

the military is so evil that the terrorists' radical goals are justified.²¹ Al Qaeda figures, including Ayman al-Zawahiri, adopted the strategy in such countries as Egypt "to force the Egyptian regime to become even more repressive, to make the people hate it."²²

The use of military force in Iraq was a specific problem. The United States diverted precious resources and scarce attention to overthrowing Saddam Hussein's government and away from the war against al Qaeda in most of the world. Gary Schroen, who led the first CIA team into Afghanistan in 2001, argued that the war in Iraq drained Afghanistan of key U.S. military personnel. Iraq also drained key CIA personnel and resources from Afghanistan, "making it increasingly difficult to staff the CIA teams in Afghanistan with experienced paramilitary officers."²³ Indeed, the United States did not have a sufficient number of personnel to target key al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan and other countries, because they were diverted to Iraq. The capture of many key al Qaeda leaders, such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi Binalshibh, and Abu Zubeida, occurred between 2001 and 2003. After the overthrow of Saddam's government, this attention shifted to stabilizing an increasingly violent war in Iraq. In sum, the United States lacked the resources and attention to adequately defeat al Qaeda, because it was diverted to Iraq.

Iraq was also helpful to al Qaeda, since it established a foothold that it did not previously have. On the occasion of the second and third anniversaries of the September 11 attacks, the group's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri provided the clearest explanation of al Qaeda's strategy in Iraq: He declared in September 2003,

We thank God for appeasing us with the dilemmas in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Americans are facing a delicate situation in

²¹ Kydd and Walter (2006, pp. 69–72); David Fromkin, "The Strategy of Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 4, July 1975, pp. 683–698.

²² Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, New York: Knopf, 2006, p. 217.

²³ Gary C. Schroen, *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan*, New York: Presidio Press/Ballantine Books, 2005, p. 360.