

## Al Qaeda's Scorecard: A Progress Report on Al Qaeda's Objectives

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*Terrorism scholars are divided over whether terrorism is an effective tactic. Disagreement derives from the fact that the objectives of terrorist groups are often highly contested. Nowhere is this clearer than in contemporary statements on Al Qaeda. This article explores the most common interpretations for why Al Qaeda attacked the United States on 11 September 2001, and then analyzes their empirical support. After determining the most compelling interpretation of Al Qaeda's objectives, the article evaluates Al Qaeda's success in achieving them since perpetrating this watershed attack. The following analysis provides a timely case study in the classic debate over whether terrorism is strategically rational behavior.*

### Introduction

The dominant view among political scientists is that terrorism is a winning tactic, and therefore groups that use terrorism are acting rationally to achieve their objectives.<sup>1</sup> In the August 2003 edition of the *American Political Science Review*, Robert Pape argued in a prominent article that “terrorism pays” and thus terrorist groups “cannot be considered irrational.”<sup>2</sup> In *Dying to Win* (2005), Pape provides additional empirical evidence for his thesis that terrorist groups are rational actors because terrorism “works” to accomplish their objectives.<sup>3</sup> *International Organization* carried two separate articles in 2002 that also contended that “extremist terrorism can be rational and strategic” and that “extremist violence is not indiscriminate or irrational as many people have assumed but quite strategic.”<sup>4</sup> Political scientists are not alone in making this assertion; recent bestsellers have likewise claimed that “terrorism is an entirely rational choice to achieve a political objective” because it has been so “successful” in the past.<sup>5</sup> Terrorism specialists have made related claims for almost a decade; in the late 1990s Bruce Hoffman detailed how Palestinians benefited from terrorism after the Six Day War, leading numerous copycat movements to adopt this tactic in order to serve their own strategic ends.<sup>6</sup>

The notion that terrorism advances the objectives of terrorist groups does not, however, hold a consensus position. As early as 1976, Walter Laqueur wrote an article entitled

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"The Futility of Terrorism" in which he concluded that terrorism tends to be ineffective.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Schelling similarly believed that "terrorism almost never appears to accomplish anything politically significant."<sup>8</sup> According to Loren Lomasky, "In almost none of the instances of terrorist activity is there any genuine likelihood that the assault on person or property will serve to advance the claimed political ends."<sup>9</sup> In fact, if terrorism exerts any perceptible influence on targeted governments, it is to strengthen their resolve to resist and kill the aggressors.<sup>10</sup>

The debate over the strategic utility of terrorism derives from the fact that the objectives of terrorist groups are often highly contested. Although theories on Al Qaeda's objectives abound, systematic studies analyzing them have been surprisingly lacking.<sup>11</sup> This article aims to contribute to the lacuna on Al Qaeda's objectives, as well as to the enduring debate over whether terrorism is strategically rational behavior. The following analysis attempts to answer two main questions: (1) What did Al Qaeda hope to achieve by attacking the United States on 11 September 2001? (2) What, if any, progress has Al Qaeda made toward accomplishing these objectives since launching this watershed attack?

Part I presents the most common interpretations for why Al Qaeda has targeted the United States as expressed by American politicians, academics, policy analysts, journalists, and public opinion surveys. Four sets of interpretations are explored: (1) Al Qaeda hates freedom and wants to impose its values on the world; (2) Al Qaeda wants to kill Americans as an end in itself; (3) Al Qaeda wants to provoke the United States into waging a self-defeating war in the Muslim world; (4) Al Qaeda wants to change unpopular U.S. policies in the Muslim world, particularly in the Middle East. Part II analyzes the empirical evidence for each of these commonly stated interpretations by examining (1) Al Qaeda's public statements; (2) confessions offered by Al Qaeda captives in U.S. custody; (3) polling data of Al Qaeda's potential supporter constituency in the Muslim world; (4) Al Qaeda's target selection. Based on this assessment of Al Qaeda's objectives, Part III evaluates the effectiveness of Al Qaeda terrorism since the 11 September 2001 attack.

## Four Interpretations of Al Qaeda's Objectives

### *Interpretation 1: Al Qaeda has Attacked the United States to Change its Values*

President Bush is the most ardent exponent that Al Qaeda has attacked the United States because of its values. According to Bush, the United States "did nothing to deserve or invite the threat"; Al Qaeda "hates not our policies, but our existence."<sup>12</sup> This interpretation was formulated in the immediate aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attack. In a joint session before Congress two weeks after the attack, Bush declared that the terrorists are targeting America because "They hate our freedoms—our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other."<sup>13</sup> Since then, he has maintained that "it's those very values that came under attack on 11 September 2001."<sup>14</sup>

Neo-conservatives believe that the United States is a target because of what it stands for, whereas neo-realists believe that the post-Cold War structure of the international system invites counterbalancing because the United States is the sole superpower.<sup>15</sup> Although influenced more by the neo-conservative tradition, Bush combines these two intellectual strains to describe Al Qaeda's motives. He thus claims that "They [the terrorists] have attacked America because we are freedom's home and defender" and "the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world."<sup>16</sup> In this formulation, Al Qaeda's policy objectives flow logically from its opposition to American values. Because Al Qaeda

"hates freedom" it follows that Al Qaeda "seeks to destroy our freedom."<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, if Al Qaeda is targeting America because it is the most powerful democracy, then Al Qaeda must surreptitiously want to "impose its radical beliefs on people everywhere."<sup>18</sup>

The belief that Al Qaeda has declared war on America to change its values is most evident when he describes the conflict in civilizational terms. Bush maintains that on 11 September "the terrorists attacked the civilized world because they bear a deep hatred for the values of the civilized world."<sup>19</sup> This interpretation of Al Qaeda bears unmistakable parallels to Samuel Huntington's 1993 article, "The Clash of Civilizations," which famously forecast that the future battle lines would be drawn less between states than civilizations.<sup>20</sup> Huntington's thesis expanded on the ideas of Bernard Lewis, who contended that there is an emerging clash between militant segments of the Muslim world and the West. According to Lewis, the roots of this clash transcend specific interests or policies, but instead derive from a "rejection of western civilization as such, not only what it does but what it is."<sup>21</sup> Proponents of the clash of civilization thesis are divided over whether the Islamic world constitutes a discrete political unit that threatens the West or whether only a minority of Muslims militantly oppose liberal democracy.<sup>22</sup> Differences in opinion also arise over whether liberal democracy—namely, limited government, secularism, and respect for minorities—can take root in the Islamic world.<sup>23</sup> Notwithstanding these important variations, this intellectual camp is united in its understanding of Al Qaeda's objectives: the terrorists are targeting America—and by extension Western civilization itself—to replace the West's values with its own.

This maximalist interpretation of Al Qaeda's objectives enjoys widespread support among America's elite opinion makers. In the preface to *The 9/11 Report*, the bipartisan commission asserts that Al Qaeda's "... hostility toward us and our values is limitless. Its purpose is to rid the world of religious and political pluralism, the plebiscite, and equal rights to women."<sup>24</sup> A common offshoot of this interpretation is that the terrorists have attacked America to change its cultural values. *New York Times* Op-Ed writer Thomas Friedman has popularized the notion that Al Qaeda opposes the United States because of its popular culture, which exudes decadence and depravity. In this rendition, Al Qaeda's goal is to roll back everything American from the messages transmitted through Hollywood to McDonalds to Mickey Mouse.<sup>25</sup> The notion that Al Qaeda aims to undercut American political and cultural values maintains broad support among the American public. Polls consistently show that most Americans believe that Al Qaeda has declared war on America to destroy "our democracy and freedom" and "change our way of life."<sup>26</sup> The breadth of support for this view, including its backing by the current U.S. president, elite American opinion makers, and the American public makes it the leading American interpretation of Al Qaeda's objectives.

### *Interpretation 2: Al Qaeda has Attacked the United States to Kill as an End in Itself*

In the early 1990s policymakers began to assert that the conventional understanding of terrorist groups needed revision. Whereas past terrorists had a political agenda to promote, the "new terrorists" are allegedly uninterested in achieving political change. Rather, they have declared war on the United States simply to kill the maximum number of Americans. A National Intelligence Estimate distributed in July 1995 stated that the 1993 World Trade Center bombing was intended "to kill a lot of people, not to achieve a more traditional political goal."<sup>27</sup> Former CIA director James Woolsey similarly concluded that "Today's

terrorists don't want a seat at the table; they want to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it."<sup>28</sup> Ashton Carter, John Deutch, and Philip Zelikow expanded on this interpretation in a 1998 article in *Foreign Affairs*, writing that the new wave of "catastrophic terrorism" is not designed to affect policy, but to create destruction in itself.<sup>29</sup>

Proponents of the catastrophic terrorism thesis fall into two camps: those who believe the goal is to kill the maximum number of people out of religious fanaticism versus the desire to avenge foreign policy injustices. Those who characterize Al Qaeda as an apocalyptic terrorist group emphasize its eschatological nature.<sup>30</sup> Three arguments are routinely offered: killing infidels (1) fulfills God's wishes; (2) will be rewarded in heaven; (3) punishes those who have disobeyed God. The 11 September 2001 attack has been variously described as "an act of consummate religious devotion," "an act of redemption," the realization of "heavenly rewards," and an effort to "humiliate and slaughter those who defied the hegemony of God."<sup>31</sup> In each rendering, the purpose of killing is not to right human wrongs, but to act with God and for God.<sup>32</sup>

The secular view is that Al Qaeda aims to inflict maximum harm against the United States not to build support for its cause or to coerce concessions, but to punish the United States for its foreign policies.<sup>33</sup> The vengeance literature is comprised of two schools. Some scholars have suggested that Al Qaeda seeks "collective revenge" for policies that have harmed their fellow Muslims, whereas others emphasize that the terrorists are motivated by a desire to avenge a personal loss resulting from an aggressor state's foreign policy, such as the killing of a friend or relative.<sup>34</sup> These variants are united in the belief that terrorism is not purposive; conventional political objectives are irrelevant because the goal is simply to kill as an end in itself.

### ***Interpretation 3: Al Qaeda has Attacked the United States to Provoke War in the Muslim World***

Another common view is that Al Qaeda has attacked the United States to provoke a self-defeating war in the Muslim world. This theory consists of two distinct arguments: (1) Al Qaeda's goal is to spur the United States to commit counteratrocities in order to undermine its international support and attract terrorist recruits; (2) Al Qaeda's goal is to goad the United States into over-committing its forces in order to get it bogged down in a costly asymmetric conflict. David Rapoport has noted that terrorist groups have historically used "the politics of atrocity" to "produce counter-atrocities rebounding to the advantage of the original assailant."<sup>35</sup> The Russian anarchists of the nineteenth century, the Irgun, and the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) tried to elicit heavy-handed counterterrorism measures in order to erode the targeted government's popular support and attract more terrorists. The optimal way for terrorists to achieve these intermediary goals is by provoking the targeted government to engage in seemingly indiscriminate violence against the terrorists' potential supporter constituency.<sup>36</sup> Michael Scott Doran has alluded that this is exactly the response Al Qaeda hopes to elicit:

America, cast as the villain, is supposed to use its military might like a cartoon trying to kill a fly with a shotgun. The media will see to it that any use of force ... will be broadcast around the world, and the *umma* [worldwide Muslim community] will find it shocking how Americans nonchalantly cause Muslims to suffer and die.<sup>37</sup>

The second variant, that Al Qaeda is trying to lure the United States into waging an un-winnable asymmetric war, was first articulated in the run-up to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Foreign policy analysts warned in the fall 2001 that the United States would face the same operational difficulties that bedeviled the Soviet Union during the Afghan War of the 1980s. Based on this projection, it was asserted that "The United States invasion of Afghanistan is precisely what the Al Qaeda movement wanted to provoke."<sup>38</sup> This claim was most fully developed by Alan Cullison of the *Wall Street Journal*, who wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* that "the United States is indeed playing the role written for it" because Afghanistan will again become a "graveyard for the imperial ambitions of a superpower."<sup>39</sup> Although the United States managed to avoid getting bogged down in Afghanistan following OEF, heightened U.S. casualties in Iraq have given new currency to the provocation thesis.

#### ***Interpretation 4: Al Qaeda has Attacked the United States to Change its Foreign Policies***

Since the 11 September attack intelligence analysts have maintained that Al Qaeda's goal is to change unpopular U.S. policies in the Muslim world.<sup>40</sup> The list of Al Qaeda's purported grievances against the United States is now well known: (1) stationing its forces in Saudi Arabia; (2) destroying Iraq with punitive economic sanctions; (3) occupying Iraq under the guise of fighting terrorism; (4) supporting Israel in its war against the Palestinians; (5) killing Muslims around the world; (6) condoning international atrocities against Muslims; (7) propping up corrupt Muslim governments; (8) exploiting Muslim oil.<sup>41</sup>

Intelligence analysts and increasingly political scientists embrace the position that Al Qaeda has targeted the United States to reverse these policies.<sup>42</sup> Intelligence analysts and political scientists diverge, however, beyond their methodological differences. Political scientists tend to advocate U.S. policy changes for the benefit of the national interest. Intelligence analysts, by contrast, are more apt to emphasize that although unpopular U.S. policies are the principal irritant in the Muslim world, they are frequently misperceived. Consequently, intelligence analysts imply that moderating unpopular U.S. policies is, at best, only a partial solution to the global struggle against violent extremism.<sup>43</sup>

#### **Assessing Al Qaeda's Objectives**

The following section will assess the empirical support for these four sets of interpretations by analyzing Al Qaeda's public statements, confessions offered by Al Qaeda captives, polling data of Al Qaeda's potential supporter constituency, and Al Qaeda's target selection. There is one interpretation that has the most empirical support. The evidence strongly suggests that Al Qaeda has attacked the United States to change its foreign policies. The claims that Al Qaeda has targeted America to destroy its values, provoke a self-defeating war in the Islamic world, or to kill as an end in itself are comparatively unsupported.

#### ***Al Qaeda has Attacked the United States to Change its Foreign Policies***

The hundreds of communiqués uttered by Al Qaeda and its affiliates suggest that they regard terrorism as a bloody communication strategy.<sup>44</sup> In Al Qaeda discourse—for example, videos broadcast on Arab television, speeches quoted in Arab newspapers, and statements posted on Islamist websites—terrorism is described as a "message with no words" that is "the only language understood by the West."<sup>45</sup> Both the message and language are

unambiguous: "Any nation that does not attack us will not be attacked."<sup>46</sup> Four grievances against the United States are mentioned with the greatest frequency. First, bin Laden's most well-known ultimatum is for the United States to withdraw its troops from Saudi Arabia, "Land of the two holy places." His statements indicate that what he finds objectionable is not only that the United States stationed its troops in "the holiest of places" during the 1991 Gulf War, but that the U.S. bases were then used as a "spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples."<sup>47</sup> Al Qaeda's criticisms of U.S. military interference in Saudi Arabia are invariably coupled with complaints about the treatment of its "neighbors," especially Iraq.<sup>48</sup> Placing U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia was not only an egregious provocation in itself; the bases represented and facilitated the occupation of "its most powerful neighboring Arab state."<sup>49</sup> Since Al Qaeda declared war on America, bin Laden and his lieutenants have thus threatened that the United States will remain a target until its military forces withdraw from the entire Persian Gulf.<sup>50</sup>

Second, according to Al Qaeda its terrorism is intended to dissuade the United States from supporting military interventions that kill Muslims around the world. In the 1990s this list included "Crusader wars" in Chechnya, Bosnia, and East Timor. Actions in Israel and Iraq during this period generated the most intense opposition. Since the 11 September attack, this criticism of the United States has focused almost exclusively on events in these two countries.<sup>51</sup> Third, Al Qaeda communiqués emphasize its goal of compelling the United States to stop supporting pro-Western Muslim rulers that suppress the will of their people. Al Qaeda leaders routinely denounce the House of Saud and Musharraf's Pakistan in particular as the most "oppressive, corrupt, and tyrannical regimes" whose very existence depends on the "supervision of America."<sup>52</sup> A prominent Al Qaeda website has equated U.S. financial and political support of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to colonization.<sup>53</sup> Fourth, Al Qaeda leaders describe Israel in similar terms—as a colonial outpost. Based on Al Qaeda communiqués, its final objective is thus to destroy the "Zionist-Crusader alliance," which enables Israel to maintain its "occupation of Jerusalem" and "murder Muslims there."<sup>54</sup>

A diverse group of policymakers, terrorism specialists, and politicians have publicly questioned the credibility of Al Qaeda's stated objectives. In an edited volume published shortly after 11 September 2001 by the Council on Foreign Relations, President Clinton's former National Security Adviser co-wrote a book chapter entitled "Commandeering the Palestinian Cause: Bin Laden's Belated Concern." The authors asserted: "Until it served his larger purposes after the 11 September attacks, bin Laden had been no champion of the Palestinian cause."<sup>55</sup> This claim surfaced repeatedly in the months immediately following the 11 September attack.<sup>56</sup> In fact, Al Qaeda's foreign policy demands have been remarkably consistent since the early 1990s.<sup>57</sup>

Others have minimized Al Qaeda's policy demands not by questioning their consistency, but by dismissing them as propaganda. Jessica Stern has warned against accepting the sincerity of self-serving "slogans" that mask the terrorists' real objectives.<sup>58</sup> Prime Minister Blair has likewise cautioned against believing Al Qaeda's "twisted logic" that unpopular foreign policies in the Muslim world are responsible for terrorist attacks.<sup>59</sup> There is good reason, however, why intelligence analysts take seriously Al Qaeda communiqués: they have accurately represented its intentions.<sup>60</sup> Throughout the 1990s, bin Laden threatened to steadily increase the lethality of his attacks on American interests until the United States complied with his ultimatums. When terrorism did not change the direction of U.S. foreign policy, Al Qaeda proceeded to attack U.S. interests in Yemen, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, and Tanzania with growing lethality. In his 1998 Fatwa,

bin Laden threatened to attack the continental United States if it refused to alter its foreign policies.<sup>61</sup> As promised, Al Qaeda proceeded to target the homeland.

Not only have Al Qaeda's public statements accurately represented its intentions, but its leaders have emphasized these foreign policy goals in private. This suggests that Al Qaeda's opposition to U.S. foreign policies is not invented for international consumption. Al Qaeda operatives captured in Afghanistan testified in 2002 and 2003 that their leaders had personally told them that the purpose of the jihad was to end U.S. support for Israel and the occupation of the Persian Gulf.<sup>62</sup> In October 2001 a trove of letters allegedly written by bin Laden was seized by Scotland Yard during an investigation of his supporters in Britain. The objectives listed in the letters are indistinguishable from those contained in his public statements: to drive out American forces from the Gulf; to deter the United States from supporting international conflicts that kill Muslims; to stop the United States from interfering in local politics, particularly in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia; and to end U.S. support for Israel. The identity of the author remains a subject of debate.<sup>63</sup> But even if another Al Qaeda leader was posing as bin Laden, the letters reveal that Al Qaeda operatives were believed to be motivated by these foreign policy goals.

Polling data of Al Qaeda's potential supporter constituency bolsters this assumption. The Muslim world may disagree with Al Qaeda's methods, but it evidently shares its foreign policy objectives. A major report released in July 2003 by the Pew Research Center found that in all eight Muslim countries surveyed, Muslim publics agreed that "the United States favors Israel over the Palestinians too much."<sup>64</sup> The survey also concluded that "By wide margins most Muslim populations do not believe that the Israeli state can exist in a way that meets the rights and needs of the Palestinian people."<sup>65</sup> Other surveys have found almost universal agreement (more than 95 percent) that American forces should promptly leave the Persian Gulf.<sup>66</sup> The sum of empirical evidence—Al Qaeda's public statements, its private statements, and polling data from its supporter constituency—thus corroborates the claim that Al Qaeda's goal is to coerce the United States into changing its foreign policies.

### *Al Qaeda has Attacked the United States to Change its Values*

By contrast there is scant empirical support for the dominant American interpretation that Al Qaeda has targeted the United States to change its values. While bin Laden has implored Americans to rid themselves of their "spiritless materialistic life,"<sup>67</sup> a comprehensive perusal of Al Qaeda's public statements reveals few references to American popular culture.<sup>68</sup> Bin Laden has taunted that "freedom and human rights in America are doomed," but American political values are also not a recurrent theme in Al Qaeda communiqués.<sup>69</sup> The relative silence on these issues suggests that American values are not a principal grievance. Bin Laden, moreover, has explicitly rejected the claim that Al Qaeda's goal is to change American values. On multiple occasions, he has warned American and European audiences that Al Qaeda has not targeted them because of their values and that those who repeat this "lie" either suffer from "confusion" or are intentionally "misleading you."<sup>70</sup>

Al Qaeda's evolving target selection is rapidly corroborating these statements. As Al Qaeda leaders have noted, the killing of Americans took place only after their heightened engagement in the Middle East after the Cold War, and the killing of Europeans took place only after the invasion of Iraq.<sup>71</sup> After bin Laden made these observations on Al-Jazeera in April 2004, Spain withdrew its troops from Iraq without subsequent terrorist incidents, whereas Britain remained committed to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Al Qaeda targeted London. Such observations are consistent with recent statistical analysis conducted

by Robert Pape, who has shown that (suicide) terrorist groups have historically targeted countries that intervene in their political affairs.<sup>72</sup> Although most of these campaigns in the last two decades have been directed against democracies, there are three compelling explanations for why values is not the underlying causal factor: (1) during this period, democratic countries were generally responsible for policies involving the long-term stationing of troops in foreign countries (e.g., Lebanon, Chechnya, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq);<sup>73</sup> (2) terrorism is a natural tactic to use against their stronger democratic enemies (e.g., Israel, Russia, United States, Britain); (3) democracies are believed to be more susceptible to coercion.<sup>74</sup>

Polling data of Al Qaeda's potential supporter constituency in Muslim countries vitiates the argument that Al Qaeda is attacking America to destroy its values. Citizens in Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates were asked in 2004 whether their "attitudes toward the United States are based more on American values or on American policy in the Middle East?" More than 75 percent of the respondents from all five countries cited American foreign policy as the leading determinant of their views toward the United States.<sup>75</sup> American values were the main factor for less than 16 percent of the population in every country surveyed. The ratio of people whose views of the United States were shaped more by American policy than American values ranged from 76:16 in Jordan up to 90:1 in Egypt.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, Muslim attitudes on economic and political values are generally positive. The majority or near majority of Muslim countries supports the U.S. stance on free markets and world trade.<sup>77</sup> Muslim countries are even more enthusiastic about democracy. According to the Pew Global Attitudes Project, most Muslim countries have "strong" democratic aspirations, with upwards of 70 percent of their publics eager to have more democracy, not less.<sup>78</sup> In the aggregate, the evidence therefore does not support the dominant view that Al Qaeda has targeted the United States to change its values.

### *Al Qaeda has Attacked the United States to Kill as an End in Itself*

There is also little evidence that Al Qaeda has targeted the United States simply to kill the maximum number of Americans. If this were true, Al Qaeda would by definition have no message to communicate. This does not comport with the empirical record. Before the 11 September attack, bin Laden granted several well-known interviews to Western journalists, despite the attendant risks to his security.<sup>79</sup> Since the war on terror commenced, Al Qaeda leaders have supplied dozens of videotapes and audiotapes to Al-Jazeera, despite the danger of potentially exposing their chain of custody.<sup>80</sup> Al Qaeda leaders have thus sacrificed their own security to disseminate their messages to the American public, which suggests that Al Qaeda regards its communiqués as an important component of its overall strategy.

Al Qaeda's rationale for using terrorism also contradicts the proposition that the loose network of terrorists are devoid of strategic objectives. In Al Qaeda communiqués, terrorism is described as a tactical necessity due to "the imbalance of power" between the United States and Al Qaeda.<sup>81</sup> Al Qaeda spokesmen draw a distinction between what they call "reprehensible" terrorism and "commendable" terrorism. The former lacks a valid objective, whereas the latter is deemed "necessary for the safety of people and for the protection of their property." In asserting that "The terrorism we practice is of the commendable kind," Al Qaeda communiqués affirm that political objectives matter.<sup>82</sup>

Al Qaeda communiqués are punctuated with threats of punishing the United States for its foreign policies.<sup>83</sup> Yet, a close analysis of these threats suggests that they are purposive; significantly, such communiqués are nearly always coupled with the pledge that changing



unpopular foreign policies in the Muslim world would alleviate the terrorism threat.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, debriefings of Al Qaeda terrorists in Guantanamo have thus far revealed that neither collective nor personal vengeance is an underlying motive for opposing the United States.<sup>85</sup> Nor is the evidence compelling that the terrorists have targeted the United States for eschatological reasons. Of the seventy-one individuals who killed themselves on Al Qaeda missions from 1995 to 2003, Islamic fundamentalism was a considerably weaker predictor for becoming a terrorist than the presence of American military forces in their homeland territory.<sup>86</sup>

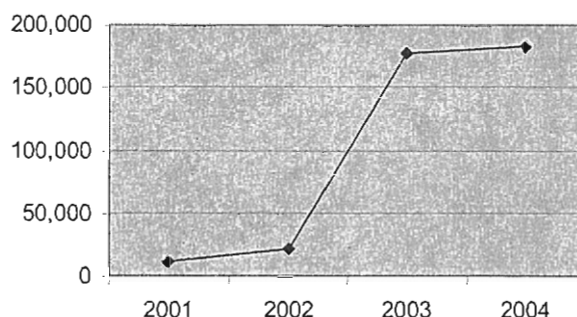
### *Al Qaeda has Attacked the United States to Provoke War in the Muslim World*

The notion that Al Qaeda has attacked the United States to provoke a losing war in the Muslim world is intuitively appealing. According to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, bin Laden urged his lieutenants to support the 11 September attack in part because the American retaliation would attract terrorist recruits and ignite criticism of the United States.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, in 1998 the Clinton administration retaliated against Al Qaeda by launching cruise missiles at a supposed chemical weapons factory in Khartoum. Subsequent revelations that the targeted facility held medical supplies sparked worldwide Muslim demonstrations and condemnation of the United States by the international community.<sup>88</sup>

Yet the provocation thesis is ultimately unconvincing for six reasons. First, prior to the 11 September attack Al Qaeda believed that the United States was a paper tiger; both publicly and privately, its leaders predicted that the United States would respond to attacks with either token gestures or political concessions.<sup>89</sup> Second, a videotape recovered in OEF shows bin Laden admitting to a Saudi visitor that the World Trade Center strikes were far more destructive than anticipated. In the tape, bin Laden confesses that the scale of the devastation greatly exceeded his expectations; in the best-case scenario, the iron structure of the buildings was intended to collapse only where the planes hit directly.<sup>90</sup> Third, senior Taliban figures (e.g., Abu Hafs the Mauritanian, Sheikh Saeed al Masri, and Sayf al Adl) opposed the mission because they feared a U.S. retaliatory strike on Afghanistan if the attack originated from there.<sup>91</sup> Fourth, many Islamist groups condemned the 11 September attack (e.g., Parti Islam Se Malaysia, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Lebanese Hezbollah) to avoid potential retaliation from the United States and its allies.<sup>92</sup> Fifth, when the Bush administration began pursuing its war on terrorism, bin Laden ordered his Asia terrorism chief to launch attacks in Southeast Asia. Instead of trying to draw the United States into the Middle East, Al Qaeda was apparently hoping to divert U.S. forces elsewhere.<sup>93</sup> Sixth, Al Qaeda leaders have repeatedly stated that the U.S. response to 11 September runs counter to their purpose of reducing external interference in the Muslim world.<sup>94</sup>

### **Al Qaeda's Scorecard**

If one accepts that Al Qaeda's goal is to reverse unpopular U.S. policies in the Muslim world, then Al Qaeda's effectiveness should be evaluated, *inter alia*, on its record in this area. There is a major disconnect between Al Qaeda's foreign policy objectives and the direction of post-11 September U.S. policies in the Muslim world. The war on terrorism has actually rendered Al Qaeda's objectives more urgent. Since it began, the U.S. has (1) increased its occupation of the Persian Gulf; (2) strengthened relations with pro-American Muslim rulers; (3) supported—either directly or indirectly—military



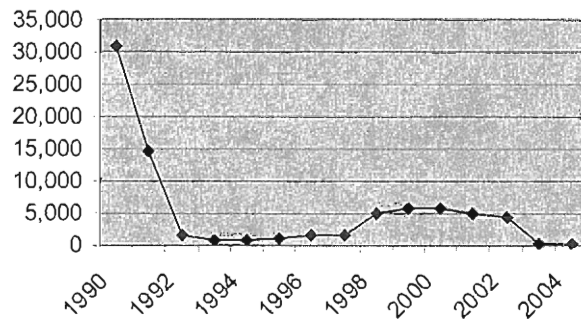
**Figure 1.** American troops in Persian Gulf, 2001 to 2004. September 30 of each year. Source: Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, "Active Duty Military Personnel by Country" (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense), 1980–2004.

interventions that have killed thousands of Muslims; (4) improved bilateral relations with Israel. The only partial success for Al Qaeda was the U.S. decision to withdraw its troops from Saudi Arabia. Even there, however, the impact of terrorism was minor; Al Qaeda's role was subordinate to other strategic considerations and the U.S. occupation of Saudi Arabia remained essentially unaffected.

#### *Reducing U.S. Military Influence in the Persian Gulf*

Al Qaeda terrorism has been counterproductive in reducing U.S. military inference in the Persian Gulf. The 11 September attack provided the strategic rationale for OIF and was the critical factor for securing the American public's support. The main selling point for regime change was not that Iraq would attack the United States or its allies, but that "using chemical, biological, or, one day, nuclear weapons provided by Iraq, the terrorists could one day kill hundreds of thousands of people in our country."<sup>95</sup> Postwar revelations suggest that even before 11 September 2001 President Bush and top-level officials wanted Saddam Hussein removed from power.<sup>96</sup> Most Americans, however, did not support invading Iraq until August 2002, when the administration began ratcheting up its rhetoric linking Saddam to Al Qaeda. From this point until March 2003, two-thirds of the American public supported Bush's Iraq policy in the context of the wider war on terrorism.<sup>97</sup> Not only was 11 September a necessary condition for OIF, but the fear of emboldening the terrorists by "retreating" from Iraq is the main intellectual justification for staying there. In the absence of a major terrorist attack on the homeland, it is difficult to imagine that Americans would have agreed to increase their troop presence by fifteen times in the Persian Gulf from about 11,000 before the 11 September attack to 177,000 in the course of OIF and its aftermath (see Figure 1).<sup>98</sup>

Al Qaeda's greatest apparent success was in Saudi Arabia. One year after the 11 September attack, the United States reduced its forces from slightly more than five thousand troops to only three hundred military advisers (see Figure 2).<sup>99</sup> To conclude that Al Qaeda terrorism has accomplished its goal in Saudi Arabia is problematic, however, for three reasons. First, American threat perceptions of Iraq—not Al Qaeda—have more explanatory power in accounting for fluctuations in American troop levels in Saudi Arabia. In the immediate aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War, the United States downgraded its forces from almost 31,000 in August 1990 to 1,800 the following year. When containment eroded in the late 1990s, the United States improved its forward deployed positions throughout the



**Figure 2.** American troops in Saudi Arabia, 1990 to 2004. September 30 of each year. Source: Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, "Active Duty Military Personnel by Country" (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense), 1980–2004.

Gulf to enforce Operations Southern and Northern Watch. Once Iraq's offensive capabilities were neutralized in OIF, the United States again reduced its troops in Saudi Arabia. In each deployment, the role of terrorism was comparatively minor.

Second, the decision to draw down American troops in Saudi Arabia was part of a broader grand strategy that had nothing to do with the Al Qaeda threat. With a diminished defense budget after the Cold War, the Pentagon aimed to project power with fewer military personnel.<sup>100</sup> In the 1990s the United States signed bilateral agreements with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, prepositioned equipment in Kuwait and then Qatar, and sold a massive "quality of quantity" of military hardware that was interoperable with the American military. The portfolio basing strategy dovetailed with the Revolution in Military Affairs as innovations in information processing and precision munitions would enable early arriving aircraft to deliver a quicker, more lethal response with fewer troops.<sup>101</sup> Similar trends are evident in other theaters (e.g., the Korean Peninsula and Western Europe), suggesting that force protection in Saudi Arabia was, at most, a secondary consideration.

Third, fewer American troops in Saudi Arabia since the 1991 Gulf War does not signal a loss of American influence. On the contrary, the United States actually enjoys greater leverage and deeper military relations with all of the GCC countries, seen in heightened arms sales, joint exercises, and intelligence sharing.<sup>102</sup> Troop levels are only one criterion to measure a foreign occupation, which is defined as a foreign power controlling the foreign policies of another government independent of the wishes of the local population.<sup>103</sup> That attacks by Al Qaeda have not abated since the United States withdrew its troops from Saudi Arabia suggests that the loose network of terrorists likely shares this broader definition of occupation, which remains firmly in effect.

### *Destroying U.S. Relations with "Corrupt" Muslim Rulers*

Terrorism has not eroded U.S. relations with pro-American Muslim leaders. In Pakistan and Saudi Arabia—the two bilateral relationships most objectionable to Al Qaeda—the 11 September attack has led to heightened cooperation with the United States due to a combination of American pressure, inducements, and mutual fears of terrorism. Prior to the attack, U.S.–Pakistan relations were at a nadir: Pakistan had diminished strategic utility to the United States with the end of the Cold War and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan;

Islamabad posed a challenge to America's nonproliferation policy and was the principal backer of the Taliban; and General Musharraf had recently staged a successful putsch against his country's first democratically elected leader. 11 September enabled Musharraf to transform Pakistan from a rogue state into a critical American ally.

He promptly severed diplomatic and military support for the Taliban and then offered intelligence, air space, and ground facilities for OEF. Musharraf also committed himself to fighting Al Qaeda operatives in his own country, especially in the terrorist-rich Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. In December 2003, Pakistani Army and Frontier Corps began waging large-scale military operations in South Waziristan, which have killed hundreds of foreign terrorists and degraded their command and control capabilities in the region. Musharraf's commitment to the U.S.-led war on terrorism has also included freezing assets of terrorist entities linked to Al Qaeda and valuable intelligence sharing.<sup>104</sup> In exchange, Washington stopped demanding the return to civilian rule and ignored Musharraf's periodic crackdowns on political challengers.<sup>105</sup> The so-called democracy sanctions were lifted, enabling Washington to provide economic and military assistance to unelected governments.<sup>106</sup> Sanctions over Islamabad's unauthorized 1998 decision to test nuclear weapons were likewise repealed, allowing the U.S. government to supply hundreds of millions of dollars in aid since 11 September 2001. To boost Musharraf, the president and the Congress also agreed to reschedule Pakistan's \$400 million debt to the United States and support loan restructuring by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.<sup>107</sup> In sum, 11 September and the ensuing war on terrorism achieved the exact opposite of Al Qaeda's objectives in Pakistan: they strengthened Musharraf's relations with the United States and bolstered his power vis-à-vis the Islamists.

The House of Saud shared several notable similarities with Pervez Musharraf before the 11 September attack. Both rulers were allied with the Taliban, unelected, and presided over restive Muslim populations eager to curtail relations with the United States. That fifteen of the nineteen hijackers hailed from Arabia signaled to many foreign policy analysts that the "special relationship" forged between Franklin Roosevelt and Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud was effectively terminated. Yet 11 September has not affected the basic structure of the relationship. The United States remains dependent on Saudi oil, whereas the Saudis remain dependent on American consumption and security guarantees in the Gulf. Instead of driving a permanent wedge between the House of Saud and the Bush administration, the terrorist threat has increasingly unified them.

In late September 2001, the Kingdom severed diplomatic relations with the Taliban and began launching counterterrorism operations against local Al Qaeda operatives. A major attack in Riyadh in May 2003 demonstrated to the House of Saud its mutual vulnerability to terrorism. The Kingdom responded by detaining 600 suspected terrorists and killing several major Al Qaeda leaders, including the head of the "Al Qaeda Organization in the Arabia Peninsula." In 2004, it adopted strict fiscal regulations to stem the funding of terrorist organizations and shut down shady "charity" organizations, most notably Al Haramain, which had known ties to Al Qaeda affiliates in East Africa.<sup>108</sup> Contrary to popular discourse, the U.S. government has found these reforms satisfactory.<sup>109</sup> The two governments are now sharing real time intelligence on Al Qaeda movements and engaged in joint counterterrorism operations in Saudi Arabia.<sup>110</sup> Although U.S. relations with the House of Saud remain tense, the American media have ignored the unprecedented cooperation between the two governments since 11 September 2001 in their discrete, but overlapping wars against violent extremists.

Indeed, throughout the Muslim world pro-American governments have not broken with the United States. Following the 11 September attack, the Bush administration attributed terrorism to autocratic regimes. Notwithstanding its newfound commitment to democracy promotion, the Bush administration has selectively pressured Muslim countries to reform. As realists would predict, leaders who support the war on terrorism are exempt from making reforms that threaten their survival. In fact, 11 September provided a disincentive for removing pro-American Muslim rulers. For the Bush administration, the prospect of a Taliban-like regime assuming power in Pakistan, the Gulf monarchy countries, Algeria, and Egypt is evidently more threatening than the risks of inflaming their local populations. Despite Al Qaeda's intentions, the United States has thus bolstered relations with these "corrupt" countries.

### *Detering the United States from Killing Muslims*

Instead of deterring the United States from supporting military interventions that kill Muslims, the 11 September attack exacerbated this objective in three ways. First, the United States responded by waging an aggressive counterterrorism campaign predominantly in the Muslim world. The Pentagon does not publish "body counts" of either terrorists killed by U.S. forces or civilian "collateral damage." The best estimates are that approximately 4,000 Afghan civilians were killed in the course of OEF, an average of 65 Afghans each day.<sup>111</sup> In Iraq, between 23,000 and 27,000 civilians are believed to have been killed from the start of OIF in March 2003 to July 2005.<sup>112</sup> As part of its global campaign against Al Qaeda, the United States has also assisted Muslim countries in capturing and killing operatives there (e.g., Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines), with incalculable civilian losses.

Second, after the 11 September attack the Bush administration broadened its definition of terrorism. The phrases "global war on terror" (GWOT) and "global struggle against violent extremism" (GSAVE) do not distinguish between terrorist enemies of the United States and regional conflicts that are only tangentially related to the Al Qaeda threat.<sup>113</sup> This lack of precision is consistent with the Bush strategy to eliminate every group that intentionally attacks civilians for political gain.<sup>114</sup> Based on its expansive definition of terrorism, the Bush administration has condoned aggressive military campaigns by other countries engaged in localized conflicts with Muslim militants. The most salient example is the Bush administration's post-11 September orientation toward Russia. Before the attack few in the West subscribed to the Kremlin's stance equating the Chechen separatists to Al Qaeda terrorists.<sup>115</sup> National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, warned Russia that "not every Chechen is a terrorist" and advised the government to find a "political solution" to the "Chechens' legitimate aspirations."<sup>116</sup> After the attack, the Bush administration dropped its demand to find a political solution and did not criticize President Putin when more than 1,000 Chechen civilians were killed by Russian forces in the year following the 11 September 2001 attack.<sup>117</sup> Similarly, the Bush administration muted its criticism of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in its war against Palestinian terrorists. In the four years after the 11 September attack, approximately 2,800 Palestinians were killed in Israeli counterterrorism operations, almost four times more than in the first Intifada.<sup>118</sup>

Third, in exchange for supporting the U.S.-led war on terrorism, the Bush administration has, on certain occasions, withheld criticism of American allies that have intentionally targeted Muslim civilians. After India committed itself to the war on terrorism, for example, the Bush administration decided to ignore the massacre of 2,000 Muslims in Gujarat by Hindu rioters who were reportedly supported by the Hindu nationalist government.<sup>119</sup>

In sum, the United States has not only killed thousands of Muslims in counterterrorism operations since 11 September, but the terrorist attack emboldened other governments to crack down on their Muslim opponents and dissuaded the Bush administration from intervening in the bloodshed.

### *Ending United States Support for Israel*

Based on Al Qaeda's objection to the "Zionist-Crusader alliance" one might have expected the Bush administration to have downgraded relations with Israel. This seemed likely in the immediate aftermath of the 11 September attack: in October, the president expressed his desire for Palestinian statehood; in November, Secretary of State Colin Powell for the first time mentioned the need to end the Israeli "occupation"; in June 2002, the administration endorsed the road map for a "viable" Palestinian state.<sup>120</sup> Yet these developments were superficial. The administration did not object when the IDF reoccupied most of the West Bank in April 2002 and detained Yasser Arafat in his Ramallah compound. It defended Israel's controversial policy of targeted assassination and the construction of the security fence, despite the traditional American objection to "prejudging" the "final status issues." This departure from American policy was codified in a Letter of Understanding between Bush and Sharon in April 2004, which formally recognized Israel's right to retain indefinitely "major population centers" (i.e., settlements) in the West Bank.

Bush's pro-Israel response to the 11 September attack was shared by the American public. Before the attack, 41 percent of Americans expressed support for Israel and 13 percent for Palestinians. After the attack, 55 percent backed Israel, whereas support for Palestinians dropped by almost half, to 7 percent. This level of American sympathy for Israel was unmatched since the 1991 scud missile attacks. Support for a more evenhanded role in the peace process also declined.<sup>121</sup> To the extent that Al Qaeda's aim is to erode U.S.-Israel relations, the 11 September attack clearly failed. Both the Bush administration and the American public responded with heightened support for the Israeli government's policies, rejecting the purported connection between Al Qaeda terrorism and the "special relationship."

### *Al Qaeda's Communication Deficit*

Indeed, most Americans reject Al Qaeda's message that the terrorism threat is contingent on U.S. foreign policies. In a poll released by the Roper Center two weeks after the 11 September attack, only one-third of Americans agreed with the statement that "there is anything the United States has done wrong in its dealings with other countries that might have motivated the terrorist attacks."<sup>122</sup> In a similar question, just 21 percent of Americans said "there is any way that the United States has been unfair in its dealings with other countries that might have motivated the terrorist attacks."<sup>123</sup> Like President Bush, the American public evidently blames the terrorists, not U.S. foreign policies.

Al Qaeda spokesmen acknowledge that their communication strategy is not having the desired effect. Since the United States launched its war on terrorism, the number of Al Qaeda communiqués has increased markedly. Those directed to the United States complain that the American response to 11 September demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of Al Qaeda's objectives. The internet journal *Al-Ansar* has lamented that the failure to comply with Al Qaeda's ultimatums is evidence that Americans have not engaged in a "careful and in-depth study of the enemy."<sup>124</sup> In audiotapes and videotapes released to

Al-Jazeera, bin Laden has indicted Americans for failing to "understand" that they have been targeted because of their provocative policies.<sup>125</sup> He has warned that "I am amazed at you. Although we have entered the fourth year after the events of 9/11 . . . the motives for its reoccurrence still exist."<sup>126</sup> Such admissions reveal that Al Qaeda terrorism has fallen short of expectations.

## Conclusion

Instead of advancing its policy objectives, Al Qaeda terrorism has systematically rendered them more urgent. In response to the 11 September attack, the United States has (1) increased its occupation of the Persian Gulf, (2) strengthened relations with pro-American Muslim rulers, (3) supported military interventions that have killed thousands of Muslims, and (4) become an even more partial mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This disjuncture between Al Qaeda's foreign policy goals and outcomes represents an important case study in the debate over whether terrorism is an effective means of political coercion. The most obvious explanation for this disconnect is that the United States has not complied with Al Qaeda's ultimatums because the world's predominant military power is by definition the most resistant to coercion. Yet President Bush's public statements on Al Qaeda and surveys of the American public suggest that Al Qaeda's policy failures derive, first and foremost, from its communication strategy. The prevailing view that the terrorists are implacably committed to destroying Western values has trumped Al Qaeda's message that U.S. national security depends on changing its foreign policies. Until Americans believe Al Qaeda's message, its policy objectives will necessarily remain elusive.

## Notes

1. The economist Herbert Simon distinguished between "substantive rationality" and "procedural rationality." The former is based on the actual achievement of goals whereas the latter depends only on the thought process of the actor. Substantive rationality is concerned with the consequences of the decision, whereas procedural rationality makes no claim that the actor correctly perceives the environment. See Herbert Simon, "From Substantive to Procedural Rationality," in *Method and Appraisal in Economics* Spiro Latsis, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 130-131; Simon, *Models of Bounded Rationality*, Vol 3 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 8-9. In this article, rationality and strategic rationality are used synonymously with Simon's definition of substantive rationality.

2. Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review*, 97(3) (August 2003), p. 13.

3. Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005), p. 61.

4. David A. Lake, "Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century, Dialogue-IO," *International Organization* (Spring 2002), p. 15; Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter, "Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence," *International Organization*, 56(2)(April 2002), p. 263.

5. Alan Dershowitz, *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenges* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 86.

6. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 73-78.

7. Walter Laqueur, "The Futility of Terrorism," *Harper's*, 252(1510) (March 1976), pp. 99-105.

8. Thomas Schelling, "What Purposes Can 'International Terrorism' Serve?" in *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice*, R.G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris, eds., (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 20.
9. Loren Lomasky, "The Political Significance of Terrorism," in *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice*, 89.
10. Ibid., 90.
11. Daniel L. Byman, "Al-Qaeda As An Adversary: Do We Understand Our Enemy?" *World Politics*, 56(1) (October 2003), p. 142. Byman's article offers a useful contribution to this lapse in the scholarly literature. In this article, the term Al Qaeda is used in the broadest sense. Its usage is not restricted to terrorists who trained in Afghanistan prior to Operation Enduring Freedom or those who take their directions from the original leadership. Rather, Al Qaeda refers to the loose network of affiliated groups that share bin Laden's objectives. For a detailed explanation of the relationship between Al Qaeda and its affiliates, see Jonathan Schanzer, *Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004).
12. "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation," 17 March 2003, posted by White House, at (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html>), accessed 21 March 2003; "Statement by President to the United Nations General Assembly," 10 November 2001, posted by Department of State, at (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/18967>), accessed 3 June 2004.
13. "Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress," 23 September 2001, posted by White House, at (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>), accessed 3 June 2004.
14. "Bush Speech to Military Personnel," 16 February 2002, posted by govrecords.org, at ([www.govrecords.org/pd25fe02-message-on-the-observance-of-eid-al-adha-2002.html](http://www.govrecords.org/pd25fe02-message-on-the-observance-of-eid-al-adha-2002.html)), accessed 3 June 2003.
15. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979); David Frum and Richard Perle, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003).
16. "President Bush Addresses Prayer Service," 14 September 2001, posted by CNN.Com, at (<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/14/bush.memorial/>), accessed 5 June 2003; "Presidential Address to the Nation," 11 September 2001, posted by U.S. Department of State, at (<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/2002/10992.htm>), accessed on 5 June 2004.
17. "Address to the Nation on the War on Terrorism," 8 November 2001, posted by C-Span.org, at ([http://www.c-span.org/executive/bush\\_progress.asp?Cat=Current\\_Event&Code=Bush\\_Admin](http://www.c-span.org/executive/bush_progress.asp?Cat=Current_Event&Code=Bush_Admin)), accessed 4 June 2004.
18. "Vice President's Remarks and Q&A at Rossi Luncheon," 26 July 2004, posted by White House, at (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/07/20040727.html>), accessed 2 August 2004.
19. "Total Victory is Only Option in War on Terror, Bush Says," 26 August 2003, posted U.S. Department of State, at ([http://www.usembassy.it/file2003\\_08/alia/a3082601.htm](http://www.usembassy.it/file2003_08/alia/a3082601.htm)), accessed 4 August 2005.
20. Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3)(Summer 1993), pp. 22-24.
21. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 266(3) (September 1990), p. 60; Jessica Stern has similarly argued that "Religious extremists see themselves as under attack by the global spread of post-Enlightenment values such as secular humanism and the focus on individual liberties." See in *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), p. xviii.
22. Huntington subscribes to the former, whereas Lewis and Bush seem to subscribe to the latter.
23. Huntington and Lewis are more skeptical than Bush of democracy promotion in the Islamic world.



24. 9/11 report, p. xvi.
25. Thomas Friedman, "Commentary: Why Those Angry Men Want to Kill America," *New York Times*, 25 August 1995; Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (London: Anchor, 2000) p. 312.
26. Harris Poll, "America Attacked," conducted 19–24 September 2001, at (<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=364>), accessed 14 July 2005.
27. Quoted in *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (London: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2004), p. 341.
28. Quoted in *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 2.
29. Ashton Carter, John Deutch, and Philip Zelikow, "Catastrophic Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs*, 77(6) (November/December 1998), pp. 80–94.
30. Stern has used the terms "eternal" and "spiritual" instead of eschatological to describe the goals of some religious terrorist groups, p. 6.
31. Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House, 2002), pp. 39–40.
32. Clark McCauley, "Psychological Issues In Understanding Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism," in *Psychology of Terrorism: Coping with the Continuing Threat*, Chris E. Stout, ed., (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), p. 42.
33. See, for example, Gavin Cameron, *Nuclear Terrorism* (Basingstoke, England: Macmillan, 1999), p. 139; *Terror in the Name of God*, p. XX.
34. See, for example, Bruce Hoffman, "Al Qaeda, Trends in Terrorism, and Future Potentialities: An Assessment," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 26(6) (November–December 2003); Rohan Gunaratna, "Al-Qaeda's Trajectory in 2003," Unisci Discussion Paper, May 2003, posted by Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, 8, at (<http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/Rohan.pdf>), accessed 6 July 2005; Asaf Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 26(2) (February/March 2003), pp. 65–92.
35. David Rapoport, "Terrorism," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Government and Politics* M. Hawkesworth and M. Kogan, eds. (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 1192.
36. Brian Jenkins, *International Terrorism: A New Model of Conflict* (Los Angeles: Crescent, 1975), pp. 4–7.
37. Michael Scott Doran, "Somebody Else's Civil War: Ideology, Rage, and the Assault on America," in *How Did this Happen* Gideon Rose and James F. Hoge Jr., eds (London: Harper Collins, 2001), p. 32.
38. Philip Jenkins, *Images of Terror: What We Can and Can't Know About Terrorism* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2003), p. 53.
39. Alan Cullison, "Inside Al-Qaeda's Hard Drive," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 2004, p. 58.
40. See Anonymous (Michael Schueur), *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 2004); *ibid.*, *Through Our Enemies Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 2003); Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (London: Free Press, 2004).
41. See *Imperial Hubris*, p. xviii; *Through Our Enemies Eyes*, p. 242; *Against All Enemies*, pp. 244, 263. For a good list of Al Qaeda's foreign policy objectives, see "Al-Qaeda As An Adversary," pp. 144–145.
42. See, for example, Robert Pape's "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" and *Dying to Win*; Stephen Van Evera, "Why U.S. National Security Requires Mideast Peace," April 2005, posted by the MIT Center for International Studies Paper, at ([http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit\\_5.05\\_VanEvera.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit_5.05_VanEvera.pdf)), accessed 21 July 2005.
43. See *Imperial Hubris*, p. xviii; *Through Our Enemies Eyes*, p. 242; *Against All Enemies*, pp. 244, 263.
44. For a more detailed analysis of this communication strategy, see Max Abrahms, "Al-Qaeda's Miscommunication War: The Terrorism Paradox," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 17(4) (Fall 2005).

45. "Interview with Osama bin Laden," CNN, interview broadcast 10 May 1997, posted by CNN.com on 10 May 1997, at (<http://news.findlaw.com/cnn/docs/binladenintvw-cnn.pdf>), accessed 7 August 2005; Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner—Meditations on the Jihadist Movement* (London: Al-Sharq al-Awsat, 2001) quoted in *Oxford Analytica*, 14 May 2002, at *Oxford Analytica*, "Middle East/Afghanistan: Al Qaida Threat," 14 May 2002, at (<http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/oxan/oxa05142002.html>), accessed on 4 May 2005. For an almost identical statement, see "Al-Qaeda Urges More Attacks, Al-Zawahiri Tape," Agence France Presse, 21 May 2003, posted by aljazeera.com at (<http://www.aljazeera.info/News%20archives/2003.html>), accessed 7 July 2005.

46. "Bin Laden: 'Your security is in your own hands,'" CNN.com, posted 30 October 2004, (<http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/10/29/bin.laden.transcript>), accessed 26 August 2005. Transcript based on Al-Jazeera interview broadcast 29 October 2004.

47. "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," World Islamic Front, 22 February 1998, posted by the Federation of American Scientists, at (<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>), accessed 26 August 2005.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. See *ibid.*; "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," Osama bin Laden, August 1996, posted by PBS.com, at ([http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa\\_1996.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html)), accessed 6 August 2005; "Osama Bin Laden Speech Offers Peace Treaty with Europe, Says Al-Qa'ida 'Will Persist in Fighting' the U.S," Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Series No. 695, posted on 15 April 2004, at (<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP69504>), accessed 20 August 2005. Interview first broadcast on Al-Jazeera, 15 April 2004; "Al-Qaeda Urges More Attacks, Al-Zawahiri Tape," Agence France Presse, 21 May 2003, posted by aljazeera.com at (<http://www.aljazeera.info/News%20archives/2003.html>), accessed 7 July 2005.

51. See, for example, "Bin Laden rails against Crusaders and UN," 3 November 2002, posted by BBC.Com, at ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/monitoring/media\\_reports/1636782.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/1636782.stm)), accessed 15 August 2005. Statement first broadcast on 3 November 2002 on Al-Jazeera. See also, "Bin Laden's Warning: Full Text," 7 October 2001, posted by BBC.Com., (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south.asia/1585636.stm>), accessed 7 July 2005. Statement first broadcast on 7 July 2001 on Al-Jazeera.

52. "Interview: Osama Bin Laden," ABC News interview, May 1998, posted by Public Broadcast Service, at (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html>), accessed 25 August 2005; Ayman Zawahiri quoted by Peter Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (London: Free Press, 2002), p. 208; see also "Full Text: bin Laden's 'Letter to America,'" posted 24 November 2002 by the Guardian, at (<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/worldview/story/0,11581,845725,00html>), accessed 25 August 2005. The letter first appeared on the Internet and was then circulated by supporters in Britain.

53. This statement is based on conclusions reported by the Center for Islamic Studies and Research in a book entitled *The East Riyadh Operation and Our War with the United States and its Agents* published in 2003. The book was translated by FBIS. Excerpts posted by why-war.com, at ([http://www.why-war.com/files/2004/01/qaeda\\_east\\_riyadh.html](http://www.why-war.com/files/2004/01/qaeda_east_riyadh.html)), accessed 25 August 2005.

54. "Osama Bin Laden Speech Offers Peace Treaty with Europe, Says Al-Qa'ida 'Will Persist in Fighting' the U.S," Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Series No. 695, posted 15 April 2004; see also "Bin Ladens' Warning: Full Text," BBC.Com, posted 7 October 2001, at (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south.asia/1585636.stm>), accessed 20 August 2005; "Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders," 23 February 1998; see my Terrorism and Political Violence article.

55. Berger and Sutphen, *How Did this Happen?* p. 124.

56. Jane Spencer, "Newsweek Web Exclusive," 11 October 2001, at ([msnbc.com/news/641689](http://msnbc.com/news/641689)); see also Dimitri K. Simes, "What War Means," National Interest, Thanksgiving Edition 2001, p. 36.

57. Bin Laden, *A Declaration of War by Osama bin Laden, together with leaders of the World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders*, Afghanistan, 23 February 1998, at ([www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm)); for a recent article on the consistency of Al Qaeda's messages, see "Al-Qaeda's Miscommunication War: The Terrorism Paradox."

58. *Terror in the Name of God*, p. XIX.

59. Quoted in "Blair Appeals to Muslim Leaders to Fight Terror, Associated Press, 20 July 2005, posted by the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 21 July 2005, at ([http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050720/news\\_ln20terror.html](http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050720/news_ln20terror.html)), access 26 August 2005.

60. *Through Our Enemies Eyes*, p. X; see also *Imperial Hubris; Against All Enemies*.

61. *Through Our Enemies Eyes*, p. X.

62. The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 251.

63. Quoted in Philip Wilan and Nick Hopkins, "Bin Laden Letters Order U.S. Massacre," *The Guardian*, posted 18 October 2001, at ([www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,576197,00](http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,576197,00)), accessed 23 August 2005.

64. "Views of a Changing world," The Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 2003, at (<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/185.pdf>), accessed 26 August 2005. The countries surveyed were Jordan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Morocco, Indonesia, Kuwait, and Turkey.

65. *Ibid.* Even in Turkey, Israel's closest Muslim ally, only one-third of the respondents believed there was an inherent contradiction between the existence of an Israeli state and Palestinian rights.

66. Elaine Scolino, "Saudi Warns Bush," *New York Times*, 27 January 2002.

67. Osama bin Laden's two-minute audiotape broadcast 6 October 2002 on Al-Jazeera quoted in Rohan Gunaratna, "Defeating Al Qaeda —The Pioneering Vanguard of the Islamic Movements," in *Defeating Terrorism: Shaping the New Security Environment*, Russel D. Howard et al., eds., (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies), p. 26.

68. Bergen's 2002 observation remains true three years later. See *Holy War, Inc.*, p. 226.

69. Quoted in *Psychology of Terrorism*, p. 51.

70. "Bin Laden: 'Your security is in your own hands,'" 29 October 2004; "Osama Bin Laden Speech Offers Peace Treaty with Europe," 15 April 2004.

71. "Osama Bin Laden Speech Offers Peace Treaty with Europe," 15 April 2004.

72. *Dying to Win*, Chapter 2.

73. *Ibid.*, 4.

74. See Kenneth Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Introduction.

75. "Arab Public Opinion Survey," Zogby International, March 2003, at (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/sadat/pub/survey2003.htm>), accessed 8 August 2005; Stephen Van Evera, "Why U.S. National Security Requires Mideast Peace," April 2005, MIT Center for International Studies Paper, at ([http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit\\_5.05\\_VanEvera.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit_5.05_VanEvera.pdf)), accessed 23 August 2005.

76. *Ibid.*

77. Pew Global Research Project: see *Dying to Win*, 244.

78. Pew Global Research Project.

79. For a list of bin Laden interviews to Western journalists in the 1990s see, "Who is bin Laden?" PBS.Org., at (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/edicts.html>), accessed 28 July 2005.

80. From 11 September 2001 through July 2005, bin Laden released 18 videotapes to Al-Jazeera, according to an interview with Bergen on *Anderson Cooper 360*, CNN, 4 August 2005.

81. "Declaration of War Against the Americans Who Occupy the Land of the Two Holy Mosques."

82. "Interview: Osama Bin Laden," *ABC News interview*, May 1998.

83. Quoted by Suleiman Abu Gheith in "Why We Fight America," posted by the Middle East Media Research Institute, No. 388, 12 June 2002, at (<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP38802>), accessed 22 August 2005. Statement first published in *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* (London), 7 June 2002.

84. See, for example, "Bin Laden: 'Your security is in your own hands,'" 29 October 2004; *Defeating Terrorism: Shaping the New Security Environment*, p. 5.

85. Scott Atran, "Mishandling Suicide Terrorism," *The Washington Quarterly*, 27(3) (Summer 2004), p. 81.

86. *Dying to Win*, p. 104; for an older database that remains relevant to Al Qaeda's motivations, see these findings see Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

87. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 251.

88. "Interview: Osama Bin Laden," May 1998; see *Through Our Enemies Eyes*, p. XVIII.

89. See "A Declaration of War Against the Americans occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places: A Message from Osama bin Laden," August 1996; *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 73.

90. *Inside al-Qaeda*, p. 104.

91. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 251–252.

92. See *Inside al-Qaeda*, pp. 9–10.

93. See "How an Al-Qaeda Bigwig Got Nabbed," *Time Magazine* 25 August 2003, p. 47.

94. See, for example, "Bin Laden: 'Your security is in your own hands,'" 29 October 2004; *Imperial Hubris*, p. 153.

95. See, for example, George W. Bush, "President's Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly," 12 September 2002, posted by White House, at, (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>), accessed 26 June 2005.

96. See Ron Suskind, *The Price of Loyalty: George Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), pp. 10–15; Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), pp. 82–86.

97. Chaim Kaufman, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security*, 29(1) (Summer 2004), p. 31.

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99. *Ibid.*

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105. Carolyn Lochhead, "Bush Insists on U.S. Resolve; U.S. Pledges Boost in Aid to Pakistan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 November 2001; "Joint U.S.-Pakistan Statement for President Musharraf's Visit to New York," 10 November 2001, posted by U.S. Department of State, at ([www.state.gov/p/sa/rt/index.cfm?docid/6060](http://www.state.gov/p/sa/rt/index.cfm?docid/6060)), accessed 3 July 2005.

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