THE EVOLUTION OF AL QAEDA

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Al Qaeda is a significant threat to the national security of the United States and its allies. This makes it important for individuals in these countries, both military and civilian, to understand the evolution of this threat. This thesis analyzes Al Qaeda's evolution from 1989 to 2006. Despite numerous assaults by the United States and its allies, Al Qaeda has evolved to continue its jihad. However, the War on Terror is not the only factor that influenced its evolution. Al Qaeda is a product of the forces of globalization. Increasing access to global finances, international travel, and sophisticated technology is what has enabled Al Qaeda to evolve into its current form. The conclusion is that Al Qaeda's evolution has made it a more formidable opponent.

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ABSTRACT

THE EVOLUTION OF AL QAEDA, by MAJ Sean P. Wilson, 129 pages.

Al Qaeda is a significant threat to the national security of the United States and its allies. This makes it important for individuals in these countries, both military and civilian, to understand the evolution of this threat. This thesis analyzes Al Qaeda's evolution from 1989 to 2006. Despite numerous assaults by the United States and its allies, Al Qaeda has evolved to continue its jihad. However, the War on Terror is not the only factor that influenced its evolution. Al Qaeda is a product of the forces of globalization. Increasing access to global finances, international travel, and sophisticated technology is what has enabled Al Qaeda to evolve into its current form. The conclusion is that Al Qaeda's evolution has made it a more formidable opponent.

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Most importantly,
To my loving wife, Diana
You are my strength and foundation

I love you.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| AI | Ansar al Islam |
| AQI | Al Qaeda in Iraq |
| ASG | Abu Sayyaf Group |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| EIJ | Egyptian Islamic Jihad |
| HUA | Harajat-ul-Ansar |
| GIA | Groupe Islamique Armeé |
| GICM | Moroccan Islamic Combat Group |
| GSPC | Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat, as of 25 January 2007 referred to as Al Qaeda Organization of the Islamic Maghreb |
| IAA | Islamic Army Aden Abyan |
| IMU | Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan |
| JI | Jemaah Islamiyyah |
| MAK | Maktab al Khidmat |
| MILF | Moro Islamic Liberation Front |
| NIF | National Islamic Front |
| U.N. | United Nations |
| U.S. | United States |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Al Qaeda represents a major threat to the national security of the United States and its allies. Al Qaeda is an extremely adaptive organization capable of transforming itself while simultaneously continuing to wage war against the United States.[1] Al Qaeda over the preceding eighteen years has evolved significantly. What began as a close-knit group of "Arab Afghans" has morphed into a transnational Islamic global insurgency.[2] This insurgency seeks to overthrow the U.S.-dominated global order and restore the former prominence of the Islamic caliphate.

In this thesis, the author intends to analyze the evolution of Al Qaeda, focusing on its ideology, leadership, financing, organization, goals, and operations. The nature of Al Qaeda's threat to the United States and its allies makes it important for individuals, both military and civilian, to understand the evolution of this threat. Increasing one's knowledge of Al Qaeda's threat is a critical component in developing a strategy to defeat it.

Research Questions

This thesis seeks to answer two research questions. The primary research question is, How has Al Qaeda evolved?  The secondary research question seeks to address what forces have caused or enabled Al Qaeda to evolve.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze Al Qaeda's evolution. Since Al Qaeda is likely to remain a significant threat to the national security of the United States and its

allies for the near future, it is important that both military personnel and civilians understand how it has evolved. The analysis will provide information on the dynamic nature of Al Qaeda's threat and increase the general knowledge on this subject.

<div align="center">Ideological Development</div>

In order to comprehend how Al Qaeda frames its jihad, one must understand the roots of its ideology. There are three periods of Islamic thought that have influenced Bin Laden, dating back to the thirteenth century. The fusion of thought from these three eras forms the ideological base for Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. They frame Al Qaeda's jihad, which focuses on removing impious or apostate Islamic regimes, conducting what it considers a defensive jihad against foreign domination, and reestablishing an Islamic caliphate.

The ancient interpretations of Islam, represented by Ibn-Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and Mohammed Abdel Wahabb (1703-1792) helped to develop Bin Laden's concept of restoring Islam's past glory through the reestablishment of the caliphate. The writings of Ibn-Taymiyyah, an Islamic scholar, are important because they help to derive how Bin Laden and Al Qaeda conceptualize *jihad* and *takfir*. According to Taymiyyah, Islam in the thirteenth century was under threat from two elements, colonialism and the declining prestige of Islam. Islam faced two opposing forces, the Mongols to East and Christians from the West.[3] Taymiyyah believed that the key to Islam's survival was strict adherence to the principles of the *salaf*. They were the companions of Mohammed whose strict interpretation of the Koran and pious behavior Taymiyyah believed was responsible for the glory of Islam.[4]

Salafism is a movement that exists within Sunni Islam with a strong influence in Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. Its basis is a strict adherence to the example of the Prophet Mohammad's companions. The word *Salafi* translates as "predecessors" or "early generation."[5] To salafists, "the strength of Islam resides in the values and practices of the prophet and his pious companions (the *salaf*)."[6] The basis of the *salafi* was a literal application of the Koran, the Hadith, and Sharia law.

Salafist Islam is a strictly monotheistic interpretation of Islam and unequivocally opposes other sects in Islam, such as the Sulfi and Shi'a.[7] Salafists place a greater emphasis on ritual, not only in prayer but also in the conduct of everyday life. Additionally, salafists reject participation in political activities and believe sharia law rather than modern Islamic themed politics should govern society. Dr. Marc Sageman characterizes salafism as an advocacy for the restoration of authentic Islam through a "strategy of violent jihad, resulting in an explosion of terror to wipe out what it regards as local political heresy."[8] At the strategic or global level, salafist jihadism is about defeating the West, which it views as the principal impediment to the establishment of a true Islamic state.[9]

Critical to understanding Al Qaeda's jihad is Taymiyyah's notion of *takfir*. Taymiyyah believed that Muslims who failed to follow the path of the *salaf* were apostate and enemies of Islam. *Takfir* was a means of excommunicating unfaithful Muslims.[10] According to Taymiyyah, there could not be peace between the *kafir* (infidels) and Muslims. It was every Muslim's duty through *jihad* to force the *kafirs* to see the true path of Islam.[11]

Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703-1791) was another major influence on Bin Laden and the Saudi elements within Al Qaeda.[12] This movement began in the eighteenth century in Saudi Arabia, and its proponents believed that the true word of Allah came directly from the Koran itself.[13]

Wahhabism spread primarily in Saudi Arabia and in regions of the Arabian Peninsula.[14] Wahabb believed that the *salaf* were responsible for the creation of the first caliphate and that Muslims of his time should emulate them. Those who did not were apostate and Wahabb used *takfir* to vilify them.[15] Wahabb's teachings gained prominence throughout what today is Saudi Arabia, and in 1924, his followers had formed an alliance with the House of Saud. This alliance unified the tribes of Saudi Arabia and made wahhabism the unofficial doctrine of Saudi Islam.[16]

The discovery of oil in the 1930s brought unprecedented wealth to the Saudi ruling family. As a result, it enabled wahhabism to spread through a global network of madrassas, mosques, and organizations funded by the Saudi royal family.[17] This accounts for the popularity and rapid spread of wahabbi ideology throughout the world.[18]

Wahabbi intolerance to other cultures and religions serves as a major factor in the radicalization of Islam. The main agenda of the wahabbi is to purify Islam of any foreign practices that have caused it to deviate from its core practices. In this respect, it is synonymous with salafism. Specifically, the wahabbi believe in purifying Islam and strictly forbid religious and social practices that they view as contrary to the fundamental tenets of Islam.[19] Sunni Muslims that adhere to either salafism or wahhabism are ideologically opposed to the Shi'a and Sulfi branches of Islam.

The modern wave of Islamist thought developed post World War I served as an outlet for political dissent. Forming initially in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood was a fundamentalist group of Islamists that advocated purifying Islam in an attempt to restore the Caliphate. The founder was Hassan al-Banna, who envisioned the Muslim Brotherhood as a unifying force to rally Muslims against the domination of West. Eventually, the Brotherhood established offshoots in many Muslim nations like Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, Sudan, and Palestine. It represented an attempt to create a transnational entity to re-establish the Caliphate according to *salafi* principles. According to Walid Phares, "It was mainly an urban phenomenon that was more complex in design. It possessed a denser ideological foundation, and unlike Wahhabism did not enjoy the legitimacy of state sponsorship."[20]

During the midtwentieth century, a figure emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood who would serve as a standard-bearer for salafist ideology. Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian member of the Muslim Brotherhood, published his views on reforming Muslim society. Qutb's belief was that Islam's *jihad* should focus on removing all traces of *jahilyaa* (barbarism and ignorance that existed before the appearance of the Prophet Mohammed) from society.[21] Qutb believed in purifying Islam of all Western or non-Muslim influence. This was a reaction to what he witnessed during his visit to the United States from 1948 to 1950.[22] In his book *Milestones*, Qutb stressed that Islam needed to reeducate itself and return to its fundamentals in order to restore its former glory. Qutb writes, "The foremost duty of Islam in this world is to depose *Jahiliyahh* from the leadership of mean, and to take the leadership into its own hands."[23] Qutb advocated both education and violence to achieve the end state citing, "It becomes incumbent upon Islam to enter the field with

preachings as well as the movement, and to strike hard at all those political powers which force the people to bow before them and which rule over."[24] Because of his views, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser had Qutb imprisoned and executed in 1966 for sedition.

Al Qaeda's leaders have taken this concept further by combining salafism with wahabbi beliefs. They advocate a violent, militant effort seeking to create, "A world-wide revivalist movement which aims to re-establish past Muslim glory in a great Islamist states stretching from Morocco to the Philippines through a strategy of violent jihad to restore authentic Islam."[25] Al Qaeda has globalized jihad. It seeks to break the territorial bonds of disparate Muslim struggles and to unite them into a global jihad spanning from the Balkans to the Philippines. This represents a significant challenge to the global world order that the United States and its Western allies have established. The globalization of Islamic militancy allows the terrorist groups involved in these regional struggles to expand their struggle beyond the confines of their locale.

Another pivotal influence was an Egyptian theologian of the Muslim Brotherhood Muhammed Abd al-Salam Faraj. In his manifesto, *The Neglected Duty*, Faraj advocated attacking the "near enemy" or apostate Muslim regimes, as well as the "far enemy" of the West, specifically the United States and Israel.[26] Faraj's teaching had a major impact upon the ideology of the later influences in Al Qaeda's ideological development, specifically through Ayman al-Zawahiri. Al-Zawahiri carries the influences of the Egyptian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and the *salafist* ideologies expressed by Qutb, Faraj, and al-Banna to Al Qaeda. Al Zawahiri's influence is important in the

development of Al Qaeda because he helped to unite the Saudi and Egyptian groups under Al Qaeda's banner that would become a majority of its core group.

Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abdullah Azzam (1941-1989) provided contemporary Islamic ideas that served to fuse the thoughts of Taymiyyah, al-Hassan, Qutb, and al-Faraj into a comprehensive ideology.[27] Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian Wahabbi who was Bin Laden's teacher in Saudi Arabia, brought to Al Qaeda another interpretation of jihad. Azzam, like Taymiyyah, believed that it was every Muslim's duty to fight against infidel expansion into Muslim lands.[28] Azzam viewed jihad in purely defensive terms. He believed that Al Qaeda could serve as a Muslim reaction force to liberate old Muslim lands, starting with Palestine.[29] Azzam advocated recapturing historical Islamic lands occupied by non-Muslims, such as the Philippines, Palestine, and Spain, but did not advocate warfare against Muslim regimes or the export of jihad to non-Muslim lands.[30] Azzam and Bin Laden's conflicting views over the future purpose of Al Qaeda resulted in Azzam's death in 1989, enabling Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri to refocus the organization on attacking apostate Muslim regimes and the West.

Al Qaeda is an amalgamation of these three periods of Islamic militancy. These Islamic scholars formed Al Qaeda's ideological base which is espoused in the fatwas of its leader, Osama Bin Laden. Bin Laden casts Islam's struggle as a return to its basic roots that requires three events to occur. These events are the overthrow of what he deems to be apostate Islamic regimes, the expulsion of non-Muslim influences from Muslim lands, and the reestablishment of an Islamic caliphate governed by strict adherence to the Koran and Sharia law. In his 1996 fatwa, Bin Laden states that his

primary duty is "to push the enemy--the greatest Kufr-- out of the country is a prime

duty. No other duty after belief is more important than the duty of had [jihad]."[31]

Bin Laden's secondary goal is to rally Islam against the United States and its ally

Israel to end the occupation of Saudi Arabia. He states,

> It should not be hidden from you that the people of Islam had suffered from
> aggression, iniquity and injustice imposed on them by the Zionist-Crusaders
> alliance and their collaborators; to the extent that the Muslims blood became the
> cheapest and their wealth as loot in the hands of the enemies. Their blood was
> spilled in Palestine and Iraq. The horrifying pictures of the massacre of Qana, in
> Lebanon are still fresh in our memory. Massacres in Tajakestan, Burma,
> Cashmere, Assam, Philippine, Fatani, Ogadin, Somalia, Erithria, Chechnia and in
> Bosnia-Herzegovina took place, massacres that send shivers in the body and
> shake the conscience. All of this and the world watch and hear, and not only didn't
> respond to these atrocities, but also with a clear conspiracy between the USA and
> its' allies and under the cover of the iniquitous United Nations, the dispossessed
> people were even prevented from obtaining arms to defend themselves.[32]

Two years later, Bin Laden expanded his jihad against the United States and directed that

all Americans were legitimate targets for attack. His second fatwa not only reiterated the

central messages of his 1996 fatwa, but also clarified and focused his efforts against the

United States.[33] It also marked a transition from attacking the "near enemy" directly and

instead attacking its primary supporters, the "far enemy." This reflected the effect of al-

Faraj and al-Zawahiri on Bin Laden and the development of Al Qaeda's ideology.[34]

Another major statement in his 1996 fatwa that provided context to Bin Laden's

jihad is the statement that Muslims should not engage in internal war among

themselves.[35] This means that until Islam returns to its true form, Sunni and Shi'a should

coexist. Only once the United States and false Muslim states abdicate their subjugation of

Muslims, does Bin Laden believe reconciliation can occur. Bin Laden has never clarified

this point, which remains a significant obstacle in the reestablishment of an Islamic

caliphate.

The author wishes to note that there exists delineation between the ancient Islamic philosophers and the contemporary interpretations. Of the previously discussed Islamists, only Wahabb, Taymiyyah, and Azzam are trained Islamic scholars that are capable of making legitimate rulings according to Islam. Colonel Dale C. Eikmeier writes:

> [The] Creditability of a message relies not only on logic and reasoning but also on the credentials of the messenger. Many of Qutbism's proponents are individuals with questionable religious credentials, yet they claim religious authority. . . . [W]ith the exception of Abul Ala Maududi and Abdullah Azzam, none of Qutbism's main theoreticians trained at Islam's recognized centers of learning. Although a devout Muslim, Hassan al Bannawas a teacher and community activist. Sayyid Qutb was a literary critic. Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj was an electrician. Ayman al-Zawahiri is a physician. Osama bin Laden trained to be a businessman.[36]

This is critical in understanding that Al Qaeda's leaders, Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri do not possess authority to issue a binding *fatwa*, declare Muslims *takfir*, or call for jihad.

There are several other Islamic concepts that help one understand how Osama Bin Laden frames his world-view. Two of these are *dar a islam* and the *dar a har.* The *dar a islam* or "the abode of submission" represents the Islamic world where Islam is a respected way of life and practiced without interference.[37] In Bin Laden's mind, the re-establishment of an Islamic caliphate from North Africa to the Philippines represents the true form of *dar a islam*: a global Islamic challenger to the U.S. (Western) dominated global order. Any Western or non-Islamic encroachment on this region justifies holy war or what Al Qaeda considers "jihad."[38]

In contrast to *dar a islam* is the concept of *dar a har* or the "abode of war." In its simplest form, this is the world of the non-Muslim, the *jahilyaa.* It represents both internal and external forces that corrupt and are in conflict with the *dar a islam*.[39] In

modern times the establishment of the state of Israel, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the suppression of the Palestinians, and the "invasion and occupation" of the Middle East by the United States and its allies represent *dar a har*. In Bin Laden's view, secular Middle Eastern regimes, like those of Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, the Ba'athists in Syria, and the House of Saud, represent another form of *dar a har*.[40] This is important because Bin Laden defines his struggle not only against the United States and other non-Muslim influences, but also against apostate regimes that in his view do not adhere to the true following of Islam.[41]

A central concept to Al Qaeda's ideology is the re-establishment of the *umma* (literally translated as community) or caliphate. Historically the caliphate refers to conquered lands achieved by Mohammad and his followers during the seventh century. This area covered North Africa, Southern Europe, and extended through the Middle East to India. Al Qaeda has stated that its objective is to unify traditionally Muslim lands under a single banner and reestablish the historical caliphate governed by salafist Islam.[42]

Al Qaeda's jihadists have three goals: *Tahrir* or the liberation of Muslim lands from non-Muslim powers, *Tawheed* or unification of Muslim lands, and finally *Khilafa* or the establishment of a pan-Muslim caliphate.[43] Al Qaeda's caliphate would stretch from Spain across Northern Africa through the Middle East, to the Philippines and Indonesia.[44] Osama Bin Laden's dream is that this caliphate under *sharia* rule governed by salafist-wahabbi ideology would represent a utopian setting for Muslims and serve to challenge the U.S.-dominated world order.[45]

A further element of Osama Bin Laden's ideology is the concept of *jihad*. He has repeatedly categorized his grievances against the West and apostate Muslim regimes in

10

terms of a defensive jihad.[46] Defining the term *jihad* is critical in understanding Al

Qaeda's evolution since it occupies such a preeminent role in its ideology.

The word jihad is a derivative of the words "jahd" or "juhd" which refers to

exertion. Jihad or "to struggle" has no literal connection to warfare.[47] The term jihad is

often an improper substitute for "holy war." As with many of the tenets of Islam and Al

Qaeda's worldview, there are many interpretations of the term jihad. However, this

paper's concern is examining the term as Al Qaeda defines it.

The concept of jihad as an armed struggle to expand Islam's influence is a major

theme in Islamic studies. Dr. Andrew G. Bostrom in his book *The Legacy of Jihad:*

*Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims* explains how Muslims have historically

used the concept of jihad in attempts to expand and defend Islam from the seventh

century through the Middle Ages.[48] As with modern translations, there has been

considerable historical debate over the legitimacy of jihadi movements. Such debate

occurs along sectarian division within Islam over the Sunni and Shi'a interpretations. The

principal divide relates to the authority to declare a jihad with the Shi'a factions arguing

that such authority rests with the emergence of the twelfth prophet.[49] This schism and

Bin Laden's lack of proper authority within Islam serve to explain why many Shi'a and

Sunni scholars reject Bin Laden's *fatwas.*[50]

The Koran rejects the methodology that Bin Laden advocates in the conduct of

jihad. The Koran describes jihad in terms of defense stating, "Fight in the cause of God

against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. God loves not transgressors."[51]

A struggle according to the Koran must be just in purpose and is subject to strict

regulation. Islamic scholars view jihad as defensive in nature and not as the means to

subjugate non-Muslims. The Koran's interpretation of warfare expressly forbids attacks on innocent people.[52]

The difference over the concept of jihad serves two purposes. It highlights the differences between Shi'a and Sunni beliefs in basic Islamic theology. It also illustrates the contradictions between orthodox Islamic teachings and the messages advanced by Al Qaeda's leadership. Al Qaeda characterizes jihad as an individual obligation against two foes: an internal foe represented by impious Muslim regimes and an external foe represented by the Christians and Jews.[53]

Bin Laden has described Al Qaeda's jihad as defensive in nature against two main enemies. The first enemy is an internal one epitomized by impious Muslim governments like Saudi Arabia.[54] Al Qaeda also describes its jihad as a defensive struggle against the encroachment of non-Islamic influences into the Muslim world. The main perpetrators of this encroachment according to Osama Bin Laden's *fatwas* are the United States and its European allies.[55]

<u>Background</u>

The year 1979 was a watershed year for the Muslim world. Two seminal events occurred: the establishment of the first modern Islamic theocracy in Iran and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. The 1979 revolution in Iran was a seminal event in Islam because the result was the establishment of the first Muslim theocracy in modern times.[56] Although Iran is predominantly Shi'a, a sect of Islam that Osama Bin Laden's brand of salafist, Sunni Islam considers invalid, it nonetheless served as a form of motivation for Sunni jihadists.[57] The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan served as a rallying call for Muslims to partake in jihad to defend Islam from foreign aggression.[58]

Following the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, Osama Bin Laden traveled to Pakistan to help aid the mujahideen. In 1984, Bin Laden and his longtime mentor Dr. Abdullah Azzam, and Omar Abd al-Rahman ("the blind sheik") established a logistical and financial organization in the Peshawar region of Pakistan called the *Maktab al Khidamat* (MAK) or "Services Office."[59] The MAK served as a clearinghouse that enlisted and aided Muslim jihadists who wished to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan.[60]

The war in Afghanistan by 1984 was a quagmire for the Soviet Union. By 1987, it was evident to Bin Laden and Azzam that the Soviet Union would not win the war. By 1988 an estimated 10-20,000 volunteers had trained in Afghanistan.[61] With this group, Azzam and Bin Laden began to form *Al Qaeda* ("the base"). While the two men agreed on the purpose of Al Qaeda, they differed on the choice of tactics.[62] Azzam's vision for their organization was to use it as an "Islamic rapid reaction force" that could be dispatched to defend Muslims wherever they were threatened. [63] Bin Laden saw Al Qaeda's role was for those who fought in the Soviet-Afghan war to return to their native countries to help overthrow apostate Muslim regimes.[64] The murder of Azzam in November 1989 left Bin Laden as the principal guiding force behind Al Qaeda.[65]

Osama Bin Laden believed that his "Arab Afghans" were instrumental in forcing the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan in defeat and directly contributed to its collapse.[66] The collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact in 1991 left the United States as the sole global superpower. Bin Laden believed that he and other Islamists enabled the United States to assume this role. However, he believed the United States was hypocritical for enabling Muslims to fight the Soviets, yet it still continued to

persecute them by supporting Israel, its continued military intervention in the Middle East, and through its support of authoritarian Muslim regimes.[67]

The 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and its threat to Saudi Arabia offered Bin Laden an opportunity to gain favor with the Saudi royal family. Saudi Arabia rejected Bin Laden's offer to defend the kingdom with his army of mujahideen. Instead, it favored the deployment a large coalition force led by the United States.[68] This rebuff by the Saudi royal family infuriated Bin Laden.[69] The introduction of American military forces into Saudi Arabia, and the Middle East at large following the war's conclusion served to bolster Bin Laden's view of the United States as the main source of Islam's ills. Bin Laden elaborates at length in his 1996 and 1998 fatwas (religious findings or ruling) about this theme.[70]

<div align="center">Terrorism Defined</div>

An academic study of Al Qaeda's evolution should have a common understanding of key terms. Terrorism is a key concept that requires a common understanding. For the purposes of this thesis, the definition of terrorism is in accordance with Title 22, *United States Code* (*U.S.C.*) Section 2656f. (d) as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."[71] Additionally Title 22 defines international terrorism as "terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country."[72] U.S. Title 22 of the *United States Code* further defines a terrorist group as any group that itself or possesses sub groups that practice international terrorism.[73]

Limitations

There are two limitations to this thesis. The first limitation is the necessity to remain unclassified to ensure maximum distribution. This limits the research for the thesis to open source documents and publications. Second, there exists a lack of definitive insight on Al Qaeda sources. There have been few publicly acknowledged Al Qaeda defectors. Those that have defected do not possess a complete view of the entire Al Qaeda network due to its compartmentalized and cellular structure. Al Qaeda is an extremely difficult organization to infiltrate and gather definitive, specific information pertaining to its organization and operations. These two limitations do not have an impact on the goal of this thesis, but warrant acknowledgment.

Scope and Delimitations

In this thesis the author examines Al Qaeda's evolution from 1989-2006. In analyzing Al Qaeda, the author focuses on five major areas of the organization. These areas are Al Qaeda's leadership, finance, goals, organization, and its strategic/operational focus. He will also examine factors influenced Al Qaeda's evolution. This thesis will not attempt to predict or assess Al Qaeda's future evolution.

Significance and conclusion

Al Qaeda is a significant threat to the United States and its allies. There is an abundant amount of literature written about Al Qaeda, yet there is still a general misunderstanding about this threat. Understanding the evolution of this enemy is important to comprehend the threat that the globalization of Islamic militancy presents to the national security of the United States and its allies.

[1]Congress, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, "Al-Qaeda: The Many Faces of an Islamist Extremist Threat" (Washington, D.C.: GPO, June 2006); accessed 13 September 2006; available from http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2006_rpt/hpsci0606.pdf; Internet.

[2]Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 25.

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[59]Ibid., 54.

[60]Kenneth Katzman, "Al Qaeda: Profile and Threat Assessment." (Washington, D.C.: 10 February 2005); accessed 20 January 2007; available from http://www.fas.org/ sgp/crs/terror/RL33038.pdf; Internet.

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[65]Ibid., 31-32.

[66]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 290.

[67]Gunaratna. *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror,* 29.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW


Introduction, Purpose, and Organization

This chapter reviews the current literature on Al Qaeda to provide an overview of

the collective knowledge of the group and its evolution. The literature pertaining to Al

Qaeda is immense, with a multitude of sources available from the major publishing

houses, research organizations, senior military service schools, and the internet. Despite

this abundance of potential research material, a few select sources stand out.

The author arranged the literature review according to the scope of their coverage

of Al Qaeda. There are two significant categories of literature on Al Qaeda. The first

category includes sources that are comprehensive in nature. These works provide a broad

overview of Al Qaeda covering multiple aspects of its existence featuring authors such as

Dr. Marc Sageman, Jason Burke, Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, and Peter L. Bergen.

The second category consists of sources that focus on specific aspects of Al

Qaeda. These sources concentrate on subjects pertaining to Al Qaeda's organization,

finances, and operations. Representative of this group are sources written by Loretta

Napoleoni, Dr. Bruce Hoffman, and Dr. Waller R. Newell.


Comprehensive Sources

The United States State Department's *Patterns of Global Terrorism* represents the

U.S. State Department's open source analysis of terrorist activities. Its reports contain

broad and generalized information regarding Al Qaeda's evolution. In the 1996 *Patterns

of Global Terrorism* the United States State Department provides basic information on Al

Qaeda and reports on Osama Bin Laden's activity as a terrorist financier. Successive

editions from 1997 until 2003 provide mostly general or contextual information. In the

1998 edition, the State Department describes Al Qaeda as an organization that emerged at

the end of the Soviet-Afghan war whose grievances are with various Muslim regimes for

their impiety, and against the United States for its continued intervention of the affairs of

the Middle East.[1]  The 2000 edition provides information on Al Qaeda's facilities in

Afghanistan used to train Islamic extremists to fight in other regional jihads including

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya, Tajikistan, Kashmir, and the Philippines.[2] These

regional jihads, like Afghanistan in the 1980s, provided Al Qaeda's members invaluable

experience in unconventional warfare, bomb making, and helped Al Qaeda to increase its

linkages with other like-minded jihadi organizations.[3]

In the 1997-2003 editions of *Patterns of Global Terrorism,* the United States State

Department provides insight to Al Qaeda's expanding global network and its increasing

operational reach. The 2000 edition cite increasing linkages between Al Qaeda and other

terrorist groups like Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (IG).[4] The

report illustrates a trend in Al Qaeda's operations. Al Qaeda limited its main attacks from

1996-2000 to East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula as shown by 1998 bombings of the

United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole* in

Yemen.[5] However, the 1999 report covers Al Qaeda's attempts to conduct operations

outside of traditionally Muslim areas like the Middle East, Africa, and Southwest Asia.

The 1999 edition of *Patterns of Global Terrorism* cites the arrest of Al Qaeda linked

terrorists in Canada who attempted to smuggle explosives into the United States.[6] This is

significant because these arrests foiled the Millennium Plot. It also demonstrates that Al

Qaeda was not only a threat to the foreign interests of the United States, but also a maturing threat to the United States homeland.[7]

Another government source that provides information complementary to *Patterns of Global Terrorism* is *The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* or *The 9/11 Commission Report*. The 9/11Commission was a bi-partisan group of ten Commissioners, five Republicans and five Democrats, selected by Congress to collect and analyze data pertaining to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The Commission's final report represents an analysis of nineteen days of hearings and the public testimony of 160 witnesses and experts.[8] *The 9/11 Commission Report*, unlike the State Department's *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, provides a more detailed analysis of Al Qaeda from its foundation and culminates with the 9/11 attacks. It serves to provide analysis of pre-9/11 Al Qaeda.

According to *The 9/11 Commission Report*, the real strength of Al Qaeda before 9/11 was its field commanders like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abd al Rahim al Nashiri who operated with a great deal of autonomy and latitude.[9] Both of these men planned and coordinated two of Al Qaeda's most visible attacks: the *U.S.S. Cole* attack and the 9/11 attacks. Bin Laden served as a "venture-capitalist" to finance both operations and assisted in some operational aspects of the attacks.[10] Bin Laden provided specific targeting guidance to al-Nashiri in the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole*, as to which areas of the port in Aden he should survey.[11] Peter Bergen and Dr. Rohan Gunaratna support the commission's conclusion about Bin Laden's role in operational and tactical planning of terrorist attacks in their respective books *Holy War Inc.* and *Inside Al Qaeda.* Dr. Bruce Hoffman also portrays Bin Laden in similar terms. He likens Bin Laden's role

as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who finances operations that he believes best serves his jihad.[12]

The *9/11 Commission Report* confirmed that by 1996 Al Qaeda was loosely coordinating with like minded organizations throughout North Africa, the Levant, Somalia, the Balkans, and Chechnya.[13] It was in the Sudan that Bin Laden began to formalize his linkages with other jihadi organizations, and to diversify his financial network.[14]

*The 9/11 Commission Report* also discusses the financial aspect of Al Qaeda, stating that after his 1991 move to the Sudan, Bin Laden established a "large and complex set of intertwined business and terrorist enterprises."[15] These businesses consisted of many subsidiaries with access to a worldwide nexus of bank accounts. Thus, Al Qaeda's financial web began to mirror its operational web of affiliate groups.[16] Al Qaeda's financial network like its affiliate groups possess limited connections with each other and the core group. This helped maintain operational security and prevent penetration.[17] Bin Laden evolved his financing of Al Qaeda by transitioning away from using his personal fortune to using funds generated through his businesses, charitable donations, and illicit operations.[18] Other works that support this information on Al Qaeda's formative years are the State Department's *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, *Inside Al Qaeda* by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, *Al Qaeda* by Jason Burke, and *Holy War Inc.* by Peter Bergen.

Jason Burke, a journalist with more than a decade of experience in the Middle East, expresses a divergent opinion of Al Qaeda than the official interpretation of the United States State Department. In his book *Al Qaeda, The True Story of Radical Islam*

Burke cites there are three distinct forms of Al Qaeda. It existed from 1989-1996 as the core group of those Muslims who traveled to Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet Union.[19] This group forms the core of what is truly Al Qaeda.

A second form of Al Qaeda emerged in 1996, out of the group that left Afghanistan and either returned to their homelands or went to participate in other regional jihads.[20] The formation of a second version of Al Qaeda includes other Islamic militant groups with superficial linkage to Osama Bin Laden and the core group.[21] Burke states that such regional groups are not necessarily Al Qaeda because this label disregards the regional nature of their struggle and overstates the operational control exerted on them by Al Qaeda.[22] These groups might share a common ideology and look to Al Qaeda for inspiration or logistical support, but are not a part of Al Qaeda.[23] The core of Al Qaeda is similar to a "venture-capitalist" firm.[24] This core group serves to sponsor projects proposed and organized by affiliate organizations.[25]

Burke describes the third form of Al Qaeda that evolved after the 9/11 attack as "the idea." [26] This focuses on those groups or individuals who carry out attacks because they are motivated by Bin Laden's worldview and ideology. Burke concludes that the Al Qaeda that existed prior to 9/11 has evolved into a broad network of local/regional organizations that are lumped under the Al Qaeda franchise solely based on a common ideology or past logistical ties. Burke states that governments have been eager to characterize Islamic insurgent groups as belonging to Al Qaeda because it offers more justification for the use of heavy-handed tactics as exemplified in Chechnya, Uzbekistan, China, North Africa, and the Balkans.[27]

According to Burke, Bin Laden's role in the Islamic jihadi movement is overstated. He cites that following the Soviet-Afghan war there were many individuals who possessed the expertise, charisma, and ability to form Al Qaeda.[28] Bin Laden emerged as the preeminent leader because, in addition to the aforementioned qualities, he possessed the financial means that the others lacked. For Burke, Bin Laden is more of an opportunist whose "current preeminence is likely to prove merely a temporary phase in the history of modern Islamic militant activism."[29]

Burke's analysis is useful in that it shows how Al Qaeda is difficult to comprehend and conceptualize. Al Qaeda means different things to different people, and there is no way to discern whose view is more accurate. Some authors like Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, and Dr. Bruce Hoffman conceptualize Al Qaeda's evolution as retaining its physical transnational entity. To them it possesses a core and certain groups within its network as apart of Al Qaeda proper. Dr. Marc Sageman and Peter Bergen support Burke's postulation about Al Qaeda's value as a "venture capitalist" organization. To them Al Qaeda represents a vanguard, a "franchise" or brand name for radical Sunni terrorism.[30] Dr. Sageman and Bergen believe that Al Qaeda has developed at the strategic level into a broad encompassing ideology. However, they also consider that Al Qaeda retains a small core group that possesses transnational appeal to a variety of like-minded, yet geographically and socially dissimilar terrorist groups.[31]

Dr. Marc Sageman, a former Foreign Service officer and forensic psychiatrist, examines the phenomenon of transnational terrorism with particular attention to Al Qaeda. In his book *Understanding Terror Networks*, Sageman pieces together a composite psychological profile of the jihadist mindset based upon his personal

examination of 172 terrorists.[32] While the majority of his book focuses on the profiles of his subjects and his conclusions concerning what factors cause people to join the jihadist cause, the first two chapters provide some contextual material on the origins of jihad and its evolution.

Sageman believes the origin of modern jihad is due to existing social conditions in the Middle East that have given legitimacy to radical Islam and its desire to restore Islam to prominence.[33] Al Qaeda serves as the vanguard for the modern jihadist.[34] Dr. Sageman cites that there are two focuses of the jihadist cause. These are removing Western (i.e. United States) influence from the Middle East and removing Muslim regimes it identifies as illegitimate or *takfir*.[35]

In Sageman's view, the global salafist jihad is "composed of four clusters surrounded by innumerable islands consisting of cliques and singletons of potential candidates."[36] Above these four clusters is a self-organizing informal core group consisting of Bin Laden and close personal associates that connects to the other groups. Below this core group is the *majlis al shura* or consultive council that oversees the four major committees of finance, military, religious, and public affairs.[37] The network includes two Arab clusters (Maghreb and Egyptian) that resemble small world networks and the Southeast Asian cluster that is vertical in its hierarchy.[38] This dichotomy between the organization of clusters is important because they each possess their own unique challenges concerning nodal analysis, establishing linkages, and potential infiltration. Dr. Sageman believes that the evolution of this organization and Bin Laden's hands off approach has made Al Qaeda more resilient, more flexible, and harder to combat.[39]

There are two sources written by former members of the Clinton and Bush administrations with direct firsthand knowledge about the danger of Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Michael Scheuer, a twenty-two year former CIA officer who headed the CIA's Bin Laden unit from 1996-1999, explains the threat posed by Al Qaeda in his revised edition of *Through Our Enemies' Eyes, Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America.* Scheuer's premise is that the United States underestimates and does not understand the significance of Al Qaeda's threat.[40] Most of this book is a deconstruction of Osama Bin Laden, his messianic vision of re-establishing an Islamic caliphate, and the graveness of Al Qaeda's threat.

Scheuer's contention is that the United States portrays Bin Laden and the jihadist movement as essentially a group of "myopic lunatics" who are guided by irrational principles or visions.[41] Scheuer believes that Bin Laden and his network of terrorists are in fact more rational than the United States gives them credit. Until the West recognizes and accepts Bin Laden and those who join militant Islamic as rational, dedicated, and highly capable opponents, it will continue to remain ignorant of Al Qaeda's danger.[42]

Expanding this premise, Scheuer states that the real threat of Al Qaeda is that it mobilizes two powerful global forces. The forces that Bin Laden is using to justify Al Qaeda's challenge to the global order are religion and nationalism.[43] Bin Laden's transnational appeal to Muslims and his ability to co-opt nationalistic struggles into his larger jihad (Chechnya, Egypt, Algeria, Philippines, Indonesia, Kashmir, and Afghanistan for example) means that conflict between radical Islam and the West is unavoidable. Scheuer's belief is similar to what Samuel P. Huntington describes in "The Clash of Civilizations." Huntington predicts that future conflicts will focus more on cultural rather

than ideological differences.[44] Critical areas are where two different cultures come into contact. For example, the Middle East represents the intersection for three of the world's most prominent religions.[45] This potential for conflict is more acute than past struggles because radical Islamic terrorism is a force that unlike the Soviet Union during the Cold War that will not negotiate or compromise.

Scheuer analyzes how the United States must begin to conceptualize the threat that Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden represent. Al Qaeda has grown substantially since its inception and remains a major threat. Its ideology is more durable and not likely to burn out like despotism, fascism, and communism.[46] Radical salafist/wahabbi Islam will continue to gain strength and remain a threat so long as the United States continues its policies that support authoritarian Muslim regimes and Israel.[47]

Richard A. Clarke, a counter-terrorism expert for twenty years and an associate of Michael Scheuer provides a similar analysis. Despite a common message, the two men differed in their efforts to combat Al Qaeda.[48] Clarke's book *Against All Enemies, Inside America's War on Terror,* agrees with Scheuer's analysis that Al Qaeda was a major threat the United States underrated prior to 9/11. Clarke believes that the elected leaders of the United States have largely failed to comprehend Al Qaeda's danger.[49] He defines Al Qaeda as, a worldwide conspiracy masquerading as a religious sect. Its goal is a fourteenth century style theocracy in which women have no rights, everyone is forced to be Muslim, and the Sharia legal system is used to cut off hands and stone people to death."[50] In pursuit of this goal, Al Qaeda has evolved and refined its operations from a motley group of mujahideen in Afghanistan fighting the Soviet Union, into a sophisticated global enterprise. It has adapted to exploit the seams that increased access

to technology, global telecommunications, ease of international travel, and international commerce offers.[51] Clarke's analysis of Al Qaeda's financing notes that the group relies on multiple sources of funding, including illegal activities, the infiltration of charities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and legitimate front businesses.[52] This analysis of Al Qaeda's agrees with other experts, like Peter Bergen, Dr. Bruce Hoffman, Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, and Loretta Napoleoni, who stated Al Qaeda's worldwide nexus of financial support consists of both legal and illicit operations.

Al Qaeda's center of gravity in Clarke's view is its ideology.[53] This ideology according to Clarke is a perverted, selective interpretation of Islam. It serves to appeal across geographic, social, and cultural lines in order to draw Muslims into Al Qaeda's jihad. In Clarke's view, it is important that the United States recognizes this and adapts its policies to counter Al Qaeda's ideology. This would help reduce the size of Al Qaeda's recruitment pool.[54]

Clarke's book serves more as a warning about Al Qaeda's danger than a detailed description of its organization or evolution. It is necessary to state that Clarke's book, while factual and relevant, ultimately suffers from its reputation as a tell-all book following his public disagreements with the Bush administration's Iraq policy. It is necessary to keep this in mind when analyzing Clarke's assessments. Richard Clarke believes Al Qaeda is likely to alter as the War on Terrorism progresses. Dr. Bruce Hoffman and Peter Bergen support Clarke's opinion believing that Al Qaeda must continue to evolve to retain its viability.[55] Clarke thinks Al Qaeda intends to operate using "clones" which the author believes are similar to Dr. Bruce Hoffman's characterization of local like-minded individuals or organizations that derive inspiration

from Al Qaeda and seek to emulate them.[56] Clarke acknowledges that Al Qaeda is in this current war "for the long haul" which will pose a significant challenge for the United States.[57]

There are two comprehensive sources on Al Qaeda written by authors with two distinct backgrounds. The first is Dr. Rohan Gunaratna's *Inside Al Qaeda*. Gunaratna is the head of terrorism research at the Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies in Singapore and is widely sought by other institutions for expert commentary on terrorism. The second is Peter Bergen's *Holy War Inc.* Bergen is a print and television journalist who also served as a terrorism analyst for CNN and an adjunct professor at John's Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. These two sources provide a wealth of information that allows the reader to trace the evolution of Al Qaeda from its origin through 2002. Unlike the aforementioned comprehensive sources, these works provide more analysis on Al Qaeda and its evolution.

Gunaratna analyzes Al Qaeda's evolution by examining its leadership, organization, financial network, and operational focus. Because of its evolution, he states, "the global fight against Al Qaeda will be the defining conflict of the early twenty-first century."[58] Gunaratna characterizes Al Qaeda as the core group of a global network of Sunni terrorist organizations. To support this network Osama Bin Laden parlayed his personal fortunes into a global financial and operational nexus that exploits the process of globalization to fund its activities. It has developed an ideological appeal that transcends social and geographical boundaries to fill its ranks with fresh recruits.

Al Qaeda's leader, Osama Bin Laden, initially played a prominent role in the evolution of the group.[59] Gunaratna states that his role has evolved from one of direct

participation and hands on oversight into a role described by Hoffman and Burke as a "venture capitalist."[60] Bin Laden provides strategic and some operational guidance and funds projects that he believes will advance Al Qaeda's cause. He also serves as a major force in expanding Al Qaeda's ties with other groups, forging alliances with Egyptian, Indonesian, Pakistani, Chechen, and Algerian terrorist groups.[61]

Gunaratna provides detailed information on how Al Qaeda funds its global operations. Mirroring its transnational terrorist network, Al Qaeda has transformed its financial network in a similar manner, taking full advantage of the opportunities that globalization and unique Islamic institutions offer.[62] Gunaratna contends that while living in the Sudan, Bin Laden forged permanent links to Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Group of Egypt, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan, and the Jihad Movement of Bangladesh forming the "World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against the Jew and the Crusaders" (al-Jabhah al Islamiyyah al-'Alamiyyah Li Qital al-Yahud Wal-Salibiyyin).[63] Similarly, Bin Laden began to establish various businesses in Sudan and overseas to expand his financial base from Europe to Asia enabling him to shift funding to means other than his personal fortunes.[64] Gunaratna believes that Al Qaeda is the benefactor of wealthy Muslim businessmen, front businesses and banks in the Middle East, siphoning aid and money from NGOs and Islamic charities, and the penetration of legitimate and illegal operations.[65] He also specifically mentions that Al Qaeda has infiltrated key industries including olives, furniture, diamond mining, food processing, import/export of cars and trucks from Russia and Slovenia, machinery, sugar, raisins, and nuts to garner financial aid.[66]

To transfer funds, Al Qaeda takes full advantage of the *hawala* system. Hawala is a form of Islamic banking. The benefit of hawala is the ability to transfer money with no financial record of the transaction; it operates solely on trust.[67] Dr. Gunaratna estimates that in Pakistan alone two to three billion dollars annually enter the country each year through the hawala system compared to one billion dollars through formal banks.[68] There are 1,000 hawaladars in Pakistan with some handling transfers amounting to ten million dollars.[69] Other experts on terrorism like Dr. Bruce Hoffman and Loretta Napoleoni in her book *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Network* support Gunaratna's assessment of Al Qaeda's financial evolution. Napoleoni in particular believes that the hawala system and the infiltration of legitimate businesses serve as sources of funding for Al Qaeda.[70]

Gunaratna states that Al Qaeda's jihad has evolved operationally in its focus. Bin Laden's fatwas of 1996 and 1998 state that Al Qaeda's grievances are with both impious Muslim regimes and the United States. Its jihad's focus has shifted from impious Muslim governments, the "near enemy," to one directed against the United States and its allies known as the "far enemy."[71] This is due to several factors. First, the authoritarian nature of the regimes in places like Egypt, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia countered salafist Islamic movements with brutal tactics, reducing the ability of them to attract new recruits.[72] This prompted Al Qaeda's leaders to refocus their attacks towards the supporter of such impious regimes, namely the United States. This shift enabled Al Qaeda to transform its jihad. The jihad has evolved into a response to perceived U.S. aggression through its physical, economic, and political occupation of the Middle East and for its support for Israel.[73] Al Qaeda attacks against the United States from 1998 to 2002 were a catalyst

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for anti-American sentiment in Muslim areas throughout the globe and helped to fill its ranks.[74]

Like Gunaratna, journalist Peter Bergen portrays Al Qaeda as an organization that has evolved. He finds Al Qaeda analogous to the multifaceted SaudiBinLaden[sic] Group with Osama Bin Laden serving as "the Director."[75] Al Qaeda has evolved from its organization in Afghanistan in 1989 taking the form of a multinational holding company with partial or controlling interest in other companies.[76] This analogy is similar to other descriptions expressed in the other major writings on Al Qaeda, specifically Dr. Hoffman's *Inside Terrorism* and Jason Burke's *Al-Qaeda.* However, a critical difference between Bergen and Burke is the role they assign to Bin Laden. Bergen, who is one of the few Western journalists that actually met and interview Bin Laden, describes him using a variety of adjectives: "hero, über-terrorist, and the banner of Islamic militancy."[77] His description of Bin Laden's role is divergent from Jason Burke's in that Bergen believes Bin Laden's role in global jihadi movement is more pivotal.[78] Bergen believes that without Bin Laden's personal talents Al Qaeda would not have become the organization it is today.

Bergen's thoughts on Al Qaeda's evolution are not significantly different from the previous literature discussed. Like Michael Scheuer, Bergen believes there is a plethora of inaccurate information about Bin Laden. This contributes to a significant misunderstanding of Bin Laden's worldview, goals, and threat.[79] Bergen believes Al Qaeda's most enduring quality is its patience. Al Qaeda is a patient enemy that is willing and able to bide its time to attack when it deems the time is most favorable to its terms.[80] In this regard, Bin Laden has accurately assessed that the United States is renowned for

preferring fast, short, and bloodless conflicts.[81] This perception of the United States is a

consistent theme in Bin Laden's rhetoric, especially in his fatwas. Al Qaeda's patience

makes assessing its status difficult since a decline in operation might simply mean the

group is waiting for an opportune time to strike.[82]

<center>Focus Area Sources</center>

There are numerous sources about Al Qaeda available on the internet and in print

that focus their analysis on a particular aspect of the organization. The following is a

review of what the author considers the more substantive of these sources. These works

focus on Al Qaeda's ideology, goals, leadership, or financing. They serve to provide

more detailed information on specific aspects on Al Qaeda than the comprehensive works

offer.

Dr. Bruce Hoffman has written and testified extensively on Al Qaeda in the last

eight years, yet a single source that contains Hoffman's complete assessment of Al Qaeda

does not exist. One must read the entire collection of numerous monographs, two books,

and abundant testimony before Congress in order to gain a complete assessment.

A central position that resonates throughout Hoffman's writings and testimony is

that Al Qaeda's center of gravity is its ideology. Its ideology allows Al Qaeda to retain its

viability.[83] For Hoffman, Al Qaeda remains essentially a small core group that

perpetuates its ideology to inspire others to commit acts in its name.[84] Hoffman believes

that Bin Laden's considerable business acumen allowed him to enable Al Qaeda and its

associated network to function as a multinational corporation.[85] Instead of actually

conducting operations itself, Al Qaeda is more likely to act through one of its affiliates

<center>35</center>

like the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), or the Groupe Islamique Armeé (GIA).[86]

Hoffman's position is that Al Qaeda's leadership has expanded the organization from merely a localized guerilla insurgency into a transnational global jihad. It is capable of mounting a significant media and information operations campaign to advance their cause, attract and train a steady amount of recruits to quickly replenish its ranks, operate a global, interconnected financial network, and conducting devastating attacks their opponents in every corner of the globe.[87] It is more akin to a franchise name rather than a specific group: a brand name for Islamic militancy that is globally recognized.[88]

In his testimony, "Islam and the West: Searching for Common Ground, The Terrorist Threat and the Counter-Terrorism Effort" before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Hoffman divides Al Qaeda into four main components. These consist of Al Qaeda central, Al Qaeda affiliates, Al Qaeda locals, and the Al Qaeda network.[89] Like Dr. Marc Sageman states in the *Understanding Terror Networks,* these groups connect through single points of contact like a key planner or financier.[90] The last group Hoffman mentions is the network of homegrown terrorists that constitute those who perpetrate terrorist acts based upon inspiration from Al Qaeda's ideology and messages. Hoffman, like Jason Burke and Richard Clarke, believes these members are quickly becoming the most active and more dangerous actors. These local homegrown terrorists have been responsible for several high visibility attacks in recent years like the Madrid train bombings, the 2005 London bombings, and the assassination of Theo Van Gogh.[91]

Hoffman also supports the idea proposed by other experts like Benjamin Orbach and Keith Blanchard of the Congressional Research Service that Al Qaeda's goal of

driving the United States out of the Middle East has evolved. Al Qaeda's stated pre-9/11

goal according to Bin Laden's fatwas of 1996 and 1998 was to drive the United States out

of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East at large.[92] Reconsideration of the 9/11 attacks

indicates that the true intent of the attacks might have been to lure the United States

further into military operations in the Middle East. Benjamin Orbach, Dr. Rohan

Gunaratna, and Peter L. Bergen support this premise to varying degrees. The author

believes that this reconsideration is a reaction to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a foreign

policy decision that many of the aforementioned experts think is a diversion from the

War of Terror.

In an updated and expanded edition of *Inside Terrorism*, Hoffman states that the

9/11 attacks succeeded in luring the United States into further combat in the Middle East.

He asserts that Bin Laden believes that the United States would fight, and retreat once Al

Qaeda defeated it as the Soviet Union did in the 1980s.[93] Bin Laden believes that Al

Qaeda can protract the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq long enough to bleed the United

States financially.[94] Al Qaeda's central leadership view the United States' war in Iraq as

a "a golden and unique opportunity" that focuses the United States away from

Afghanistan and other theaters, and as a means of attracting new recruits.[95]

There is a growing amount of literature about the war in Iraq and what impact it is

having on Al Qaeda. The war in Iraq serves as a recruitment tool and as a battlefield

laboratory for a new generation of Al Qaeda leaders and operatives.[96] There is no

shortage of volunteers willing to travel to Iraq from North Africa, Asia, and Europe's

growing population of radical Muslims to fight the United States.[97] Although the number

of foreign fighters with allegiance to Al Qaeda in Iraq is relatively small when compared to the entire insurgency, they have made their presence felt.[98]

Terrorism experts, including Dr. Bruce Hoffman, Dr. Fawaz A. Gerges, and Dr. Brian Jenkins, have formed a consensus about the effects of the war in Iraq on Al Qaeda' development. The Soviet-Afghan war helped establish the initial linkages between various regional Islamic militant groups and Al Qaeda's core leadership. Hoffman alludes to the effect that the war in Iraq is likely to have on Al Qaeda's future. The Iraq war has encouraged more Muslims to join Al Qaeda's ranks, and serves as a bloody training ground for future jihadists.[99] It is the twenty-first century version of what Afghanistan was to the initial cadre of Al Qaeda and Chechnya was in the mid 1990s. The war in Iraq will serve to further radicalize Al Qaeda, and help build a new generation of battle-hardened jihadists.[100] Since 2003, these jihadists have had the opportunity to fight against the most powerful and capable military force in the world. They have had to adapt their tactics, weaponry, and strategies as U.S. forces have adapted to fight them. Furthermore, they have fought the United States in Iraq's urban battlefields of Najaf, Samarra, Baghdad, and Fallujah.[101] When the war ends, the jihadists that survive will return to their homeland, skilled in urban guerilla warfare and advanced terrorist tactics.[102]

Al Qaeda's senior leaders have described the war in Iraq as "a golden and unique opportunity."[103] Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri have repeatedly stated that they believe the war in Iraq will serve to bleed the United States financially. The long-term effect they feel the war in Iraq will have is that their contemporary mujahideen there will inflict a critical defeat and help precipitate the collapse of the United States.[104] In their mind, this

is analogous to their perception that the Soviet Union's collapse was a result of its defeat in Afghanistan.

Aiding Al Qaeda in its jihad, particularly in Iraq, is what amounts to a virtual jihad that Al Qaeda has been able to establish. Dr. Hoffman states this virtual jihad exists by utilizing the tools of modern communication: visual, print, and the Internet to disseminate its message and propaganda to a global audience.[105] The Internet serves as a means of conducting strategic communications to inspire action by its affiliates and local homegrown imitators.

Al Qaeda is a learning and adaptive organization. Hoffman claims that it uses a similar review process similar in purpose to the after action review (AAR) conducted by the U.S. Army.[106] This process serves to capture lessons identified from previous operations in order to avoid repeating mistakes or improving future performance.[107] This is instructive in ensuring the maintenance of critical skills and the ability to carry out new attacks based on previous operations. Dr. Hoffman states that the 2005 London bombers learned many lessons from the March, 2004 Madrid bombings despite the differences in style and modus operandi between the attacks.[108]

Hoffman elaborates on post 9/11 Al Qaeda stating that most significant aspect of its evolution is that it has become more amorphous, retaining looser control over its subordinate entities. He describes the pre-9/11 Al Qaeda as a "unitary organization, assuming the dimensions of a lumbering bureaucracy."[109] It possessed a discernable center of gravity that the United States could attack and achieve tangible effects. This corresponds to Dr. Gunaratna's position that Al Qaeda's pyramidal, hierarchical structure

has given way to a flatter more linear model that exerts less control over the day-to-day operations. [110]

According to Dr. Hoffman Al Qaeda remains a significant threat to United States national security.[111] Dr Hoffman attributes Al Qaeda's danger to its ability to attack with a variety of agents, such as local imitators mixed with affiliate groups. He also cites Al Qaeda's ability to regenerate depleted cells and fill leadership vacancies quickly.[112] Al Qaeda has been able to accomplish this because its center of gravity lies in the organization's ideology.[113]

There are three prominent works on Al Qaeda sponsored by the United States Army War College. In "Al-Qaeda as Insurgency" Michael F. Morris states that Al Qaeda represents more of a global Islamic insurgency than a terrorist organization. He believes that its methodology is closer the Department of Defense's definition of an insurgency rather than a terrorist organization.[114] Morris argues that an insurgency uses political resources and violence to achieve its goals, while terrorists use violence in preference to political means. Morris believes that Al Qaeda uses theological elements to mask its political agenda. To achieve its goals, Morris states that Al Qaeda's core membership likely numbers less than 100 dedicated members has adopted methods similar to Mao Tse Tung's concept of mass mobilization and protracted revolutionary war. [115]

Two other critical works, "Al Qaeda: Center of Gravity and Decisive Points" by Joseph P. Schweitzer and "Al Qaeda's Center of Gravity" by James A. Bliss, examine the factors they believe empower the terrorist entity. Schweitzer agrees with Dr. Bruce Hoffman and other experts contending that Al Qaeda's center of gravity is its ideology.[116]

Divergent to this, Bliss asserts that the organization's leadership and Islamist support serve as its center of gravity.[117] Citing Clauswitz, COL Bliss contends that leadership in an organization directly influences the group's success. COL Bliss affirms that Osama Bin Laden's charisma, vision, wealth, and leadership are the underlying reasons for Al Qaeda's success, and therefore constitute a center of gravity.[118] Experts like Dr. Gunaratna and Peter Bergen support this conclusion in part by citing Bin Laden's popularity in the Muslim world and his ability to attract new recruits.[119] Jason Burke disagrees in his book *Al-Qaeda: The True Story Behind Radical Islam*, which downplays Bin Laden's role in the global jihadi movement.[120]

Benjamin Orbach, the David Kagan Fellow of Middle East Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, supports the idea that Al Qaeda believes it can inflict a defeat on the United States similar to the defeat the Soviet Union suffered in Afghanistan.[121] Orbach believes that Al Qaeda consists of approximately 3-5,000 members who work within a network of like-minded terrorist organizations spanning the globe.[122] Al Qaeda has a decentralized command and control system that lacks geographic boundaries. This hampers efforts to combat it.[123] This assessment is consistent with those Dr. Hoffman and Dr. Gunaratna, but differs with how Burke conceptualizes Al Qaeda.

Although Al Qaeda's ideology is an important aspect of its jihad, so too is its financing. The description of Al Qaeda's financial network offered by Peter Bergen and Dr. Rohan Gunaratna coincide with Loretta Napoleoni's book *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Networks.* Napoleoni asserts that Al Qaeda utilizes a multitude of resources, both legitimate and illegitimate to fund its operations.[124] Al Qaeda's

legitimate sources of funding come from a variety of legal practices like the honey
industry and the hawala banking system.[125] Al Qaeda also uses mosques, Islamic banks,
non-governmental organizations, and Islamic charities to garner donations and to mask
financial transactions.[126]

Napoleoni notes that globalization played a critical to Al Qaeda's financial
evolution. [127] Globalization not only allowed Al Qaeda to alter its operational side, it has
allowed Al Qaeda to diversify its portfolio. Napoleoni's belief is that Al Qaeda operates
in globalization's shadows, slowly increasing its connection to the legitimate global
economy. She estimates that the entire terrorist economy, of which Al Qaeda occupies a
central position, amounts to some $1.5 trillion of the world's economy.[128] This represents
a significant portion of the global economy.

Echoing Napoleoni's assessment of Al Qaeda is Paul J. Smith who sets out
examining Al Qaeda as a model for future terrorist groups. In his article "Transnational
Terrorism and the al Qaeda Model: Confronting New Realities" Smith cites that terrorist
groups like Al Qaeda are both products and beneficiaries of globalization.[129] He argues
that globalization and access to advanced technologies have allowed Al Qaeda to evolve
into a transnational movement.[130]

Smith like Hoffman, believes Al Qaeda operates with an informal horizontal
structure comprising of more than twenty-four terrorist groups, yet still possesses a
formalized vertical structure.[131] Osama Bin Laden and his chief lieutenants, al-Zawahiri
and Atef, oversee and supervise the organization are at the head of the organization.
Below this triumvirate is the *majlis al shura* that is responsible for directing the four
major committees (military, religious, financial, and media). Al Qaeda's senior leaders

hand picks the heads of these committees. Smith states: "Until the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, al Qaeda acted in a manner somewhat resembling a large charity organization that funded terrorist projects to be conducted by preexisting or affiliate groups."[132] Al Qaeda's ability to operate as a central node for affiliated terrorist groups is constrained by the current operational environment.[133] This constrained environment has forced Al Qaeda to concentrate on inspiring local or affiliate groups to execute attacks.[134] Smith cites growing ties in Southeast Asia, Africa, the Caucasus, and even the "triple border" area (Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay) between local insurgent groups and Al Qaeda or its affiliates.[135]

In "Countering Al Qaeda" RAND researcher Dr. Brian Jenkins contends that Al Qaeda has links or operatives in over sixty countries and has a massive pool of potential recruits. Jenkins concedes that Al Qaeda possesses the initiative in the War on Terror, because there are so many vulnerable targets within Al Qaeda's operational reach for the West to protect.[136] Jenkins states that Al Qaeda is likely to adapt a looser global network that supports local initiatives to attack Western interests.[137] Hoffman's analysis supports Jenkin's premise. Jenkins believes that until Al Qaeda is able to consolidate strategically, it will require local cells to operate independently and often in uncoordinated means. The significance of this is that while Al Qaeda's strategic disorganization may preclude a large-scale attack like 9/11 it means that distinguishing Al Qaeda attacks from local "home grown" terrorist incidents will be extremely difficult.[138] Dr Hoffman confirms this analysis in "Lessons of 9/11," stating that by utilizing one or more of its four groups to undertake terrorist attacks, Al Qaeda seeks to modify or adapt the group's modus operandi to reduce the success of pattern analysis.[139]

Some focus on Al Qaeda's ideology and organization and point out it possesses

similarities with the Marxist, left wing revolutionary movements during the 1960s. Dr.

Waller R. Newell, professor of political science and philosophy at Carleton University in

Ottawa, Canada, and Frederick W. Kagan, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise

Institute, believe that Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda bear certain similarities with left

wing revolutionary movements that occurred in the 1960s. Newell draws several

comparisons between Bin Laden and left wing European ideology citing a commonality

in a desire to return society to medieval state of existence and the acceptance of violence

to achieve their ends. He remarks that this should not be surprising given the influence of

socialism on the postcolonial mind-set of certain Arab societies like Egypt where jihadist

ideology evolved.[140]

Bin Laden's vision of reestablishing the caliphate harkens to return to a medieval

Islamic state governed by a strict wahhabist Sharia law.[141] Newell believes Bin Laden's

exaltation of Afghan society under the Taliban is similar to views expressed by German

philosopher Martin Heidegger's call for Germans to "return to a foggy, medieval, blood-

and-soil collectivism purged of the corruptions of modernity" and Pol Pot's desire to

return Cambodia to "Year Zero."[142] Newell draws a comparison between Heidegger's

and Pol Pot's ideology and Al Qaeda's desire to return society to a basic form of

existence founded on Islamic law and devoid of external influences.[143]

Bin Laden and Al Qaeda in Dr. Newell's view also draw inspiration from the

violent leftist reaction in Europe during the later 1960s. The riots in Paris in 1968

demonstrated the power of dedicated individuals to guide their own destinies. Dr. Newell

states that the influence of this movement was inculcated into the various terrorist

organizations that existed throughout Europe during the later 1960s and 1970s which included several Islamic groups.[144]

Dr. Newell argues that socialism and Marxism in the post-colonial governance of the Middle East were influential in the development of the leaders of today's global jihadi movement.[145] Fathi Yakan, a protégé of Sayyid Qutb who was a major influence on Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, states: "The groundwork for the French Revolution was laid by Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu; the Communist Revolution realized plans set by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. . . . The same holds true for us as well."[146] Newell believes that the intellectual tenets of socialism and Marxism made their way into the culture of the Middle East through European literature and the educational system that its leaders were apart of.[147]

Frederick W. Kagan argues that Al Qaeda's expresses its jihad as a universal struggle against the West, similar in structure to how Marx expressed the universal struggle of the proletariat against capitalist exploitation. Kagan's argument is that Al Qaeda's ideological base, formed by Sayyid Qutb, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abdullah Azzam, and Hassan al-Banna, shares many similarities in perspectives and its historical outlook with Karl Marx.[148] Qutb and Marx both held beliefs that the world of their time was corrupt, oppressive, and locked in perpetual conflict with itself. Whereas Marx believed that the cause of this conflict was the historical socioeconomic oppression of the proletariat by capitalistic nation-states, Qutb attributed the Muslim world's ills to the subjugation of human beings by one another.[149] This was an expression of Egypt's brutal suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood and other like-minded Islamists. Qutb believed

that only God was just enough to exercise sovereignty. The views Marx and Qutb held

posited an inevitable struggle between two historical forces.[150]

Both Marx and Qutb believed in the eventual destruction of existing state

structures and institutions. Marx believed that the victory of the proletariat would usher in

a global socialist order where the state eventually withers away in favor of "natural

laws."[151] Qutb believed that once the *umma* reformed, the unjust state structures that

oppressed Muslims would collapse in favor of God's law (sharia) as it existed under the

first Muslims.[152]

Marx and Qutb both viewed the importance in educating their respective

audiences as critical to success.[153] Marx and Lenin published their goals and worldviews

respectively in *Das Kapital* and *What is to be Done?* Qutb outlined his roadmap for

Islamic reformation in the book *Milestones* that was a major influence in the development

of Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.[154] In order to accomplish their goals,

Qutb's successor, Al Qaeda serves as a vanguard for global Islamic fundamentalism that

is similar to Marx's concept of the vanguard of the proletariat. Kagan states that:

> He [Sayyid Qutb's world view]in a nutshell is the basic structure of Marxism-
> Leninism-Stalinism reproduced in a religious context: the corruption and
> illegitimacy of current state structures; the inadmissibility of any state structures
> in a justly ordered world; the need to transform humanity before entering into that
> world; the need to begin by seizing power in a single state, but with the aim of
> ultimately destroying all states; the error of having any human or group of
> humans holding sovereignty over any other; and the critical role of a vanguard
> revolutionary group in the process.[155]

This is not to say that Al Qaeda's leaders, or Sayyid Qutb, subscribes or advocate

Marxism or Leninism. To the contrary, they oppose these ideologies because they violate

Islam's most basic tenets and due to their atheistic views. However, Kagan suggest that

there are similarities between how Marx, Lenin, and Al Qaeda organize and express their world-views.

Similar to Kagan and Newell, some of the authors of the comprehensive sources believe that Al Qaeda share some commonalities with Marx. Gunaratna also suggests a similarity between Marx and Al Qaeda. He states that, "Using techniques drawn from Leninism and operating on the Marxist militant model, it [Al Qaeda] uses nom de guerre, adheres strictly to a cell structure, follows the idea of a cadre party, maintains tight discipline, promotes self-sacrifice and reverence for its leadership, and is guided by a program of action." [156] These sources are insightful because they recognize that similarities between Al Qaeda and left wing ideologies exist on certain levels. They demonstrate how Al Qaeda has transmuted fundamentalist Islamic thought interspersing it with a left wing European ideology that it believes is impious and a product of infidels.[157]

<u>Conclusion</u>

This literature review represents the collective knowledge of the major works germane to Al Qaeda's evolution. The author selected these sources because the credentials of the authors ensure that they are of the highest academic value and scholarship available. Furthermore, they represent a diverse collection of viewpoints about Al Qaeda and its evolution. These works stand apart and help provide a clear understanding of Al Qaeda's evolution.

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[1]United States State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1998* (Washington DC: State Department, April 1999), 82.

[2]United States State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2000* (Washington DC: State Department, April 2001), 8, 68-69

[3]Ibid., 8.

[4]Ibid., 56,59.

[5]Ibid., 30.

[6]United States State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1999* (Washington DC: State Department, April 2000), 32.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Congress, *The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* or *the 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: Norton, 2004), xv.

[9]Ibid., 145.

[10]Ibid., 149.

[11]Ibid., 152-153.

[12]Bruce Hoffman, "Lessons of 9/11," submitted for the Committee Record to the United States Joint Inquiry Staff of the House and Senate Select Committees on Intelligence (Washington D.C.: 8 October 2002); accessed 20 April 2007; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT201/; Internet.

[13]Congress, *The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, 67.

[14]Ibid., 57.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., 58-59.

[17]Ibid., 170.

[18]Ibid., 57, 170-171.

[19]Jason Burke, *Al Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam*, 2d ed. (New York: I. B. Taurus, 2004), 20-21.

[20]Ibid., 10-11.

[21]Ibid., 10.

[22]Ibid., 10-11.

[23]Ibid., 11.

[24]Ibid., 12-13.

[25]Ibid., 13.

[26]Ibid., 15.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., 10.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004),1; and Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 32.

[31]Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 282; and Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 32.

[32]Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, vii.

[33]Ibid., 3-4.

[34]Ibid., 1.

[35]Ibid., 4, 7-10. The author acknowledges several interpretations and usages of the words *takfir* and *kufi*r exist. The author is using the term to describe impious Muslim regimes.

[36]Ibid., 171.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., 172-173.

[40]Michael Scheuer, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radial Islam, and the Future of America*, 2d ed. (New York: Potomac Books, 2006), 282.

[41]Ibid., 28.

[42]Ibid., 29.

[43]Ibid., 28.

[44]Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (summer 1993), 22.

[45]Ibid., 31-33.

[46]Scheuer, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radial Islam, and the Future of America*, 282-285.

[47]Ibid., 274.

[48]Scheuer states, "Clarke's book [*Against All Enemies*] is also a crucial complement to the September 11 panel's failure to condemn Mr. Clinton's failure to capture or kill bin Laden on any of the eight to 10 chances afforded by CIA reporting. Mr. Clarke never mentions that President Bush had no chances to kill bin Laden before September 11 and leaves readers with the false impression that he, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Clinton's national security adviser, Sandy Berger, did their best to end the bin Laden threat. That trio, in my view, abetted al Qaeda, and if the September 11 families were smart they would focus on the dereliction of Dick [Clarke], Bill [Clinton] and Sandy [Berger] and not the antics of convicted September 11 conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui." Michael F. Scheuer. "Bill and Dick, Osama and Sandy" *Washington Times*, July 5, 2006.

[49]Richard A Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: The Free Press, 2004), 289-290.

[50]Ibid., 218.

[51]Ibid., 256.

[52]Ibid., 192,193,196.

[53]Ibid., 262-263.

[54]Ibid, 245-6, 262.

[55]Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 241-242; and Dr. Bruce Hoffman interview by author, October 18, 2006, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

[56]Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 246.

[57]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 290.

[58]Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror,* 2d ed. (New York: Penguin Group, 2003), 294.

[59] Ibid., 2.

[60]Ibid., 91.

[61]Ibid., 7-9.

[62]Ibid., 80-81.

[63]Ibid., 60-61.

[64]Ibid., 209,212.

[65]Ibid., 82.

[66]Ibid., 83, 90.

[67]Ibid., 84.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Loretta Napoleoni, *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Networks* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 122-125.

[71]Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror,* 308.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Ibid., 58-60.

[74]Ibid., 317-318.

[75]Peter Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 31.

[76]Ibid., 32.

[77]Ibid., 33.

[78]Ibid., 241.

[79]Ibid., 33-35.

[80]Ibid., 242.

[81]Author's assessment based on instruction from Dr. Jonathan House during H100, 200, and 300 while a student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

[82]Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 242; the author contends that Al Qaeda's patience is similar to Nikita Khrushchev's famous quote that the Soviet Union would lull America

into a false sense of security." Author contends that Al Qaeda's patience to choose the timing and place of its attacks has a similar effect.

[83]Hoffman, "Does Our Counter-Terrorism Strategy Match the Threat?" Testimony presented before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation. (Washington, D.C.: 29September 2005); accessed 4 January 2007; available from http://www.rand.org/pub/testimonies/CT250-1/; Internet; Bruce Hoffman interview by author, October 18, 2006.

[84]Ibid., 2-4.

[85]Bruce Hoffman in Karen J. Greenberg  ed., *Al Qaeda Now: Understanding Today's Terrorists* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 23-24.

[86]Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat." Testimony presented to the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities. (Washington, D.C.: 16 February 2006); accessed 8 January 2007; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND_CT255.pdf; Internet.

[87]Hoffman, "Islam and the West: Searching for Common Ground; The Terrorist Threat and the Counter-Terrorism Effort." Testimony presented before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Washington, D.C.: 18 July 2006); accessed 20 October 2006; available from http://www.senate.gove/~foreign/testimony/2006/HoffmanTestimony060718.pdf; Internet.

[88]Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat." Testimony presented to the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities. (Washington, D.C.: 16 February 2006, accessed 8 January 2007); available from http://www.rand.org/ pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND_CT255.pdf; Internet.

[89]Hoffman, "Islam and the West: Searching for Common Ground; The Terrorist Threat and the Counter-Terrorism Effort." Testimony presented before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Washington, D.C.: 18 July 2006); accessed 20 October 2006; available from http://www.senate.gove/~foreign/testimony/2006/HoffmanTestimony060718.pdf; Internet.

[90]Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat." Testimony presented to the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities. (Washington, D.C.: 16 February 2006); accessed 8 January 2007; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND_CT255.pdf; Internet; and Sageman. *Understanding Terror Networks*, 138-140.

[91]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 287-288.

[92]Ibid., 129.

[93]Hoffman, "Lessons of 9/11," (Washington, D.C.: 2002); accessed 20 April 2007; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT201/; Internet.

[94]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 290.

[95]Ibid., 291.

[96]Fawaz A. Gerges, "Planting the Seeds of Al-Qaida's Second Generation." (27 October 2005); accessed 20 March 2007; available from http://www.fpif.org; Internet.

[97]Robert J. Bunker, ed., *Networks, Terrorism, and Global Insurgency* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 194.

[98]Hoffman, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq." (Washington, D.C.: 2005); accessed 20 May 2006; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional _papers/2005/RAND_OP127.pdf; Internet; and Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Developing Iraqi Insurgency: Status at End-2004."(Washington, D.C.: 22 December 2004); accessed 10 February 2006; available from http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/ iraqdeviraqinsurgency.pdf; Internet; and Dan Murphy, "Iraq's foreign fighters: few but deadly." (27 September 2005); accessed 3 May 2007; available from http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0927/p01s03-woiq.html; Internet.

[99]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 291.

[100]Ibid., 292-293.

[101]Hoffman, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq." (Washington, D.C.: 2005); accessed 20 May 2006; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional _papers/2005/RAND_OP127.pdf; Internet; and Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Developing Iraqi Insurgency: Status at End-2004."(Washington, D.C.: 22 December 2004); accessed 10 February 2006; available from http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs /iraqdeviraqinsurgency.pdf; Internet; and Dan Murphy, "Iraq's foreign fighters: few but deadly." (27 September 2005); accessed 3 May 2007; available from http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0927/p01s03-woiq.html; Internet; and ABC News, "Insurgent Training Camp Found in N. Iraq" (March 22, 2005); accessed March 21, 2007; available from http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=60461; Internet; and Kristin Archick, John Rollins, and Steve Woehrel, *Islamist Extremism in Europe.* (Washington, D.C.: 6 January 2006); accessed 15 March 2007; available from http://www.opencrs.com/document/RS22211; Internet; and Gerges, "Planting the Seeds of Al-Qaida's Second Generation." (27 October 2005); accessed 20 March 2007; available from http://www.fpif.org; Internet; and Alan B. Krueger, "The National Origins of Foreign Fighters in Iraq." (30 December 2006); accessed 20 March 2007; available from http://www.aeaweb.org/annual_mtg_papers/2007/0105_14301601.pdf; Internet; and *New York Times* "Foreign Fighter add to Resistance in Iraq." (22 January 2003); accessed

21 March 2007; available from http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=150017; Internet; and Timothy Kraner, "Al Qaeda in Iraq: Demobilizing the Threat."(Monterrey: December 2005); accessed 30 November 2006; available from http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nps/kraner_dec05.pdf; Internet.

[102]Brian Jenkins, "Unconquerable Nation: Knowing Our Enemy, Strengthening Ourselves" (Washington, D.C.: 2006); accessed 20 May 2007; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG454/ Jenkins. Internet.

[103]Gerges, "Al Qaeda's Golden Opportunity." (11 October 2005); accessed 4 May 2007; available from http://www.alternet.org/waroniraq/26460/. Internet.

[104]Jenkins, "Unconquerable Nation: Knowing Our Enemy, Strengthening Ourselves" (Washington, D.C.: 2006); accessed 20 May 2007; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG454/ Jenkins. Internet; and Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 290.

[105]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 290, 212-213, 221, 283.

[106]Ibid., 251-252.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Ibid.

[109]Ibid, 283.

[110]Ibid., 271.

[111]Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat," 2-3, 18.

[112]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 282-283.

[113]Ibid., 289; Bruce Hoffman interview by author, October 18, 2006.

[114]Michael F. Morris, "Al Qaeda as Insurgency" (Carlisle: 18March 2005); accessed 12 September 2006; available from http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/ksil234.pdf; Internet.

[115]Ibid.

[116]Joseph P. Schweitzer, "Al Qaeda: Centers of Gravity and Decisive Points" (Carlisle: 2003); accessed 13 September 2006; available from http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/schweitzer.pdf; Internet.

[117]James Bliss, "Al Qaeda's Center of Gravity" (Carlisle: 3 May 2005); accessed 10 September 2006; available from http://stinet.dtic.mil/dticrev/PDFs/ADA423365.pdf; Internet.

[118]Ibid.

[119]Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror,* 69-70; and Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 128, 151-152.

[120]Burke, *Al Qaeda, The True Story of Radical Islam*, 10.

[121]Benjamin Orbach, "Usama Bin Laden and Al Qa'ida: Origins and Doctrines" *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, December 2001; available from http://www.meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2001/issue4/orbach.pdf. Internet; accessed 6 September 2006.

[122]Ibid., 61.

[123]Ibid., 62.

[124]Loretta Napoleoni, *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Networks* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 122-125, 158-159.

[125]Ibid., 124-125, 158-159.

[126]Ibid., 122, 195.

[127]Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror,* 81. Setup costs are estimated at fifty million dollars per annum. Some estimate that Al Qaeda's total budget is under fifty million dollars, however, some experts cite that Al Qaeda funded Islamists pre 9/11 with upwards of $100 million.

[128]Ibid., 200.

[129]Paul J Smith, "Transnational Terrorism and the al Qaeda Model: Confronting New Realities." *Parameters* 32, no. 2 (summer 2002), 36.

[130]Ibid., 33-34.

[131]Ibid.

[132]Ibid., 35-36.

[133]Ibid., 36.

[134]Ibid., 37.

[135] Ibid., 37-38.

[136]Jenkins, "Unconquerable Nation: Knowing Our Enemy, Strengthening Ourselves" (Washington, D.C.: 2006); accessed 20 May 2007; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG454/ Jenkins; Internet.

[137]Ibid., 11-12.

[138]Ibid., 12.

[139]Hoffman, "Lessons of 9/11." (Washington, D.C.: October, 2002); accessed 14 September 2006; available from http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2005/CT201.pdf; Internet.

[140]Waller R. Newell, "Postmodern Jihad: What Osama bin Laden learned from the Left," available from http://www/weeklystandard.com/content/public/articles/000/000/ 000/553fragu.asp?pg=1; accessed 20 March 2007; Internet.

[141]Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 1.

[142]Waller R. Newell, "Postmodern Jihad: What Osama bin Laden learned from the Left," available from http://www/weeklystandard.com/content/public/articles/000/000/ 000/553fragu.asp?pg=1; accessed 20 March 2007; Internet.

[143]Peter Bergen. *Holy War Inc*., 82-83 and 95-96. Bergen reports that Bin Laden, despite his immense wealth chose to lead a simplistic life. This is consistent with reports that he viewed Afghanistan under the Taliban as a model Islamic society.

[144]Waller R. Newell, "Postmodern Jihad: What Osama bin Laden learned from the Left," available from http://www/weeklystandard.com/content/public/articles/000/000/ 000/553fragu.asp?pg=1; accessed 20 March 2007; Internet..

[145]Ibid.

[146]Ibid.

[147]Ibid.

[148]Frederick W. Kagan, "The New Bolsheviks: Understanding Al Qaeda" (16 November 2005); accessed 23 March 2007; available from http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/ vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&requesttimeout=500&folder=1087&paper=2534; Internet.

[149]Ibid.

[150]Ibid.

[151]Ibid.

[152]Ibid.

[153]Ibid.

[154]Ibid.

[155]Ibid.

[156]Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, 296.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY


Introduction and Purpose

Research for this thesis serves to identify how Al Qaeda has evolved from 1989 to 2006 with specific focus on the organization's leadership, financing, organization, goals, and operations. The author's intent is to examine Al Qaeda's evolution, the factors that might have aided this process and why this organization and its associates at large remain the single greatest terrorist threat to United States national security.[1]

Primary Research Question

The primary research focuses on how Al Qaeda has evolved. By utilizing the current literature available, the author intends to describe how Al Qaeda has evolved from a formalized organization that Bin Laden helped create at the end of the Soviet-Afghan war.[2] Over time, this organization has transformed itself into a decentralized entity that relies on an amorphous network of jihadi organizations united by a common ideology to achieve its endstate.[3]

Secondary Research Question

In this thesis the author intends to explore what critical events or factors were responsible for Al Qaeda's evolution. Specifically the author intends to answer whether Al Qaeda's evolution is a result of action taken by the United States and its allies in the war post 9/11. There might also be some internal causation for Al Qaeda's evolution.

Research Material

The works on Al Qaeda fall into two general categories. The first category consists of sources that provide a comprehensive overview of Al Qaeda. Sources represented by such works as Dr. Marc Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks*, Peter L. Bergen's *Holy War Inc.*, Jason Burke's *Al Qaeda*, and Dr. Rohan Gunaratna's *Inside Al Qaeda*.

The second category of sources includes those that focus on a specific aspect of Al Qaeda. Essays written for professional journals like *Parameters*, *Foreign Affairs*, and research monographs published by the Rand Corporation characterize these sources. Dr. Bruce Hoffman's works from 1998-2006 are included in this category because they each tend to focus on specific aspects. Together they provide an excellent overview, but to obtain this overview requires reading several separate pieces of literature.

This categorization, however, does not take into account the philosophical differences that exist between several of the authors. For example, both Burke's *Al Qaeda* and Gunaratna's *Inside Al Qaeda* provide the reader with an excellent overview of Al Qaeda. However, they ultimately have differing conclusions with Burke believing that Al Qaeda has evolved from a physical entity into more of an ideology, whereas Gunaratna believes it has evolved into a global network.

Research Conducted

The research for this thesis occurred from August through November 2006 utilizing sources found at the Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. There is a vast amount of literature about Al Qaeda and the global Islamist movement. Sources used for this thesis are products of governmental and non-

governmental agencies. These included various academic institutions and non-profit organizations. The author also used a host of Internet sites such as RAND Corporation, the Congressional Research Service, and publications from the nation's senior service schools that produced information relevant to terrorism and national security. When conducting research it was important to consider the selected literature's objectivity in relation to the ideology and motivation of the organization or individual that published the work. This is to present a balanced sampling of the literature on Al Qaeda.

The author also considered primary sources from former U.S. government officials and intercepted Al Qaeda documents. This thesis references Richard Clarke's *Against All Enemies* and literature by Michael Scheuer. Both men served in various counter-terrorism positions in the United States government during the 1990s and early 2000s and have first hand accounts of combating Al Qaeda.

The author utilizes primary sources from Al Qaeda as well. These primary sources include captured Al Qaeda documents translated by the West Point Counter Terrorism Center. It also incorporates various communications from its key leaders like Osama Bin Laden's fatwas and messages from Ayman al-Zawahiri. This thesis also considers some of the primary literature that serves as the basis for Bin Laden and Al Qaeda's ideological base.

The literature review of the thesis presents what is currently known about Al Qaeda. Of critical importance in selecting sources was the agency or organization that supported the research. The author specifically selected works published by the major publishing houses, research organizations, or institutions known for professional research that ensured that the works underwent some form of peer review.

An evaluation criteria used in selecting a piece of literature was the credibility of the author. Primary research sources, such as Richard Clarke, Michael Sheuer, and Osama Bin Laden, are examples of those sources whose expertise is based on first hand accounts relative to the subject. Secondary experts like Dr. Bruce Hoffman, Dr. Marc Sageman, and Dr. Rohan Gunaratna are widely accepted by the academic community as experts in the field of terrorism. Other sources that the author readily accepted include products produced by research institutions such as RAND, the Congressional Research Service and senior military academic institutions. Additionally, the author conducted a telephone interview with Dr. Hoffman.

Limitations to Research

A limitation was a self-imposed desire to avoid using classified material. This was deliberate because the author believed that sufficient open source information was available for the purpose of this thesis. Secondly, the use of classified material would limit the distribution and access to this thesis by the general populace. The thesis's purpose is to inform and provide analysis on Al Qaeda in order to demonstrate why it is a threat to the United States.

Other limitations that the author encountered pertained to the use of some primary material, particularly those originating from Al Qaeda itself. The main issue with using such material is the possible existence of an error in translation from Arabic to English. There also exists uncertainty concerning the exact origin in some of Al Qaeda's post 9/11 communications, particularly concerning its written and tape-recorded releases.

The analysis of the author is another limitation to this thesis. The author can only provide analysis on what others have written about Al Qaeda. The author is not in a

position to gain first hand information on Al Qaeda, its internal organization, or the

motivations of its leaders. The author can use primary sources and translated documents

of Al Qaeda, but any analysis is subjective. The author contends that Al Qaeda is a

product of globalization and functions similar to a franchise. It is an umbrella

organization for a host of like-minded Islamic terrorists untied by an ideology that

incorporates tenets of salafism and wahhabism with revolutionary war theory.

## Conclusion

These limitations do not detract from the intent of this thesis, which seeks to add

to the collective knowledge on Al Qaeda. The benefit this thesis adds is that it takes what

is currently known in open source sources on Al Qaeda and synthesizes them to illustrate

the evolution of Al Qaeda. This thesis not only shows how Al Qaeda has evolved, but

addresses possible explanations for its evolution. This highlights why Al Qaeda and its

network of associated terror groups will remain a significant national security threat to

the United States and its allies.

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[1]Congress, House of Representatives Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Human Rights, Committee on International Relations, *Al Qaeda: The Threat to the United States and its Allies,* report prepared by Henry J. Hyde, chairman, 108th Cong., 2d sess., 1 April 2004, 1.

[2]Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 282, 290.

[3]Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, 2d ed. (New York: Penguin Group, 2003), 127.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS


<u>Introduction</u>

Al Qaeda is an evolving and adaptive threat to the national security of the United States and its allies.[1] Al Qaeda has transformed at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of operation. Although it has changed, its goal remains constant in that it seeks restoration of the Islamic caliphate.[2] This chapter analyzes the evolution of Al Qaeda by focusing specifically on its strategy, ideology, organization, and finances.

A secondary purpose of this chapter is to reveal what have been the forces that caused this evolution. The author contends there are a myriad of factors that both forced and enabled Al Qaeda to evolve. The external force that compelled Al Qaeda to evolve is the war on terror that dramatically altered Al Qaeda's operational environment.[3] However, a larger force has helped enable its evolution. This is Bin Laden's ability to foresee the effects of globalization and harness some of its power to shape the future of terrorism. Globalization has allowed Bin Laden to alter how Al Qaeda operates.[4]

This chapter analyzes the current knowledge that exists in the collective works of various international scholars and noted experts on Al Qaeda. It also includes various statements by Al Qaeda's leadership and captured documents to provide further insight. However, this thesis remains bound by the limits of this current knowledge. It is subject to further refinement based on data that might become available at a future date that supersedes contemporary information.

Strategic Focus and Goals

Al Qaeda's objectives have remained relatively constant throughout its history.

Bin Laden remains committed to defeating the United States and ending its support for

impious Muslim regimes and Israel. He expressed Al Qaeda's strategic focus in his 1996

and 1998 fatwas. His 1996 fatwa stated:

> Today, his son, king Fahd, trying to deceive the Muslims for the second time so as
> to loose [lose] what is left of the sanctities. When the Islamic world resented the
> arrival of the crusader forces to the land of the two Holy Places, the king told lies
> to the Ulamah (who issued Fatwas about the arrival of the Americans) and to the
> gathering of the Islamic leaders at the conference of Rabitah which was held in
> the Holy City of Makka. The King said that: "the issue is simple, the American
> and the alliance forces will leave the area in few months". Today it is seven years
> since their arrival and the regime is not able to move them out of the country. The
> regime made no confession about its inability and carried on lying to the people
> claiming that the American will leave.[5]

Bin Laden further cited that the Saudi family and their ties to the United States ultimately

serve to continue Palestinian oppression. Again Bin Laden stated in his 1996 fatwa, "It is

incredible that our country is the world largest buyer of arms from the USA and the area

biggest commercial partners of the Americans who are assisting their Zionist brothers in

occupying Palestine and in evicting and killing the Muslims there, by providing arms,

men and financial supports."[6]

To rectify these injustices Bin Laden called for the overthrow of the Saudi

government for its betrayal of Islam, the expulsion of the United States from Muslim

lands, and the establishment of a true Islamic state (the caliphate).[7] While Bin Laden

expressed his grievances and cited specific issues, he addressed a greater issue at hand.

The larger issue is the perception of global persecution of Muslims by either false or

impious regimes and the continued military occupation of Muslim lands by foreign

oppressors. This is what makes his ideology so appealing to Muslims and allows it to

transcend national origins and geographic boundaries.[8]

In 1998, Bin Laden again issued a fatwa decrying the persecution of Muslims by

immoral Muslim regimes and foreign powers like the United States. Unlike his 1996

fatwa, the object of his passions shifted focus more on the United States than wayward

Muslim governments.[9] The tone and language of the fatwa served to incite Muslims to

jihad against the United States, both its military and civilians. Bin Laden stated in his

1998 fatwa:

> The ruling to kill the Americans 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
> [Mecca] 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. This is in accordance with
> the words of Almighty God, "and fight the pagans all together as they fight you
> all together," and "fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and
> there prevail justice and faith in God."[10]

The 1998 fatwa expanded Al Qaeda's focus away from the "near enemy" and encouraged

Muslims to fight the "far enemy."[11] This represents the recognition that Al Qaeda's

evolution had matured to the point where Bin Laden believed that his organization was

prepared to take its jihad to the United States.[12] The use of the term "civilians"

distinguishes that all American and its allies are fair targets. The implication here is that

Bin Laden intends to move his jihad away from the Middle East region and attack the

United States and Europe.[13] From 1992 to 1996, Al Qaeda targeted American interests in

the Middle East and East Africa, yet had very little effect on the posture of U.S. military

forces stationed there.[14] However, the 1998 fatwa attempts to transform the jihad from

merely a localized effort into a global campaign by shifting Al Qaeda to attack the United

States and Europe.[15]

This shift is also a response to the changing operating environment in which Al Qaeda found itself. By 1996, Al Qaeda had largely failed to achieve any significant progress in its war against apostate Muslim rulers.[16] However, its operational and financial expansion allowed it to begin attacking the targets of the "far" enemy, namely the United States. Bin Laden decided that Al Qaeda's new focus would be on attacking the United States, Israel, and the Western nations that supported the secular Muslim regimes in the Middle East.[17] Counterterrorism expert Michael Sheuer states that eighteen out of thirty attacks attributed to Al Qaeda from 1998 through 2002 were against Western targets outside of the Middle East.[18]

The 9/11attacks are significant for many reasons. The scope of the attacks served to demonstrate the capabilities that Al Qaeda had come to possess.[19] They clearly demonstrated that Al Qaeda's operational reach was capable of inflicting a devastating attack on the United States. The attacks also served to illustrate the ineffective nature that U.S. military forces had in deterring or preventing a major terrorist attack against targets in the United States.[20] More importantly, it served as a major recruitment tool. Bin Laden was able to portray the 9/11 attacks as what many Muslims perceived to be a legitimate counter attack to Western (U.S.) domination.[21] The 9/11 attacks made the name "Al Qaeda" synonymous with radical Islamic terrorism.[22]

To analyze the role of the 9/11 attacks and their impact on Al Qaeda's evolution, one must first consider Osama Bin Laden. Bin Laden was as a highly successful businessman.[23] Peter Bergen noted during his interviews with Bin Laden that he spends a great portion of his leisure time reading about history, politics, and current events.[24] Therefore, one can conclude that Bin Laden is an educated person who understands how

business systems work and possesses the ability to anticipate actions/reactions. The author concludes that he possesses a highly developed understanding of causation.

Bin Laden has repeatedly stated that the United States was a "paper tiger" that when pushed hard enough it would back down.[25] Bin Laden consistently refers to this lack of resolve or will by citing past failed missions such as Vietnam, the 1983 withdrawal from Lebanon, and the withdrawal from Somalia in 1993.[26] Bin Laden also formed his opinion about the United States due to its lack of substantive responses following the East African Embassy bombings in 1998 and the lack of any response to the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole.*[27] This view presumes that Bin Laden believed he could attack the United States homeland and its response would be less than persuasive. This means that Al Qaeda's post 9/11 evolution is a direct result of the United States' response to the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C.

A second theory is that Bin Laden believed the 9/11 attacks would draw the United States into a larger military contact in the Muslim world. This conflict would serve as a rallying call for Muslims similar to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.[28] It is the classic terrorist tactic of attacking an enemy as the pretext for provoking an over-reaction. Dr. Ernest Evans, an expert in terrorist strategy and motivations, states that a major goal of any terrorist campaign is force their opponent into an over-reaction that will discredit it.[29] To this end, 9/11 was not an attempt to drive the United States out of the Middle East. It was an attempt to precipitate what Samuel P. Huntington termed as a "clash of civilizations."[30] Bin Laden wanted the United States to over-react to the attacks on 9/11, and deploy its forces in greater numbers in the Middle East to help propagate Bin Laden's portrayal of the United States as the twentyfirst century crusader. He wanted

the United States to reciprocate with such a heavy-handed response that it would incite a larger war between Muslims and non-Muslims.

This however did not occur immediately after 9/11. The United States did not respond with malice towards the Muslim world. Its campaign in Afghanistan focused on defeating the Taliban and Al Qaeda networks there, and ultimately addressing the social, economic, and political needs of the Afghan people.[31] However, in 2003 the United States overstepped its international mandate after 9/11, and invaded Iraq. The invasion and subsequent deposing of Saddam Hussein provided Bin Laden with an over-reaction.[32] In the eyes of our allies in Europe and other major powers, not to mention a large portion of the Muslim world, the United States' invasion of Iraq significantly decreased its legitimacy.[33] Despite the noble aim of liberating the Iraqi people, Muslims viewed the United States' intentions with skepticism. Al Qaeda quickly portrayed the invasion as another symbol of Western oppression.[34]

The purpose of the 9/11 attacks were to drive the United States out of the Middle East.[35] While they failed to achieve this, the attackers did produce an over reaction when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. Al Qaeda portrayed the invasion of Iraq as crusader aggression against Muslims, giving Bin Laden the propaganda tool he needed to perpetuate his ideology.[36] Now Bin Laden and Al Qaeda did not have to win decisively through spectacular terrorist attacks. All Al Qaeda had to do was keep from losing decisively in Iraq and wear down the United States' resolve, as it believed it had almost thirty years previous on the Soviet Union.[37]

It appears that Bin Laden fully intended to draw the United States into a larger conflict, but in Afghanistan and not Iraq. In Afghanistan, Bin Laden thought he could

conduct a war against the United States in a fashion similar to the one he waged against the Soviet Union.[38] The 2003 invasion of Iraq was not something Bin Laden could have predicted, and careful reading of Al Qaeda's messages indicates that it was something unforeseen. Al-Zawahiri refers to Iraq as a "golden and unique opportunity." [39] This description of the U.S. invasion of Iraq does not denote an event they calculated. The Iraq war was an opportunity for Al Qaeda to pin the United States into a hard to win situation. If the United States withdraws before stabilizing Iraq, the central government will likely fall and Al Qaeda will have a failed state within which to operate. If the United States remains to stabilize the Iraqi government, it will experience significant human and financial costs. Thus, Bin Laden was able to place the United States in a significant dilemma. Withdraw and publicly affirm Bin Laden's statements about a lack of resolve or to continue the fight and bear the excessive costs associated with the war.

From 2003 to present Al Qaeda appears focused on defeating the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri believe that the defeat of the Soviet Union came at the hands of the mujahideen they recruited and trained.[40] They have linked its defeat in Afghanistan as causation for its eventual collapse.[41] Al Qaeda's leaders have claimed that drawing the United States into nebulous, open-ended conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq serves this same purpose. According to al-Zawahiri, "We thank God for appeasing us with the dilemmas in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Americans are facing a delicate situation in both countries. If they withdraw they lose everything and if they stay, they will continue to bleed to death."[42]

The Iraq war is a rallying call for jihadists from all over the world. Foreign jihadists from the Philippines, Chechnya, Indonesia, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Libya,

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Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Algeria have all been discovered fighting for various Sunni Islamic groups.[43] Experts like Dr. Bruce Hoffman, Gerges A. Fawaz, and Audrey K. Cronin agree that Iraq has the potential to serve as a mechanism for training a second generation of Al Qaeda terrorists that are even more dangerous than the alumni of the Soviet-Afghan war.[44] They will emerge far more battle hardened, more radicalized, and better practiced in the art of urban warfare.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan today serve as a microcosm of Al Qaeda's strategic jihad. Just as Al Qaeda shifted its global focus in 1998 from the "near enemy" to the "far enemy," 2004 witnessed a shift in its targeting. Although Al Qaeda continues to target U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has also shifted its focus to attacking the "far enemy," or the U.S.'s allies in the war on terror.[45] The 2004 Madrid bombings and the 2005 London bombings are indicative of this shift in targeting. The goal of these attacks was to reduce support for the United States' war effort.[46] Following the Madrid bombings, Al Qaeda propaganda portrayed the attacks as successful in forcing Spain to elect a new government that ended the country's support for the Iraq war.[47] Although they received different effects, the Madrid and London attacks further indicate a shift in Al Qaeda's operations. The change is that the operatives who conducted the London and Madrid bombings were local or homegrown terrorists. Their actions could serve to foreshadow the increasing radicalization of Europe's expanding Muslim population.[48]


## Ideology

Al Qaeda's ideology remains grounded in salafist and wahabbi doctrine that uses Islamic themes to justify its actions. Al Qaeda justifies its actions with reference to

Koranic verses that its senior leaders selectively skew to rationalize their actions. Al Qaeda invokes the concept of jihad in its ideology. It believes it is the duty of every Muslim to defend Islam from the United States, Russia, China, Israel, and the impious Muslim regimes Al Qaeda believes have strayed from true Islam. In Al Qaeda's view there is only one true variety of Islam, salafist/wahabbi Sunni Islam.

While it recognizes this salafist/wahabbi Sunni Islam to be truest form of Islam, Al Qaeda has avoided attacking Shi'a and other sects of Islam for the greater convenience of its jihad. There are numerous incidents of coordination and support for Shi'a terrorist groups, like Hezbollah.[49] When al-Zarqawi's tactics threatened Al Qaeda's relationship with Shi'a groups, Al Qaeda's core leadership demanded he explain himself. In June 2006, the United States killed Musab al-Zarqawi in an air strike in Iraq. Theories abound that senior Al Qaeda leaders, having lost confidence in his ability and upset by his actions, provided targeting information to the United States.[50] Al Qaeda's leaders feared his tactic of bombing Shi'a targets and campaign of gruesome beheadings were proving more detrimental to Al Qaeda's larger cause.[51]

Bin Laden has repeatedly stated that the differences between Sunni and Shi'a Islam can be resolved once their primary mission is accomplished.[52] The defeat of the United States is Bin Laden's immediate concern followed by restoration of the caliphate.[53] He desperately wants to avoid a civil war within Islam.[54] Only after Islam has achieved its goals of defeating the United States and reestablishing the caliphate does Bin Laden believe that an Islamic reformation can happen.[55]

Concerning Al Qaeda's ideological roots and its methodology, there are some interesting theories that compare it to Marxism and Leninism. The discussion of this

subject is relatively limited although its does warrant some analysis. Dr. Gunaratna states, "Al Qaeda has built an Islamist organization full of vitality. Its politically clandestine structure is built on the idea of internationalism. Using techniques drawn from Leninism and operating on the Marxist militant model."[56] By maintaining a relative small core group, Al Qaeda's ideologues view themselves as a vanguard cadre that act similar to V.I. Lenin's revolutionary vanguard.

Lenin believed that a small vanguard could rally enough support to inspire the masses to overthrow the Russian Czar and establish a communist state. Lenin stated, "By educating a workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and *leading the whole people* to Socialism, of directing and organizing the new order, of being the teacher, guide and leader of all the toiling and exploited in the task of building up their social life, without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie."[57]Al Qaeda serves as a mixture of Marx and Lenin in its methodology. It advocates the education of its recruits in radical Islamic theory in order to lead Islam towards the restoration of the Caliphate.

However, Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri do not just seek to educate the masses with their ideology. They desire its recruits to carry it forward and adopt militant tactics to achieve their ends, a basic tenet of Marxism. Karl Marx states, "Here and there the contest breaks out into riots. Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and place the workers of different localities in contact with one another."[58] This passage described how Bin Laden formed

Al Qaeda in the late 1980s at the end of the Soviet-Afghan war. For Bin Laden the war

served to expand his contacts with similarly motivated jihadists from Asia, North Africa,

the Middle East, and Central Asia that resulted in the establishment of Al Qaeda. Part of

this group left Afghanistan in the 1990s and fought in regional jihads. This served to

bring more recruits into Al Qaeda's fold. It also encapsulates how Al Qaeda views its

struggle. It acknowledges a long struggle to achieve its goals, but also addresses the

means about which it shall use to accomplish them.

In *Milestones*, Sayyid Qutb advocated restoring Islam to prominence in the face

of the *jahiliyyah*. The goal of this jihad was to make the world, as it should be according

to Islam. He states, "Our foremost objective is to change the practices of this society. Our

aim is to change the Jahili system at its very roots-this system which is fundamentally at

variance with Islam and which, with the help of force and oppression is keeping us from

living the sort of life which is demanded by the creator. . . . Our first step is to raise

ourselves above the Jahili society and all its values and concepts."[59] Qutb advocated

achieving this goal through education and if necessary, violence when he stated:

> If the actual life of human beings is found to be different from this declaration of
> freedom [described by Qutb as Islam[60]] the it becomes incumbent upon Islam to
> enter the field with preachings as well as the movement, and to strike hard at all
> those political powers which force the people to bow before them and which rule
> over them, unmindful of the commandmants of God. . . . After annihilating the
> tyrannical force, whether it be in a political or a racial form, or in the form of
> class distinctions within the same race, Islam establishes a new social, economic,
> and political system in which the concept of freedom of man is applied in
> practice.[61]

Qutb's methodology and end state are similar with the foundation of Marxist-Lenin

ideology. Marx and Lenin advocated using education and if necessary violence to

overthrow the bourgeoisie to establish a "dictatorship of the proletariat" ruled by natural

law.[62] Qutb argues that Muslims should educate themselves and overthrow the false regimes that existed at the time. After doing this, Qutb believes Muslins should establish a society where pure Islam is practiced. This comparison highlights the impact of Marxist and Leninist ideology in the post-colonial Middle East. It was these ideas that influenced the development of Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abdullah Azzam, and Al-Banna, which in turn influenced today's global jihadi movement. [63]

There also exist aspects of Maoist revolutionary war theory in Al Qaeda's methodology. Mao Tse Tung believed that through proper mobilization, he could muster China's peasants into a revolutionary force and defeat the stronger Nationalist army. Thomas X. Hammes, states that Mao, "Did not see revolution as a spasm created by the urban proletariat that overthrows the central government. He saw it as a political struggle where he must pay attention to maintaining the goodwill of the people. Further, he understood that maintaining the goodwill of the peasants was not simply a propaganda slogan but essential to his army's survival. He knew that only the peasants could provide an unbeatable intelligence network, a constant source of manpower, and resources in the form of food and labor."[64] Mao and Bin Laden also share similarities in that both rely on appealing to their respective audiences as the vanguard for a larger cause. Mao and his guerillas gained the support of the population because they lived among them and educated them. They also gained credibility because they had proven themselves by fighting the Japanese in World War II.[65]

Bin Laden and Al Qaeda conduct themselves in a similar manner. The proponents of Al Qaeda's ideology and their foot soldiers also move and live among the Muslim communities and recognize the need of the Muslim communities support. They preach in

mosques, release educational videos and pamphlets that serve to increase support for their insurgency. Al Qaeda's ability to operate within the Muslim community is similar to the role of the Chinese Red Army did during the Chinese Civil War. By proving themselves in the various regional jihads, conducting terrorist attacks, and educating the Muslim community they seek to inspire and motivation Muslims to support their jihad.[66]

Similar to Mao, Bin Laden advocates protracted war against the West. He has demonstrated a willingness to plan, and patiently wait until the conditions are favorable to attack.[67] Al Qaeda's leaders recognize that their struggle will require generations to achieve its goals. It is their patience, noted by Bergen that makes assessing Al Qaeda's status difficult.

<u>Organization</u>

It is difficult to conceptualize Al Qaeda's physical organization today. It has evolved substantially from a vertically structured organization into a more horizontally aligned group.[68] Al Qaeda today exists as the core of a transnational network of like-minded jihadist organizations united in a global insurgency. They seek to re-establish an Islamic caliphate from Spain to the Philippines. Al Qaeda's ideology believes this caliphate can serve to challenge the United States as the dominant global power.[69]

Globalization in the 1990s resulted in increased interdependence and interconnectivity. In short, the world became smaller and people from all across the globe gained increased access to information, commerce, and travel.[70] Al Qaeda as it exists today is a product of this force. The processes that enable interdependence also allowed Bin Laden to establish his global nexus of operational cells and financial infrastructure.[71]

It allows Al Qaeda's operatives to communicate globally and conduct operations around the world.

Al Qaeda's internal organization has undergone a significant makeover from its inception. It has transformed itself from a motley collection of foreign jihadists into the international franchise for radical terrorism.[72] While the exact organizational structure of Al Qaeda remains a mystery, it is possible to analyze and offer educated speculation as to how it might look. The common belief from experts like Hoffman, Gunaratna, and Sageman is that Al Qaeda as an organization has compressed its core leadership and infrastructure into a leaner, less hierarchical form.[73]

Al Qaeda's pre-9/11 organizational structure differed greatly from other terrorist organizations.[74] Al Qaeda established several interlinked command and control structures.[75] Following the war against the Soviets, Al Qaeda was a terrorist organization, but also possessed a para-military force in the 055 Brigade.[76] The 055 Brigade merged with the Taliban in 1997 and fought against the Northern Alliance.[77] The unit consisted of 2,000 members, predominantly Arabs, Central Asians, and Southeast Asians.[78] These were the two generations of Afghan veterans: those who fought the Russians from 1979 to 1988 and those who survived the war to fight in other theaters (Bosnia, Dagestan, Chechnya, and Kashmir for example).[79] The United States largely destroyed this element in 2001to 2002.[80]

Al Qaeda possessed a pyramid style command and control structure which assisted in strategic and operational direction, a global terrorist network, a base for guerilla war inside Afghanistan, and a loose coalition of transnational terrorist and guerilla groups.[81] At the pinnacle were the *emir* (Bin Laden) and his top deputies.[82] The

roles of these leaders were to provide strategic and limited operational guidance on operations. In some instances, Bin Laden himself provided tactical direction to his subordinates. Dr. Rohan Gunaratna and *The 9/11 Report* state that Bin Laden played a major role in planning for the bombing of the East African embassies and the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole*.[83]

Immediately below the *emir* and his deputy is the *shura majlis* or consultive council that is comprised of individuals personally appointed by Bin Laden.[84] Bin Laden distributes appointments and rewards not solely based on merit, but based also on family ties and personal relationships that he developed.[85]

Once the senior leaders designate an operation, the various councils of the *shura majlis* coordinate activities. Senior operatives, heading a covert cell with singular points of contact, have the responsibility for planning and organizing operations at the local level.[86] Below the *shura majlis* are its subordinate committees focusing on military, finance and business, Islamic study, media and publicity. An emir and deputy emir heads each committee, and each committee consists of compartmentalized working groups and special assignments. Some members served on more than one committee to coordinate and ensure unity of effort.[87]

Beneath the core group existed the various affiliate groups that had officially pledged their loyalty to Osama Bin Laden.[88] In 1998, Bin Laden united with various Egyptian terrorist organizations to form the "World Front against the Crusaders and Jews." This was an alliance between Al Qaeda and like-minded terrorist groups in Egypt, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.[89] By staffing the various committees within Al Qaeda's

organizational structure with a multinational contingent, Bin Laden established a wider

support network to enable the group to conduct terrorism.[90]

Regional Islamic conflicts are important to understanding how Al Qaeda

developed into a global network. As early as 1991, Al Qaeda had already begun to

transform itself into a global insurgency.[91] From a secure base of operations in the Sudan,

Bin Laden began to organize and expand Al Qaeda's operational and financial

infrastructure. Keenly aware of the global processes that the end of the Cold War had

unleashed, Bin Laden designed his organization to take full advantage of globalization.[92]

From 1990 to 1996, Al Qaeda established franchises in other regions by co-opting

regional Islamic struggles into its larger jihad. Its operatives played major roles in

Abkhazia, Bosnia, Central and Southwest Asia, and Chechnya. [93]

The 9/11 attacks marked a transition in Al Qaeda's evolution. The subsequent

U.S. response to the 9/11 attacks decimated Al Qaeda's physical base of operation in

Afghanistan.[94] Despite diplomatic, military, and economic attacks by the United States

and its allies after 9/11, Bin Laden managed to avoid a decisive defeat.[95] Although the

post 9/11 world severely constrained Bin Laden's ability to direct Al Qaeda, this hardly

mattered. His jihad was already global in that the subsidiary groups aligned with Al

Qaeda could operate relatively independently.[96] PBS reports in *Al Qaeda's New Front*, a

Frontline special, that the 2004 Madrid bombings were completely self organized and

financed.[97] Al Qaeda's financial infrastructure continues to operate and provide resources

to like-minded groups, and Bin Laden serves as its ideological inspiration. [98]

It is very easy to state that the constrained post 9/11 operating environment is the

primary cause of Al Qaeda's transformation. The loss of its bases in Afghanistan was a

major blow to the organization. However, it enabled Al Qaeda to shed its cumbersome infrastructure and bureaucracy and allowed it to evolve into a less easily defined threat.[99] It has become a global ideological challenge to perceived domination by the United States and its allies.[100] Bruce Hoffman supports this assertion by stating, "What we see today is a more diffuse phenomenon, with less centralized and more opaque relationships and a far less transparent command and control structure…It is no longer a pseudo-or quasi-army as it was in Afghanistan when it could be defeated on the battlefield. Nor is it a bureaucratic entity as it was in Afghanistan, able to be crushed. Instead it is a transnational movement that is true to its name.[101] Hoffman's statement suggests that Bin Laden's ultimate goal was the transformation of Al Qaeda from a hierarchical terrorist entity into a transnational movement that poses an asymmetrical threat to the Western oriented world order.[102]

Al Qaeda originated as a terrorist organization with a clearly identified organizational structure; however, Bin Laden transformed it into what its name implies "the base."[103] There is a major consensus among terrorism experts like Burke, Hoffman, Peter Bergen, Sageman, and. Gunaratna that Al Qaeda has become more of a social movement. It is a franchise name, or a common base of salafist Islamic ideology that several terrorist groups have aligned with to forge a multinational corporation of terror.[104] Al Qaeda is a global vanguard, a common idea and dedicated cadre that provides ideological guidance, material and financial support to its subsidiaries in the pursuit of a global jihad.[105]

What is Al Qaeda? It exists in several forms. It is the core group of Bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and their closest confidents serving as the ideological leaders of a global

network of jihadi organization.[106] In one sense, it is a larger social movement of loosely

connected localized jihadists that seek to restore Islam to former prominence.[107] The

hierarchical entity that formed at the close of the Soviet-Afghan war died after 9/11; it is

no more. It has evolved due to international pressure and a global effort to stamp it out,

but more importantly due to the processes of globalization.[108] Utilizing sophisticated

global communications, the Internet, and a swelling population of potential Muslim

supporters, Bin Laden allowed Al Qaeda to transform so that it was more insular and less

easily defined.[109] The ability of Al Qaeda to integrate itself with the process of

globalization allow it to maintain its international sources of financing, communication

with cells across the globe, and production of inspirational messages that are distributed

in available mediums.[110]

<center>Finance</center>

As it forged alliances with other Muslim insurgent groups, Al Qaeda also began to

expand and diversify its financial network.[111] This was so Al Qaeda could rely less on

Bin Laden's personal fortune and diversify its base of support to include legitimate and

illegal sources of income. Bin Laden started this nexus by creating subsidiary businesses

of his parent companies in the Sudan.[112] Utilizing existing international banking and

financial structures, he established legitimate and front companies with numerous foreign

accounts held in several different countries.[113]

A key aspect to Bin Laden's financial diversification was the infiltration of

various Muslim banks and charities.[114] The latter was particularly helpful in that the

global reach of such charities aided in the transfer of money to operational cells.

<center>80</center>

Operating under relatively benign sounding names, many of these charitable organizations were able to avoid scrutiny until the 9/11 attacks.

During Bin Laden's stay in the Sudan from 1991 to1996, he began to increase Al Qaeda's global financial network. Today Al Qaeda is major shareholder in the one and one half trillion-dollar economy that benefits or is under the control of international terrorism.[115] Instead of relying on Bin Laden's personal fortunes and business ventures, the group has diversified to incorporate several sources of legal and illegal income. These sources includes money received through Muslim charitable organizations, narcotics trafficking, legitimate businesses, and linkages to organized crime.[116] It also infiltrated several Muslim institutions such as Islamic charities, Islamic banks, and the mosque network.

Many illegal activities fund contemporary Islamic jihadists. From the early 1990s, they have been reliant on criminal activity such as counterfeiting, extortion, blackmail, and kidnapping to fund their operations.[117] Contrary to their rhetoric about piety and purifying the soul and body, Islamic radicals condoned their use of drug trafficking as a source of revenue.[118] Although forbidden by Islam, jihadists view drug trafficking as a means to an end. Heroin smuggling in Central Asia controlled by Al Qaeda and its affiliates is worth an estimated $200 million.[119]

Apart from the illegal aspects of Al Qaeda's economy, there exists a robust legitimate side to its financing.[120] Dr. Rohan Gunaratna and Loretta Napoleoni present a detailed assessment of Al Qaeda's financial enterprises. Dr. Gunaratna argues that Al Qaeda receives revenue through operating legitimate businesses in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and in Southwest Asia. These businesses are diverse and not focused in any

one particular economic sector. Gunaratna and Napoleoni cite Al Qaeda's involvement with businesses in the agriculture industry, specifically olives, honey, dates, sugar, and other crops.[121] Dr. Gunaratna's analysis also mentions a multitude of other industries that Al Qaeda uses to finance its operations. These industries include the mining and processing of rare and valuable minerals, providing medical equipment to hospitals, shipping, furniture construction, and automobile/bicycle importing and exporting.[122]

Islamic banking also plays a critical role in funding Al Qaeda. Islamic banks have "economically colonized" areas in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.[123] Most of these banks, backed by Saudi petro-dollars, use their wealth to impose their religious philosophy on other Muslims. Citing examples in the Balkans and Indonesia, Napoleoni states that Islamic banks and institutions establish themselves in these poor Muslim regions under the false pretense of establishing a wider support system. Instead, they serve to help establish and fund jihadi groups that spread Wahabbi oriented Islam.[124]

Al Qaeda relies on specific traits of Islamic banking such as the *zakat*, or the religious tax system charged for transactions and the *hawala* banking system.[125] *Halawa* (literally means "in trust") is a legitimate paperless banking system Al Qaeda uses to transfer money globally without maintaining any financial records. It obtains proceeds using money sent through the hawala system to Islamic charities.[126] Dr. Rohan Gunaratna states that the amount of money entering Pakistan each year through hawaladars amounts to two and one half to three billion dollars each year, vice one billion dollars through conventional banking.[127]

Income generated to support Al Qaeda comes from its membership dues, investment projects, front companies, false contracts, embezzlement, forgery,

counterfeiting, extortion, drug trafficking, black marketeering, and kidnapping.[128] Diverted funds from *zakat* and *hawala* are also components of Al Qaeda's financial portfolio, as are diverted donations to Islamic charities.[129] Ninety percent  of the money received by Al Qaeda is used to sustain its infrastructure while less than ten percent funds operational aspects.[130]

A means that Al Qaeda uses to help divert funds to its organizations is by infiltrating Islamic charities.[131] Al Qaeda sympathizers divert legitimate donations to their cause from these charitable organizations. In other cases, the charity itself serves as a front for Al Qaeda.[132] It is hard to distinguish one from the other, but both achieve the same endstate. Napoleoni states that Saudi Arabian and Yemeni Islamic charities have contributed to an "explosion" in radical jihadist insurgencies in Western and Central Africa.[133] Monies donated to buy medicines and help improve the quality of life have instead bought guns and ammunition for Islamic fighters.[134]

Although U.S. and allied efforts after 9/11 succeeded in seizing $200 million belonging to Al Qaeda and its affiliates, these amounts represented only a fraction of Al Qaeda's global economy.[135] The expansion of Al Qaeda's financial portfolio married with access to global communications and the popularity of its anti-Western ideology significantly magnify Al Qaeda's power. This makes allied efforts to combat it more problematic.[136]

<div align="center">Operations</div>

Al Qaeda advocates a protracted war against impious Muslim regimes and their chief supporter, the United States, by using terrorism and supporting like-minded Islamic movements throughout the world.[137] Bin Laden himself acknowledges that the tactics of

Al Qaeda constitute terrorism. When asked about Al Qaeda's tactics in 2002 by a journalist from *Al Jazeera*, Bin Laden stated, "that if inciting people to do that [perpetrating attacks like 9/11] is terrorism and if killing those who will kill our sons is terrorism then let history be witness that we are terrorists."[138] In addition to using terrorism to garner support, Bin Laden used his communications in a strategic manner to inspire attacks against the United States and its allies. His calls cross not only sectarian lines within Islam, but cultural and geographic boundaries.[139]

At the operational and tactical level, Al Qaeda focused its efforts at attacking visible symbols of U.S. power in the Middle East and East Africa.[140] The focus of Al Qaeda's attacks was to attrit U.S. forces in the Middle East in an effort to expel them and weaken the Muslim regimes they supported.[141] Notable attacks attributed to Al Qaeda during the 1990s include several bombings in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and the 1998 Kenyan and Tanzanian Embassy bombings. For these operations, Al Qaeda's technique was to use its dedicated or "professional" membership, trained in Afghanistan, to conduct terrorist operations.[142] Al-Nashiri, the leader of the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole*, was a veteran of Afghanistan and personally recruited by Bin Laden.[143] In a general sense, Al Qaeda's professionals receive better training in planning operations than affiliates or local walk-ins.[144] They receive a significant amount of advanced training whereas affiliates or other members might receive rudimentary classes. Translated captured Al Qaeda documents indicate that the curriculum for trainees in Al Qaeda's Afghanistan camps contained multiple tiers of instruction.[145] Dedicated, official members of Al Qaeda received access to greater instruction than basic recruits.[146]

Another reason for entrusting such high visibility operations to its professional cadre is that they possess the means and patience to conduct thorough planning for terrorist attacks. Dr. Bruce Hoffman and Dr. Rohan Gunaratna state that the 1998 Embassy bombings and the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* took several years from concept to execution.[147] Detailed planning, coordination, and resourcing of these operations are not all that the professional cadre is involved in. They also expend considerable energy in re-affirming and bolstering the religious fervor of the suicide bombers who executed both attacks.[148]

After 9/11, there was a distinctive shift in Al Qaeda's operational and tactical level of operations. The senior central core of Al Qaeda relinquished its directive control over specific targeting and operations and delegated more autonomy to local cells and affiliates.[149] This occurred for two reasons. Bin Laden's foresight enabled Al Qaeda to adapt a hierarchical structure that existed from 1991 to1998 into a network of networks. Al Qaeda's nexus of operational and support cells had spread to over sixty countries due in large part to the rapid acceleration of globalization.[150] Another critical factor was that Al Qaeda's core element, although it avoided decisive defeat in 2001 and 2002 in Afghanistan, allowed itself to become isolated. It lost its base of support in Afghanistan due to the United States' reaction to the 9/11 attacks.[151] As previously mentioned this was not entirely a bad thing for Bin Laden. Instead of being involved in operational aspects of the organization, he and al-Zawahiri focused their energies on the guiding the strategic direction of Al Qaeda.

The war in Iraq is another critical point in Al Qaeda's evolution. It is serving to educate a new generation of Al Qaeda with skills that are more lethal and dangerous.[152]

The foreign fighters that have shown up in Iraq have come from mostly Arab nations like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan.[153] However, there are a minority of fighters coming from Africa, Southeast Asia, and to some extent from Europe's expanding community of Muslims. This has the potential for future implications regarding European-U.S. security and defense commitments.[154]

Europe's Muslim population is growing. It is becoming more polarized and radical over what it considers as the inability of Europe's governments to address their needs adequately. Al Qaeda recognizes Europe's Muslim communities as a source for future recruits. Jihadists are able to enter these Muslim communities with little notice and are conducting attacks (Madrid and the London bombings), inciting riots and anti-government rallies, and recruiting for volunteers to fight in Iraq.[155] The concern among European and American counter-terrorism officials is that these Iraqi jihadists, battle hardened and skilled in the tactics of urban warfare, may one day return to Europe and conduct jihad.[156]

<u>Leadership</u>

Prior to 2001, Bin Laden and al Zawahiri played a more direct supervisory role concerning the planning and execution of Al Qaeda's operations.[157] This is evident in *The 9/11 Commission's Report* that Bin Laden played a variety of roles concerning Al Qaeda's operations. In some cases, Bin Laden served as a venture capitalist, a financial or logistical supporter who provided the means for attacks. The 1995 *Bojinka* Plot and the 9/11 attacks conducted by Khalid Sheik Mohammed serve as an example of Bin Laden's role in Al Qaeda's operations.[158]

The 2000 attack on the *U.S.S. Cole*, however, illustrates a completely different role for Bin Laden. Bin Laden played a far more direct role in this operation. According to *The 9/11 Commission's Final Report*, Bin Laden recruited the principal lead of the operation, al-Nashiri.[159] Furthermore, he provided al-Nashiri with specific guidance on surveying the port of Aden. He reportedly directed al-Nashiri to focus his reconnaissance efforts on the southern portion of the port.[160]

In looking at Al Qaeda as whole, experts like Dr. Marc Sageman, Dr. Bruce Hoffman, and Jason Burke believe that the group exists today more as a social movement.[161] Al Qaeda has become synonymous with a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam that rejects Western cultural, military, and ideological dominance.[162] Sageman states, "Al Qaeda is really a social movement. . . . people think of it as a hierarchical organization, like a military organization, but it was never that. It was always a network, like a peace movement, coalescing together for a peace demonstration on a certain Sunday. That is the model you have to think of. It has very fuzzy boundaries. Some people are part of it, some people are not. . . . to think of it as having a fixed membership, he says, is an illusion."[163] Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri serve to motivate and inspire this social movement to fight against the United States.

The post 9/11 role for Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri is to serve as the ideological leaders of Al Qaeda.[164] It appears that they have largely left their global jihad to proceed unfettered, allowing for its operational and tactical organizations (affiliates and local homegrown sympathizers) to conduct operations in their name.[165] They have little direct control over the specific targets chosen, dates, or other details. They provide the motivation by issuing a *da'wa* to those who subscribe to their worldview. [166] Bin Laden

and al-Zawahiri shape the strategic orientation of Al Qaeda by issuing audio and/or video releases that encourage followers to carry on the fight, but are no longer able to directly coordinate and participate in operations.

One interesting change in Al Qaeda's leadership and its information operations campaign is a shift in spokesman for the group. Since 2001, al-Zawahiri appears to serve as the primary spokesman to the world. He has appeared in the majority of videotapes and pre-recorded audio messages to the outside world.[167] This is interesting because Bin Laden is viewed as more charismatic, while al Zawahiri is considered the more religiously intellectual of the two. Whether or not it indicates a change in leadership, change in focus, or the death or incapacitation of Bin Laden remains indeterminate.

The decreased role of Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri does make Al Qaeda easier to defeat. To the contrary, it means Al Qaeda is likely to become more difficult to combat. It empowers the growth of its affiliate groups and allows individuals or groups that are more radical the ability to attain greater prominence.[168] This increased reliance on its affiliate groups produces mixed results. In assisting Al Qaeda, it helps to disguise its operations. Distinguishing an attack perpetrated by the Groupe Islamique Armeé (GIA) or Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC) and an attack in by Al Qaeda becomes difficult to make.[169]

The decreased role of Al Qaeda's leadership can have negative consequences for Al Qaeda as well. It means that subordinate leaders at the operational level are likely to gain increased leadership and power. Decentralization can allow more radical and unstable elements to have an increased impact on the organization.[170] The rise of the late Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq is evidence of this. His virulent hatred for anything beyond

radical Sunni Islam unleashed a level of violence against United States forces and Iraq's

Shi'a population that enflamed sectarian violence.[171]

Al-Zarqawi and Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) serve as a warning concerning Al

Qaeda's increasing decentralization. Although Al Qaeda in Iraq is not necessarily Al

Qaeda, it has sworn fealty to Bin Laden. Al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian radical, used the 2003

war in Iraq as a means to establish himself as a major part of Al Qaeda's larger

organization.[172] His radical tactics and beliefs led him to direct the targeting of Shi'a

landmarks, neighborhoods, and militias by Al Qaeda in Iraq. His actions have worsened

the rift between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims.[173] Al-Zawahiri's letter to al-Zarqawi in 2005

and possible inside involvement in al-Zarqawi's death indicate that the core leadership

retains some control over its subsidiary groups.

Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri have long stated that Shi'a Islam was unorthodox and

not in keeping with true Islam. However, they did not wish to incite a civil war (*fitna*)

within Islam. Historically, Bin Laden has had nominal ties to Shi'a terrorist organizations

like Hezbollah.[174] His focus was to unite all Muslims to fight against the United States

and its allies, establish an Islamic caliphate, and then work to resolve Islam's internal

divisions. Al-Zarqawi's attacks on the Shi'a in Iraq were counter productive to this vision

by Bin Laden.

There is some evidence that there is disharmony among Al Qaeda's affiliates in

the conduct of their jihad. Intercepted letters and communiqués suggest a rift between Al

Qaeda in Iraq and Ansar al Sunnah (formerly known as Ansar al Islam).[175] In a translated

letter from Ansar al Sunnah to Al Qaeda in Iraq, Ansar al Sunnah chastises Al Qaeda in

Iraq for its wanton attacks, violence, beheadings, and torture. The letter continues

demanding that Al Qaeda in Iraq consider compensation for its members' misbehavior or that Ansar al Sunnah will seek retribution.[176]

Divisiveness among Al Qaeda's affiliates is important to understand. It can have a very significant impact in efforts to fight the War on Terror. Division among Al Qaeda's affiliates could result in increased internal competition for resources like funding, material, and recruitment.[177] Schisms between Al Qaeda's affiliates could propagate an entirely new class of localized, self-contained, and more radical terrorist organizations that are more difficult to target.[178] Hoffman and other experts state that Al Qaeda's tactic of mixing the four types of operatives-- professional, walk-ins, affiliates, and locally inspired sympathizers--make countering Al Qaeda difficult.[179] If Al Qaeda fragments further into local or regional entities each pursuing their own version of jihad, it would exponentially increase its threat to international security.

<p style="text-align:center">Conclusion</p>

Al Qaeda's evolution in many ways is a mirror to the rapid expansion of globalization following the end of the Cold War.[180] It has enabled Al Qaeda to expand its organization over the past two and one half decades into a global multinational corporation of terrorism. The effects of the war on terror have minimized or limited some its capabilities, but that does not mean that Al Qaeda is about to be defeated.[181] Its post 9/11 ability to conduct sophisticated attacks in Asia, Europe, and throughout the Middle East means it is a more resilient organization than previously believed. This resiliency is due to Bin Laden's design and foresight. He recognized the power globalization could make Al Qaeda.[182] Despite suffering significant losses, Al Qaeda remains a major threat

to the national security of the United States. Critical to understanding Al Qaeda's

evolution is to acknowledge how globalization and the war on terror have affected it.

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[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 32-33.

[13]Congress, *The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* or *the 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: Norton, 2004), 67.

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[23]Ibid., 41-43.

[24]Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 83.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Ends, Ways, and Means

In analyzing Al Qaeda's evolution, it is important to discuss their ends, ways, and means. The results of the author's research indicate that Al Qaeda's endstate has remained constant throughout its evolution. It remains committed to three goals: the overthrow of apostate Muslim regimes, the removal of Western domination of Muslim lands, and the re-establishment of an Islamic caliphate governed according to a strict interpretation of Sharia law. To accomplish this, Al Qaeda has been resilient in adapting its ways and means. Its means are the methods that support how it conducts operations; the means are its recruitment, ideology, and financing. The ways describe how Al Qaeda conducts operations, specifically how and where it conducts terror attacks.

Ideology

Al Qaeda continues to justify its jihad in terms of salafist and wahabbi ideology framed in a Marxist-Leninist context that garners transnational support. This appeal makes Al Qaeda dangerous. Its ideological base has remained steadfast since Al Qaeda's inception in 1989. It is the group's center of gravity and serves to attract new recruits and inspire others to conduct terrorism. However, it is also a potential point of weakness.

In Chapter 1, the author laid out the foundation of Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri's ideology that is derived from several historical influences dating back to the twelfth century. With the exception of Azzam, there exists no legal or authoritative justification for the modern interpretations of Taymiyyah or Wahabb. Bin Laden, Faraj, Qutb and the

rest of their ilk are not trained Islamic scholars.[1] They have no authority to declare jihad, declare anyone *takfir*, or issue a fatwa. They are merely co-opting Islam to justify their actions and gain the support of uneducated or socially alienated Muslims. Like the other methods used to further its jihad, Al Qaeda's interpretation of Islam, like drug trafficking, martyrdom, and terrorism are but a means to achieve their end.

## Operations

One way that Al Qaeda has evolved is how it conducts terror attacks. Prior to 9/11, it used professionals who had trained in its training camps. These devoted individuals received extensive training in various illicit crafts, terrorist skills, and religious indoctrination. After 9/11, Al Qaeda has become more reliant on the use of affiliates and homegrown or locally inspired individuals. These individuals may or may not have received formal training by Al Qaeda, but are nonetheless capable. Since 2001, a majority of Al Qaeda's attacks have been the result of its affiliates and or locally inspired individuals. Indicative of this new pattern of terrorism conducted by Al Qaeda were the Madrid and London bombings in 2004 and 2005 respectively. Local actors, inspired by Al Qaeda and its ideology, perpetrated these acts vice the use of professional Al Qaeda members. In the case of the Madrid bombings, the operatives locally coordinated the planning, resourcing, and execution.[2]

In the cases of the London bombings, the operatives were locals who belonged to the London's large Pakistani population. The London bombers represent the growing radicalism of European Muslims. The individuals that perpetrated the attacks lived in the United Kingdom for many years. The Madrid and London attacks indicate that Al Qaeda

recognizes Europe as a potential boon for its jihad given the continent's growing disenfranchised Muslim population.[3]

There exists a certain professional disagreement of exactly what constitutes Al Qaeda. Does it exist as a physical organization, is it a social movement, or has it become an ideology? There are numerous and often diverse opinions on this question. Based on an analysis of the current knowledge that exists the author contends Al Qaeda exists as both. It still possesses a physical entity through its franchises and its core group, namely Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. It also exists as an ideology, an idea that transcends national borders to inspire new recruits.

The franchises of Al Qaeda are also a point of contention. It is difficult to determine which groups are Al Qaeda and which are merely using the Al Qaeda namesake to gain notoriety or financial support. Certain groups like various factions of the Chechen resistance received considerable aid and support from Al Qaeda, but that does not mean they are apart of it. These groups do not have the same vision as Al Qaeda's core group. They focus their jihad more on regional or local issues, and retain their internal command and control.

<u>Financial Transformation</u>

To support its global terror campaign, Al Qaeda developed a vast and opaque financial network.[4] From 1984 to 1989, Bin Laden used his position in the MAK to establish a global foundation upon which he could build an international organization.[5] From 1989 to 1996 Bin Laden primarily used his personal fortunes to finance Al Qaeda operations.[6] However, in 1991 he began to build a more robust global operational and support network that included co-opting of regional Islamic struggles, the infiltration of

Islamic banks and charities, penetration of mosques to attract new recruits and money, and the establishment of legitimate and illegitimate businesses.[7] By 1996, Al Qaeda was less reliant less on Bin Laden's personal wealth, having evolved to the point were it financed its operations using corporate funds from Bin Laden's worldwide businesses.[8]

Drug trafficking, criminal activities, legitimate and illegitimate businesses are some of the methods used by Al Qaeda to garner financial support.[9] The Internet enables increased ability to garner financial support through legitimate sources. As the global marketplace continues to rely more heavily on the Internet for sales and transactions, Al Qaeda and its affiliates are likely to exploit this mode for raising capital.[10]

<u>Virtual Jihad</u>

Al Qaeda's operations are more technologically sophisticated. Al Qaeda has taken full advantage of the information revolution and the technologies that globalization affords the world's citizenry.[11] Al Qaeda continues to adapt to new technologies that enable Al Qaeda's senior leaders to retain control over the organization, and further highlights the minimal impact their isolation by the War on Terror has had. Internet videos, websites, and chat forums help Al Qaeda's senior members to communicate with underlings, issues orders, reinforce ideology, and direct the course of their global insurgency.[12]

In the twenty-first century, the revolution is global. In the fight for the hearts and minds of the future generation, media outlets like Google video and "YouTube" are more likely to become the next informational battleground vice *Al Jazeera,* FOX news, or CNN. Today, insurgents and United States military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan are waging information warfare via the Internet. Videos posted on the Internet serve as a

critical medium to communicate ideas and illicit sympathy for a struggle. Al Qaeda in Iraq videos found by searching the Internet serves to motivate jihadists to come to Iraq and fight the United States. PBS's video *Al Qaeda's New Front* illustrates how recruiters in Europe are using videos to inspire future jihadists.[13]

The Internet represents but another means for Al Qaeda to exploit in its global insurgency. It is a diffuse and nebulous world in which Al Qaeda's operatives can hide with anonymity and exploit to their benefit. The Internet is virtually impossible to police, transcends international borders, and is accessible from the most remote regions. It is a powerful tool that Al Qaeda uses to advance its cause.

<u>Pattern of Evolution</u>

Al Qaeda's evolution occurred in distinct phases. Prior to 9/11, its evolution was the result of decisions made by its leadership. Its leaders, Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri adapted the organization to take full advantage of globalization, specifically the ability to travel, communicate over vast distances, and access to information and technology. This is not because they were grand visionaries, but more akin to adroit opportunists who adapted their means to the changing operational environment. In this aspect, Al-Qaeda is more akin to a chameleon rather than a hydra. It can rapidly change its colors to blend in to the operational environment.

Before 9/11, Al Qaeda's evolution was due to its desire to make the organization more effective and solidify its powerbases in countries like Sudan, Somalia, and Afghanistan. There were no significant external actions that caused Al Qaeda to evolve from 1989 to 2001. Prior to 9/11, the only significant U.S. response to Al Qaeda was the firing of seventy-seven Tomahawk land attack cruise missiles following the 1998 East

African Embassy bombings. This response by the Clinton administration destroyed a pharmaceutical plant in the Sudan and an abandoned training camp in Afghanistan. Even Bin Laden's expulsion from the Sudan in 1996 did little to hurt Al Qaeda. Instead, Al Qaeda gained a greater foothold in Afghanistan, a more remote and geographically insulated region to establish its bases.

After 9/11, Al Qaeda's evolution is more indicative of an action-counteraction process in response to the War on Terror. The efforts of the United States and its allies against Al Qaeda have destroyed a significant portion of its physical network, particularly in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda became a leaner and more mobile entity than it was before 9/11. The organization constricted its vertical command and control structure with Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri assuming a greater role in providing strategic direction as opposed to planning operations. Simultaneously Al Qaeda increased its reliance on its network of affiliates to conduct attacks.

## Threat Analysis

The United States and it allies have had some notable successes in the War on Terror. So far, a significant portion of Al Qaeda's pre-9/11 leadership is dead, captured, or isolated. The United States destroyed its training camps in Afghanistan, and seized some $200 million.[14] Anti-terror legislation and cooperation between the United States and its allies remains high. However, these successes to do not equal victory; they represent peripheral victories against a foe that is much larger and more resilient than given credit. The U.S.'s successes in the War on Terror have enabled Al Qaeda to free itself from its physical infrastructure and evolve into a phenomenon without a discernable

*physical* center of gravity. Al Qaeda is now a vanguard movement for the Islamic struggle against foreign imperialism.[15]

The War on Terror has made Al Qaeda a more dangerous foe than previously assessed. Despite efforts at killing or capturing its senior leaders, expelling it from its sanctuaries around the globe, and curtailing its funding, Al Qaeda persists.[16] It exists as an enduring threat that today operates in the shadows of the globalized world. The result of grafting Al Qaeda to the processes of globalization facilitated its global communications and access to technology, resulting in an operationally and financially self-sustaining transnational entity that requires only strategic orientation. The very processes that enabled global communications, global banking, and permits international travel, allowed Al Qaeda to develop into a global franchise with a redundant capacity to conduct terrorism.[17]

Al Qaeda's resiliency is due a global nexus of affiliate groups, sympathetic supporters, and financing bound by a common ideology. Because of this, Al Qaeda was able to absorb significant damage to its organization during the five years following 9/11. Despite U.S. successes, Al Qaeda remains capable of attacking targets around the globe. Al Qaeda's senior leaders continue to direct the organization, and are able to provide strategic guidance. Isolated by the United States and its allies, Al Qaeda's core leadership can no longer conduct operational or tactical planning as they did prior to 9/11. However, this does not constrain Al Qaeda's operations. Through multimedia, the Internet, and instant access to the global community, Al Qaeda's senior leaders can still communicate and inspire affiliate groups and homegrown imitators to conduct jihad.[18]

<u>Challenges and Future Implications</u>

The nature of Al Qaeda poses a major challenge for the United States and its

allies. The constrained operational environment after 9/11 has isolated Al Qaeda's core

group, preventing them from direct involvement in the operations of its subsidiaries. The

challenge for the United States is addressing how it can combat a foe that operates

outside of the Westphalian international system. By operating at the sub-national and

transnational level, Al Qaeda is a difficult entity to combat. The traditional applications

of national power do not translate easily into a strategy that addresses Al Qaeda's nature.

The first recourse is to acknowledge the danger that Al Qaeda and its network

poses to the security of the United States and the West. Many believe that the apparent

defeat of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, and to some extent in Iraq means the

organization is crippled. Reports have begun emanating from the major news outlets in

early 2007 that Al Qaeda is regrouping.[19] Al Qaeda did not regroup, it simply continued

to adapt itself to meet the current threat. Al Qaeda is a transnational terrorist syndicate

girded by a salafist/wahhabist ideology operating in well over sixty countries with links

to a global terror economy estimated at $1.5 trillion.[20] By recognizing this fact, the

United States needs to realize that the threat Al Qaeda poses is more pervasive than

previous national security challenges.

Al Qaeda has suffered a significant amount of damage since 9/11 in terms of

funds seized, leaders killed or captured, and terror plots foiled, but it is far from being

defeated. [21] The absence of attacks against the United States since 2001 does not mean

that Al Qaeda is not planning future attacks. Al Qaeda is a patient organization.[22] Experts

like Dr. Bruce Hoffman dismiss the notion that Al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks were its *coup de*

*grace* against the United States.[23] Michael Scheuer states, "To say Al Qaeda was out of business simply because they have not attacked in the U.S. is whistling past the graveyard. . . . Al Qaeda is still humming along, and with a new generation of leaders."[24] Given the opportunity, Al Qaeda will strike again at the United States homeland.

The author contends that Al Qaeda is going to be a significant security threat not only to the United States, but also to a host of other nations for a considerable time as. It is an adaptive and elusive enemy. Al Qaeda has adapted based on external pressures like the War on Terror. It also evolved based on the internal decisions of its leaders.[25] Its purpose was to become a catalyst for a worldwide jihadist revolution that would restore Islam in its purest form to its former glory.

Based on its evolutionary trends the author believes that Al Qaeda central will continue to function primarily as the strategic guiding force for the organization. Regional battlegrounds like Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Iraq will serve to mold a new generation of jihadists to replace the veterans of the Soviet-Afghan war in key leadership positions. This new generation is likely to be more radical and better trained in urban warfare, and complex asymmetric attacks.[26]

Al Qaeda's focus for operations will continue to be in the Middle East and Asia. However, a new battlefield is looming in Europe. North African Muslims are immigrating to Europe in growing numbers. With them, operatives from North Africa's more ruthless terrorist organization like the Groupe Islamique Armeé (GIA), the Moroccan Islamic Combat Group (GICM), and Al Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb (formerly the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat or GSPC) continue to infiltrate and will undoubtedly foment trouble among Europe's Muslim

communities.[27] The London and Madrid bombings represent the opening salvoes in growing Islamic militancy towards the West in Europe.[28] The Muslim uprisings in France and Germany in 2005, the religious intolerance over cartoons in Danish newspapers, the assassination of Theo Van Goeh, and increasing discontent among disassociated Muslim populations provide a fertile field for the recruitment of would-be terrorists.[29]

Prior to 9/11 Islamic terrorists used Europe as a hub to launch attacks throughout the Middle East and even as a waypoint to conduct the 9/11 attacks against the United States.[30] Since 9/11, there have been two major terrorist attacks in Europe from Muslims who had lived in Europe for several years. This represents a new threat that is evolving internally to Europe. At a minimum, Europe will serve as a source for local walk-in terrorists motivated by Bin Laden's charisma, Al Qaeda's ideology, or social alienation. This can pose a significant issue for the United States' future efforts to garner the support of its traditional European allies as the War on Terror progresses.[31]

## Conclusion

Al Qaeda evolved from a loose band of like-minded jihadists in Afghanistan into a transnational corporation due in part to globalization, but mainly because of the War on Terror.[32] The War on Terror forced Al Qaeda to become more reliant on its affiliate organizations, while globalization has enabled the core group to maintain some span of control over them. It allows Al Qaeda's affiliates to possess the ability to export their jihad beyond their borders.

Al Qaeda's operational design and its financial network mirror each other. Both consist of nebulous organizational designs that make identifying them extraordinarily

difficult. Furthermore, Al Qaeda's economic resources intertwine with the global economy. Defining a business, or organization, that might have legitimate connections or merely circumstantial ties to Al Qaeda is difficult to assess. This makes it hard for counterterrorism efforts to distinguish Al Qaeda operations from other groups.

The use of military power is but one component the United States has to leverage against Al Qaeda. More effort must go into mobilizing other instruments of national power to attack Al Qaeda's vulnerabilities. The United States and its allies must mobilize their diplomatic, informational, military, and economic power to combat Al Qaeda.[33] This is easier said than done. A significant obstacle to using the elements of national power, is addressing how a nation-state like the United States, which is bound by the international system, can fight an organization that operates outside of the current world system. Al Qaeda is not bound by international law, international treaties or institutions in the conduct of its jihad. This is an advantage it possesses over the United States who must work within a system of nation-states that is a product of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Further research into how the United States can leverage its national power to combat Al Qaeda is warranted, but remains beyond the scope of this thesis.

The West, the United States in particular, must adapt its thinking to recognize that Al Qaeda's threat is enduring. The current fight against it will not be over soon. It will likely take several decades, and enormous sacrifices in terms of lives and resources to defeat Al Qaeda.

There are no concrete answers as to how to address the terrorist threat that Al Qaeda poses, and solutions are as varied as the very problem itself. Knowledge and understanding of the enemy are important in the War on Terrorism. It allows the United

States and its allies to evaluate their strategies and adjust their tactics to combat Al Qaeda effectively.[34] The challenge for military and civilian leaders is to try to objectively understand Al Qaeda through its evolution, recognize its dangers, and understand how their action can influence the current war against it.

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[1]Dale Eikmeier,"Qutbism: An Ideology of Islamic-Fascism." *Parameters* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 94.

[2]Lowell Bergman and Neil Docherty, *Al Qaeda's New Front.* Produced and directed by Neil Docherty. 60 minutes. PBS, 2005. DVD.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Bruce Hoffman, telephone Interview by author, 18 October 2006, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

[5]Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror,* 2d ed. (New York: Penguin Group, 2003), 2-3, 6-7.

[6]Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf Publishing, 2006), 197.

[7]Loretta Napoleoni, *Terror: Tracing the Dollars Behind Terror Networks* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 116, 124-125, 134-135.

[8]Peter Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 104-107.

[9]Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror,* 90-91.

[10]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 213-214.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., 201, 214-215, 228.

[13]Bergman and Docherty, *Al Qaeda's New Front.* Produced and directed by Neil Docherty. 60 minutes. PBS, 2005. DVD. The video shows police surveillance of a potential jihadist recruit who reacted with enthusiasm and excitement while being shown footage that featured the execution of Nicholas Berg in Iraq.

[14]Gunaratna, "The Post Madrid Face of Al Qaeda" *The Washington Quarterly.* Volume 27, Issue 3 (summer 2004): 93.

[15]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 283.

[16]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 283-285.

[17]Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 40-42; and Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 201, 214-215, 228.

[18]Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 28-29; and Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 201, 214-215, 228.

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[22]Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 200.

[23]Interview with Dr. Bruce Hoffman conducted by author via telephone. 18 October 2006, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

[24]Michael Scheuer, quoted in Mark Mazzetti. "New Generation of Qaeda Chiefs Is Seen On Rise" *New York Times* April 2, 2007.

[25]Mark Mazzetti, "New Generation of Qaeda Chiefs Is Seen On Rise"

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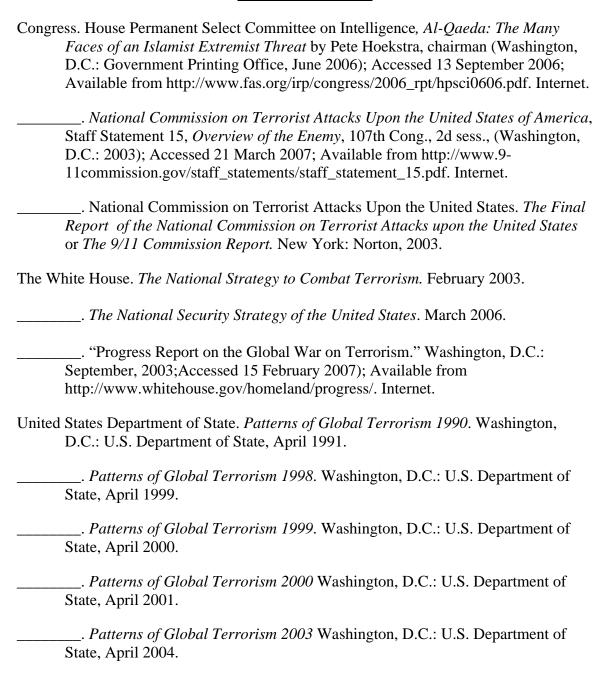
[32]Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 200; and Napoleoni, *Terror: Tracing the Dollars Behind Terror Networks*, 195, 202-208.

[33]Ibid.

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