial resources,” including “large numbers of trained and educated young men who are no longer affected by the complex of defeats and catastrophes.”
2010-2013	“Recuperation and Possession of Power to Create Change”	This stage “will focus on overthrowing regimes by means of direct and fierce clashes with them” and “when the regimes gradually disintegrate, Al-Qa’ida and the Islamic jihad trend will grow persistently.” Economic warfare will be waged against the United States and the West more broadly—including burning “Arab oil” and conducting electronic attacks against critical infrastructures. Gold is restored as the “standard exchange value in international markets,” leading to the “collapse” of the US dollar.
2013-2016	“Declaration of the State”	“The Western fist in the Arab region will loosen, and Israel will not be able to carry out preemptive or precautionary strikes” and a “persistent increase in self-power will provide Al-Qa’ida and the Islamic jihadist trend with a golden opportunity to declare the establishment of an Islamic state.”
2016-2020	“All-Out Confrontation”	With the creation of the caliphate, there will be “an all-out confrontation between the forces of faith and the forces of global atheism” As a result, “falsehood will come to an end” and “the Islamic state will lead the human race once again to the shore of safety and the oasis of happiness.”
2020-	“Final Victory”	“The enormous potential of the Islamic state will terrify the enemy and prompt them to retreat rapidly. Israel will not be able to withstand the substantial Islamic power that will frighten the heart of the enemy.”

### **Lines of Operation**

To implement its long-term strategy, AQAM appears to be pursuing five major lines of operation that are, to varying degrees, mutually supporting:

- Attacking the “far enemy,” meaning the United States and its Western allies, directly, including carrying out high-profile, mass-casualty attacks within the US homeland;
- Exhausting the United States and its allies through protracted guerrilla warfare and carrying out low-to-medium level “vexation operations” globally;
- Dividing the “Zionist-Crusader” alliance;

- Waging a modern “media war” to win over the hearts and minds of the Muslim masses; and
- Regaining an operational sanctuary by overthrowing apostate regimes in the Muslim world and creating enclaves of “barbarism” as a precursor to the establishment of a pan-Islamic caliphate.

While there is no single authoritative document that integrates all of these lines of operation into a coherent overarching strategy, they are discussed repeatedly—both individually and in various combinations—across a wide body of Salafi-jihadi literature. What follows, therefore, is a description of AQAM’s major lines of operation as they have organically evolved over the past five years.

### **Attacking the “Far Enemy” and Conducting Mass-Casualty Attacks against the US Homeland**

In the 1980’s and the first half of the 1990s, the operations of Sunni jihadists were directed overwhelmingly on individual states. The Afghan mujahideen sought to push out occupying Soviet military forces and then wrest political control away from Afghan Communists. Egyptian terrorists groups—including, most notably, the Islamic Group and Egyptian Islamic Jihad—concentrated on overthrowing the apostate regime of Hosni Mubarak. In Algeria, GIA fought, often savagely, to oust the secular government in Algiers, especially after the military government suspended legislative elections in 1992 to forestall the anticipated landslide victory of the Islamic Salvation Front. The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) was fixated on overthrowing the un-Islamic regime of Muammar Qadhafi. In the Philippines, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf focused their energies on creating an independent Islamic state in western Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago.

A consensus was reached among senior al Qaeda leaders in around 1992-1993 to shift the focus of the jihad from the “near enemy” to the “far enemy,” meaning the United States and its Western allies. This decision had immediate results on the ground—as evidenced by operations in Somalia and the bombing of the World Trade Center towers in 1993; major bombing attacks against US Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1998, the small-boat attack against the USS *Cole* in the port of Aden, Yemen in 2000; and, most painfully, the attacks of September 11, 2001. Testifying to Congress in February 2006, Director of National Intelligence John D. Negroponte cautioned that, “attacking the US homeland, US interests overseas, and US allies—in that order—are *al Qaeda’s top operational priorities*” and “the group will attempt high-impact attacks for as long as its central command structure is functioning and affiliated groups are capable of furthering its interests...”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Emphasis added. Negroponte testimony, February 2, 2006, p. 4.

It appears that there were at least four major arguments in favor of the shift from the near to the far enemy:<sup>86</sup>

- Dissuading the United States and other Western powers from supporting apostate regimes in the Muslim world;
- Prompting US retaliatory strikes against Muslim states to galvanize popular support for al Qaeda's call to defensive jihad and creating more grist for al Qaeda's propaganda mill more broadly;
- Establishing al Qaeda as the accepted "vanguard" of the jihadi movement and putting an end to internal rivalries; and
- Precipitating, in time, the collapse of the already strained US economy by hitting vital "nodes" and population centers.

In his masterwork, *Knights under the Prophet's Banner*, Zawahiri claims that Qutb's writings helped him to realize that "the internal enemy was not less dangerous than the external enemy was and that the internal enemy was a tool used by the external enemy and a screen behind which it hid to launch its war on Islam."<sup>87</sup> The external "Jewish-Crusade alliance," he argued, leverages its economic and military power to prop up corrupt, un-Islamic regimes that would otherwise fall of their own weight. In exchange for this support, their internal Muslim proxies subjugate the faithful while the new Crusaders plunder Muslim lands of their God-given natural resources. He assessed the situation as follows:

The Jewish-Crusade alliance, led by the United States, will not allow any Muslim force to reach power in any of the Islamic countries. It will mobilize all its power to hit it and remove it from power...Therefore, to adjust to this new reality we must prepare ourselves for a battle that is not confined to a single region, one that includes the apostate domestic enemy and the Jewish-Crusade external enemy....the Jewish-Crusade alliance will not give us time to defeat the domestic enemy then declare war against it thereafter....The Islamic movement and its jihad vanguards, and actually the entire Islamic nation, must involve the major criminals—the United States, Russia, and Israel—in the battle and do not let them run the battle between the jihad movement and our governments in safety. They must pay the price, and pay dearly for that matter...Therefore, we must move the battle to the enemy's grounds to burn the hands of those who ignite fire in our countries.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Several prominent Salafi-jihadi ideologues, including Maqdisi, were opposed to this shift. Maqdisi argues that the near enemy's "influence and all his evil and tribulation are greater and far more serious than the farther one" when it comes to undermining the tawhid of Allah. Steven Brooke, "The Preacher and the Jihadi," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Volume 3, 2006, pp. 56-57.

<sup>87</sup> Zawahiri, *Knights*, Part III.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, Part XI.

By making the far enemy “pay dearly,” it was hoped that the cost of continuing to provide support to apostate regimes would outweigh the material benefits; and thus, external powers would withdraw their assistance, leaving their proxies vulnerable and exposed.

Zawahiri also argued that by attacking US interests throughout the world, the United States would be more likely to strike Muslim lands directly, rather than relying upon Muslim proxies to do its bidding. With this “screen” of deception removed, Muslims would see the United States for what it was: the leader of a new Western Crusade against Islam. That realization would, in turn, convert the current battle into a clear-cut jihad against infidels. Continually baiting the United States into attacking Muslim lands would also yield tremendous public relations benefits. As he put it, based on his experiences in Egypt, “stepping up the jihad action to harm the US and Jewish interests creates a sense of resistance among the people, who consider the Jews and America a horrible symbol of arrogance and tyranny.”<sup>89</sup>

Building upon Zawahiri, Naji more strongly emphasizes the propaganda value of compelling the United States to strike Muslim lands directly. The primary intent of attacks on the US homeland and American interests around the world, he argues, is to “force America to abandon its war against Islam by proxy and force it to attack directly so that the noble ones among the masses and a few of the noble ones among the armies of apostasy will see that their fear of deposing the regimes because America is their protector is misplaced and that when they depose the regimes, they are capable of opposing America if it interferes.”<sup>90</sup> He contends that the physical destruction and loss of life, especially of women and children, caused by the Zionist-Crusader alliance will enrage the masses, not only against the United States, but also against apostate regimes that provide it support of any kind. To Naji, the deployment of large numbers of US troops on Muslim soil, as in Iraq, is to be welcomed because it infuriates the ummah, adds credibility to al Qaeda’s call to defensive jihad, and provides a low-cost opportunity to inflict casualties on American soldiers. Clashes with the US military, moreover, disabuse the ummah of the notion that America is invincible, elevate the status of the mujahideen, and provide an invaluable training and indoctrination crucible in which to forge a new generation of mujahideen.

Prior to September 11, 2001, the leadership role of Osama bin Laden and the al Qaeda organization more broadly in the jihad against the Zionist-Crusaders alliance was not yet firmly established. As can be seen in many vitriolic memorandums between al Qaeda central in Afghanistan and affiliated groups and cells abroad, the jihadi movement was rife with internal rivalries.<sup>91</sup> The merger between al Qaeda and Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which was more akin to a “friendly” takeover by Zawahiri, that had been agreed to earlier in the summer had not yet taken hold. Senior Islamic Jihad leaders in Egypt were in open rebellion against Zawahiri and the intended shift in focus away from Mubarak regime toward the “distant enemy.”<sup>92</sup> Part of the motivation for carrying out a high-profile attack against the “distant enemy” was to solidify al

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, part VI.

<sup>90</sup> Naji, *The Management of Barbarism*, p. 10.

<sup>91</sup> Alan Cullison, “Inside Al Qaeda’s Hard Drive,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 2004.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Qaeda's position as the "vanguard" of the jihadi movement, as well as to elevate the personal status of Osama bin Laden and his key lieutenants such as Zawahiri and Muhammad Atef.

Direct attacks against the United States are also integral to al Qaeda's narrative about how conditions are ripe for the downfall of the United States as a great power. Jihadi propaganda portrays the United States, and the West more broadly, on the brink of collapse due to internal moral decay and corruption, as well as the economic pain caused by successful jihadi operations, especially the attacks of September 11, 2001. The intended message to the mujahideen is that with a few more hard hits, preferably at low cost to the movement, America will tumble over the precipice just like the former Soviet Union did in the late 1980s. With respect to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack, Osama bin Laden commented that "al Qaeda spent \$500,000 on the event, while America...lost, according to the lowest estimate, \$500 billion....Meaning that every dollar of al Qaeda defeated a million dollars" of the American Treasury.<sup>93</sup> Based on his experience in Afghanistan and September 11<sup>th</sup>, he offered the following assessment:

America is definitely a great power, with an unbelievable military strength and a vibrant economy, but all of these have been built on a very weak and hollow foundation....Therefore, it is very easy to target the flimsy base and concentrate on their weak points, and even if we're able to target one-tenth of these weak points, we will be able [to] crush and destroy them...<sup>94</sup>

Reflecting this belief, writing three weeks after September 11<sup>th</sup>, Osama bin Laden exhorted the faithful to strike blows against the American economy to both weaken it directly and shake foreign confidence, causing "investors to refrain from investing in America or participating in American companies, thus accelerating the fall of the American economy..."<sup>95</sup> In a public address in December 2001, while on the run from US forces, Osama bin Laden boldly (and ironically) declared: "America is in retreat by the grace of God Almighty and economic attrition is continuing up to today. But it needs further blows. The young men need to seek out the nodes of the American economy and strike the enemy's nodes."<sup>96</sup>

There have been many reports that al Qaeda is planning to launch new attacks against the US homeland on a scale similar to that witnessed on September 11, 2001.<sup>97</sup> In an audiotape message broadcast by Al Jeezera on January 19, 2006, for example, Bin Laden explained to the American people that "the delay" in carrying out major attacks in the US homeland was "not due to failures to breach your security measures" and threatened that "operations are under preparation, and you

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<sup>93</sup> "Full Transcript" of Bin Laden's Message, posted on Al Jeezera, November 1, 2004.

<sup>94</sup> Translation of purported Bin Laden audiotape, posted on Islamist website, February 14, 2003. See also: George W. Bush, "President Discusses Global War on Terror," Capital Hilton Hotel, September 5, 2006.

<sup>95</sup> Cullison, "Inside Al Qaeda's Hard Drive."

<sup>96</sup> As quoted in Hoffman, Testimony to House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, February 16, 2006, p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> John D. Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence, "Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence," Statement before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, February 2, 2006, p. 3.

will see them on your own ground once they are finished..."<sup>98</sup> Fortunately, thus far, Bin Laden's threat has not materialized. Assessments vary widely regarding whether surviving elements of al Qaeda central and its affiliated "franchises" have the capability to plan, organize, and conduct a sophisticated, mass-casualty attack in the US homeland. That being said, many senior-level AQAM leaders have a strong personal interest, including avenging the death of family members and close friends, in retaliating against the United States for its actions in the war on terrorism to date. They have publicly committed the movement to conducting attacks against the US homeland and, to vary degrees, have put their personal reputations on the line. One must be concerned, therefore, that the adage, "when there's the will, there's a way," may be all too relevant to the current situation.

Speculation on what that "way" might be has filled countless newspaper and magazine pages over the past five years. The theory that causes the most anxiety is the acquisition and use of chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons against American population centers. What makes this threat especially alarming is the fact that it is discussed extensively in internal al Qaeda documents.<sup>99</sup> In a December 1998 interview with *Time* magazine, bin Laden declared that the acquisition of WMD was a "religious duty." Numerous internal memoranda and letters reveal a determination to acquire nuclear weapons, in particular.<sup>100</sup> Reflecting the priority given to this task, prior to 2001, al Qaeda's military committee in fact had a standing "nuclear weapons" section.<sup>101</sup>

Intelligence collected since 2001 is not encouraging. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, "Documents recovered from Al Qaeda facilities in Afghanistan show that bin Laden was pursuing a sophisticated biological weapons research program."<sup>102</sup> Al Qaeda was apparently trying to develop several different biological and chemical agents for attacking people, livestock, and crops.<sup>103</sup> Two agent production centers in Afghanistan, which were preparing to manufacture botulinum and salmonella toxins, were found and destroyed by Coalition forces in 2001. Since then, traces of ricin, an extremely lethal biological toxin, have been discovered along with

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<sup>98</sup> "Text: Bin-Laden Tape;" as translated by BBC News. Available on-line at: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle\\_east/4628932.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/4628932.stm).

<sup>99</sup> Interestingly, it appears that al Qaeda did not initially have any plans to develop WMD, but was attracted to the option because of Western press coverage in the wake of its high-profile attacks in the late 1990s. In a letter to Muhammad Atef on April 15, 1999, Zawahiri states that "we only became aware of them [WMD] when the enemy drew our attention to them by repeatedly expressing concerns that they can be produced simply with easily available materials..." As quoted in Cullison, "Inside Al Qaeda's Hard Drive."

<sup>100</sup> In a 1994 letter from Hassan al-Tajiki to Al Qaeda's "Africa Corps," for example, the author refers to nuclear weapons more than a dozen times. Harmony Database, document AFGP-2002-600053 (letter three).

<sup>101</sup> See Harmony database, documents AFGP-2002-000078 and AFGP-2002-600053.

<sup>102</sup> As quoted in Michael Gordon, "U.S. Says it Found Al Qaeda Lab Being Built to Produce Anthrax," *New York Times*, March 23, 2002, p. 1. See also Judith Miller, "Lab Suggests Qaeda Planned to Build Arms, Officials Say," *New York Times*, September 12, 2002; and Judith Miller, "Qaeda Videos Seems to Show Chemical Tests," *New York Times*, August 19, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> Judith Miller, "Lab Suggests Qaeda Planned to Build Arms, Officials Say," *New York Times*, September 12, 2002; Michael Gordon, "U.S. Says it Found Al Qaeda Lab Being Built to Produce Anthrax," *New York Times*, March 23, 2002, p. 1; Jonathan Weisman, "Possible Anthrax Lab Unearthed," *USA Today*, March 26, 2002, p. 10; and "Al Qaeda Bioterror Study Went Further than Thought," *USA Today*, January 8, 2003, p. 6.

related production equipment during raids on al Qaeda-affiliated cells in Britain, France, Spain, Russia, Georgia, and Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq.<sup>104</sup> In an undated letter that was written shortly after the attacks on September 11, 2001, an unknown al Qaeda operative, Abu Abdullah Al-Kuwaiti, makes the following threat to the US government:

If the American people are ready to die as we are ready to die, then our combat groups along with our military, nuclear, and biological equipment will kill hundreds of thousands of people we don't wish to fight.... We warn you that our war against you has not ended, but its effects will increase. Isn't it time to end American arrogance and begin listening to your people before you experience more devastating disasters?<sup>105</sup>

In June 2002, al Qaeda spokesman, Suleiman Abu Gheith, declared in an online article, "Why We Fight America," that "we have the right to kill 4 million Americans" and "it is our right to with chemical and biological weapons, so as to afflict them with the fatal maladies that have afflicted the Muslims because of [American] chemical and biological weapons."<sup>106</sup> Raising the spectre of a WMD attack against the US homeland yet again, in May 2003, Osama bin Laden asked for and received a *fatwa* from Shaykh Nasir bin Hamid al-Fahd entitled, "A Treatise on the Legal Status of Using Weapons of Mass Destruction Against Infidels," which condones their use as part of a defensive jihad. In February 2006, Director of National Intelligence Negroponte testified that al Qaeda "remains interested in acquiring chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials or weapons to attack the US homeland, US troops, and US interests worldwide."<sup>107</sup>

### **Exhausting the United States with Guerrilla Warfare and Global "Vexation Operations"**

Al Qaeda leaders frequently assert that a critical element of their strategy is to wear the new Zionist-Crusaders down over time through low-to-medium scale attacks conducted by small, mobile, elusive mujahideen units. Al Qaeda strategist al-Muqrin refers to this as the "1,000 wound policy."<sup>108</sup> In a videotape broadcast on October 29, 2004, Osama bin Laden explicitly endorsed this line of operation, asserting that "we are continuing this policy in bleeding

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<sup>105</sup> Harmony database, "Letter of Threat to Americans," written by Abu Abdullah Al-Kuwaiti, undated, document number AFGP-2002-001120.

<sup>106</sup> Suleiman Abu Gheith, "Why We Fight America," online article published on the website of the Center for Islamic Research and Studies ([www.alneda.com](http://www.alneda.com)), June 12, 2002. Subsequently translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute ([www.memri.org](http://www.memri.org)).

<sup>107</sup> Negroponte testimony, p. 4.

<sup>108</sup> Scheuer, "Al Qaeda's Insurgency Doctrine," p. 5.

American to the point of bankruptcy.”<sup>109</sup> There are, in essence, two elements to this policy: engaging US and allied military forces, where and when possible, in protracted guerrilla warfare (e.g., Iraq and Afghanistan); and conducting attacks globally to force the “Zionist-Crusader alliance” to spread out its forces and expend tremendous energy and resources to protect soft, but highly valued targets.

The value of guerrilla warfare, especially in urban areas, for imposing high costs—both in terms of casualties and financial resources—on a militarily superior adversary at a minimal cost to the mujahideen was recognized by al Qaeda long before the current war in Iraq. Writing in 1994, for example, al Qaeda strategist Hassan al-Tajiki observed that:

In Mogadishu and Beirut, urban deterrence operations caused the American forces to flee in a shameful and humiliating manner. Doesn't this demonstrate the importance of this type of warfare and the need to develop our warfare capabilities in terms of personnel, training syllabi, equipment being used, its level of technological advancement, development of security syllabi, development of security procedures, and training of competent elements for the security field.<sup>110</sup>

When Osama Bin Laden made his war against the United States public with his “Declaration of Holy War on the Americans Occupying the Country of the Two Sacred Places,” in August 1996, he also stressed the importance of guerrilla warfare, remarking:

...it must be obvious to you that, due to the imbalance of power between our armed forces and the enemy forces, a suitable means of fighting must be adopted i.e., using fast moving light forces that work under complete secrecy. In other words to initiate a guerrilla warfare, where the sons of the nation, and not the military forces, take part in it.<sup>111</sup>

While al Qaeda did not plan to conduct guerrilla operations in Iraq, it took full advantage of the opportunity that presented itself. With war looming on the horizon in February 2003, Saif al-Adel, a former Egyptian special forces officer and key operational planner for al Qaeda, wrote two installments in a series of on-line articles entitled, “In the Shadow of the Lances,” in which he gave advice to Iraqi and foreign jihadis on how guerrilla warfare tactics could be used against American troops. “Turn the mujahedin military forces into small units with good administrative capabilities,” he suggested, since this “will spare us big losses.” He cautioned that “large military units pose management problems” and “occupy large areas which are difficult to conceal from air reconnaissance and attack.”<sup>112</sup>

Although some of Zarqawi's tactics and statements have undermined al Qaeda's broader “media war” and have exasperated al-Zawahiri, in particular, jihadi guerrilla operations in Iraq have, on

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<sup>109</sup> Al Jazeera.net. “News: Arab World—Full Text of bin Laden's speech,” November 1, 2004.

<sup>110</sup> Harmony database, document AFGP-2002-600053 (letter three), Hassan, “The Five Letters to the African Corps,” May 24, 1994.

<sup>111</sup> First published in *Al Quds Al Arabi*, a London-based newspaper, in August 1996. Available on line: [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa\\_1996.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html)

<sup>112</sup> As quote in Hoffman testimony, p. 10. See also Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris*, pp. 60-61.

balance, been spectacularly successful from al Qaeda's point of view. They have clearly demonstrated that the United States is vulnerable and that the mujahideen have the strength to stand up to the new "superpower" Crusader. As will be discussed later, these are important themes in al Qaeda's "media war" against the West. Moreover, while it is difficult to say precisely how many American casualties were inflicted by Zarqawi's Al Qaeda in Iraq organization or how much of the ever-mounting cost of the war should be ascribed to them, they clearly have exacted a heavy toll in American blood and treasure. Anecdotally at least, the publicity gained from jihadi operations in Iraq have been a boon for recruitment and fundraising.

Al Qaeda strategists strongly believe that ongoing guerrilla operations against Crusader forces in Iraq and Afghanistan should be complemented by periodic small-to-medium scale attacks in multiple countries around the globe. The intent of this second element of al Qaeda's "exhaustion" policy is to force the US military to spread itself thin and expose exploitable vulnerabilities. This tactic is explicitly endorsed by Abu Bakr Naji who urges the mujahideen to "diversify and widen vexation strikes against the Crusader-Zionist enemy in every place in the Islamic world, and even outside of it if possible, so as to disperse the efforts of the alliance of the enemy and thus drain it to the greatest extent possible."<sup>113</sup> One of al Qaeda's other leading strategists, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, put it this way: "neither the United States nor ten armies of its like will be able to fight in hundreds of Fallujahs throughout the Arab and Islamic world."<sup>114</sup> Putting this cost-imposing strategy in the context of al Qaeda's larger "bleed-to-bankruptcy" plan, Osama bin Laden explained:

All that we have to do is send two mujahideen to the furthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written al Qaeda, in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses without achieving anything of note...this is in addition to our having experience in using guerrilla warfare and the war of attrition to fight tyrannical superpowers, as we, alongside the mujahideen, bled Russia for 10 years, until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat.<sup>115</sup>

To gain the maximum "draining effect" from low-to-medium scale attacks, Naji and others call for striking soft, but highly valued targets such as tourist sites, banks, and oil and gas infrastructure. He recommends this approach not so much because of the high intrinsic value of these targets, although that is a plus, but because the enemy will feel compelled to spend enormous amounts of time and energy in a futile effort to defend similar targets elsewhere from follow-on attacks. In *The Management of Barbarism*, he states:

If a tourist resort that the Crusaders patronize in Indonesia is hit, all of the tourist resorts in all of the states of the world will have to be secured by the work of additional forces, which are double the ordinary amount, and a huge increase in spending. If a usurious bank belonging to the

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<sup>113</sup> Naji, *Management of Barbarism*, p. 19.

<sup>114</sup> Abu Mus'ab al-Suri (Mustafa Setmariam Nasar), "A Statement by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri in Response to the Announcement by the U.S. State Department," in *Majallat risalat al-mujahidin*, No. 3, p. 9.

<sup>115</sup> Osama bin Laden, statement aired on al-Jazeera, November 1, 2004. See Chris Heffelfinger, "Al Qaeda's Evolving Strategy Five Years after September 11," *Terrorism Focus*, September 12, 2006, pp. 4-5.

Crusaders is struck in Turkey, all of the banks belonging to the Crusaders will have to be secured in all of the countries and the (economic) draining will increase. If an oil interest is hit near the port of Aden, there will have to be intensive security measures put in place for all of the oil companies, and their tankers, and the oil pipelines in order to protect them and draining will increase. If two of the apostate authors are killed in a simultaneous operation in two different countries, they will have to secure thousands of writers in other Islamic countries. In this way, there is a diversification and widening of the circle of targets and vexation strikes which are accomplished by small, separate groups. Moreover, repeatedly (striking) the same kind of target two or three times will make it clear to them that this kind (of target) will continue to be vulnerable.... Hitting economic targets will force (the enemy) to goad the regimes, who are (already) exhausted from protecting the other remaining targets (economic or otherwise), into pumping in more forces for its protection. As a result, feebleness will start to appear in their forces, especially since their forces are limited...<sup>116</sup>

In addition to the draining effect of these global “vexation operations” on US and allied military power, they are also repeatedly cited as an important ingredient of al Qaeda’s propaganda campaign. They are seen as critical, in particular, for maintaining the movement’s profile is the media and creating the perception of global reach (and relevance) in the eyes of the ummah. Al Muqrin stresses that a wider war is essential because “[there must be] no trace of doubt left on anybody’s minds that they [the mujahideen] are present all over the land. This will prove the mujahideen’s power, rub the nose of the enemies in the dirt, and encourage young men to take up arms and face the enemy—Jews, Christians, and their collaborators.”<sup>117</sup>

### **Dividing the Zionist-Crusader Alliance**

Ever since 2001, but especially over the past two years, Al Qaeda has made a concerted effort to divide the US-led coalition arrayed against it. Al Muqrin has written, for example, that broad and continuous mujahideen “military activity” is important to the struggle because it will send a warning “through the language of blood or fire” to the people in countries allied with America that “their governments are getting them involved in wars and conflicts with which they have nothing to do.”<sup>118</sup>

Hassan al-Tajiki, in his letters to the “Africa Corps” in 2004, points out that this “[enemy] alliance is fragile and just as the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century Crusaders succumbed to infighting, so too will this alliance.”<sup>119</sup> Building upon that idea, Naji argues that it is imperative to identify and capitalize on the self-interest of US allies in order to fracture their alliances. In *The Management of Barbarism*, he writes that the:

...ideological alliance against Islam is a fragile alliance and limited by a ceiling of material interests that each faction among them possesses. Therefore, we should formulate our military and political plans after

<sup>116</sup> Naji, p. 19.

<sup>117</sup> Scheuer, “Al Qaeda’s Insurgency Doctrine: Aiming for a ‘Long War,’” p. 6.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Harmony Database, Document AFGP-2002-60053.

properly understanding and appraising the ceiling of interest which limits the action of each one of our enemies and work to widen the gap of the interests between hostile factions. *Therefore, the map of interests must be clear in the minds of our leaders of action. It is a map that is just as important as military maps.*<sup>120</sup>

Roughly a month after the Madrid train bombing, in April 2004, Osama bin Laden pursued this line of operation by extending a public truce offer to America's European allies. After a lengthy diatribe railing against European politicians who inflict "injustice" against their peoples by sending their sons against their will to "kill and get killed" in Muslim lands and blood-sucking "warlords" like the "White House gang" and the "Halliburton Company" that profit from war, he stated:

I also offer a peace initiative to [European peoples], whose essence is our commitment to stopping operations against every country that commits itself to not attacking Muslims or interfering in their affairs—including the US conspiracy on the great Islamic world...The peace will start with the departure of its last soldier from our country. The door of peace is open for three months of the date of announcing this statement.<sup>121</sup>

The sincerity of bin Laden's peace offer will never be known since every European country rejected it out of hand as soon as it was extended. One should expect, however, that AQAM will extend truce offerings, including ones tailored to specific countries in the West, in the future in an effort to drive a wedge between the United States and its partners in the war on terrorism.

### **Waging a Modern "Media War"**

Al Qaeda and its ideologically linked franchises have proven to be very effective in exploiting modern communications not only to spread their violent, jihadist ideology, but also to recruit new mujahideen and raise funds for continual jihad for what is expected to be a protracted struggle. Considering that AQAM longs for a return to the early Muslim community of the Salafs, it is ironic that they have taken full advantage of modern communications technologies such as the Internet, satellite television, and video-recording. The Internet, in particular, has emerged as a key weapon in al Qaeda's media war. Terrorism experts at the Center for Combating Terrorism at West Point have assessed that:

As a repository of images, videos and stories, the Internet has come to codify a particular jihadi foundation myth, accessible to anyone, anywhere, anytime. Publishing their ideas in short forum posting, longer articles floated online or in voluminous books, jihadi strategists not only recruit new members into this worldview, but they spoon-feed recruits with their virulent (and tedious) vocabulary for expressing their anger,

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<sup>120</sup> Emphasis added, Naji, p. 52.

<sup>121</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Bin Laden Threatens Revenge on Israel, US, Offers Truce with Europeans," translated version of audio recording aired on Dubai Al-Arabiya Television in Arabic, April 15, 2004, FBIS Document No. GMP20040415000029.

and provide direction to operators on the ground, both in Iraq and beyond.<sup>122</sup>

AQAM's approach to the media war is sophisticated, targeting different audiences around the world with messages finely tuned to local conditions. AQAM remains very effective in getting its message out. Public opinion surveys and anecdotal evidence suggest, moreover, that it is resonating with a significant cross-section of the Muslim world.

The senior leadership of al Qaeda is keenly aware of the strategic importance of the media war. In a letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar, for example, Osama bin Laden observes that propaganda is one of the jihadist's most powerful weapons. "It is obvious," he says, "that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods; in fact, its ratio may reach 90% of the total preparation for the battles."<sup>123</sup> In Zawahiri's letter to Zarqawi in July 2005, he asserts that "we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media" and that the jihadi movement is "in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma."<sup>124</sup>

AQAM dedicates considerable resources to waging a robust propaganda campaign, as evidenced by the regular flow of audio and video recordings from various spokesmen, most notably, al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden. The organization also maintains a half-dozen major websites and distributes propaganda materials to scores of other jihadi websites on a daily basis. In addition, senior al Qaeda leaders have taken great pains to integrate the media effort with global jihad operations. Looking back to mid-1990s, internal critiques indicated that the organization could have done more to exploit the publicity value of mujahideen operations in Somalia, as well as the embassy bombings in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. In one memorandum, written in June 2000, the author laments the "horrible informational and political shortfall regarding these events" and decries the fact that immediately following the embassy bombings, people had to resort to "western foreign media to quench their thirst for the true news."<sup>125</sup> AQAM has learned from these mistakes. Today, the movement is very quick to link itself publicly to successful jihadi attacks (including ones carried out by cells whose only link to al Qaeda is a shared ideology) and squeezes as much propaganda value as possible out of each one. Several websites update written content and post new video streams, frequently featuring successful jihadi operations in Iraq and highlighting supposed American "attacks" against Muslim civilians, on an almost hourly basis.

As will be detailed later, however, the dramatic weakening of al Qaeda's command and control capabilities since 2001 has had a deleterious effect on the coherence of its message. Despite repeated efforts, for example, al Qaeda central was unable to rein in Zarqawi. In his July 2005 letter, Zawahiri reproves Zarqawi for his videotaped beheadings of hostages, his self-declared

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<sup>122</sup> Similarly, the current US National Strategy for Combating Terrorism states, "the Internet provides an inexpensive, anonymous, geographically unbounded, and largely unregulated virtual haven for terrorists." Harmony and Disharmony, pp. 51-52.

<sup>123</sup> Osama bin Laden, Letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar, undated. Harmony database, AFGP-2002-600321, p. 2.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from al-Zawahiri to Zarqawi, July 9, 2005. Available on-line at: [http://www.dni.gov/letter\\_in\\_english.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/letter_in_english.pdf).

<sup>125</sup> Abu Huthayfa, Memo to the Honorable Sheikh Abu Abdullah, June 20, 2000, pp. 9-11. Harmony database, AFGP-2002-003251.

“all out war” against Shiites, and his indiscriminate attacks against Muslim civilians. These actions, he explains, are alienating the masses and detracting from al Qaeda’s broader media war. Zawahiri’s closing rebuke is curt and stinging: “we don’t need this.”<sup>126</sup> However, given Zarqawi’s behavior over the next year, it was also wholly ineffective.

### **Overthrowing Apostate Regimes and Creating Enclaves of “Barbarism”**

While several of Al Qaeda’s senior leaders expected, indeed hoped, that the United States would retaliate for the attacks of September 11, 2001 by launching strikes into Afghanistan, the speed and intensity of Operation Enduring Freedom caught them by surprise.<sup>127</sup> Firm believers in the myth of American military weakness—as evidenced, in their view, by cowardly retreats from Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia—they anticipated air and missile strikes, not the use of highly trained special forces to overthrow the Taliban regime in a matter of weeks through skillful unconventional warfare operations on the ground supported by precision air strikes. As will be discussed later, the loss of its state-sponsored sanctuary in Afghanistan was a crippling blow to al Qaeda for myriad strategic and operational reasons. A key line of operation for AQAM, therefore, is creating a new sanctuary where its leaders can find refuge from unrelenting US-led manhunting operations; re-establish some measure of centralized command and control of the movement; supervise recruitment, training, and indoctrination activities; manage expanded fundraising efforts; and plan, organize, and direct large-scale, coordinated attacks against the West, including against the US homeland.

To that end, AQAM will certainly continue ongoing efforts to overthrow apostate regimes—in particular, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan—and install Islamic regimes in their place. As Zawahiri concludes in *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*, “the mujahid Islamic movement will not triumph against the world coalition unless it possesses a fundamentalist base in the heart of the Islamic world” and that this base “constitutes the hope of the Muslim nation to reinstate its fallen caliphate and regain its lost glory.”<sup>128</sup> Later, he laments, however, that “the establishment of a Muslim state in the heart of the Islamic world is not an easy goal or an objective that is close at hand.”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Letter from al-Zawahiri to Zarqawi, July 9, 2005, pp. 4-5, 10.

<sup>127</sup> Some of al Qaeda’s senior leaders, however, held deep reservations about the wisdom of attacking the US homeland to prompt an attack on Afghanistan, where al Qaeda enjoyed an operational sanctuary. Abu al-Walid al-Masir, who was member of the inner council, wrote after the devastating US led offensive in October 2001 that “everyone know that their leader was leading them to the abyss and even leading the entire country to utter destruction, but they continued to carry out his orders faithfully and with bitterness.” Abu Musab al-Suri, Maqdisi, and Zarqawi also questioned the strategic prudence of the attack on September 11<sup>th</sup>. See Lawrence Wright, “The Master Plan,” *New Yorker*, September 11, 2006.

<sup>128</sup> He also states that “Victory for the Islamic movements...cannot be attained unless these movements possess an Islamic base in the heart of the Arab region” Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*, published in *Al-Sharq al Awsat* (London), December 2-10, 2001 and translated by FBIS (FBIS-NES-2001-1202). Zawahiri reaffirmed this position in a July 2005 letter to Zarqawi, in which he writes: “It has always been my belief that the victory of Islam will never take place until a Muslim state is established in the manner of the Prophet in the heart of the Islamic world, specifically in the Levant, Egypt, and the neighboring states of the Peninsula and Iraq; however, the center would be in the Levant and Egypt.” Zawahiri letter to Zarqawi, p. 2.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, Section XI.

There appears to be recognition among AQAM leaders that the movement is unlikely to overthrow an apostate regime and create a state "established in the manner of the Prophet" anytime soon. Many commentators on the war of terrorism have suggested that AQAM is now focused on creating an Islamic state in Iraq to replace the sanctuary lost in Afghanistan. This assessment, however, is belied by the writings and statements of Zawahiri, Naji, and numerous other AQAM strategists. They are painfully aware that it is impractical to install a Sunni regime to govern a Shia dominated state, at least in the short run. The best that can be hoped for is to create an enclave or "amirate" where the jihadi movement can take root and expand over time. In his July 2005 letter to Zarqawi, Zawahiri advises that after expelling the Americans from Iraq, the goal of the movement should be to "establish an Islamic authority or amirate, then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate over as much territory as you can to spread its power in Iraq."<sup>130</sup> He envisions a sharia-based amirate, initially rooted in the so-called "Sunni triangle," reaching out *in time* to encompass portions of "the secular countries neighboring Iraq," meaning Jordan and Syria, and ultimately, extending into Israel.<sup>131</sup> Zawahiri harbors no illusions, however, about how difficult it will be to defend this amirate in a sea of Shiites and cautions that it will be "in a state of constant preoccupation with defending itself" from one generation to the next.<sup>132</sup>

Naji takes Zawahiri's amirate concept for Iraq and generalizes it to the broader Muslim world. He exhorts the "groups and separate cells in every region of the Islamic world" to create zones of "barbarism" in which "savage chaos" reign as in pre-Taliban Afghanistan. As a tactic for accomplishing this, he advises the mujahideen to attack tourist sites, oil facilities, and other relatively soft, high value facilities to compel states to pull their security forces out of remote areas and outlying cities, thereby creating exploitable security vacuums. During this "stage of vexation and frustration," he argues that operations should focus on the following "priority" states: Jordan, the countries of the Maghrib, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. After sowing the seeds of chaos in these areas and allowing "barbarism" to take root, jihadi "administrators" would eventually step in to restore order. During this stage, aptly named "the administration of barbarism," a cadre of specially trained jihadi administrators would establish "sharia justice," secure the region from external enemies by "setting up defensive fortifications and developing fighting capabilities," and provide food, medical treatment, and other basic services to a welcoming, desperate people. Finally, once control over these individual regions was established, they could be gradually stitched together into a caliphate during the "stage of establishment."<sup>133</sup>

In short, AQAM will continue to undermine apostate regimes in hopes of precipitating their collapse. If this occurs, especially in a Sunni-dominated state in which Islamic extremism is well established and the mujahideen have a significant presence (e.g., Pakistan), AQAM will undoubtedly try to exploit the opportunity. There appears to be a growing acceptance within the organization, however, that this unlikely to occur for several years. In the interim, AQAM may

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<sup>130</sup> Letter to Zarqawi, p. 3.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Naji, pp. 14-21, especially, p. 16. Brachman and McCants, pp. 8, 19.

strike out on a new path toward its long-term goal of a pan-Islamic caliphate: the creation and agglomeration, both virtually and physically, of multiple sub-national enclaves.

## **CAPABILITIES**

There is no question that the al Qaeda organization has been badly battered over the past five years by CT operations conducted by the United States and its partners in the war on terrorism. Al Qaeda's high-ranking leadership has been decimated; it no longer has a state-protected sanctuary in Afghanistan to plan, coordinate, and train for complex operations, as well as to recruit and indoctrinate new jihadis; its senior leaders have limited situational awareness of the global "arenas of jihad" and their command, control, and communications (C3) links are, at best, tenuous; and it has gone from being the central banker for global operations to pleading for financial assistance from its more profitable franchises (e.g., AQI).

The organization, however, is surprisingly resilient. Through the skillful exploitation of modern communication technologies, AQAM continues to spread its violent, jihadist ideology and inspire new recruits to join the movement. Owing to the success of some its "franchises," most notably AQI, the profile of the organization remains high in the Muslim world. New franchises appear to be "opening for business" in previously under-served areas of the world. In addition, Osama bin Laden, Zawahiri, Suleiman Abu Gheith, and others have repeatedly threatened new mass-casualty attacks on the US homeland, and against the West more broadly. As Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte cautioned, "the organization's core elements still plot and make preparations for terrorist strikes against the Homeland and other targets from bases in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border area."<sup>134</sup>

This section of the assessment will critically examine AQAM's current ability to pursue the lines of operations discussed above by taking a closer look at four key capability areas: leadership; strategic-level C3; fundraising; and recruitment, indoctrination, and training. It will also examine AQAM operations since September 11, 2001 to identify relevant trends, as well as to gain further insight into the organization's capabilities.

### **Leadership**

More than two-thirds of al Qaeda's known senior leaders as of September 11<sup>th</sup> have been captured or killed overseas; mostly by partner nations' police and security forces, and oftentimes with US intelligence support. Most of the top AQAM leaders and operatives captured or killed since September 11, 2001 were found in urban areas (see Table 3).<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> John D. Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence, "Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence," Statement before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, February 2, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>135</sup> Kenneth Katzman, "Al Qaeda: Profile and Threat Assessment," CRS Report for Congress, August 17, 2005, p. 6.

Table 3—Key AQAM Leaders Captured or Killed since September 11, 2001

Name	Description	Location and Date
<b>Muhammed Atef</b>	Former head of the al Qaeda's military committee; senior field commander; linked to jihadi operations in Somalia (1992-1993), Luxor bombing in Egypt (1997), West African embassy bombings (1998); named by Osama bin Laden as his successor (2001)	Killed in bombing raid, Kabul, Afghanistan, November 2001
<b>Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libbi</b>	Head of al Qaeda training infrastructure in Afghanistan, Khalden training camp commander	Captured crossing into Pakistan, December 2001
<b>Yazid Sufaat</b>	Senior leader of JI; played role in planning attack on USS <i>Cole</i> and September 11 <sup>th</sup> hijackings; linked to foiled plot to detonate truck bombs against Western embassies in Singapore	Arrested in Kuala Lumpur, December 2001
<b>Abu Zubaydah</b>	30-year old, Saudi-born Palestinian; one of al Qaeda's chief recruiters/trainers and intimately involved in its global operations	Arrested in Faisalabad, Pakistan, February 2002
<b>Omar al-Faruq</b>	31-year old Kuwaiti who was reportedly responsible for planning al Qaeda operations in Southeast Asia	Arrested in Indonesia, June 2002
<b>Ramzi Bin al Shibh</b>	Organizer of Hamburg, Germany cell that formed the core of the September 11 <sup>th</sup> hijackers; logistics handler and financier	Arrested in Karachi, Pakistan, September 2002
<b>Saif al-Islam al-Masri</b>	Al Qaeda ruling council member	Captured in Georgia, October 2002
<b>Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri</b>	Senior al Qaeda commander; mastermind behind the USS <i>Cole</i> attack; linked to the attack on <i>Limburg</i> tanker and East African embassy bombings; directed al Qaeda operations in Saudi Arabia	Arrested in the UAE, November 2002 (Escaped, February 2006)
<b>Khalid Sheik Mohammed</b>	September 11 <sup>th</sup> mastermind and head of Al Qaida's military committee following Atef's death. Involved in 1993 World Trade Center bombing, a foiled 1995 plot to down a dozen US airliners over the Pacific, the bombing of US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the attack on the USS <i>Cole</i> , the bombing of a Tunisian synagogue in April 2002, and the beheading of Daniel Pearl	Arrested in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, March 2003
<b>Tawfiq bin Attash (Khallad)</b>	Head of Bin Laden's security detail; al Qaeda trainer; senior-level communications courier; and planner of the 1998 West African embassy bombings, USS <i>Cole</i> attack, the September 11 <sup>th</sup> attacks, and the attack on the US Consulate in Pakistan in 2002	Arrested in Karachi, Pakistan, April 2003

<b>Nurjaman Riduan bin Isomoddin (Hambali)</b>	38-year old Indonesian militant; served as al Qaeda's liaison to radical Islamic groups in Southeast Asia; operational leader of JI; believed to be responsible for the Bali bombing	Arrested in Indonesia, August 2003
<b>Assem al-Makki</b>	Commander of al Qaeda operations in Yemen; linked to attack on USS <i>Cole</i> and French oil tanker <i>Limburg</i>	Arrested in Sanaa, Yemen, December 2003
<b>Abdulaziz al-Muqrin</b>	Al Qaeda trainer; operative in Afghanistan, Spain, Algeria, and Bosnia; and leader of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula	Killed by Saudi authorities, June 2004
<b>Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani</b>	Senior-ranking operational planner for al Qaeda, involved in 1998 embassy bombings	Captured by Pakistani authorities, July 2004
<b>Amjad Hussain Farooqi</b>	Senior member of al Qaeda; linked to beheading of Daniel Pearl, and two assassination attempts of President Musharraf in 2003	Killed by Pakistani authorities, September 2004
<b>Abu Farraj al-Libbi</b>	Born in Libya; senior al Qaeda commander and operative; mastermind behind two attempted assassinations of President Musharraf	Arrested near Peshawar, Pakistan in May 2005
<b>Mustafa Setmariam Nasar (Abu Musab al-Suri)</b>	Instructor at terrorist camps in Afghanistan, specializing in poisons and CW; linked to 9/11, Madrid, and London underground attacks; important ideologue and propagandist for the jihadi movement	Arrested in Quetta, Pakistan, November 2005
<b>Abu Hamza Rabia</b>	Egyptian; senior al Qaeda operations officer; headed operations in/around Pakistan after the arrest of Khalid Sheik Mohammed	Killed in Asorai, Pakistan, December 2005
<b>Abu Omar al-Saif</b>	High-ranking al Qaeda military commander in Chechnya; linked to the group responsible for the Beslan bombing	Killed by Russian security forces, December 2005
<b>Fahd Faraaj al-Juwair</b>	Former leader of al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia	Killed by Saudi security forces, February 2006
<b>Abu Musab Zarqawi</b>	Former leader of al Qaeda in Iraq	Killed in US air strike, June 2006
<b>Akhtar Mohammad Osmani</b>	Head of Taliban operations in Afghanistan's Helmand province; senior Taliban leader; close associate of Osama bin Laden	Killed in US air strike, December 2006

In addition, more than 4,000 lower-level operatives have been arrested or detained in over 100 countries.<sup>136</sup> Cells linked to al Qaeda have been rolled up in America, Europe, Southwest Asia, Central/South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa. As the State Department's CT coordinator testified to Congress, the pre-9/11 al Qaeda organization:

...has been put under catastrophic stress. Seventy percent of their leadership has been arrested, detained, or killed. The majority of the rest of them are essentially primarily defensive, concerned primarily about their own personal security. There is a massive global hunt for them underway. It is relentless, 24 hours a day.<sup>137</sup>

Nevertheless, many senior leaders of al Qaeda remain at large, including most notably: Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Saif al-Adel, Suleiman Abu Ghaith, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, Jamal Mohammad al-Badawi, and Mahfouz Ould Walid (Abu Hafs 'the Mauritanian').

Many analysts have argued that the long-term significance of "manhunting" operations is negligible because vacancies in the organization can be quickly and easily filled through a combination of internal advancement and off-the-street recruitment. In reality, however, senior leaders and operatives are difficult to replace. Strategic judgment, operational experience, technical expertise and tradecraft, and charismatic leadership cannot be regenerated rapidly. Part of what made the al Qaeda organization work in the past, moreover, was the personal trust forged between key individuals over years of shared experiences in Egypt, Afghanistan, Sudan, and elsewhere. It will take time to rebuild this network of trust. In the interim, there is likely to be cleavage in the organization between long-time veterans of the movement and recent recruits. The former will be constantly on guard, fretting about treachery and betrayal, while the latter try to earn their spurs and dispel clouds of suspicion.

What is perhaps the most revealing about al Qaeda's current leadership situation are the internal assessments that have emerged since 2001. For example, in a letter written to Khalid Sheik Mohammad in June 2002 *before* the arrest or death of more than a dozen additional high-ranking al Qaeda leaders (including Khalid Sheik Mohammad himself), a senior al Qaeda figure, Abd-al-Halim Adl, assessed that the organization was "experiencing one set back after another and [has] gone from misfortune to disaster." He implores his close friend and colleague to "completely halt all external actions until we sit down and consider the disaster we have caused" and ends his letter with the following plea:

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<sup>136</sup> J. Cofer Black claimed that "more than 3,400 lower-level operatives or associates have been detained or killed in over 100 countries" as of 2004. J. Cofer Black, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, US Department of State, Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Hearing on "Al Qaeda: The Threat to the United States and its Allies," April 1, 2004, p. 38.

<sup>137</sup> During the same testimony, J. Cofer Black stated that "ongoing operations against al Qaeda have served to isolate its leadership and sever or complicate communications links with its operatives scattered around the globe. Unable to find easy sanctuary in Afghanistan or elsewhere, the al Qaeda leadership must now devote much more time to evading capture or worse." *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 14.

The East Asia, Europe, America, Horn of Africa, Yemen, Gulf, and Morocco Groups have fallen, and Pakistan has almost been drowned in one push... Stop all foreign actions, stop sending people to captivity, stop devising new operations, regardless of whether orders come or do not come from Abu-Abdalla [Bin Laden].<sup>138</sup>

Considering the losses that al Qaeda's leadership structure has absorbed since this letter was written, one can only imagine that Abd-al-Halim Adl's assessment today would be far graver. That being said, it is demonstrably true that the al Qaeda core still provides ideological leadership for the movement and retains a very modest supervisory role. Moreover, several of its "franchises" are now being run by effective, seasoned leaders. As will be detailed below, the centralized operational leadership provided by al Qaeda's "Shura Council" and its subordinate committees, however, are no longer functioning.

### **Command, Control, and Communications (C3)**

Al Qaeda built a very centralized, hierarchical management apparatus in Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001.<sup>139</sup> The central "ruling council" supervised six subordinate general committees: military, political, information, administrative and financial, security/surveillance, and foreign purchases.<sup>140</sup> Each committee, in turn, typically oversaw several branches and sections. The information committee, for example, which was charged with "spreading the Al-Qa'ida vision of jihad to all Muslims," had seven distinct branches for computers, printing, foreign relations, photography, phonetics, translations, and microfiche.<sup>141</sup> Just like a commercial business, al Qaeda had detailed administrative and personnel policies, including employment contracts and compensation schedules, furniture and housing reimbursement allowances, medical coverage, disability benefits, holiday and home leave allowances, and severance benefits.<sup>142</sup> Mujahideen in the field had to submit detailed expense summaries back to al Qaeda central in Afghanistan on a regular basis for auditing. Internet and telephone communications flowed freely between headquarters and the field. All of that ended abruptly in the weeks prior to the start of Operation Enduring Freedom on October 7, 2001.

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<sup>138</sup> Harmony database, "Letter to Mukhtar," document name: Al Adl Letter.

<sup>139</sup> For a more detailed discussion of structure and operations of the al Qaeda organization, especially prior to Operation Enduring Freedom, see: Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2002); Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2002); Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al-Qa'ida* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

<sup>140</sup> Harmony database, "(Al-Qa'ida Goals and Structure)," document number AFGP-2002-000078; and "Interior Organization," document number AFGP-2002-000080.

<sup>141</sup> Detailed position descriptions and specific qualifications were developed for all committee positions. See "Al Qaeda Goals and Structure," Harmony Document, AFGP-2002-000078. See also: Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden*.

<sup>142</sup> Harmony database, document numbers: AFGP-2002-600045 and AFGP-2002-600048.

Today, al Qaeda is a flat, highly decentralized organization with strained communication links. As discussed above, with more than two-thirds of its veteran commanders killed or captured and the remainder on the run around the world, the top-level of al Qaeda's C3 hierarchy has been effectively decapitated. Forced to spend most of their time trying to evade capture or worse, surviving senior leaders have scant opportunity to supervise franchise operations and far-flung individual cells. Moreover, even if they had the time and energy to do so while hunkered down in caves in Waziristan or the urban slums of Pakistan, they are often cut off from news and reporting links. As revealed in Zawahiri's letter to Zarqawi in July 2005, as well as in the numerous tapes that he and Osama bin Laden have released since 2001, the situational awareness of the senior leadership is sketchy and episodic. In the Zarqawi letter, for example, Zawahiri clearly seems to be out of touch, admitting that "I don't have detailed information about the situation of the mujahedeen" in Iraq and around the world.<sup>143</sup>

Ongoing operations by the United States and its partners have made outgoing communications more difficult and dangerous. Physical communication links have been cut off or compromised. Several high-level communications coordinators have been apprehended (e.g., Safwan ul-Hasham, captured in Pakistan in May 2003; and Mohammed Naeem Noor Khan, captured in Pakistan in July 2004), restricting the number of access points to the communications network and heightening paranoia about the security of old links. Whether for lack of physical access or out of fear of detection, senior al Qaeda leaders rarely communicate directly to their field commanders. Most of their communications are in the form of hand-delivered letters, faxed statements, Internet postings, and pre-taped audio and video messages—all of which allow temporal and geographic separation between the original sender and the intended recipients. The inability or unwillingness of senior al Qaeda leaders to communicate directly has had a significant operational impact. The former State Department coordinator for counterterrorism reported, for example, that "we have also seen examples of terrorist activities delayed for extended periods as al Qaeda affiliates await instructions from an increasingly isolated central leadership."<sup>144</sup> In the absence of timely and reliable C3 from above, decision-making on the full range of operational matters (i.e., recruitment, training, financing, and attack planning and execution) has devolved almost entirely to the leaders of individual franchises and cells.

Even bits and pieces of news, however, are apparently sufficient for the leadership to grasp the strategic landscape. While Zawahiri may not have had all the tactical and operational details at his fingertips while writing his letter to Zarqawi in the summer of 2005, his assessment of the strategic situation was insightful and his recommendations compelling. Similarly, while their communications links are tenuous, senior leaders remain capable of providing ideological inspiration, offering broad strategic guidance on key issues (e.g., Iraq), and articulating their long-term vision for the movement. Their exploitation of audio- and video-recordings, several of which have been studio-produced, and the Internet for this purpose has been impressive.

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<sup>143</sup> Zawahiri letter to Zarqawi, p. 6.

<sup>144</sup> J. Cofer Black, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, US Department of State, Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Hearing on "Al Qaeda: The Threat to the United States and its Allies," April 1, 2004, p. 6.

Many analysts have suggested that loss of centralized C3 has had the perverse effect of making the movement even stronger than it was prior to September 11, 2001. The amorphous, decentralized AQAM, it is argued, is much more difficult to attack than a hierarchical network with more easily defined critical nodes and links. While there is certainly an element of truth to that assessment, it is often exaggerated. First of all, the ideological dimension of the movement, which motivates franchises and inspires home-grown cells, would still exist if the center's C3 capabilities remained intact. Indeed, the ideological base might even be stronger given unimpeded communications by the movement's strategists and charismatic leaders. It is fair to say, however, that the loss of centralized C3 has forced franchises to become more self-sufficient, which does make them less vulnerable to some disruption operations. Second, and more importantly, the loss of centralized C3 has two costly penalties: the movement's global operations are no longer coordinated; and there is no longer a higher authority to rein in overly zealous operatives.

The breakdown in global coordination is important because, as mentioned earlier, it is not clear that any of al Qaeda's franchises have the independent wherewithal to plan, organize, finance, and execute attacks with the complexity and sophistication of those of September 11, 2001. Whether enough centralized C3 has been or can be restored to orchestrate a multi-franchise operation that requires the pooling of divided resources and capabilities, therefore, is a critical open question. In terms of preventing future attacks on the US homeland, the policy prescription is clear: the less centralized C3 within AQAM, the better. The inability of "high command" to rein in overly zealous commanders has been highlighted by Naji, Zawahiri, and other strategists as a vexing problem that threatens the long-term survival of the entire movement. They are concerned that by conducting a large-scale attack against the wrong target at the wrong time, these loose cannons could inadvertently trigger a crippling crack down on the mujahideen around the world and alienate the Muslim masses. Naji, for example, implores commanders not to conduct "qualitative operations" without prior consultation and approval from "High Command."<sup>145</sup> Similarly, Zawahiri voices the need for the mujahideen to avoid "any action that the masses do not understand or approve."<sup>146</sup>

Much to the frustration of senior al Qaeda strategists, their appeals for restraint can be easily ignored by those actively engaged in the arenas of jihad. In his letter to Zarqawi, for example, Zawahiri clearly spells out why deliberate attacks against Iraqi Shiites and the videotaped beheading of Western hostages are not in the strategic interest of the movement. After explaining why winning the hearts and minds of the ummah is central to the struggle, he tells him that "many of your Muslim admirers amongst the common folk are wondering about your attacks on the Shia. The sharpness of the questioning increases when the attacks are on one of their mosques..."<sup>147</sup> After pointing out that there is no way to win a sectarian war in Iraq against a Shi'a majority and reminding him that Shi'a regime in Iran is holding "more than one hundred [al Qaeda] prisoners" whose lives could be put in jeopardy, he pointedly instructs Zarqawi to

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<sup>145</sup> Naji, *Management of Barbarism*, pp. 17, 25, 31-33 (original); and Brachman, p. 8.

<sup>146</sup> Zawahiri letter to Zarqawi, p. 5.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

knock it off.<sup>148</sup> Zarqawi, however, apparently more annoyed than chastened, subsequently declared “all out war” on the Shiites.

### **Fundraising**

Numerous AQAM documents discuss the importance of fundraising to the long-term success of the Salafi-jihadi struggle. The movement continues to rely on six major sources of funding:

1. Tapping the personal wealth of Osama bin Laden, which is estimated to be between \$280 and \$300 million;<sup>149</sup>
2. Penetrating and siphoning off funds from legitimate Islamic charities;
3. Forming “front” charities and organizations that defraud donators by publicly claiming to support popular causes while diverting a substantial funding stream to jihadi cells;
4. Soliciting donations from wealthy patrons, most notably in the Gulf States and in Saudi Arabia, in particular;
5. Trafficking and smuggling narcotics (e.g., opium and heroin from poppy plants grown in Afghanistan and Central Asia); and
6. Profit-earning businesses.

Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, financial interdiction efforts against al Qaeda were half-hearted. Not only were enforcement activities in the United States under-staffed and poorly funded, but meaningful diplomatic and economic pressure was never placed upon reluctant friends and allies overseas.<sup>150</sup> An executive order issued by President Clinton in 1998 that sought to freeze al Qaeda’s assets, for example, excluded many organizations with known or suspected links to the organization.

In the wake of the attacks on the September 11, 2001, the US government cracked down seriously on terrorist financing. The US strategy had four main elements: identifying and freezing terrorist-linked funds controlled by US operated financial institutions, as well as blocking suspicious transactions; encouraging foreign governments to do the same, including providing them with financial intelligence; working through the United Nations, the G-7, and Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (now comprising 33 states), and other multilateral forums to establish international standards to counter money laundering and terrorist financing more broadly, as well as to strengthen enforcement; and providing direct training and

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Thachuk, “Terrorism’s Financial Lifeline, Can It Be Severed?” *Strategic Forum*, May 2002.

<sup>150</sup> David E. Sanger and Joseph Kahn, “Bush Freezes Assets Linked to Terror Net,” *New York Times*, September 25, 2001; and Maurice R. Greenberg (chair), *Terrorist Financing – Report of an Independent Task Force* (New York, NY Council on Foreign Relations, 2002).

technical assistance to “priority” countries considered vulnerable to terrorist exploitation because of lax financial controls and loosely enforced or nonexistent money-laundering laws.

Within four months of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, by acting upon pre-existing intelligence, the government froze \$68 million in funds linked to al Qaeda. By the end of 2002, about \$124 million in assets had been frozen worldwide in over 500 accounts with the cooperation of more than 160 countries.<sup>151</sup> Several major financial networks that were used by al Qaeda to raise and transfer funds internationally were shut down, including the Somalia-based Al Barakaat financial conglomerate and the Al Taqwa/Nada Management Group.<sup>152</sup> Al Barakaat, which had operations in over 40 countries including the United States, was a major funding source for al Qaeda. Prior to the US-led global crackdown, it wired some \$500 million in annual profits to its central money exchange in the United Arab Emirates. Al Barakaat’s founder and close associate of Osama bin Laden, Shaykh Ahmed Nur Jimalles, reportedly gave al Qaeda a flat five percent cut, or about \$25 million per year.<sup>153</sup> To date, according to public reports, approximately \$150 million has been frozen in over 1,400 accounts worldwide.<sup>154</sup> In addition, several prominent AQAM financiers have been apprehended, including Mustafa Ahmed al-Hawsawi, Yasser al-Jaziri, Ramzi Bin al Shibh, and Ahmed Said al-Khadar.

These actions have clearly diminished AQAM’s ability to raise funds and move them around the world as needed to support ongoing operations. In his now famous letter to Zarqawi, for example, Zawahiri is forced to grovel for funds, explaining that “many lines have been cut off” and “we need a payment while new lines are being opened.” He pleads, “if you’re capable of sending a payment of approximately one hundred thousand, we’ll be very grateful to you.”<sup>155</sup> The decision to open up an al Qaeda “franchise” in Saudi Arabia in 2003 apparently had a disastrous effect on a formerly lucrative funding source. In response to attacks in Riyadh in May 2003, the Saudi government began cracking down on suspicious charities, tightened up financial regulations, and strengthened enforcement of existing laws and regulations. Individual donors may also have been turned off by some of al Qaeda’s tactics, especially the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent Muslims. By alienating wealthy patrons, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula seems to have killed the proverbial goose that laid golden egg.

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<sup>151</sup> Department of the Treasury, “Contributions by the Department of the Treasury to the Financial War on Terrorism,” Fact Sheet, September 2002, p. 8; Mike Allen, “U.S. Calls Financial War on Terror a Success,” *Washington Post*, September 7, 2002, p. 6. See also: Reuters, “Al Qaeda’s Wealth Still Intact, Says Swiss Official,” *Washington Post*, September 5, 2002, p. 24; Edmund Andrews, “White House Denies Report Qaeda Funds are Flowing,” *New York Times*, August 30, 2002; Maurice R. Greenberg, *Terrorist Financing—Report of an Independent Task Force* (Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations, 2002), pp. 12-17; and The White House, “Operation Enduring Freedom: One Year of Accomplishments,” *Fact Sheet*, October 11, 2002.

<sup>152</sup> The Al Barakaat network was reportedly channeling as much as \$15-20 million per year to Al Qaeda (See The White House, “News about the War against Terror,” Fact Sheet, November 16, 2002).

<sup>153</sup> Thachuk, “Terrorism’s Financial Lifeline, Can It Be Severed?”

<sup>154</sup> Some sources put the total as high as \$200 million. See Phillips Testimony, p. 6. See also, J. Cofer Black, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, US Department of State, Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Hearing on “Al Qaeda: The Threat to the United States and its Allies,” April 1, 2004, p. 9.

<sup>155</sup> Zawahiri letter, pp. 10-11.

Few would argue, however, that AQAM cells are starving on the vine just yet. Anecdotally at least, the war in Iraq has been a boon for fundraising globally. While no reliable estimates exist as to the specific amount, most experts agree that substantial terrorist funding continues to wind its way through the underground, unregulated hawala system. The latter requires neither physical nor electronic movement of funds, just a telephone call between trusted money handlers, called hawaladars, who have set up shop in thousands of cities around the world.<sup>156</sup> Although hawaladars may occasionally know the identity of the sender or receiver through social associations, personal identification is not required as part of the process and names are rarely recorded. More typically, the sender provides the hawaladar a codeword that is used on the receiving end as authorization for payment, keeping the identity of both the sender and receiver anonymous. All records are destroyed once the transfer is completed. Needless to say, the hawala network makes tracking terrorist financing extremely difficult. Borrowing a tactic mastered by international drug traffickers and organized criminals, AQAM also moves funds by physically smuggling bulk cash, precious metals, and gems.

The amount of assets with suspected ties to designated terrorist groups frozen by the United States has fallen by more than an order of magnitude since 2001, from a high of \$68 million in the accounts of 157 individuals and organizations between September and December 2001 to a low of \$4.9 million in accounts belonging to 32 targets in all of 2005 (see Table 4).<sup>157</sup>

**Table 4 – US Interdiction of Terrorism Financing Since 2001**

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Amount Frozen by New Actions</b>
<b>Sept – Dec 2001</b>	\$68 million
<b>2002</b>	\$56.5 million
<b>2003</b>	\$12.3 million
<b>2004</b>	\$8.9 million
<b>2005</b>	\$4.9 million

Of course, part of the explanation for this precipitous decline is that in the wake of September 11, 2001, the US government acted upon intelligence that had accumulated over several years. The drop between 2003 and 2005, however, is more difficult to explain. The Departments of Treasury and State have both indicated that part of the answer lies in the fact that the government has had successes that cannot be disclosed publicly at this time because they are associated with

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Based on data available from US Department of Treasury. See Kevin Johnson, "Fewer Terror Assets Frozen—'Lack of Urgency' Feared in Effort," *USA Today*, January 30, 2006.

ongoing classified operations.<sup>158</sup> A portion of the decline might also be attributed to the overall success of the interdiction effort; there may be fewer dollars being raised and moved. An equally plausible explanation, however, is that AQAM has adapted to US-led interdiction efforts and is now relying more heavily on the hawala network and other money-moving mechanisms that are difficult to monitor and interdict (e.g., black-market trade in gems and gold).

According to the Government Accountability Office and numerous financial-interdiction experts, the US government's financial interdiction effort has been stymied by a lack of interagency cooperation, leadership, and funding. Ongoing "turf battles" between the Departments of State and Treasury are frequently cited as the most pressing problem. According to a Senior Policy Advisor who works in the Treasury Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes (TFFC) unit, the interagency Terrorist Finance Working Group (TFWG) process is "broken" and "State creates obstacles rather than coordinates efforts." Officials in the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, which chairs the TFWG, counter that the principal problem is the lack of Treasury's "acceptance of State's leadership over counter-terrorism financing efforts..."<sup>159</sup> Based on a detailed study of the problem, GAO summarized the situation this way: "the U.S. government lacks an integrated strategy to coordinate the delivery of counter-terrorism financing training and technical assistance to countries vulnerable to terrorist financing. Specifically, the effort does not have key stakeholder acceptance of roles and procedures, a strategic alignment of resources with needs, or a process to measure performance."<sup>160</sup>

### **Recruitment, Indoctrination, and Training**

In his now famous "long, hard slog" memo dated October 16, 2003, former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld posed a critical question for assessing US progress in the war on terrorism: "Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against us?"<sup>161</sup> Today, the answer to that multi-part question is no clearer than it was three years ago. The scant information that is available on this issue is largely anecdotal in nature and conflicting in its implications. The United States and its partners have clearly taken steps to make recruitment, indoctrination, and training more difficult—most notably, by eliminating al Qaeda's sanctuary in Afghanistan and dramatically raising the cost of direct involvement through global manhunting operations. These steps have been offset, however, by the apparently positive effect on recruitment of the continued American "occupation" of Iraq (and American missteps such as Abu Ghraib debacle); the festering Palestinian problem; the clash between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon in the late summer of 2006; the backlash against anti-terrorism crackdowns in several Muslim states; repeated strategic communications gaffes (e.g., Quran defilement incidents at the Guantanamo detention facility, the Danish cartoons depicting Muhammad, and Pope Benedict XVI's

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<sup>158</sup> See Johnson, "Fewer Terror Assets Frozen," p. 1; and GAO, *Terrorist Financing—Better Strategic Planning Needed to Coordinate U.S. Efforts to Deliver Counter-Terrorism Financing Training and Technical Assistance Abroad* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2005), Appendix 6, p. 6.

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

<sup>160</sup> GAO, *Terrorist Financing—Better Strategic Planning Needed to Coordinate U.S. Efforts to Deliver Counter-Terrorism Financing Training and Technical Assistance Abroad* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2005), p. 1.

<sup>161</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, "Global War on Terrorism," Memorandum to General Dick Myers, Paul Wolfowitz, General Pete Pace, and Doug Feith, October 16, 2003. Available on-line at: <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/executive/rumsfeld-memo.htm>

unfortunate public reference to an assertion by a 14<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine emperor: “Show me just what Mohammad has brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman...”<sup>162</sup>; and the ongoing diffusion and intensification of jihadi ideology—owing in large part to al Qaeda’s tremendously successful media campaign. The net effect of these clashing forces is impossible to calculate precisely. It appears, however, that recruitment has remained more or less constant in terms of aggregate numbers and composition, principally drawing Muslims with middle- and upper-middle class backgrounds. Recent converts to Islam and women, however, are being recruited in growing numbers.

The key driver of recruitment for AQAM is its call to defensive jihad that, in theory, creates a positive religious obligation for every faithful Muslim to join actively in the struggle. The message carefully crafted and disseminated by the movement is that turning a deaf ear to this call is tantamount to apostasy—in the ongoing struggle between good and evil, there is no middle ground. As Osama bin Laden has exhorted, “The one who stays behind and fails to join the Mujahidin when Jihad becomes an individual duty commits a cardinal sin...The most pressing duty after faith is repelling the aggressor enemy. This means that the nation should devote its resources, sons, and money to fight the infidels and drive them out of its lands.”<sup>163</sup> The wider and more deeply AQAM’s call to defensive jihad resonates with Muslims, the larger its potential recruiting pool.

The presence of a large American “occupation” force in Iraq adds credibility to AQAM’s call to defensive jihad. As will be discussed in more detail later, from a strategic communications perspective, AQAM has been very adept at portraying US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan as “Zionist Crusaders” and tapping into the deep-seated feelings of humiliation and resentment toward the West prevalent in the Muslim world. Osama bin Laden, Zawahiri, and other spokesmen recite an ever-growing litany of supposed American war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, draw attention to US complicity in the Israeli killing of Muslim innocents in Palestine, and highlight the ill-treatment of Muslim detainees at the Abu Ghraib and the Guantanamo detention centers. They cast American abuses at Abu Ghraib as emblematic of its “reform plan” for the Muslim world and urge the faithful to avenge the shedding of innocent blood of Muslim women and children by the United States.<sup>164</sup> Anecdotally, at least, these messages are resonating across a broad swath of the Muslim world—especially young, unemployed males. According to the interrogations of captured terrorists and other operatives, key recruitment nodes continue to be mosques and Islamic study circles; schools, universities,

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<sup>162</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with the Representatives of Science, University of Regensburg, September 12, 2006.

<sup>163</sup> FBIS Report, FEA20041227000762, December 27, 2004.

<sup>164</sup> See, for example, “Text of Bin Laden’s Remarks: ‘Hypocrisy Rears its Ugly Head,’” *Washington Post*, October 8, 2001.

and youth organizations; and health and welfare organizations, including charities.<sup>165</sup> Internet websites and chat rooms are an increasingly important means of recruitment as well.<sup>166</sup>

Conversely, however, recent US disaster relief and humanitarian assistance efforts have buoyed popular perceptions of the United States. Moreover, AQAM's bloody tactics and its intentional targeting of fellow Muslims, in particular, appear to be alienating mainstream Muslims. While perhaps overly optimistic, DIA recently assessed the ongoing battle over the "heart and minds" of Muslims world as follows:

Across several Islamic states, positive public opinion toward al Qaida, Usama bin Ladin and Sunni extremism has waned, according to polling...Popular backlashes were observed in Iraq and Jordan in response to the most brutal al-Qaida tactics, including hostage beheadings and attacks on civilians, Shia, and public facilities...Public opinion of the U.S. improved in some predominantly Muslim states, especially those in Asia, following our assistance to tsunami victims. Public attitudes toward the U.S. and Western countries in Pakistan improved following their assistance to earthquake victims in Kashmir last fall.<sup>167</sup>

The situation with respect to indoctrination and training is similarly mixed. In the past, after passing an early screening, recruits were generally sent to foreign countries (e.g., Pakistan) for more rigorous religious "education." The most promising recruits would be sent to training camps, primarily in Afghanistan, for further indoctrination and training for jihad operations. With the elimination of the training camp network in Afghanistan, the movement now relies on actual combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan; smaller training camps, most of which are located in "under-governed" areas of the world; and virtual training on the Internet.

According to many accounts, the overall quality and consistency of recruit indoctrination has declined significantly.<sup>168</sup> Senior AQAM leaders question the commitment of new recruits, worry openly about the movement being penetrated by foreign intelligence services, and fret about their ability to control new recruits. For their part, new recruits reportedly have widely varying perspective on the movement's goals and strategy. Training, however, has probably improved, at least with respect to urban guerrilla warfare, because of the availability of Iraq as an active "arena of jihad." Zawahiri has likened Iraq today to Afghanistan in the 1980s in that it provides

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<sup>165</sup> For an expanded discussion of the recruitment process, see: Angel Rabasa, Senior Policy Analyst at RAND, Prepared Statement for House Armed Services Defense Review and Radical Islam Gap Panel, November 3, 2005, p. 4; and Phillips, p. 5.

<sup>166</sup> The current National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, released in September 2006, asserts that "our enemies use the Internet to develop and disseminate propaganda, *recruit new members*, raise and transfer funds, train members on weapons use and tactics, and plan operations." Emphasis added. White House, National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (Washington, DC: White House, 2006), p. 17.

<sup>167</sup> Maples, "Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States," p. 5.

<sup>168</sup> Some terrorism experts dispute this contention. Michael Scheuer, for example, argues that based on the "admittedly imprecise information available," the next generation of al Qaeda recruits will be "at least as devout but more professional and less operationally visible;" larger in size than in the past; and "will be better educated and more adept at using the tools of modernity, particularly communications and weapons." See Michael Scheuer, "Al Qaeda's Next Generation: Less Visible and More Lethal," *Terrorism Focus*, Volume 2, Issue 18, October 14, 2005.

“an incubator” where the seeds of the jihadist movements can “grow and where it can acquire practical experience in combat, politics, and organizational matters.”<sup>169</sup> As several observers have remarked, regardless of the outcome of the war in Iraq, surviving foreign jihadis will eventually return to their native countries or the émigré communities from which they came. When they do, they will have more experience, cachet, and credibility, which will be useful both for recruitment, as well as for planning, organization, and conducting jihadi and operations around the world. They will have first-hand experience in urban warfare—including construction and employment of IEDs, use of stand-off weapons like mortars and MANPADS, assassination and kidnapping techniques, and sniper and ambush tactics.<sup>170</sup> While this could lead to a major increase in bloodshed and destruction in urban centers throughout world, the threat may be especially high in Saudi Arabia—and to a lesser extent, Egypt and Jordan—from where the overwhelming majority of jihadis fighting in Iraq hail.<sup>171</sup>

### **Current Operations**

Despite the loss of its sanctuary in Afghanistan, the capture of more than two-thirds of its senior leadership and numerous operatives, the rolling up of cells globally, the interdiction of C3 and financial links, and challenges with indoctrination and training, AQAM remains capable of global operations. Since September 11, 2001, exclusive of Iraq, it has been responsible for more than a score of major attacks ranging geographically from Spain to Indonesia (see Table 5). While it is often difficult to attribute attacks in Iraq to specific terrorist and insurgent groups, it is estimated that AQI has been behind more than 200 incidents, which have caused a total of more than 1,600 deaths and 3,000 injuries.<sup>172</sup> According to the Defense Intelligence Agency, more than 100 terrorist attacks planned against the United States and its allies have been thwarted.<sup>173</sup>

Al Qaeda claims that the movement is stronger and more capable today than it was on September 11, 2001. Propagandists on jihadi web sites pour forth a never-ending flow of unsubstantiated claims of increased vitality and cast small suicide attacks as epic events in an attempt to create a popular perception of positive progress. Ironically, while spending most of his time trying to evade capture, Zawahiri boasts in a tape released in December 2003 that, “we are still chasing the Americans and their allies everywhere, even in their homeland.”<sup>174</sup> To support often outlandish claims, AQAM leaders point out that prior to September 11, 2001 the movement was only able to muster one major attack every two years and since then, it has been averaging at

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<sup>169</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, serialized in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London, in Arabic), December 2001, translated by FBIS GMP2002010800097.

<sup>170</sup> Douglas Jehl, “Iraq May Be Prime Place for Training of Militants, C.I.A. Report Concludes,” *New York Times*, June 22, 2005.

<sup>171</sup> Hoffman, testimony, p. 12.

<sup>172</sup> MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. <http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=4416>.

<sup>173</sup> Richard Serrano and Greg Miller, “100 Terrorist Attacks Thwarted, U.S. Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 11, 2003.

<sup>174</sup> Associated Press, “Purported al-Qaida Tape Warns of Attacks,” December 19, 2003.

least two attacks per year.<sup>175</sup> The veracity of this claim of course depends upon what one means by the word “major.”

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<sup>175</sup> Dana Priest and Walter Pincus, “New Target and Tone: Message Shows Al Qaeda’s Adaptability,” *Washington Post*, April 16, 2004; and Geoffrey Nunberg, “Bin Laden’s Low-Tech Weapon,” *New York Times*, April 18, 2004.

**Table 5—Major Terrorists Incidents Linked to AQAM since September 11<sup>th</sup> Outside of Iraq**

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>US Casualties</b>	<b>Total Casualties</b>
Detonation of a natural gas truck outside a synagogue	Djerba, Tunisia	April 11, 2002	--	15 killed, 20 injured
Car bomb next to Navy shuttle bus	Karachi, Pakistan	May 8, 2002	--	12 killed, 19 injured
Truck bombing outside US Consulate and Marriott Hotel	Karachi, Pakistan	June 14, 2002	1 killed	11 killed, 51 injured
Speed boat attack on French oil tanker <i>Limburg</i>	Al Dhabbah, Yemen	October 6, 2002	--	1 killed, 4 injured
Massive car bombing of two nightclubs frequented by tourists	Bali, Indonesia	October 12, 2002	7 killed	202 killed, 300+ injured
Double bombing in shopping district	Zamboanga, Philippines	October 17, 2002	--	7 killed, 150 injured
Car bombing of Israeli-owned hotel and attempted downing of an Israeli airliner with SA-7 SAMs	Mombassa, Kenya	November 28, 2002	--	15 killed, 40 injured
Coordinated car bombings of 3 housing compounds for foreign workers	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	May 12, 2003	8 killed, 44 injured	35 killed, 216 injured
Coordinated suicide bombings against five targets	Casablanca, Morocco	May 2003	--	33 killed, 101 injured
Car bombing of J.W. Marriott hotel	Jakarta, Indonesia	August 5, 2003	2 injured	13 killed, 149 injured
Assault and bombing of a housing complex	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	November 8, 2003	--	17 killed, 120 injured
Suicide truck bombings of two synagogues	Istanbul, Turkey	November 15, 2003	--	25 killed, 300 injured
Bombing of British Consulate and HSBC bank	Istanbul, Turkey	November 20, 2003	--	41 killed, 555 injured
Sinking of Superferry 14	Manila Bay, Philippines	February 27, 2004	--	132 killed
Coordinated train bombing (ten bombs at four different locations)	Madrid, Spain	March 11, 2004	--	191 killed, 600+ injured
Armed attack against oil industry office and residential resort	Khobar, Saudi Arabia	May 30, 2004	1 killed	22 killed, 25 injured
Car bombing outside Australian Embassy	Jakarta, Indonesia	September 9, 2004	--	10 killed, 182 injured
Suicide bombing of Abdul Rab mosque	Kandahar, Afghanistan	June 1, 2005	--	21 killed, 51 injured
Coordinated bombing of London underground and double-decker bus	London, United Kingdom	July 7, 2005	--	56 killed, 700+ injured
Coordinated bombing of three western hotels	Amman, Jordan	November 11, 2005	1 killed	63 killed, 100 injured
Bombing of Askari Mosque	Samarra, Iraq	February 22, 2006	--	--
Attempted suicide VBED attack on Abqaiq oil-processing plant	Saudi Arabia	February 24, 2006	--	2 killed, 4 injured

Over the past five years, AQAM-linked attacks have mainly involved vehicle-borne and improvised explosive devices (especially in Iraq), suicide bombers, small-scale assaults, targeted shootings, and beheadings. None have caused casualties on a scale comparable to the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001 or even the August 1998 attacks on the US Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. There have been only three attacks that caused more than 100 fatalities: the Bali bombing in October 2002, the sinking of Superferry 14 in Manila Bay in February 2004, and the Madrid train bombing in April 2004. While several have demonstrated an ability to coordinate multiple bombings within a single city, none have shown an ability to coordinate jihadi efforts internationally. Nearly all of the attacks have focused on soft targets and most of those were in Muslim areas. As a result, Muslim civilians account for the overwhelming majority of total casualties—which obviously works at cross-purposes with winning over the hearts and minds of the ummah. There have been only two attacks directly against the West: the train bombing in Madrid, Spain in March 2004 and the coordinated bombing of the London underground subway system and a double-decker bus on July 7, 2005. Interestingly, both of those attacks were carried out by groups without any formal links to al Qaeda.

Despite propaganda to the contrary, a strong case can be made that AQAM's operational capabilities have waned considerably since September 11, 2001. Whether or not the central core can regenerate enough C3 to pool and coordinate the efforts of its far-flung franchises or conduct independent global operations remains an open question. As mentioned earlier, one cannot dismiss the possibility that al Qaeda leaders will make good on their threat to acquire and use WMD against Western targets.

### III. VIOLENT SHI'A EXTREMISTS – “KHOMEINISM”

Radical Shi'a ideologues and terrorist groups draw selectively upon the works of Sunni scholars like Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Mawdudi, focusing narrowly on their rejection of the Western secular model of governance and the imperative to re-introduce the sharia as the blueprint for all aspects of life. The dominant inspiration for radical Shi'ism, however, is without question the works and public statements of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Rising from a firebrand, anti-Shah cleric in Qom in the 1960s to the *faqih*, or the supreme spiritual and political leader, of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he reformulated the Shi'a faith tradition in two fundamental, and still contentious, ways: introducing the concept of the *velayat-e faqih*, meaning direct rule by Islamic jurists; and replacing a tradition of passive acceptance of injustice on Earth while waiting for the return of the Mahdi at the end of days with a positive obligation to rise up against un-Islamic regimes in the present.

Khomeini-inspired Shi'a extremism has been responsible for numerous attacks against US interests, as well as those of US allies, over the past quarter century, including the following:

- Seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran on November 6, 1979 and the taking of 66 hostages, 52 of whom were held in captivity for 444 days.
- Abduction of some 30 Americans and other Westerners in Lebanon in the 1980s, many of whom were tortured and executed during their confinement, including the CIA's Chief of Station in Beirut, William Buckley.
- A suicide car-bomb attack against the US embassy in Beirut that resulted in 63 deaths, including 17 Americans, on April 18, 1983.
- The bombing of US and French military barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Marines and 58 French paratroopers, on October 23, 1983.
- A truck bomb attack against the US embassy and other targets in Kuwait City on December 12, 1983, killing five people and injuring 80.
- A truck bomb attack against US embassy annex in east Beirut, killing 24 people, on September 20, 1984.
- The hijacking of Kuwait Airways Flight 221 on December 3, 1984, resulting in the deaths of two Americans.
- The hijacking on TWA Flight 847 on June 14, 1985 and its subsequent diversion to Beirut, during which an US Navy diver was executed.

- The bombing of the Khobar Towers complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 US airmen and wounding 372 additional Air Force personnel in June 1996.<sup>176</sup>
- Scores of bombings and suicide attacks by Hezbollah within Israel and southern Lebanon, resulting in 100s of deaths and 1,000s of injuries.<sup>177</sup>

In short, prior to September 11, 2001, Shi'a terrorists were responsible for killing and injuring far more Americans than the Sunni-based Salafi-jihadi branch of Islamic radicalism. The section that follows provides an overview of the ideological roots of violent, Shi'a extremism, which is sometime referred to as "Khomeinism," and what distinguishes it from Sunni radicalism. Subsequent sections will examine key actors in the Shi'a branch (i.e., Iran and Hezbollah); their goals, strategy, and lines of operation for waging a defensive jihad; and their current capabilities for implementing them.

## IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS

To understand the goals and motivations of today's Shi'a extremists, it is imperative to understand two key issues: the basic differences between the Shi'a and Sunni confessions; and innovations in traditional Shi'a thought introduced and institutionalized in Iran by, among others, Ayatollah Khomeini. As will become clear in the sections that follow, while they are separated by significant ideological/theological divides, radical Shi'a and Sunni "Islamists" offer nearly identical diagnoses of and remedies for curing the ills plaguing the modern Muslim world.

### The Shi'a-Sunni Schism

Following the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632, there was an immediate succession crisis within the early Islamic community in Medina. The *shi'at Ali*, which translates in Arabic as the "faction" or "followers" of Ali, believed leadership should pass over bloodlines. Since Muhammad had no sons, they called for his patrilateral cousin and son-in-law, Ali, to become the infallible spiritual leader or "Imam" of the community.<sup>178</sup> The beliefs and traditions of the *shi'at Ali* eventually coalesced into what became known as Shi'a Islam. A rival group believed, however, that the elders of the Islamic community (initially, Muhammad's "companions") should choose his successor, or "caliph" (*khalifah*), from among the men of the prophet's tribe of Quraysh. Those who shared this view became known as "the People of the Sunna and the

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<sup>176</sup> While the attack itself was conducted by a Saudi branch of Hezbollah, the entire operation was planned, funded, and coordinated by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the MOIS. The execution of the attack was approved by "senior Iranian government officials." See National Commission on the Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, "Overview of the Enemy," Staff Statement No. 15, p. 5; and Louis Freeh, "Khobar Towers," *Wall Street Journal*, June 23, 2006, p. 10.

<sup>177</sup> According to the terrorist database maintained by the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), Hezbollah is responsible for 836 fatalities and 1,535 injuries across 179 terrorist incidents since it was founded in 1982. Israelis account for the majority of those casualties.

<sup>178</sup> Ali was the son of Muhammad's father's brother and was married to Fatima, one of Muhammad's daughters. Members of the *shi'at Ali* asserted that prior to his death Muhammad designated Ali as his heir.

Community” and their beliefs and practices created the foundation of Sunni Islam.<sup>179</sup> The “People of the Sunna” carried the day in 632, electing three caliphs as successors to Muhammad before finally selecting Ali in 656.<sup>180</sup> Adherents to Shi’a Islam have been a minority within the Muslim world ever since. Today, only about 15 percent of the world’s roughly 1.5 billion Muslims practice the Shi’a form of Islam.

In Iran, Shi’a Islam has been the official “state” religion since the founding of the Safavid dynasty in 1501 by Shah Ismail Safavi, who claimed to be the “Imam’s deputy” and took on the royal title of the “Shadow of God on Earth.” Today, Shi’a Muslims account for 89 percent of the Iranian population. Less dominant Shi’a majorities exist today in Iraq and Bahrain, and significant minority enclaves exist in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia as well. The vast majority of Shi’ites belong to the “Twelver” sect, which holds that there have been twelve pure and sinless Imams, beginning with Ali and ending between 874 and 940 AD. The earlier date is when the twelfth Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi, went into physical seclusion in Samarra, Iraq, and the later date is when his spiritual connection with humanity was broken, which is referred to as his “greater occultation.” This “hidden Imam,” which is also referred to as the “Imam of the age” or al-mahdi, is expected to return as a messiah shortly before the end of time to fill the earth “with justice and equity.”<sup>181</sup> While this apocalyptic world view also exists within the Sunni tradition, it is far less prominent. Reflecting its history as an oppressed minority group, Shi’a theology is also more keenly focused on the concept of divine justice.

From a theological/ideological perspective, contemporary Shi’a terrorist groups like Hezbollah have much in common with Sunni-rooted, Salafi-jihadist groups like al Qaeda. As will be elaborated upon below, both groups provide a similar diagnosis of the ills plaguing the Muslim world: the ummah has been led astray by apostate regimes and corrupted by Western influences. Their suggested cure is nearly identical: return to “true Islam” by, above all else, living in complete accord with “revealed” Islamic law. Despite their shared Muslim identity and broad agreement on how to restore the vitality of the Muslim world, however, cooperation between Shi’a and Sunni extremists is more the exception than the rule. Relatively minor theological differences have, over time, grown into deep political divides that are difficult to straddle. These differences have also been compounded by more than 13 centuries of antagonism, punctuated by episodes of bloody struggle and persecution. Over this period, the Shi’a minority has cultivated a communal sense of victimization and oppression at the hands of the Sunni majority. Although Shi’a revolutionaries have occasionally resisted Sunni rule, as occurred during the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, the norm has been reluctant acquiescence. Meanwhile, at the risk of over-generalizing, Sunnis have adopted a sense of religious superiority over the Shi’a, viewing them as lesser Muslims or, at the extreme, as heretics deserving death. Both to understand the inspiration driving Shi’a terrorist groups today and why sustained

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<sup>179</sup> Henry Munson, Jr, *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 17.

<sup>180</sup> In the Sunni tradition, the first four caliphs of the Islamic community—Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali—are revered as the “rightly guided caliphs” and the period of their reign, running from 632-661, is considered to be an extension of the golden age of Mohammad’s rule in Medina from 622-632. As mentioned in the previous chapter, AQAM calls for a return to this early period, prior to the accretion of corrupting foreign influences.

<sup>181</sup> Munson, *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East*, pp. 16, 26.

cooperation with Sunni groups is problematic, it is imperative to highlight some of the theological/ideological difference between these co-religionists. Aside from the central debate over the proper method of succession after the death of Muhammad in 632, Shi'a Islam has incorporated a number of beliefs and practices over time that set it apart, including the following:

- Only the 12 preternatural Imams inherited the Prophet's understanding of Islam and thus, only they have the authority to offer infallible interpretations of the Quran and hadiths of Islam;<sup>182</sup>
- Only the Imams, or those who act on their behalf, are the legitimate holders of political authority—and thus, they alone can declare an offensive jihad;
- The “gates of ijtiḥad,” or the use of individual reasoning to interpret the Quran and hadith in light of contemporary circumstances, were closed in the (10<sup>th</sup> century) within the Sunni world, but remain open for Shiite jurists, significantly increasing the flexibility and adaptability of Shi'a jurisprudence; and
- Shiite veneration of the Imams—especially Ali's younger son, Husayn, who was killed near Karbala, Iraq by the army of the Sunni caliph Yazid in 680—is alien to Sunnis and viewed by some as outright heresy because it violates the doctrine of *tawḥid*, the belief in the absolute unity of God.<sup>183</sup>

### **Revolutionary Shi'a Ideology: The Innovation of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini**

Consistent with the collective sense of victimization and oppression inherent to the Shi'a faith tradition, the refusal to accept the legitimacy of non-Imami rule has been historically fused with a conscious eschewal of rebellion. The fifth and sixth Imams, Muhammad al-Baqir and Jafar al-Sadiq, explicitly directed their followers not to rebel against their rulers under any circumstances. Jafar al-Sadiq, who was the source for much of the Imami hadith, went so far as to recommend “total abstention from even so much as verbal dispute with their opponents.”<sup>184</sup>

What made Ayatollah Khomeini revolutionary was that he rejected this “quietistic patience” and passive waiting for the appearance of the Twelfth Imam. Reinterpreting more than a millennia worth of Shi'a hadith, as well as implicitly over-ruling the fifth and sixth Imams, he portrayed Shi'a Islam as a religion of rebellion. In *Islam and Revolution*, turning Islamic history on its head, he wrote: “This is the root of the matter: Sunni populated countries believe in obeying their rulers, whereas the Shi'is have always believed in rebellion—sometimes they were able to

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<sup>182</sup> As will be discussed later, Ayatollah Khomeini's departed from this tenet with his concept of *velayat-e-faqih* (rule by a supreme Islamic jurist) in the 1970s.

<sup>183</sup> The events surrounding the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, most of his family, and followers in 680 are narrated and reenacted each year during the first ten days of the month of Muharram. The final day of mourning, Ashura, which marks the martyrdom of Husayn, is considered the holiest day of the Shii year.

<sup>184</sup> Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1969), p. 2.

rebel, and at other times they were compelled to keep silent.”<sup>185</sup> While other Shi’a scholars and clerics have attempted to usher in a more revolutionary form of Shi’a Islam in the past, Khomeini was the first to cultivate a sustained, broad-based movement sufficient to gain political power and institutionalize it.

Because of his public criticism of the Shah’s policies, Khomeini was exiled to Turkey in 1964. The following year he moved to Iraq and then, in 1978, to France. From the safety of exile, his reproofs of the Shah became more strident and uncompromising. Building upon the work of Dr. Ali Shariati and many others, Khomeini argued for what is sometimes referred to as a “maximalist” version of Islam, meaning that the sharia offers a blueprint for all aspects of personal and public life. As he wrote later:

Islam has a system and a program for all the different affairs of society: the form of government and administration, the regulation of people’s dealings with each other, the relations of state and people, relations with foreign states and all other political and economic matters.<sup>186</sup>

To this “maximalist” view, which has roots in both the Shi’a and Sunni traditions, Khomeini popularized the belief that intervening in politics was not merely the right of Muslims, but an individual responsibility. In the decades leading up to the 1979 revolution, Khomeini and others successfully recast Imam Husayn as a revolutionary leader who sought to liberate the oppressed peoples of Kufa from the tyrannical caliph Yazid.<sup>187</sup> They argued that rather than mourn him and passively pray for his intercession, the faithful should actively emulate the “Lord of Martyrs” by rising up against the Shah. On November 23, 1978, just prior to the month of Muharram and the Ashura holy day, Khomeini issued a statement to the Iranian people that read in part:

We are about to begin the month of epic heroism and self-sacrifice—the month in which blood triumphed over the sword, the month in which truth condemned falsehood for all eternity and branded the mark of disgrace upon the forehead of all oppressors and satanic governments...the month that proves the superpowers may be defeated by the word of truth; the month in which the leader of the Muslims [Husayn] taught us how to struggle against all the tyrants of history.<sup>188</sup>

Less than four months later, in March 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran was established. The new constitution, drafted by the clerically dominated Assembly of Experts, was ratified by a popular referendum by the end of the year. The constitution enshrined the principle of direct rule by Shiite Islamic jurists and theologians, called “velayat-e faqih” or guardianship of the jurisconsult. The Islamic revolutionaries argued that in the absence of the Hidden Imam, Muslim society should be guided by Islamic law, the sharia, which could be best understood by Islamic jurists. Therefore, rather than just advising secular leaders, jurists should rule directly. The

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<sup>185</sup> Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, translated and edited by Hamid Algar (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1981), pp. 326-327.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 249-250.

<sup>187</sup> This activist revolutionary interpretation of the martyrdom of Husayn had several precedents in Iranian history. See Munson, p. 25.

<sup>188</sup> Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, p. 242.

constitution named Ayatollah Khomeini the “faqih” for life, bestowing him with both supreme political and religious authority. This “innovative” concept was contentious at the time and remains so today.<sup>189</sup> Until Khomeini, Shiite ulama never acknowledged the religious legitimacy of temporal rule of any kind. Traditionally, spiritual leadership of the Shi’a community is vested solely with God, the Prophet Muhammad, and the infallible Imams. With the occultation of the Muhammad al-Mahdi in 10<sup>th</sup> century, there could, therefore, be no legitimate claims to spiritual authority on Earth.

On November 6, 1979, radicalized Iranian students and other followers of Khomeini stormed the US embassy in Tehran and took 66 Americans hostage. Of that number, 52 were held until January 21, 1981. In addition to marking the first attack by “Khomeinists” on US interests, the embassy seizure also precipitated the resignation of Mehdi Bazargan, a lay scholar who espoused an interpretation of the Quran consistent with the demands of modernity, as prime minister two days later. In the wake of Bazargan’s departure, pragmatic, pro-modernity Iranian policymakers either resigned or were forced out of office. Khomeini viewed this “second revolution” as even more consequential than the overthrow of the Shah in that revolutionary Islamists were able to wrest the reins of government away from “liberal” centrists and nationalists.<sup>190</sup> The “second revolution” also brought about a major shift in Iranian foreign policy. Instead of trying to promote Iranian’s national interests within the international system by playing the United States and Western Europe off the Soviet Union, which had been the policy under Bazargan, the cleric dominated government characterized the international system as “illegitimate” and “unjust,” rejecting the dominance of both the American and Soviet superpowers. The Islamic Republic of Iran committed itself to the long-term mission of creating an Islamic utopia on Earth with justice for all. The twin principles of “neither East nor West, but the Islamic Republic” and “the export of the revolution” internationally have guided Iranian foreign policy ever since. As will be elaborated upon below, an integral component of Iran’s effort to “export of the revolution” has been supporting Shiite insurgents and terrorists groups.

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<sup>189</sup> The adoption of the faqih system was opposed by key figures in the 1979 Revolution, including the modernist lay leaders such a Mehdi Bazargan and Abul Hasan Bani-Sadr, as well as senior ayatollahs such as Shariamadari, Taleqani, and Tabatabai.

<sup>190</sup> R.K. Ramazani, “Iran’s Export of the Revolution: Politics, Ends, and Means,” in Esposito, *The Iranian Revolution*, p. 43.

## KEY ACTORS IN THE “KHOMEINIST” BRANCH OF GLOBAL TERRORISM

The Islamic Republic of Iran is unquestionably the prime mover behind Shi'a-inspired terrorism in the world today. Most of Iran's efforts to “export the revolution” over the past quarter-century have failed. The major exception, however, is Hezbollah, which was planted in Lebanon in 1982 and has grown into a quasi-autonomous actor with global reach. It appears, however, that with its active support of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and Sadr Organization, and their associated Shiite militias (i.e., Badr and Mahdi Army, respectively), Iran is on the verge of creating a new Hezbollah-like organization in Iraq. While both organizations are strongly supported by Iran, they also pursue their own political agendas within Iraq. The Mahdi Army or Jaish al Mahdi (JAM), nominally controlled by Muqtada al Sadr, has grown rapidly since its creation in June 2003 and has emerged as an important quasi-independent actor. Shiite radicals, who may or may not be linked to Iran or Hezbollah, continue to have a presence in other countries in the region (e.g., Saudi Arabia and Bahrain). In short, although “Khomeinism” as a revolutionary ideology was treading water for much of the past two decades, it is now resurgent. Bellwethers of this resurgence include the radicalization of Iranian domestic politics, Hezbollah's recent electoral victories in Lebanon, and Hezbollah's growing stature in the wake of its strategically successful battle with the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) in July-August 2006.

### The Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran's constitution explicitly called for exporting the revolution to unify the Islamic world and, in time, to extend God's sovereignty over *all* peoples—not just Muslims. In Article 11, it states that the Iranian government should “exert continuous efforts in order to realize the political, economic and cultural unity of the Islamic world.” In Article 154 it holds that the “Islamic Republic of Iran is concerned with the welfare of humanity as a whole and takes independence, liberty and sovereignty of justice and righteousness as the right of people the world over....The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the struggle of [the] oppressed anywhere in the world.”<sup>191</sup> During his reign as faqih, Khomeini emphasized that the divinely guided quest for a new Islamic world order was not limited to the Muslim world. He asserted in 1979 that: “Islam is not peculiar to a country, several countries, a group [of people or countries] or even the Muslims. Islam has come for humanity....Islam wishes to bring all of humanity under the umbrella of its justice.”<sup>192</sup> Over the past quarter-century, the practical implementation of that policy has shifted back and forth between Iran serving as an inspirational-model for others and the active propagation of the ideas underpinning 1979 Revolution, including the use of force, in what is commonly referred to as the “volcano theory.”

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<sup>191</sup> English translation of Iranian constitution, *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1980, pp. 180-204.

<sup>192</sup> FBIS, Daily Reports—Middle East and North Africa, December 18, 1979.

In the wake of the Revolution, the more aggressive “volcano” approach dominated and it seemed to be working, as evidenced by the following:<sup>193</sup>

- Communal riots in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province;
- Terrorist attacks (e.g., car bombings), hijacking, and civil disturbances in Kuwait;
- Demonstrations and several coups attempts in Bahrain by the Iranian-backed Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain;
- Major Shiite uprisings in Karbala and Najaf in Iraq; and
- The deployment of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) units to Lebanon and the founding of Lebanese Hezbollah in 1982.

In addition to these developments, which were supported in varying degrees by the Iranian government, the Revolution also served to reinforce and accelerate Islamist “liberation” movements from Egypt to the Philippines. While Sunni groups had no interest in replicating the Iranian model, they were inspired by how Islam could be used to mobilize the masses and hold an apostate government to account. As one leader of the Muslim Brotherhood explained at the time, the Iranian Revolution “is a matchless, powerful, and vital example of the [larger] Islamic revolution...and the important thing is not to put our hands at our sides and wait.”<sup>194</sup>

During the mid-to-late 1980s, with the major exception of Hezbollah’s activities in Lebanon, the export of the Revolution stalled. The eight-year war with Iraq not only pulled resources away from that endeavor, but also exacted a major toll on the Iranian people and its economy. The attractiveness of the Iranian model waned as the excesses of the Khomeini government, especially with respect to denial of individual freedoms and suppressing internal dissent, gained increased media attention. In addition, states clamped down on internal Islamic opposition groups by linking them to Iranian extremism and the threat of “Khomeinism.”<sup>195</sup> With the Iranian economy in tatters and the quality of life for Iranians badly eroded as a result of the war, the government largely abandoned the volcano strategy in favor of a renewed focus on the inspiration model. With pragmatists on the ascendancy within the Iranian bureaucracy, Iran sought to develop closer economic and diplomatic ties with the West.

With Ayatollah Khomeini’s *fatwa* in February 1989 condemning Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* and calling for his execution for apostasy, the pendulum started to swing back toward the

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<sup>193</sup> See John Esposito, ed., *The Iranian Revolution—Its Global Impact* (Miami, FL: Florida International University Press, 1990).

<sup>194</sup> Muhammad Abd al-Rahim Anbar as cited in Shahrough Akhavi, “The Impact of the Iranian Revolution in Egypt,” in Esposito, ed., *The Iranian Revolution—Its Global Impact*, p. 145.

<sup>195</sup> In Iraq, for example, Saddam Hussein’s Ba’athist regime outlawed the Islamic Call Society (al Dawa) the Mujahidin, and other Shi’a groups with suspected links to Iran; arrested or otherwise suppressed militant Shi’a leaders; and executed Iraq’s most prominent and influential cleric, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr. Esposito, ed., *The Iranian Revolution*, p. 33.

activist model. In his *fatwa*, Khomeini couched the Rushdie issue as part of a larger struggle between the Islamic world and the West. He declared that: "the issue for them [Western powers] is not that of defending an individual—the issue for them is to support an anti-Islamic and anti-value current, which has been masterminded by those institutions belonging to Zionism, Britain and the USA which have placed themselves against the Islamic world, through their ignorance and haste."<sup>196</sup> Iran ramped up its support to Shiite extremist groups opposed to the Sunni monarchies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (i.e., Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the UAE). Those efforts, however, were unsuccessful and pushed several of the GCC states into closer relationships with the United States.

With the death of Ayatollah Khomeini on June 3, 1989 and the impressive routing of the Iraqi military by the US forces in the Desert Storm, the pendulum swung back toward the inspirational model. By the mid-1990's, Iran was focused on economic development, reaching out to Europe, in particular. In 1999, former President Mohammad Khatami visited Saudi Arabia, the first senior level Iranian official to do so since the 1979 Revolution. During this period, however, Ayatollah Khamenei apparently approved the bombing of the Khobar Towers complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, which caused the deaths of 19 US airmen and seriously wounded 372 additional Air Force personnel.

With the failure of the so-called "reformist" movement, the pendulum appears to be swinging back toward sustained, active confrontation with the West. Conservatives, supported by Ayatollah Khamenei, have been gaining strength ever since the 2003 municipal elections that were boycotted by the reformists. In the run up to the February 2004 Majles elections, the Council of Guardians disqualified about 3,600 candidates, mostly reformists, including 87 sitting members of the Majles, enabling conservatives to gain a majority.<sup>197</sup> The June 2005 election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, an ultra-conservative, is also indicative of this trend. Ahmadinejad's rhetoric is intensely anti-American and anti-Israeli. In June 2006, he warned that unless the United States abandoned its current path of falsehood, "your doomed destiny will be annihilation" and then in August 2006, he informed the American people that: "If you would like to have good relations with the Iranian nation in the future...bow down before the greatness of the Iranian nation and surrender. If you don't accept [to do this], the Iranian nation will later force you to surrender and bow down."<sup>198</sup> In a student rally entitled "The World Without Zionism," on October 2005, he asserted that "the establishment of a Zionist regime was a move by the world oppressor [the United States] against the Islamic world" and that "the skirmishes in the occupied land are part of the war of destiny." Referencing Ayatollah Khomeini, he declared that "as the Imam said, Israel must be wiped off the map."<sup>199</sup> A year later on the eve of Qud's

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<sup>196</sup> BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, February 24, 1989.

<sup>197</sup> Kenneth Katzman, "Iran: US Concerns and Policy Responses," CRS Report for Congress, January 20, 2006, pp. 3-4.

<sup>198</sup> "President Ahmadinejad Says Iran to Respond to Nuclear Proposals by 'End of Mordad'," aired on Islamic Republic of Iran News Network Television (IRINN), June 21, 2006; "Ahmadinejad Says US, UK 'Resorted to Trick' to Postpone Cease-Fire," aired on Islamic Republic of Iran News Network Television (IRINN), August 15, 2006; and President George W. Bush, "President Discusses Global War on Terror," Capital Hilton Hotel, September 5, 2006.

<sup>199</sup> A few days later, the IRGC issued a statement of support that read in part: "In the face of the bestial behavior of the regime occupying Qods [Israel], and for its infinite oppression of Palestinians, the wrath of the hard done by

well as Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army.<sup>217</sup> This support is being provided quasi-covertly by the IRGC's Qods Force and MOIS officers. By providing Shiite militias with more lethal improvised explosive devices (IEDs), using shaped explosive charges, Iran is responsible for an ever-growing number of US and Coalition casualties. According to the Iraq Survey Group, in 2003, Iran reportedly placed "a bounty on U.S. forces of U.S. \$2,000 for each helicopter shot down, \$1,000 for each tank destroyed, and \$500 for each U.S. military personnel killed."<sup>218</sup>

While estimates vary, the Badr Corps reportedly now comprises about 25,000 men and the Mahdi Army claims to have as many as 60,000 part- and full-time fighters—all of those figures, however, are probably inflated.<sup>219</sup> Splinter groups and "death squads" have spun off from both the Badr Corps and Mahdi Army.<sup>220</sup> These radicalized groups operate largely independently from political control and have taken it upon themselves to assassinate Sunni leaders and carry out myriad terror attacks against Sunni Iraqis in the name of Islam, including mass kidnappings and execution-style killings, forced evictions, and indiscriminate car bombings. Shiite "death squads," mostly those linked to the Mahdi Army, are now the primary driver of sectarian strife raging across the country, especially in Baghdad.<sup>221</sup> Exacerbating the problem, there have been numerous reports that the Shiite-controlled Interior Ministry, which has been penetrated by both militias, has been complicit in many of the killings.<sup>222</sup> The Badr Corps, the Mahdi Army, and spin-off Shiite gangs also target Iraqi military and police forces, as well as Coalition military forces. The Mahdi Army, in particular, has fought several pitched battles with US, British, and Iraqi forces, including a series of offensives in 2004 in Karbala, Najaf, and Sadr City. Shiite militias have targeted Iraqi oil infrastructure, corporate facilities and local businesses deemed "un-Islamic," such as liquor stores.

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<sup>217</sup> The Badr Corps, which began as the Badr Brigade, was organized, trained, and equipped by the IRGC's Qods Force in Iran and possibly in Lebanon prior to 2003. The Mahdi Army is believed to have gained access to unguarded Iraqi ammunition dumps in the immediate fall of the Hussein regime from which they acquired light weapons, submachine guns and rocket-propelled grenades. For an excellent overview of Iran's influence within Iraq, see: Vali Nasr, "When the Shiites Rise," *Foreign Affairs*, July-August 2006, pp. 60-66.

<sup>218</sup> *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD*, September 30, 2004; and Edward Pound, "Special Report: The Iran Connection," *US News & World Report*, November 11, 2004.

<sup>219</sup> According to IRGC documents recovered by the media, as of August 2004, Iran was paying the salaries of at least 11,740 members of the Badr Corps. The Mahdi Army is believed to comprise at least 10,000 full-time active fighters who can be reinforced by the rapid mobilization of several times that number. See Iason Athanasiadis, "Iran's Presence Shadowy in Iraq," *Washington Times*, April 26, 2006, p. 16; and Michael Ware, "Inside Iran's Secret War for Iraq," *Time*, August 22, 2005, p. 26.

<sup>220</sup> According to senior US military and intelligence officials, the United States has identified at least 23 militias operating in Iraq, most of them Shiite. Sudarsan Raghavan, "Militias Splintering Into Radicalized Cells," *Washington Post*, October 19, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>221</sup> Iran may be funding some of these death squads. Solomon Moore, "Iraq Impeding Efforts to Go After Shiite Militias, U.S. Military Says," *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 2006; Solomon Moore, "Killings by Shiite Militias Detailed," *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 2006; and Sabrina Tavernise, "Cleric is Said to Lose Reins Over Part of Iraqi Militia," *New York Times*, September 28, 2006.

<sup>222</sup> Under pressure from Western officials and some Iraqi political leaders, the Iraqi Minister of the Interior, Jawad al Bolani, reshuffled the ministry's senior leadership and purged some 3,000 employees charged with corruption and rights abuses. As of the writing of this report, however, it is unclear whether these efforts have had any meaningful effect on the ground. David Rising, "3,000 Ministry Staffers Fired Over Corruption," *Washington Times*, October 15, 2006, p. 6; Kirk Semple and Michael Luo, "Iraqi Interior Minister to Purge Agency to Stem Killings," *New York Times*, October 14, 2006, p. 5.

According to some reports, the Qods Force has deployed a few hundred operatives, organized into 10-20 man teams, to Iraq. These units, which operate in concert with Hezbollah trainers and fighters, are believed to be engaging in *direct* attacks against US and Coalition forces, in addition to training, equipping, and advising Shiite militias.<sup>223</sup> In December 2006 and again in January 2007, US forces conducted raids against buildings being used by the Qods Force, seizing reams of documents, computer files, and other physical evidence implicating the government of Iran in supporting the Iraqi insurgency. Several Iranians were also detained, including Brigadier General Mohsen Chirazi, the third most-senior official in the Qods Force.<sup>224</sup> Iran's MOIS is also active in Iraq. According to a leaked US Army intelligence assessment, written at the end of 2003, "Iranian intelligence agents are conducting operations in every major city with a significant Shia population. The counterintelligence threat from Iran is assessed to be high, as locally employed people, former military officers, politicians, and young men are recruited, hired, and trained by Iranian intelligence to collect on coalition forces."<sup>225</sup> MOIS personnel are believed to have established major networks in Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, Kut, Basra, and Kirkuk.

In essence, Iran is trying to transplant Hezbollah to Iraqi soil—the parallels between Iranian operations in southern Lebanon in the 1980s and ongoing activities in Iraq are striking. Iran's support to Shiite militias and covert direct action against US and Coalition forces is consistent with an overarching strategy of weakening the "Great Satan" and dampening US enthusiasm for pursuing regime change in Iran.<sup>226</sup> It also adds depth to Iran's growing political influence in Iraq and quite possibly to its stature in the broader Muslim world. Given those strategic benefits, Iran may use its Shiite militia surrogates and direct presence (Qods Force and MOIS) to sustain an environment of "controlled chaos" in Iraq in order to keep as many US forces tied down for as long as possible. That being said, it is not in Iran's interest to foment an all-out civil war in Iraq, which would likely pull in neighboring powers such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia. A full-blown civil war could also spill over into Sunni enclaves within Iran: Kurds in the Azarbaijan e-Gharbi and Kordestan provinces, Arabs along the Persian Gulf Coast, and Baluch in the Sistan va Baluchistan province adjacent to Pakistan. Finally, Iran also has an interest in protecting Shi'a holy sites throughout Iraq, which would likely come under attack if the sectarian violence spiraled out of control. As former Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Maleki put it, "if your neighbor's house is on fire, it means your home is also in danger."<sup>227</sup> Keeping the current chaos under "control" in Iraq, however, may prove difficult—or to borrow Maleki's metaphor, ongoing Iranian efforts to keep the coals of sectarian violence smoldering in Iraq could inadvertently stoke them into a raging fire that would be difficult for Iran to contain.

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<sup>223</sup> The estimated size of Qods Force presence ranges from about 100, to a very specific "280," to nearly 500. While it is been widely reported that Hezbollah trainers are in Iraq, the size of their presence appears to be unknown. Michael Ware, "Inside Iran's Secret War for Iraq," *Time*, August 22, 2005, p. 26; and Edward Pound, "The Iran Connection," *U.S. News & World Reports*, November 22, 2004. See also: Rowan Scarborough, "Rumsfeld Accuses Iranians of Fomenting Violence in Iraq," *Washington Times*, March 8, 2006, p. 11; Stephan Dinan, "Bush Says Iran Bombs Used in Iraq," *Washington Times*, March 14, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>224</sup> Robin Wright and Nancy Trejos, "U.S. Troops Raid 2 Iranian Targets in Iraq, Detain 5 People," *Washington Post*, January 12, 2007, p. 16.

<sup>225</sup> Edward T. Pound, "The Iran Connection," *U.S. News & World Reports*, November 22, 2004.

<sup>226</sup> Vali Nasr, "When the Shiites Rise," *Foreign Affairs*, July-August 2006, p. 66.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

The final line of operation being pursued by Iran is the clandestine development of a nuclear weapons capability. While the latter may appear at first glance to be an altogether separate issue from Iranian involvement in the war on terrorism, the two are, in fact, very much linked. The acquisition of even a small number of nuclear weapons would be strategically advantageous for "exporting the revolution" for at least three reasons: deterring Israel from striking Iran or any other Muslim state with nuclear weapons; deterring American conventional "aggression" or pursuit of "regime change" in Tehran in response to its support of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Shiite militias in Iraq, as well as its ongoing refusal to turn over senior al Qaeda leadership; and finally, elevating its stature dramatically in the eyes of the Muslim world. Conversely, Iran will almost certainly use its proxies and direct presence in Lebanon and Iraq as coercive levers against the West, threatening to ratchet up the violence in either or both places if the UN Security Council imposes meaningful economic and diplomatic sanctions beyond those imposed in December 2006.

Iran has repeatedly disavowed that it has any intention to develop a nuclear weapon, claiming to be interested solely in peaceful nuclear energy. The official position of the US intelligence community is that "Iran is intent on developing a nuclear weapon."<sup>228</sup> Based on a series of critical reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and intelligence reports, the UN Security Council has threatened to impose sanctions on Iran if it does not suspend its ongoing uranium enrichment activities. Since its clandestine enrichment program was first revealed in April 2003, however, Iran has resisted international pressure, adeptly managing to stall serious consideration of the issue by the UN Security Council for more than three years with frequently repeated cycles of expressing interest in negotiations followed by bombastic defiance. Given repeated public commitments by President Ahmadinejad to Iran's "right" to develop nuclear energy, which has actually boosted his popularity at home, continued Iranian defiance of the UN Security Council and the broader international community is probable; the domestic political cost of capitulation would almost certainly outweigh the cost of UN-imposed sanctions.

Although Iran has successfully demonstrated the ability to slightly enrich uranium (3.5 percent) using a 164-centrifuge cascade at the Natanz complex, it has reportedly had difficulty setting up and operating a larger cascade.<sup>229</sup> Plans to have a 3,000-centrifuge cascade operational by the end of this year will not be met. Estimates vary widely on how long it may take Iran to develop an atomic device capable of producing an explosive yield. Assuming Iran has not successfully hidden other uranium enrichment facilities, the conventional wisdom appears to be that it will take at least five years to acquire a weapon and probably as long as ten years.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> John Diamond, "U.S. Intelligence Agencies Say Iran is Years Away from Building a Nuke," *USA Today*, April 14, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>229</sup> The Natanz facility is designed to accommodate as many as 50,000 gas centrifuges.

<sup>230</sup> The key pacing factor is how quickly Iran can build centrifuges and assemble them into working cascades. See John Diamond, "U.S. Intelligence Agencies Say Iran is Years Away from Building a Nuke," p. 6; William Broad, Nazila Fathi, and Joel Brinkley, "Analysts Say a Nuclear Iran is Years Away," *New York Times*, April 13, 2006, p. 1.

## **CAPABILITIES**

Since Iran and Hezbollah are so closely linked, their capabilities for supporting and conducting terrorism will be addressed together. In addition, since the power base of the Iran-Hezbollah nexus is much different than that of al Qaeda movement discussed earlier, some of the topics addressed below are arranged differently—some new topics have been added and others dropped. For this assessment, for example, it is not very useful to examine Iran's "fundraising" capabilities; as a nation-state, its financial resources are more than adequate for funding global terrorist operations. While Hezbollah has raised funds from Islamic charities and wealthy patrons around the world, including in Europe and the United States, its dominant source of funding and material support is Iran, and to a lesser extent, Syria. Also, while the al Qaeda movement does not have what would be considered irregular military units or special forces, Iran and Hezbollah employ such units on a regular basis in support of terrorist operations.

### **Leadership**

It is beyond the scope of this assessment to delve into the details of the leadership structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Basic overviews of the Iranian government bureaucracy are widely available.<sup>231</sup> A few points, however, are worth making. Administratively, both the IRGC and MOIS technically fall under the control of President Ahmadinejad, who is an ultra-conservative, anti-Western, second-generation hardliner. In practice, however, the IRGC and MOIS are controlled by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Hoseini Khamenei. Although appointed by an elected body, the Assembly of Experts, the Supreme Leader is, in effect, answerable to no one. His enumeration of powers is extensive, including the power to appoint and dismiss the commander of the IRGC, as well as members of the Supreme National Security Council, which oversees the implementation of Khamenei's defense and security policies. Khamenei, who is strongly backed by the IRGC, came to power in June 1989 following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and is generally considered to be more moderate than President Ahmadinejad.

The Majlis al-Shura, or Consultative Council, is Hezbollah's highest governing body. The council comprises 17 members, mostly Shi'a clerics and operational commanders. It makes strategic decisions for Hezbollah in all areas of legislative, executive, judicial, political, and military affairs. Decisions are made by a simple majority vote. Since 1992, the Secretary-General of the Majlis al-Shura has been Hasan Nasrallah, who is a charismatic leader with growing popularity not only in Lebanon, but the broader Muslim world.

### **Military and Intelligence**

As has been mentioned already, Iran's primary instruments for supporting and conducting terrorism globally are the IRGC Qods Force and MOIS. They are known to have provided support to Hezbollah, HAMAS, Islamic Jihad, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and PFLP-GC.

Under the Iranian Constitution, the IRGC is responsible not only for defending Iran's borders, but also for "holy war in the way of God and fighting to expand the rule of God's law in the world." While the IRGC comprises traditional army, air force, and navy branches, as well as

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<sup>231</sup> See, for example: <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ir.html>

special forces, the principal IRGC unit for terrorism-related activity is the Qods Force (Jerusalem Force). It is believed to comprise roughly 15,000 “paramilitary” personnel. While most are based in Iran, there are relatively large units deployed to Lebanon and Iraq, and smaller contingents deployed in Europe and elsewhere. Qods personnel provide a full range of covert support to terrorist groups, including basic and specialized training, tactical-operational planning, intelligence support, target surveillance, logistics (weapons and equipment), communications, and advising in the field. Training activities are generally conducted in Iran or the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. In addition to supporting terrorist groups, Qods Force personnel conduct direct-action missions (i.e., assassinating “enemies” of the Republic) and propaganda activities globally.

The Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS)—which is frequently referred to using the Farsi acronym “VEVAK,” standing for Vezarat-e Ettela’at va Amniyat-e Keshvar, was created in 1984. While estimates on the size of MOIS vary widely, it probably comprises between 5,000 and 10,000 personnel. According to the act of Parliament creating MOIS, it is charged with “gathering, procurement, analysis, and classification of necessary information inside and outside the country.” While it conducts routine intelligence service missions, (e.g., foreign intelligence collection, counter-intelligence, counter-espionage, and internal security), it has two more unusual missions: monitoring dissidents and regime opposition groups outside of Iran, and supporting terrorist groups. With respect to the latter mission, it primarily provides covert funding, logistical support, specialized training, intelligence support, and planning assistance.

Hezbollah’s military wing is believed to number approximately 1,000 experienced, well-trained “fighters” plus an additional 3,000 to 10,000 “reservists” who can be quickly mustered when needed.<sup>232</sup> While Hezbollah operates primarily in the Bekaa Valley, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and southern Lebanon, it is believed to have active cells in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and Asia—giving it global reach.<sup>233</sup> As the Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte warned in Congressional testimony, Hezbollah “has a worldwide support network and is capable of attacks against US interests if its feels its Iranian patron is threatened.”<sup>234</sup> In addition to its own efforts to liberate all Palestinian land from unjust Jewish occupation, Hezbollah supports several Palestinian terrorist organizations. According to the US Department of State, “This support includes the covert provision of weapons, explosives, training, funding, and guidance, as well as overt political support.”<sup>235</sup>

In addition to a demonstrated ability to carry out lethal car and truck bombings (e.g., October 1983 Beirut bombings and the Khobar Towers bombing in June 1996), aircraft hijacking, and abducting and executing Westerners, Hezbollah has developed an impressive array of more

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<sup>232</sup> The official US Department of State estimate is “a few hundred terrorist operatives” and “several thousand members.” *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*, p. 199.

<sup>233</sup> Hezbollah has a large presence in Gaza, the West Bank, and southern Iraq. Operatives have also been found in Argentina, France, Spain, Cyprus, Singapore, the tri-border region of South America, and the Philippines. Byman, p. 58.

<sup>234</sup> John D. Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence, “Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence,” Statement before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, February 2, 2006, p. 13.

<sup>235</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—April 2006*, p. 197.

traditional, "irregular" warfare capabilities.<sup>236</sup> It can conduct coordinated, simultaneous small-unit (company-size and below) "light infantry" type operations, including extended raids and ambushes against mechanized, armored forces. As was vividly demonstrated during the July-August 2006 clash with Israeli Defense Forces, Hezbollah has been well armed by Iran and Syria. Its arsenal includes:

- Thousands of unguided artillery rockets with calibers ranging from less than 100mm up to 122 mm;<sup>237</sup>
- 100s of larger caliber rockets with heavier warheads and longer striking range, such as the Fajr-3 with a 45-km range and the Fajr-5 with a 75-km range;<sup>238</sup>
- Dozens of ballistic missiles, including the Iranian-built Zelzal-2 (or "Earthquake") that has a range of over 200 km, can carry a 600-kg warhead, and has rudimentary inertial guidance;<sup>239</sup>
- Large numbers of Russian-made, man-portable, surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), including the SA-7 and SA-14, probably the SA-16, and possibly the SA-18;
- As many as eight Iranian-supplied UAVs (e.g., Mirsad-1 and Ababil-3) that can carry 30-40 kg of payload to a maximum, one-way distance of 300-km;<sup>240</sup>
- An unspecified number of anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), including an Iranian version of the Chinese C-802 radar-guided, solid-fueled rocket/turbojet system with a range of up to 120 km and 155-kg blast-fragmentation warhead;<sup>241</sup>
- Advanced Russian-made RPGs, including 105-mm RPG-29 or "Vampire" with an aimed range of 500 meters and a 6-kg projectile that can be fired by single fighter and can be used effectively against armored vehicles and buildings; and

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<sup>236</sup> "Hezbollah's Improved Arsenal," Special Report, Military Periscope.com, July 21, 2006.

<sup>237</sup> Prior to the summer 2006 clash with Israel, Hezbollah was estimated to have between 10,000 and 15,000 short-range rockets, primarily Katyusha rockets with a 12-18 mile range. Approximately 3,500 were expended and Israeli claims to have destroyed an additional 1,600; in which case, Hezbollah's current inventory would in range of 5,000-10,000 rockets. Its stocks, however, will almost certainly be quickly replenished by Iran and Syria.

<sup>238</sup> Prior to the summer 2006 clash with Israel, Hezbollah was believed to have a total of 24-30 Fajr-3 launchers, each capable of carrying up to 14 rockets; and approximately 24-30 Fajr-5 launchers, each armed with 4 rockets. Its rough inventory in this class, therefore, was 432-540 missiles plus an unspecified number of re-loads. According to Israeli sources, most of the Fajr-3/-5 launchers were destroyed in the opening week of the conflict. Peter Spiegel and Laura King, "Israel Says Syria, Not Just Iran, Supplied Missiles to Hezbollah," *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 2006, p. 1; Ken Ellingwood, "Hezbollah Wields Improved Arsenal," *Los Angeles Times*, July 15, 2006.

<sup>239</sup> The Zelzal-2 missile is an road-mobile, solid-fueled rocket that is closely related to the Russian FROG-7. The Zelzal-1 has a range of 125 km with a 600-kg warhead. Fulghum and Barrie, "The Iranian Connection," p. 22; Alon Ben-David, "Iran 'Supplied Zelzal-2 Rockets to Hizbullah'," *Janes Defence Weekly*, August 16, 2006, p. 5; and Military Periscope.com database entry for "Zelzal-2 SRBM."

<sup>240</sup> Alon Ben-David, "Israel Shoots Down Hizbullah UAV," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, August 16, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>241</sup> Fulghum and Barrie, "The Iranian Connection," p. 21.

- Wire- and laser-guided anti-tank missiles, including Russian Kornet-E and Metis-M missile from Syria, and Russian AT-3 Sagger, AT-4 Spigot, and AT-5 Spandrel missiles from Iran.

### **Recruitment, Indoctrination, and Training**

Scant open-source information is available on Iranian recruitment for the Qods Force and MOIS. It is almost certain, however, that commitment to the ideals of the Revolution and loyalty to the regime (or more specifically, to Supreme Leader Khamenei) are critical factors. In a sense, Iranians are indoctrinated throughout their life as a result of their exposure to a cleric-controlled educational system, state-supervised prayer at mosques, state-run media, and constant, pervasive propaganda extolling the ideals of the revolution and demonizing the West, and the United States and Israel, in particular. Iran has extensive military and paramilitary training facilities within its borders, and can also sub-contract training to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Iran recruits and indoctrinates foreign jihadis through an extensive media campaign, including radio broadcasts, an endless flow of publications on Islamic thought, both in hardcopy and on the Internet, and distribution of tapes and compact disks with multimedia content. The Iranian government also regularly organizes and hosts conferences, bringing in Islamic scholars and activists from around the world. During these events, attendees are not only exposed to Iranian interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence, but contacts are made between them and various organs of the government (e.g., MOIS). MOIS and Qods Force personnel also operate overseas, establishing and cultivating contacts with Islamic "liberation" movements. As evidenced in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank, and now Iraq, the Iranian government increases its influence over these groups by providing them with financial, military, and other support.

With Iranian assistance, Hezbollah has built up an impressive propaganda capability over the past two decades. It publishes its own newspaper and magazine, and operates its own radio and satellite television stations. These are key instruments for recruitment and indoctrination of future jihadis. Hezbollah's television station, al-Manar (The Lighthouse), broadcasts to the Muslim world in multiple languages and is estimated to have more than 10 million viewers daily. When asked to compare Al Manar's programming to Al Jazeera, its news director remarked that "Neutrality like that of Al Jazeera is out of the question for us...we cover only the victim, not the aggressor. CNN is the Zionist news network, Al Jazeera is neutral, and Al Manar takes the side of the Palestinians."<sup>242</sup>

Hezbollah's other mechanism for recruitment and indoctrination is the social service network it runs in southern Lebanon and southern Beirut. Its schools, medical-care centers, food shelters, and other facilities provide an ideal opportunity to identify potential recruits and expose them to Hezbollah's well-crafted propaganda materials.

Hezbollah operates several floating "day camps" for terrorist training throughout the Bekaa Valley. They are staffed primarily Hezbollah trainers with supporting IRGC and MOIS personnel. While these camps are used primarily by Hezbollah and groups it has found common-

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<sup>242</sup> Jeffrey Goldberg, "In the Party of God," *New Yorker*, October 14/21, 2002, p. 180.

cause with in its war against Israel (i.e., HAMAS, PIJ, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and the PFLP-GC), a range of terrorist groups have trained in the Bekaa Valley in the past, including Basque ETA, the Red Brigades, Kurdistan Workers' Party, and the Irish Republican Army.<sup>243</sup>

### **Current Operations**

For the Shi'a branch of jihadism, current operations are focused on two areas: Iraq and Lebanon. As has been detailed above, since 2003, Iran has conducted an aggressive political action campaign in Iraq, provided extensive support to Shiite militia and gangs, and expanded the number of Qods Force and MOIS personnel in country. All of those activities are still underway. As US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad remarked in March 2006, "our judgment is that training and supplying, direct and indirect, takes place, and that there is also provision of financial resources to people, to militias, and that there is [a] presence of people associated with Revolutionary Guard and with MOIS."<sup>244</sup> Three months later, in June 2006, the US Commander in Iraq, General Casey asserted that, "we are quite confident that the Iranians, through their covert special operations forces [Qods Force], are providing weapons, IED technology and training to Shia extremist groups in Iraq, the training being conducted in Iran and in some cases probably in Lebanon through their surrogates [Hezbollah]."<sup>245</sup>

As mentioned briefly above, on July 12, 2006, Hezbollah members crossed into Israel, kidnapping two soldiers and killing three others, triggering an extended precision air campaign by the IDF followed by a limited ground incursion into southern Lebanon. After 34 days of hostilities, a cease-fire agreement was eventually hammered out that called for the IDF's phased withdrawal as the Lebanese Army and an expanded UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) replaced them. Despite the fact that only 5,426 UNIFIL personnel out of the authorized 15,000 were deployed as of October 2006, the fragile peace held.<sup>246</sup> UNIFIL, which has slowly grew to 11,570 military personnel (including 9,812 troop) as of January 2007, is charged with monitoring the cessation of hostilities, accompanying and supporting the Lebanese Army as it deploys throughout the south of Lebanon, and facilitating humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons.<sup>247</sup> To Israel's chagrin, neither the Lebanese Army nor UNIFIL plan to root out and dismantle Hezbollah's military infrastructure in southern Lebanon; only Hezbollah fighters carrying their weapons openly will be disarmed.<sup>248</sup> In addition, while diplomatic pressure has been put on Syria not to permit weapons and equipment to be shipped through its territory to Lebanon, it is very likely that Iran and Syria will resupply Hezbollah over the next several months.

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Jonathan Finan and Ellen Knickmeyer, "Envoy Accuses Iran of Duplicity in Iraq," *Washington Post*, March 24, 2006, p. 12. See also: Steven Simon and Ray Takeyh, "Iran's Iraq Strategy," *Washington Post*, May 21, 2006, p. B2.

<sup>245</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, "General Reports Spike in Iranian Activity in Iraq," *Washington Post*, June 23, 2006, p. 19; and Michael Gordon, "Iran Aiding Shiite Attacks Inside Iraq, General Says," *New York Times*, June 23, 2006.

<sup>246</sup> <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unifil/facts.html>.

<sup>247</sup> United Nations, "Lebanon-UNIFIL-Facts and Figures," available on-line at <http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/missions/unifil/facts.html>.

<sup>248</sup> Susan Page, "Rice: Not U.N.'s Job to Disarm Hezbollah," *USA Today*, August 16, 2006, p. 16.

What is especially remarkable about the July-August conflict is the fact that Hezbollah was able to hold its own against the IDF. Hezbollah fighters were disciplined, well-trained, and superbly equipped and organized for a defensive battle against the IDF on pre-determined, restricted terrain.<sup>249</sup> Hezbollah had established an impressive network of deep, well-constructed underground bunkers with connecting passages. To make their communications robust, Hezbollah took advantage of radios, cell phones, hard-wire landlines, and messengers. Its forces were organized into an inter-linked web of fighter “cells,” each with significant autonomy. If cut off from higher command and support for whatever reason, individual cells would fall in on pre-positioned weapon and equipment stockpiles and then carry out pre-established mission orders. While the IDF repeatedly claimed to have broken through Hezbollah’s defenses, the cellular web just reconfigured itself and re-engaged from new directions. Hezbollah fighters also displayed considerable tactical skill:<sup>250</sup>

- Launching barrages of rocket and missile strikes into Israel;
- Ambushing IDF armored vehicles with anti-tank missile teams firing from multiple directions simultaneously;
- Using anti-tank missiles to engage concentrations of dismounted infantry in buildings, as well as in the open;
- Conducting operations at night with night-vision goggles and infrared sensors;
- Firing at least two anti-ship cruise missiles, damaging the *Hanit*, an Israeli Saar 5 missile corvette, and severely damaging a Cambodian-flagged merchant ship;<sup>251</sup> and
- Flying three UAVs (e.g., Mirsad-1 and Ababil-3) into Israeli airspace (though all three were detected and shot-down by Israeli air defenses).

Over the course of 34 days, an estimated force of 2,000-4,000 Hezbollah fighters launched between 3,700 and 3,800 rockets into Israel, killing 43 Israeli civilians and causing considerable damage; held their ground against the much larger and better equipped IDF; and killed 117 Israeli soldiers—albeit at an estimated cost of 500-800 Hezbollah fighters. When the dust and smoke cleared after the UN-brokered cease fire, Hezbollah fighters emerged from shattered buildings and underground bunkers exultant, while beleaguered Israeli soldiers watched in disbelief. Nasrallah could credibly claim—at least to his Muslim audience—to be the leader of the first Arab “army” to have defeated the IDF in battle.

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<sup>249</sup> Ralph Peters, “Lessons from Lebanon—The New Model Terrorist Army,” *Armed Forces Journal*, October 2006, p. 38.

<sup>250</sup> Edward Cody and Molly Moore, “The Best Guerrilla Force in the World,” *Washington Post*, August 14, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>251</sup> Hezbollah almost certainly had significant IRGC assistance for its C-802 attacks. It is likely that IRGC personnel actually operated the C-802 system.

## IV. REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Although we cannot measure the extent of the spread with precision, a large body of all-source reporting indicates that activists identifying themselves as jihadists, although a small percentage of Muslims, are increasing in both number and geographic dispersion. *NIE on Trends in Global Terrorism.*<sup>252</sup>

While the United States and its partners in the war on terrorism have made important strides in combating jihadist groups worldwide since 9/11, they have not weakened the jihadis' will or their ability to inspire and regenerate. The high-water mark for the United States in the war on terrorism was arguably reached by 2002-2003. By that time, the Taliban government had been overthrown and al Qaeda stripped of its sanctuary in Afghanistan; ten of al Qaeda's senior leaders had been captured or killed, including Abu Zubaydah, Ramzi bin al Shibh, and Khalid Sheik Mohammad; dozens of terrorist cells had been rolled up worldwide; actions had been taken to seize vast majority of the finances frozen to date; and several partner countries had taken step to enhance their CT capabilities. Since then, the overall US position in the GWOT has slipped. To be sure, the United States has made considerable progress capturing or killing terrorist leaders and operatives, disrupting terrorist operations, seizing assets, and building partner CT capabilities. Those gains, however, have been offset by the metastasis of the al Qaeda organization into a global movement, the spread and intensification of Salafi-jihadi ideology, and the growth in number and political influence of Islamist fundamentalist political parties throughout the world, including the Justice and Prosperity Party and the Mujaheddin Council (MMI) in Indonesia, the Party Islam in Malaysia, the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia, and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam faction led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) in Pakistan, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.<sup>253</sup> In short, both the Sunni-based Salafi-jihadi and Shia-based "Khomeinist" branches of Islamic radicalism have spread rather than receded over the past three years.

It is very difficult to assess country, regional, and global balances in the war on terrorism accurately owing both to their extreme volatility and, in many cases, the lack of credible intelligence. That being said, it appears that the jihadist threat has, on balance, remained constant or declined slightly in four regions: Africa, with the notable exception of Somalia; Russia and Central Asia; Southeast Asia; and the Americas. In contrast, it has intensified, in some cases sharply, in Southwest Asia, South Asia, and Europe.

Over the past five years, steps taken by African states to improve border security, extend control over remote areas, and enhance their domestic CT capabilities has outpaced jihadi gains. Algeria waged a very effective CT campaign against the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and its offshoot, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). Partner CT capacity has expanded significantly in the Magreb and Pan-Sahel owing in large part to a dramatic increase in American military-to-military training and aid. Nevertheless, large "un-governed" areas remain in Africa

<sup>252</sup> "Declassified Key Judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate 'Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States' Dated April 2006, p. 1.

<sup>253</sup> Raphael Perl, "Trends in Terrorism: 2006." *CRS Report to Congress*, RL33555, July 21, 2006

that could be exploited by terrorist groups. So far, the only major inroad in Africa made by Islamist groups has been in Somalia.

In Russia and Central Asia there have been several positive developments in the GWOT such as the deaths of key Chechen terrorist leaders, the collapse of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and the implementation of more effective financial controls, border security, and CT operations by several states in the region. These gains, however, have been offset by the rise of the Islamic Jihad Group of Uzbekistan, a splinter group of the IMU, since 2004 and Uzbekistan's decision in 2005 to terminate its close working relationship with the United States.

While jihadi groups have tried to make in-roads into Australia, Burma, Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand over the past five years, they appear to have had little success.<sup>254</sup> While much work remains to be done to enhance the CT capabilities of Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand, they are better able to handle terrorist threats than they were five years ago. The principal terrorist threat in the region is centered on the Indonesian archipelago and the Philippines. In both countries, after reaching a high-water mark in 2001-2002, the terrorist threat has receded. These gains, however, have been partially offset by the growing popularity of more fundamentalist interpretations of Islam in the region.

The radical Islamist threat from the Americas has declined considerably since 2001. In the wake of 9/11, the United States took a number of steps to improve its domestic CT capabilities including tearing down statutory and bureaucratic walls that kept law enforcement and intelligence officials from sharing information; restructuring the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); creating the Department of Homeland Security; tightening security at US airports, seaports, and borders; and creating new programs to monitor bank records and phone calls for terrorism-related activity. Canada has also revamped its domestic CT capabilities and rolled up a major al Qaeda-linked cell operating within its borders. In addition, several countries in Central and South America have taken modest steps to strengthen financial laws to make money laundering and other illicit transactions more difficult, tighten border security, and improve domestic policing and CT capabilities.

In Southwest Asia, the Levant, and the broader Middle East the Salafi-jihadi and Khomeinist branches of Islamic radicalism have both gained more ground than they have lost. While the Sunni-based jihadi threat in Saudi Arabia has been neutralized, AQI has made strategic gains in Iraq that have greatly benefited the broader jihadi movement. Iran has made substantial progress in its effort to transplant the Hezbollah model to Iraq. While al Qaeda linked groups remain active in Egypt, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Jordan, and Yemen, the threat from these areas has not materially changed in the past five years. In Egypt, Yemen, and the Gulf States, the jihadi threat has arguably fallen owing to the enhanced government CT capabilities. In Lebanon, Hezbollah's clash with the IDF in July-August 2006 dramatically raised its profile, as well as that of its chief benefactor, Iran, in the Muslim world. It also destabilized the democratically elected government in Beirut that came to power in the "Cedar Revolution" and stripped away the IDF's mystique of invincibility, which will complicate Israel's effort to restore the credibility of its deterrent vis-à-vis hostile surrounding states and their terrorist proxies.

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<sup>254</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism (2005)*, pp. 59-83.

Since September 11, 2001, the Islamic terrorist threat to the United States emanating from South Asia has arguably declined owing to the elimination of al Qaeda's extensive infrastructure in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and President Musharraf's decision to join the United States as an active partner in the GWOT. There have been significant setbacks in both of these front-line countries in the GWOT, however, over the past three years. In Afghanistan, the Taliban, which has found sanctuary along the Pakistani frontier, is resurgent. The central government has yet to extend its authority over rural areas, especially in the south and east. Poppy cultivation, which provides a critical source of revenue for the Taliban hit record levels in 2006. In Pakistan, despite Musharraf's heroic efforts, the terrorist threat has intensified. In comparison to 2001, the Pakistani population is more radicalized and the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), especially North and South Waziristan, has become more "Talibanized."

The situation in Europe has deteriorated. Jihadists continue to take advantage of the "civil-liberties sanctuary" and unrestricted travel within the European Union to recruit and indoctrinate, export their violent ideology, raise funds, and plan and organize terrorist operations. Over the past five years, Europe's growing Muslim population has become more rather than less radicalized. Tens of thousands of "active" supporters of al Qaeda and "Islamic extremists" are now believed to be entrenched in Western Europe. Bosnia and Herzegovina remain weak and potentially vulnerable to jihadi exploitation. Spurred to action by two bombings in November 2003 in Istanbul, Turkish authorities have dealt repeated blows to AQAN's embryonic network in Turkey over the past three years.

The remainder of this chapter explores these regional assessments in more detail. It will first examine regions where the terrorist threat has receded, focusing in turn on Africa, Russia and Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Americas. It will then turn to regions in which the jihadi movement appears to be on the march: Southwest Asia, South Asia, and Europe.

## **AFRICA**

The threat posed by violent Islamic extremism in Africa has decreased slightly over the past five years. On balance, the steps taken by African states to improve border security, extend control over remote areas, and enhance their domestic CT capabilities has outpaced jihadi gains. As will be detailed below, two major positive developments in the region were:

- Algeria's very effective CT campaign against the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and its offshoot, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC); and
- The dramatic increase in American military-to-military training and aid, especially in the Magreb and Pan-Sahel.

Another favorable development was the Libyan decision in 2003 to end its international isolation by terminating its WMD programs and abandoning its sponsorship of terrorism. Even prior to that, in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>, Libya provided the CIA with dossiers on terrorists with which it has had dealings in the past. It has also turned over several terrorists to neighboring pro-Western Arab states (i.e., Egypt and Algeria) and provided useful intelligence to the United States.

On the negative side of the ledger, however, large “un-governed” areas remain in which terrorist groups could find safe haven. Algerians are currently estimated to constitute the third-largest pool of al Qaeda recruits, behind citizens or residents of Saudi Arabia and Yemen.<sup>255</sup> According to European Command, roughly 25 percent of the suicide bombers in Iraq are Saharan Africans.<sup>256</sup> Small numbers of al Qaeda operatives are believed to be active in parts of Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.<sup>257</sup> The GSPC, while weakened, continues to have a small presence not only in the Magreb and pan-Sahel, but increasingly in Europe.<sup>258</sup> The Islamic Courts Union’s rout by Ethiopian forces in December 2006 has weakened, but not eliminated the Islamist threat in Somalia. A small, extremely violent terrorist cell led by Aden Hashi Ayro has become active in Somalia over the past three years, conducting numerous attacks against Westerners. The Ayro cell, which is believed to have links to al Qaeda, is described as sophisticated, tightly organized, and highly secretive.<sup>259</sup>

The sections below describe in more detail the situation in the Magreb, pan-Sahel, and the Horn of Africa. While Sudan is teetering on the precipice of becoming a failed state, which could provide a fertile ground for jihadi cells to germinate and take root; as yet, their presence is limited. Similarly, while Egypt is a critical front-line state in the GWOT, the threat situation there has remained more or less constant. While terrorist groups have conducted sporadic attacks, the Egyptian government has been very effective in penetrating and rolling up terrorist cells. It is, however, necessary to take note of three “high profile” attacks in Sinai Peninsula over the past two years. The attacks in Taba in October 2004, Sharm el Sheik in July 2005, and Dahab in April 2006, killed 34, 60, and 30 people, respectively, and caused hundreds of injuries.<sup>260</sup> Finally, while Nigeria has played a leading CT role in West Africa, several jihadi organizations (e.g., al Qaeda and GSPC) are believed to be active there.<sup>261</sup>

### **The Magreb and Pan-Sahel**

While jihadi groups continued to make in-roads into the Magreb and pan-Sahel over the past five years, they suffered several major setbacks—most notably, the crippling of GSPC. While it is impossible to disaggregate stepped up local CT efforts and the impact of American assistance, it is likely that latter has had a substantial effect.

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<sup>255</sup> Bryan Bender, “US Search for Al Qaeda Turns to Algeria,” *Boston Globe*, March 11, 2004, p. 1

<sup>256</sup> Jason Motlagh, “U.S. Seeks to Secure Sahara Desert,” *Washington Times*, November 17, 2005, p. 16; Jason Motlagh, “US Antiterror Ally Ousted, But Democracy Promised,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 9, 2005

<sup>257</sup> John Donnelly, “Islamists Claim Rout of US-Tied Forces in Somalia,” *Boston Globe*, June 6, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>258</sup> GSPC operatives have been arrested in Spain, France, Italy, and Belgium. Ed Blanche, “US Woos North Africa as Al Qaeda Infiltrates,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, March 1, 2006, p. 23.

<sup>259</sup> Thomas Dempsey, *Counterterrorism in African Failed States: Challenges and Potential Solutions* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, April 2006), pp. 12-13.

<sup>260</sup> Michael Slackman, “30 Are Killed in Sinai as Bombs Rock Egyptian Resort City,” *New York Times*, April 25, 2006, p. 1

<sup>261</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 54.

Several groups are responsible for terrorist activity in the Magreb and pan-Sahel. The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group played a central role, for example, in the Casablanca bombing in 2003 and facilitated the Madrid bombings in 2004. Al-Sunna wa al-Jamma attacked provincial police posts in northern Nigeria, killing 28 people, in September 2004. The prime mover, however, of terrorism in the Magreb and pan-Sahel has been the GSPC. Over the past five years, it has conducted scores of attacks, mostly in Algeria. Its modus operandi includes bombings, IED attacks, fake road blocks used for extortion and kidnapping, ambushes, and occasional fire fights.

GSPC was founded in 1998 by Hassan Hattab, a former regional commander of GIA, who broke away in protest over the group's indiscriminate slaughter of civilians. Between 1992 and 1999, when the Algerian government launched an amnesty program, somewhere in the vicinity of 150,000 people died over the course of the GIA's bloody insurgency. GSPC pledged to protect civilians in its struggle to overthrow the secular Algerian government and install an Islamic regime in Algeria. As it turns out, although GSPC attacks were directly principally against government targets (e.g., police and military forces and installations), civilians still accounted for nearly half of the resulting casualties. According to some reports, in September 2003, Hattab was replaced as the "emir" of GSPC by Nabil Sahraoui, who subsequently offered a bayat, or oath of allegiance, to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. During the same year, a GSPC regional commander, Amari Saifi, formed a splinter group, the Free Salafist Group (GSL), which took 32 European tourists hostage in early 2003. While Algerian commandos freed 14 of the captives and killed nine terrorists in May 2003, Saifi and many others escaped to Mali with 17 hostages, who were subsequently released when the German government paid a ransom of \$5.6 million.<sup>262</sup>

By working closely with neighboring countries, Algeria has managed to reduce dramatically the threat posed by GIA, GSPC, and GSL. In January 2004, Algerian and Mali forces hunted down Saifi's GSL in northern Mali, from where they were pursued eastward across northern Niger until they were cornered by Chadian forces. (The latter received intelligence updates from an orbiting American P-3 surveillance aircraft and US logistical support). During a key battle just inside northwestern Chad in March 2004, 43 Salafist fighters were killed, which was the final chapter for GSL.<sup>263</sup> Although Saifi managed to escape, he was subsequently captured by a Chadian rebel group, the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad, and turned over to the Libyan government, which extradited him to Algeria where he was imprisoned for life in June 2005. In June 2004, Sahraoui was killed along with several senior GSPC leaders in a fire fight with the Algerian Army. In January 2006, Ahmed Zarabib, one of GSPC's founders, was also killed. Perhaps shaken by GSPC's losses, in March 2006, Hassan Hattab called on all of its members to accept the government's amnesty, requiring them to lay down their arms in exchange for immunity from prosecution. The combination of waning domestic support for Islamic violence in Algeria, the appeal of the government's amnesty and reconciliation program, and the effectiveness of the Algerian government's CT campaign has exacted a heavy toll on GSPC.

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<sup>262</sup> AP, "Rumsfeld Meets Senior Govt Officials in Algeria," *Wall Street Journal*, February 12, 2006.

<sup>263</sup> Internal Crisis Group, "Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?," Report, March 31, 2005; and Craig Whitlock, "Taking Terror Fight to N. Africa Leads U.S. to Unlikely Alliances," *Washington Post*, October 28, 2006, p. 1.

While GSPC has long been affiliated with al Qaeda, the group announced a formal alliance with al Qaeda in September 2006 in an apparent bid to revitalize flagging recruitment and fundraising. According to Zawahiri, however, the new alliance will “be a thorn in the necks of the American and French crusaders and their allies, and a dagger in the hearts of the French traitors and apostates.”<sup>264</sup> Calling into question the feasibility of that ambitious goal, Algerian security forces killed or captured some 500 fighters in 2006 and roughly 250 GSPC members heeded Hassan Hattab’s advice and accepted the government’s offer of amnesty. The ranks of Islamic extremists in Algeria have fallen precipitously from a high of 40,000 or more during the 1990s to between 500 and 1,200 today. Under intense government pressure, GSPC has had its air supply cut off in Algeria. The same, however, cannot be said in Europe, where several GSPC cells remain active.

The US military can legitimately take some credit for helping local forces to beat back terrorists in the Magreb and pan-Sahel. Beginning in 2002, US Special Forces (SF) began conducting military-to-military training exercises in the region. In 2003-2004, SF assisted Algerian security forces in hunting down GSPC operatives along the southern border with Mali.<sup>265</sup> With the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), launched in 2004, US forces began training rapid-reaction forces in Chad, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania. PSI was expanded in 2005 into the Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) to include Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. The level of effort also skyrocketed from roughly \$7 million annually under PSI to an anticipated \$500 million annually between 2007 and 2011 to fund more extensive training, as well as to provide badly needed military equipment, under TSCTI.<sup>266</sup> Under the PSI-TSCTI umbrella, 700 Special Operations Forces (SOF) and supporting personnel deployed to the region for “Exercise Flintlock” in June 2005, training about 3,000 troops from Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia. The exercises, conducted over three weeks, were designed to help the African troops to extend and maintain more effective control over the region’s porous borders and expansive ungoverned areas.

Unfortunately, US progress in building partner capacity in the region took a step backward in 2006. Several African countries (e.g., Mali, Tanzania, Niger, and Kenya) had their funding cut off because they declined to sign so-called “Article 98” agreements with the United States exempt American troops from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. In accordance with the American Servicemembers’ Protection Act, enacted in 2002, the US government is prohibited from providing foreign military assistance, including any expenditure of International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds, to countries that have not signed “Article 98” agreements. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice aptly put it, blocking assistance to nations actively trying to combat terrorism and requesting US support is “sort of the same as shooting ourselves in the foot.”<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Craig Whitlock, “Al Qaeda’s Far Reaching New Partner,” October 5, 2006, p. A1.

<sup>265</sup> Bryan Bender, “US Search for Al Qaeda Turns to Algeria,” *Boston Globe*, March 11, 2004, p. 1

<sup>266</sup> Andrew Koch, “US and African Partners Pledge Terrorism Purge,” *Janes’s Defence Weekly*, June 29, 2005, p. 16; and Gordon Lubold, “African Allies,” *Armed Forces Journal*, September 2005, p. 22.

<sup>267</sup> Mark Mazzetti, “U.S. Cuts in Africa Aid Said to Hurt War on Terror,” *New York Times*, July 23, 2006.

## Somalia and the Horn of Africa

An outgrowth of neighborhood Islamic courts that were established across Mogadishu over the past decade to restore some order to Somalia's largest city, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU)<sup>268</sup> is both an Islamic political movement and a collection of disparate Islamic militias. Over the past several years it gradually took control over much of southern Somalia. On June 5, 2006, after months of fighting a coalition of US-backed secular warlords, called the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism, the ICU declared that it had established control over all of Mogadishu with its population of roughly 1.2 million people.<sup>269</sup> Sharif Ahmed, the chairman of this loosely confederated organization, repeatedly declared that the ICU had no intention of imposing strict Islamic rule or harboring terrorists, but rather sought to rebuild Somalia and improve the quality of life of his people. He promised to stand-up a civilian police force and demobilize Islamic militias, focusing former fighters on public works projects.<sup>270</sup> In a three-page letter sent to the United States and other foreign governments in June 2006, the ICU declared that it sought "a friendly relationship with the international community" and had a "steadfast" commitment against "the tyranny of terrorists and organized criminals."<sup>271</sup>

During the last half of 2006, however, the ICU failed to live up to those commitments. The ICU proceeded to enforce a Taliban-style form of sharia justice in Mogadishu and other population centers. In October 2006, Sharif Ahmed called for jihad against Ethiopia and reiterated the ICU's irredentist goal of creating a "Greater Somalia" that incorporates Somali Muslims in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. Four jihadist groups play a prominent role within the ICU:

- Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (AIAI), which seeks to turn Somalia into an Islamic state and is aligned with al Qaeda;<sup>272</sup>
- Al-Takfir wal-Hijra (Excommunication and Exodus), which declares *takfir* against Muslims who do not support their very extreme views;
- Al-Islah, which that supports the creation of an Islamic state in Somalia; and
- Al-Tabligh, an Islamic "missionary" groups with link to radical madrassas in Pakistan and elsewhere.

AIAI is strongly suspected of harboring al Qaeda fugitives, including three individuals indicted for the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. During recent Congressional

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<sup>268</sup> The ICU is also frequently referred to as the Islamic Courts Council.

<sup>269</sup> The secular warlords were reportedly funded covertly by the CIA in exchange for intelligence information on terrorists. Bradley Graham and Karen DeYoung, "Official Critical of Somalia Policy is Transferred," *Washington Post*, May 31, 2006, p. 13; and Howard LaFranchi, "US Trading Hostilities for Talk in Somalia?" *Christian Science Monitor*, June 14, 2006

<sup>270</sup> Craig Timberg, "Somali Militias Decry Terrorists," *Washington Post*, June 16, 2006, p. 14.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Since 1996, AIAI is not believed to have participated directly in any terrorist attacks. It is, however, linked to al Qaeda. For instance, AIAI's radical leader, Hassan Dahir Aweys, who also holds a leadership role within ICU, has direct ties with senior al Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin Laden.

testimony, Henry Crumpton, the State Department coordinator for counterterrorism, stated that, despite its public overtures, “We’re not sure what Islamic Courts really want in terms of their strategies and in terms of their relationship with al Qaeda.” He also re-affirmed that the US government believes that “a half-dozen or less” senior al Qaeda leaders are currently or were recently in Somalia, along with a fluctuating number of “operatives.”<sup>273</sup> In addition to the US embassy bombings in 1998 mentioned above, Al Qaeda terrorists located in and operating from Somalia participated in the car bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel and attempted downing of an Israeli airliner with SA-7 SAMs in Mombassa, Kenya, in 2002 and a thwarted plot to fly an explosive-laden light aircraft into the US embassy in Nairobi in 2003. Although al Qaeda operatives performed slightly different roles in each case, support typically included helping to secure financing, tactical planning and preparation for the attacks, and logistical activities (e.g., acquiring weapons and explosives).<sup>274</sup> At least 17 terrorist training camps are reported to be active in Somalia.<sup>275</sup>

As of early December 2006, the ICU was on the march, both figuratively and literally, and it was widely believed that the UN-recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG) based in Baidoa, over 150 miles north of Mogadishu, would fall in early 2007. The volatile situation threatened to boil over into a broader regional war. Regional rivals, Ethiopia and Eritrea, had backed opposing sides: the former deployed several thousand troops to defend the TFG; whereas the latter provided training, supplies, and weapons to ICU militias.<sup>276</sup> Combined TFG and Ethiopian forces clashed several times with Islamist militias for control over the approaches to Baidoa.<sup>277</sup>

The stand-off between the rising ICU and beleaguered TFG took a sudden, unanticipated turn, however, during the last two weeks of December. Ethiopian military forces—including several thousands troops supported by tanks, helicopter gunships, and strike aircraft—poured over the border, routed Islamic Courts militias threatening the TFG in Baidoa and forced them southward. By the end of December, Ethiopian forces had pushed ICU-linked militias out of Mogadishu and pursued retreating remnants toward the Kenyan border and into the hilly region of Buur Gaabo. On January 1, 2007, the Islamists were forced to flee their final stronghold in the southern port city of Kismayu.<sup>278</sup> Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf, and Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi were quick to declare that major combat operations were almost over and that Somalia would be pacified in “weeks and months, not

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<sup>273</sup> Craig Timberg, “Somalia’s Islamic Militias Reaching Out to the West,” *Washington Post*, June 14, 2006, p. 17; and Bill Gertz, “Group Linked to Al Qaeda Tightening Grip on Somalia,” June 15, 2006, p. 4.

<sup>274</sup> Dempsey, *Counterterrorism in African Failed States: Challenges and Potential Solutions*, pp. 14-15

<sup>275</sup> CJTF-HOA is barred by current rule of engagement from taking direction action against the camps. J. Peter Pham, “The New Taliban,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 2006, p. 14.

<sup>276</sup> Jeffrey Gettleman, “U.S. Official Offers Bleak Assessment of Somalia,” *New York Times*, November 11, 2006, p. 6; and Dr. Andrew McGregor, “Somalia Hostilities Threaten Outbreak of Regional War,” *Terrorism Focus*, October 31, 2006, pp. 3-5.

<sup>277</sup> Ethiopia and Eritrea also deployed 1000s of troops to the UN-monitored buffer zone separating them. *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> Sahra Abdi, “Somalia’s Islamists Flee Final Bastion,” *Reuters*, January 1, 2007

more.<sup>279</sup> Their estimates are almost certainly wildly off the mark. Even if an African Union peacekeeping force is deployed, which appears increasingly unlikely, it will be extraordinarily difficult for the Ethiopian-backed TFG to restore order and govern effectively. Thousands of Islamist fighters are believed to have taken off their uniforms and melted away into the population during the Ethiopian offensive. They will almost certainly re-emerge to wage a guerrilla war against what they consider to be an illegitimate government. The clan-based warlordism that has plagued Somalia for decades is already resurgent. In short, while the Islamists were clearly handed a major setback in Somalia at the end of 2006, the security situation is highly volatile. There is a very strong likelihood that the ICU-linked militias will regroup and launch guerrilla operations in 2007.

In contrast to Somalia, the security situation across the rest of the Horn of Africa (i.e., Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Yemen) has, on balance, improved—in some cases, considerably. Since it was established in 2002, the US Combined Joint Force—Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) has conducted several military-to-military training exercises with upwards of 3,000 Ethiopian, Djiboutian, Kenyan, and Yemeni soldiers; and completed hundreds of public works projects.<sup>280</sup> Training has focused mainly on small-unit skills such as marksmanship, orienteering, and basic security tasks (e.g., setting up and manning roadblocks). The coast guards in Djibouti, Kenya, and Yemen have been trained and equipped to monitor their littoral waters more effectively, including carrying out counter-piracy and counter-smuggling tasks.<sup>281</sup> The construction of schools, medical and veterinary clinics, and freshwater wells has not only bolstered the reputation of the US military in the region, but has also provided valuable opportunities to cultivate local contacts, develop familiarity with the terrain and infrastructure, collect “street level” intelligence, and maintain a non-intrusive presence along routes into and out of Somalia.

## **RUSSIA AND CENTRAL ASIA**

Since 2001, the terrorist threat in Russia and Central Asia has, on balance, remained more or less unchanged. There have been several positive developments such as the deaths of Chechen terrorist leaders Aslan Maskhadov and Shamil Basayev; the collapse of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) owing to the death of its leader, Juma Namangani, in an American air strike during Operation Enduring Freedom and a vigorous counter-terrorism campaign by the Government of Uzbekistan; and the implementation of more effective financial controls, border security, and counter-terrorism operations by several states in the region. These gains, however, were offset by the rise of the Islamic Jihad Group of Uzbekistan, a splinter group of the IMU, since 2004 and Uzbekistan’s decision in 2005 to terminate what had matured into close cooperative relationship with the United States on counter-terrorism over the course of the previous six years.

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<sup>279</sup> Mohamed Sheikh Nor, “Somalia’s PM: Major Fighting Likely Over,” *Associated Press*, January 2, 2007; and C. Bryson Hull and Sahal Abdulle, “Ethiopian Army to Stay in Somalia in Coming Weeks,” *Reuters*, January 2, 2007.

<sup>280</sup> Joshua Kucera, “Djibouti: African Foothold,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, pp. 24-29

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* See also, Mike Pflanz, “US Troops Keep Watch Along Kenya’s Coast,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 9, 2005.

## Russia

At least ten different Chechen terrorist groups are active in Russia, primarily in the north Caucasus region (Ossetia, Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan). There have, however, been incidents outside of the region, including in Moscow (e.g., Moscow Theater in 2002 and the Moscow subway blast in August 2004). While most of these groups are indigenous and closely associated with the Chechen separatist movement, there is evidence of a foreign terrorist presence in Chechnya, as well as financial and ideological links to the broader Salafi-jihadi movement.

Scores of attacks have occurred in the Caucasus region since 2001, but in most cases the attackers did not take credit and were not subsequently identified. Among the most capable and organized terrorists groups are Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade, which is strongly suspected of having links to al Qaeda, Dagestani Shariah Jamaat, and the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB). Except for two aircraft bombings, most of the attacks conducted by these home-grown groups have been bombings against soft targets, generally with IEDs, and small-scale raids against police, military, and government targets.<sup>282</sup> Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade, however, was responsible for two high-profile incidents: the Dubrovka Theater seizure in October 2002, in which 129 hostages died during the botched rescue attempt by Spetsnaz units; and the Beslan school seizure and massacre in September 2004 in which 344 civilians were killed, including 186 children.

Over the past five years the Russian government has taken serious steps to detect and cut off terrorist financing; significantly expanded its CT capabilities, both with respect to intelligence and operations; and cooperated actively with the United States, including participating in the US-Russia Counterterrorism working group and forging a joint, operational CT capability between the FBI and the Russia Federal Security Service (FSB).<sup>283</sup> The most significant development in Russia's CT effort since 2001 was the deaths of two key figures in the Chechen-based terrorist network: Aslan Maskhadov, a key Chechen "separatist" leader, who was killed in March 2005; and Shamil Basayev, founder of the IIPB and head of the Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade, who was killed in a truck bomb explosion on July 10, 2006 in Ingushetia.<sup>284</sup> Owing to these and other successes, it is reasonable to conclude that the terror threat in Russia has diminished slightly since 2001.

## Central Asia

Central Asia has been targeted by al Qaeda as a promising expansion opportunity since the late 1990s. Writing before September 2001 in a letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar, Osama bin Laden

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<sup>282</sup> Members of the Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade are believed to be linked to the Black Widows, IIPB, the Movsar Baryayev Gang, and the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment. The Martyr's Brigade is also allied with Ingush Jama'at Shariat.

<sup>283</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 114.

<sup>284</sup> Basayev was reportedly in a car escorting a truck filled with explosives in preparation for a bombing when it detonated. There is a controversy, however, over what caused the explosives to detonate. Chechen seperatists allege that they accidentally detonated when the truck hit a pothole, whereas the Russian Federal Security Service claims that its agents detonated the explosives remotely. Other sources sources claim a rival insurgent group, Shariat, assassinated him with an improved explosive device.

stressed the value of extending operations in the Central Asian Republics, specifically Tajikistan, because “it will keep the enemies busy and divert them away for the Afghani issues.” He also noted that “the Islamic Republics region is rich with scientific experiences in conventional *and non-conventional* military industries, which will have a great role in future Jihad against the enemies of Islam.”<sup>285</sup> The key battlefield in the war on terror in Central Asia over the past five years has been in Uzbekistan—including the Fergana Valley that extends into neighboring Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU); the Islamic Jihad Group (IJG), which splintered off from IMU; Hizb-ut Tahir (HuT); and the East Turkistan Islamic Movement are all currently active in this area. Prior to 2004, IJG did not exist and IMU had been essentially eradicated by the Government of Uzbekistan. Over the past two years, however, IJG has risen dramatically in strength and IMU has reconstituted itself, in part by finding sanctuary in under-governed areas in Tajikistan.

IMU was founded in 1998 by two Salafi jihadists, Juma Namangani and Tahir Yuldash, who avowed to overthrow the oppressive, “apostate” regime of President Islam Karimov and create an Islamist state in Uzbekistan, presumably modeled after Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. In 1999, IMU carried out five coordinated car bombings, killing 16 people, in Tashkent. Over the next few years, IMU expanded its original goal and declared its intention to create an Islamic caliphate encompassing Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and the Xinxiang province of China. In May 2001, Osama bin Laden reportedly named Namangani to be the leader of a brigade of foreign fighters, called Livo, comprising radicalized Uzbeks, Turks, Uighurs, and Pakistanis. Five months later, Livo and IMU fought alongside Taliban and al Qaeda fighters against US military forces during OEF.

Already at war with the IMU, Uzbekistan was among the first states to support American efforts in the global war in terror in 2001, agreeing to host US military forces within its borders.<sup>286</sup> During OEF, Juma Namangani was killed in a US air strike and Tahir Yuldash fled to Pakistan. Back in Uzbekistan, President Karimov authorized a brutal but effective crackdown on Islamic terrorism, arresting and jailing thousands of individuals with suspected terrorist ties. By the end of 2002, the leadership of IMU had been decapitated and most of its cells had been rolled up within Uzbekistan. As one former IMU member put it, in the wake of OEF, “The IMU’s back has been broken.”<sup>287</sup>

Between 2002 and 2004, however, the IMU was able to reconstitute itself by taking advantage of sanctuaries outside the reach of Karimov’s security services in Tajikistan and elsewhere. By 2004, IMU had rebuilt to an estimated 800 active members.<sup>288</sup> It also spun off a more radical group, the IJG, which was responsible for a string of bombings in Tashkent in late March and early April, killing 14 and injuring 56, as well as the near simultaneous attacks on the US and Israeli Embassies and the Uzbekistani Prosecutor General’s office in Tashkent on July 30,

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<sup>285</sup> Emphasis added. Osama bin Laden, Letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar, undated. Harmony database, AFGP-2002-600321, p. 2.

<sup>286</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 125

<sup>287</sup> Peter Baker, “Renewed Militancy Seen in Uzbekistan,” *Washington Post*, September 27, 2003, p. 19.

<sup>288</sup> Peter Baker, “Group Linked to Al Qaeda Suspected in Uzbek Unrest,” *Washington Post*, April 2, 2004, p. 17

2004.<sup>289</sup> The attacks marked the first use of suicide bombers in Central Asia.<sup>290</sup> The ideological inspiration of al Qaeda is clearly evident in the statement released by IJG following the attacks:

A group of young Muslims executed martyrdom operations that put fear in the apostate government and its infidel allies, the Americans and Jews. The mujahidin belonging to Islamic Jihad Group attacked both the American and Israeli embassies as well as the court building where the trials of a large number of the brothers from the Group had begun. These martyrdom operations that the group is executing will not stop, God willing. It is for the purpose of repelling the injustice of the apostate government and supporting the jihad of our Muslim brothers in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, the Hijaz, and in other Muslim countries ruled by infidels and apostates.<sup>291</sup>

Following the 2004 IJG attacks, the Karimov government cracked down again on terrorist groups, triggering an international outcry over alleged human rights abuses. In one incident in Andijan province in May 2005, for instance, several hundred civilians were reportedly killed.<sup>292</sup> In response to diplomatic pressure and public criticism of Uzbekistan's human rights record by US and EU officials, Karimov slowly ratcheted back Uzbekistan's cooperation on counter-terrorism and, in July 2005, opted to terminate an agreement allowing the US military access to the Karshi-Khanabad airbase.<sup>293</sup>

Following the revelation in 2004 that Kazakh jihadis participated in the bombings in Tashkent, Kazakhstan stepped up CT activities and began to cooperate more closely with the United States. The Islamic Jihad Union, IJG, and HT, however, all remain active, to varying degrees, in Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan has taken a number of steps to increase its CT capabilities, including bolster CT-focused intelligence and law enforcement, and creating a special agency to target terrorism financing and money laundering. The impetus for these initiatives was the potential threat posed by HT, which has a growing presence in southern Kyrgyzstan where there is a large ethnic Uzbek population.<sup>294</sup> Finally, although Tajikistan is strongly supportive of US efforts in the war on terrorism, including allowing the US government to use its territory and airspace for CT actions, it does not currently have the resources to secure its border and prevent its territory from being used by terrorists groups. As a small positive note, however, Tajik authorities did manage to arrest several IMU operatives in 2005.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> 33 terrorists were also killed during the March-April bombings. NCTC Worldwide Incidents Tracking System

<sup>290</sup> "Uzbekistan President Points to Islamic Extremists in Attacks," *Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 2004; and *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 199.

<sup>291</sup> MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, "Islamic Jihad Group" entry. See: <http://www.tkb.org/Home.jsp>.

<sup>292</sup> Robin Wright, "Uzbeks Stop Working With U.S. Against Terrorism," *Washington Post*, September 30, 2005, p. 14

<sup>293</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 85

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

Overall, the terrorist threat in Southeast Asia has diminished since 2001. While jihadi groups have tried to make in-roads into Australia, Burma, Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand over the past five years, they appear to have had little success.<sup>296</sup> Jihadi efforts have been checked repeatedly across the region. The governments in Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore have, in particular, been very effective in combating terrorism domestically. In November 2005, for instance, Australian police arrested 18 suspected terrorists planning a "large scale terrorist attack" in Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>297</sup> Malaysian authorities have successfully tracked down and detained more than 110 suspected terrorists since 2001.<sup>298</sup> While much work remains to be done to enhance the CT capabilities of Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand, they are better able to handle terrorist threats than they were five years ago. That being said, Thailand still faces a serious home-grown insurgency in the far south of the country, near the border with Malaysia, which spiked in intensity in 2004 and has not significantly abated. It does not appear, however, that transnational terrorist groups are directly involved in the violence, and links between southern Thai separatist groups and regional terror networks (e.g., Jemaah Islamiyah) appear to be limited to minor financial and training assistance.<sup>299</sup> The principal terrorist threat in the region is centered on the Indonesian archipelago and the Philippines.<sup>300</sup> In both countries, after reaching a high-water mark in 2001-2002, the terrorist threat has receded. The possibility of a jihadi resurgence, however, should not be discounted. Key positive developments in the war on terror in Southeast Asia include:

- A significant improvement in the CT capabilities and capacities of several countries in the region, especially Indonesia and the Philippines;
- The rolling up in 2001-2002 of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) cells in Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines that were plotting—with the assistance of al Qaeda—bombing attacks against American, Australian, British, and Israeli installations and citizens in Singapore;<sup>301</sup>
- The arrest of Omar al-Farouq, al Qaeda's senior representative in Southeast Asia, by Indonesian police in June 2002 and the thwarting of planned joint al Qaeda-JI attacks against US interests in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Cambodia to mark the one-year anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-83.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>300</sup> About two thirds of the roughly 300 terrorist incidents, most of them minor, in Southeast Asia since September 11, 2001, occurred in Indonesia and the Philippines.

<sup>301</sup> Bruce Vaughn et al, "Terrorism in Southeast Asia," *CRS Report for Congress*, February 7, 2005, Order Code RL31672, pp. 10-11

<sup>302</sup> Romesh Ratnesar, "Confessions of an Al Qaeda Terrorist," *Time*, September 23, 2002.

- The arrest of in Nurjaman Riduan bin Isomoddin (Hambali), who served as al Qaeda's liaison to radical Islamic groups in the region and acted as the operational leader of JI, by Thai security forces in August 2003; and
- The Armed Forces of the Philippines successful operations against Abu Sayyaf, JI, and the Rajah Sulaiman Movement.

These gains, however, have been partially offset by the growing popularity of more fundamentalist interpretations of Islam in Indonesia and the Philippines; the lenient treatment of JI spiritual leader, Abu Bakar Bashir, by the Indonesian government; and the continued ability of jihadi groups to carry out major terrorist attacks throughout the region.

## Indonesia

In the year following the attack on September 11, 2001, the Indonesian government's effort to combat Islamic terrorism domestically was half-hearted and ineffectual. This foot-dragging was, in part, a reflection of the central government's relative weakness and the negative domestic political ramifications of appearing to be too accommodating to the United States or too "secular" in a country of 200 million Muslims. The bombing on October 12, 2002 of two nightclubs in the Kuta beach area on the resort island of Bali, killing 202 people and injuring more than 300, caused a dramatic shift in Indonesian policy. The government immediately began working with US and Australian government officials to track down the terrorists responsible for the attack.

Since then, Indonesian cooperation with the United States and Australia has deepened considerably. The US State Department funded the establishment of a national police CT unit, "Special Attachment 88," at a cost of about \$35 million, under its Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program. Personnel in the new unit have been trained by the FBI, CIA, and Secret Service.<sup>303</sup> The US government also provided basic CT training to Indonesian police, assistance formulating effective CT legislation and conducting terrorist prosecutions, financial intelligence training to strengthen Indonesian enforcement of new anti-money laundering laws, and specialized training to tighten border security under the Terrorist Interdiction Program.<sup>304</sup> In September 2005, Indonesia's Attorney General established a terrorism and transnational crime task force to manage CT prosecutions nationwide. Most significantly, in 2005, US military training and aid programs with the Indonesian military, referred to as the "TNI" for *Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, which had been terminated in 1999 in response to TNI's human rights abuses in East Timor, were resumed.

The principal jihadi threat in Indonesia is Jemaah Islamiya, which literally stands for "Islamic Community." Formed in 1993 in Malaysia by the radical clerics, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Bashir, JI's goal is to create an Islamic caliphate across Southeast Asia, encompassing

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<sup>303</sup> James Solomon and James Hookway, "In Indonesia, War on Terror Shows Both Gains and Worrisome Trends," *Wall Street Journal*, September 8, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>304</sup> Vaughn et al, p. 16; and Simon Montlake, "Indonesia, US Ties Strained by Past," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 29, 2005

Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, southern Thailand, and the southern Philippines. While it is estimated to have as many as 25,000-30,000 followers in Indonesia alone, the number of core JI operatives is believed to be between 300 and 500. Through its intimate involvement in Indonesia's network of pesantren, boarding schools that teach Wahhabist Islam, JI has put down deep societal roots.<sup>305</sup> JI is linked to several regional jihadi groups—including the Abu Sayyaf Group, Komando Jihad, Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, and Nusantara Islamic Jihad Forces—that provide each other with limited training, logistical, and financial support. There is also considerable evidence that JI has engaged in joint training and terrorist operations with separatist groups in the Philippines, most notably, the Moro Islamic Salvation Front (MILF). JI has reportedly established a network of bases and training camps, for example, in MILF-controlled territory in Mindanao.<sup>306</sup> In addition to the Philippines, JI is believed to have cells in Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Thailand, and Pakistan. It also has long-established links with al Qaeda: JI and al Qaeda members have shared training camps in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Mindanao; loaned each other trainers and technical experts; and collaborated on operational plans, including the attack on the USS *Cole*, the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the 2002 Bali bombing.<sup>307</sup> Prior to 2001-2002, al Qaeda also provided significant financial support to JI.

The Indonesian government's more vigorous CT efforts since the 2002 Bali attacks have yielded a number of important victories. In June 2002, Omar al-Farouq, al Qaeda's senior representative in Southeast Asia, was tracked down and arrested by Indonesian police. In November 2005, after an intense, three-year manhunt, the Malaysian bomb-maker, Azahari Husin—who, along with JI recruiter, Noordin Mohammed Top, is believed to have played an instrumental role in nearly every major terrorist attack in Indonesia over the past five years—was tracked down to a terrorist safe house in Malang, East Java, where he committed suicide rather than be arrested.<sup>308</sup> Thirty terrorists have been convicted for complicity in the 2002 Bali attack. The trials, moreover, were public and transparent, which not only debunked popular conspiracy theories (e.g., the US government was responsible for the bombing) but also highlighted the serious nature of the domestic terrorist threat.<sup>309</sup> In all, since 2001, over 200 suspected and acknowledged JI members, including several senior leaders, have been arrested or killed in Indonesia.<sup>310</sup> While JI has not been eradicated completely, it has been seriously weakened.

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<sup>305</sup> Greg Sheridan, "Jihad Archipelago," *The National Interest*, Winter 2004/2005, p. 79.

<sup>306</sup> Ellen Nakashima, "Indonesian Militants 'Keep Regenerating'," *Washington Post*, March 25, 2004; and Bruce Vaughn et al, "Terrorism in Southeast Asia," *CRS Report for Congress*, February 7, 2005, Order Code RL31672, pp. 5-6.

<sup>307</sup> Al Qaeda and JI members attended a meeting in January 2000 in Kuala Lumpur during which plans for the attack on the USS *Cole* and the September 11<sup>th</sup> plot were discussed. At a meeting in Bangkok in 2002, an al Qaeda representative contributed to planning for the 2002 Bali bombing. See Sidney Jones, "Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous," *International Crisis Group Report*, August 26, 2003; *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 150-152; and Vaughn et al, "Terrorism in Southeast Asia," pp. 7-8.

<sup>308</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 70.

<sup>309</sup> Sheridan, "Jihad Archipelago," pp. 78-79.

<sup>310</sup> James Solomon and James Hookway, "In Indonesia, War on Terror Shows Both Gains and Worrisome Trends," *Wall Street Journal*, September 8, 2006, p. 1.

This achievement, however, has not been easy. While on the ropes, JI and al Qaeda have managed to land some staggering blows, including:

- The detonation of a car bomb in front of the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta on August 5, 2003, which killed 13 people and injured approximately 149 others;
- A suicide car bombing outside the gates of the Australian embassy in Jakarta, killing nine people and wounding nearly 200, on September 9, 2004; and
- The coordinated bombing of restaurants on Bali on October 1, 2005 that included two near simultaneous bombings of beachfront restaurants in Jimbaran and a third blast in a steakhouse and bar in Kuta, killing 20 people and wounding more than 120.<sup>311</sup>

Given the Indonesian's government effective CT campaign against JI since 2002 and growing CT cooperation with both the United States and Australia, there is ample reason for optimism that the jihadi threat in Indonesia will continue to ebb. While it is true that the number of parliamentary seats held by fundamentalists has crept up slightly over the past several years, Indonesian politics are still very much dominated by secular nationalists.<sup>312</sup> The current president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who is former general and a staunch secular nationalist, is committed to combating Islamic terrorism.

Historically, Indonesian Muslims have practiced a very tolerant, pluralist, moderate form of Islam syncretized with local customs and mystic influences. More conservative, fundamentalist Islam is, however, starting to take root in Indonesia. Several local districts and municipalities have unilaterally enacted elements of the sharia such as banning alcohol, curtailing women's rights, restricting dancing and music, and imposing strict moral codes regulating public conduct (e.g., banning short skirts and kissing in public). Militias such as Islamic Defenders Front and Indonesian Mujahedeen Council openly recruited fighters to go to Lebanon to fight Israel in July-August 2006.

Domestic political considerations (e.g., not appearing to be anti-Muslim or a puppet of the United States) have clearly constrained the government's options for stemming this undercurrent of radicalism. Amazingly, even though JI is designated by the United Nations as a terrorist organization, the Indonesia government has declined to ban JI outright. Similarly, despite the fact pesantren boarding schools radicalize Indonesian youth and are used by JI to identify and recruit new members, the government has not yet closed them down.<sup>313</sup> Finally, even though Abu Bakar Bashir is widely recognized as the spiritual leader of JI, the government has been extremely lenient in prosecuting him because of his popularity and Islamic credentials. When Bashir was put on trial in spring of 2003, the government opted not to charge him with offenses related to the Bali bombing even though he was clearly complicit in the attack. The

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<sup>311</sup> Ellen Nakashima and Alan Sipress, "25 Killed in Three Blasts in Bali," *Washington Post*, October 2, 2005, p. 1; and Christian Le Miere, "Bali Bombs Confirms Indonesia's Extremist Problem," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 2005, p.1.

<sup>312</sup> In the 2004 presidential election, the top four candidates were all secular nationalists.

<sup>313</sup> Sheridan, "Jihad Archipelago," p. 78.

government also performed legal acrobatics to find him innocent of being a JI leader, which was quite a feat given his widely acknowledged role in the organization. Nevertheless, while the prosecutor had sought a 15-year prison term, Bashir was sentenced to four years in jail for plotting to overthrow the Indonesian government. In March 2004, however, the Indonesian Supreme Court reduced Bashir's sentence and scheduled his release for April 2004. The government filed new terrorism-related charges in April 2004, which led to Bashir's sentencing in March 2005 to 30 months in prison for his involvement in the "sinister conspiracy" to carry out the 2002 Bali bombing. Five months later, his sentence was reduced by four and a half months for "good behavior."

In time, the growing popularity of fundamentalist Islam could create patches of fertile soil for jihadi groups like JI to take root and prosper in Indonesia. Fortunately, it appears that Indonesia's two largest Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, are willing to combat radicalism by speaking out against Salafi and Wahhabi preachers, discrediting radical ideology, and putting pressure on the pesantren to moderate their instruction.

### **The Philippines**

The CT efforts of the Philippine government, bolstered by major support from the United States, have unquestionably reduced the jihadi threat since 2001. The single most important accomplishment has been the systematic destruction of the al Qaeda linked group, Abu Sayyaf, which has shrunk from an estimated strength of 5,000 in 2000 to only a few hundred committed fighters today.<sup>314</sup>

Most of the terrorist attacks in the Philippines over the past five years were conducted by domestic groups with separatist agendas (e.g., Indigenous People's Federal Army, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and the New People's Army). While it has grown steadily weaker over time, Abu Sayyaf conducted some two dozen attacks—bombings, armed attacks, assassinations, and beheadings.<sup>315</sup> A disturbing trend is the growing cooperation among Abu Sayyaf, JI, and the fledgling Rajah Sulaiman Movement (RSM), which is comprised mainly of Christian converts to Islam.<sup>316</sup> The three near simultaneous bombings in three different cities—Manila, Davao, and General Santos City—on Valentine's Day in 2005, which resulted in eight deaths and 150 injuries, involved operatives from all three groups. In addition, MILF-controlled territory continues to be used by JI as a sanctuary where it can regroup, train, and plan new attacks.<sup>317</sup>

Even in its weakened state, Abu Sayyaf, which literally means "father of the sword" in Arabic, is still the most powerful jihadi group in the Philippines. Its strength is also magnified by its cooperation with JI and RSM. Abu Sayyaf was founded in 1991 by radicalized members of the separatist group, the Moro National Liberation Front, which had entered into negotiations with

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<sup>314</sup> Reuters, "Philippine Troops Say Kill Senior Abu Sayyaf Man," *New York Times* (on the web), April 8, 2004.

<sup>315</sup> All statistics from MIPT Terrorist Knowledge Base.

<sup>316</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 77.

<sup>317</sup> Greg Sheridan, "Jihad Archipelago," *The National Interest*, Winter 2004-2005, p. 75; Carlos Conde, "U.S. To Aid Antiterror Plan in Philippines," *New York Times*, June 29, 2004.

the Philippine government. Abu Sayyaf's declared goal is the creation of an independent Islamic state that encompasses parts of southern Thailand, Borneo, the Sulu Archipelago, and Mindanao. Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law, Muhammad Jamal Khalifa is believed to have provided most of the seed money for the start up of Abu Sayyaf, using funds laundered through his charity, the International Islamic Relief Organization. Abu Sayyaf's founder and leader, until he was killed by Philippine security forces in 1998, was Abdurajak Janjalani, who trained in al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. He was replaced by his younger brother, Khadaffy Janjalani, who is a less charismatic leader and has weaker Islamic credentials. Since Khadaffy has assumed control, the group has fractionalized and gained a well-deserved reputation for criminality.<sup>318</sup> It has resorted to robbery, extortion rackets, and kidnapping-for-ransom schemes to generate funds.<sup>319</sup> Abu Sayyaf operates mainly in western Mindanao and the Sulu islands.

Immediately following the attacks on September 11, 2001, the US government ramped up CT assistance to the Philippines dramatically. On November 20, 2001, the US government agreed to provide \$92 million in US military assistance and \$55 million in economic aid for predominantly Muslim regions of the Philippines.<sup>320</sup> In January 2002, more than 1,300 US personnel, including 160 SF advisors, initiated a six-month, company-level training program with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that focused on counter-terrorism and "civic action" projects, including setting up and running medical clinics, building schools, and digging wells.<sup>321</sup> Between 2001 and 2002, the United States equipped AFP units with about \$100 million worth of military equipment, including 200 sets of night-vision goggles, two high-speed cutters, a C-130 transport aircraft, eight UH-1H Huey helicopters, and various types of small arms.<sup>322</sup> As part of this training program, US forces participated in an extended live-combat exercise called "Balikatan," which translates to "shoulder-to-shoulder," focused mainly on rooting out terrorists from Basilan Island. While this "exercise" significantly reduced Abu Sayyaf's presence on Basilan, many of the terrorist group's leaders and fighters fled to nearby Sulu province, particularly to the island of Jolo.<sup>323</sup>

In May 2003, the United States launched a new training program and designated the Philippines a "Major Non-NATO Ally," giving it greater access to US defense equipment and supplies. During 2003, several hundred US military personnel put two Philippine "light reaction" companies, eight Army and Marine light infantry battalions, and an unspecified number of helicopter pilots through an intensive training program focusing on intelligence fusion, command and control, night operations, and relevant light infantry tactics (i.e., close quarter battle, hostage

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<sup>318</sup> Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf terrorists, for example, are led by Jumdalil Gumbahali. Another Abu Sayyaf cell is led by Hamsiraji Sali. See "Infighting Splits Sayyaf," *Philippine Star*, March 8, 2004

<sup>319</sup> See entry for "Abu Sayyaf Group" in the MIPT Terrorist Knowledge Base

<sup>320</sup> Steven Mufson, "U.S. to Aid Philippines' Terrorism War," *Washington Post*, November 21, 2001

<sup>321</sup> Some 25 field companies from the Armed Forces of the Philippines participated in the program. See U.S. Department of Defense, *2002 Year in Review*, December 31, 2002, p. 6. See also: James Hookway, "U.S. Official Warn Southeast Asia is Potential Meeting Site for Al Qaeda," *Wall Street Journal*, April 29, 2002; Rowan Scarborough, "Philippine Army Closing In On Abu Sayyaf Rebels," *Washington Times*, March 29, 2002, p. 6.

<sup>322</sup> James Brooke, "Unease Grows in Philippines on U.S. Forces," *New York Times*, January 19, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>323</sup> Ellen Nakashima, "Island in the Philippines Poses Counterterrorism Challenge," *Washington Post*, December 21, 2002, p. 16.

rescue, and sniping).<sup>324</sup> In addition to classroom instruction and field training in Luzon, Mindanao, and Visayas, the training program featured more than a dozen small-scale exercises.<sup>325</sup>

While plans to conduct a second Balikatan-scale exercise in 2003 were de-railed because of diplomatic and political issues, US-AFP cooperation continued unabated at the small unit level.<sup>326</sup> Those difficulties, however, were soon overcome with the formation of the Security Engagement Board to oversee an expanded exercise and training program. US and AFP military forces have conducted scores of small- and large-scale training exercises since 2004. Roughly every year, the US military and AFP conduct several small-scale joint training exercises (e.g., Kapit Bisig and Balance Piston) under the Joint Command Exercise for Training (JCET) program, a maritime-focused Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise, and a large-scale Balikatan exercise. Roughly 5,500 American troops and similar number of AFP personnel participated in Balikatan 2006, which was organized into three segments: humanitarian and civic assistance on the island of Jolo in Sulu, a combined task forces staff exercise in Cebu, and cross training and field training exercises in Luzon.<sup>327</sup> Balikatan was only one of 37 joint US-AFP military exercises planned for 2006.<sup>328</sup>

These efforts to build the CT capabilities and capacity of the AFP have clearly had an impact. US personnel have also provided intelligence and other support to AFP troops hunting down suspected terrorists. Significant CT victories in the Philippines over the past five years include the death of Aldam Tilao (Abu Sabaya), a chief spokesman for Abu Sayyaf, who was killed in clash with navy commandoes in June 2002; the elimination of Indonesian terrorist, Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, in October 2003; the capture of senior Abu Sayyaf commander, Ghalib

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<sup>324</sup> Julie Alipala, "U.S. Troops Arriving This Month for Exercises," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 6, 2003; and Martin Marfil, "Secret RP-US Plan to Deploy Rapid Force," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 4, 2002.

<sup>325</sup> Ding Cervantes, "Balance Piston 03-05 Blasts Off in Central Luzon," *Philippine Star*, January 28, 2003; Eric Schmitt with Charles Conde, "U.S. and Philippines May Start New Training Mission," *New York Times*, December 1, 2002.

<sup>326</sup> By the end of 2002, plans were also in place to conduct an "Armed Forces of the Philippines-led, U.S.-supported operation" to eliminate some 200-300 hard-core Abu Sayyaf terrorists believed to be on Jolo Island. The U.S. military intended to commit approximately 350 SF personnel to the operation, along with an additional 400 support personnel on Mindanao and a 2,000-strong, rapid-reaction and attack-aviation force offshore (elements from the 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit and the USS Essex Amphibious Ready Group). The operation was suspended, however, owing to Filipino political concerns and legal wrangling about whether an active combat role for U.S. forces in support of PAF units, as opposed to a strictly "advisory" one, is permissible under the constitution of the Philippines. Jim Garamone, "U.S., Philippines to Operate Against Abu Sayyaf Terrorists," *American Forces Information Service*, February 21, 2003; Bradley Graham, "U.S. Bolsters Philippine Force," *Washington Post*, February 21, 2003, p. 1; John Hendren, "Americans Could Face Another Swamp in the Philippines," *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 2003, p. 1; Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Combat Force of 1,700 is Headed to the Philippines," *New York Times*, February 21, 2003, p. 1; Ellen Nakashima and Bradley Graham, "Missed Signals Forced Suspension of U.S.-Philippine Mission," *Washington Post*, March 3, 2003, p. 12; Norman Bordadora, "Exact Role of U.S. Forces in Philippines Sought," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 26, 2003; Seth Mydans, "Combat Role for G.I.'s in Philippines Left Unclear," *New York Times*, February 25, 2003; and Ellen Nakashima, "Talks May Clarify U.S. Role in Philippines," *Washington Post*, February 24, 2003, p. 17.

<sup>327</sup> Some of the US troops deployed for the exercise were subsequently committed to humanitarian relief operations following a major landslide in southern Leyte.

<sup>328</sup> Ding Cervantes, "5,500 US Military Personnel Coming for Balikatan 2006," *Philippine Star*, February 17, 2006.

Andang, in late 2003; the death of six members of Abu Sayyaf, including one its commanders, Hamsiraji Sali, in gun battle with AFP troops on Basilan island in April 2004; the successful thwarting in March 2004 of an Abu Sayyaf plot to carry out a series of bombing in Manila, which led to the arrest of six terrorists and the seizure 80 pounds of explosives; the arrest of several members of RSM, including its leader, Ahmad Santos, in October 2005; and the death of Jainal Usman, a senior Abu Sayyaf commander, who was killed along with two of his subordinates by Philippine security forces in November 2005.<sup>329</sup>

As with JI in Indonesia, while the pressure has been on, Abu Sayyaf and its affiliates have still managed to lash out. Major attacks have included the October 2002 bombing of department stores and a Catholic shrine in Zamboanga; the bombing of a ferry on February 27, 2004, which killed 116 people;<sup>330</sup> and the August 2005 bombing of a passenger ferry in Basilan, killing four people and injuring 30. By any measure, however, Abu Sayyaf has been substantially weakened since 2001. The Philippine government still must overcome a number of shortfalls in its battle against terrorism, including weak CT laws and spotty enforcement, rampant government corruption, recruitment and retention difficulties in key agencies, inadequate information technology, and porous borders and weak immigration controls.

## THE AMERICAS

Owing to stepped up CT efforts throughout the Americas, the jihadi threat—which was never very high relative to other regions of the world—has ebbed considerably. In the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the US government took a number of important steps, including the following:

- Tripling spending on security at airlines, ports, borders, and other critical sites;
- Eliminating the legal and bureaucratic walls that previously kept US law enforcement and intelligence agencies from sharing information on terrorist threats;
- Restructuring the FBI, including creating a National Security Branch to coordinate terrorism investigations and intelligence operations, and expanding the number of Joint Terrorist Task Forces;
- Revising Immigration and Naturalization procedures, including adding new layers of screening (e.g., fact-to-face interviews, fingerprints, and routine database check for visa applications);
- Consolidating and improving the accessibility of terrorist watchlists available to Federal, State, and local government officials;

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<sup>329</sup> These arrests were followed by the apprehension of RSM's second in command and operations chief, Pio de Vera, in December 2005. Country Reports on Terrorism-2005, p. 78.

<sup>330</sup> Jim Gomez, "Abu Sayyaf Reinvents Itself to Attract Recruits, Funding," *Manila Times*, April 21, 2004; and James Hookway, "Sinking of Ferry in Philippines Tied to Terrorism," *Wall Street Journal*, May 4, 2004, p. 17.

- Expanding the investigative powers of law enforcement agencies (i.e., the Patriot Act);
- Launching NSA-run terrorist surveillance programs, monitoring communications between individuals in the United States and known or suspected terrorists operatives overseas, and searching financial transactions for suspicious activity; and
- Creating the Department of Homeland Security, the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and the Terrorist Screening Center.

Those initiatives have undoubtedly improved the security of the US homeland by, among other things, making it much more difficult for terrorists to enter into and operate within the United States. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, US law enforcement personnel have arrested and convicted dozens of individuals, including Zacarias Moussaoui for his role in facilitating the 9/11 attacks, the “shoe bomber” Richard Reid, and more than a score of others—most of whom were found guilty of providing “material support” to al Qaeda. Convictions were made across the United States, ranging from New York, Washington DC, and New Jersey on the East Coast to Portland, Oregon on the West Coast.<sup>331</sup> At least four “serious” AQAM plots to attack targets within the United States have been foiled to date and five attempts to either case American targets or infiltrate operatives into the United States have been disrupted.<sup>332</sup> And fortunately, over the past five years, jihadists have not managed to conduct a single follow-on attack within the US homeland.

For decades, terrorists have exploited Canada’s liberal immigration and asylum policies to find safehaven, raise funds, arrange logistical support, and plan terrorist attacks.<sup>333</sup> Hezbollah, for example, has used Canada as a major fund-raising and logistics base for years.<sup>334</sup> According to the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), al Qaeda established cells in Canada in the late 1990s whose members have the “capability and conviction” to support terrorist activities all across North America.<sup>335</sup> In the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>, however, the Canadian government enacted tougher CT legislation, increased oversight over Islamic charities and non-governmental organizations, enhanced its financial intelligence capabilities, and stepped up intelligence sharing with the US government. In December 2002, the Canadian government finally banned all Hezbollah activities within its borders and arrested Mohammed Harket, an Algerian with extensive links to al Qaeda reaching back to the 1990s.<sup>336</sup> In June 2006, as the result of a sting operation, Canadian authorities arrested 17 Muslim citizens or residents of Canada who had

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<sup>331</sup> White House, *9/11 Five Years Later: Successes and Challenges* (Washington, DC: White House, 2006), p. 8.

<sup>332</sup> White House, Fact Sheet—Plots, Casings, and Infiltrations Referenced in President Bush’s Remarks on the War on Terror, October 6, 2005.

<sup>333</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, pp. 160-161; Paul Martin, “Canada Bans All Hezbollah Activities,” *Washington Times*, December 12, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>334</sup> Martin, “Canada Bans All Hezbollah Activities,” p. 1.

<sup>335</sup> Robert Frank, “Ottawa, Justifying Algerian’s Arrest, Says Al Qaeda Is Operating in Canada,” *New York Times*, December 17, 2002; and Jerry Seper, “Al Qaeda Said to be Operating in Canada,” *Washington Times*, December 19, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>336</sup> Dana Priest and DeNeen L. Brown, “Sleeper Cell Contacts Are Revealed in Canada,” *Washington Post*, December 25, 2002, p. 1.

conspired to attack targets in downtown Toronto using three tons of ammonium nitrate.<sup>337</sup> While Canada has made some important strides in improving its CT capabilities over the past five years, the US government remains concerned that several al Qaeda operatives and “ sleeper cells” remain at large in Canada.<sup>338</sup>

Several countries in Central and South America have taken modest steps to strengthen financial laws to make money laundering and other illicit transactions more difficult, tighten border security, and improve domestic policing and CT capabilities. Nevertheless, long-standing weaknesses that could be exploited by terrorist groups remain, including corruption, relatively weak financial laws, poor border security, and lax enforcement of existing CT laws. As one example of the problem, the Government of Brazil has chosen not to establish a terrorist-designation system that would make support for and membership in terrorist groups a crime, and officially considers Hezbollah to be a legitimate political party.<sup>339</sup>

Hezbollah, HAMAS, and other Islamic terrorist groups continue to find sanctuary in the loosely regulated territory in the “ tri-border” area shared by Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. They take advantage of this area primarily for fundraising and recruitment, but may also be engaged in planning, training, and logistical support activity. They are especially active in the Muslim communities in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, and Foz do Iguacu, Brazil.<sup>340</sup>

There have been sporadic reports of al Qaeda activity in Honduras and elsewhere in Central America. Al Qaeda may be interested in establishing secure land routes to the US homeland by cultivating relationships with Central American gangs, Maras, and other criminal groups. For a variety of reasons, however, strategic cooperation between them and al Qaeda is unlikely.<sup>341</sup>

## **SOUTHWEST ASIA AND THE LEVANT**

The jihadi movement has strengthened and extended its geographic reach in Southwest Asia, the Levant, and the broader Middle East over the past five years. The key battlegrounds for the Salafi-jihadi branch of Islamic radicalism in this region are currently Saudi Arabia and Iraq. For the Khomeinists, the key battlegrounds are Lebanon and Iraq.

As was discussed in Chapter III, Hezbollah’s clash with the IDF in southern Lebanon in July-August 2006 was an important strategic victory for the organization and bolstered the standing of its two key patrons, Iran and Syria, in the Muslim world. By surviving the Israeli onslaught, Hassan Nasrallah has emerged as a rising anti-Israel icon in the Arab world. Hezbollah’s popularity has soared not only among Lebanese Shiites, but also among Sunni Arabs and

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<sup>337</sup> AP, “Sting Led to Canada Terrorism Arrests,” June 5, 2006.

<sup>338</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 161.

<sup>339</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, pp. 157-170.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>341</sup> Carlos Mauricio Pineda Cruz, “Al Qaeda’s Unlikely Allies in Central Asia,” in Christopher Heffelfinger, ed., *Unmasking Terror—A Global Review of Terrorist Activities* (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2005), pp. 458-461.

Palestinians, in particular. Hezbollah-controlled southern Lebanon is now, in effect, a state within a state. Meanwhile, the democratically elected government in Beirut has been severely weakened owing both to its inability to rein in Hezbollah and its failure to defend the territory and people of Lebanon from Israel's attack. Taking advantage of this frailty, at the beginning of December 2006, Nasrallah called for "civilized and peaceful" demonstrations to pressure the government into accepting its demands for greater representation in the cabinet, which would, in effect, allow Hezbollah to exercise a veto over all government actions. Embattled Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, who equated Nasrallah's threats to an attempted coup, cautioned that "Lebanon's independence is threatened and its democratic system is in danger."<sup>342</sup> As of the writing of this report, the security situation in Lebanon remained volatile with Hezbollah politically ascendant and in the process of being re-armed by Iran and Syria. Finally, while the IDF may well have won the battle in a narrow tactical sense (e.g., inflicting many more casualties than it suffered and temporarily eliminating a large fraction of Hezbollah's military infrastructure in the south), it lost strategically. Falling on the heels of Israel's unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon in 2000 and the Gaza Strip in 2005, Hezbollah's victory has reinforced popular perceptions of Israeli weakness, eroding the credibility of Israeli deterrence.

As will be elaborated upon below, while the Saudi government has essentially eradicated Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula, the government continues to promote Wahhabism overseas, Saudi clerics provide critical ideological support to the jihadi movement, and Saudi nationals are taking part in the insurgency in Iraq. AQI has chalked up a number of important victories for the jihadi movement: weakening the US military, imposing high costs on the United States at limited cost to the movement, creating wedges between America and its allies, and winning over the hearts and minds of the ummah through the skillful exploitation of graphic images of American "atrocities" in Iraq and successful jihadi operations against the new "Crusaders." Simultaneously, as has been discussed already, Iran has made major strides in exporting the ideals of the Khomeini revolution to Iraq.

Other important fronts for the jihadi movement in the region include the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Yemen. While al Qaeda-linked groups continue to operate in all of these areas, the level of activity is, on balance, comparable to that in 2001. Indeed, since the CT capabilities of the governments of Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen, in particular, have improved over the intervening years, one could argue that the terrorist threat has abated. Improvements in the CT capabilities of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE also appear to be outpacing the relatively slow growth of the threat in those areas.

### **Saudi Arabia**

The Salafi-jihadi threat within and emanating from Saudi Arabia has diminished dramatically since 2001. Over the past five years, Saudi Arabia has changed from being one of the primary

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<sup>342</sup> In response to Nasrallah's call to protest, large numbers of Lebanese Shiites took to the streets in Beirut along with supporters of Christian groups allied with Hezbollah. Estimates on the number of protestors vary from "tens of thousands," according to media sources linked to the government, to over one million, according to Hezbollah's al-Manar television channel. Anthony Shadid, "Crisis Intensifies in Lebanon as Hezbollah Takes to the Streets," *Washington Post*, December 2, 2006, p. 1; and Anthony Shadid, "Hezbollah Sets Anti-Government Protest, Sit-In," *Washington Post*, December 1, 2006, p. 23.

financial and ideological sponsors of Islamic radicalism to an effective US partner in the GWOT. This is critically important because overthrowing the “apostate” royal family is one of the original and most deeply held goals of al Qaeda and its founder, Osama bin Laden. As a Saudi exile and vocal critic of the “corrupt” ruling regime since at least the first Gulf War in 1991, Osama bin Laden is, of course, personally committed to the Saudi jihad.

It is imperative to prevent Saudi Arabia from falling into the hands of al Qaeda or any other similarly inspired radical group. The propaganda value and fundraising-recruitment potential of controlling Mecca and Medina for the jihadi movement would be incalculable. The Kingdom’s oil could not only be used to fund jihadi operations of unprecedented scope and intensity, but also as an instrument of strategic economic warfare against the West. Fortunately, in the wake of al Qaeda’s attacks against Saudi targets in 2003, the government launched a very effective internal counter-terrorism campaign, and reined in extremist madrassas and mosques within the Kingdom. Reflecting the effectiveness of the government’s counter-terrorism efforts, in 2005, only two terrorist attacks occurred in the Kingdom, as compared to 15 significant attacks in 2004. While there have been a few thwarted attacks, including an attempted suicide truck bombing of Saudi Arabia’s largest oil processing facility in Abqaiq, there were not any successful attacks in 2006.

As discussed earlier, as a result of Wahhab’s pact with the rising Najd chieftain, Muhammed Ibn Saud, in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, his extremist view of Islam became the state religion of Saudi Arabia. Beginning with the discovery of oil in the Kingdom, the state has provided Wahhabi muftis and imams funding for madrassas, as well as to proselytize abroad. Over the past half century, Saudi Arabia has spent tens of billions of petro-dollars building and operating schools, charities, and mosques around the world—nearly all of which espouse Wabbism, and many of which were later discovered to have links to jihadi terrorist groups.<sup>343</sup> It is by no means a coincidence that 15 of the 19 hijackers on September 11<sup>th</sup> were Saudi citizens. Financial laws in Saudi Arabia were inadequate for detecting money laundering and illicit transfers to terrorist organizations. Islamic charities and extremist madrassas were essentially unregulated.

All of that began to change, however, in the wake of al Qaeda-directed synchronized car bombings of three residential housing compounds (Vinnell Arabia, Al Hamra, and Gedawal) on May 12, 2003, killing 35 people and injuring more than 200 others—mostly foreign workers. As the US ambassador to Saudi Arabia put it at the time, “If this was not the Saudis’ September 11<sup>th</sup>, it was certainly the Saudis’ Pearl Harbor.”<sup>344</sup> Immediately after the bombing, Crown Prince Abdullah publicly swore to “confront and destroy” the attackers and over the past three years he has made good on that promise.<sup>345</sup> Yousif Salih Fahad al Ayeeri, the commander of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, was killed in a shoot out with Saudi security forces only a few weeks

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<sup>343</sup> Zeyno Baran, Nixon Center, “Combating al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat,” Prepared Statement for House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, February 16, 2005, p.4

<sup>344</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, “Saudis Are Shaken as Jihad Erupts at Their Front Door,” *New York Times*, May 16, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>345</sup> Steven R. Weisman, “Bush Condemns Saudi Blasts; 7 Americans Are Dead,” *New York Times*, May 14, 2003, p. 1

later. In the following months, Saudi security forces arrested 600 people with suspected terrorist ties, interrogated over 2,000 individuals, rolled up dozens of terrorist cells, and seized several caches of weapons and explosives.<sup>346</sup> Those measures, while impressive, were not sufficient to prevent a follow-on assault and car bombing of the Al-Muhaya residential housing complex in Riyadh, killing 17 people and injuring more than 120 others, roughly six months later on November 8, 2003. Unlike the May attack, however, nearly all of the casualties were Muslim Arabs, including several women and at least five children. That fact outraged the Saudi population, which turned sharply against al Qaeda and gave the government even more latitude in conducting aggressive counter-terrorism operations. Many Saudis who were sympathetic toward al Qaeda's call to defensive jihad ended their support.

Although al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula managed to conduct 15 significant terrorist attacks in 2004, including a shooting rampage in Khobar at the end of May that left 22 civilians dead, the organization was largely wiped out—or at least driven underground—by year's end. Saudi security forces not only rolled up several cells, capturing or killing all but seven of its 26 most-wanted terrorists, but also decapitated the senior leadership of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. In the span of just four months, Saudi security forces hunted down and killed two successive commanders of the organization: Khalid al-Hajj, killed in March 2004; and Abd al-Aziz al-Muqrin, killed in a shoot-out with Saudi police in June 2004. The fourth commander, Saleh Aofi, was seriously injured in July 2004 and killed in a police raid in August 2005; and his successor, Fahd Faraaj al-Juwair was killed in Riyadh following the failed attack on the Abiqaiq oil-processing facility in late February 2006.<sup>347</sup> The average lifespan of the first five commanders of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has turned out to be less than seven months. The third most-wanted terrorist in Saudi Arabia, Zaid Saad al-Samari, was killed in a bloody three-day siege in Dammam in September 2005.<sup>348</sup> Since then, although several plots have been disrupted, there has not been a single significant attack in Saudi Arabia attributed to al Qaeda or any of its affiliates. In total, since May 2003, Saudi authorities have foiled more than 25 major attacks, captured or killed 264 al Qaeda operatives (including all but one of the individuals on its "most wanted" list), and arrested more than 800 people with links to al Qaeda.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Reuters, "Terror Threat in Saudi Arabia," *New York Times*, October 26, 2003; and John Bradley, "Saudis Outraged at Muslim Casualties," *Washington Times*.

<sup>347</sup> Muqrin was arguably al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's most effective and charismatic leader. He trained in al Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan in late 1990s, fought with the Taliban in 2001, and participated in jihad operations in Somalia, Bosnia, and Algeria. See Craig Whitlock, "Saudi Builds Reputation as a Leader of Terror Cell," *Washington Post*, June 18, 2004, p. 19; Craig Whitlock, "Al Qaeda Shifts Its Strategy in Saudi Arabia," *Washington Post*, December 19, 2004, p. 28; and AP, "'Al Qaeda Leader' In Saudi Arabia Killed," *Washington Post*, August 19, 2005; AP, "Saudi Arabia: Ministry Says Police Killed Qaeda Leader," *New York Times*, March 1, 2006.

<sup>348</sup> Hassan Fattah, "Saudis Kill Top Militant, Ending Skirmish with Al Qaeda Cell," *New York Times*, September 7, 2005.

<sup>349</sup> Between September and December 2006, Saudi authorities carried out a series of sweeps across the country, rolling up a large terrorist cell in Riyadh and arresting 136 suspected terrorists with links to al Qaeda. David Ignatius, "Lessons from the Saudis," *Washington Post*, November 22, 2006, p. 21; and Suleiman Nimr, "Three-month Roundup Nets 136 Terror Suspects," *Washington Times*, December 3, 2006, p. 6.

In parallel with this vigorous manhunting effort, the Saudi government began a concerted effort to rein in radicalism—firing 44 Friday preachers, 160 imams, and 149 prayer callers for “incompetence” and suspending nearly 1,400 religious officials from their duties until they complete “retraining” programs.<sup>350</sup> It also expanded intelligence sharing with several partner states in the GWOT.

While there is no question that the violent jihadi strain of Sunni Islam has been weakened in Saudi Arabia over the past five years, there are still several concerns looking forward:

- Less-than-vigorous enforcement of banking and financial laws, as well as continued lack of oversight over Islamic charity and relief organizations based in Saudi Arabia that are engaged in suspicious activities overseas;
- State funding of Wahhabi enterprises (e.g., schools, madrassas, mosques, and cultural centers) and clerics around the world with links to Islamic radicalism and terrorist activity;
- The intellectual contribution of Saudi clerics to the jihadi movement; and
- The involvement of Saudi nationals in the insurgency in Iraq and the potential domestic ramifications of their return home.

Although Saudi authorities promised to enact new banking laws and financial procedures in 2003 to detect money-laundering activity and stem the flow of money from Saudi charities and wealthy businessmen to terrorist groups overseas, it has been slow to do so. While it did set up a financial intelligence unit to track terrorist financing in September 2005, it is focused almost exclusively on domestic activity. This is problematic because five of the Muslim world’s largest charity and relief organizations—including the Muslim World League, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, and the International Islamic Relief Organization—are headquartered in Saudi Arabia and reportedly continue to engage in highly suspicious activity overseas. Saudi officials committed in 2004 to establish a government commission to provide badly needed oversight over Saudi-based charity and relief organizations, but have not yet done so. The Saudi government has also been reluctant to crackdown on the private donations of wealthy Saudi businessmen (e.g., Yasin Qadi, We’el Hamza Jalaidan, and Abdel Abdul Jalil Batterjee) to terrorist-linked organizations. As a result, according to the US government, millions of dollars continue to flow from Saudi bank accounts into the coffers of terrorist groups operating outside the Kingdom.<sup>351</sup>

The Saudi government continues to provide billions of dollars in funding to Wahhabi schools and madrassas, mosques, cultural centers, and other proselytizing efforts overseas. While the Saudi government is striving to promote a more moderate form of Wahhabism domestically, that

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<sup>350</sup> Christine Spolar, “Saudis Reach Out in War on Terror,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 12, 2005.

<sup>351</sup> Josh Meyer, “U.S. Faults Saudi Efforts on Terrorism,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 2006, p. 1; and John Mintz, “Saudi Anti-Terror Efforts Criticized,” *Washington Post*, June 15, 2004.

effort is pursued much less aggressively, if at all, overseas.<sup>352</sup> In short, Saudi Arabia still provides funding to extremist schools and madrassas, as well as to the radical clerics, imams, and educators that run them, around the world, which contributes to the radicalization of Muslim youth.

Saudi establishment clerics are the most influential contributors to modern Salafi thought, of which violent jihadism is a subset.<sup>353</sup> While Saudi clerics and religious scholars are generally politically quietest, supportive of the ruling Saud family, and openly critical of some jihadi doctrines (e.g., who has the right to call for a jihad, who can excommunicate Muslims, and whether armed revolt against a Muslim ruler is legitimate) and tactics (e.g., suicide bombing, killing other Muslims, and killing women, children and the elderly), they add tremendous legitimacy to the broader Salafi movement and the call to a defensive jihad to liberate Muslim lands from Western "occupation."

It is well established that many of the foreign fighters contributing to the insurgency in Iraq are Saudi nationals. According to most estimates, foreign fighters account for 5-10 percent of all enemy combatants in Iraq. Various studies assert that anywhere from 10-25 percent of that number are Saudi citizens.<sup>354</sup> This is troubling for at least two reasons: first, it is indication of the level of radicalization of Saudi youth that they are willing to martyr themselves in a defensive jihad in Iraq; and second, when these jihadis eventually return home after gaining considerable operational experience and being exposed to further radical indoctrination in Iraq, they may pose a serious domestic security threat. While the Saudi government has repeatedly claimed that the number of Saudi nationals fighting in Iraq is vastly overestimated, it is apparently sufficiently concerned about their prospective return, along with their foreign associates, to invest millions of dollars into the construction of a 560-mile security fence along its northern border with Iraq.<sup>355</sup>

## Iraq

Operation Iraqi Freedom has had a serious deleterious impact on the overall US position in the GWOT. US-led operations in Iraq over the past three years have added credibility to the jihadi message that Muslim lands are being occupied by foreign infidels, and thus, it is the individual duty of every Muslim to join in a defensive jihad to expel the new "crusaders." US operations—especially major missteps like the Abu Ghraib debacle and the al-Haditha incident—have provided daily grist for the jihadi movement's propaganda mill and Islamist media outlets,

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<sup>352</sup> David Ottaway, "Saudi Effort Draws on Radical Clerics to Combat Lure of Al Qaeda," *Washington Post*, May 7, 2006, p. 23; and Meyer, "U.S. Faults Saudi Efforts on Terrorism," p. 1.

<sup>353</sup> William McCants, Jarret Brachman, et al, *Military Ideology Atlas*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>354</sup> One report, for example, asserts that upwards of 60 percent of Arab fighters killed in Iraq are Saudi nationals. A study by the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS) in 2005, however, found that Saudis comprised the sixth largest group of foreign fighters at 12 percent, following behind: Algerians at 20 percent, Syrians at 18 percent, Yemenis at 17 percent, Sudanese at 15 percent, and Egyptians at 13 percent. Meyer, "U.S. Faults Saudi Efforts on Terrorism," p. 1; Susan Glasser, "'Martyrs' in Iraq Mostly Saudis," *Washington Post*, May 15, 2005, p. 1..

<sup>355</sup> The "fence" actually comprises two parallel fences enclosing a 100-meter "no-man's land" containing concertina wire obstacles, ultraviolet sensors and night vision camera, and buried motion detection sensors. Command posts, helipads, and observation towers will be spaced along the frontier. The fence barrier will also be preceded by massive sand berms immediately adjacent to the border.

sides, the first is the heads of the tribes, the second is the leaders of the Islamic party and mosque speakers [who] announced their war on the Mujahidin...their danger was so great, that hundreds of people volunteered in the police and the army, and thousands of people participated in the elections, renouncing their religion, and listening to the erratics." To solve the growing problem, he proposed an assassination campaign against tribal leaders, calling for jihadis to "cut the heads of the Sheiks of infidelity and erratic."<sup>371</sup>

AQI efforts to wrest control of al Anbar from tribal sheiks was largely successful. Since the December 2005 elections, AQI attacks and targeted assassinations, combined with rising levels of communal warfare, has plunged the region into chaos. As a leaked Marine Corps intelligence assessment in August 2006 put it, "nearly all government institutions from the village to provincial levels have disintegrated or have been thoroughly corrupted and infiltrated by Al Qaeda in Iraq."<sup>372</sup> As the "manager of barbarism" in al Anbar, AQI has benefited from the mayhem and criminality. As of the end of 2006, it has co-opted, subsumed, marginalized, or eliminated most rival Sunni insurgent groups in al Anbar.

AQI's assassination of Sunni tribal leaders, bloody attacks on Shiites, and indiscriminate bombing of Iraqi civilians over the past two years, however, has alienated most Iraqi Sunnis and, in all likelihood, mainstream Muslims the world over. For that reason, it has raised the ire of senior al Qaeda leaders, prompting a scathing letter to Zarqawi in December 2005. The letter commanded him not to "kill any religious leader or tribal leader who is obeyed, and of good repute in Iraq from among the Sunnis, no matter what." It also rebuked him for a series of other poor strategic decisions, including the slaughter of "turncoat" Shiites, which alienated the people instead of "bringing them in and gaining their hearts."<sup>373</sup>

On June 2, 2006, Zarqawi again publicly prodded Sunnis to rise up in mass against the Shiites. In a four-hour, televised sermon he exhorted: "Sunnis, wake up, pay attention and prepare to confront the poisons of the Shiite snakes, who are afflicting you with all agonies since the invasion of Iraq until our day. Forget about those advocating the end of sectarianism and calling for national unity."<sup>374</sup> Less than one week later, on June 7, 2006, after three years of near misses and numerous false leads, US forces finally tracked down and killed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in the village of Hibhib, north of Baghdad. After the attack it was revealed that with the apparent

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al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. Lydia Khali, "Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq Expands Ranks, Continues Attacks," *Terrorism Focus*, February 28, 2006, Volume III, Issue 8, pp. 2-3.

<sup>371</sup> Letter from unknown commander of Al Qaeda in Iraq to the Mujahideen Shura Council, document captured February 2006, Harmony Document: IZ-061306-01. Also reflecting this alienation of Sunni tribes, in a letter to Abu-Usamah in Ramadi, an unnamed al Qaeda leader warns him to "stop the killing of people unless they are spying, military, or police officers. We have to find a secure [secret] method because *if we continue using the same method, people will start fighting us in the streets.*" Emphasis added. "Instructions to Abu-Usamah," document captured February 2006, Harmony Document IZ-0603-16-02

<sup>372</sup> Dafna Linzer and Thomas E. Ricks, "Anbar Picture Grows Clearer and Blacker," *Washington Post*, November 28, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>373</sup> Letter from "Atiyah" to Abu Musab al Zarqawi, December 11, 2005. Letter found June 7, 2006 during search of Zarqawi's safehouse and released by Iraqi government on September 18, 2006.

<sup>374</sup> Nelson Hernandez and Omar Fekeiki, "Iraq Insurgent Urges Sectarian War," *Washington Post*, June 3, 2006, p. 9.

assistance of the Jordanian government and disaffected Sunni tribal leaders, AQI had been successfully penetrated in late 2005 and the resulting intelligence stream was the source of information on Zarqawi's location. Using intelligence gleaned from the rubble of Zarqawi's safehouse and other sources, Iraqi security and Coalition forces conducted more than 200 raids nationwide, killing more than 33 jihadi fighters, capturing more than 200 suspected terrorists, and seizing explosives, weapons and equipment, identification documents, and Iraqi army uniforms.<sup>375</sup>

While the organization quickly selected a new leader, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, and even ramped up jihad operations following Zarqawi's death, it faces several serious problems. First and foremost, al-Masri, who is an Egyptian with close ties to Zawahiri, must contend with the realization that the organization has been penetrated, which has likely created an atmosphere of distrust within and among the various groups comprising the MSC. Second, he faces internal discord over strategy, operations, and tactics. Given his relationship with Zawahiri, it is reasonable to speculate the al-Masri is inclined to adopt al Qaeda's emphasis on the "far enemy" and agree to curtail attacks on Shiites, at least in the short run, in the interest of the larger jihadi movement. In contrast, his key rival within the organization and the emir of the MSC, Abdallah bin Rashid al-Baghdadi, will almost certainly try to persevere with Zarqawi's approach. It will be difficult for al-Masri to assert authority over the disparate elements of AQI. The likelihood of the MSC fragmenting is very high, owing both to unresolved ideological differences and anxiety over which of its constituent groups have been penetrated. Third, AQI's standing among Arab tribes has continued to ebb despite al-Masri's efforts to woo them back into the fold. In late September 2006, for example, the head of the tribal council in Salahuddin Province north of Baghdad publicly rebuked AQI for killing "civilians, defenseless people, police and security men" and stated that "Al Qaeda said it came to Iraq for jihad and to liberate it from occupation [but] what Al Qaeda is doing is utterly at odds with what it announced."<sup>376</sup>

The handwriting was very much on the wall with respect to the dilemmas facing AQI and MSC even before Zarqawi's death. In a document retrieved from a computer hard drive found at a "safe location" during the summer of 2006 and presumably written by Zarqawi, he assesses the situation as "bleak," citing the increasing capability of Iraqi security forces, shortages of weapons and fighters, lack of funds, and internal divisions. The document states that "time is now beginning to be of service to the American forces and harmful to the resistance," owing to the following Iraqi and Coalition initiatives:

Undertaking massive arrest operations, invading regions that have an impact on the resistance, and hence causing the resistance to lose many of its elements.

Undertaking a media campaign against the resistance resulting in a weakening of its influence inside the country and presenting its work as harmful to the population rather than being beneficial to the population.

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<sup>375</sup> John Burns, "A Jihadist Web Site Says Zarqawi's Group in Iraq has New Leader in Place," *New York Times*, June 13, 2006.

<sup>376</sup> Dan Murphy, "How Al Qaeda Views a Long Iraq War," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 6, 2006, p. 1.

By tightening the resistance's financial outlets, restricting its moral options and by confiscating its ammunition and weapons.

By taking advantage of the resistance's mistakes and magnifying them in order to misinform.<sup>377</sup>

On June 19, 2006, Hamed Jumaa Faris Juri al-Saeidi, who is believed to be responsible for orchestrating numerous, high-profile suicide-bombing attacks on civilians, as well as the bombing of the Askari Mosque, was captured by Iraqi and US forces. In the wake of his arrest, a score of senior AQI leaders and fighters were captured or killed.<sup>378</sup> AQI has clearly been weakened by its penetration by Iraqi and Coalition intelligence, the death of Zarqawi and al-Saeidi, the killing or arrest of several hundred fighters, dwindling financial resources, and intensifying internal discord. Nevertheless, both AQI and MSC continue to function, attacking Iraqi government, military, and police targets, as well as Coalition forces, on a near daily basis; and conducting vicious, high-profile attacks against Shiite civilians, adding fuel to an already blazing inferno of sectarian war. According to the US military, more than 90 percent of the suicide attacks in Iraq are carried out by fighters recruited, trained, and equipped by AQI.<sup>379</sup> The CIA and DIA estimate that roughly 1,300 foreign fighters remain active in Iraq as of November 2006.<sup>380</sup> The ranks of AQI and other jihadi groups are filled out by radicalized Iraqi Sunnis. While AQI and MSC have been eclipsed by burgeoning Sunni and Shiite militias and gangs in terms of the overall level of violence in Iraq, they have already accomplished much for the global jihadi movement: killing scores of US soldiers, exacting a financial cost on the United States that is already measured in hundreds of billions of dollars and will likely exceed a trillion dollars in time, promoting the call to a defensive jihad, indoctrinating and training young jihadi recruits from around the world, and creating an enclave of "barbarism" in the heart of the Arab world that could provide a de facto sanctuary for organizing and conducting jihadi operations throughout the region.

## **SOUTH ASIA**

While the Islamic terrorist threat to the United States emanating from South Asia has declined significantly since 2001 owing to the elimination of al Qaeda's extensive infrastructure in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and President Musharraf's decision to extend Pakistan's support to the United States in the GWOT, there have been significant setbacks in both countries over the

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<sup>377</sup> The document also states that the best plan for improving the "current bleak situation" is "to entangle the American forces into another war against another country" or to create friction between the United States and its Shiite allies in Iraq. To that end, it recommends "First to exaggerate the Iranian danger and to convince America, and the West in general, of the real danger coming from Iran." Rowan Scarborough, "Papers Reveal Weakening Terror Group," *Washington Times*, June 16, 2006, p. 1; and Cesar Soriano, "Iraqi Leaders: Memo Details Al Qaeda Plans," *USA Today*, June 16, 2006, p. 10.

<sup>378</sup> Amit Paley, "Iraq Cites Arrest of a Top Local Insurgent," *Washington Post*, September 4, 2006, p. 1; and "Arrest of Iraqi Insurgent Came in June, U.S. Says," *Washington Post*, September 7, 2006, p. 24.

<sup>379</sup> DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Report Submitted to Congress in accordance with DoD Appropriation Act 2006, May 2006, p. 28; and AP, "Al Qaeda Arranges Most Suicide Blasts in Iraq, U.S. Says," *Washington Post*, April 11, 2006, p. 16.

<sup>380</sup> Michael Gordon and Mark Mazzetti, "General Warns of Risks in Iraq if GIs Are Cut," *New York Times*, November 16, 2006, p. 1.

past three years. In Afghanistan, the Taliban is now resurgent. The central government has yet to extend its authority over rural areas, especially in the south and east. Poppy cultivation, which provides a critical source of revenue for the Taliban, hit record levels in 2006. In Pakistan, despite Musharraf's seemingly heroic efforts, the terrorist threat has intensified. As compared to 2001, the Pakistani population is more radicalized and the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), especially North and South Waziristan, has become more "Talibanized."

Since developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan are clearly the drivers of the overall terrorist threat in South Asia, they are described in detail below. It is worth noting, however, that despite several attacks perpetrated by al Qaeda-linked LT and JeM in India, the five-year trend of declining civilian fatalities from terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir has continued.<sup>381</sup> In Bangladesh, a new terrorist group, Jamaat ul Mujahedin, has emerged and has demonstrated the ability to conduct coordinated nationwide attacks on "un-Islamic" persons and facilities.<sup>382</sup> The situation in Nepal and Sri Lanka has remained stable.

### **Afghanistan**

The jihadist threat in Afghanistan is much reduced today relative to 2001 because of the elimination of al Qaeda's state-sponsored sanctuary as a result of Operation Enduring Freedom. In addition to marking a major turning point in US counter-terrorism strategy, the elimination of that sanctuary dramatically reduced al Qaeda's ability to recruit and indoctrinate new recruits, train, and organize and plan new attacks. The importance of eliminating al Qaeda's infrastructure in Afghanistan, built up between 1996 and 2001, cannot be over-estimated. However, as will be detailed below, the situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated substantially since 2003 for at least three reasons:

- The failure of the central government to extend its authority over rural areas, especially in the south and east, by maintaining security and improving the lives of average Afghans through reconstruction, economic development, and humanitarian relief projects;
- The ability of the Taliban, followers of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, al Qaeda, and other foreign jihadists to regroup and establish new bases of operation in neighboring Pakistan; and
- Burgeoning poppy cultivation and opium trafficking, which provides a critical source of revenue for the Taliban and creates incentives for increased cooperation among drug traffickers, corrupt government officials, and tribal warlords against the Karzai government.

Fortunately, it appears the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan may have hit a high-water mark in July-August of 2006. Currently, the strategy of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) of retaking control of Taliban operating areas, moving in reconstruction

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<sup>381</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 150.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

teams, and maintaining a robust security presence appears to be working, although there have been occasional setbacks.<sup>383</sup> The Taliban and associated groups suffered extremely heavy losses during the summer-early fall of 2006 and thousands of fighters were pushed out of Afghanistan's southern and eastern provinces, where they had gathered and built supporting infrastructure over the course of the previous three years. It is critical to the GWOT that the Taliban, al Qaeda and its allies fail in their stated aim to overthrow the democratically elected government in Kabul. If that were to occur, not only would terrorists re-gain access to a state-protected sanctuary, but the Taliban could legitimately claim credit for defeating the United States and the West more broadly, which would be a propaganda victory of immense proportions for the global jihadi movement. The three keys to eradicating the Taliban threat are to neutralize its support bases in Pakistan, break the link it has forged with opium traffickers, and secure and economically revitalize Afghanistan's southern and eastern provinces.

### **The Fall and Resurgence of the Taliban, 2001-2006**

Swept from power in little more than two months in the fall of 2001, the Taliban paid a heavy price for harboring al Qaeda. By the end of 2002, Al Qaeda cells operating in Afghanistan had been nearly eradicated, along with their support infrastructure (e.g., training camps, weapon stores, and supply caches); the 5000-strong ISAF authorized by the United Nations had restored a degree of peace and order to Kabul; and the US military began shifting to a distributed security strategy that emphasized reconstruction over combat operations.<sup>384</sup> The centerpiece of this new strategy was creating 8-10 regional bases, located in urban centers, from which provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) could operate.<sup>385</sup> Working alongside newly trained units from the Afghan National Army (ANA), US and coalition ground forces focused on maintaining local security, while the remainder of the team worked with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local government officials on reconstruction and humanitarian relief projects.

The United States and its coalition partners could tout myriad non-military accomplishments by the fall of 2002. US military civil affairs teams had dug hundreds of wells, built or refurbished dozens of hospitals and medical facilities, repaired roads and bridges, restored hundreds of

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<sup>383</sup> Rowan Scarborough, "British General Faults US for Taliban Resurgence," *Washington Times*, October 18, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>384</sup> James Dao, "U.S. Shifts Emphasis in Afghanistan to Security and Road Building," *New York Times*, November 12, 2002; and Bradley Graham, "Pentagon Plans a Redirection in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, November 20, 2002, p. A1. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Richard Meyers foreshadowed this shift in strategy in comments at the Brookings Institution on November 4, 2002, when he opined that the US military was losing momentum in the war on terrorism in Afghanistan and disclosed that there was an increasing belief among the Pentagon leadership about the need to shift priorities from combat operations to reconstruction. See Thomas E. Ricks and Vernon Loeb, "Afghan War Faltering, Military Leader Says," *Washington Post*, November 8, 2002, p. A1.

<sup>385</sup> The teams were originally referred to as "joint regional teams." Each team was staffed with approximately 60-70 military and civilian personnel including a mix of SF personnel, light infantry, civil affairs troops, engineering and communications specialists, US Agency for International Development (USAID) staff, medical teams, and diplomatic personnel. Between 200 and 300 additional US civil affairs personnel, roughly quadruple the number initially deployed, were sent to Afghanistan to bolster the PRTs. See Vernon Loeb, "U.S. Hopeful on Afghan Security," *Washington Post*, December 23, 2002, p. 14; Ahmed Rashid, "Plans for Afghan Enclaves Indicates Shift in U.S. Policies," *Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 2002; and Thomas Ricks, "U.S. To Set Up New Bases to Help Afghanistan Rebuild," *Washington Post*, December 20, 2002, p. 45.

kilometers of irrigation canals, and rebuilt more than 60 schools.<sup>386</sup> The United States also took the lead on a \$250 million, multinational effort to rebuild the 900-kilometer-long “ring road” linking Kabul through Kandahar to Herat.<sup>387</sup> The United States and its coalition partners had delivered some 575,000 metric tons of food to cities and remote villages throughout Afghanistan, feeding nearly ten million people. USAID distributed 12,000 metric tons of seeds and 15,000 tons of fertilizer to more than 40,000 Afghan farmers, managed the rebuilding of 72 hospitals and health clinics, sponsored the construction of more than a score of bakeries, and arranged for more than four million measles vaccinations to be dispensed.<sup>388</sup> USAID also contributed to 6,000 water and irrigation projects across the country.<sup>389</sup> With the Taliban gone, security improving, and basic service coming back on line, nearly two million refugees returned to Afghanistan and approximately 630,000 internally displaced Afghans were able to return to their homes by the fall of 2002.<sup>390</sup> To accommodate the near doubling of the student population in Afghanistan, USAID distributed nearly 15 million textbooks, as well as teaching materials and supplies. To complement the construction and rehabilitation of over 150 schools, 6,000 temporary classrooms were set up.<sup>391</sup>

As of February 2003, over 2,000 soldiers, drawn from several ethnic groups, had completed training and were serving in the ANA. New recruit battalions, each comprising about 450 soldiers, were expected to complete training at a rate of one every 5-6 weeks.<sup>392</sup> By that spring, the first three PRTs were at work—and by most accounts, doing quite well improving the quality

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<sup>386</sup> The White House, “American Assistance to the People of Afghanistan,” *Fact Sheet*, October 11, 2002; Rumsfeld, *Testimony before the Senate Armed Service Committee*, July 31, 2002. As part of DoD’s Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid program, more than \$6.6 million was allocated to 220 reconstruction projects in 2002, including 118 schools, 25 medical centers, 14 drinking water wells, nine agricultural projects, 10 road and bridge projects, and four irrigation projects. See U.S. Department of Defense, *2002 Year in Review*, December 31, 2002, p. 5.

<sup>387</sup> The United States has pledge \$80 million to this reconstruction effort. The White House. “American Assistance to the People of Afghanistan,” *Fact Sheet*, October 11, 2002. See also “Afghans Rebuild A Broken Lifeline,” *Washington Post*, November 11, 2002, p. A16.

<sup>388</sup> In 2002, Afghanistan’s agricultural production increased more than 80 percent relative to 2001. The White House, “Rebuilding Afghanistan,” p. 3. The White House, “Operation Enduring Freedom: One Year of Accomplishments,” *Fact Sheet*, October 11, 2002; Peter Slavov, “U.S. Urged to Expand Presence in Afghanistan,” *Washington Post*, April 22, 2002, p. 14.

<sup>389</sup> Briefing by Andrew S. Natsios, “Reconstruction and Rebuilding Efforts in Afghanistan,” December 23, 2002, p. 3.

<sup>390</sup> The White House, “Afghanistan: Then and Now,” *Fact Sheet*, October 11, 2002.

<sup>391</sup> The White House, “Afghanistan: Then and Now,” *Fact Sheet*, October 11, 2002; and briefing by Andrew S. Natsios (USAID Administrator), “Reconstruction and Rebuilding Efforts in Afghanistan,” December 23, 2002, p. 2. Other sources place the number of rehabilitated schools at 600. See DoD, “Afghanistan Relief and Reconstruction,” slide 4, background briefing, February 27, 2003.

<sup>392</sup> According to DoD, as of February 27, 2003, U.S. and French military personnel had trained five ANA battalions and had two more in training. See DoD, “Background Briefing on Afghanistan Relief and Reconstruction,” February 27, 2003, slide 9. See also: U.S. Department of State, “Rebuilding Afghanistan,” *Fact Sheet*, January 9, 2003, p. 2; Chris Kraul, “Afghanistan’s Fledgling Army Needs Far More than a Few Good Men,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 2003; U.S. Department of Defense, *2002 Year in Review*, December 31, 2002, p. 6.

of life for Afghans—in Gardez, Bamian, and Kunduz.<sup>393</sup> All appeared to be going well in Afghanistan.

By mid-2003, however, the security situation slowly began to unravel. The original goal of fielding 13,000 soldiers in the ANA by the end of 2003 had to be scaled back to 9,000-12,000 by the first half of 2004.<sup>394</sup> In addition to sluggish recruitment and retention challenges, the effort to build a credible national army suffered from under-representation of Pashtuns, Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, and over-representation of Tajiks and Uzbeks.<sup>395</sup> The much anticipated demobilization of local militias made negligible progress and was actively undermined by foreign interference.<sup>396</sup> While the RPTs were delivering goods and services to Afghans in or near urban areas, the country side was largely ignored—both in terms of aid and security. Neither the ANA nor coalition forces, for instance, maintained a substantial, visible, persistent security presence in Afghan's southern provinces. Across Afghanistan, but in the southern and eastern provinces in particular, Afghans grew disillusioned by the slow-than-expected pace of reconstruction and economic development, rampant government corruption, intensifying "warlordism," and above all else, lack of security. Having regrouped and rearmed, the Taliban slowly crept into this security vacuum. As President Karzai's chief of staff, Jawed Ludin, later reflected, "It's not that the Taliban were strong, it's that the government was weak. They have moved into a vacuum [in the south]"<sup>397</sup>

By 2004, the insurgency against the Karzai government was a motley assortment of surviving remnants of the Taliban and splinter groups, followers of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, foreign AQ-linked fighters (including members of Lashkar-e-Taiba from Pakistan), opium traffickers, and local fighters motivated by tribal politics. Coalition combat deaths in Afghanistan doubled in comparison to 2003. Two insurgencies started to take root: one in the south (i.e., Helmand Province, Zabol Province, Uruzgan Province, Kandahar Province) that was waged primarily by ethnically Pashtun fighters based in Baluchistan; and another in the east (i.e. primarily Paktia and Paktika Provinces, but also Kunar and Khost Provinces) with a more ethnically diverse fighter

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<sup>393</sup> Chris Kraul, "U.S. Aid Effort Wins Over Skeptics in Afghanistan," *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2003; James Dao, "Wolfowitz, In Kabul, Calls for Rebuilding," *New York Times*, January 16, 2003; Pamela Constable, "Courting Afghanistan Brick by Brick," *Washington Post*, December 8, 2002, p. 32.

<sup>394</sup> General Tommy Franks, *Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, Hearing on "Progress in Afghanistan," July 31, 2002; James Dao, "Doubts Now Raised Over Extending Force Beyond Kabul," *New York Times*, September 18, 2002; and The White House, "Operation Enduring Freedom: One Year of Accomplishments," *Fact Sheet*, October 11, 2002.

<sup>395</sup> Elliot Blair Smith, "U.S. Helping Create An Army in Afghanistan," *USA Today*, November 27, 2002, p. 15.

<sup>396</sup> Iran reportedly continued its practice of supporting Ismail Khan, a warlord who controlled the area around Herat, while Russia supplied military equipment to the Tajik-dominated army of General Mohammed Fahim, who was serving as Afghanistan's defense minister, instead of to the ANA. Ahmed Rashid, "Dangerous Neighbours," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 9, 2003; and Ahmed Rashid, "Taking the Initiative, Karzai Seeks to Extend Kabul's Writ," *Wall Street Journal*, January 3, 2003

<sup>397</sup> Rachel Morarjee, "Doubts Intensify Over Afghanistan's Future," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 11, 2006.

corps (e.g., Pashtuns, Uzbeks, Pakistanis, Chechens, and “foreign Arabs”) operating out of Peshawar and Waziristan.<sup>398</sup>

With funds from the burgeoning drug trade and donations from the Middle East, the Taliban and its associates continued to rebuild and rearm, primarily in Pakistan, in 2005. Equipped with better weapons and more powerful explosive devices, they carried out 20 percent more attacks relative to 2004. As an ominous sign of the “Iraqification” of the Afghan insurgency, the number of suicide attacks increased almost four fold and the number of improvised-explosive device (IED) attacks (mostly roadside bombings) doubled relative to 2004. The latter included the use of shaped explosives and remote-controlled detonators eerily reminiscent of those used by Iraqi insurgents.<sup>399</sup> Borrowing a page from Zarqawi’s playbook in Iraq, the Taliban also carried out beheadings to terrorize the local populations and discourage NGOs from providing economic aid and development assistance. The Defense Intelligence Agency cautioned at the time that “insurgents now represent a greater threat to the expansion of the Afghan government authority than at any point since late 2001...”<sup>400</sup> Most of their attacks were focused on relatively soft targets and rarely involved more than 20-40 guerrillas in any single attack. The modus operandi was to hit, claim credit in the international media, and fall back before US and coalition forces could respond. While their operations were costly—more than 1,200 fighters were killed, include several high-level commanders, they were effective.<sup>401</sup> Human relief and reconstruction teams started pulling out; the construction boom ground to a halt; and the number of US soldiers killed in action roughly tripled.<sup>402</sup>

By 2006, the emerging Afghan insurgency was estimated to have a total strength of between 7,000 and 10,000 fighters belonging to 20-25 militias of widely varying size and capability. Building upon a winter-spring campaign of suicide attacks, assassinations of government officials and moderate clerics, roadside IED attacks, ambushes of military patrols, and bogus road checkpoints (including on the newly built Kabul-Kandahar highway), the Taliban and associated groups started concentrating fighters in larger numbers and hitting harder targets. The number of suicide attacks soared—most of them attributed to foreigners.<sup>403</sup> The Taliban also

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<sup>398</sup> Joshua Kucera, “Paving the Way to Peace—Counter-Insurgency in Afghanistan,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, December 15, 2004, p. 26.

<sup>399</sup> Part of the explanation for the adoption of Iraqi tactics by Afghan insurgents is the “copy cat” effect, which is no surprise given the extensive coverage given to these tactics in the media. It is also very likely that groups operating in and around Afghanistan have shared ideas on the Internet. It has also been alleged, however, that some fighters with experience in Iraq have traveled to Afghanistan. According to at least one source, al Qaeda has created an “underground railroad” to facilitate the movement of jihadi fighters from Iraq to Afghanistan. Maples, p. 8; and Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, “Unholy Allies,” *Newsweek*, September 26, 2005.

<sup>400</sup> Maples, p. 9.

<sup>401</sup> Scot Baldauf, “Small US Units Lure Taliban into Losing Battles,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>402</sup> Pamela Constable, “Afghan’s City’s Rebound Cut Short,” *Washington Post*, August 19, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>403</sup> There was one suicide attack in 2002, two in 2003, 6 in 2004, and roughly 25 in 2005. As of September 2006, there had already been between 47-70 suicide attacks. Paul Wiseman, “Once Unknown, Suicide Blast Soar in Afghanistan,” *USA Today*, September 11, 2001, p. 10; Carlotta Gall, “Attack in Afghanistan Grow More Frequent And Lethal,” *New York Times*, September 27, 2006; and Carlotta Gall, “Taliban Threat is Said to Grow in Afghan South,” *New York Times*, May 3, 2006, p. 1.

burned down hundreds of schools and clinics, and even began to re-introduce sharia law in remote areas. As Afghan Finance Minister Anwar ul-Haq Ahady put it in June 2006, "It is hurting us. We build a school, and they come and they burn it. We build a clinic, and they come and burn it. We build a bridge, and they knock it down. Security is the No.1 issue."<sup>404</sup> In a major shift from previous behavior, the Taliban and other terrorist groups began recording their attacks, releasing gruesome DVDs and Internet videos, both as a recruitment tool, as well as to spread fear among the population by graphically showing that neither the Afghan government nor outside powers (US military and ISAF) could protect them.<sup>405</sup>

Part of the impetus for the Taliban's stepped up attacks in the spring and early summer of 2006 was almost certainly the handover of responsibility for security in southern Afghanistan from the US-led coalition to the NATO-led ISAF taking place at the same time. One can reasonably speculate that the Taliban hoped to shatter the will of the countries contributing forces to ISAF and expand further into the pre-existing security vacuum in the south and east.<sup>406</sup>

That is not, however, how events unfolded. As the ISAF was moving into the south, the US-led coalition launched its largest offensive, Operation Mountain Thrust, since 2001. Beginning in mid-June, the 11,000-strong force—with Afghan, American, British, and Canadian contingents—swept into the south and killed hundreds of Taliban fighters, who, in a costly shift in tactics, opted to stand and fight in a series of pitched, direct-fire battles.<sup>407</sup> Reinforcing that success, the NATO-led ISAF launched Operation Medusa with some 6,000 troops, killing over 1,000 insurgents out of an estimated hard-core force of 4,000-5,000 in the south and compelling the Taliban to retreat.<sup>408</sup> As General James Jones, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) recounted: "The Taliban decided to make a test case of this region [southern Afghanistan]. The outcome of it was that they retreated and we are now in the consolidation phase and we are going to start to bring aid and reconstruction to the region."<sup>409</sup> While General Jones' buoyant assessment may have been a bit premature given the record-setting number of clashes with regrouped Taliban forces in the months that followed, the underlying trend has held: ISAF is continuing to slowly consolidate control, including in the eastern and southern provinces, while the Taliban is under growing pressure and has been forced to find sanctuary over the border in Pakistan. Nevertheless, the frequency of terrorist attacks nationwide has actually increased four-fold since January 2006. Compared to 2005, the number of suicide attacks increased by a factor of five in 2006, soaring from 27 to 139, and the number of remotely detonated bombings more than doubled from 783 to 1,677.<sup>410</sup> While part of the explanation for

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<sup>404</sup> Paul Wiseman, "Revived Taliban Waging 'Full-Blown Insurgency'," *USA Today*, June 20, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>405</sup> Scott Peterson, "Taliban Adopting Iraq-Style Jihad," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 13, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>406</sup> Jason Motlagh, "Ambassador Predicts Taliban Ferocity," *Washington Times*, June 2, 2006, p. 15.

<sup>407</sup> Peter Bergen, "The Taliban, Regrouped And Rearmed," *Washington Post*, September 10, 2006, p. B1.

<sup>408</sup> Other sources estimate that only 500 fighters were killed and 136 captured. Rowan Scarborough, "Taliban Retreats After Losses, NATO Reports," *Washington Times*, September 21, 2006, p. 3; Carlotta Call, "After Afghan Battle, A Harder Fight for Peace," *New York Times*, October 3, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>409</sup> Scarborough, "Taliban Retreats After Losses, NATO Reports," p. 3.

<sup>410</sup> The total number of armed attacks increased from 1,558 in 2005 to 4,542 in 2006. All of the figures cited here were released by Lt Gen Karl Eikenberry, the senior US commander in Afghanistan. Pamela Constable, "Gates Visits Kabul, Cites Rise in Cross-Border Attacks," *Washington Post*, January 17, 2007, p. 10.

this spike in activity is the expansion and proliferation of Taliban bases in Pakistan's FATA and NWFP in the wake of Islamabad's failed peace initiatives with tribal leaders, a major driver is ISAF's adoption of a more pro-active security strategy. ISAF raids on suspected Taliban bases and operating areas resulted in several hundred Taliban deaths in October-November 2006. Those raids, however, have stirred up the Taliban "hornet nest" in the south and east, prompting reprisal attacks.<sup>411</sup>

As of January 2007, the United States had some 24,000 troops in Afghanistan (inclusive of the 11,000-strong ISAF contingent), the highest level since 2001, and NATO-led ISAF numbered some 31,000 foreign troops drawn from 37 contributing nations.<sup>412</sup> The Afghan National Army comprised more than 36,000 newly trained officers and soldiers, more than halfway toward the goal of a 70,000-strong professional national army. In addition to the slowly improving security situation, there are myriad other reasons for optimism regarding the situation in Afghanistan. Over the past two years, millions of Afghans have voted in elections—reelecting President Karzai to a five-year term in 2004 and electing representatives to the new Afghan parliament in September 2005. In both instances, despite calls from the Taliban to boycott the election, there was no significant violence and the elections were held without incident. In the presidential election, some eight million Afghans made their way to the polls and for the parliamentary election, some six million Afghans cast ballots for a dizzying array of nearly 6,000 candidates.<sup>413</sup> Karzai's general amnesty program from Taliban rank and file, enacted in December 2004, has slowly diminished Taliban ranks. The central government's campaign to disarm tribal militias has made some progress in the northern and western provinces, while several militias in the south have been co-opted, donning police uniforms to combat the Taliban and other insurgent groups.<sup>414</sup> With enhanced security, 24 Provincial Reconstruction Teams are at work, including four in the South (Kandahar, Lashkar-Gah, Tarin Kowt, and Qalat) and 11 in the East. Thousands of schools, clinics, and government buildings have been built across the country. Some six million children are now attending school, including 1.6 million girls. Nearly 2,000 miles of road have been either restored or newly constructed. According to the IMF, official GDP growth in Afghanistan averaged 22.5 percent between 2002 and 2004, dipped to eight percent in 2004-2005, and is forecast to be 14 percent for 2005-2006—a healthy rate of economic recovery.<sup>415</sup> More than \$16 billion in foreign aid, including more than \$10 billion from the United States, has flown into the country. While that aid is nowhere near sufficient for

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<sup>411</sup> Pamela Constable, "In Afghanistan's South, Mixed Signals for Help," *Washington Post*, November 20, 2006, p. 1; Abdul Waheed Wafa, "NATO Forces Fight Taliban in 5 Provinces of Afghanistan," *New York Times*, November 1, 2006; Reuters, "NATO Raid Kills Up to 22 Taliban in Afghan South," November 9, 2006; and Jason Straziuso, "Insurgent Activity Spikes in Afghanistan," *Associated Press*, November 13, 2006.

<sup>412</sup> The largest complements are from the United Kingdom with 5,200 troops deployed; Germany, 2,750; Netherlands, 2,100; Canada, 1,800; and Italy, 1,800. Pamela Constable, "Gates Visits Kabul, Cites Rise in Cross-Border Attacks," *Washington Post*, January 17, 2007, p. 10. See also: *International Security Assistance Force Fact Sheet*, October 5, 2006.

<sup>413</sup> Carlotta Gall and Somini Sengupta, "Afghan Voters Take Next Step to Democracy," *New York Times*, September 19, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>414</sup> Amir Shah, "Karzai to Arm Afghan Tribesmen in Bid to Stem Taliban Attacks," *Washington Post*, June 12, 2006, p. 15.

<sup>415</sup> Rachel Morarjee, "Doubts Intensify Over Afghanistan's Future," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 11, 2006. See also: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2006/pr06144.htm>

rebuilding Afghanistan after nearly three decades of conflict, and is in fact considerably less than has been provided to Bosnia and Iraq, it has improved the lives of countless Afghans.<sup>416</sup>

While the overall trend seems positive, there is still ample room for pessimism regarding Afghanistan's future. An opinion poll conducted by the Asia Foundation in 2006 found that the number of Afghans who felt that their country was heading in the right direction had dropped from 64 percent on the eve of the presidential elections in 2004 to 44 percent over the past two years.<sup>417</sup> The three principle complaints of the Afghan people are pervasive government corruption, the central government's failure to deliver promised reconstruction and restore basic services, and its inability to secure the countryside, which is repeated thrust into the public consciousness by high-profile Taliban attacks and suicide bombings.<sup>418</sup> As will be detailed below, Islamabad's unwillingness, inability, or both to prevent its western frontier from being used as a sanctuary by the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other radical groups poses a serious security problem for Afghanistan. So too is the country's record-breaking cultivation of opium and the illicit funding stream it provides not only to jihadis, but also to warlords opposed to President Karzai's efforts to extend the central government's authority beyond Kabul. There are also some signs that foreign jihadis, many having honed their skills in Iraq, are beginning to flow into Afghanistan. The new fighters and suicide-bombers making their way to Afghanistan, primarily through Iran and Pakistan, comprise mainly Yemenis, Syrians, and Chechens.<sup>419</sup> On the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan, in late October 2006, Mullah Omar threatened, "With the grace of Allah, the fighting [in Afghanistan] will be increased...and it will be organized in the next few months."<sup>420</sup>

### **The Pakistani Sanctuary and Opium Trade Problems**

Afghanistan's recovery and stabilization has been bedeviled by two serious and growing problems: the terrorist sanctuary in western Pakistan and the illegal poppy trade. Despite Pakistan's protestations to the contrary, it is clear that the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, al Qaeda, and other groups are based in and operate from Pakistani territory. Senior lieutenants of Mullah Muhammad Omar, the Taliban's supreme leader, are believed to be operating out of Baluchistan province. Its capital is also the seat of the Taliban's most important leadership council, the Quetta Shura. From its Baluchistan base, the Taliban conducts operations in the south-central

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<sup>416</sup>According to RAND, international aid flowing into Afghanistan amounts to about \$57 per person as compared with \$679 in Bosnia and \$206 in Iraq. Paul Wiseman, "Revived Taliban Waging 'Full-Blown Insurgency'," *USA Today*, June 20, 2006, p. 1; and Paul Watson, "Steering His Nation Without a Rudder," *Los Angeles Times*, November 12, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>417</sup> 21 percent of the more than 6,200 Afghans polled felt their country was heading in the wrong direction, roughly twice the figure in 2004. The poll was conducted by the non-profit Asia Foundation and sponsored by USAID. In a public opinion poll released by ABC news in December 2005, 77 percent of Afghans asserted that their country was heading in the right direction. Paul Wiseman, "Poll: Afghans Express Confidence in Country's Direction, Security," *USA Today*, November 9, 2006, p. 4; Carlotta Call, "Afghans Losing Faith in Nation's Path, Poll Shows," *New York Times*, November 9, 2006; and Bergen, "The Taliban, Regrouped And Rearmed," p. B1.

<sup>418</sup> David Rohde and James Risen, "C.I.A. Review Highlights Afghan Leader's Woes," *New York Times*, November 5, 2006, p. 14.

<sup>419</sup> Sebastian Rotella, "War on West Shifts Back to Afghanistan," *Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>420</sup> Terry Friel, "Taliban Leader Warns of More Attacks," *Washington Times*, October 24, 2006, p. 11.

Afghan provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Zabol. From his base in Miramshah, the capital of Pakistan's North Waziristan Province, Maulana Jalaluddin Haqqani runs operations in Kabul and eastern Afghan provinces of Khost, Logar, Paktia, and Paktika. Fighters belonging to Hezb-i-Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former Afghan prime minister and fundamentalist warlord who fought against the Soviets during the 1979-1989 jihad, are based in Peshawar and the Bajur region of Pakistan. From the relatively safety of this sanctuary, Hekmatyar runs operations in the Afghan regions of Kapisa, Kunar, Laghman, Nangahar, and Nuristan. Finally, al Qaeda fighters and foreign jihadists are believed to be operating primarily from bases in the FATA and North-West Frontier Province in Pakistan.<sup>421</sup>

As will be discussed below, while Pakistan has attempted to deny Taliban and its allies these sanctuaries, efforts to date have been inadequate. Although Pakistani security forces have captured or killed more than 700 foreign jihadis (including members of al Qaeda) and Taliban-linked fighters in these areas, not a single senior Taliban leader has been arrested or killed in Pakistan since 2001 nor have any of the top leaders of the militias head by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani that fight alongside the Taliban.<sup>422</sup> There is also growing evidence that the Taliban may be receiving intelligence on ANA, American and ISAF plans and tactical operations, as well as medical, financial, and logistical support from Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI).<sup>423</sup>

In 2006, opium cultivation in Afghanistan rose to 165,000 hectares, a 59 percent increase over 2005. An unprecedented 6,100 metric tons of opium was harvested, breaking Afghanistan's former world record in 1999 of 4,600 tons, and accounting for a staggering 92 percent of global production. According to a field survey completed by the Afghan government and the United Nations, poppy cultivation in 2006 increased in 13 provinces, remained unchanged in 16, and decreased in three. Troublingly, nearly 13 percent of the Afghan population is involved in opium cultivation in some way.<sup>424</sup> Revenue from the illegal sale of opium and heroine flows not only into the pockets of tribal warlords and corrupt government officials, but also into the coffers of the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, and other "insurgent" groups. It is not a coincidence that the largest areas of expanded cultivation are in the South, especially in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces, which were wracked by the mounting Taliban-led insurgency over the past few years. Ironically, the Taliban, which banned poppy production in the 1990s as un-Islamic, now encourages local farmers to begin growing it or expand their cultivation in exchange for protection. General James Jones, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, observed in the spring of 2006 that "Afghanistan is on the way to recovery but is also fighting some internal demons.

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<sup>421</sup> Robert Kaplan, "The Taliban's Silent Partner," *New York Times*, July 20, 2006; and Peter Bergen, "The Taliban, Regrouped And Rearmed," *Washington Post*, September 10, 2006, p. B1; and David Rhode, "Al Qaeda Finds Its Center of Gravity," *New York Times*, September 10, 2006, p. WK3.

<sup>422</sup> One possible exception would be the arrest of Taliban spokesman, Abdul Latif Hakimi, in Baluchistan in October 2005. Bergen, "The Taliban, Regrouped And Rearmed," p. B1; and Carlotta Gall, "Pakistan Arrests Chief Spokesman for Taliban," *New York Times*, October 5, 2005.

<sup>423</sup> Carlotta Gall, "Musharraf Vows to Aid Afghanistan in Fighting Taliban," *New York Times*, September 7, 2006.

<sup>424</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006—Executive Summary* (New York, NY: UN, September 2006), p. iv, pp. 1-4. See also: Carlotta Gall, "Opium Harvest At Record Level in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, September 3, 2006, p. 1.

And one is certainly the narcotics culture and the dependence of the economy on narcotics."<sup>425</sup> Hopefully, the forced withdrawal of the Taliban from Afghanistan's southern provinces, the large ISAF presence in the south, the co-opting of tribal militias to serve as government security forces, and the ongoing work of PRTs in the area will lead to falling poppy production in the years ahead.

## **Pakistan**

On September 13, 2001, General Pervez Musharraf was given an ultimatum: either discontinue Pakistan's decade-long support of the Taliban and join the United States in its war against terrorism or face serious diplomatic, economic, and military consequences. Musharraf opted for the former course—pledging to terminate Pakistan's support to the Taliban, granting unrestricted over-flight and landing rights for US military and intelligence flights, sharing critical intelligence with the United States on known or suspected al Qaeda terrorists, and stepping up domestic counter-terrorism activities.<sup>426</sup> Since 2001, Musharraf has been a stalwart ally in the GWOT, frequently putting his career and indeed his life in jeopardy. Over the past five years, Pakistan authorities have apprehended more than 700 suspected members of al Qaeda, including nearly all of the senior leaders that have been captured globally to date, most of whom were promptly turned over to the United States for interrogation. Pakistan has also deployed an unprecedented 70,000-80,000 troops to the western frontier—Baluchistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP)—in a costly, politically risky effort to seal the border and hunt down al Qaeda and Taliban fighters who fled from Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. At a cost of some 500-600 soldiers' lives and thousands of injuries—more than any other American ally in the war on terrorism, Pakistan has captured hundreds and killed scores of Islamist militants in this rugged, volatile region.<sup>427</sup> In his letter to Zarqawi in July 2005, Zawahiri characterized Pakistan's patrols and sweeps in the FATA as a dire threat to the jihadi movement, stating that the "the real danger comes from the agent Pakistani army that is carrying out operations in the tribal areas looking for mujahedeen."<sup>428</sup>

Despite these laudable efforts, however, the Salafi-jihadi threat in Pakistan has not diminished significantly since 2001. In fact, a persuasive case can be made that the terrorist threat has intensified for at least two reasons: the increasing radicalization of Pakistan's Muslim population of 160 million and the increasing "Talibanization" of the FATA, especially North and South Waziristan. The arrest of so many members of al Qaeda and other foreign jihadists in Pakistan is in part a reflection of the fact that it remains a terrorist breeding ground: its madrassas and mosques continue to churn out radicals who are recruited into myriad terrorist organizations and its largely "ungoverned" western frontier is a de facto sanctuary where foreign jihadists have found refuge and can plot, prepare, and train for future attacks. As one former Pakistani parliamentarian commented, "It is ironic that our very success in thwarting plots and arresting a

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<sup>425</sup> Ann Scott Tyson, "Afghan Threat Played Down," *Washington Post*, March 7, 2006, p. 13.

<sup>426</sup> Reuters, "Pakistan Tells of U.S. Threat After 9/11, CBS Reports," *New York Times*, September 22, 2006, p. 12.

<sup>427</sup> AP, "Pakistan Says U.S. Has Custody of Al Qaeda Suspect," *Washington Post*, June 7, 2005, p. 24; Ismail Khan and Carlotta Gall, "Pakistan Lets Tribal Chiefs Keep Control Along Border," *New York Times*, September 6, 2006, p. 8.

<sup>428</sup> Letter to Zarqawi, p. 1.

large number of terrorists reinforces the perception that this country is a bastion of terrorism. Our triumphs in the war against terror have become advertisements of our failure."<sup>429</sup>

As will be elaborated upon below, taken as a whole, Pakistan's cooperation in the GWOT is at once invaluable and insufficient. While the US government is clearly pleased by what Pakistan has accomplished in the past five years, it is also frustrated by its lack of progress in several critical areas. Although the US government has strong incentives to push Musharraf harder to clamp down on terrorism, it must simultaneously acknowledge that he is severely constrained by his tenuous political situation. Pushing Musharraf too hard could force him to break off his partnership with the United States, or alternatively, to take imprudent political risks that put his presidency in even further jeopardy. While Musharraf, who came to power in a military-backed coup in 1999, may not be the ideal partner in the GWOT, the United States could do much worse with possible successors.

In light of the fact that several attempts have been made on Musharraf's life, including two linked to al Qaeda, and his uncertain prospects in the upcoming elections in 2007, the United States should develop contingency plans for retaining Islamabad's cooperation in the GWOT in a post-Musharraf Pakistan. The emergence of a regime that is much less supportive of, if not openly hostile toward, the United States is very real possibility. Given its large Muslim population and nuclear weapons arsenal, preventing Pakistan from falling to radical Islamists is a strategic imperative of the highest order.

While Pakistan has accomplished much in the past five years—including capturing or killing nearly a score of senior al Qaeda leaders, operatives, facilitators, and financiers—it faces three serious and growing challenges: intensifying, home-grown Wahhabi-jihadi radicalism; its demonstrated inability to secure its border with Afghanistan and deny sanctuary to terrorists based in and operating from tribal areas; and the "Talibanization" of Waziristan, which is beginning to spill over into the wider FATA and even the NWFP. Although Musharraf might have the will to confront these problems, his ability to do so will be severely constrained by domestic political considerations.

His ability to remain in power rests, in part, on the cooperation of a coalition of conservative Islamic parties that have reluctantly backed him in order to block gains by secular, pro-democratic parties (i.e., Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League, led by exiled former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, respectively). As a result, members of the border-line extremist political parties, Jamiat-e-Ulema-i-Islami and the Jamiat-Islami, hold prominent positions in Musharraf's administration and wield significant power. Musharraf's effort to track down jihadis operating in the religiously conservative FATA and NWFP have encountered stiff resistance not only from the tribal community and local religious leaders, but also from Islamist political parties in Islamabad. Nicknamed "Mush" by his Islamist critics, he is frequently and vitriolically denounced as a traitor and puppet of the United States.<sup>430</sup> Within his own administration, there are credible reports that elements within the ISI and the military may

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<sup>429</sup> Pamela Constable, "Pakistan's Awkward Balancing Act on Islamic Militant Groups," *Washington Post*, August 26, 2006, p. 10

<sup>430</sup> Kim Barker, "Situation Normal for Key Ally: Under Siege," *Chicago Tribune*, March 3, 2006

be undercutting his publicly announced policy of suspending any and all support for the Taliban. They reportedly are interested in retaining the Taliban (and Kashmiri separatist groups) as strategic “agents of influence” against Pakistan’s archrival, India, which could be especially critical in the event that Afghanistan collapses back into chaos.<sup>431</sup> If this domestic balancing act was not difficult enough, Musharraf also has to contend with a brewing ethnic insurgency in Baluchistan, led by the Bugti and Marri tribes that seek self-rule and control over oil and gas resources in the region. In addition, he has to keep inflation, which recently hit 9 percent annually, in check.<sup>432</sup>

### **Pakistan’s Victories in the GWOT**

As mentioned above, since 2001, Pakistan has achieved a number of victories in the GWOT. Pakistan banned several militant and terrorist organizations, enacted numerous anti-terrorism laws, tightened up financial controls (including freezing dozens of bank accounts suspected of being controlled by terrorist organizations), and captured or killed hundreds of suspected al Qaeda terrorists and other foreign jihadis. Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has developed a closer working relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency and other foreign intelligence services. As will be discussed below, although Pakistan’s efforts to bring radical madrassas into the mainstream and deny sanctuary to terrorists groups in Baluchistan, the FATA, and NWFP have failed, it has been very successful in hunting down senior al Qaeda leaders and operatives (see Table 6). In many cases, these individuals have been apprehended with intelligence support provided by the United States.

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<sup>431</sup> Robert Kaplan, “The Taliban’s Silent Partner,” *New York Times*, July 20, 2006; and Peter Bergen, “The Taliban, Regrouped And Rearmed,” *Washington Post*, September 10, 2006, p. B1; and Robert Kaplan, “The Taliban’s Silent Partner,” *New York Times*, July 20, 2006; and Peter Bergen, “The Taliban, Regrouped And Rearmed,” *Washington Post*, September 10, 2006, p. B1.

<sup>432</sup> While economic growth was an impressive seven percent in 2004-2005, inflation was around 9 percent. *CIA World Factbook*; and Carlotta Gall, “Civil War Festers in Remote Pakistan Province,” *New York Times*, April 2, 2006, p. 1

Table 6 – Senior Al Qaeda Leaders and Operatives Captured or Killed in Pakistan Since 2001<sup>433</sup>

Name	Description	Location and Date
<b>Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libbi</b>	Head of al Qaeda training infrastructure in Afghanistan, Khalden training camp commander	Captured crossing into Pakistan, December 2001
<b>Abu Zubaydah</b>	30-year old, Saudi-born Palestinian; one of al Qaeda's chief recruiters/trainers and intimately involved in its global operations	Arrested in Faisalabad, Pakistan, February 2002
<b>Ramzi Bin al Shibh</b>	Organizer of Hamburg, Germany cell that formed the core of the September 11 <sup>th</sup> hijackers; logistics handler and financier	Arrested in Karachi, Pakistan, September 2002
<b>Khalid Sheik Mohammed</b>	September 11 <sup>th</sup> mastermind and head of Al Qaida's military committee following Atef's death. Involved in 1993 World Trade Center bombing, a foiled 1995 plot to down a dozen US airliners over the Pacific, the bombing of US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the attack on the USS Cole, the bombing of a Tunisian synagogue in April 2002, and the beheading of Daniel Pearl.	Arrested in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, March 2003
<b>Tawfiq bin Attash (Khallad)</b>	Head of Bin Laden's security detail; al Qaeda trainer; senior-level communications courier; and planner of the 1998 West African embassy bombings, USS Cole attack, the September 11 <sup>th</sup> attacks, and the attack on the US Consulate in Pakistan in 2002.	Arrested in Karachi, Pakistan, April 2003
<b>Ahmed Said Khadr</b>	Senior-ranking financier for al Qaeda	Killed in Waziristan, October 2003
<b>Mussad Aruchi (Abu Musab al Baluchi)</b>	Nephew of Khalid Sheik Mohammed; operational planner, facilitator, and financier for al Qaeda; mastermind behind several attacks in Pakistan, including the bombing of a Shiite mosque in Quetta	Arrested in Karachi, June 2004
<b>Dawood Badini</b>	Leader of al Qaeda-linked Lashkar-e-Jhangvi terrorist group	Captured in June 2004
<b>Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani</b>	Senior-ranking operational planner for al Qaeda, involved in 1998 embassy bombings	Captured by Pakistani authorities, July 2004
<b>Muhammed Naeem Noor Khan</b>	Key al Qaeda operative closely tied to Khalid Sheik Mohammed; computer expert	Apprehended in Lahore, Pakistan, July 2004

<sup>433</sup> Zahid Hussain et al, "Al Qaeda Arm in Pakistan is Tied to 12 Years of Plots and Attacks," *Wall Street Journal*, August 6, 2004; AP, "Pakistan Sys U.S. Has Custody of Al Qaeda Suspect," *Washington Post*, June 7, 2005, p. 24; Douglas Jehl, "Remotely Controlled Craft Part of U.S.-Pakistan Drive Against Al Qaeda, Ex-Officials Say," *New York Times*, May 16, 2005; and Dana Priest, "Surveillance Operation in Pakistan Located and Killed Al Qaeda Official," *Washington Post*, May 15, 2005, p. 25; Josh Meyer, "Terror Arrest Reported," *Los Angeles Times*, November 4, 2005; and Mohammed Khan and Carlotta Gall, "A Qaeda Bomb Expert Killed in Pakistan was a Paymaster," *New York Times*, April 22, 2006.

<b>Amjad Hussain Farooqi</b>	Senior member of al Qaeda; linked to beheading of Daniel Pearl, and two assassination attempts of President Musharraf in 2003	Killed by Pakistani authorities, September 2004
<b>Abu Farraj al-Libbi</b>	Born in Libya; senior al Qaeda commander and operative; mastermind behind two attempted assassinations of President Musharraf	Arrested near Peshawar, Pakistan in May 2005
<b>Haitham al-Yemeni</b>	Al Qaeda facilitator and logistician	Killed by Hellfire missile launched from CIA-operated Predator UAV in Toorikhel, North Waziristan, May 2005
<b>Abdul Latif Hakimi</b>	Senior Taliban spokesman	Arrested in Baluchistan, October 2005
	Instructor at terrorist camps in Afghanistan, specializing in poisons and CW; linked to 9/11, Madrid, and London underground attacks; important ideologue and propagandist for the jihadi movement	Arrested in Quetta, Pakistan, November 2005
<b>Abu Hamza Rabia</b>	Egyptian; senior al Qaeda operations officer; headed operations in/around Pakistan after the arrest of Khalid Sheik Mohammed	Killed in Asorai, Pakistan, December 2005
<b>Muhsin Musa Matwalli Atwah (Abdul Rahman al-Muhajir)</b>	Egyptian; senior al Qaeda operative suspected of playing a key role in the bombing of the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998	Killed in Pakistani gunship strike near Miram Shah, North Waziristan, April 2006
<b>Marwan Hadid al-Suri (Abu Marwan)</b>	Explosives expert and trainer for al Qaeda	Killed in Waziristan, April 2006

What is conspicuously absent from this list are senior-ranking Taliban officials and top leaders of the militias head by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani. With the exception of Taliban spokesman, Abdul Latif Hakimi, not a single high-ranking Taliban leader has been captured or killed by Pakistani authorities, despite the fact that Taliban is known to be operating out of Baluchistan and Waziristan.<sup>434</sup> According to many reports, the Taliban has set up senior leader “shura councils” in both Quetta and Peshawar. As will be elaborated upon below, there are at least two explanations for Islamabad’s failure to find and apprehend Taliban officials. The first is that elements of the central government, primarily the ISI, have intentionally circumvented government efforts to crack down on the Taliban in order to preserve the group as “agents of influence” in Afghanistan, if and when it collapses, to counter Indian- and Iranian-backed groups. The second is that while the central government may have the will to hunt down Taliban leaders, it has neither the political or military capability to extend its authority into the FATA where the Taliban has strong cultural, religious, and ethnic ties with the fiercely independent, well-armed Pashtun tribes that control the area.

<sup>434</sup> Several dozen low-ranking Taliban fighters, however, have been arrested.

### Pakistan as a Hot Bed of Radicalism

Despite Musharraf's domestic counter-terrorism initiatives, including what he described in July 2005 as a "jihad against extremism," Pakistan remains a hotbed of ideological radicalism and a well-traveled recruiting ground for Salafi-jihadi groups. It is no coincidence that several of the major attacks conducted over the past few years—2002 Bali nightclub bombing, Madrid train bombing, London underground bombing, and airliner bombing plot over the Atlantic—had links back to Pakistan. In the wake of the revelation that the bombers of the London underground had links to Pakistan, Musharraf addressed the nation on television to announce:

- A crackdown on banned organizations, hate materials, and incitement to violence by religious leaders;
- The expulsion of foreign madrasa students; and
- New registration and financial disclosure requirements for the country's thousands of madrassas.

Unfortunately, while the government remains rhetorically committed to these goals, they have yet to be implemented in a meaningful way. Although banned by the central government, several violent Islamic terrorist groups continue to operate in Pakistan, including: Harakat ul-Mujahedin (HUM), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT), and Laskar-i-Jhangvi (LJ).

HUM and JEM are both aligned with the radical Fazlur Rehman faction of the Islamist political party Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam and are focused primarily upon liberating predominantly Muslim Kashmir from India and uniting it with Pakistan.<sup>435</sup> HUM has close links with al Qaeda; its former leader, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, for example, signed Osama bin Laden's February 1998 *fatwa* calling for a "jihad against Jews and Crusaders." JEM, which is a splinter group of HUM, rivals its parent organization in strength. It is believed to have several hundred armed supporters, including a large cadre of former HUM members, as well as tens of thousands of followers who support its attacks against Indian and Pakistani government targets. JEM has openly declared war against the United States. In 2003, it spawned two splinter groups: Khuddam ul-Islam (KUI), headed by Masood Azhar; and Jamaat-ul Furqan (JUF), led by Abdul Jabbar. JEM and its splinter groups are believed to be responsible for several attacks over the past five years, including the October 2001 suicide car bombing of the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly building in Srinagar that killed more than 30 people; the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament, killing nine people and injuring 18; and two assassination attempts on President Musharraf.<sup>436</sup>

LT was formed in mid-1980s and its one of the largest and best-trained military groups fighting in Kashmir against India.<sup>437</sup> Recent operations include the attack, along with JEM, on the Indian Parliament building in December 2001, probably the attack in May 2002 on the Indian Army

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<sup>435</sup> In 2003, Hum began using the name Jamiat ul-Ansar. *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid, pp. 201-202.

<sup>437</sup> After being banned, LT changed its name to Jamaat ud Dawa

base in Kaluchak that left 36 dead, and attacks in New Delhi and Bangalore in October and December 2005, respectively. Nearly all of LT's members are either Pakistanis, recruited from local radical madrassas, or Afghan veterans of war against the Soviet Union and the Northern Alliance. LT has links with al Qaeda. Not coincidentally, when Abu Zubaydah was captured by Pakistani authorities in March 2002, he was hiding in a LT safehouse in Faisalabad.<sup>438</sup>

LJ is a radical Sunni sectarian group, formed in the mid-1990s, that focuses its attacks primarily, but not exclusively, on Shiites. After being banned by Musharraf in August 2001, many LJ members sought refuge in Afghanistan with the Taliban. When they were forced out of Afghanistan just a few months later, they began providing members of al Qaeda and other Afghanistan-based terrorist groups with safe houses, false identification documents, and protection in Pakistan's densely populated cities, especially Karachi, Peshawar, and Rawalpindi. LJ members are believed to be responsible for the abduction and murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002, probably the car bombings in Karachi against a French shuttle bus and the US consulate in May and June 2002, a grenade assault on a Protestant International Church in Islamabad in March 2002, the abduction and killing of 13 Shia police cadets in June 2003, the bombing of a Shiite mosque in Quetta in July 2003, and the bombings of two Shiite mosques in Karachi in the summer of 2004.<sup>439</sup>

"Hate materials" in the form of written literature, DVDs and video-cassette tapes, and Internet postings are widely available. These shockingly sanguine, violent materials are feeding a growing sub-culture of grievance and anger toward United States and the West more broadly. Almost a year after Musharraf's promise to bring madrassas into the mainstream, scant substantive progress has been made: there has been no systematic effort to register madrassas; foreign students are allowed to remain so long as they have permission from their home countries, which is impractical to verify; and an estimated 15 percent of madrassas in Pakistan continue to teach extremist interpretations of Islam and churn out radicalized graduates.<sup>440</sup>

### **Terrorist Sanctuaries in the "Wild West"**

Pakistan's FATA, which hugs the border with Afghanistan, has an estimated population of about 3.5 million people, who are overwhelming Pashtun. It encompasses over 27,000 square kilometers—mostly difficult-to-access, rugged, mountainous terrain. The FATA is home to about 60 Pashtun tribes, including a dozen major ones, which spill over into Afghanistan. Ever since Pakistan was founded, the FATA has been a semi-autonomous zone into which the central government's authority does not extend in any meaningful way. The tribesmen value their independence highly and have historically resisted any effort by Islamabad to expand the central government's influence. While the tribes are generally religiously conservative, they also adhere to a pre-Islamic tribal code, Pashtunwali, that demands hospitality, generosity when someone asks for pardon or protection, and an absolute obligation to avenge any slights.<sup>441</sup> For

<sup>438</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209; and Nasra Hassan, "Al Qaeda's Understudy," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 2004, pp. 42-43.

<sup>440</sup> Samina Ahmed and Andrew Stroehlein, "Pakistan: Still Schooling Extremists," *Washington Post*, July 17, 2005, p. B7.

<sup>441</sup> Hassan Abbas, "Profiles of Pakistan's Seven Tribal Agencies," *Terrorism Monitor*, October 19, 2006, pp. 1-2.

administrative purposes, the FATA is divided into seven separate agencies that vary considerably in terms of their proclivity for supporting religious extremism.<sup>442</sup>

In the wake of Operation Enduring Freedom, members of the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other foreign jihadi groups streamed over the porous border with Afghanistan into the FATA, as well as into Baluchistan Province to the south and the NWFP to the north. Around 600 al Qaeda operatives—including Arabs, Uzbeks, Chechens, and Tajiks—are believed to have found refuge in Waziristan agencies alone.<sup>443</sup>

At the insistence of the United States, beginning in late 2002, President Musharraf took the unprecedented step of sending thousands of Frontier Corps, regular army, and paramilitary troops into the FATA to secure the border, as well as to track down remnants of al Qaeda and the Taliban. Initially, the effort was limited to relatively small raids and sweeps into the FATA and NWFP, but it ramped up quickly over the next two years. By 2003-2004, Pakistan had deployed some 70,000-80,000 troops to the border region (including Baluchistan). While many of these troops focused on constructing over 500 schools, setting up health clinics, and building some 800 miles of road, most of them were committed to conducting more extensive sweeps and more frequent border patrols.<sup>444</sup> Unsurprisingly, the tribesmen viewed these incursions as a challenge to their independence, a threat to their way of life, and affront to their honor. The level of violence skyrocketed.

In January 2004, the government surged some 12,000 military and paramilitary troops into the FATA and NWFP to track down Al Qaeda and Taliban elements. Pakistani officials put pressure on tribal leaders to handover the "foreign terrorists," as well as more than 100 tribesmen wanted for providing them sanctuary. In an effort to compel compliance, they threatened to impose hefty fines and carry out home demolitions for each day that passed without the wanted individuals being turned over. Several of the tribes stood up militias to hunt down the foreigners.<sup>445</sup> While about 60 of the wanted tribesmen were turned over, none of the most-wanted tribesmen were apprehended nor their al Qaeda and Taliban guests. The government's heavy-handed tactics enraged the Pashtun tribal community.<sup>446</sup>

Following a series of raids in the opening months of 2004 during which Pakistani forces encountered increasingly fierce resistance, the government launched the largest single operation in South Waziristan, directly involving about 5,000 Pakistani troops, in March-April 2004. During a 12-day clash with tribesmen, reinforced by Taliban and al Qaeda fighters, the government claims that it killed 60 foreign militants or their local supporters, arrested 163 suspected militants, and dismantled "a hardened den of miscreants."<sup>447</sup> Collateral damage,

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<sup>442</sup> The seven agencies are Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, Mohmand, Bajaur, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan. The agencies most closely linked to the Taliban are Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai, and North and South Waziristan.

<sup>443</sup> Owais Tohid, "Cash Wean Tribes from Al Qaeda," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 16, 2005.

<sup>444</sup> Jason Szep, "Pakistan Seeks Reform on Afghan Border," *Washington Times*, April 13, 2004, p. 1.

<sup>445</sup> Owais Tohid, "Pakistan Gains in Al Qaeda Hunt," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 16, 2004.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>447</sup> Pamela Constable, "Conflict Ends in Pakistani Tribal Lands," *Washington Post*, March 29, 2004, p. 14.

however, was also high: scores of civilians were killed and dozens of homes were destroyed. During the fighting, eight captured Pakistani soldiers and two local officials were found executed. Tribesmen also took 12 Pakistani soldiers and government officials hostage.<sup>448</sup> The cease-fire and truce that was reached, however, was hardly a victory for the government. In return for amnesty, tribal leaders agreed to stop fighting Pakistan security forces, withdraw their support for al Qaeda and other “foreign terrorists,” and refrain from attacks against US-led forces across the border in Afghanistan. Militants were also supposed to surrender their heavy weapons and register with local authorities. For its part, the government pardoned the five tribal commanders wanted for attacking Pakistani troops (and executing eight soldiers) and agreed to release 60 of the captured militants.<sup>449</sup> Notably, the agreement was silent on handing over members of the Taliban and did not bar all cross-border attacks into Afghanistan. It was, in any event, not honored—attacks on Pakistani security forces continued unabated.

After deadlines for turning over the “foreign terrorists” came and went, and repeated clashes between the tribesmen and Pakistani security forces, a new peace agreement was eventually reached in November 2004. The Pakistani government agreed to pay more than \$800,000 in total to four tribal commanders, supposedly so they could reimburse al Qaeda and Taliban guests who had already paid wildly inflated prices for shelter, supplies, and protection.<sup>450</sup> In exchange, the tribal leaders committed to terminate their support to the foreigners, cease attacks against Pakistani security forces, and suspend cross-border attacks into Afghanistan. The agreement, however, did not stop or even slow the frequency of attacks on Pakistani personnel; cross-border attacks into Afghanistan from South Waziristan continue to this day; and al Qaeda and other foreign guests still reside and operate from there.

Meanwhile, the stand-off in North Waziristan escalated, culminating in a series of major clashes with government forces in the vicinity of Miran Shah, Mir Ali, and Saidgi in March 2006 during which upwards of 80 tribesmen were reportedly killed.<sup>451</sup> Violence continued through the spring and summer. On September 5, 2006, Islamabad signed a peace agreement with tribal elders, with the apparent consent of the Taliban.<sup>452</sup> According to President Musharraf the truce had “three bottom lines”—the first was described as “no Al Qaeda activity in our tribal agencies or across the border in Afghanistan; the second was “no Taliban activity” in the same areas; and the third was “no Talibanization” of the region.<sup>453</sup> The tribesmen agreed to force foreign

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<sup>448</sup> Pamela Constable, “Pakistan’s Untamed Frontier,” *Washington Post*, April 7, 2004, p. 13.

<sup>449</sup> Zahid Hussain, “Pakistan Border Offensive Fails,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 10, 2004, p. 15; Owais Tohid, “Cash Wean Tribes from Al Qaeda,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 16, 2005.

<sup>450</sup> According to one interviewed tribesman, Mohammad Noor, al Qaeda and other foreigners were charged \$15 for a chicken that sold for \$1 on the market and \$150 for a bag of sugar worth only \$7. Facilities that typically rented out for \$17-25 would be given to al Qaeda as a training camp/hide out for around \$10,000. Owais Tohid, “Cash Wean Tribes from Al Qaeda,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 16, 2005.

<sup>451</sup> AP, “Pakistan Strikes Again in Tribal Area,” *Washington Post*, March 5, 2006, p. 19.

<sup>452</sup> The truce was reportedly approved not only by representatives of the “local Taliban,” but possibly also Mullah Omar as well. Jim Krane, “Taliban Strikes on U.S. Troops Triple After Truce,” *Washington Times*, September 28, 2006, p. 13.

<sup>453</sup> David Sanger, “Musharraf Defends Deal With Tribal Leaders,” *New York Times*, September 23, 2006.

militants to leave the area unless they vowed to “take up a peaceable life.”<sup>454</sup> They also pledged to discontinue attacks against Pakistani government officials and security forces in the region. In exchange, the government agreed to cease all ground and air operations in North Waziristan, release all detainees, and resolve future problems using local customs and traditions.<sup>455</sup>

As with the truce in South Waziristan, the problem with this agreement is that it was utterly unenforceable. While no longer fighting Pakistani government and security personnel, who have largely withdrawn from the region, the Taliban, foreign fighters (including many linked to al Qaeda), and Pushtun militants are using camps within the North Waziristan border area as hubs for attacks into Afghanistan. No longer under pressure from Pakistani security forces, they have been able to triple the frequency and expand the scale of attacks into eastern Afghanistan.<sup>456</sup> Providing direct evidence of this problem, in January 2007, NATO forces tracked two large groups of fighters infiltrating out of Pakistan and attacked them on the ground and from the air once they crossed over into Afghanistan’s Paktika province, killing between 80 and 150 of them.<sup>457</sup>

While President Musharraf has described Pakistan’s truces with “tribal elders” in Southern and Northern Waziristan as defeats for the Taliban, they are more properly viewed as face-saving retreats by the central government driven by political necessity.<sup>458</sup> Duty-bound by the Pashtunwali code to protect their guests, many of whom had deep tribal roots within Waziristan, the tribesmen would rather fight “intruding” Pakistani security forces than dishonor themselves.<sup>459</sup> Musharraf’s now-aborted effort to assert central government control into the FATA and NWFP was politically unsustainable for at least three reasons: heavy-handed government tactics enraged the tribesmen accustomed to independence and ignited an open rebellion, it alienated conservative Islamic parties upon which he depended politically, and mounting casualties demoralized the Army.

### **The “Talibanization” of Waziristan**

The Pakistani Army’s efforts to secure the western border and hunt down al Qaeda and Taliban militants in the FATA and NWFP, not only enraged tribal leaders accustomed to autonomy and

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<sup>454</sup> Michael Abramowitz and Karen DeYoung, “Bush Seeks Increased Pakistani Cooperation,” *Washington Post*, September 23, 2006, p. 2.

<sup>455</sup> Ismail Khan and Carlotta Gall, “Pakistan Lets Tribal Chiefs Keep Control Along Border,” *New York Times*, September 6, 2006, p. 8;

<sup>456</sup> American and ISAF troops in eastern Afghanistan have reported a tripling of attacks since the truce. Jim Krane, “Taliban Strikes on U.S. Troops Triple After Truce,” *Washington Times*, September 28, 2006, p. 13

<sup>457</sup> Pamela Constable, “Scores of Insurgents Killed in Afghan Border Area,” *Washington Post*, January 12, 2007, p. 10.

<sup>458</sup> It is unclear whether the truce in North Waziristan was signed by tribal leaders or with wanted militants, including leaders of the “local Taliban” and the members of the displaced Afghan Taliban. See Isambard Wilkinson, “Taliban Militias Take Control,” *Washington Times*, October 26, 2006, p. 15.

<sup>459</sup> To complicate matters, even some of the “foreign terrorists” had tribal connections to the region. While some had families that came to region and married into Pashtun tribes during the jihad against the Soviet Union and later the Northern Alliance, others arranged to marry their daughters to the sons of tribal leaders after being pushed out of Afghanistan in the fall of 2001.

deference, but also alienated the Pashtun population more broadly. Heavy-handed Pakistani tactics such as imposing heavy fines or threatening home demolitions for non-compliance with their demands, while somewhat effective in the short-run, fostered deep-seated enmity. Civilian casualties, estimated to total in the hundreds, during repeated clashes with Taliban and tribal militants further enraged the population—converting formerly moderate Pashtuns into Taliban supporters; and radicalizing Pashtun youth, who felt beholden by the Pashtunwali code to avenge the deaths of relatives, into willing jihadis. Far from the declared goal of empowering tribal leaders, Musharraf's policies in fact undermined their legitimacy by calling into question their ability to provide for and protect their people. During the chaos that reigned in the FATA between 2004 and 2006, the Taliban and associated groups assassinated more than 200 tribal leaders, allegedly for cooperating with Pakistani officials or spying for the United States and its allies.<sup>460</sup>

The Taliban, which sowed the seeds of disorder and rebellion in the FATA, is now taking full advantage of the resulting security vacuum to consolidate its position. The so-called “local Taliban” movement, which has close ethnic and theological links to displaced members of the Afghan Taliban, has started creating an alternative government structure in Waziristan.<sup>461</sup> Contrary to the truce between Islamabad and tribal leaders, who may or may not have been acting as surrogates for the Taliban, in September 2006, pro-Taliban militants began setting up a “parallel administration” in North Waziristan. They opened recruiting offices and distributed propaganda materials, introduced tax or “donation” schedules for local businesses, and started to enforce sharia law. Armed Taliban militants patrol village streets. Extremist madrassas, many with links to JUI, are thriving. Radical clerics preach sermons in mosques and over the FM airwaves inciting violence and calling all faithful Muslims to wage a jihad against the apostate, puppet regime of President Musharraf, the United States, and the West more broadly. Similar activity is reported in South Waziristan.

At the apparent insistence of the United States, on October 30, 2006, the Pakistani military conducted an air strike on a madrassa in the Bajaur tribal area, killing some 80 people, whom US and Pakistani authorities confidently claim were Islamist militants training for jihad operations.<sup>462</sup> Although the attack was a tactical success—including killing Maulana Liaquatullah (Liaquat Hussain), who was a senior member of the banned Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammad terrorist group and an associate of Zawahiri—it triggered a series of anti-government, anti-American protests involving thousands of participants across the FATA. In a retaliatory suicide bombing, a jihadi terrorist killed 42 Pakistani army recruits and wounded 20 more—the most deadly terrorist attack against the Pakistani military ever—by blowing himself up in the middle of a training camp in the Malakand tribal district.

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<sup>460</sup> An estimated 120 tribal leaders were killed in North Waziristan alone since the fall of 2005. See Isambard Wilkinson, “Taliban Militias Take Control,” *Washington Times*, October 26, 2006, p. 15; Paul Watson and Zulfiqar Ali, “Suspected U.S. Spies Targeted,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>461</sup> Pamela Constable, “In Tribal Pakistan, An Uneasy Quiet—Pact Fails to Pamela Constable,” *Washington Post*, June 20, 2006, p. 11; and Paul Watson and Zulfiqar Ali, “Suspected U.S. Spies Targeted,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>462</sup> Pamela Constable and Kamran Khan, “In Pakistan, Recent Attacks Shred Hopes for Regional Peace Model,” *Washington Post*, November 11, 2006, p. 1.

An even more troubling trend is the spread of Islamic extremism from Waziristan not only into other FATA agencies, but also NWFP, which had been relatively tranquil. Pro-Taliban militants have launched a campaign of intimidation: threatening the lives of barbers who shave beards, closing hotels for promoting sexual promiscuity, confiscating televisions and VCRs from people's homes and burning them in public bonfires, and bombing video and music stores. Taliban militants openly recruit youth to join the jihad in Afghanistan and dispense sharia justice in the street, including conducting public beheadings for theft. The popularity of the Taliban is growing in the FATA and NWFP. In March and April 2006, there were dozens of reports of this type of Taliban activity across several NWFP Districts, including Dir, Dera Ismail Khan, Swat, Tank, Malakand, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Mardan, and Kohat.<sup>463</sup>

## EUROPE

On balance, the terrorist threat in Europe has intensified over the past five years. The key driver of that trend is the exploitation by radical Islamic groups of the "civil liberties sanctuary" in the European Union to support ongoing operations. It is also worth mentioning that, despite genuine efforts at increasing their CT capabilities, Bosnia and Herzegovina remain weak and potentially vulnerable to jihadi penetration. On a positive note, however, al Qaeda's cells in Turkey, while probably not eliminated, were dealt a serious blow by Turkish authorities in the wake of the 2003 attacks in Istanbul.

For at least the past decade, and arguably substantially longer than that, radical Islamists have taken advantage of the "civil liberties sanctuary" an unrestricted travel within the European Union to recruit and indoctrinate, export their violent ideology overseas, raise funds, and plan and organize terrorist operations. Al Qaeda's "Hamburg cell" was instrumental in carrying out the attacks in New York City and Washington, DC on September 11, 2001. Members of the Hamburg cell included Mohamed Atta al Sayed, who led the four hijacking teams and piloted American Airlines flight 11 into the North Tower of the World Trade Center; Ramzi Bin al Shibh, who managed logistics and finances for the operation from Germany since he was unable to enter the United States; and Marwan al-Shehhi, who piloted United Airlines flight 175 into the South Tower of the World Trade Center. In addition, Ziad Jarrah, who piloted United Airlines flight 93 until it crashed into a field in Shanksville, PA, lived in Hamburg prior to the attacks and was very likely a member of the al Qaeda cell there. While steps are finally being taken by members of the European Union to deny sanctuary to jihadists, the situation has deteriorated considerably since 2001. Europe's growing Muslim population has become more rather than less radicalized. While solid numbers are difficult to find, according to British and German intelligence assessments, tens of thousands of "active" supporters of al Qaeda and "Islamic extremists" are now entrenched in Western Europe.<sup>464</sup> The Director General of the Security

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<sup>463</sup> Open Source Center, "Analysis: Pakistani Media Say 'Talibanization' Increasingly 'Spilling Over' into NWFP," Document No. FEA20060420022208, April 20, 2006.

<sup>464</sup> A confidential British study estimated that there were 10,000 "active" supporters of al Qaeda in the United Kingdom alone as of 2003-2004. German intelligence estimated that there were over 30,000 Islamic extremist in Germany who posed a potential security risk. Michael Taarnby, "The European Battleground," in Christopher Heffelfinger, ed., *Unmasking Terror—A Global Review of Terrorist Activities* (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2005), p. 466.

Service (MI5) in the United Kingdom stated publicly in November 2006 that MI5 was investigating “200 grouping or networks, totaling over 1,600 identified individuals,” which were “actively engaged in plotting, or facilitating, terrorist attacks” within the United Kingdom and overseas. She revealed that some thirty terrorist plots had been disrupted to date, many with “links back to Al Qaida in Pakistan.”<sup>465</sup>

The combination of the March 2004 Madrid bombing, the July 2005 bombing of the London underground, the violent Muslim mass protest over the publication of Danish cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad, and the plot to down as many as ten aircraft in flight from the United Kingdom to the United States have forced European political leaders to accept that they face a mounting security problem—one that forces them to confront the unpleasant reality that radical Islamists are taking advantage of European protection of civil liberties, especially the freedom of speech and assembly, to wage a jihad against the West.<sup>466</sup> As John Reid, the British Home Secretary, observed recently, “we face a persistent and very real threat across Europe” in that terrorists hope to “abuse our open societies” in pursuit of their violent ends. Highlighting the need to strike a better balance between protection of civil liberties and counter-terrorism imperatives, Reid asserted that “the rights of the individual must be balanced against the collective right of security and protection of life and limb.”<sup>467</sup>

In addition to home-grown jihadi cells, several al Qaeda “franchises” are active in Europe, most notably North African Salafist groups such as the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, the Armed Islamic Group, and GSPC.<sup>468</sup> In addition to their own activities—which focus mainly on recruitment, fundraising, and propaganda—these groups serve as facilitators for local cells, such as those responsible for the Madrid and London bombings, as well as the recently foiled London airliner plot. By providing a conduit to the larger jihadi network, as well as hands-on advice, training, and logistical support, these North African Salafist groups and other al Qaeda affiliates may enable local cells to be more effective than would otherwise be the case. Al Qaeda has also expanded into Turkey. Several members of the local jihadi cell, the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders Front, responsible for the two double bombings in Istanbul in November 2003, killing a total of 66 people and injuring over 800, visited al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan and met with senior al Qaeda leaders prior to the attacks.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> Eliza Manningham-Buller, Director General of the Security Service, “The International Terrorist Threat to the UK,” speech, November 9, 2006. Available on-line at <http://www.mi5.gov.uk/print/page568.html>

<sup>466</sup> In a May 2006 video, Mohammad Hassan, speaking on behalf of al Qaeda, made this jihad within Europe explicit, calling on Muslims to attack Denmark, Norway, and France for publishing cartoons of the prophet Muhammad. “Muslims avenge your prophet... We deeply desire that the small state of Denmark, Norway, and France... are struck hard and destroyed... Destroy their buildings, make their ground shake and transform them into a sea of blood.” “Al Qaeda Video Urges Europe Attacks,” *Washington Times*, May 12, 2006, p. 15.

<sup>467</sup> Heather Timmons and Eric Pfanner, “Europe Says It Will Unify Effort to Fight Terrorism,” *New York Times*, August 17, 2006.

<sup>468</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, p. 19.

<sup>469</sup> Interestingly, Turkish police and intelligence had been following several of these individuals for months, even years, before to the 2003 bombings, but were unable to arrest them preemptively because of new civil liberty protections enacted by the government in an effort to qualify for membership in the European Union. Catherine Collins, “Small Terror Groups Pose Grim Risk,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 16, 2004.

Muslim minorities now represent five percent of the population of Western Europe (or about 23 million out of 460 million) and, given current demographic trends, that figure is expected to double by 2025. Large expatriate Muslim populations exist in Britain, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium.<sup>470</sup> As a general rule, Europe's Muslim communities, including second- and third-generation immigrants, have been poorly integrated into society and have higher than average rate of employment. While societal alienation, discrimination, and economic hardship may make Muslims more susceptible to radicalization, social-economic factors alone do not account for jihadi gains in Europe. Most of the members of al Qaeda's Hamburg cell, for example, had what would be considered a middle-class background. Similarly, most of the individuals responsible for the attacks in Madrid and London were also raised in middle-class households and several were married, well-educated, and employed. Women are also increasingly being recruited into the jihadi ranks. At least three of the 24 individuals suspected of being involved in the August 2006 aircraft bombing plot, for example, were women, including one who was married with an infant son.<sup>471</sup>

Several of the Salafi-jihadi terrorists that have emerged in Europe have been radicalized by al Qaeda propaganda and ideology on the Internet, in formal and informal prayer groups, and by sermons delivered in radical mosques. The expansion of radical countercultures in Europe's major urban centers and recruitment based on established social networks appear to be major contributing factors as well. While EU states have taken tentative steps to address these problems (e.g., increasing intelligence sharing, blocking Internet sites that incite Muslims to violence and provide detailed information on weapons and explosives, employing biometric screening technologies on flights into and out of EU countries, and reaching out to Muslim instructors and preachers to discourage violence), much more needs to be done, especially with respect to reining in radical clerics like Britain's Abu Hamza al-Masri, who intentionally and repeatedly incite Muslims to violence against non-Muslims.<sup>472</sup> It is also disconcerting that the EU as a whole, and France in particular, has been reluctant to take the steps needed to block ongoing fundraising effort by HAMAS and Hezbollah.<sup>473</sup>

While Bosnia and Herzegovina have taken modest steps to improve their CT capabilities, they remain weak states that could be easily exploited by transnational terrorist groups. Terrorist cells with links to Western Europe are already operating there, albeit at a relatively low level. In October 2005, for example, two terrorist operatives with links to transnational groups were arrested as part of a raid on a safe house in a suburb of Sarajevo. In addition, Aktivna Islamska Omladina (AIO), which is a Bosnian-rooted NGO formed in 1995 that seeks to establish an Islamic state in Bosnia and Herzegovina, continues to expand. It conducts a variety of outreach

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<sup>470</sup> Frederick Kempe, "U.S. Sees Europe as New Front Against Islamists," *Wall Street Journal*, April 11, 2006, p. 8.

<sup>471</sup> Cassell Bryan-Low and David Crawford, "Terrorist Profile Gains Disturbing Features," *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>472</sup> Heather Thomas and Eric Pfanner, "Europe Says It Will Unify Effort in Fight On Terrorism," *New York Times*, August 17, 2006.

<sup>473</sup> France opposed the EU designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. It also allow charities affiliated with HAMAS and Hezbollah to operate freely. *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, pp 84 and 97.

activities—including operating youth centers, summer camps, and Internet cafes—to indoctrinate young Bosnians with a strict literal interpretation of Islam.<sup>474</sup>

The Islamic terrorist threat in Turkey has fallen over the past five years as the Turkish National Police (TNP) and National Intelligence Organization have focused even more attention on domestic CT initiatives. Following the two major bombings in Istanbul in November 2003, which together killed more than 60 people and injured over 800, Turkey mounted an aggressive CT campaign and detained numerous suspected terrorist in scores of raids. Many of those involved in the Istanbul attacks have been apprehended and convicted. In August 2005, Turkish authorities arrested Luay Sakka, a Syrian national linked to al Qaeda who not only played a role in funding the 2003 bombings in Istanbul, but also supported AQI operations.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism—2005*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

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## V. STRATEGY AND CAPABILITIES FOR THE “LONG WAR”

The *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, released in September 2006, asserts that the US government’s “strategic vision” is that in the short run:

The fight involves the application of all instruments of national power and influence to kill or capture the terrorists; deny them safehaven and control of any nation; prevent them from gaining access to WMD; render potential targets less attractive by strengthening security; and cut off their sources of funding and other resources they need to operate and survive.<sup>476</sup>

It specifically calls for hunting down terrorist leaders around the world, capturing or killing terrorist foot soldiers, interdicting weapon shipments and financial transfers, disrupting the ability of terrorists to travel internationally, cutting off or exploiting terrorist communications, and countering terrorist propaganda operations. It also reaffirms that it is US policy to end state sponsorship of terrorism, as well as to eliminate physical, legal, cyber, and financial safe havens currently exploited by terrorists.

As detailed earlier in the study, at least with respect to the Salafi-jihadi movement, the United States has made impressive gains over the past five years on nearly all of these fronts. To date, roughly two-thirds of senior al Qaeda leaders have been captured or killed, more than 4,000 lower-level operatives have been neutralized in over 100 countries, and scores of terrorist cells linked to al Qaeda have been rolled up in America, Europe, Southwest Asia, Central/South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa.<sup>477</sup> Afghanistan has been eliminated as a state-sponsored terrorist sanctuary and the United States has repeatedly demonstrated an ability to reach into “ungoverned areas” in Yemen, the pan-Sahel, the NWFP and FATA in Pakistan, and elsewhere around the globe. US accomplishments have been relatively less impressive, however, with respect to the admittedly daunting tasks of cutting off terrorist supplies and funding, disrupting their communications (especially on the Internet), and debunking terrorist propaganda and conspiracy theories. The strategy that follows seeks to reinforce US successes in the GWOT and shed light on how some of the most critical performance shortfalls might be remedied. It departs significantly, however, from current US long-term strategy for the GWOT, which is to advance freedom, opportunity, and human dignity through democracy. While one can debate the merits and feasibility of promoting democratic ideals as a means of ameliorating the social, economic, and political plight of the Muslim world and other so-called “root causes” of radical Islamic terrorism, publicly declaring it is the US policy to do so is strategically ill-advised for several reasons. First, the promotion of democracy could dramatically undermine the overall US position in the GWOT in the near term by jeopardizing the security of key partner states, most notably,

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<sup>476</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, DC: White House, 2006), p. 7.

<sup>477</sup> J. Cofer Black, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, US Department of State, Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Hearing on “Al Qaeda: The Threat to the United States and its Allies,” April 1, 2004, p. 38.

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Algeria, and Egypt. Pushing these countries to open up their respective domestic political processes and enact liberal reforms is unlikely to be in the US interest for quite some time. Second, US promotion of democracy provides valuable grist to the Salafi-jihadi propaganda mill. Credible arguments have been made by well-respected Islamic scholars and AQAM leaders that democracy is antithetical to Islam because it replaces divinely revealed law in the Quran and hadith with human-made law. While there are, of course, counter-arguments to be made that Islam is compatible with democracy, the US government ignores at its peril the fact that many mainline conservative Muslims fervently believe that is not.

The GWOT is likely to be protracted and increasingly fought within states with which the United States is not at war. To prevail in this war, the United States will need to mount a multifaceted global smother campaign against jihadis and sustain it for the foreseeable future, while simultaneously isolating, dividing, and otherwise weakening the jihadi movement. To do so, it will be essential for the United States to rally as many allies as possible to the cause, including non-violent Salafis who are best positioned to lure conservative Muslims away from the jihadi camp. During this protracted global war, the United States will need to ensure that the key terrain of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan does not fall into jihadi hands. Most critically, the US government must avoid making statements or taking any actions that legitimize the call to defensive jihad. In summary form, the seven pillars of US strategy should be to:

- Sustain a global smother campaign on radical Islamic terrorists that includes relentless manhunting, comprehensive sanctuary denial, disruption operations, severing transnational links, and impeding recruitment and training;
- Employ UW and covert action against state sponsors of terrorism and transnational terrorist groups globally;
- Defend and hold the “key terrain” of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan;
- Maintain a significant “surge” capability for responding to protracted COIN and state-failure contingencies;
- Create and exploit divides within and among jihadi groups;
- Discredit Salafist-Jihadi and “Khomeinist” ideology and covertly promote credible, alternative Islamic voices (i.e., engage in the counter-fatwa war); and
- Isolate Islamic extremists from mainline, conservative Muslims and avoid legitimizing the call to defensive jihad.

Each of these strategic pillars will be described below in more detail and, where appropriate, the capability and capacity implications of pursuing them will be addressed briefly as well.<sup>478</sup> It should be noted at the outset that clandestine and covert capabilities—frequently exercised

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through surrogates and partner states—will play an increasingly central role in the execution of US strategy in the “long war.” It is assumed, moreover, that the United States continues to take prudent steps to protect the US homeland and safeguard US and allied interests overseas. Given that compelling the United States to spend disproportionately to defend against low-level threats globally is an integral element of AQAM’s “bleed-until-bankruptcy” strategy, care should be exercised to avoid over-spending on defensive measures. While it is obviously desirable to make it as difficult as possible for terrorists to strike the US homeland or American interests overseas, the opportunity cost and defensive “return” on such investments must be carefully assessed.

## **SUSTAIN A GLOBAL SMOTHER CAMPAIGN ON RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISTS**

For the better part of three decades, the strategic posture of the United States in combating terrorism was predominantly defensive. While the United States periodically conducted limited strikes against terrorists or their state sponsors after an attack (e.g., Libya in 1986, Iraq in 1993, al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Sudan in 1998), the primary focus of American CT policy was to reduce the vulnerability of potential American targets at home and abroad through defensive measures (e.g., heightened airport security; increased physical security around embassies, military installations, and other government facilities; and enhanced protection of critical infrastructure).

Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, the United States has adopted a posture that might be termed a forward offense. This change in posture not only shifts some of the strategic initiative from terrorists to the United States, it also alters the strategic balance from one in which terrorist organizations are able to impose significant costs on the United States to one where greater costs (e.g., less security, greater disruption of operations, increased transaction costs) are imposed on the terrorists. As former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asserted in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>:

It is not possible to defend against every threat, in every place, at every conceivable time. The only defense against [them] is to take the war to the enemy. *The best defense is a good offense...* Victory in the war against terrorism requires steady pressure on the enemy, leaving him no time to rest and nowhere to hide. This means that the United States should give no strategic pauses that would allow the enemy breathing room or time to regroup.<sup>479</sup>

Thus far, the United States has been reasonably effective in prosecuting this global “smother campaign.” AQAM leaders are on the run and generally more concerned with their personal security than planning and orchestrating offensive operations. While operatives have found sanctuary in various “ungoverned” areas around the world and have flocked to Iraq to gain practical training and experience, there is nothing like the former training camps in Afghanistan for indoctrination, training new recruits, and planning and preparing for complex, global operations.

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<sup>479</sup> Emphasis added. Rumsfeld, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress 2001*, pp. 30-31.

That being said, Salafi-jihadi and Khomeinist terrorist groups are believed to have a presence in more than sixty countries around the world. In addition to rolling up terrorist cells globally, it is also imperative to eliminate physical safe havens around the world—most notably in Iraq, especially al-Anbar province; southern Lebanon; Pakistan, especially the FATA, NWFP, and Baluchistan; Afghanistan's southern and eastern provinces; Yemen; Aceh, Indonesia, the pan-Sahel of Africa (i.e., Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad), the Fergana Valley, the Trans-Caucasus, Chechnya, and Dagestan. Syria and Iran must be forced to terminate their active support of terrorist groups. The US government should maintain ongoing efforts to encourage partner-states, most especially in Europe, to deny terrorists "legal sanctuaries," as well as those focused on the very daunting task of denying jihadis a "virtual sanctuary" on the Internet. The United States must also continue ongoing efforts to disrupt terrorist plans and operations, sever transnational links relied upon by terrorist groups (i.e., financial, transportation, and communication), and impede their recruitment and fundraising. Finally, it is imperative to prevent WMD from falling into terrorist hands.

To increase global pressure on terrorist groups and sustain it over time, the United States will need to:

1. Build partner capacity in counter-terrorism (CT) and counter-insurgency (COIN) capabilities;
2. Generate persistent air and maritime surveillance and strike coverage over ungoverned / "under-governed" areas and littoral zones; and
3. Conduct clandestine and covert operations, including in politically sensitive and denied areas.

### **Build Partner Capacity**

The United States cannot win a protracted global war against the Salafi-jihadi and Khomeinist branches of radical Islam by itself—it has neither the financial nor manpower resources needed. A self-destructive attempt to win the war unilaterally (or even with a handful of Western allies) would also be strategically counter-productive by adding credibility to Islamist charges that the United States is waging a "Zionist-Crusade" against the Muslim world and legitimizing the call to defensive jihad. An indirect approach is required owing both to US resource constraints and the need to put a "Muslim face" on the global CT operations.

The premier US capability for building foreign CT capabilities, as well as foreign internal defense (FID) capabilities more broadly, currently resides in the Special Forces (SF) community. Right now, however, roughly 75 percent of SF capacity is focused on Iraq and Afghanistan. A sixty-country problem cannot be solved with a two-country solution. As reflected in the 2005-2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), to meet steady-state GWOT requirements, it will be necessary to expand SF force structure significantly, as well as to reorient general purpose forces (GPF) from traditional to irregular warfare, with an emphasis on training and advising foreign military, paramilitary, and police forces. Between 90 and 108 additional Operational Detachment-Alphas (ODAs) are required to conduct steady-state GWOT missions while also preparing for large-scale unconventional warfare (UW) and major combat operation (MCO)

contingencies.<sup>480</sup> While this increased capacity could be generated in a variety of ways, a strong case can be made for standing up six new SF battalions, bringing the total active force to 21 battalions, and creating two additional SF group headquarters. SOF force structure should also be reoriented geographically to better reflect GWOT requirements and the shift in US national security interest toward Asia.<sup>481</sup>

In addition, ground general purpose forces (GPF) must develop the capabilities and capacities needed to train and advise foreign security forces in multiple, widely dispersed countries simultaneously. The US Marine Corps' decision to stand up a dedicated foreign-military training unit (FMTU) and the US Navy's decision to develop "Navy Expeditionary Battalions" are promising first steps in this direction. Much more could and should be done, however. The US military must build partner capacity on a persistent basis in more countries than it is doing it now—and the only practical way to do so on a sustained basis is for the GPF to take it on as a core competence. The creation of several additional FMTUs and an irregular warfare advisory corps would not only avoid stripping operational units of their mid-level leadership on a regular basis, but would also provide both officers and non-commissioned officers sustained irregular warfare experience that could be invaluable in subsequent US-led operations. It would also free up SOF for other GWOT tasks that more fully leverage their unique capabilities. SOF would, however, remain responsible for training, equipping, and advising missions in politically sensitive areas where a "low-visibility" presence is essential, as well as for instructing foreign elite forces in intelligence collection and advanced military skills (e.g., SR, DA, CP, and counter-WMD).

### **Generate Persistent Air and Maritime Surveillance-Strike Coverage**

Currently, the vast majority of unmanned air vehicles controlled by the CIA, Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), and the Air Force more broadly are concentrated in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is a clear need for additional UAVs to provide persistent air surveillance-strike coverage over key GWOT operating areas. The US government should have the capacity to maintain at least one continuous surveillance-strike orbit simultaneously in several key GWOT operating areas to:

- Locate, track, and strike time-sensitive, high-value targets (HVTs);
- Detect and interdict WMD;
- Enable partner operations (e.g., providing actionable intelligence and fire support, as needed); and
- Reduce ungoverned land areas, as well as littoral zones, in which Islamist extremist groups can operate.

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Given that currently available UAVs have significantly longer unrefueled range and mission endurance relative to manned surveillance platforms, they are the preferred platform for providing wide-area persistent surveillance in the GWOT. As has been amply demonstrated over the past several years, armed UAVs also provide an effective remote-strike capability for covert or low-visibility attack. While the number of simultaneous, 24-hour surveillance-strike orbits needed to cover key GWOT operating areas adequately is a judgment call, a credible case can be made that at least eight continuous orbits would be desirable.<sup>482</sup> While other systems might be used in this role, at present, it appears that the best available option is a combination of MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Predator B aircraft. Although additional analysis is required to determine the optimal “low-high” mix of MQ-1Bs and MQ-9As (or alternative armed UAVs), since the MQ-9A Predator-B system provides considerably more operational flexibility than the MQ-1B, the fleet should be weighted heavily in favor of the former. As a first-order approximation, it would appear that a doubling of the currently planned MQ-9A Predator B fleet would be warranted. In addition, high-altitude long endurance (HALE) UAVs (e.g. GlobalHawk), tethered dirigibles/aerostats, and high-altitude airships should be used for GWOT-focused, persistent, wide-area surveillance.<sup>483</sup> With cueing provided by these systems, the Predator “hunter-killer” fleet could effectively cover much more terrain than would be otherwise be possible.

It is well established that AQAM is exploiting commercial shipping to move personnel, materiel, finances (i.e., currency, gold, and jewels), and contraband (e.g., opium). The Intelligence Community has reportedly identified several cargo ships around the world believed to be owned or controlled by AQAM. These vessels, owned by an ever-changing array of shell companies, are constantly renamed and re-registered. Terrorist groups like AQAM also take advantage of legitimate commercial shipping firms to move containers globally. While recognizing that it is impractical to completely deny jihadis the ability to operate at sea, the US Navy should be postured and equipped to

- Maintain persistent surveillance over littoral zones adjacent to countries where terrorist groups are believed to be operating;
- Monitor critical chokepoints globally;
- Board and inspect suspicious vessels routinely in cooperation with partner states;

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<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> For the surveillance *and* strike role, approximately three MQ-9A Predators would be required to maintain 24 hours of coverage at an operational radius of 500 nm. Adding one additional aircraft as an attrition and maintenance reserve would bring the total requirement to four aircraft—or one Predator-B system—per orbit. Assuming two systems (alternating one day on and one day off) would be needed to sustain continuous operations, 16 MQ-9A systems, comprising 64 air vehicles, would be needed to sustain a single “24-7” orbit from each of eight hubs. To reduce the overall requirement for MQ-9As, missions less than 500 nm away from a regional hub could be assigned to MQ-1B Predators. According to the latest UAV roadmap, the Air Force currently has three operational MQ-1B Predator squadrons, each equipped with four systems, and intends to procure nine combat-coded MQ-9A systems. All together, the Air Force is projected to have 84 combat-coded Predators (48 MQ-1B and 36 MQ-9A) available. Given the endurance and cruising speed of these systems, however, even if they were all assigned to GWOT-support missions—which is highly unlikely—it would still not be possible to sustain eight continuous orbits at 500 nm radius from available hubs. OSD, *Unmanned Aircraft Systems Roadmap, 2005-2030*, Section 2, p. 10.

- Seize vessels by force, when necessary; and
- Conduct small quick-reaction raids against ground targets in coastal regions.

To better meet these requirements, the Navy should consider procuring 60-80 littoral combat ships (LCS), equipping them with mission-tailored payload modules, and routinely embarking SEALs or Marine Special Operations Forces on them. The Navy's recent decision to stand up three riverine squadrons, which can be used to deny terrorists inland maritime sanctuaries, is a step in the right direction.<sup>484</sup>

For maritime surveillance and interdiction in support of the GWOT, the LCS fleet will need to be sized, organized, configured, and postured to support persistent operations within at least eight littoral zones simultaneously: the Caribbean and southern approaches to the United States; the west coast of Africa; the Mediterranean; the east coast of Africa; the Arabian Gulf; the South Asian littoral; the Strait of Malacca and Indonesian archipelago; and the Philippine Sea. To maintain a robust, continuous presence in all of these areas, the LCS fleet will need to be forward based.<sup>485</sup> In addition to increasing the amount of time each ship can remain on-station, this would also allow LCS crews to gain a better appreciation of local operating conditions, develop better operational ties with smaller regional navies and coast guards allied with the United States in the GWOT, and facilitate "training and advising" activities aimed at enhancing the capabilities of local forces. Operating the LCS fleet forward on a sustained basis, however, will require a forward support network to provide logistics support; to perform maintenance on mission modules and offboard systems; to store and swap out LCS mission packages; and to provide support for LCS crews conducting extended operations in austere environments. To limit political risk, the network's backbone should be located on sovereign US territory, or on the territory of trusted allies.

### **Conduct Clandestine and Covert Operations Globally**

Clandestine and covert operations capabilities will be critical to a global "smother" campaign against jihadi cells, especially for operations in sensitive or denied areas. While classification concerns preclude a detailed discussion of precisely how these capabilities could be brought to bear, core missions in the future might include the following:

- Collecting intelligence on terrorist networks and infrastructure, including penetrating targeted terrorist groups and foreign liaison services;
- Building the intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities of selected partner states;

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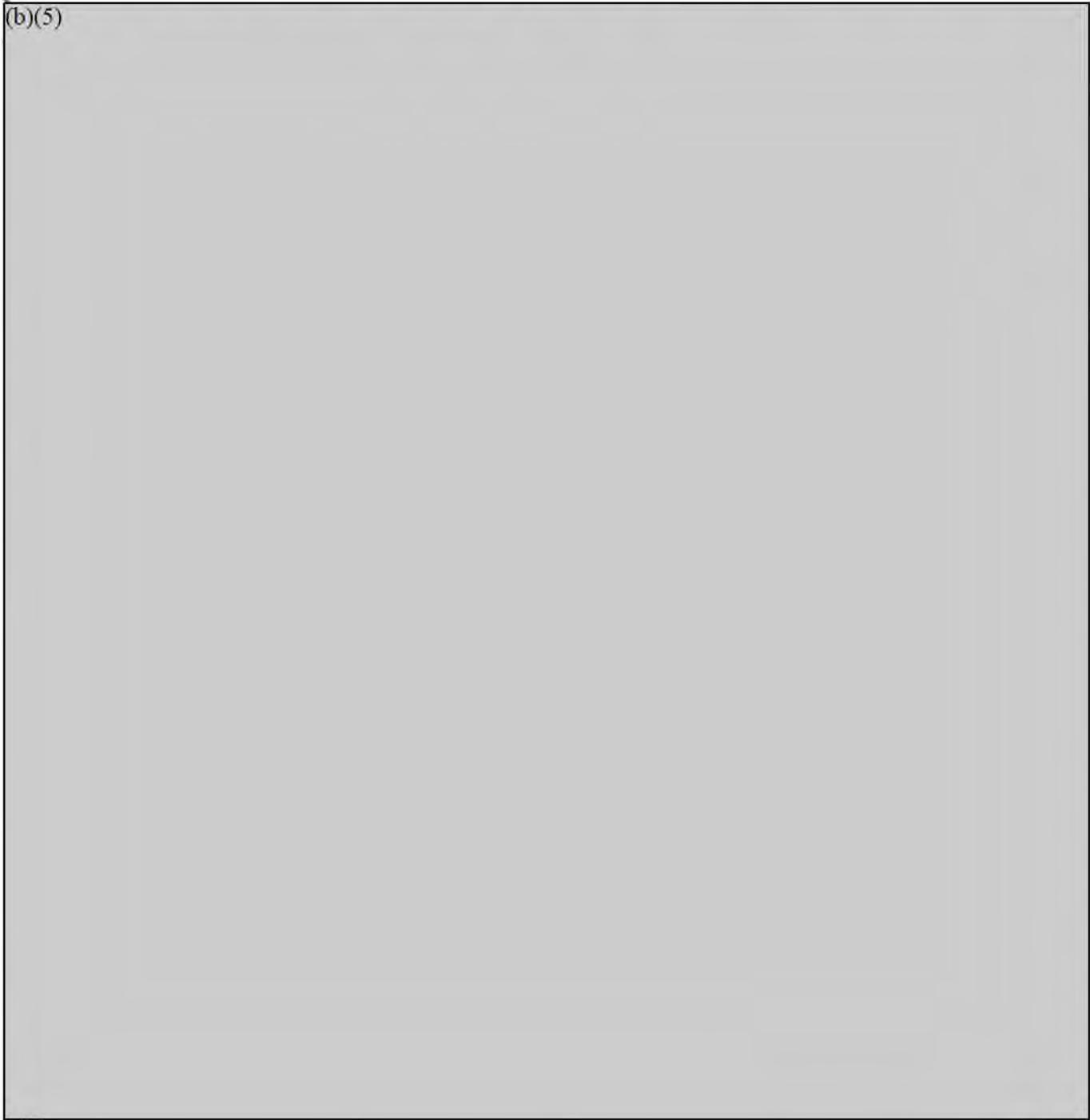
<sup>484</sup> Director of the Navy Staff, Memorandum for Distribution, "Implementation of the CNO Guidance—GWOT Capabilities."

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- Working with foreign intelligence and security services to capture/kill identified terrorist leaders and operatives, interdict the movement of material resources (e.g., money, weapons, explosive, and other supplies), and disrupt terrorist plots;
- Tracking down and rendering safe "loose" WMD material or devices; and
- Conducting covert political action, strategic communication, and PSYOP activities to discredit Salafi-jihadi and Khomeinist ideology, as well as to bolster competing mainstream conservative voices in the Muslim world.

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Finally, a major, national-level R&D program is needed to develop new technologies to locate, tag, and track terrorists in order to provide the United States with the same advantage in situational awareness in transnational irregular warfare that it has at present in traditional warfare. In its 2004 summer study, the Defense Science Board (DSB) advised that "a 'Manhattan Project' in scale, intensity, and focus is required to transform the nation's portfolio of tagging, tracking, and locating programs into an institutionalized discipline to serve the United States for decades to come." The DSB concluded that "the global war on terrorism cannot be won without" such a project and warned that "cost is not the issue; failure in the global war on terrorism is the real question."<sup>488</sup>

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While some modest improvements have been made in US capabilities, much more could and should be done in this area.<sup>489</sup> There are two broad classes

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<sup>488</sup> Defense Science Board, *Report of the Summer Study on Transition To and From Hostilities* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2004), pp. 163, 170. This finding echoed that of the DSB's Summer Study in 2002. Defense Science Board, "Briefing on DSB Summer Study on Special Operations and Joint Forces in Support of Countering Terrorism," September 2002, Slides 42-43.

<sup>489</sup> One of the most notable R&D programs in this area, called Human Identification at Distance, was launched by DARPA in 2000.

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## **EMPLOY UW AND COVERT ACTION AGAINST STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM AND TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST GROUPS GLOBALLY**

In his address to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, President Bush announced that no longer would the United States restrict its actions to tracking down terrorists and attempting, often unsuccessfully, to gain the cooperation of the states in which they reside in order to bring them to justice. Instead, the president stated:

We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, *any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.*<sup>492</sup>

As noted earlier, sanctuary denial is a key element of a global smother campaign to keep terrorists groups under pressure and unable to plan, organize, and train effectively for complex, large-scale offensive operations. Sanctuary denial also complicates enemy fundraising and recruitment, and facilitates US-led manhunting and disruption operations globally. While building partner CT capacity and reducing ungoverned areas are necessary elements of a comprehensive sanctuary-denial campaign, they are not sufficient. When dealing with hostile state sponsors of terrorism, regime change may sometimes be the only assured means of ending their support. In Afghanistan, for example, the Taliban and al Qaeda were inextricably linked. Osama bin Laden reportedly provided the Taliban with an estimated \$100 million in funding and

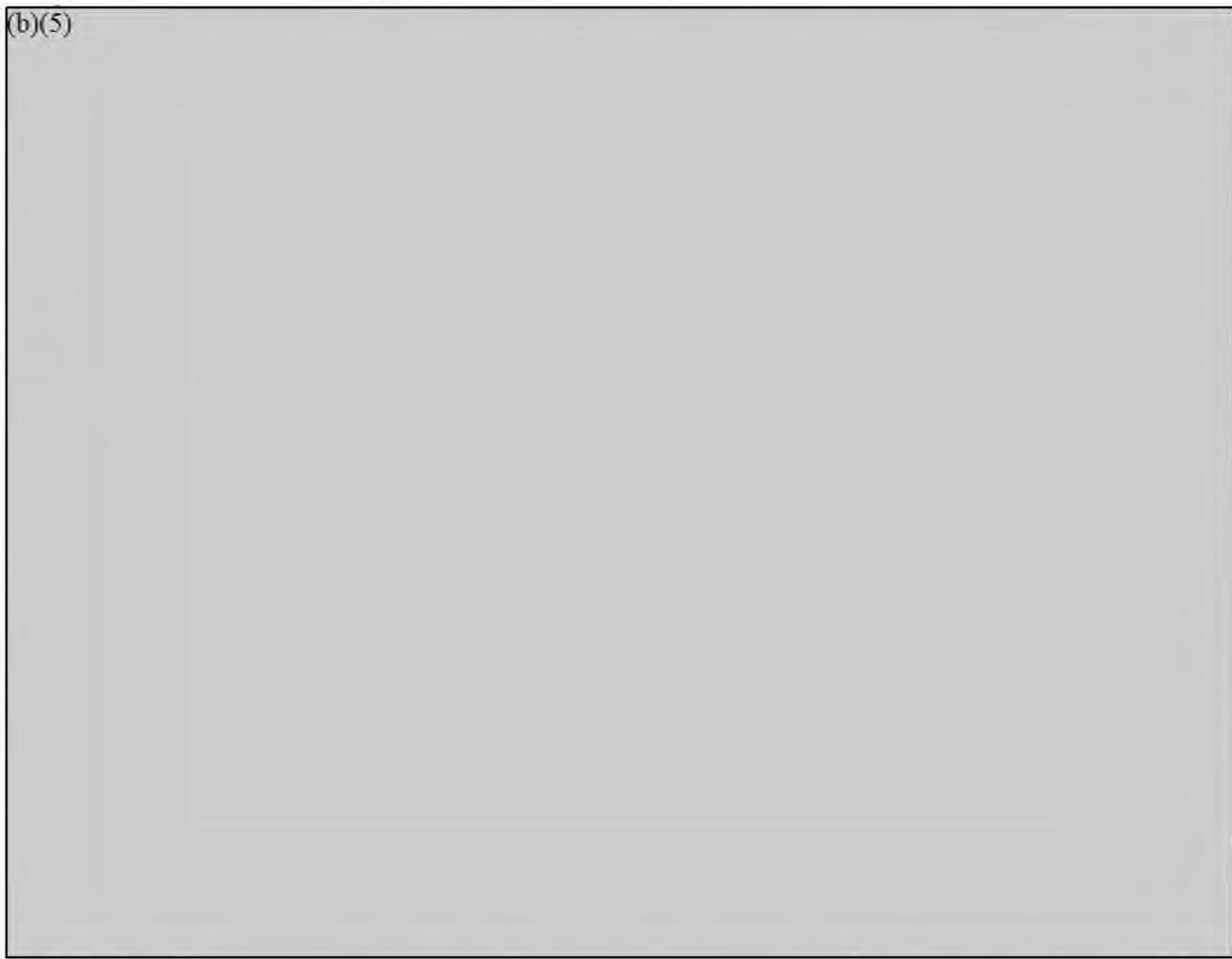
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<sup>492</sup> Emphasis added. President George W. Bush, *Address to Joint Session of Congress and the American People*, September 20, 2001.

military assistance, making him the single greatest supporter of the fledgling regime.<sup>493</sup> He also provided the Taliban with seasoned and loyal fighters in their bid to exterminate the Northern Alliance. The CIA thus concluded that bin Laden effectively "owned and operated" the Taliban.<sup>494</sup> In return, bin Laden's Taliban co-conspirators provided him with sanctuary and operational support. In response to an ultimatum extended by President Bush prior to OEF, the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mohammed Omar, claimed to have no recourse but to offer protection to Afghanistan's al Qaeda "guests" and absorb US attacks, arguing that it would be un-Islamic to turn over Muslims who had started "a journey on God's path."<sup>495</sup> The relationship between Hezbollah and its state sponsors, Iran and Syria, is comparable to the one that existed between al Qaeda and the Taliban. Absent a change in their respective ruling regimes, it is very unlikely that either country will terminate its sponsorship of Hezbollah and other terrorist groups in the region.

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<sup>493</sup> Bob Woodward, "Bin Laden Said to 'Own' the Taliban, Bush is Told He Gave Regime \$100 Million," *Washington Post*, October 11, 2001, p. A1.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>495</sup> Partial transcript of Voice of America interview with Mullah Mohammed Omar as compiled by Washington Post Staff, September 23, 2001.

## **DEFEND AND HOLD THE “KEY TERRAIN” OF SAUDI ARABIA AND PAKISTAN**

The “long war” is being waged on a global battlefield with topography much different than in past wars. There are no fronts. There are no enemy capitals to seize. War zones range from desolate deserts in the pan-Sahel of Africa, to rugged mountainous terrain in Pakistan’s FATA, to jungles in Indonesia and the Philippines, to densely populated cities around the globe. That being said, there is “key terrain” in this war that must be held, if possible. The two best examples are Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

As discussed earlier, overthrowing the “apostate” royal family is one of the original and most deeply held goals of al Qaeda and its founder, Osama bin Laden. His focus on the Kingdom, however, transcends his personal antipathy for the ruling family and thirst for vengeance—it is strategic. As he wrote to Mullah Omar well in advance of September 11<sup>th</sup>:

The Arabian Peninsula has a great significance for many reasons. The most important of which are the following: the existence of the Ka’abah and the Prophet’s mosque; and the existence of 75 percent of the world’s oil in the gulf region—and *whoever controls the oil controls the world economy.*<sup>496</sup>

For both the reasons he cites, it is imperative to prevent Saudi Arabia from falling into the hands of al Qaeda or any other similarly inspired radical group.

The propaganda value and fundraising-recruitment potential of controlling Mecca and Medina for the Salafi-jihadi movement would be incalculable. Publicly taking on the duty of defending Islam’s two holiest sites would dramatically elevate the status of the movement throughout the Muslim world. As alluded to by Osama bin Laden, Saudi Arabia possesses 25 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves (about 262 billion barrels of oil) and is the world’s largest net oil exporter. It maintains a production capacity of about 11 million barrels per day, which could be increased, if necessary, to as much as 15 million barrels per day.<sup>497</sup> Simply put, control over that much oil would give jihadis a practically inexhaustible source of revenue for conducting ramped up global operations and could also be leveraged to conduct strategic economic warfare against

<sup>496</sup> Emphasis added. Osama bin Laden, Letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar, undated. Harmony database, AFGP-2002-600321, p. 2

<sup>497</sup> Department of Energy, EIA-Country Analysis Brief—Saudi Arabia, August 2005.

the West. Fortunately, since 2003, the Saudi government has been very effective in finding and eliminating terrorist cells operating within the Kingdom.

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For all of the foregoing reasons, it is imperative for the United States to defend and hold the "key terrain" of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Loss of either would likely have catastrophic effects—rapidly shifting regional power balances against the United States and severely weakening the overall US strategic position. Accordingly, a serious effort should be made to bolster them. Key elements of this effort might include:

- Launching economic and diplomatic initiatives to bolster domestic political support for the current regimes;
- Increasing US intelligence collection and analysis on internal and external threats to both states, and sharing as much of that intelligence as possible with their respective intelligence services and internal security forces;
- Providing "covert" training in intelligence collection and analysis, personal security, CT, and COIN;<sup>499</sup>
- Providing "covert" advisory assistance and equipment, including sensitive intelligence collection and CT technologies, as requested; and

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<sup>499</sup> Technically these activities would not be "covert" in that elements of the host nation's government would be aware of the US government's involvement. The intent, however, would be to conceal US involvement from the the host-nation population and surrounding countries, and possibly, from some organs of the host government.

- Preparing to deploy US military forces in an overt FID role, to include securing Saudi Arabia's petroleum-related infrastructure and Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

## **MAINTAIN A "SURGE" CAPABILITY FOR PROTRACTED COIN AND STATE-FAILURE CONTINGENCIES**

Despite the best efforts of the United States to shore up vulnerable partner states by training, advising, and equipping their intelligence, police, and military forces as part of the global smother campaign described above, jihadi-backed insurgencies will inevitably arise and some states, under mounting strain, risk collapse. It is essential that the US government not allow the jihadi movement to exploit the social and political disorder associated with these contingencies. Recall that in his strategic opus, *The Management of Barbarism*, Naji specifically calls on jihadis in "every region of the Islamic world" to create zones of "barbarism" so that jihadi "administrators" can later step in to take control of them. A key element of US strategy, therefore, must be to maintain a significant "surge" capability for conducting protracted COIN operations and restoring order in the wake of future state failures.

While all of the Services have important roles to play, the primary responsibility for these missions falls squarely on ground GPF of the US Army and Marine Corps. It is important to appreciate that the ground GPF may also be called upon to perform a wide array of other missions, including high-intensity campaigns against regional powers armed with nuclear weapons. They should, therefore, remain "general purpose." Much could be done, however, to improve their capabilities and expand current capacity for COIN and irregular warfare more broadly.

Improving irregular warfare skill sets will require the US Army and Marine Corps to dedicate significant resources to introducing or, in some cases, expanding the following specialized capabilities: intelligence collection and analysis, military police, psychological operations, civil affairs, and language/cultural expertise. The professional military education system and current training programs need to be restructured to focus on building an institutional competence in COIN strategy and operations, as well as on developing irregular warfare tactics, techniques, and procedures. To accomplish this across the force in a reasonable timeframe, it will likely be necessary to create new training infrastructure. Increased investment in simulation tools to facilitate mission planning, rehearsal and execution at the small-unit level is also warranted.

The ground GPF will need equipment/weapon systems that are better suited to irregular warfare challenges than much of what is currently available in the inventory. Several promising mine-protected vehicles (MPVs) with V-shaped hulls, for instance, are commercially available including Textron's Armored Security Vehicle (ASV), Blackwater Inc.'s *Grizzly* armored personnel carrier, and Force Protection Inc.'s *Cougar* "urban combat vehicle" and *Buffalo* explosive ordnance disposal vehicle. Given the urgent, near-term need for these types of vehicles, they should be purchased in quantity as soon as possible. The ASV, for example, provides significantly greater protection, mobility, and firepower than up-armored High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs). The ASV can travel at over 60 mph on the highway, ford up to five feet of water, overcome obstacles two feet high, and climb off-road gradients of 60 percent. It is armed with the same 40-mm/.50 caliber gun used by the US Marine

Corps in the LAV-25. The ASV is protected with exterior ceramic composite armor that is effective against .50 caliber rounds, as well as an interior spall liner. The crew is protected from mine blasts (12-lb of TNT) under any wheel. The ASV reportedly proved very effective during operations in Kosovo and is now being manufactured for the US Army's military police.<sup>500</sup> The *Grizzly* and *Cougar* vehicles, which that have been purchased in small quantities by both the Army and Marine Corps for the COIN campaign underway in Iraq, offer similar advantages over the HMMWV and other light vehicles. The 13-ton *Grizzly* is protected with armor sufficient to defeat .50 caliber rounds at 30 feet, double anti-tank mines (30-lb of TNT equivalent) under a wheel, or a single heavy anti-tank mine (14-lb of TNT equivalent) under the hull or engine compartment. It is equipped with a roof-mounted weapon station that will accommodate a 7.62-mm machine gun. In addition, the *Grizzly* is outfitted with four front windows, 10 side windows (five on each side), and four rear windows—all of which are specially hardened and configured to protect against blast—to maximize the crew's situational awareness. The side and rear windows, moreover, each have a six-inch firing port that "actually allow operators to properly employ their weapons in any situation."<sup>501</sup> The *Cougar* comes in 4x4 and 6x6 models that weigh 15 and 18 tons, respectively. Both offer blast and mine protection similar to the *Grizzly* and ASV.<sup>502</sup> *Grizzly* and *Cougar* vehicles in service in Iraq have proven very effective in reducing casualties from IEDs, ambushes, and snipers.

For the GPF to take on irregular warfare as a core competency, while also preparing for the full slate of conventional warfighting missions, it will likely be necessary to expand US Army and Marine Corps force structure. In January 2007, the Bush Administration proposed expanding the ground GPF by 92,000 troops (65,000 for the Army and 27,000 for the Marine Corps). Even with this increase, however, the active GPF may not have sufficient manpower for responding to large-scale insurgencies or managing state failures in large, densely populated countries (e.g., Pakistan or Indonesia). At some point, it will be necessary to mobilize the reserve component, which should be re-oriented toward irregular warfare and homeland defense. A more detailed assessment of how the active and reserve ground GPF should be reshaped and sized for future irregular warfare missions is required. New concepts for dealing with state failure in populous countries also need to be developed.

## **CREATE AND EXPLOIT FISSURES AMONG AND WITHIN SALAFI-JIHADI GROUPS**

The Salafi-jihadi movement is far from monolithic. Significant differences exist among and within groups with regard to strategic goals and how the struggle should be waged. Some Salafi groups, for example, eschew violence and believe that Islamic renewal can be best achieved through *da'awah*, or peaceful proselytizing and preaching (i.e., educating the ummah about

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<sup>500</sup> Textron Marine & Land—Textron Systems, Armored Security Vehicle fact sheet, 2003.

<sup>501</sup> Blackwater USA, Grizzly APC marketing brochure, pp. 3-4.

<sup>502</sup> The 4x4 model has two small side windows and firing portals whereas the 6x6 model has four larger windows and firing ports on each side, as well as a rear window and firing port. The *Cougar* also comes in a more heavily armored variant, called the *Buffalo*, which is specially equipped for explosive ordnance disposal. Weighing in at over 22 tons, the *Buffalo* has sufficient armor to withstand the blast of 45-lb of TNT under any wheel or 30-lb of TNT under the hull centerline. Force Protection Inc. See [www.forceprotectioninc.com](http://www.forceprotectioninc.com).

“true” Islam), and internal jihad, meaning a personal struggle for Islamic piety. Some jihadi groups focus almost exclusively on defeating the “near” enemy (i.e., domestic regimes that oppress the faithful), while others are more concerned about the threat posed by the “distant” enemy (i.e., the United States, Israel, and other Western states). Some groups are interested in short-term, Islamic reform at the national or sub-national level and would be content to see the *sharia* as the dominant, but not exclusive, law of the land. More extremist groups, in contrast, envision “a war of destiny between infidelity and Islam” that is global in scale and effectively infinite in duration. Borrowing from Ibn Taymiyya, they hold that unless a government rules exclusively by the *sharia*, it is un-Islamic, and thus subject to attack. As will be detailed later, there are also passionate debates within the “movement” on narrow questions of theological interpretation, many with clear operational implications, including:<sup>503</sup>

- The definition of Dar al-Islam today given the absence of a caliphate, and conversely, the definition of Dar al-Harb;
- Whether an offensive jihad must be declared by a competent Islamic ruler and how that is possible in the absence of a caliphate;
- To what extent treaties and other diplomatic agreements between Muslim countries and “infidel” countries should be honored;
- The legitimacy of suicide attacks given the severe prohibition against taking one’s life clearly and repeatedly specified in the Quran;
- The status of Muslims who participate in political elections or provide aid to infidels;
- The legitimacy of general declarations of *takfir*;
- The degree to which the lives and property of “innocent” Muslims should be protected;
- The lawfulness of killing infidel women and children; and
- The permissibility of using various types of weapons and means of attack (e.g., using hijacked commercial aircraft as explosive missiles in light of Islamic prohibitions on killing prisoners or the use of explosives given Quranic injunctions reserving the use of fire to Allah alone).

Salafi-jihadi groups also compete with each other over their relative status within the Muslim world, which creates tensions and potential fracture points within the movement. This competitive aspect is reflected, for example, in al Qaeda’s policy of requiring all new recruits to swear loyalty *exclusively* to al Qaida and barring them from having dealings with “any other

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<sup>503</sup> Shmuel Bar, “The Religious Sources of Islamic Terrorism,” *Policy Review*, June 2004; and Shmuel Bar, “Jihad Ideology in Light of Contemporary Fatwas,” Research Monograph, Hudson Institute—Center on Islam, Democracy, and the Future of the Muslim World. August 2006.

Islamic group.”<sup>504</sup> AQAM’s endless self-promotion of being the “vanguard” of a global Islamic movement that will restore an Islamic caliphate is a source of irritation to other groups. There are also long-standing, personal rivalries among the leaders of various groups. Finally, there is a generational divide between veterans of jihadi operations over the past several decades (e.g., in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Algeria, and most especially, Afghanistan in 1980s) and new recruits that have not yet proven their mettle. Strong bonds of trust and friendship, forged in battle and in prisons across the Muslim world, unite jihad veterans. Those same bonds, however, act as a barrier to the acceptance and assimilation of new recruits. There is a general sense among veterans that the indoctrination process has become less rigorous and the screening process less reliable over the past decade. As a result, while new recruits are trying to earn their jihadi spurs, they are viewed with suspicion. In several captured AQAM documents, jihadi commanders express concern about the dependability of new recruits, anxiety over whether they can be adequately controlled, and fear of treachery and penetration. The lack of trust between veteran jihadis and new recruits across the movement could serve as a wedge to drive them further apart.

There also fissures within various Salafi-jihadi groups. In the case of AQAM, for example, there are significant differences among senior leaders over strategic goals and the means for achieving them. While Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri have called for jihadi operations to focus on the “far enemy,” nearly all of the organizations major “franchises” (see Table 1) remain focused on attacking the “near enemy.” There are also major disputes over operational approaches and tactics for waging jihad. The most striking example of the latter is the strained relationship between the now deceased Zarqawi and senior al Qaeda leaders/ideologues. In July 2004, Zarqawi’s former religious mentor, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, published a jail-cell missive, entitled *Support and Advice, Pains and Hopes*, that was harshly critical of Zarqawi’s actions in Iraq. He took him to task for issuing declarations of general *takfir*, targeting Shi’a Muslims, conducting reckless operations outside of Iraq, issuing “meaningless threats against countries around the world” that discredit the mujahidin as a serious force, his excessive use of suicide attacks, and most of all, the indiscriminate killing of fellow Muslims. He charged that the jihad in Iraq under Zarqawi had become a “crematory” for Muslim youth who were “precious jewels” that “must not be wasted for targets that can be claimed without losses of this type.”<sup>505</sup> Similarly, as was discussed at length earlier, Zawahiri differed sharply with Zarqawi as well, rebuking him for his brutal tactics (e.g., videotaped beheadings), attacks on Muslim mosques, and targeting killing Sunni tribal leaders and Shiite civilians. Zarqawi, however, did not take these and other critiques of his performance sitting down. In a scornful rejoinder to Maqdisi, he casts his former mentor as complacent, out-of-touch scholar who is unwilling to risk his life for the cause. Obviously upset about Maqdisi’s accusation that he was senselessly sending Muslim youth to their deaths in a crematorium “inferno,” Zarqawi responded derisively:

What inferno are you talking about? The real inferno awaits those who shy away from implementing the verdict of Allah and refuse to answer the call to jihad...The real inferno awaits those who do nothing to free Muslim prisoners from Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and other locations. The real inferno awaits those who betray our honored sisters who are

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<sup>504</sup> Harmony AFGP-2002-600045

<sup>505</sup> Brooke, “The Preacher and the Jihadi,” p. 62.

being raped day and night by the cross worshippers and the *Rafidhah* [Shia].<sup>506</sup>

Zawahiri was also not immune from Zarqawi's vitriol. In an on-line posting called, "It is Allah Whom ye Should More Justly Fear," he expresses his strong disapproval of scholars advising the mujahideen from locations of safety far from arenas of jihad. In a thinly veiled jab at Maqdisi, Zawahiri, and other critics, he wrote:

People always respect the one who accompanies his words with deeds and the opposite is true...Recently some of our brotherly scholars, who were pioneers in the call for God's way, fell into fault and made mistakes, caused by their distance from the arenas of jihad and by the fact that they are not actually involved in jihad...A scholar living in the land of infidels away from the arenas of jihad and the real situation of the mujahadeen should not issue *fatwas* to the people...<sup>507</sup>

Even at the highest levels of the al Qaeda hierarchy there are potentially exploitable divides. It appears that a rivalry may be growing between Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri over leadership of the movement. Other senior AQ leaders have questioned Osama bin Laden's decision to shift strategic focus to the "distant" enemy, and the decision to attack the US homeland on September 11, 2001, in particular. In a captured letter written to Khalid Sheikh Mohammad in June 2002, Abd-al-Halim Adl, who is clearly in the upper strata of the al Qaeda leadership, implores him to disregard Osama bin Laden's operational directives and concentrate instead on re-organizing and reinvigorating the group's organizational infrastructure in the wake of US offensive actions. He writes to his long-time friend that:

During [the past] six months, it has become apparent to the observer that there is a new hand that is managing affairs and that is driving forcefully; every time it falters, it gets up and rushes again, without understanding or awareness. It rushes to move without vision, and it is in a hurry to accomplish actions that now require patience...Let us stop and think...[Bin Laden] pushes you relentlessly and without consideration as if he has not heard the news and as if he does not comprehend the events. To absolve my conscience before Allah, and to announce my innocence in front of Allah, I say today we must completely halt all external actions until we sit down and consider the disaster we have caused...The East Asia, Europe, America, Horn of Africa, Yemen, Gulf, and Morocco Groups have fallen, and Pakistan has almost been drowned in one push...*Stop all foreign actions, stop sending people to captivity, stop devising new operations, regardless of whether orders come or do not come from Abu-Abdalla [Bin Laden]*<sup>508</sup>

In short, there are significant and, in some cases, growing divides among and within the Salafi-jihadi movement. Senior ideologues and strategists, most notably Abu Bakr Naji and Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, have expressed concern about these fissures. To reinforce their call for increased unity, they point to the fact that most jihadi movements in the past have failed, not because of the

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<sup>506</sup> Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>507</sup> Posted on [www.world-news-network.net](http://www.world-news-network.net) on October 14, 2005. Translated by FBIS, report on jihadist websites, on October 19, 2005. See Harmony and Disharmony, pp. 35-36

<sup>508</sup> Emphasis added. Harmony Database, "Letter to Mukhtar," document name: Al Adl Letter.

effectiveness of CT-related efforts in the state in which they were waged, but because of internal fragmentation. The United States should exploit all of the fissures described above, or any others that develop over time, to weaken and divide the Salafi-jihadi movement so that it can be defeated in detail.

Widening and exploiting such divides should be an integral component of a broader covert strategic communications/influence campaign focused on the Muslim world. The goal would be to highlight differences and exacerbate latent tensions among and within Salafi-jihadi groups. As will be discussed later, a dedicated federal agency will likely need to be created to plan and orchestrate an intense, national-level strategic communications/influence effort. The CIA's Directorate of Operations and "black" SOF units would likely play important roles in collecting the intelligence needed to shape and guide this effort over time, as well as in disseminating propaganda, conducting PSYOP efforts, and carrying out supporting covert action. Other national assets will be relied upon to conduct computer network attacks (e.g., covertly manipulating web postings and internal e-mails, sending fraudulent but credible e-mails to key targets, manipulating bank accounts, etc.), offensive IO activities, and other special technical activities.

## **DISCREDIT SALAFIST-JIHADI AND "KHOMEINIST" IDEOLOGY AND PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE ISLAMIC VOICES**

As the current *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* correctly points out, "in the long run, winning the War on Terror means winning the battle of ideas."<sup>509</sup> It observes that "terrorism ultimately depends upon the appeal of an ideology that excuses or even glorifies the deliberate killing of innocents" and asserts that "Islam has been twisted and made to serve an evil end."<sup>510</sup> America's enemies also recognize the central importance of ideology in the "long war." In December 2001, Zawahiri characterized the current conflict as "a battle of ideologies, a struggle for survival, and a war with no truce."<sup>511</sup> In his oft-cited letter to Zarqawi in July 2005, Zawahiri explained that "we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media" and that the jihadi movement is "in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma."<sup>512</sup> Given this, AQAM has put a major emphasis on propaganda or what its leadership generally refers to as the "media war." Osama bin Laden has asserted that propaganda is in fact one of movement's strongest weapons. "It is obvious," he says, "that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods; in fact, its ratio may reach 90% of the total preparation for the battles."<sup>513</sup>

Although the United States has won many important tactical victories in the GWOT to date—eliminating al Qaeda's sanctuary in Afghanistan, rolling up terrorist cells around the world,

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<sup>509</sup> *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, p. 7.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>511</sup> Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, Part VI.

<sup>512</sup> Letter from al-Zawahiri to Zarqawi, July 9, 2005. Available on-line at: [http://www.dni.gov/letter\\_in\\_english.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/letter_in_english.pdf)

<sup>513</sup> Osama bin Laden, Letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar, undated. Harmony database, AFGP-2002-600321, p. 2.

cutting off terrorist funding streams, killing or capturing scores of senior leaders and operatives, and disrupting numerous planned attacks—it appears to be losing the war in the madrassas, on the air waves, on jihadi websites and countless Internet chat rooms and, and during Friday prayers in mosques around the world. While it has become a hackneyed recommendation, it nevertheless remains true that the US government must engage more effectively in the ongoing “war of ideas” in the Muslim world by developing and implementing an agile, coherent, multifaceted strategic communications campaign. The primary objective of this campaign should be to discredit Salafi-jihadi and Khomeinist ideologies while simultaneously promoting alternative, credible, non-violent voices in the Islamic world. Since statements by the US government lack credibility in much of the Muslim world, especially among the target audience of Salafists and other conservative Islamists, this campaign will need to be waged indirectly. Since any association with the US government by respected Muslim speakers would discredit them, the primary effort will also need to be covert.

In shaping this indirect, covert strategic communications campaign, it is important to appreciate two realities. First, contrary to arguments made in the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* and numerous US government statements on the topic, the basic tenets of Salafi-jihadi ideology are not “twisted” perversions of Islam but are firmly rooted in the Quran, the hadith, and a long history of Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>514</sup> While one may disagree with Salafist-jihadi interpretations of various passages and the relative weight they ascribe to some texts as opposed to others, the fact that they are based upon legitimate sources and historically accepted interpretations of them cannot be ignored. When jihadis cite Ibn Taymiyya, al-Wahhab, Sayyid Qutb, Maqdisi, and numerous other Islamic scholars, they generally do so accurately. The latter, moreover, are highly respected by much of the Muslim community. In short, rather than trying to discredit jihadi ideology by simply declaring it to be a corruption or falsification of true Islam, a more nuanced approach is necessary. Key elements of this campaign might include the following:

- Calling into question the religious credentials of radical clerics who issue *fatwas* supporting jihadi operations;<sup>515</sup>
- Focusing increased public attention in the Muslim world on jihadi activities that are broadly considered to be “un-Islamic,” including charging entire Muslim populations with *kufir* [heresy] and thereby placing a death sentence upon them (i.e., general *takfir*), the slaughter of hostages, the indiscriminate killing of innocent Muslims, the killing of women and children (and other protected classes like the elderly and clerics), encouraging suicide, and attacking the sources of wealth (e.g., tourism and oil industry) of Muslim states;

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<sup>514</sup> For a detailed treatment of this issue, see: Shmuel Bar, *Warrant For Terror—Fatwas of Radical Islam and the Duty of Jihad* (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006); Shmuel Bar, “The Religious Sources of Islamic Terrorism,” *Policy Review*, June 2004.

<sup>515</sup> According to Islamic jurisprudence, *fatwas* can only be given by a scholar who has sufficient experience and knowledge of the sharia to be considered a mufti. Many of the *fatwas* issued in support of Salafi-jihadi movement have been authored by individuals who do not meet that requirement.

- Holding up the tyrannical rule and social-economic failures of the Taliban in Afghanistan as an example of the type of society that jihadis seek to create;
- Covertly supporting a vigorous counter-fatwa campaign in which respected muftis are “encouraged” by their host nations or other agents of influence (e.g., individuals, religious foundations, and Islamic universities) to issue authoritative rulings countering jihadi arguments on key issues of Islamic jurisprudence (e.g., the meaning and obligations of jihad, the definition of Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb in the modern age, the extent to which treaties and other diplomatic agreements with “infidel” countries should be honored, the permissibility of suicide attacks, the status of Muslims who participate in political elections or provide aid to infidels, the degree to which the lives and property of “innocent” Muslims should be protected, the lawfulness of killing infidel women and children, and the permissibility of using weapons of mass destruction);<sup>516</sup>
- Publicizing it widely and repeatedly when influential scholars associated with the Salafi-jihadi movement renounce certain targets and tactics (implicitly threatening hellfire to jihadis who continue to conduct such attacks) such as the renunciation of suicide attacks after the London bombings by Abu-Basir al-Tartusi, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and Muhammad Sayed Tantawi; Maqdisi’s scathing critique of Zarqawi’s actions in Iraq; Sheikh Nasser al-Fahd’s televised denunciation that “blowing oneself up in such operations [on Muslim soil] is not martyrdom, it is suicide”; and the condemnation of AQI’s attack on a wedding celebration in Amman, Jordan by Hamas, Jordan’s Islamic Action Front, Egypt’s Islamic Jihad, and Gamaa Islamiyya;<sup>517</sup>
- Denying terrorists semantic victories by, for example, publicly describing their conduct not as a “jihad,” which is considered a highly venerated undertaking blessed by Allah, but as “hirabah,” which is the rough equivalent of the Western concept of “terrorism” and is the most severely punished crime in Islam;<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>516</sup> As Shmuel Bar, an expert of jihadi fatwas, has recommended, “for every fatwa that promises paradise to those who engage in jihad, an authoritative counter-fatwa is needed that threatens hellfire for those actions.” Shmuel Bar, “Jihad Ideology in Light of Contemporary Fatwas,” p. 15.

<sup>517</sup> Al Tartusi lives in London and has a large following in Europe and across the Middle East. Al Qaradawi is an Egyptian scholar with a global audience owing to his popular show “Shariah and Life” on Al Jazeera and his founding role with IslamOnline. Tantawi is the sheikh of al-Azhar, which is widely respected as a center of Islamic thought across the Muslim world. At the time, Sheikh Nasser al-Fahd was considered to be one of al Qaeda’s spiritual leaders. In addition to condemning suicide bombings, he also declared that it is not permissible to attack non-Muslims who had travelled legally to Islamic countries. He did not, however, object to attacks on America or other infidel countries. Uzi Mahnaimi, “Al Qaeda Split at Mentor Condemns Saudi Attacks,” *London Sunday Times*, January 11, 2004; and Marc Lynch, “Al Qaeda’s Media Strategies,” *The National Interest*, Spring 2006, pp. 54-55.

<sup>518</sup> The term “hirabah” refers to the murder with the intent to cause terrorism or intimidation. The punishment for hirabah, which is considered a heinous crime and sin, as specified in the Quran (5:33-34), includes execution, crucifixion, or amputation of hands and feet. For an expanded discussion of the semantic argument over jihad and hirabah, see J. Michael Waller, “Making Jihad Work for America,” *The Journal of International Security Affairs*, pp. 15-22.

- Exploiting missteps by jihadis (e.g., repeatedly airing images from the Zarqawi-directed bombing of the wedding in Jordan and graphic images of woman and children killed in suicide-bombings/car bombings in Iraq) whenever possible;
- Visibly providing economic aid, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief to Muslim countries;<sup>519</sup> and
- Covertly promoting, credible alternative “narratives” focused on non-violent Islamic reform, including peaceful Salafi prescriptions for returning to the “straight path” and other approaches to reform that are critical of emulating the West.

While it might be the US preference to align exclusively with Muslim advocates of democracy, liberalism, and secular reform in this effort, that impulse should be avoided. To the contrary, an indirect, covert strategic communications campaign should focus *primarily* upon identifying and bolstering alternative, non-violent *conservative* scholars (e.g., non-violent Salafis) since they can compete much more effectively with the jihadis in winning over the “hearts and minds” of the ummah. This is especially important in the Middle East and North Africa where a significant portion, if not a majority, of “mainstream” Muslims are Salafi or conservative in orientation.<sup>520</sup> To a limited extent, non-violent conservative voices are already beginning to question the ideological/theological underpinnings of violent jihadism; a development that leaders of the movement view as a grave threat because it weakens their legitimacy and, as Naji put it, “siphons off recruits among the youth.”<sup>521</sup> (Owing to its denunciation of violence, the growing appeal of its peaceful model of reform, increasing participation in the political process, and the popularity of its social services network, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey is frequently cited as a major threat to the jihadi movement.) The goal of the United States should be to give these speakers as a powerful a microphone as possible without jeopardizing their credibility.

Over the past five years, however, the US government has failed to plan and orchestrate a national-level strategic communications/influence campaign—broadly defined to include overt public diplomacy and media activities, propaganda and counter-propaganda, and black PSYOP and IO activities—focused on the Muslim world. By nearly all accounts, the jihadis—both Salafi-jihadis and Khomeinists—are currently winning the “media war” and the radical ideology they espouse is spreading rather than receding. Across much of the Muslim world, the United States has failed to counter effectively the portrayal of America, and the West more broadly, as an aggressive, predatory force (i.e., Zionist Crusaders) that poses a threat to Islam. US efforts to

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<sup>519</sup> According to the DIA, public opinion of the United States improved in several predominantly Muslim states, especially those in Asia, following US assistance to tsunami victims in Indonesia and earthquake victims in Kashmir. Maples, “Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States,” p. 5.

<sup>520</sup> William McCants and Jarret Brachman, *Militant Ideology Atlas* (Westpoint, NY, US Military Academy, 2006), p. 10.

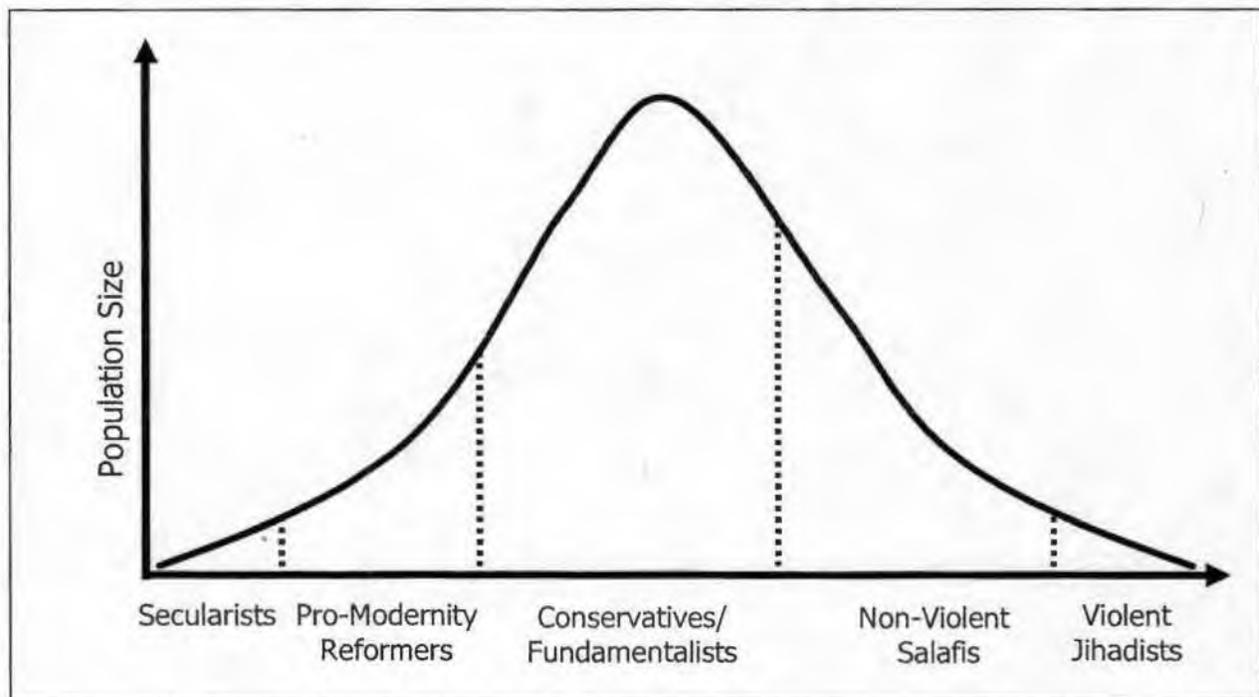
<sup>521</sup> Several AQAM strategists and ideologues, most notably Naji and Zawahiri, have voiced their concern about the danger posed by competing voices, especially those that deny the legitimacy of violent jihad and focus instead on peaceful proselytizing and teaching “true” Islam to the ummah. See, for example, Naji, *The Management of Barbarism*, pp. 46-47, 73-80.

reverse these trends have, thus far, been limited, fragmented, and largely ineffective. Aborted efforts by the State Department to improve the image of the United States by extolling American values (especially democracy) have been counter-productive. To gain ground in what is likely to be an indirect, protracted “war of ideas,” the US government should stand up an independent agency (i.e., a more powerful follow-on to the Cold War-era US Information Agency) to plan and orchestrate a coherent, national strategic communication strategy.

## **ISOLATE ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS AND AVOID LEGITIMIZING THE CALL TO DEFENSIVE JIHAD**

Although precise figures are unavailable, it is widely reported that most Muslims in the world have what might be termed a “fundamentalist or “conservative” orientation. The next two largest demographics are non-violent Salafis and pro-modernity reformers. Secularists and jihadis/terrorists represent comparatively small minorities (see Figure 2). Admittedly, the dividing lines between these cohorts and their relative sizes are rather ambiguous. Nevertheless, the basic concept illustrates an important strategic point.

Figure 2—Illustrative Depiction of Global Muslim Population by Islamic Orientation



Assuming that this characterization is broadly accurate, the overriding goal of US strategic communications and GWOT strategy more broadly over the long term should be to shift all of the cohorts to the left while cleaving off as much of the violent jihadist population as possible. Given their large relative size, it is especially important to focus on moving the conservatives/fundamentalist population toward pro-modernity reform, and the non-violent Salafi population (which is expanding in the Middle East and North Africa) toward mainline conservatism. The overriding imperative, however, is to do so *without* creating incentives or

otherwise encouraging conservatives/fundamentalists and non-violent Salafis to shift to the right, expanding the jihadi ranks. Avoiding the latter should be the controlling concern—it is better to do nothing than to take actions that are likely to expand significantly the terrorist population.

The key policy instrument for encouraging a gradual migration toward pro-modernity and secularism is the promotion of alternative, non-violent “voices” in the Muslim world through a sustained, indirect, national-level strategic communications campaign. The latter is also critical for discrediting violent jihadist ideology, which should both reduce the jihadi recruiting base over time and possibly convince some currently active jihadis to renounce violence. From a strategic communications perspective, there are three tools that might prove especially useful for isolating the violent jihadi population and shrinking it over time. The first, which was described above, is to focus increased public attention on jihadi activities that are broadly considered to be “un-Islamic.” The second is to encourage authoritative Muslim spokesmen to refer consistently to jihadis using terms that cast them as alien to mainstream Islam. Options include “Hirabists,” the root of which refers to a heinous crime and grave sin; “Qutbis,” which is fully consistent with their constant references to the writings of Sayyid Qutb, but reduces them to followers of a human as opposed to individuals fighting in the name of Allah; “Takfiris,” to reflect their frequent and wide-scale use of general *takfir*, which contradicts the deeply rooted Islamic value of maintaining unity and avoiding fitna [communal discord]; and “Khawarijites,” referring to a radical, early Islamic sect that is widely considered as deviant. The third tool is to exploit the fact that the ideology of the Salafi-jihadi movement is inherently—and unavoidably—exclusionary. Any Muslim that does not believe in their peculiar interpretation of Islamic texts and follow their dictates is *ipso facto* an apostate, guilty of “allowing that which God has forbidden,” and thus subject to death. Given their extreme views on *tawhid* [absolute unity of God] and exclusive reliance upon the sharia, jihadis have scant ideological “wobble room” in this regard. As Mary Habeck explains:

This attitude has created a dilemma for the jihadis. They understand that they must appeal to ordinary Muslims to join their cause if they are going to win their lengthy war against the “Crusaders” and “Jews.” Yet, at the same time, they believe that ideological and religious purity is necessary for their case, and this purity demands that they regard as enemies any Muslims who do not actively support them.<sup>522</sup>

As part of its strategic communications campaign, the US government should exploit the exclusivity of jihadi ideology as a wedge to drive away non-violent Salafist and mainline conservatives. The target audience should be constantly reminded that jihadis view them as “lesser believers” whose lives and property are not protected and, in some cases, as apostates who must be killed. Isolated from mainstream Muslims and with an evaporating recruitment base, the jihadi population would shrink over time as manhunting operations, defections encouraged by government amnesty offers, continued “martyrdom” operations, and death by natural causes take their toll.

What the United States should *not* do is attempt to extol the virtues of democracy, secularism, women’s rights, and other Western concepts and values that are too easily misconstrued as an

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<sup>522</sup> Habeck, p. 167.

attack on Islam and are also likely to reawaken unpleasant memories of European imperialism. While compelling academic arguments have been made that Islam is not necessarily incompatible with democracy, the fact of the matter is that Salafi-jihadis and Khomeinists have convinced their constituencies to the contrary. Frequently citing the works of Taymiyya, Maqdisi has been an especially vocal critic of democracy, as well as Muslims who participate in democratic activities. He and many other clerics argue that the creation of a constitution and a body of legislation that replaces or supplements the divine law and judgment of Allah is apostasy.<sup>523</sup> Human-made law cannot, in their view, add to or take away from the sharia in any way. Maqdisi harshly rebukes the Muslim Brotherhood, among others, for participating in the democratic process, asserting that they parrot “many of the words of Said [Qutb]” while at the same time [racing] one another to beg the taaghut [false deities] who turn away from the legislation of Allah...so that they may attain a seat in the councils of *shirk* [polytheism] and transgressions and disobedience.”<sup>524</sup>

Like it or not, the argument that democracy is un-Islamic because it places human-made law above divine law resonates across much of the Muslim world. In time, counter-arguments may gain traction, but they have yet to do so. Therefore, when senior officials of the US government publicly state that it is the policy of the United States to “democratize” the Middle East, they provide powerful ammunition to the enemy in the ongoing “media war.” For example, the repeated use of the term “democracy” and related concepts throughout the most recent *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, available to all on the World Wide Web, is strategically ill-advised.<sup>525</sup> While one can reasonably debate whether or not “effective democracy” is in fact the “long-term solution for winning the War on Terror,” it is unambiguously clear that it should not be the *public* message of the United States.<sup>526</sup> The US government should avoid creating the perception that the West is trying to convert Muslims into something they do not want to become by, among other things, assiduously avoiding religiously charged rhetoric like “democracy” and “secularism.”

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<sup>523</sup> For an extended discussion of this topic, see Brooke, “The Preacher and the Jihadi,” pp. 54-57.

<sup>524</sup> Abu Muhammad Asim al-Maqdisi, *The Religion of Abraham* (Tibyan Publications, 1985), p. 110.

<sup>525</sup> *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, pp. 1 and 7-10.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.