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CHALLENGES FOR THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (SOCOM) POSED BY THE GLOBAL TERRORIST THREAT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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[There were no Questions submitted.]

CHALLENGES FOR THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (SOCOM) POSED BY THE GLOBAL TERRORIST THREAT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, February 14, 2007.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:03 p.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Adam Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, CHAIRMAN, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. SMITH. I would like to call the meeting to order.

I am without a gavel, so rather than just pounding the desk and looking silly, I will just call the meeting to order without the gavel. It doesn't look like a terribly unruly bunch. I think we will be able to conduct the hearing just fine without that.

I want to welcome the witnesses today and welcome the members of the committee as well.

As I discussed previously, I don't do opening statements. It is my goal to get to the witnesses as quickly as possible, to hear from you, and also to urge our witnesses to be as brief as possible.

Now, in this case I think all of you have some pretty interesting information, but I have always found in hearings the most interesting information comes out in dialogue between the witnesses and the members, so we will try to get to them as quickly as possible.

I will just say that we have called this hearing to get a picture of where al Qaeda and its various groups that are supportive of it to one degree or another—where they are at now, you know, five and a half years after 9/11, how they have metastasized, spread, where we have been able to contain them.

And we have a very distinguished panel here that has studied that issue in great depth and I think will provide us terrific information.

And specifically, the interest of this Subcommittee on Terrorism, a big piece of it is our jurisdiction over special operations forces, which I believe can be a critical component of this war.

It is very difficult, to my mind, to take on al Qaeda in huge pitched battle, you know, conventional forces' efforts.

But I do believe that our special forces in many different places of the globe can play a critical role in both directly hitting al Qaeda

and also working with local communities to prevent them from getting a foothold. So that is the interest of the committee.

And with that, I will turn it over to my very able ranking member, Mr. Thornberry, for any comments he has before we get started.

STATEMENT OF HON. MAC THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, RANKING MEMBER, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to join you in welcoming our witnesses.

I think this is an important hearing, in part because it is important for us to hear from folks outside of government. They give us a different perspective. And as you said, this is certainly a very distinguished panel.

Second, I don't know of a more important topic that we could focus on. It is so essential that we understand our enemy and what we face, a point made, I think, in nearly all your written statements, that I don't know of a more important topic for us to hear from some of the country's leading experts.

So I welcome you. I look forward to hearing what you have to say as well.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Thornberry.

I will do a brief introduction of all four witnesses and then move on to their testimony one at a time.

We have with us Professor Bruce Hoffman from Georgetown University and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service.

We have Daniel Benjamin, who is the director of the Center on the United States and Europe for the Brookings Institution.

We have Ms. Rita Katz, director of the SITE Institute.

And Dr. Jarret Brachman, who is the director of research, Combating Terrorism Center for the United States Military Academy at West Point.

We appreciate all of you being here. You all have very lengthy and very impressive resumes, which I will simply stipulate to and turn it over to Dr. Hoffman to give his opening statement first.

STATEMENT OF DR. BRUCE HOFFMAN, PROFESSOR, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, EDMUND A. WALSH SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE, SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM

Dr. HOFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, for the opportunity to testify before you.

Five and a half years ago, 19 terrorists hijacked four airplanes and changed the course of history. Just as we underestimated al Qaeda then, we risk repeating the same mistake now.

Al Qaeda today is frequently spoken of as if it is in retreat, a broken and beaten organization, its leadership living in caves, cut off somewhere in remote Waziristan, incapable of mounting further attacks on its own and instead having devolved operational authority either to its various affiliates and associates or to entirely organically produced homegrown terrorist entities.

Isolated and demoralized, al Qaeda is thus imagined to have been reduced to a purely symbolic role, inspiring copycat terrorist

groups, perhaps, but lacking any operational capacity on its own—a toothless tiger.

Al Qaeda, President Bush declared last October, "is on the run." But al Qaeda, in fact, is on the march.

It has regrouped and reorganized from the setbacks meted out to it by the United States and our coalition partners and allies during the first phases of the global war on terror (GWOT) and is marshaling its forces to continue the epic struggle begun more than ten years ago.

More than ever, al Qaeda's revival reminds us of our continued failure to heed the advice of the Chinese strategist Sun Tzu. If you know the enemy and know yourself, he famously advised centuries ago, you need not fear the results of 100 battles.

Yet if there has been one consistent theme in both America's war on terrorism and our melancholy involvement in Iraq, it is our serial failure to fulfill Sun Tzu's timeless admonition.

The Bush Administration's new strategy to surge 21,000 American troops into Iraq is the latest fundamental misreading of our enemy's mindset and intentions.

Let me first turn to al Qaeda today. Al Qaeda, in fact, is now functioning exactly as its founder and leader, Osama bin Laden, envisioned it.

On the one hand, true to the meaning of the Arabic word for base of operation or foundation, meaning the base or foundation from which a worldwide Islamic revolution can be waged, and thus simultaneously inspiring, motivating and animating radicalized Muslims to join the movement's fight.

On the other hand, al Qaeda continues to exercise its core operational and command and control capabilities, directing and implementing terrorist plots and attacks throughout the world.

Indeed, ongoing investigations increasingly suggest that recent terrorist threats and attacks—the August 2006 plot to blow up ten planes in flight from Britain and crash them into American cities; the July 2005 suicide bus and subway bombings in London; and the two separate operations foiled in Britain during 2004 involving, on the one hand, bombings of a shopping center and a nightclub, and on the other hand, simultaneous attacks on economic targets in lower Manhattan, Newark, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C.—were all, in fact, coordinated in some way by al Qaeda and not, as is commonly assumed, cooked up by entirely homegrown, organically produced terror groups.

Just as disturbing is the fact that these attacks were not directed against the soft and more accessible targets like subway and commuter trains, hotels and tourist destinations that the conventional wisdom held a degraded al Qaeda only capable of, but, in last summer's case, arguably against the most internationally hardened target set since 9/11, commercial aviation.

This alarming development calls into question some of our most fundamental assumptions about al Qaeda's capabilities and intentions, given that the movement seems undeterred from the same grand homicidal ambitions that it demonstrated on 9/11.

Thus, the portions of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) publicly released last September are right. We are just as vulnerable as ever, not only because of Iraq, but also because of a revital-

ized and resurgent al Qaeda that continues to plot and plan terrorist attacks.

Senior British and security officials publicly stated that they had reached an identical conclusion in November as well.

In a speech delivered later that month, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, the director general of the security service, or MI5, was unequivocal in her assessment of the threat posed by a resplendent al Qaeda. "We are aware of numerous plots to kill people and to damage our economy," Dame Eliza stated.

"What do I mean by numerous? Five, 10? No, nearer 30 that we currently know of," she continued. "These plots," she said, "often have linked back to al Qaeda and Pakistan and through those links al Qaeda gives guidance and training to its largely British foot soldiers here on an extensive and growing scale."

Rather than al Qaeda rest in peace (RIP), then, we face an al Qaeda that has risen from the grave. Its dispersion following Operation Enduring Freedom has not meant that al Qaeda has become decentralized. The movement, in fact, is just as hierarchical as before.

Its chain of command, however, admittedly is less effective and more cumbersome. But this is a reflection of how al Qaeda has been able to adapt and adjust to the changes imposed on it by the U.S.-led war on terrorism and how, indeed, the movement has coped with this new reality.

Although it may not be the most effective way to run a terrorist organization, al Qaeda's core leadership has accepted that in order to survive and ensure the movement's continued longevity and, indeed, its continued attack capacity, it has to surrender the direct command and control, if not micromanaging capacity, it exercised before 9/11.

In retrospect, too, it appears that Iraq has further blinded us to the possibility of an al Qaeda renaissance.

America's and Britain's entanglement in that country the past four years and our overwhelming preoccupation first with an escalating insurgency and now with an incipient civil war has consumed the attention and resources of our respective countries' military and intelligence communities at precisely the time that bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and other senior al Qaeda commanders were in their most desperate straits and stood to benefit most from this distraction.

Iraq has thus has a pernicious effect on both our counterterrorism policies and perceptions of national security. As the situation in that country deteriorated, one could take some solace in the President's argument that we were fighting the terrorists over there so that we don't have to fight them here.

The plots and attacks against the United States in 2004 and again this past summer, along with the attacks in Madrid and London in recent years, effectively challenged that once comforting but now discredited argument.

Al Qaeda in Iraq now. Our preoccupation with Iraq, moreover, has introduced yet another significant impediment to the war on terrorism. Withdrawing from that country, the Bush Administration has claimed in support of its new strategy, is exactly what al

Qaeda wants. That would, as the Vice President said last month, "validate" the al Qaeda view of the world.

Yet ironically, by staying the course, America is doing exactly what al Qaeda wants and, indeed, has long expected. The clearest explication of al Qaeda's strategy in Iraq was provided by the group's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, on the occasion of the second and third anniversaries of the 9/11 attacks.

"We thank God," he declared, "for appeasing us with the dilemmas in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Americans are facing a delicate situation in both countries. If they withdraw, they will lose everything. And if they stay, they will continue to bleed to death."

In other words, with America stuck in Iraq, al Qaeda has us exactly where they want us. Iraq, for them, has been an effective means to occupy America's military force and distract U.S. attention while al Qaeda has regrouped and reorganized since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

Indeed, this was essentially the analysis offered last month in congressional testimony by the outgoing Director of National Intelligence, Ambassador John Negroponte.

In contrast to both longstanding White House claims and the prevailing conventional wisdom, the annual threat assessment he presented to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence painted a disquieting picture of a terrorist movement, al Qaeda, that is indeed on the march rather than on the run.

In sum, America's stubborn refusal to change its policy for Iraq has arguably played right into al Qaeda's hands. And Zawahiri's prophecy about bleeding us to death has proven depressingly prescient.

Iraq not only daily consumes American lives and treasure but has arguably enervated our military, preoccupying U.S. attention and sapping America's strength, precisely at a time when the threat posed by al Qaeda, the 2007 annual threat assessment warns, is increasing.

But even if one dimension of Zawahiri's analysis has already been validated, it is still within America's power to prevent the other even more consequential dimension of Zawahiri's prediction from being realized, our losing everything.

But this requires nothing less than a dramatic reversal of the current strategy for Iraq and accepting that even if it is beyond our capacity to solve the Iraq program, we should be moving without further delay to contain it from spreading and destabilizing the entire region.

Redeploying the American military from Iraq to strengthen and build capacity among our key allies throughout the region could serve to affirm, not undermine, U.S. commitments there.

It would also enable us to refocus our efforts more productively on countering the greater systemic threat to the region posed by al Qaeda's clarion call to radicalization and violence than to remain in Iraq as America's power is expended and confidence in U.S. leadership continues to erode worldwide.

In conclusion, the war on terrorism has now lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II. Yet even today we cannot claim with any credibility, much less acuity, to have fulfilled Sun Tzu's timeless admonition.

Indeed, what remains missing five and a half years since this war began is a thorough, systematic understanding of our enemy, encompassing motivation as well as mindset, decision-making processes as well as command and control relationships, and ideological constructs as well as organizational dynamics.

Forty years ago, the United States understood the importance of building this foundation in order to effectively counter an enigmatic, unseen enemy motivated by a powerful ideology who also used terrorism and insurgency to advance his cause and rally popular support.

Although America, of course, encountered many frustrations during the Vietnam conflict, a lack of understanding our adversary was not among them. Indeed, as early as 1965 the Pentagon had begun a program to analyze Vietcong morale and motivation based on detailed interviews conducted among thousands of guerilla detainees.

These voluminously detailed studies provided a road map of the ideological and psychological mindset of that enemy, clearly illuminating the critical need to win what was then often termed "the other war," the ideological struggle for the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people.

Even if the fundamental changes required in U.S. military strategy to overcome the Vietcong's appeal went ignored, tremendous effort and resources were nonetheless devoted at least to understanding the enemy.

Today, Washington has no such program in the war on terrorism. America's counterterrorism strategy continues to assume that America's contemporary enemies, be they al Qaeda or the insurgents in Iraq, have a traditional center of gravity.

It also assumes that these enemies simply need to be killed or imprisoned so that global terrorism or the Iraqi insurgency will end. Accordingly, the attention of the U.S. military and intelligence community is directed almost uniformly toward hunting down military leaders or protecting U.S. forces, not toward understanding the enemy that we now face.

This is a monumental failing, not only because decapitation strategies have rarely worked in countering mass mobilization terrorist or insurgent campaigns, but also because al Qaeda's ability to continue the struggle is ineluctably predicated on precisely its capacity to attract new recruits and continually replenish its resources.

The success of U.S. strategy will therefore ultimately depend on Washington's ability to counter al Qaeda's ideological appeal and thus effectively address the three key elements of al Qaeda's strategy: one, the continued resonance of their message; two, their continued ability to attract recruits and replenish their ranks; and three, their capacity for continued regeneration and renewal amongst their base.

To do so——

Mr. SMITH. I am sorry, Dr. Hoffman, we would ask for about ten minutes or a little over that. I just want to be fair to the other witnesses.

Dr. HOFFMAN. That is absolutely fine.

Mr. SMITH. Do you have a quick sum-up?

Dr. HOFFMAN. I have the last paragraph, if I could read that.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Please, go ahead.

Dr. HOFFMAN. Okay. To do so, we first need to better understand the mindset and minutiae of the al Qaeda movement, the animosity and arguments that underpin it, and indeed the regions of the world from which its struggle emanates and upon which its hungry gaze still rests.

Without knowing our enemy, we cannot successfully penetrate their cells. We cannot knowledgeably sow discord and dissension in their ranks and thus weaken them from within. And we cannot fulfill the most basic requirement of an effective counterterrorist strategy—preempting and preventing terrorist operations and deterring their attacks.

Until we recognize the importance of this vital prerequisite, America will remain perennially on the defensive, inherently reactive rather than proactive, deprived of the capacity to recognize, much less anticipate, important changes in our enemy's modus operandi, recruitment and targeting.

Thank you very much, and my apologies.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Hoffman can be found in the Appendix on page 47.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Benjamin.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL BENJAMIN, DIRECTOR, CENTER ON THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Mr. BENJAMIN. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify here today.

I believe American citizens are understandably confused by the many forms that the terrorist threat takes today, and I think that the potential for a devastating attack or series of attacks remains.

Therefore, I believe it is imperative for legislators such as yourselves and policy-makers to do their utmost to clear away some of the misunderstandings that cloud this subject.

Let me just begin by saying that I am delighted to have the opportunity to be joined by such a distinguished panel. I fully agree with Bruce's assessment that we have failed the first command of strategy, which is to know thy enemy.

And he has said many things that I agree with—in fact, the overwhelming majority of them—and so I would like to skip around through my own testimony and try to elaborate on some other points that I believe still need to be brought out.

As I said at the beginning, there are many different forms of the jihadist threat, and that is one of the real complications we face in dealing with it. I think Bruce has done an excellent job in summarizing the nature of the core group, the group that carried out the attacks of 9/11.

Let me just add to that that it appears increasingly clear that whatever damage the organization suffered at the time of its expulsion from Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, those blows were certainly not fatal.

On the contrary, al Qaeda's organization is strengthening, and it appears to have achieved its goal of recreating sanctuary in the federally administered tribal areas (FATA) of Pakistan on the Af-

ghanistan border. And we can't rule out the possibility that it is operating in some safety in other parts of Pakistan in particular.

Bruce has spoken about the Heathrow conspiracy, and I don't want to go over that ground again, but I do think that it underscores the fact that al Qaeda remains very much in the business of catastrophic terror.

Had that conspiracy been successful, it would have rivaled 9/11 in terms of the number of casualties it would have caused and the damage it would have done to the international aviation system.

In the near term, there is little prospect that the threat from the core of al Qaeda will be diminished. The group appears well ensconced in the FATA, and the government of Pakistan shows little inclination to dislodge it.

The recently concluded cease-fire between Pakistani authorities and the tribal powers indicate that Islamabad is tired of having its own forces pummeled and is unwilling to carry out more than the occasional symbolic strike on terrorist infrastructure.

Other forms, however, of the jihadist threat also need to be discussed. And in my view, the three most important have derived—either have their origin or have derived great benefits from the war in Iraq.

The West would have faced a significant challenge from jihadist violence no matter how it reacted after 9/11, because that was the world's most successful recruitment effort. But the invasion of Iraq gave the jihadists an unmistakable boost.

Terrorism is about advancing a narrative and persuading a targeted audience to believe it. Although leading figures in the American Administration have often spoken of the terrorist ideology of hatred, U.S. actions have all too often lent inadvertent confirmation to the terrorist narrative.

In its most bare-bones formulation, that narrative holds that America and its allies seek to occupy Muslim lands, steal Muslims' oil wealth, destroy their faith.

Radical Islamists interpret much of history through this prism and as a result of our occupation of Iraq they are making considerable gains in convincing other Muslims that their version of history is correct.

The invasion and occupation opened a new field of jihad for militants who were more than eager to take on U.S. forces in the Arab heartland.

For the radicals, killing Americans and their Western allies is the essential task. By doing so, they demonstrate their bona fides as the only people determined to stand up for Muslim dignities. The presence of coalition forces in Iraq thus provided an irresistible invitation.

Because in large measure of Iraq, three new categories of terrorists have emerged. The first group is comprised of self-starters, often called homegrown terrorists. And it is probably true that we have exaggerated their importance to some extent.

Nonetheless, it is clear, as we saw, for example, in the Madrid bombings of 2004, that there are now an increasing number of people in the world who are prepared to accept the bin Laden view of history and to enlist themselves in this struggle without having di-

rect contact or certainly without direct and extensive contact with the network.

Self-starters have appeared not only in Europe where they are most familiar, but also in Canada, the Maghreb, the Middle East and Pakistan. Iraq has been on the lips of all of the terrorists involved in the major conspiracies of the last few years.

Two other groups, both centered in Iraq—the first, the foreign fighters. Contrary to the Administration's expectation, these were not the remnants of al Qaeda come to the killing field of Mesopotamia.

Rather, these are people as scholars both from Israel and Saudi Arabia have shown, who were radicalized by their perception of what was going on in Iraq and who realized or came to believe that this was a legitimate defensive jihad for them to engage in.

A last group that deserves attention and to my mind will be the most worrisome is comprised of Iraqi jihadists who have emerged from the turmoil of the last three years or four years. Today al Qaeda in Mesopotamia has become predominantly Iraqi.

And there are any number of other affiliated jihadist groups. According to some reputable sources, there could be as many as 15,000 in their ranks.

The chaos in Iraq has allowed for extensive training and development in terrorist tactics and urban warfare, including the increasingly proficient use of improvised explosive devices (IED).

Without going into it in great depth, let me just say that I believe that this is a sanctuary that is far more useful to the jihadists than Afghanistan ever was.

In addition, the jihadists will have a durable sanctuary in Al Anbar province in western Iraq from which they will be able to conduct operations throughout the region.

And the intelligence community or members of the intelligence community have already suggested that they are looking for targets outside. Of course, in 2005 they bombed three hotels in Amman.

Let me just underscore one point here. I know what the mandate of this committee is, but I think that there is one clear lesson in our experience in Iraq, and that is the instrument of military force is a highly problematic one for fighting terror, especially fighting an ideologically driven movement like the jihadists.

There will undoubtedly be times when military operations against terrorists are appropriate, as they were in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002. But confronting jihadists with military force too often glamorizes the terrorists. They can portray themselves as the standard-bearers of Muslim interests and that they are the only ones who are prepared to confront the hated occupier.

As we have seen, the tableau of these fighters in action has had a galvanizing effect on others around the world. Military forces typically have a large footprint. Their presence can alienate exactly those individuals in a given community who we, as a matter of strategy, do not want to radicalize.

Military action against terrorists often causes the death of many innocents, no matter how much care is taken. With tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths during the years of the

U.S. presence, inevitably there will be many Iraqis who have come to blame the tragedies that have befallen their families on us.

We are short on time, sir, so I am going to abridge my remarks and simply conclude by addressing the one question of how much the jihadists wish to attack the United States at this point, because this is a question that comes up in virtually every discussion.

And of course, it has often been cited by the Administration as proof of the success of their strategy that we have not been struck.

Let me say it very briefly. We should not draw the conclusion that attacking the United States at this time is the jihadists' top priority. μI do believe this is the gold standard. I do believe they will want to come back and strike on the American homeland again.

But the terrorists are getting what they need in Iraq. It is easier for jihadists to kill Americans there than it is in the United States, and those casualties provide the radicals with the proof they need to show the global community of Muslims of their devotion to the cause.

Over the long term, the terrorist will seek to rebuild their networks and capabilities to attack the United States. But we should not make the mistake of ignoring what is going on abroad and thinking that in some way we have insulated ourselves by conducting this struggle far from home. What troubles foreign lands will inevitably come back to trouble us and our interests.

And with that, I will end. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Benjamin can be found in the Appendix on page 72.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ms. Katz.

STATEMENT OF RITA KATZ, DIRECTOR, SITE INSTITUTE

Ms. KATZ. Thank you. Chairman Smith, distinguished members of the committee, it is my pleasure and honor to offer some of my analysis on jihadist terrorism.

I agree with the two speakers, Dr. Hoffman and Mr. Benjamin. In addition, though, what I would like to demonstrate more is why is it that al Qaeda has been so successful since 9/11, showing a different angle from different kind of research.

And if I come with one thing, one theme, after my brief testimony, I hope that it will be that the Internet is a crucial battleground in the war on terror that must be contested in a more effective way.

Since the war on terror began after 9/11, the United States and the West have embarked a war on al Qaeda. Al Qaeda leaders like Osama bin Laden are probably hidden somewhere in the border, in the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and many other top al Qaeda operatives have been killed or captured. Coalition forces destroyed most of al Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan and their headquarters. Yet the jihadist groups are not defeated.

Despite being isolated and hunted, the leaders of the jihadist nevertheless maintain an active dialogue with their followers, issuing statements on a daily basis on the Internet to a worldwide audience.

Jihadists continue to hold al Qaeda in their highest esteem, with localized groups today from all over the world in Iraq, Egypt, Algeria and elsewhere pledging their allegiance to Osama bin Laden.

Post-9/11, bombings in Madrid, London, Bali, Istanbul and elsewhere proved to us that the war on terror is not over. To the contrary, I think that almost every country today face the threat of al Qaeda more than ever before.

The paradox is plain: Despite very real and significant success in dismantling and disrupting the terrorists and their supporters, the terrorist threat remains and does not appear to be shrinking.

Though military and law enforcement will always have an important role in disrupting the activities of the jihadist groups on the ground, it is important to understand that the jihadist networks will continue to evolve to the point where no gun, no bomb or assassination can harm them permanently.

One primary source of the jihadists' resilience is the Internet. It is the Internet that enables the jihadi network today to continue to exist despite the military might of the United States.

On the Internet, local jihadi networks all share the same virtual space, forming unified online jihadi community that has no physical boundary.

While guns, IED and other weapons are necessary for the terrorists and remain very dangerous, the Internet is what enables the jihadists to coordinate, share information, recruit new members and propagate their ideology.

If we do not treat the Internet as a crucial battleground in the war on terror, we will not be able to defeat this enemy. Just as an example, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the former head of al Qaeda in Iraq until his death, made the Internet his primary means of releasing information and communicating with his operatives and with al Qaeda's top leadership.

He never used any other kind of media outlet. He publicized all his activities on his password-protected message board. And from being almost anonymous when the war started, he became the face of the insurgency.

What he did on the Internet was immediately adopted by other Iraqi insurgency groups and from there to Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt and many others. Currently, al Qaeda top leadership is adopting his method.

The virtual jihadi network that exists on the Internet has replaced the traditional jihadi network that was destroyed after 9/11.

As someone who lives within the jihadi community and spends most of my day with the jihadists on these password-protected message boards, I must say that it is one of the most addictive, interactive and informative experiences that fulfills the social needs of every jihadist, from video games, to making bombs, to religious justification, and just to great friendships.

Every jihadi feels as though he is a part of the larger connected community. This overwhelming experience help explain why members of these online forums are suddenly announced as being dead as a result of carrying out a suicide operation.

The joy and the pleasure the online jihadists share in celebrating such a death is astounding. Today, the virtual jihadi network on

the Internet support the effort necessary for the survival of the jihadi group.

The jihadi network, the virtual jihadi network, enables jihadist groups to continue with their propaganda, indoctrination, strategy, psychological warfare—which plays a very important role here.

They set up their own local cells with virtual jihadi networks to communicate and coordinate. The jihadi ideologists provide ideology, short-term and long-term ideology. They even transfer funds with these message boards, all by the Internet.

As al Qaeda restructured itself after 9/11, gradually decentralized, virtual jihadi cells started all over the world. These cells combine or consist members from around the world who may be located only remotely. They get to meet each other only in these message boards, only in these password-protected forums where they plot, chat and interact.

As one notable example, of course, continental coordination in how the virtual network works is the example of the infamous Irhabi 007. He is a jihadi member. His real name was Younis Tsouli.

He was arrested in England in October 2005 and indicted under the United Kingdom act of terrorism. Among his charges were conspiracy to murder, conspiracy to cause explosions, and many other charges.

He was seen within the online jihadi community because he was one of the pioneers of who provided the jihadists with information on how to use the Internet in safe ways and how to hack into important websites, including American governmental website, and retrieve information.

In March 2006 two Americans in Atlanta, Georgia were arrested and eventually charged with material support to the terrorist organization for plotting attacks on oil refineries in the United States. These men visited Washington, D.C. in spring 2005, recorded video footage of the U.S. Capitol and many other targets in D.C.

The footage of these locations were found in the belongings of Irhabi 007 when he was arrested in the U.K., indicating that the two American terrorist suspects were indeed in contact with Irhabi 007 and were feeding him tactical information via the Internet.

In addition, in June 2006 17 Canadians were arrested for plotting a series of truck bomb attacks in Canada. The investigation extended also, after their arrest, to Bosnia, Sweden, Austria and many other places, including the United States.

The Canadians were also in contact with Irhabi 007 and with the Americans from Georgia. The connection between all these cells was online, in password-protected websites.

Though the online jihadi network has benefitted the global jihadi movement greatly, at the same time it has provided us with an open window into the means and the methods by which jihadist groups operate today.

By studying the various dimensions of the virtual jihadi network, we can learn about our enemy, including who they are, their location, ideology, trends and tactics, training—in short, we can defend ourselves better.

While the Internet is vast and disorganized, the virtual network established an infrastructure that is extremely organized. This in-

frastructure enables jihadist groups to pool their resources, gathering information and sharing tactical information to the global jihadi movement everywhere in the world.

The infrastructure also allows the jihadist to know immediately what is an authentic message and what is not authentic message—messages from al Qaeda and other groups. In my submitted statement—I am sorry that it was very long—I outlined in many greater details on how the jihadi movement online was established post-9/11, how they disseminate their information and how it is being structured.

To fight the global jihadist movement, we can not only rely on classified information. Undeniably, classified information will always play an important role in the intelligence community.

However, since the global jihadi movement exists in the public domain accessible to non-governmental organization, open-source methods of intelligence-gathering provide a wealth of intelligence that can result in strategic, operational and even tactical success.

The SITE Institute has spent several years in infiltrating and studying, analyzing the online jihadi community and has been able to gather actionable intelligence from jihadists on the Internet.

Once again, in my long statement, the submitted statement to the committee, I provided several examples illustrating how the SITE Institute's open-source intelligence was able to prevent potential attacks and provided lifesaving information to war-fighters.

The challenge now is to infiltrate this virtual network and to weaken this driving force behind the global jihadi movement. Studying the online jihadi community empowers us.

Before I close, I would like to provide just with one example on how open-source research into online jihadi network can result in actionable success.

By monitoring and infiltrating the jihadi forum, the SITE Institute obtained intelligence information about some members of the forums that were leaving their own country of residence to join jihad.

We contacted a Federal U.S. law enforcement agency to provide them with the information, but the agency was uninterested. The SITE Institute then tracked down the location of the specific individuals which came to Europe and contacted law enforcement agencies there, who immediately checked the information, appreciated it and prompted the arrest of the individuals.

In closing, I hope that you all recognize the importance that the Internet plays in this jihadi community. And once again, I will refer you to my written statement.

I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Katz can be found in the Appendix on page 85.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mrs. Katz.

Ms. KATZ. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Brachman.

STATEMENT OF DR. JARRET BRACHMAN, PH.D., DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER, UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

Dr. BRACHMAN. Chairman Smith, Congressman Thornberry, distinguished members of the committee, it is a true honor for me to be here and briefly testify to you.

I am going to pull back a little bit and talk about the strategy and ideological dimensions of al Qaeda and, more broadly, the jihadi movement. I would like to begin by focusing your attention on someone who is considered the professor of the jihadi movement, a guy name Abu Musab al-Suri.

He is known by several other aliases, but Suri is famous for saying a number of things, particularly that al Qaeda is not simply an organization, al Qaeda is not simply a network or a network of networks, al Qaeda is a state of mind, al Qaeda is a world view that anyone, anywhere can buy into.

And so al Qaeda's goal, he argues, should be to maximize the number of people that can participate in this movement at a number of different intellectual levels of sophistication. So his goal, in his past 30 years of studying guerilla warfare, is to apply those lessons to scholarship and to education.

Abu Musab al-Suri has written extensive numbers of writings, including a 1,600-page—including a number of videotape lectures, including a number of other lessons learned documents, where he goes through historical actions of jihad and tries to dissect them to understand what the jihadis did right, what they did wrong, and where they can learn.

Many of these books and articles that he has written have not been studied by the U.S. Government and there are extensive lessons to be learned for us, and I will talk about that in a moment.

But one of the most important things Suri does is clue us into his intellectual forebear, which is a guy named Abdullah Azzam, who is the godfather of jihad during the 1980's in Afghanistan.

Abdullah Azzam was very famous for saying we don't just simply hand our kids rifles and say go out and fight. We give them comprehensive education about how to use a rifle, who we are using it against, who we are not using it against, and why.

We need to apply this type of educational process, he says, to the jihadi movement today. This is where we have failed in the past 30 years to do. We have lost that because we have been harassed in all these different countries.

So what we have seen over the past three years is a deep investment of resources by al Qaeda and by the broader jihadi movement into intellectual and ideological education, what Suri says—a reconstitution of the corpus of jihadi thought.

We have seen these writings be translated. We have seen them in the possession of known terrorists, of dead terrorists, including the Madrid bombers.

We are reading works by a guy named Abdel Kadr ibn Abdel Aziz, who generally is off the radar of most intelligence analysts because he hasn't written in 15 years. But this guy provides deep, deep intellectual legitimacy for the religious dimension of the jihadi movement and is actively being read by terrorist operatives.

One of the most influential current jihadi thinkers alive today is a guy named Abu Mohammed Al Makdisi. He is a Jordanian-Palestinian. He hosts al Qaeda's online library. This is the library that contains over 3,000 books and articles. They are all available online. You simply go log on and you can download it.

And these are what I would call the Mein Kampf of today, where the thinkers, the big brains, of al Qaeda and the jihadi movement lay out their strategic objectives, their ideological strengths and weaknesses. What you find reading these is that they are very candid about, again, their strengths and vulnerabilities.

I would like to highlight three books—and these are three that are anomalous because they have been translated and available to researchers here in the United States—as an example of the type of literature that you can find in this library.

The first book is called "39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad." And this is a book that says we understand that not everyone can get to the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that is okay, you may be elderly, you may be sick, you may be a child, but there is 39 other things you can do, or 39 categories of behavior you can do, to help prepare for jihad or to fight jihad. I will just highlight two of them.

One is he focuses on motherhood. He says if you are a mother and you are not able to go to the front lines and fight or serve in a nursing capacity, then you need to prepare your children by reading them bedtime stories, by showing them videos of beheadings and of successful operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, buying them strategically minded video games to help them think in terms of the logistics and the strategy that it takes to wage warfare, to buy them punching bags and putting the face of Ariel Sharon on it to inculcate this deep hatred.

And so this is the type of activity that he is encouraging mothers to do if they can't fight.

Similarly, if you are, say, a software engineer, then in your free time, he argues, maybe you should be designing a jihadi video game, uploading that to the Internet. You should be designing Web propaganda.

It is very Marxist in the sense that from each according to their ability, to each according to the jihadi movement. Whatever you can do to support the movement, you can do. And so, again, this fits into Suri's mentality of proliferating the avenues of participation in the jihadi movement.

The second book I would like to point your attention to is one called "The Management of Savagery." It is written by a gentleman named Abu Bakr Naji, and it is perhaps the most intellectually sophisticated strategy book we have seen in a long time from the jihadi movement.

He focuses on several areas of how to secure and exploit security vacuums. But some of the more interesting insights he draws our attention to is the need for young jihadi students to take anthropology and sociology classes, particularly in Western universities. He says these classes will help these students to understand the tribal breakdowns that you may see in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He also advocates that they take classes in business administration programs and public policy courses, because this allows them,

when they establish a security vacuum in a place like Al Anbar province, to move in a cadre of managers and public administrators into these areas to establish security and establish social services, something al Qaeda has been very poor in the past at doing.

So Abu Bakr Naji really extends the intellectual sophistication, again, of al Qaeda strategists in a remarkable way. And this book is kind of a must-read if you are in this movement and you want to think strategically.

The third book, then, I point your attention to is one called "The Fantastic Myth," and this is a book written by Mohammed Khalil Hakaymah. He is a rising star in the movement.

But what he does is say al Qaeda was successful on 9/11 not simply because they were tactically or operationally genius, but because they exploited a key weakness in the United States, which is our bureaucratic inefficiencies, our failure to share information.

He says this is something that the United States has not resolved and it is something we need to be more cognizant of and exploit in a much deeper way.

So the book is a case study, or three case studies, of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He outlines their internal operating budget, the location of all their field offices, and talks about some of the strengths and weaknesses of each organization and the collaborative process.

Again, the point of doing this is to increase the awareness of members of this community in not just the electoral politics or the domestic weaknesses but really the bureaucratic inefficiencies that can be exploited within the government.

Again, the point is that these books are widely available, widely circulated and widely translated. And they are being read. Tens of thousands of downloads are registered for each of these books.

My argument, then, is that the writings of the jihadis, who themselves are the experts on their own movement, on their own strengths and their own vulnerabilities, need to be used by the U.S. and turned against them.

And we have done that to some extent, and I believe Special Operations Command (SOCOM) has been at the forefront of this effort. Recently SOCOM, working in conjunction with West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, released a number of documents from the Harmony database.

This database contains upwards of a million documents that are sensitive or classified. Many of them don't need to be, or could be readily sterilized and released to the public.

And so SOCOM approached West Point, the goal being to introduce and bring scholars more in line with this counterterrorism effort. The problem is logistically there is not enough time, resources or translation capabilities to make more of these documents available in a more timely way.

And I think that one thing that could be tangibly done is to help empower SOCOM to bring these types of intellectual insights to the war-fighters, because this is a strategic and a long-term ideological fight.

Maybe I will stop there and we can move into the questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Brachman can be found in the Appendix on page 113.]

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate that last comment in particular, as it is something directly in the jurisdiction of this committee, and we will certainly work with SOCOM on that.

And I appreciate all of your testimony. It is very, very insightful about the threat we face. Not exactly cheerful and upbeat, but then again, that is not your mission, and I respect that.

I have a couple of questions, and then I want to turn to my colleagues.

It seems that what has happened—and one of the things I am interested in doing is trying to figure out some way to describe this other than describing it as the jihadi movement, because as all of you know that sort of gives them something within the Muslim world right off the top, because jihad is not necessarily—you know, it is a good thing in the Muslim world. It means many different things. It doesn't necessarily mean violent struggle. And in giving them that off the top as a way of describing them, it is like describing them as freedom fighters. I don't have an idea off the top of my head, but we should describe them in a different way.

But it seems like what they have done on the Internet, as Ms. Katz points out, in the books and the way you have described it, is basically taken any dissatisfaction in the Muslim world and translated it into, "Okay, if you are dissatisfied, this is who you need to be with. We are speaking to your dissatisfaction."

And it covers a broad array. You know, some of it is not even economic. Some of these people are very well-off. Some of it is an expression of freedom. You know, their religion is not being properly expressed.

And it strikes me that one of the biggest things we need to do is figure out a way to break that link, to basically say that just because you are dissatisfied in the Muslim world does not mean you have to follow these maniacs, quite frankly.

And one of our problems in that—and I am curious to get your, you know, direct answer on that point, how you think we should go about breaking that link. But I think one of our problems is that, you know, we tend to in the midst of that try to promote a Western outlook.

And I am trying to think of an example of this. But you know, in sort of encouraging them, you know, don't be like them, you have got to be more like us, you know, the West is where freedom is, is where opportunity is—you know, sort of the "God Bless America" speech, if you will, which strikes me as a spectacular mistake, because the Muslim world, you know, even if they don't like al Qaeda, they are certainly not going to want to be like us for a wide variety of reasons. Just basically you want to sort of be yourself. We wouldn't want to be like them to that degree either.

So, you know, getting past that and finding some avenue for that dissatisfaction that is more legitimate than following al Qaeda—I am curious what you have to say about that.

And also, you know, as I was listening to your testimony, one of the questions that occurred to me was, is there any good news out there? And I imagine there is, and I would imagine some of the

good news is that there has to be sort of splinters within these various groups.

You know, they can't all be saluting bin Laden and saying you guys are making all of the right decisions here. There has to be some dissatisfaction within their—which would be, you know, wise for us to exploit. We have seen some of that in Iraq, for that matter.

So that is one question. I realize it could take you 40 minutes to answer that, theoretically. I have only 5 minutes, or 2.5 minutes at this point. We will allow you a little bit of time.

We will get to my other colleagues, and I will ask my second question after that. But if you could take a stab at how we sort of separate that dissatisfaction from following al Qaeda.

So, Mr. Benjamin, you look like you had something to say there, so I will yield to you first.

Mr. BENJAMIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, you are absolutely right that the genius of al Qaeda and other radical Islamist groups, if you want to call them that instead of jihadists, which is what they call themselves—but their genius is translating grievances into a religious idiom. And the idiom has a lot of authenticity because they are drawing on Muslim texts.

Mr. SMITH. And also legitimate grievances.

Mr. BENJAMIN. Some of the grievances are; some aren't. Some of them are being projected onto us even when we may not be guilty. But it is important to remember what some of these grievances are.

They are not just our presence in the Middle East, for example, but also their resentment of suffering under autocratic rule for so many years, and this they blame us for in large measure because of the belief that we have supported these local autocrats. And that is, you know, at the core of their anger.

It is going to be very, very difficult to break through that mindset because the mindset is validated by the people everyone is talking to. And if you look at the polling—that is to say, within these societies. And if you look at the polling, disapproval of the United States is, you know, at an extraordinary peak, or that is to say our image is at an extraordinary low.

It seems to me that we do need to have a positive agenda for the Muslim world, and if a positive agenda for the Muslim world is bringing democracy through the end of a rifle barrel, we have got a problem, because that really does conform more to the al Qaeda narrative.

I give the Administration credit for putting democratization on the agenda, and I think that that is part of a long-term positive program, positive agenda, for the Middle East. But we can't get there from here.

And we need to also talk about economic reach of a nation, modernization, a number of different things—the rule of law, stronger institutions in that part of the world. These are all projects that are generational, that we cannot do ourselves, that we need help from our allies on. But I do think that there is an opportunity to break that hold.

Now, you asked about good news, and I think that one piece of good news is that although an awful lot of people in the Middle East and in the broader Muslim world view us very negatively,

they don't all view us in exactly the way that bin Laden would like them to.

And in fact, while we have seen a fair amount of radicalization, we have not seen mass mobilization. We don't see countries falling over one after the other, embracing radical Islam.

In fact, the polling is quite clear that while people may admire bin Laden for standing up to the United States, they don't want to live in the state of bin Laden. They don't want to live in a caliphate. They don't want to go into an archaic sort of Taliban-like existence that he has sketched out for them.

So there is an opportunity there. There is room for improvement. My own view is that although there is a clear problem with leaving Iraq in that we validate part of their story, which is that we are paper tigers, we would at least stop validating another part of it, which is that we are occupiers.

And once we are out of Iraq, it seems to me that we will again be in a position where we can articulate and act on a positive agenda for the Muslim world and rehabilitate ourselves in their eyes, to some extent.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Anybody else want to take a quick stab at that before I move to Mr. Thornberry?

Dr. BRACHMAN. Sir?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, Dr. Brachman?

Dr. BRACHMAN. Chairman Smith, the al Qaeda strategists and ideologies are very candid about their own internal fractures, and there are a number of them.

Al Qaeda and what is, I guess, more or less called the jihadi movement, for better or for worse, grows out of a broader movement called the Salafi movement, which is often inter-used with Wahabbi.

But the Salafi movement actually consists of a number of schools of thought, many of which are pitted against one another for resources, for recruitment, for prestige. And in the West, analysts tend not to be sensitive to those internal breaks within the Salafi movement, between those schools of thought, against the jihadis and likewise.

So I think there is some deep traction that can be gained by having a more granular understanding of the broader Salafi movement, those internal politics of that.

But where we see Muslims most disagreeing with al Qaeda, I think, are on two fronts. First are attacks by Muslims on Muslims. That never plays well.

And this is again why Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was criticized so aggressively by the al Qaeda high command, particularly Zawahiri. There is a guy named Attea and a number of these other big-name, you know, iconic figures in the movement were very aggressive about criticizing him for that.

The second is the application of something called "takfir", or the ex-communication of one Muslim by another Muslim. And this really centers on when you say you have the right to overthrow an Arab government because they are not good Muslims.

And so this is a very contentious, you know, theme throughout Islamic history, but the jihadis have been very brazen about their

application of takfir, or ex-communication. And this doesn't play well in the broader Muslim world. And I think, again, this is something that can be exploited to great effect if we understand that.

But the two places I think we really need to focus our attention in order to break the link between taking grievances and connecting that to al Qaeda is in—again, to draw your attention to an Arabic concept called "al-wala and al-barah," and this is a concept that means love all that is Islamic and hate all that is not.

And so the implication of hating all that is not in line with God's law is that you destroy it, or you do what you can to destroy it. The jihadi movement and al Qaeda has been very successful, I think, in monopolizing that discussion and in broadening the sphere of what is not Islamic.

And so I think what we need to do is work with our local allies. And this is a very local process—is to push that back down. How do you constrain that which is conceived of as non-Islamic?

And the second place I would just point your attention to is another Islamic concept called "Tawhid", or the unity of God. And this is the basis upon which most al Qaeda strategists say we cannot participate in democratic elections, because man's law violates God's law, and so if you violate that, then you are violating the oneness of God, which is a deeply held Islamic concept.

And so rethinking what is in line with God's law versus human law is an important discussion that needs to be happening within the Islamic world.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ms. Katz, quickly, and then I will turn to Mr. Thornberry.

Ms. KATZ. Well, first of all, I have to say that there is no magic solution to this problem, definitely not. It will take some time to counter this ideology.

And second, on the record, just to make sure that we will not mix two things, the jihadists—because we can't find right now a better word—and Islam or Muslim, because we are talking and we are switching from the Muslim world to the jihadists and the terrorists. So there must be a strict differentiation between the two. I think that most of us were talking about, in general, about the jihadi Muslims.

Regarding how to counter the ideology, I want to share with you an example, for instance, of a fatwa that was issued. Two years ago when the war in Iraq was on its way—actually, it was already going on—the election for the democratic government was going on, and there was a question of whether or not Sunni Iraqis should participate in the police or not, because most of the majority is Shia, shall we participate?

And the Arab world actually needed help from top scholars to answer that question, and who can be better than the scholar by the name—and I am sorry to confuse you with names, but his name is Yusuf al-Kardawi. He is one of the most prominent, knowledgeable scholars in the Muslim world today, represents the Muslim Brotherhood.

He has even a T.V. show in Al Jazeera where he said, yes, they can join and be part of the new forces in Iraq. That didn't mean anything to the jihadi community. They cared nothing about it. To

the contrary, they started calling Kardawi as a non-believer or someone who is breaking from the movement of Islam.

They have their own scholars instead issuing their fatwas for them. They immediately posted the question on a Hesbah forum, which is the forum dedicated at that time to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, his people, his propaganda. And they ask their scholars to issue a fatwa: is this correct or not.

And immediately, in less than 24 hours, when Zarqawi issued his fatwa on Al Jazeera, two scholars, Attea Allah and Hussein bin Mahmoud, issued two fatwas. Both scholars are virtual scholars. We have no idea who they are because of security reasons. But if these individuals said it is not allowed, then it is not allowed.

In Hesbah alone there is about 10,000 members. Almost every primary source which I explained what it means on the jihadi community have about 10 to 20. Hesbah is a forum that is close to the people. If you were not part of the regional cell, you can join it.

So you know, we can continue going and thinking on how we can counter this ideology, but before we do that, we really need to go to, again, what Dr. Bruce Hoffman mentioned earlier, know the enemy.

And I feel with all my interaction with government officials, with scholars and so on, that as one who lives the jihadi community, I see things differently, because they have their own mechanism.

Now, regarding attacks on Muslims, the Jordan attack may be the perfect example. But I don't agree that al Qaeda disagree and do not accept attacks on Muslims. To the contrary, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the second man of al Qaeda, was the first one to carry out attacks against Muslims.

He carried out his first attack in Egypt where a 13-year-old girl was killed. That was his first attack there. Then he was put in jail. He left, and he joined al Qaeda in Afghanistan long after.

The embassy bombing in Nairobi, in Kenya and Tanzania, killed more Muslims than Americans. I think 13 Americans were killed. About 200 Muslim were injured or killed. And Osama bin Laden said afterward——

Mr. SMITH. And with that, Ms. Katz, if I could—my ranking member has been very patient. I want to make sure I give him a chance.

Ms. KATZ. Sorry.

Mr. SMITH. Did you have anything else on that point, or can I turn to Mr. Thornberry?

Ms. KATZ. No, that is it.

Mr. SMITH. Okay, good.

Mr. Thornberry, please? I appreciate your patience.

Mr. THORNBERRY. No, I appreciate the discussion, because I think it is very helpful and enlightening for us.

I guess I want to follow up a comment you made, Ms. Katz, I guess the next-to-last point.

Each of you come with different expertise, slightly different viewpoints. But based on what you know, what grade would you give the United States government understanding of the adversaries we face?

And let me break it down, 1–A and 1–B. One-A is the intellectual basis upon which they do what they do. But part B is the personal

reasons that—how do you grade our understanding of what it is that causes someone, perhaps coming from a middle-class family, to choose to strap explosives around their waist and blow up a bunch of people in a marketplace?

There has to be a personal decision as well as an intellectual foundation that draws these people to this radical jihadi approach. And I would just be interested, from each of you, roughly, what grade would you give, based on your understanding, the government, how well we understand intellectually and personally these people.

Dr. Hoffman, do you want to start?

Dr. HOFFMAN. Sure. Well, I would give us actually failing grades.

I think that we, especially as Dr. Brachman has described, that we have made some inroads to understanding the intellectual basis, so that I would grade higher, but I think that that is just the first step.

It is what we do with it and how we implement it, which I think has been singularly problematical. And this goes back to the fact that I don't think we have done our homework.

For example, the reason during the Cold War that Radio Free Europe or Radio Liberty were so effective in the messages that they beamed—the Iron Curtain is because, just as the chairman said, they didn't view this through an American prism. They didn't see the problem from the United States.

In the 1980's, they conducted surveys of more than 200,000 people who either traveled regularly to and from the Iron Curtain or emigres, and asked them what they were listening to, where they got their news from, what did people behind the Iron Curtain believe, what were the sources of derision, for instance, in government statements.

And then they took all that information and they packaged exactly the kind of shows and the kind of messages that their audience was receptive to, because they knew their audience. This is one failing.

The second one, which Mrs. Katz talks about, is the power and the growth of the Internet. According to an Israeli scholar, Gaby Weimann, who has written a book, Terror on the Internet, there are now 5,200 terrorist and insurgent Internet sites, yet the Voice of America allocates only 6 percent of its budget to communicating via the Internet.

Now, on the one hand, we have seen spectacular growth. Professor Weimann says that it has increased by more than 1,000 over the past two years. So it is clear, exactly as Mrs. Katz said, that the jihadis and the terrorists see the Internet as their main mode of communication.

Yet it is inexplicable that we devote so few resources to countering this.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I agree.

Mr. Benjamin, how do you grade our understanding?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Well, the first question, of course, is, who is "we"?

Mr. THORNBERRY. The government, U.S. Government.

Mr. BENJAMIN. Right. You know, in my dealings with the intelligence community, I would have to say that some of those who are

in the highest positions of responsibility and dealing specifically with these issues have quite a sophisticated understanding.

It is very hard to translate that into effective policy, not least because our initial steps in the war on terror committed us heavily in one direction, and that was in the direction of using military force and of not—and that foreclosed a lot of other options in the ways that we would deal with that.

To extend Dr. Hoffman's discussion of why we succeeded in the Cold War and why we are not doing so well now, our message is failing to jam the jihadists' narrative for the simple reason that to most of them, the facts and the message are not aligned.

In other words, if we say you know, what we really want is peaceful modernization of the Muslim world, we want everyone to enjoy the same benefits of globalization if they stick to the rules of the road, and so on and so forth, and that is a much better way to go than trying to overthrow the existing power structure in the world, well, that is not getting through because we are seen as being a threat to, you know, various Muslim nations.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. I appreciate it. I want to——

Audience MEMBER. Stop the war!

Mr. THORNBERRY. I want to get to Mr. Cooper in just a second.

Mr. SMITH. All right.

Audience MEMBER [continuing]. That will stop terrorism in the world.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Ms. Katz, you are the one that prompted this in my mind. Based on your dealings, how well do you think we understand the intellectual basis that draws people to this movement and the personal decision that someone makes to join it?

Ms. KATZ. You blame me, ah? [Laughter.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. No. I mean, I think it is true——

Ms. KATZ. No, I think it is a——

Mr. THORNBERRY [continuing]. Before you ever have a strategy to deal with this problem, you need to understand it.

Ms. KATZ. I think it is a very, very important question, and I think they have no idea what is happening. I mean, in my language it is like—for them, the Internet is a mess, what we say in Hebrew, balagan. They have no idea what is happening.

If I could share with you an example that maybe can illustrate how little—and I am sorry to criticize it this way, but it is unfortunate. Once again it goes to the point that we don't know the enemy. And I don't think that there is enough understanding on how they are doing things.

And this is an example. A year ago, and probably you remember, there was a very important letter that was intercepted from Ayman al-Zawahiri somewhere in Afghanistan to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the dead guy of al Qaeda in Iraq. And in the letter, he basically outlined his message, telling him how he should proceed.

The interesting part is in the beginning of the letter, Ayman al-Zawahiri tells his fellow Zarqawi, he says, by the way, thank you very much for your public speech on May 2000 whatever. It was an Internet speech that he delivered to al Qaeda telling them how he is going to continue.

But later in the letter, he explains to him how he should proceed in the war in Iraq, gives him a very, very important strategy, and

at the end he closes the letter with the following sentence. He says, "And if you go to Fallujah, say 'hi' to Abu Musab."

And that was a sentence at the end that many people didn't have an explanation to if he said it to Zarqawi, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Why is he telling him, if you go to Fallujah, say 'hi' to Abu Musab?

And the media started criticizing that letter, saying that this is not an authentic letter, this is not something that we should pay attention. Negroponte's spokesman came out and said, "We are telling you, this is an authentic letter, and we should look at it as an authentic—we cannot explain that sentence."

It was only when I read that sentence I realized that this is an authentic letter, because the whole slogan of the war in Iraq at that time was, "If you go to Fallujah, say 'hi' to Abu Musab."

It was if you went to any of the jihadi forums, any of the jihadi propaganda, that is how it started. That is how it ends. Every message by Zarqawi was in the background with a song, because it was a poem that was written, later changed to a song.

When I saw the responses of the U.S. Government where they said, "Look, we can't explain that to you," I said, where is all the thousands of translators?

And I myself cannot understand that, because when you are just a translator, you know, are you told to translate something. You are missing the environment. You are missing the climate of how people are communicating and what happens online.

This is just one example that they couldn't understand it. I think that there needs to be much more done in understanding the mindset of the jihadists. Do we understand now what makes someone leave everything and go on jihad? No.

But if they will share more the stories, individuals that are produced online on a daily basis—you see a video of a guy who has his own family in Morocco, sells his store, gives away everything, takes the money and goes to Iraq.

Every study we had before about Hamas and Palestinian Islamic suicide bombers do not apply in the war today on jihad either in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, if I could ask Dr. Brachman to comment. He has, I think, a very interesting proposal about setting up a center to study and learn better.

You obviously understand a lot of the intellectual basis, but what grade would you give our government?

Dr. BRACHMAN. Sir, in terms of the intellectual foundations to your point, I will say there are pockets of very deep understanding throughout the government, but, again, these are pockets that haven't been connected.

And I mean, these words are difficult. These concepts are not intuitive to most senior policy-makers in the West.

Mr. SMITH. Sorry to interrupt.

Dr. BRACHMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. SMITH. I mean, you are, to some degree, part of our government, so we get to take credit for you. That is one point.

And I say that somewhat facetiously, but also to point out that, you know, listening to you, you obviously have, you know, the type of understanding that Mac is talking about. Do they not make

proper use of you within the broader government structure, within SOCOM, within other places?

I mean, I guess I—and I am trying to enhance on Mac's point there that, you know, because obviously—and I have had that same—I think Mr. Benjamin pointed out, there is some intel people like you who, bam, I mean, they have a sophisticated knowledge level.

So the knowledge is there somewhere. Are we not moving it around in the proper way to make sure that people who need to know it know it?

Dr. BRACHMAN. Sir, from my perspective, Department of Defense (DOD) has been among the lead organizations—the combatant commands, specifically SOCOM and Central Command (CENTCOM)—have been very forward-thinking and very aggressive in trying to bring scholars and analysts into the war-fighting process.

But to your point, I think there needs to be more senior-level and vocal dedication to making this a war of ideas and understanding and empowering and resourcing that war. And so I guess, again, we have deep pockets of understanding selectively, but we need to bring those together.

And it takes time. I mean, we are in the beginning of a long fight.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Cooper.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you.

Very helpful testimony. I have a bunch of questions that hopefully can be answered with short answers.

What is the degree of understanding at the U.S. Military Academy of these issues? Like in the graduating class of X-thousand, how many get it?

Dr. BRACHMAN. Well, if they take my class, sir, hopefully all of them get it.

Mr. COOPER. How many are in your class?

Dr. BRACHMAN. About 300 go through our classes in the Combating Terrorism Center a year. But we have the opportunity to touch every cadet that goes through West Point in some courses and guest lectures throughout the academy.

But the fact is, by setting up this center, West Point made a clear statement that this was something that they had to teach as part of the standard curriculum for cadets.

Because the cadets, I mean, they know within a year they will be in Iraq or Afghanistan. And they don't have time, once they get on the ground, to learn a lot of these bigger issues.

So the cadets are highly motivated to learn this, and there is a lot of incentive within the academy to make sure they get the very best training and experiences.

Mr. COOPER. Help me understand. Is there a difference between the different terrorist groups and their Internet savvy? Like is al Qaeda better than Hezbollah or Jaish al-Mahdi or——

Ms. KATZ. Oh, yes. There is a significant difference—a lot of differences. But, you know, talking about this—there was a very interesting incident today where a Shia group—this is one of the first times we have seen something like that—posted a video of the

American soldier who was kidnaped in Iraq, American-Iraqi soldier, on a Shia site.

There is a very big difference—while you see that the Sunni insurgency or the Sunni-al Qaeda-affiliated forums, message boards, are more sophisticated, because they need the Internet. It is more interactive basis. It is not a static website.

It is a message board where people can communicate and they can receive the messages from the leadership. Most of them are password-protected forums that you need to be a member.

The Shia forums are more—I would describe them—if we talk, for instance, about forum like Muqtada al-Sadr's forum, Jaish al-Mahdi, they are less mature. Many of them are not password-protected. But they don't use it as their primary source. It is a secondary source.

Most of the recruitment is within Iraq. It is not fighters that they import to the country and propaganda that they try to disseminate over the jihadi world.

Mr. COOPER. So if we were going to try to define the audience like we did successfully in World War II and the Cold War, should we focus first on the Sunni?

Ms. KATZ. Oh, definitely, because the Sunni is the real threat right now.

However, having said that, that doesn't mean that we should forget about the Shias. The Shias are serving—not all the Shias. The radical forms of the Shias, like Muqtada al-Sadr and Hezbollah definitely, are a very important threat that we should consider also.

But the Sunnis are the more immediate threat.

Mr. COOPER. What is the problem in getting translations of all these books and documents that Dr. Brachman was talking about?

Ms. KATZ. If I can——

Mr. COOPER. Is it funding? Is it disorganization? Is it lack of interest? Sheer volume?

Mr. BENJAMIN. It is a small market.

Dr. BRACHMAN. And if I could add, part of it, sir, is metrics. We lack metrics for understanding what are priority texts to translate and what aren't.

And again, the al Qaeda library makes it very easy for us, because they keep track of the number of times these books are downloaded, so if we use that as our metric, you know, how many people are reading these books, and then translate it from there—I mean, that is one start.

But these books are always popping up in smaller articles. But again, my proposal of getting an entity within the government somewhere that is dedicated to specifically mining the strategic texts and then using those not just as academic insights but as building blocks for making policy, long-term, you know, strategy out of, I think that would make a big impact.

Ms. KATZ. If I may say something about this, as an Arabic speaker, the problem is not only translate all the material. I mean, there is tons of material out there. I think that the most important thing is to translate what they say.

That is why when we realized that there is a problem when it comes to translation and that the language is providing some kind

of a problem for the military, the SITE Institute set up something called the SITE Intelligence Service which—on a daily basis we provide our subscribers information on what is the latest from the jihadists.

It is not only the tons of books, because I can't assure you that all of them sit and read all the big books, but they do select some items. And we usually go through the jihadis' message boards, see what is the most important to them, what is the latest, what are they discussing, and that is among the items that we will decide to translate.

However, that doesn't mean that should forget about the 1,600-page that was mentioned earlier. This is a very important book that—I don't know of any government agency that translated the book. And I know that when people were looking for that book, they contacted us for the copy.

I myself read the book from cover to cover. It is very important. That provides the jihadists with, "Here is your target, here is how you set up your own cell, here is how you continue with your own jihad."

Mr. COOPER. Help me understand why there isn't more of a reaction when a legitimate imam has a fatwa that is overruled by nobodies. Why isn't there more power in institutional Islam to enforce the legitimate fatwa?

Mr. BENJAMIN. A quick stab is that there is a crisis of authority in Islam. I think a lot of scholars would agree on that. And there is no hierarchy that determines—at least in most countries; there is in Saudi Arabia. But for the most part—and there is in Egypt as well.

But for the most part, there is not a hierarchy. There is not a universal church. And as a result, we find that a lot of upstart imams consider themselves empowered. They don't have—many of them don't have formal training.

Mr. COOPER. Take Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani. He is not——

Mr. BENJAMIN. Well, that is Shia. But I am really just talking about the Sunni world here. There is a hierarchy in the Shia world that is very consequent, very effective.

But in the Sunni world, we don't see that. And it is a highly fractured world. And you know, part of what it is we are up against is, in fact, this crisis of authority, that so many people have so many different interpretations of Islam.

And in fact, the very notion that we have a jihadist movement—one of the things that is going on at the core of this is an effort to elevate jihad as an activity almost to the level, you could say, of a sacrament, which it is not historically in Islam.

So there are very, very big disagreements over what the faith is really all about. I will cite here just one person, Richard Bulliet, a professor at Columbia and one of the leading scholars of Islam in our country, who said at the street level there is no agreement on what the fundamental tenets of Islam are these days.

Mr. COOPER. But surely showing your own children beheading videos is not a tenet in any legitimate religion. That would seem to overstep the bounds of any conceivable——

Mr. BENJAMIN. Well, I dare say that there are plenty of people in some different very tumultuous places in the world in which—who would disagree with you.

You know, Dr. Hoffman mentioned Gabby Weimann. You know, he has extensive files showing in, for example, the Palestinian territories games in which children are encouraged to imitate suicide bombers, you know. There is some very grim stuff out there.

Mr. COOPER. I don't want to overstep my time limit.

Mr. SMITH. If I could, I wanted to ask a couple more questions, and then I will go to Mr. Saxton, and then we can go back and forth more.

I am sorry, I apologize. I didn't see you there at first.

Ms. Castor.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Continuing on the crisis of authority, as you put it, how large of a figurehead is Osama bin Laden currently?

Ms. KATZ. Within what community? Within the jihadists? The Arab world? I mean, that is——

Ms. CASTOR. Explain that.

Ms. KATZ. And that is really something that we should maybe talk about. We all talk about here the jihadi Sunni network. How large the jihadi community is—it is not something that we can really number. I think that that is one of the reasons that we say al Qaeda is growing.

Al Qaeda today is combined of—it is more an ideology, the ideology that for those of you who hate America, we are here for you. For those of you that hate that Iraq was occupied by a foreign source, we are here for you.

That is the kind of ideology that is being adapted by the jihadists. Most of the jihadists are the Salafists. And so that is the network that is being disseminated more to other people, the Sunni Salafist jihadists.

Most of the Arab world is not the jihadi world. Most of the Arab world is combined of Sunnis and Shias that themselves—almost every central government today in every Arab country is trying to find the phenomena of jihadism, because jihadists within every country today is trying to fight the government.

That is part of what al Qaeda basically tried to teach all their members for many, many, many years. America is one thing. It is easy to recruit the jihadists when you go with the slogan let's all attack America, we all hate America.

But in fact, it really started with him hating or going against the Saudi regime, with Ayman al-Zawahiri going against the Egyptian regime, with other individuals going up—Abu Musab al-Zarqawi going against the Jordanian regime. They did not accept these regimes as legitimate.

They all joined together, and they set up—easy to recruit people—today is when you go and say, "You know what, we have a joint enemy, that is America." But in fact, today there is, really within the jihadi community, there is very important new trends that we should look into them.

For instance, in the summer a group by the name Al Gamaah Islamiya, the Islamic group—it is an Egyptian group that has not been part of al Qaeda—had a split between themselves, and part

of it went ahead with Hakaymah and they pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden. This was a group that was quiet—lived peacefully with the Egyptian government. Suddenly they are also joining Osama bin Laden.

In addition to that, four months ago an Algerian group, a local jihadi group called the Salafist Group for Call and Combat—I don't want to say too many names or confuse you with names, but they were always a local Algerian group fighting the Algerian Administration.

Suddenly they came and they said no, we are part of bin Laden, we are pledging our allegiance to Osama bin Laden. Three months later, only after Osama bin Laden accepted their change of name to al Qaeda in Algeria, they changed the name. And they said it specifically—we had to ask the permission of Osama bin Laden.

So basically, what we are saying is that more and more local groups in Arab countries, Muslim countries, are becoming part of al Qaeda's network. And that is what happened with Zarqawi. When Zarqawi started in Iraq, he was not part of al Qaeda very much.

There were some conflicting reports, and only later in 2004 he pledged alliance to bin Laden.

Dr. BRACHMAN. Ma'am, beyond the symbolic importance of folks like bin Laden, Zawahiri, my center at West Point spent the past 16 months trying to answer the question who is driving the bus in terms of the ideology.

What we found is that bin Laden isn't on that bus. Bin Laden has almost no impact on the big brains of the jihadi movement or of al Qaeda. Clearly, he is the most influential symbolic figure on the ground, but in terms of setting the ideological agenda, the long-term, direction for the movement, he isn't seen as a factor.

It is other people who the United States tends not to be sensitive to, like this guy Mafisi, or Abu Qatada, or Abdel Kadr or, you know, these names that aren't familiar to us.

And this, to me, is—if we are going to defeat al Qaeda over the long term, we have to be more sophisticated in understanding who the big scholars are that are legitimizing and pushing the movement forward.

Ms. CASTOR. That goes to Dr. Hoffman's point, know your enemy. And I think that it has been very easy for our country to focus on Osama bin Laden—I mean, after all, 9/11 and the impact it has had.

But going forward, how do we analyze know your enemy and explain—carry that off into our policy?

Dr. HOFFMAN. Well, I think we certainly—it does begin, as Ms. Katz and Dr. Brachman were saying, with understanding the ideology. But I think that is useful in the counter-propaganda war, in the information operations dimension.

And it is absolutely essential in that realm, so that we can more effectively, and more actively, and with greater speed—I think that is one of the problems.

It is not only are we not collecting this information and analyzing, but even when we do have it, there is an enormously cumbersome process before we respond or before we empower people to

respond. So the jihadis or our enemies have, in essence, an open mike with no response.

But I want to at least—not disagree with my colleagues, but draw a different distinction. That is how you counter the ideological war. I don't think we should be under any illusion that—al Qaeda may have become more of an ideological inspiration, but we shouldn't be under any illusion that al Qaeda has disappeared.

I mean, when you look at—as Eliza Manningham-Buller, the head of the security service in Britain had said, virtually every—in fact, I won't say virtually—every plot that we have seen in Britain since 2003 has involved some distinct, definitive al Qaeda connection. So al Qaeda is still there.

Now, I agree with what Dr. Brachman is saying, that al Qaeda or bin Laden has receded as an intellectual or an ideological figure. But that is the problem, I think, with this struggle, is it is so multifaceted. We shouldn't be blind to the fact that there is still an existing al Qaeda organization out there that is planning and plotting attacks against us.

Ms. CASTOR. Do our allies in the region—do they analyze this data? Do they have it? Do they share it with the United States? Are they doing the kind of Internet analysis?

I mean, they are right there. They should be able to maybe understand what is on the Internet, analyze it, if we don't have that capacity yet in our government.

Ms. KATZ. We have tried to interest a lot of government agencies in what is happening on the Internet. I don't think there was full understanding of what is really happening there, to put it in a nice way.

Why did we need to go and stop that suicide bombers in Europe? Why couldn't we just give it to one of the law enforcement agencies here? Why did they refuse it? I think that there is a lot going on where there is not enough understanding on how important the Internet is.

Ms. CASTOR. Are there other countries, though, in the region that have——

Ms. KATZ. Oh, the same problem?

Ms. CASTOR [continuing]. That are doing a good job, or are more advanced, or that we can——

Ms. KATZ. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. BENJAMIN. Well, first of all, we should be careful about defining the region.

Ms. CASTOR. Yes, I guess that is right.

Mr. BENJAMIN. There is an enormous amount of jihadist activity in Europe, and European intelligence and law enforcement agencies, in my view, are working pretty hard on this material, and they also have affiliated research institutes and the like that are looking closely at it. We don't have a monopoly on that by any means.

If you are talking about Middle Eastern countries, well, many of them have very adept intelligence services but they tend to deploy their energies in other ways than doing a lot of ideological analysis. At least that is my experience.

And they are very much involved in operational work to find potentially threatening people and prevent them from carrying out any of the threats.

And it is also important—this was something that is in my written testimony, but I didn't get a chance to talk about it. It is very important that we are careful about the geography of jihad.

The fact is that jihad had largely—jihadist movement had largely been wiped out in much of the Muslim world prior to 9/11, certainly prior to the war in Iraq, and there has been a significant resurgence in the last few years.

There was always a lot of activity in Saudi Arabia, but even that, you know, bumped up after 9/11. We have seen activity in Kuwait, a country we have never seen it in before. We have seen a resurgence in Syria, a country that literally exterminated all of its radical Islamists in the early 1980's.

So that is happening. But these are, of course—just to come back to what Ms. Katz was saying, these are actually countries that have lower Internet penetration, lower computer usage, than, say, in Europe and other parts of the world.

Dr. HOFFMAN. Could I make a brief point, Mr. Chairman? I don't know of any country in the world that is doing anything effectively to counter jihadi propaganda or terrorist propaganda on the Internet. You can go tonight and look at any country that you want—North Africa, the Middle East, Jordan, Egypt, Yemen, in South Asia—and no one has countered it.

Their websites are very factual, which is commendable, but no one is challenging what is becoming, I think—now, let me back up for just one second and say there is a vast amount of ideology that would be very difficult to counter.

But why don't we drill down deeply to one of the main causes? And this is the conspiracy theories that have become so prevalent and that are peddled with a greater ubiquity on the Internet than ever before.

And I think this is a main failing, just countering those conspiracy theories, the way they are directed against the United States, but against individual countries that have assumed a truth and veracity divorced from reality, mainly because they lie out on the sites that Mrs. Katz monitors unchallenged by any government.

And that in and of itself, I think, would be an important step forward, because they are assuming almost a parallel truth because they have become so commonplace and no one is pushing back against them.

Ms. KATZ. Do you have a minute?

Mr. SMITH. I am sorry, just quickly on that, and then I have another question I want to get to, if I may, but if both of you can make a quick comment.

Dr. Brachman.

Dr. BRACHMAN. Just one small anecdote. After we released the study that I was telling you about mapping the ideology, the Arab newspaper Ashak Allahu ran an editorial that said we didn't need the U.S. Military Academy to tell us who the most influential thinker in the jihadi movement was, we know it is Makdisi.

To us, that was a huge success, because, you know, this is a re-engagement of the media and the press. They do know the stuff. It is in the air. But it is what you do with that that matters.

Ms. KATZ. Regarding the actual information that—Internet actionable—actions that are being done by different governments—well, the Saudis, the Syrians, the Jordanians also—they tried to block individuals, tried to block several uniform resource locators (URLs).

When they know that there is a certain website that is extremely important for the jihadists to communicate, they block that internet protocol (IP) from being able to go to if you live in Jordan.

But the jihadists always find ways to set up new URLs, and then they provide you in many ways of communications. Other governments, including the U.S. Government for a long time, was trying just to take down websites.

Mr. SMITH. It strikes me that that is almost superfluous. What we need to do is counter them with information of our own. I mean, getting into a technological battle, taking down websites—it seems to me they would always be one step ahead.

What we need is we need counter information out there that is reliable.

Mr. Benjamin, you had something?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Just one very brief point. We have depicted the Internet as though it is only about ideology and some kind of social communication.

One area that has been of great interest to the government and I think to a number of other governments is actually operational matters having to do with bomb building, having to deal with actual operations. And there is a lot of work going on there.

So we shouldn't be fully negative. I do completely agree that we are not doing enough with the ideology, but there are things going on, many of them in the classified realm.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

I wanted to ask a couple of questions specifically about Iraq and what happens. Mr. Benjamin, Dr. Hoffman, you have commented and I think laid out, I think effectively, sort of the choice in Iraq. While it is true if we pull out, you know, the jihadists will—you know, I use the term—we know what is going to happen.

Al Qaeda and bin Laden will declare victory. But on the other hand, the longer we stay there, they derive great benefit from that as well, and presumably at some point we are going to have to leave. And I understand that choice.

I want to get a greater understanding of what happens in Iraq if the U.S. military—and I don't personally think that we can completely pull out. I personally think we need to reduce our force structure and leave what is there to deal.

There are some specific al Qaeda supporters in Iraq, and targeting them is something that the U.S. military, I think, still needs to do, particularly in Al Anbar, in areas where some Sunnis have sort of started to rise up against the al Qaeda presence and seen them as, you know, foreign elements to be fought.

And thus far, at least as of a week ago, they were sort of holding their ground. And there is an internal fight now between the al

Qaeda elements in Al Anbar and the Sunni elements who oppose them. μAnd helping them I think would make a great deal of sense.

But I want to sort of use your knowledge here to sort of spin out what happens internally within Iraq if we pull out beyond those two big broad points in terms of how the broader al Qaeda movement takes this, because al Qaeda—Iraq has never been sort of a central part of the battle.

You mentioned a number of other countries—Saudi Arabia, certainly, is where bin Laden started. Egypt—a bunch of other places. There are forces in Iraq that are only tangentially interested in this discussion.

There is your basic, you know, battle for control. There is differences amongst the Shia, differences amongst the Sunni. So how all of that plays out in terms of how it impacts al Qaeda and bin Laden and those who follow them in that larger threat is something I am very interested in and curious about your comments.

One final point on that is it was described to me—what has essentially happened in Iraq is the former regime elements—the Baathists who were there for a while fighting us as insurgents—are still there, but al Qaeda has kind of taken over the Sunni insurgency.

And what has happened with the former regime elements and the Baathists, to be somewhat facetious about it, is they got religion, like legitimately. They decided to sign up for al Qaeda's outlook.

But that strikes me as more a marriage of convenience, that basically al Qaeda had the resources and the forces. They were the most effective insurgent group. The Sunnis wanted to, you know, stop the Shia takeover, so they basically—marriage of convenience, and if I have to pledge allegiance to your, you know, religious philosophy, sure.

And I am sure some then started to believe it. But within all of that context, we pull back. The sectarian violence plays out. How does that affect the larger al Qaeda element? What is their remaining presence and what happens to their influence in Iraq and how it spreads out from there, in 30 seconds or less?

It is a complicated question, I grant you, but I am very interested in the answer, so I want to take this moment to do that.

Dr. Hoffman.

Dr. HOFFMAN. Well, very briefly, I think the problem is that when al Qaeda in—well, before it was al Qaeda in Iraq, when it was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in 2003 and 2004, it was estimated it was 90 percent foreigners and 10 percent Iraqis.

I think the latest estimates from CENTCOM or from the Multinational Force Headquarters in Iraq would be that al Qaeda in Iraq now is 90 percent Iraqi and only 10 percent foreigners.

So in that respect, I don't think that it affects—pulling out of Iraq affects al Qaeda in the main all that much because the majority of the fighters there are Iraqis who I think are going to have plenty to keep them busy for years to come against the Shia and against other forces.

I think in terms of the propaganda bounce they would get, which is not insignificant—but I think they have already been milking that. They have already demonstrated that their fighters can stand

up to the United States. This, I think, is already a train that has left the station.

I think that shouldn't be something that imprisons us there, that they are going to continue to milk that for propaganda. I think that, you know—hitting harder against al Qaeda's resurgence in Afghanistan would be a greater setback to the ambitions.

Destroying the Taliban and the insurgency in south Afghanistan would be a great setback to al Qaeda—not al Qaeda in Iraq, but al Qaeda's ambitions than continuing to be enervated by the struggle in Iraq.

Mr. BENJAMIN. I agree with Bruce that the terrorists—the jihadists believe they have won. And if you read some of the material coming out of the SITE Institute and others, they are pretty triumphalist at this point.

There is a certain amount of bluster, but there is also a certain amount of conviction that, you know, they have taken the day.

I don't think we have a lot of great options. My own view is that by surging, we have foreclosed a containment option.

Now, containment is not a great option, but it, to my mind, has a lot of virtues that have not gotten a full airing. And in particular, in Anbar, where I don't think we are going to root out al Qaeda for the foreseeable future, it would be quite important.

I think we should be clear about this. If we send 50,000 troops—and there has been talk out of the Marine Corps, for example, that we need to do that—into Anbar, we are not going to get rid of those guys, because they are not going to stand and hold territory. They are going to come back when the sun sets, which is what they have been doing all along.

What we need to root out al Qaeda in Anbar is a Sunni-run intelligence service that is dedicated to the mission. And we are going to need patience. And the way we are going, we are not going to get that.

Mr. SMITH. Are we getting closer to that? Are we getting closer to a Sunni population in Al Anbar that is willing to take on al Qaeda?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Sir, I am sure you have seen better intelligence than I have. I am very, very skeptical of this, only because I have heard this story cycle through the news about once a year now, that the sheiks are getting together and they are cracking down.

If you go back and you look at the intelligence report that was filed by Colonel Devlin of the Marine Corps, he actually made—and this appeared in *The Washington Post*. He made the argument that al Qaeda has systematically disabled the tribes and wiped out a lot of their leaders, and that therefore it is a very atomized society in which the jihadists have the upper hand and are now, in fact, the dominant element in that society.

Ms. KATZ. Like Bruce said earlier, 90 percent of the al Qaeda in Iraq—by the way, they are not called al Qaeda in Iraq anymore. It is the Islamic State of Iraq. And that is actually a significant difference, because they are not only al Qaeda in Iraq anymore.

They joined ventures and they united with many other Sunni insurgency, about a dozen Sunni insurgency. And that tells us a lot, that they serve today, as my understanding—being in their com-

munity online is—it serves as—this is the group that protects the Sunnis, in Anbar especially.

And how can you go and root them out if most of the population, or large percentage of the population, is combined with them? They live together. They are part of the same organization. And that is why they are not called today al Qaeda in Iraq anymore but the Islamic State of Iraq.

And from the al Qaeda point of view and other jihadists around the world, this was a great success, that they were able to gain much more than I think they anticipated in the beginning, that Zarqawi thought he will be able to do when he started with all his activities in Iraq.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Saxton.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome all of you here, which—you have probably already been duly welcomed, but thank you for being here.

I, over the last month or so, have become increasingly concerned about the health of the Sunni governments in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Qatar and Jordan and the UAE.

And I guess I would like to ask a question, but the question is preceded by this. I am aware that there is some level of al Qaeda building success in each of the countries that I mentioned.

About two weeks or three weeks ago John Dingell invited the ambassadors—that is number two—the ambassadors from the countries that I mentioned to here in the Rayburn Building for a discussion of what we should do about Iraq.

And they expressed their strong desire—and this has nothing to do with the debate that is on the floor today and has a lot to do with what we do long term. They expressed the strong desire that we not conduct a precipitous withdrawal because they think it would be very destabilizing for the area.

And number three, I talked to a couple of friends. They got me curious—the ambassadors got me curious, and I talked to a couple of friends who are knowledgeable who travel in the Middle East a lot.

And they told me that yes, in fact, call them al Qaeda or call them whatever you wish, the governments in those countries are truly concerned about being able to survive and to have their successors survive, and the threat being al Qaeda or al Qaeda-type groups.

What do you think?

Dr. HOFFMAN. Well, Congressman, that is exactly why at greater length in my written testimony I thought that we should—precisely why we need to refocus our attention and efforts outside of Iraq to building up the capacity of our allies instead of pouring the money down the sieve that it is going into in Iraq right now.

That money could be better spent stabilizing the rest of the region and strengthening our key allies there, which I think is a more positive activity than throwing good money after bad.

I see the region first already enormously destabilized just by our presence in Iraq and indeed by a resurgent Iran who—I think in their point of view, they couldn't be happier for us to remain enmeshed in Iraq, because it emboldens them.

But I think the views expressed by the ambassadors—I mean, they have to take a hand in defending their own region. They can't depend on the United States.

And that is why I think it is enormously important that we show that we are not going to continue drilling a dry hole after it is not successful, but we are willing to commit to the region, to strengthen them, to help them to help themselves, and to stand beside them, but that we can't solve a problem that is unfortunately insoluble.

Mr. BENJAMIN. I agree with Dr. Hoffman. Just a few additional points. These countries all face a significant threat to their own leadership.

In a sense, what moral support they have in their own societies—because Iran has outflanked them as being the champion of the Palestinian cause, of the anti-American cause, and whatever the sectarian divide may be, that is very popular among—in the so-called Arab street. And so that is having a corrosive effect on these regimes.

Additionally, there is the long-term worry about instability because of radical Islamist upheaval.

At the same time, I would caution that we have gotten nervous on and off many times in the past—some of these countries are actually fairly stable and have the resources to take care of their opponents. Saudi Arabia, for example, is very good at co-opting anyone who challenges the Al Saud family.

Now, the one thing that I would suggest is the most proximate worry is refugee flows out of Iraq, into Jordan, into Syria, and into several other countries in the region, because refugee flows are historically associated with instability and with the transfer of radicalism from one country to another.

And it seems to me that this bell has not been rung loudly enough, and it concerns me greatly.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Saxton.

Do we have other questions?

Mr. Cooper.

Mr. COOPER. Is there a short version of your course, Dr. Brachman, you could offer Members of Congress?

Dr. BRACHMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. COOPER. CliffsNotes for Congress?

Dr. BRACHMAN. We have actually been working with the FBI in doing 2.5-day training seminars to the Joint Terrorism Task Forces all around the country.

And so there are a number of these kind of scalable models that us and a number of other, you know, universities and government agencies have been trying to build up to increase the educational awareness.

But there are resources on our website, and we can talk offline, sir, about how to get those.

Mr. COOPER. Another question. To the extent the Internet has been used as an anti-American weapon, to what extent is it being used as an anti-Sunni or-Shia weapon, or an anti-tribal weapon, to promote civil war or other breakups of the Arab, you know, street?

I would presume that a weapon of this magnitude could be directed against virtually any——

Ms. KATZ. It is a weapon that can be used against anything and anything.

Mr. COOPER. Is it being used against——

Ms. KATZ. It is being used very much——

Mr. COOPER [continuing]. Tribe versus tribe, or——

Ms. KATZ [continuing]. For a lot of the war—a lot of the indoctrination of what has happened in Iraq started with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

All his speeches from the beginning, where we have to fight the Shia, the Americans will eventually leave, but we all have to understand that this is a war that will last forever because the Shias are going to take over Iraq with the democratic elections that we are going to have here.

This is a weapon that is being used for—when we look at the beheading—why did he need to behead these people? He could have just shot them. But he beheaded them because it plays an important role in the psychological warfare. It can change people's opinion and ask the public opinion to move out from Iraq and things like that.

But it is definitely being used very much in instigating civil war.

Mr. COOPER. Is it being used as an anti-Persian weapon right now?

Ms. KATZ. You mean anti-Iran?

Mr. COOPER. Yes.

Ms. KATZ. Very much.

Mr. COOPER. But more of a racial base.

Ms. KATZ. Yes. Within the jihadi online community, the Sunnis you are talking about—they don't like Iran. And one thing that they are happy with is the American attitude against Iran to stop their nuclear ambition.

The jihadists extremely scared that if Iran get their nuclear weapon, that will make them stronger than they are today. They see Iran behind many of the reasons that the Sunnis are suffering in Iraq and other places. So there is a huge campaign, anti-Iran, in the jihadi community.

Mr. COOPER. A final question. Adam had mentioned we might be giving them a break by calling them jihadis. Are we giving them a break when we say it is a Salafist movement as opposed to a Wahabbi movement?

Ms. KATZ. Well, not every Salafist maybe is a jihadist. I think that when we use the word jihadi we mean someone who is, you know, willing to fight for the cause. Not every Salafist probably would do that.

So right now, I don't think there is any better word, and that is why we are all using it. Well, we all agree that maybe——

Dr. HOFFMAN. If I could just add something, I mean, during the Cold War we didn't have any hesitation identifying and calling our enemies communists, even though there were enormous varieties of communists, from Marxism, Leninism, Maoism, Trotskyism and so on.

So I don't think we should be hesitant. I think all of us have made a distinction that I think is generally lost on most people. I am not implying the committee, but the jihadis call themselves jihadis. I think that is different from jihadist.

I mean, jihadist does have a positive connotation. But they call themselves jihadis, in the same way communists called themselves communists.

So I am not sure that we really do a disservice to this word or to the concept by referring to them in the same manner that they refer to themselves, in a word that they, after all, invented for themselves.

Mr. COOPER. And we want to make sure we minimize our enemies, and we are not against Islam. We are just against violent extremists.

Dr. HOFFMAN. Right.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. If the conflicts between Sunni and Shia continue to escalate, including the Iranian nuclear program, what effect does that have on the worldwide jihadis?

Does that suck some of the energy into Sunnis opposing Shia? Or do we end up with a situation where the fringes unite in some way and we are facing something more dangerous?

Ms. KATZ. When we were witnessing to that event in the summer when there was a war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, the jihadi community was immediately—they raised the question are we supposed to go and fight with the Hezbollah, because after all, they are fighting our enemy.

There were some Saudi scholars who issued fatwas saying no, you cannot, because, you know, they are both our enemies, and they got tons—numerous fatwas from their own communities saying you cannot go and help them.

Now, if this is going to continue, the conflict between the Shia and Sunni, this is not going to be good for anyone, because the conflict between them will spread to the Middle East, to countries like Qatar and other UAE countries where the Shias have very important communities.

And we know from all the jihadi online community and messages that we intercept all the time between members that they are looking into spreading this conflict very much. And they don't like what they have right now.

Dr. HOFFMAN. If I could add something, there is an historical precedent because, of course, over 20 years ago when Iran and Iraq were at war, we could say well, there are two enemies in the region, in essence, they are fighting with one another, and we can stand aside.

But we saw that actually, ironically, it was during that period that it produced the sharpest spike in Shia international terrorism. This is when the Hezbollah was born, when it began to carry out international terrorist attacks, and when terrorism became a sideshow or another battlefield of the much wider war.

But also, too, we should—I agree entirely with Mrs. Katz. But we should understand that neither the Shia nor the Sunni worlds are monolithic, of course, and they make alliances of convenience.

Hamas, which is a purely Sunni organization—its patron is not al Qaeda. Its patron is Hezbollah. They have enormously close relations and have had so for more than 20 years.

Mr. BENJAMIN. I would just add, first of all, that the conflict that Dr. Hoffman was talking about was also coming out of the—the

Iranian revolution was also, you know, the impetus for the kinds of exported Wahabbi ideology that led to the establishment of al Qaeda.

So you know, you can have a perfect storm again, and you could also see some very horrible consequences somewhere down the line.

Just to answer your original question a little more precisely, I think there has already been a significant reorientation of energy in the jihadi community, especially in Iraq and its neighborhood, against Shia.

There has been a strong anti-Shia streak within al Qaeda since very early on, and the group—although the intelligence is again murky, the group has been associated with anti-Shia groups in Pakistan, a country that historically has the highest level of anti-Shia or sectarian violence.

You could imagine that an American withdrawal, for example, would really focus the jihadis overwhelmingly on Shia targets and vice versa.

My own view is that while there may be some very unwelcome consequences down the line, one specter we should dispense with is the possibility of a jihadist government in Iraq. I don't think that is going to happen. I just don't see the balance of forces being conducive to that. But perhaps Bruce or some others have a different view.

Mr. SMITH. Thanks.

I have one final also not short question. But in looking at the ideology behind al Qaeda and, you know, like groups—and someone mentioned earlier the—you know, basically, if it is not exactly like Islam, it must be destroyed, and the notion of basically, you know, convert or die, if you will, for lack of a better way to put it—which is a driving force behind al Qaeda.

I think it is—you know, the caliphate is not their end goal. It is basically the whole world, as I understand it.

You know, if you—and I have admittedly just taken a cursory look at this, but if you look at Mohammed himself and how the religion was born, that is really contrary to where he was coming from, that basically—I think there is a point in there that he did not wish to convert people outside of, I think, the Arab world at the time.

He was bringing monotheism basically to a world that hadn't seen it, and you know, they had no desire to convert. And there is a lot in there about living peacefully with those of different religions.

How did we get from that to this, you know, rather strong stand by al Qaeda and others that they are both the true heirs to Mohammed and believe something that is so diametrically opposed?

Now, a piece of that, as I understand it—and I mispronounce this guy's name all the time, but Qutb, I believe it is, one of the guys who wrote it, who didn't—who started out with an ideology along these roads but didn't quite become violent until he confronted the Nasser regime in Egypt, and I think basically sort of reached the conclusion that it is kill or be killed—they are so against Islamists that we have to wipe them all out. That is one minor little understanding of it.

You know, if there was some way to sort of unring that bell within the al Qaeda community and get them away from that notion that we can't have more than one religion in the world, that would obviously be helpful.

How widespread is that feeling? Do people in the Muslim world make this argument consistently, that Mohammed did not envision it that way, so what are you doing? Or how did we wind up in that place?

Dr. BRACHMAN. Sir, that is a——

Mr. SMITH. It is sort of your area, Dr. Brachman.

Dr. BRACHMAN. That is an extensive question. I will try to just be brief. I think most of al Qaeda's high command would be fine having global governance, not necessarily having a global population of purely Muslims.

As long as they are in control of the world, or at least a substantial part of it, I think that is good enough. The establishment of the caliphate doesn't mean everyone has to be Muslim.

Mr. SMITH. Sure. That, too, is counter to where Mohammed was headed in terms of how he was spreading his——

Dr. BRACHMAN. And in terms of Qutb, yes, he has provided tremendous intellectual horsepower for this, but it was his brother who brought much of the movement then over to Saudi Arabia after Sayyid's death.

And then he not only brought the ideology, but he also brought all of his like-minded believers who were being persecuted by the Egyptian government at the time with him. They all took teaching posts within the university and high school systems within Saudi Arabia.

And so you saw this intellectual Salafi movement being combined with this conservative Wahabbi interpretation of Islam, which is where you get this whole kind of screwed up understanding of—not you, but you know, people who are trying to analyze this—of Salafis versus Wahabbis versus—and so you have decades, then, of this hybridization, of this kind of bubbling and percolation, not in the universities but after the university classes.

It is a lot of, you know, passing of literature kind of behind the scenes. But what makes this such a powerful movement is that it is a resistance movement. It is never cool to be the establishment scholars. And so that is really what they have played on for decades.

And I think it is a peripheral movement in terms of a Salafi body of believers. The jihadis are a very small percentage. But they have been asymmetrically powerful in using the Internet and propaganda to unify the global community of jihadis in a way that is difficult to move back from.

Ms. KATZ. Just to add more to this point, when Sayyid Qutb wrote his publication, he was part of the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is—different from what we see today, the jihadi movement.

The jihadi movement that we are all talking about is a new thing. It is not something that you will find a book that was written that applies that, the ideology will apply exactly to that.

It is an evolving movement which changes its ideology as things are changed in the world. And so all they want is to have the Is-

lamic caliphate—give us our world, give us our own empire, and Muslims can live together with Shias and Jews and whatever, just like they were in the past.

But it is really a new ideology, a new movement, that needs to be studied because it differ from the Muslim Brotherhood. I remember that, you know, some ten years ago the Muslim Brotherhood was considered by us as the most radical Muslim movement. It is not anymore.

The jihadi new movement that we are encountering today is the one that we really need to study and understand better, because it has really evolved itself as a resistance movement that continues as an idea.

And that is why I said in my opening statement an idea like that you can't just kill. You can continue killing people, but I think that throughout history—and Bruce Hoffman probably will agree with me on that—you can kill people; you can never kill an idea.

Mr. BENJAMIN. You are absolutely right that Mohammed said there should be no force in religion, no compulsion. But we should remember that all of the great religions, because they have so many different texts, are incredibly plastic and can be interpreted in an infinitude of different ways.

And you know, we can only look at our own religious landscape here. Is one a sermon-on-the-mount Christian or a Book-of-Revelations Christian? You know, we can see these kinds of influences in——

Mr. SMITH. Sorry to interrupt, but a pastor said something this weekend at a church I was at that I thought was very profound. He said, "God's language is silence. Everything else is a really bad translation." And I kind of liked that. I just thought it was appropriate to add that at that moment.

Go ahead.

Mr. BENJAMIN. Remind me to filter that. But you know, we are dealing with a movement that views itself as a purification movement, a movement that is driven by the sense of empowerment that people have that they can interpret scriptures by themselves.

This is in some ways a fairly novel thing in Islam, that we don't have to rely on all these old scholars and commentaries. This is coming out of the reform movements in Islam of the last century.

And as I mentioned before, you know, this is a group that has raised defensive jihad to a pillar of Islam, which is not, I think, what most of the great Islamic scholars throughout history would consider it, with the possible exception of Ibn Taymiya, who is the man that they all cite.

So you know, things are changing, and the only point I would make in closing is that it is really not for us to tell them what the true religion is and isn't.

That is something that Muslims are going to have to sort out themselves, because we are not, you know, a validated spokesperson in this debate. That is really something that the Muslim world has to figure out.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Hoffman.

Dr. HOFFMAN. Well, briefly, I agree with everything that has been said, but we are talking about the intelligentsia or the philosophers.

I think that when you look at the people who are actually committing the violence and if you look at the martyrdom tapes, they are not debating theology. They are not referring back to what the Prophet Mohammed meant. They see this—first, it is a politicized form of Islam.

Second, they see this fundamentally as a defensive war. They see themselves repeatedly, whether it is the 19—well, at least the tapes that have been released by—I think now it is five of the 19 hijackers from 9/11, or whether it is the two bombers of the subways in London, so on—their claim is that—has nothing to do with the theology. They are not intellectualizing this.

They are saying Islam is under attack, that the West is a predatory aggressive force, that they are not terrorists but they are soldiers defending against these depredations or against this predatory aggressive force, that they have no choice but to use this violence, that they are reluctant warriors.

And I think what bin Laden's success has been is then harnessing that sense of being besieged into a sense of empowerment, that then you have the cathartic value of striking back against your oppressor or against your predator. And that is what is motivating the killers.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mac, do you have anything else?

Mr. THORNBERRY. I will not prolong it, but it seems to me that this takes us back where we started. That is what we have to understand to really deal with this. I mean, we do have to understand at the intellectual level, but what motivates someone to take the emotions you just described and then commit acts like we have seen.

I think that deserves a lot more effort on the part of our government by whatever mechanisms. And I appreciate you all's help today.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much. That was very, very helpful and very informative, and I am sure we will call on all of you again as we work our way through this. Your expertise is invaluable to us, and I thank you for taking the amount of time you have to help us with that.

And with that, we are now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:12 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

February 14, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FEBRUARY 14, 2007

CHALLENGES FOR THE U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND POSED BY THE GLOBAL TERRORIST THREAT: AL QAEDA ON THE RUN OR ON THE MARCH?

Written Testimony Submitted to
The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities

Professor Bruce Hoffman
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Five and half years ago, 19 terrorists hijacked four airplanes and changed the course of history. Just as we underestimated al Qaeda then, we risk repeating the same mistake now. Al Qaeda today is frequently spoken of as if it is in retreat: a broken and beaten organization, its leadership living in caves, •cut off somewhere in remotest Waziristan; incapable of mounting further attacks on its own and instead having devolved operational authority either to its various affiliates and associates or to entirely organically-produced, homegrown, terrorist entities. •Isolated and demoralized, al Qaeda is thus imagined to have been reduced to a purely symbolic role, inspiring •copycat terrorist groups, perhaps, but lacking any operational capability of its own—a •toothless tiger.

"Al Qaeda," President Bush declared last October, "is on the run."[1] But al Qaeda in fact is on the march. It has re-grouped and re-organized from the setbacks meted out to it by the United States and our coalition partners and allies during the initial phases of the global war on terrorism (GWOT)[2] and is marshalling its forces to continue the epic struggle begun more than ten years ago. More than ever, al Qaeda's revival reminds us of our continued failure to heed advice of the Chinese strategist Sun Tzu. "If you know the enemy and know yourself," he famously advised centuries ago, "you need not fear the results of a

[1] Quoted in Peter Baker, "Bush Is Reassuring on Iraq But Says He's 'Not Satisfied'," *Washington Post*, 26 October 2006.

[2] The most stunning and consequential of these was achieved during "Operation Enduring Freedom," that toppled the Taliban regime ruling Afghanistan and destroyed al Qaeda's infrastructure in that country.

hundred battles." Yet, if there has been one consistent theme in both America's war on terrorism and our melancholy involvement in Iraq, it is our serial failure to fulfill Sun Tzu's timeless admonition. The Bush Administration's new strategy to "surge" 21,000 American troops into Iraq is the latest fundamental misreading of our enemy's mindset and intentions.

AL QAEDA TODAY: EVOLUTION, ADAPTION AND ADJUSTMENT

Al Qaeda's obituary has already been written often since 9/11. "Al-Qa'ida's Top Primed To Collapse, U.S. Says," trumpeted a *Washington Post* headline two weeks after Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks, was arrested in March 2003. "I believe the tide has turned in terms of al-Qa'ida," Congressmen Porter J. Goss, then-chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Intelligence Committee and himself a former CIA case officer who became its director a year later, was quoted. "We've got them nailed," an unidentified intelligence expert was quoted, who still more expansively declared, "we're close to dismantling them."[3] These up-beat assessments continued the following month with the nearly bloodless capture of Baghdad and the failure of al Qaeda to make good on threats of renewed attacks in retaliation for invasion.[4] Citing Administration sources, an article in the *Washington Times* on 24 April 2003 reported the prevailing view in official Washington that al Qaeda's "failure to carry out a successful strike during the U.S.-led military campaign to topple Saddam Hussein has raised questions about their ability to carry out major new attacks."[5] Despite major terrorist attacks in Jakarta and Istanbul during the latter half of that same year and the escalating insurgency in Iraq, this optimism carried into 2004. "The Al Qaida of the 9/11

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[3] Dana Priest and Susan Schmidt, "Al-Qa'ida's Top Primed To Collapse, U.S. Says," *Washington Post*, 16 March 2003.

[4] See, for example, CNN, "Alleged bin Laden tape a call to arms," at http://cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/02/11/sprj.irq.wrap and bin Laden's statement, "We want to let you know and confirm to you that this war of the infidels that the U.S. is leading with its allies . . . we are with you and we will fight in the name of God."

[5] David R. Sands, "Al-Qa'ida's credibility 'on the line' as war in Iraq winds down," *Washington Times*, 24 April 2003. See also, Dennis Pluchinsky, "Al-Qa'ida Identity Crisis," *Washington Times*, 28 April 2003.

period is under catastrophic stress," Ambassador Cofer Black, at the time the U.S. State Department's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, declared. "They are being hunted down, their days are numbered."[6] Then came the Madrid bombings six weeks later and the deaths of 191 persons. The most accurate assessment, perhaps, was therefore the one offered by al Qaeda itself. "The Americans," Thabet bin Qais, a spokesperson for the movement said in May 2003, "only have predications and old intelligence left. It will take them a long time to understand the new form of al-Qaida."[7] Four years later we are indeed still struggling to understand the changing character and nature of al Qaeda and the shifting dimensions of the terrorist threat as it has evolved since 9/11.

Al Qaeda in fact is now functioning exactly as its founder and leader, Usama bin Laden envisioned it. On the one hand, true to the meaning of the Arabic word for the "base of operation"[8] or "foundation"—meaning the base or foundation from which worldwide Islamic revolution can be waged (or, as other translations have it, the "precept" or "method")[9]—and thus simultaneously inspiring, motivating and animating, radicalized Muslims to join the movement's fight. While, on the other, continuing to exercise its core operational and command and control capabilities: directing the implementing terrorist attacks.

The al Qaeda of today combines, as it always has, both a "bottom up" approach—encouraging independent thought and action from low (or lower-) level operatives—and a "top down" one—issuing orders and still coordinating a far-flung terrorist enterprise with both highly

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[6] "U.S.: Al Qaida is 70 percent gone, their 'days are numbered'," World Tribune.Com, 23 January 2004.

[7] Sarah el Deeb, "Al-Qaida Reportedly Plans Big New Attack," *Associated Press*, 8 May 2003.

[8] Peter Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), p. 29.

[9] As Jason Burke notes '"Al-Qaeda" is a messy and rough designation . . . . The word itself is critical. "al-Qaeda" comes from the Arabic root *qaf-ayn-dal*. It can mean a base, as in a camp or a home, or a foundation, such as what is under a house. It can mean a pedestal that supports a column. It can also mean a precept, rule, principle, maxim, formula, method, model or pattern.' Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting A Shadow Of Terror* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 7. See also, idem., 'Think Again: Al Qaeda,' *Foreign Policy* (May/June 2004), accessed at http://www.foreign policy.com.

synchronized and autonomous moving parts. Mixing and matching organizational and operational styles whether dictated by particular missions or imposed by circumstances, the al Qaeda movement, accordingly, can perhaps most usefully be conceptualized as comprising four distinct, though not mutually exclusive, dimensions. In descending order of sophistication, they are:

1. **Al Qaeda Central**. This category comprises the remnants of the pre-9/11 al Qaeda organization. Although its core leadership includes some of the familiar, established commanders of the past, there are a number of new players who have advanced through the ranks as a result of the death or capture of key al Qaeda senior-level managers such as Abu Atef, KSM, and Hambali, and more recently, Abu Faraj al-Libi and Abu Hamza Rabia.[10] It is believed that this hardcore remains centered in or around the Afghanistan and Pakistan borders and continues to exert actual coordination, if not some direct command and control capability, in terms of commissioning attacks, directing surveillance and collating reconnaissance, planning operations, and approving their execution.

   This category comes closest to the al Qaeda operational template or model evident in the 1998 East Africa embassy bombings and 9/11 attacks. Such high value, "spectacular" attacks are entrusted only to al Qaeda's professional cadre: the most dedicated, committed and absolutely reliable element of the movement. Previous patterns suggest that these "professional" terrorists are deployed in pre-determined and carefully selected teams. They will also have been provided with very specific targeting instructions. In some cases, such as the East Africa bombings, they may establish contact with, and enlist the assistance of, local sympathizers and supporters. This will be solely for logistical and other attack-support purposes or to enlist these locals to actually execute the attack(s). The operation, however, will be planned and directed by the "professional" element with the locals clearly subordinate and playing strictly a supporting role (albeit a critical one).

2. Al Qaeda Affiliates and Associates. This category embraces formally established insurgent or terrorist groups that over the years have benefited from bin Laden's largesse and/or spiritual guidance and/or have received training, arms, money and other assistance from al Qaeda. Among the recipients of this assistance have been terrorist groups and insurgent forces in Uzbekistan and Indonesia, Morocco and the Philippines, Bosnia and Kashmir, among other places. By supporting these groups, bin Laden's intentions were three-fold. First, he sought to co-opt these movements' mostly local agendas and channel their efforts towards the cause of global jihad. Second, he hoped to create a jihadi "critical mass" from these geographically scattered, disparate movements that would one day coalesce into a single, unstoppable force. And, third, he wanted to foster a dependent relationship whereby as a quid pro quo for prior al Qaeda support, these movements would either undertake attacks at al Qaeda's behest or provide essential local, logistical and other support to facilitate strikes by the al Qaeda "professional" cadre noted above.

This category includes groups such as: al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI), the late Abu Musab Zarqawi's al Qaeda in Mesopotamia (formerly *Jamaat al Tawhid wa'l Jihad*), Asbat al-Ansar, Ansar al Islam, Islamic Army of Aden, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jemaah Islamiya (JI), Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), and the various Kashmiri Islamic groups based in Pakistan—e.g., Harakat ul Mujahidin (HuM), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Laskar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), and Laskar i Jhangvi (LiJ). Both the number and geographical diversity of these entities is proof of al Qaeda's continued influence and vitality.

3. Al Qaeda Locals. These are dispersed cells of al Qaeda adherents who have or have had some direct connection with al Qaeda—no matter how tenuous or evanescent. They appear to fall into two sub-categories.

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[10] A search on google.com for "al Qaeda Number 3's" illuminates how this movement has a deeper bench than is often thought and something akin to an institutionalized process of leadership succession.

One category comprises persons who have had some prior terrorism experience—having been blooded in battle as part of some previous jihadi campaign in Algeria, the Balkans, Chechnya, and perhaps more recently in Iraq, and may have trained in some al Qaeda facility whether in Afghanistan or Yemen or the Sudan before 9/11. Specific examples of this adversary include Ahmed Ressam, who was arrested in December 1999 at Port Angeles, Washington State, shortly after he had entered the U.S. from Canada. Ressam, for instance, had a prior background in terrorism, having belonged to Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA). After being recruited to al Qaeda, he was provided with a modicum of basic terrorist training in Afghanistan. In contrast to the professional cadre detailed above, however, Ressam was given very non-specific, virtually open-ended targeting instructions before being dispatched to North America. Also, unlike the well-funded professional cadre, Ressam was given only $12,000 in "seed money" and instructed to raise the rest of his operational funds from petty thievery. He was also told by KSM to recruit members for his terrorist cell from among the expatriate Muslim communities in Canada and the U.S.[11] The al Qaeda operative, Andrew Rowe, a British national and Muslim convert, convicted for his involvement in the 2003 al Qaeda plot to attack London's Heathrow Airport is another example of this category.

The other category, as is described in the detailed discussion of the 7/7 London attacks below, conforms to the profile of the four British Muslims responsible for the 2005 bombings of mass transit targets in London. In contrast to Ressam and Rowe, none of the four London bombers had previously fought in any of the contemporary, iconic Muslim conflicts (e.g., Algeria, Chechnya, Kashmir, Bosnia, Afghanistan, etc.) nor is there *conclusive* evidence of their having received any training in an al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan, Yemen, or the Sudan *prior* to 9/11.[12] Rather, the ringleader of the London cell—Mohammed

[11] See 1734HA01, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, United States of America v. Mokhtar Haouri, S4 00 Cr. 15 (JFK), 3 June 2001, pp. 538, 548, 589, 622, 658, & 697.

[12] A confidential informant of the British Security Service (MI-5) claims to have traveled to Afghanistan in the late 1990s/early 2000s with another man named "Imran," who he later identified as the

Siddique Khan, and an accomplice, Shahzad Tanweer, were brought to Pakistan for training and then returned to their homeland with both an attack plan and the knowledge to implement it. They then recruited others locally as needed, into the cell and undertook a relatively simple, but nonetheless sophisticated and highly consequential attack.[13]

In both the above categories, however, the terrorists will have some link with al Qaeda. Their current relationship, and communication, with a central al Qaeda command and control apparatus may be either active or dormant and similarly their targeting choices may either be specifically directed or else entirely left to the cell to decide. The distinguishing characteristic of this category, however, is that there is some direct connection of some kind with al Qaeda.

4. **Al Qaeda Network.** These are home-grown Islamic radicals—from North Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia—as well as local converts to Islam mostly living in Europe, Africa and perhaps Latin America and North America as well, who have no direct connection with al Qaeda (or any other identifiable terrorist group), but nonetheless are prepared to carry out attacks in solidarity with or support of al Qaeda's radical jihadi agenda. Like the "al Qaeda Locals" they too are motivated by a shared sense of enmity and grievance felt towards the United States and West in general and their host-nations in particular. In this specific instance, however, the relationship with al Qaeda is more inspirational than actual, abetted by profound rage over the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq and the oppression of Muslims in Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, and elsewhere. Critically, these persons are neither directly members of a known, organized terrorist group nor necessarily even a very cohesive entity unto themselves.

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ringleader of the 7/7 London attacks, Mohammed Siddique Khan. That "Imram" was in fact Khan has not been confirmed. See Intelligence and Security Committee, *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, p. 16.

[13] See Honourable House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005* (London: The Stationary Office, HC 1087), 11 May 2006, titled "Were They Directed From Abroad?" pp. 24-27, accessed at http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/hc0506/hc10/1087/1087.asp.

> Examples of this category, which comprises small collections of like-minded locals who gravitate towards one to plan and mount terrorist attacks completely independent of any direction provided by al Qaeda, include the so-called Hofstad Group in the Netherlands, a member of whom (Mohammed Bouyeri) murdered the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam in November 2004, and the so called, "trolley bombers,": the two Lebanese nationals who placed bombs, that failed to explode, on two German commuter trains near Dortmund and Koblenz in July 2006.[14]

The most salient threat posed by the above categories, however, continues to come from al Qaeda Central and from its affiliates and associates. However, an additional and equally challenging threat is now posed by less discernible and more unpredictable entities drawn from the vast Muslim Diaspora in Europe. As far back as 2001, the Netherlands' intelligence and security service had detected increased terrorist recruitment efforts among Muslim youth living in the Netherlands whom it was previously assumed had been completely assimilated into Dutch society and culture.[15] Thus, representatives of Muslim extremist organizations—including, presumably, al Qaeda—had already succeeded in embedding themselves in, and drawing new sources of support from, receptive elements within established Diaspora communities. In this way, new recruits could be drawn into the movement who likely had not previously come under the scrutiny of local or national law enforcement agencies. Indeed, according to a BBC News documentary report broadcast in July 2006, Khan, the London bombing cell's ringleader, may have acted precisely as such an al Qaeda "talent spotter": trawling Britain's Muslim communities during the summer of 2001—literally weeks before 9/11—trying to attract new recruits to the movement.[16]

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[14] See "Lebanon holds train bomb suspect," *BBC News (Internatinoal Version)*, 24 August 2006 accessed at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5281208.stm

[15] See General Intelligence and Security Service, *Recruitment for the jihad in the Netherlands: from incident to trend* (The Hague: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, December 2002).

[16] A UK Muslim community leader interviewed in the documentary said that he approached by maintains Khan, who was accompanied by two other British Muslims named Asif Hanif and Omar Khan Sharif ,who in 2003 would

This new category of terrorist adversary, moreover, also has proven more difficult for the authorities in these countries to track, predict and anticipate. The Director of GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters), Britain's equivalent of our NSA (National Security Agency) admitted this in testimony before a Parliamentary committee investigating the 7/7 attacks. "We had said before July [2005]," Sir David Pepper noted,

> there are probably groups out there that we do not know anything about, and because we do not know anything about them we do not know how many there are. What happened in July [the 2005 London bombings] was a demonstration that there were [material redacted for security reasons] conspiracies going on about which we essentially knew nothing, and that rather sharpens the perception of how big, if I can use [Secretary of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld's term, the unknown unknown was.[17]

This adversary, comprising hitherto unknown cells, is difficult, if not impossible, to effectively profile. Indeed, this was precisely the conclusion reached by the above-mentioned Parliamentary committee in their report on the London bombings.[18] Although the members of these terrorist cells may be marginalized individuals working in menial jobs from the lower socio-economic strata of society, some with long criminal records or histories of juvenile delinquency; others may well come from solidly middle and upper-middle class backgrounds with university and perhaps even graduate degrees and prior passions for cars, sports, rock music and other completely secular, material interests. For example, in the case of radicalized British Muslims, since 9/11 we have seen terrorists of South Asian and North African descent as well as those hailing both from the Middle East and Caribbean. They have included life-long devout Muslims as well as recent converts. Persons from the margins of society who made a living as thieves or from drug dealing and

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stage a suicide attack on a seaside pub in Tel Aviv, Israel. See BBC News Media Exchange, "Britain's First Suicide Bombers," broadcast on BBC2 on 11 July 2006, 2000 GMT.

[17] Quoted in Intelligence and Security Committee, *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, pp. 30-31.

[18] The report concluded that "The July attacks emphasized that there was no clear profile of a British Islamist terrorist." See Ibid., p. 29.

students at the London School Economics and the University of London, two of the UK's premiere universities.[19] What they will have in common is a combination of a deep commitment to their faith—often recently re-discovered; admiration of bin Laden for the cathartic blow struck against America on 9/11; hatred of the U.S. and the West; and, a profoundly shared sense of alienation from their host countries. "There appear to be a number of common features to this grooming," the report of the Intelligence and Security Committee of the UK House of Commons concluded.

> In the early stages, group conversation may be around being a good Muslim and staying away from drugs and crime, with no hint of an extremist agenda. Gradually individuals may be exposed to propaganda about perceived injustices to Muslims across the world with international conflict involving Muslims interpreted as examples of widespread war against Islam; leaders of the Muslim world perceived as corrupt and non-Islamic; with some domestic policies added as 'evidence' of a persecuted Islam; and conspiracy theories abounding. They will then move on to what the extremists claim is religious justification for violent jihad in the Quran and the Hadith . . . and—if suicide attacks are the intention—the importance of martyrdom in demonstrating commitment to Islam and the rewards in Paradise for martyrs; before directly inviting an individual to engage in terrorism. *There is little evidence of over compulsion. The extremists appear rather to rely on the development of individual commitment and group bonding and solidarity* [my emphasis].[20]

These new recruits are the anonymous cogs in the world-wide al Qaeda enterprise and include both long-standing residents and new immigrants found across in Europe, but specifically in countries with large expatriate Muslim populations such as Britain, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

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[19] For instance, in the criminal category are Richard Reid (the so-called "shoe bomber," who attempted to blow up an American Airlines flight en route from Paris to Miami in December 2001) and Jermaine Lindsay (one of the 7/7 London bombers); while Omar Saed Sheikh (who orchestrated the kidnapping and murder of the *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Daniel Pearl, in 2002) is a graduate of the LSE and Omar Sharif Khan (one of the two British Muslims who carried out a suicide bombing attack against a sea-side pub in Tel Aviv, Israel in April 2003) attended the University of London.

[20] Honourable House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, pp. 31-32.

Indeed, on-going investigations increasingly suggest that recent terrorist threats and attacks—the August 2006 plot to blow up 10 planes inflight from Britain and crash them into American cities, the July 2005 suicide bus and •subways bombings in London, and the two separate operations •foiled in Britain during 2004 involving on the one hand, bombings of a shopping center or nightclub and on the other simultaneous suicide attacks on economic targets in lower •Manhattan, Newark, New Jersey and •Washington, D.C.—were all in fact coordinated in •some way by al-Qaeda, and not (as commonly assumed) cooked up by home-grown terror •groups.

Thus, al Qaeda's goal remains as it has always been: to inspire radicalized Muslims across the globe to join the •movement's holy fight. Not only does al •Qaeda retain its core operational and command-and-control capabilities, it has •shown remarkable resiliency and a stubborn capacity for renewal and regeneration. Even though its personnel may be dispersed, al Qaeda remains a hierarchal organization: capable of ordering, planning and implementing bold terrorist strikes. Issues of classification and sensitive collection, as well as the British government's gathering of evidence for a number of criminal cases that remain *sub judice* have prevented further, full, public disclosure of al Qaeda's active involvement in the London attacks—and virtually every other major terrorist plot unmasked in the UK since 2003.[21] However, suffice it to say that what is publicly known and has been reported in unclassified sources, clearly points to such involvement.

The widely perceived current threat from less discernible and more unpredictable entities drawn from the vast Muslim Diaspora in Europe,

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[21] These include the so called "ricin plot" in January 2003 involving an Algerian al Qaeda operative named Kamal Bourgass and what British authorities refer to as "Operation Crevice" and "Operation Rhyme" as well as this past summer's abortive plot to crash ten U.S. airliners into American cities. See Elaine Sciolino and Don Van Natta, Jr., "2004 British Raid Sounded Alert on Pakistani Militants," New York Times, 14 July 2005; and idem., "Europe Confronts Changing Face of Terrorism," New York Times, 1 August 2005; Sebastian Rotella, "British Terrorism Case Parallels Others; Trial in a suspected plot to bomb a nightclub or mall in 2004 involves alleged home-grown Islamic radicals with ties to militants in Pakistan," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 September 2006; and BBC News, "Man admits UK-US terror bomb plot," 12 October 2006 accessed at http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6044.

moreover, actually represents the fruition of strategic decisions made by al Qaeda a decade ago. As far back as 1999, British authorities knew of al Qaeda's years long subversive activities among that country's Muslim community: believing that some 3,000 British Muslims had already left and returned to the country after receiving terrorist training at al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and elsewhere.[22] Three years later, the Netherlands' intelligence and security service called attention to increased terrorist recruitment efforts among assimilated Dutch Muslim youths. And, a senior official in Spain's Interior Ministry recently told me that authorities in that country now suspect that upwards of a thousand Muslims living there also received training in overseas al Qaeda camps before 9/11. In this way, new recruits from these countries have been drawn into the movement who had not previously come under scrutiny or suspicion. The threat thus is not only one of jihadi radicalization, but of deliberate, longstanding al Qaeda subversion.

Consider what we have learned since the 2005 London bombings and how new evidence about the attack's genesis completely dispels the prevailing assumption that entirely organic, "homegrown" threats posed by indigenous radicals acting on their own have superseded that of al Qaeda. Initially, •British authorities concluded that the attacks were the work of disaffected British •Muslims, self-radicalized and self-selected •and operating purely within the country. •We have subsequently learned, however, •that the London cell's ringleader, Mohammed Siddique Khan, and a fellow •bomber, Shahzad Tanweer, both visited Pakistani terrorist •camps between November 2004 and February 2005—where it is now believed they were trained by al Qaeda operatives. For instance, the aforementioned report by the Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee, noted among its other conclusions, that

- "Investigations since July [2005] have shown that the group [the four London bombers] was in contact with others involved in extremism in the UK . . . "

[22] Robert Winnett and David Leppard, "Leaked No 10 dossier reveals Al-Qaeda's British recruits," *Sunday Times* (London), 10 July 2005.

- "Siddique Khan [the group's ringleader] is now known to have visited Pakistan in 2003 and to have spent several months there with Shazad Tanweer [another bomber] between November 2004 and February 2005. It has not yet been established who they met in Pakistan, but it is assessed as likely that they had some contact with Al Qaida figures."
- "The extent to which the 7 July attacks were externally planned, directed or controlled by contacts in Pakistan or elsewhere remains unclear. The [British intelligence and security] Agencies believe that some form of operational training is likely to have taken place while Khan and Tanweer were in Pakistan. Contacts in the run-up to the attacks suggest they may have had advice or direction from individuals there." [23]

Both men also recorded "martyrdom" videos while in Pakistan that were •subsequently released in September 2005 and then on the first anniversary of the bombings by al Qaeda's perennially active •communications department, "Al Sahab •[the Clouds] for Media Production." On those tapes, Ayman al Zawahiri also claims credit for the London attack in the name of al Qaeda: an admission that at the time was mostly dismissed given that it challenged the conventional wisdom that al Qaeda was no longer capable of such operations.

In addition, following the bombings, when Khan's photograph was a staple of nightly British newscasts and on the front page of daily newspapers, a reliable source working for Britain's security service claimed to have seen Khan at an al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan in either 1999 or •2000.[24] Finally, as previously noted, a BBC documentary broadcast last July reported that during the summer of 2001 Khan was seen •attempting to attract recruits from Britain's Muslim community for to• al Qaeda. He was accompanied, moreover, by •two other British Muslims who would later •stage a suicide bombing in Israel in April

[23] Ibid., p. 12. See also, the section of the Honourable House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, pp. 20-21.

[24] See Intelligence and Security Committee, *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, p. 16.

•2003. • And, only a month before that attack, Khan himself visited Israel—taking the same route via Jordan that the bombers would soon follow—in what may have been a practice or dry-run for the operation.[25]

The London bombing's pedigree, moreover, is familiar. Exactly a year earlier, British and American authorities had thwarted the aforementioned plot by a London-based al Qaeda cell led by Dhiren Barot (aka "Issa al-Hindi" and Issa al-Britani") to simultaneously carry out suicide attacks on the New York Stock Exchange and the CitiGroup Building in mid-town Manhattan, the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C. The trail in this operation similarly led back to Pakistan. It emerged that a protégé of the 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed operating in Lahore was the essential nexus between the London cell and al Qaeda commanders operating out of Waziristan.

And, a parallel plot disrupted only months before, in April 2004, likewise involved a group of British Muslims of Pakistani ancestry. Their plan was to bomb a shopping mall or London nightclub using 1,300 pounds of ammonium nitrate fertilizer they had stockpiled with which to fabricate their explosives. Members of this cell had also traveled to Pakistan for terrorist training in jihadi camps along the Afghan border. Their leader, Omar Khyam, admitted that while in Pakistan he had met with al Qaeda commanders and that his al Qaeda controller for the operation was Abdul Hadi al-Iraqi: the reputed new "number three" figure in the movement and a key liaison officer with the al Qaeda organization in Iraq. Khyam's claims were corroborated by another cell member, Mohammed Junaid Babar, who became a witness for the prosecution. Babar, a naturalized U.S. citizen who had emigrated from Pakistan as a young child, himself confessed to having attended an al Qaeda "summit" meeting held in Pakistan in March 2004 that was devoted to planning international terrorist operations.

Finally, this past summer's plot to simultaneously bomb ten U.S. airliners and crash them into targets over American cities was foiled

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[25] See BBC News Media Exchange, "Britain's First Suicide Bombers," broadcast on BBC2 on 11 July 2006, 2000 GMT.

after arrests in Pakistan once more led U.K. and U.S. officials to yet another terrorist cell of British Muslims of Pakistani heritage. According to terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna, that operation's controller was none other than Abu Ubaydah al-Masri: the commander for al Qaeda in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.

Just as disturbing is the fact that these attacks were not directed against the softer, more accessible targets like subway and commuter trains, hotels and tourist destinations that the conventional wisdom held a de-graded al Qaeda only capable of: but against arguably the most internationally-hardened target set since 9/11—commercial aviation. This alarming development calls into question some of our most fundamental assumptions about al Qaeda's capabilities and intentions, given that the movement seems undeterred from the same grand homicidal ambitions it demonstrated on 9/11.

And so it is with other case. Spanish authorities now intimate that evidence is accumulating that al Qaeda is behind the March 2004 Madrid bombings. Though reluctant to share the details of an investigation that remains *sub judice*, the links between the Madrid bombers and al Qaeda that have since publicly come to light are compelling. One key figure in the 3/14 attacks, for instance, a terrorist using the nom de guerre, "Serhane the Tunisian," has been linked to Amer Azizi, an al Qaeda operative who is believed to have helped organized the July 2001 meeting held in Tarragona, Spain between 9/11 hijacker Mohammed Atta and his controller, Ramzi Binalshib. Another member of the Madrid cell, Mohamed Afalah, was able to flee to Belgium following the attack allegedly with the help of Omar Nakhcha, a European-based al Qaeda recruiter of foreign fighters for jihad in Iraq. And, the enigmatic "Abu Duhana al-Afghani," often cited in internal communications by the Madrid bombers, is believed to be Yussuf Belhadj, the self-described "military spokesman for al Qaeda in Europe."

Thus, the portions of the National Intelligence Estimate released publicly last September are •right. We're just as vulnerable as ever—not only because of Iraq, but also because of a re-vitalized and resurgent al Qaeda that continues to plot •and plan terrorist attacks. Senior British intelligence and security officials publicly stated that

they had reached this same conclusion the following month. And, in a speech delivered in November 2006 Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, the Director-General of the Security Service (MI-5), was unequivocal in her assessment of the threat posed by a resplendent al Qaeda. "We are aware of numerous plots to kill people and to damage our economy," Dame Eliza stated. "What do I mean by numerous? Five? Ten? No, nearer 30 that we currently know of," she continued. "These plots often have linked back to al Qaeda in Pakistan and through those links al Qaeda gives guidance and training to its largely British foot soldiers here on an extensive and growing scale."[26]

Rather than al Qaeda R.I.P. then, we face an al Qaeda that has risen from the grave. Its dispersion following Operation Enduring Freedom has not meant that al Qaeda has become de-centralized. The movement in fact is just as hierarchical as before: its chain of command however admittedly is less effective and more cumbersome. But this is a reflection of how al Qaeda has been able to adapt and adjust to the changes imposed on its operations by the U.S.-led war on terrorism and how the movement has coped with this new reality. Although it may not be the most effective way to run a terrorist organization, al Qaeda's core leadership has accepted that in order to survive and ensure the movement's continued longevity—and, indeed, attack capacity—it has had to surrender the direct command and control, if not micro-managing, capacity it exercised before the 11 September 2001 attacks.

In retrospect, it thus appears that Iraq has further blinded us to the possibility of an al Qaeda renaissance. America and Britain's entanglement in that country the past four years and our overwhelming preoccupation first with an escalating insurgency and now with an incipient civil war, consumed the attention and resources of our respective countries' military and intelligence communities—at precisely the time that bin Laden, al Zawahiri and other senior al Qaeda commanders were in their most desperate straits and stood to benefit most from this distraction. Iraq has thus had a pernicious effect on

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[26] Quoted in BBC News "Extracts from MI5 chief's speech," 10 November 2006 accessed at http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hl/news/6135000.stm.

both our counterterrorism policies and perceptions of national security. As the situation in that country deteriorated, one could take solace in the President's argument that we were "fighting terrorists over there, so that we don't have to fight them here." The plots and attack plans against the U.S. previously described along with the Madrid and London attacks effectively challenge that once comforting, but now patently discredited, argument.

PLAYING RIGHT INTO AL QAEDA'S HANDS: IRAQ AND THE SURGE STRATEGY

Our preoccupation with Iraq, moreover, has introduced yet another significant impediment to the war on terrorism. Withdrawing from that country, the Bush Administration has claimed in support of its new strategy to "surge" 21,000 American troops into Iraq, is exactly what al Qaeda wants. That would "validate the al Qaeda view of the world," Vice President Cheney argued in an interview broadcast on "Fox News Sunday" last month.[27] He amplified that same point the following week in an interview with Wolf Blitzer on the CNN show, "Situation Room." "The pressure is from some quarters to get out of Iraq," he stated. "If we were to do that," the Vice President continued, "we would simply validate the terrorists' strategy that says the Americans will not stay to complete the task, that we don't have the stomach for the fight."[28] Yet, ironically, by "staying the course" America is doing *exactly* what al Qaeda wants—and, indeed, has long expected.

The clearest explication of al Qaeda's strategy in Iraq was provided by the group's second-in-command, Ayman al Zawahiri, on the occasion of the second and third anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. "We thank God," he declared in September 2003, "for appeasing us with the dilemmas in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Americans are facing a delicate situation in both countries. If they withdraw they will lose everything and if they stay, they will continue to bleed to death."[29] Indeed, what

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[27] Quoted in Michael A. Fletcher, "Bush 'We're Going Forward'," *Washington Post*, 15 January 2007.

[28] Quoted in Peter Baker, "Defending Iraq War, Defiant Cheney Cites 'Enormous Successes'," *Washington Post*, 25 January 2007.

[29] Quoted in Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, D.C. Brassey's, 2004), p. xxi.

U.S. military commanders had once optimistically described more than three years ago as the jihadi "magnet" or terrorist "flytrap" orchestrated by the U.S. invasion of Iraq has thus always been viewed very differently by al Qaeda. "Two years after Tora Bora," Zawahiri observed in December 2003, "the American bloodshed [has] started to increase in Iraq and the Americans are unable to defend themselves."[30]

In other words, with America trapped in Iraq, al Qaeda has had us exactly where they want us. Iraq, for them, has been an effective means to preoccupy American military forces and distract U.S. attention while al Qaeda has re-grouped and re-organized since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Indeed, this was essentially the analysis offered last month in Congressional testimony by outgoing National Intelligence Director John D. Negroponte. In contrast to both longstanding White House claims and the prevailing conventional wisdom, the Annual Threat Assessment presented by Negroponte to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence painted a disquieting picture of a terrorist movement on the march rather than on the run.

Iraq has also figured prominently in al Qaeda plans and propaganda as a means to reinvigorate the jihadi cause and recapture its momentum. By enmeshing U.S. forces in battle and thereby portraying America's efforts in Iraq as an oppressive occupation, al Qaeda has been able to propagate an image of Islam cast perpetually on the defensive with no alternative but to take up arms against American aggression. Finally, the ongoing violence in Iraq—coupled with the continued painful memories of the Abu Ghraib revelations—have all contributed to America's indisputable decline and increasingly poor standing in the Muslim world.

In sum, America's stubborn refusal to change its policy for Iraq has arguably played right into al Qaeda's hands. And Zawahiri's prophecy about "bleeding us to death" has proven depressing prescient. Iraq not only daily consumes American lives and treasure but has arguably enervated our military: preoccupying U.S. attention and sapping America's strength precisely at a time when the threat posed by al

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[30] Quoted in Walter Pincus, "A-Qa'ida Releases Tape Predicting U.S. Defeat," *Washington Post*, 10 September 2004.

Qaeda, the 2007 Annual Threat Assessment warns is increasing—and other even more portentous security challenges, like Iran and North Korea, grow more worrisome.

But, even if one dimension of Zawahiri's analysis has already been validated, it is still within America's power to prevent the other—even more consequential—dimension of Zawahiri's prediction from being realized—our "losing everything." But this requires nothing less than a dramatic reversal of the Administration's current strategy for Iraq—and accepting that even if it is beyond our capacity to solve the Iraq problem, we should be moving without further delay to contain it from spreading and de-stabilizing the entire region.

Re-deploying the American military from Iraq to strengthen and build capacity among our key allies throughout the region could serve to affirm, not undermine, U.S. commitments there. It would also enable us to re-focus our efforts more productively on countering the greater systemic threat to the region posed by al Qaeda's clarion call to radicalization and violence—than to remain in Iraq as America's power is expended and confidence in U.S. leadership continues to erode worldwide.

Finally, ending our military and intelligence preoccupation with Iraq would permit the U.S. to devote its full attention to thwarting al Qaeda's current resurgence. Al Qaeda's efforts to re-gain its foothold in Afghanistan and its growing strength across the border in Pakistan could be decisively negated. More critical, our efforts to kill or capture bin Laden, Zawahiri and the movement's other leading figures could be re-vitalized and re-doubled. The benefits of making good on President Bush's now five-plus year old pledge to bring these murderers in "dead or alive" would potentially deliver a more crushing blow to al Qaeda's morale than continuing to pursue our quixotic ambitions in Iraq—which, after all, is precisely what al Qaeda wants.

Concluding Remarks: A Way Ahead?

Al Qaeda may be compared to the archetypal shark in the water that must keep moving forward—no matter how slowly or incrementally—or die. In al Qaeda's context, this means adapting and adjusting to even our

most consequential countermeasures while simultaneously searching to identify new targets and vulnerabilities. However, al Qaeda's capacity to continue to prosecute this struggle is also a direct reflection of both the movement's resiliency and the continued resonance of its ideology.

Defeating al Qaeda suggests first and foremost that our assessments and analyses are anchored firmly to sound, empirical judgment and not blinded by conjecture, mirror-imaging, politically partisan prisms and wishful thinking. Second, is the need to re-focus our attention and efforts back to south Asia—to Pakistan and Afghanistan, specifically—where it was following 9/11 and when al Qaeda was indeed on the run. Third, is the recognition that al Qaeda cannot be defeated with military means alone. As one U.S. intelligence officer with vast experience in this realm told to me over two years ago: "We just don't have enough bullets to kill them all." Accordingly, a new strategy and new approach is needed given a resuscitated al Qaeda organization that relies as much upon clandestine subversion of targeted communities as it does upon propaganda and radicalization. Its success will depend on effectively combining the tactical elements of systematically destroying and weakening enemy capabilities alongside the equally critical, broader strategic imperatives of countering the continued resonance of the radical's message and breaking the cycle of terrorist recruitment and replenishment that has both sustained and replenished al Qaeda.

The war on terrorism has now lasted longer America's involvement in World War II: yet, even today we cannot claim with any credibility, much less, acuity to have fulfilled Sun Tzu's timeless admonition.[31] Indeed, what remains missing five and a half years since this war began is a thorough, systematic understanding of our enemy: encompassing motivation as well as mindset, decision-making processes as well as command and control relationships; and ideological constructs as well as organizational dynamics.

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[31] This same argument was made almost exactly a year ago in my testimony before this subcommittee. See Bruce Hoffman, *Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, CT-255, 2006) available at http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT255.

Forty years ago the United States understood the importance of building this foundation in order to effectively counter an enigmatic, unseen enemy motivated by a powerful ideology who also used terrorism and insurgency to advance his cause and rally popular support. Although America of course encountered many frustrations during the Vietnam conflict, a lack of understanding of our adversary was not among them. Indeed, as early as 1965, the Pentagon had begun a program to analyze Vietcong morale and motivation based on detailed interviews conducted among thousands of guerrilla detainees. These voluminously detailed studies provided a road-map of the ideological and psychological mindset of that enemy: clearly illuminating the critical need to win what was then often termed the "other war"—the ideological struggle for the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people.[32] Even if the fundamental changes required in U.S. military strategy to overcome the Vietcong's appeal went ignored, tremendous effort and resources were devoted to understanding the enemy.

Today, Washington has no such program in the war on terrorism. America's counterterrorism strategy continues to assume that America's contemporary enemies—be they al Qaeda or the insurgents in Iraq—have a traditional center of gravity. It also assumes that these enemies simply need to be killed or imprisoned so that global terrorism or the Iraqi insurgency will both end. Accordingly, the attention of the U.S. military and intelligence community is directed almost uniformly towards hunting down militant leaders or protecting U.S. forces—not toward understanding the enemy we now face. This is a monumental failing not only because decapitation strategies have rarely worked in countering

[32] The RAND Corporation actively contributed to these analyses in a series of detailed reported, based on voluminous interviews of captured Vietcong. See, for example: Leon Gouré, Anthony Russo, and D. Scott, *Some Findings of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Study: June-December 1965* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RM-4911-12-ISA/ARPA, February 1966); Leon Gouré, J. M. Carrier, and D. Scott, *Some Findings of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Study: January-June 1966* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RM-5137-ISA/ARPA, February 1966); J. M. and Charles Thomson, *Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RM-4830-2-ISA/ARPA, May 1966); J. C. Connell, *Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: A Preliminary Report* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RM-4507/2-ISA, July 1968).

mass mobilization terrorist or insurgent campaigns, but also because al Qaeda's ability to continue this struggle is ineluctably predicated on its capacity to attract new recruits and replenish its resources.

The success of U.S. strategy will therefore ultimately depend on Washington's ability to counter al Qaeda's ideological appeal—and thus effectively address the three key elements of al Qaeda's strategy:

- the continued resonance of their message
- their continued ability to attract recruits replenish their ranks; and,
- their capacity for continual regeneration and renewal.

To do so, we first need to better understand the mindset and minutia of the al Qaeda movement, the animosity and arguments that underpin it and indeed the regions of the world from which its struggle emanated and upon which its hungry gaze still rests. Without knowing our enemy we cannot successfully penetrate their cells; we cannot knowledgeably sow discord and dissension in their ranks and thus weaken them from within; and, we cannot fulfill the most basic requirements of an effective counterterrorist strategy—pre-empting and preventing terrorist operations and deterring their attacks. Until we recognize the importance of this vital prerequisite, America will remain perennially on the defensive: inherently reactive rather than proactive—deprived of the capacity to recognize, much less anticipate, important changes in our enemy's modus operandi, recruitment and targeting.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(4), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 110th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule.

Witness name: BRUCE HOFFMAN

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

✓ Individual

___ Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented:_____

FISCAL YEAR 2007

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
	N/A	(NONE)	

FISCAL YEAR 2006

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
	N/A	(NONE)	

2/9/07

FISCAL YEAR 2005

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
	N/A	(None)	

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2007): Ø;
Fiscal year 2006: Ø;
Fiscal year 2005: Ø.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2007): Ø;
Fiscal year 2006: Ø;
Fiscal year 2005: Ø.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2007): Ø;
Fiscal year 2006: Ø;
Fiscal year 2005: Ø.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2007): Ø;
Fiscal year 2006: Ø;
Fiscal year 2005: Ø.

BM
2/9/07

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2007): Ø;
Fiscal year 2006: Ø;
Fiscal year 2005: Ø.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2007): Ø;
Fiscal year 2006: Ø;
Fiscal year 2005: Ø.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2007): Ø;
Fiscal year 2006: Ø;
Fiscal year 2005: Ø.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2007): Ø;
Fiscal year 2006: Ø;
Fiscal year 2005: Ø.

Zon 2/9/07

The Nature of the Terrorist Threat

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Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies
The Brookings Institution

House Armed Services Committee
Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee
February 14, 2007

More than five years after the cataclysm of September 11, 2001, the terrorist threat has become more varied, complicated and difficult to understand than perhaps at any time in memory. The United States faces an array of different kinds of terrorist threats, some of which are related, some of which are not. Some are extraordinarily dangerous; others pose a risk on a much smaller scale. Some are genuinely global; others are purely local, others still reach beyond their countries of origin but are better characterized as more or less regional.

American citizens are understandably confused by the panoply of forms this security threat takes. Moreover, confusion about forms and the irregular incidence of successful terrorist attack causes further uncertainty about the dimensions of the threat. Indeed, for Americans who are not living in Iraq, the actuarial tables do not show much of change regarding the likelihood of dying in a terrorist act -- even factoring in September 11. Yet in my view, the potential for a devastating attack or series of attacks and for grave damage to American interests remains. For these reasons, it is imperative that legislators and policymakers do their utmost to clear away some of the misunderstandings that inevitably cloud this subject. Consequently, I am grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the committee for having this hearing. I hope to do my best help you as you seek to clarify the nature of the threat today.

Categories of Terror

It is worth spelling out some of the main types of terrorism the world faces. No taxonomy is completely satisfying, but for the sake of simplicity, we should stipulate that there are essentially three categories. The first includes the familiar ethno-nationalist groups persist in such diverse parts of the world as the Basque region of Spain and Sri Lanka. By and large, however, such groups show little inclination to increase substantially the lethality of their attacks. They are therefore usually a second-tier concern -- highly disruptive to the societies in which they are found but posing little danger to the global order.

The second category, state-sponsored terror, persists and is unlikely to ever disappear. But there is something approaching a consensus among scholars that is a phenomenon on the wane. Several of those countries that were on the State Department's list have either experienced regime change (Iraq) or appear to have gotten out of the business of terror (Libya); others are largely inactive (Cuba). Today, state-sponsorship of terror continues

most strongly in the Middle East, where both Iran and Syria support Palestinian rejectionist groups. With the outlook for the Middle East uninspiring, this is likely to continue. But attacks against European nations and the United States have declined greatly. Syria has avoided targeting Westerners and its proxies have not attacked United States assets in the last two decades. Iran's last major attack on a Western target was the 1996 bombing of the U.S. troop facility at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. In short, the state sponsors' appear to be operating now on the assumption that they cannot carry out significant operations undetected, and therefore, the risk of retaliation has become excessive.

State sponsorship of terror could, of course, come roaring back. The most likely circumstances in which this would occur would be an armed conflict between the United States and Iran. But even in that case, the likelihood of Iranian proxies such as Hezbollah carrying out a catastrophic attack is limited, since Tehran will be reluctant to do anything that would elicit an overwhelming military response.

One oft-discussed nightmare scenario involving state sponsors of terror is much less likely to occur than is often suggested: namely, an attack with a weapon of mass destruction such as a nuclear or biological weapon. This specter was summoned regularly by members of the Bush administration in the run-up to the war with Iraq, with the argument that "on any given day," Saddam Hussein might give a nuclear weapon to a terrorist group because it would allow him to hurt the United States "without leaving fingerprints." Setting aside the issue of Iraq's non-possession of such weapons, this was extraordinarily unlikely to occur for the same reason that state sponsorship has waned generally: there is no way to be assured that one's involvement will be undetected. What is true of a limited attack that destroys a plane or kills a couple of hundred people is much truer of one that would kill tens or hundreds of thousands.

Prudence is an aspect of statecraft even for the most dangerous dictators in a way that it is not for non-state actors like al Qaeda. Indeed, the fact that Saddam never used non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction owes, it appears, the 1991 warning he received from Secretary of State James Baker, which threatened overwhelming retaliation. To be sure, one should not base national security decisions solely on the belief in others' prudence. World leaders rightly worry that North Korea might sell some of the fissile material it has produced in recent years. But the likelihood of Iran one day handing a nuclear device to Hezbollah is remote.

The third and most dangerous form we face is that of radical Islamist terror. As we have seen both on 9/11 and in a number of other conspiracies, these terrorists possess a desire to kill on the grand scale. In contrast to the large majority of terrorist groups, jihadists have demonstrated an interest in indiscriminate killing, including with weapons of mass destruction going back as far the early 1990s. The aspiration to use such weapons – and after 9/11, no one should doubt that they would use them – indicates that these militants see violence in a different way than most others. For them, the violence is not a means of forcing an opponent into negotiations and incremental concessions but a sanctified

activity that aims at massive change. To a degree not true of most other terrorists, the violence is also an end in itself.[1]

Jihadist Violence: Al Qaeda and the Consequences of Iraq

One of the greatest complications in understanding the jihadist threat today derives from multiplicity of different terrorist groups we find within what has become a global social movement. It makes sense to begin what is probably most familiar: Al Qaeda. It appears increasingly clear that whatever damage the organization suffered at the time of its expulsion from Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, the blows were not fatal. On the contrary: Al Qaeda's organization appears to be strengthening, with its leadership based either in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan on the Afghanistan border, or elsewhere in Pakistan.

The most telling indicator of al Qaeda's survival and renewed efforts to attack Western targets has been the "Heathrow plot," of last summer, in which British based terrorists sought to bomb as many as 10 U.S. commercial jetliners while in flight over the Atlantic. This plot, though disrupted fairly early in its planning cycle, could have resulted in roughly as many deaths as the 9/11 attacks. It is interesting note that this conspiracy was a kind of updating of the failed "Bojinka" plot – also known as "Manila Air" that Ramzi Yousef and Khalid Sheikh Mohamed sought to carry out in 1994-1995 using liquid explosives that were to be assembled into bombs on board. The signal difference is that this time, the operatives were prepared to commit suicide and go down with the planes – something the Bojinka planners did not contemplate. The Heathrow plot, though the most spectacular, is not the only one that has been traced to al Qaeda.

In the near-term, there is little prospect that the threat from the core al Qaeda organization will diminish. The group appears well-ensconced in the FATA, and the government of Pakistan shows little inclination to dislodge it. The recently concluded ceasefire between the Pakistani authorities and the tribal powers indicate that Islamabad is tired of the pummeling its forces have suffered and unwilling to carry out more than the occasional symbolic strike on terrorist infrastructure. As a result, we must face the fact that Pakistan's tribal areas are now a sanctuary for the group. Unmolested, al Qaeda will to continue its work re-networking many of the disparate units in the jihadist world. It may reenergize its efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction, though the lack of industrial infrastructure in the FATA will cause some difficulties, assuming the work is done there. We can also expect a steady stream of communications and guidance from al Qaeda to its sympathizers and soldiers in the outside world.

Of the other forms of jihadist terror that we confront today, several either have their origin or have derived great benefits from the war in Iraq. The West would have faced a significant challenge from jihadist violence no matter how it reacted after 9/11. But the invasion of Iraq, gave the jihadists an unmistakable boost. Terrorism is about advancing a narrative and persuading a targeted audience to believe it. Although leading figures in

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[1] For a more extensive discussion of violence and jihadist terror, see Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House: 2002)

the American administration have often spoken of the terrorists' ideology of hatred, U.S. actions have too often lent inadvertent confirmation to the terrorists' narrative. In its most barebones formulation, that narrative holds that America and its allies seek to occupy Muslims' lands, steal their oil wealth and destroy their faith. Radical Islamists interpret much of history through this prism: From the Sykes-Picot redrawing of borders in the Middle East after World War I to the creation of Israel to the U.S. deployment to Saudi Arabia and the invasion of Iraq in Operation Desert Storm. Radical Islamists believe, moreover, that the United States supports the autocrats of the Muslim world as a way of keeping the believers down and undermining the faith.

So, not surprisingly, U.S. actions in Iraq have given the radicals fresh fodder for their "clash of civilizations" claims. Polling in Muslim nations over the last three years has shown that America's image has plummeted to historic lows. The invasion and the botched occupation opened a new "field of jihad" for militants who were more than eager to take on U.S. forces in the Arab heartland. For the radicals, killing Americans and their Western allies is the essential task; by doing so, they demonstrate their bona fides are the only ones determined to stand up for Muslim dignities. The presence of coalition forces in Iraq thus provided an irresistible invitation.

Whatever one thinks of American intentions in going into Iraq, in the context of the culture of grievance that exists in much of the Muslim world, the extremists' narrative has had a profound resonance. Through their violence, the jihadists have also created a drama of the faith that disaffected Muslims around the world can watch on television and the Internet. New areas of the globe are increasingly falling under the shadow of this growing threat. To be sure, the jihadists have not achieved anything like a true mobilization of Muslim opinion, and the overwhelming majority of Muslims will not embrace a vision of their faith that places violence at its very center, but the process of radicalization has gained momentum.[2]

Because in large measure of Iraq, three new categories of terrorists have emerged. The first group is comprised of self-starters, also often called "home-grown terrorists." We have become familiar with them through such attacks as 2004 bombings in Madrid, the 2005 bombings in London, the murder of Dutch artist Theo van Gogh by a young Dutch Muslim militant also in 2005. These are individuals who may have very little connection to al Qaeda or other preexisting groups, but they have been won over by the ideas of Osama bin Laden and his followers. These terrorists are self- recruited and often self-trained, using the vast wealth of instructional materials available on the Internet. Self-starters have appeared not only in Europe but also in Canada, the Maghreb, the Middle East and in Pakistan, a country with a well-established jihadist infrastructure which some of the new recruits deemed insufficiently aggressive.

A complete parsing of their motivation is difficult, but it is clearly the case that Iraq was on the lips of those who carried out bombings in Madrid in 2005 and London in 2005, as

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[2] For a superb discussion of the role of the World Wide Web in contemporary terrorism, see Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, The New Challenges,* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press: 2006)

well as on those of Mohammed Bouyeri, the Dutch-Muslim murderer of Theo van Gogh. The recent arrest of six British citizens who were apparently plotting to kidnap and execute a British Muslim soldier indicates, much as the murder of van Gogh (who was first shot and then decapitated) the tactical influence that events in Iraq have exerted on some home-grown terrorists. (It has become routine event in the investigation of terrorist conspiracies to find a library of video recordings of action in Iraq in the possession of operatives.) We should expect more such examples of "retail" with the expansion of the self-starter phenomenon, as individuals who are uncertain of their technical capacities seek to leverage individual acts of terror through the use of publicity or particularly gruesome violence.

It is true that as a group, the self-starters have a less experience and are less skilled than, say, those who have gone through al Qaeda training camps. However, a significant number of highly educated individuals show up in these cells. If only a small percentage of these groups manage to carry out attacks, we could therefore see a considerable amount of damage and casualties. We should also not make the mistake of believing that terrorists who begin as self-starters will not find the connections, training and resources they seek. It is now widely accepted that the July 7, 2005 Tube bombings in London were carried out with guidance and support from jihadists in Pakistan, including possibly al Qaeda members, who the operatives may have met during visits.

The two other groups of terrorists are both centered in Iraq: The first consists of the foreign fighters who traveled there to fight against U.S. and coalition forces. Contrary to the expectations voiced by the administration at the outset of the war, those who came to Iraq did not represent the global remnants of al Qaeda after its eviction from Afghanistan. On the contrary, studies by the Israeli expert Reuven Paz and the Saudi scholar Nawaf Obeid both demonstrate that the foreign fighters are overwhelmingly young Muslims with no background in Islamist activism. That is, they represent another pool of the recently radicalized.[3] Although U.S. officials have repeatedly argued over the last three years that the Jordanian born Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his band of foreign fighters represented a very small percentage of the insurgents in Iraq, their violence drove the insurgency - especially the large-scale attacks, such as the attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra mosque last February that gave the country a powerful push toward an all-out civil war. There are contradictory reports about how many foreign fighters there are in Iraq and whether the influx continues. What we can say, however, is that if they leave Iraq victorious – and the jihadists are today in a triumphalist mood -- they could become the vanguard of a new generation of jihadists, much as the veterans of the fighting in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s were the founding generation of al Qaeda.

The last group that deserves attention is comprised of Iraqi jihadists who have emerged from the turmoil of the last three years. Today, al Qaeda in Mesopotamia has become predominantly Iraqi, and there are any number of other, sometime affiliated jihadist groups. According to some reputable sources, there could be more than 15,000 in their

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[3] Reuven Paz, Arab Volunteers Killed in Iraq: An Analysis, Project for the Research of Islamist Papers, Occasional Papers (2005) http://www.e-prism.org/images/PRISM_no_1_vol_3_-_Arabs_killed_in_Iraq.pdf and Bryan Bender "Study Cites Seeds of Terror in Iraq," Boston Globe, July 172005

ranks. The chaos in Iraq has allowed for extensive training and development in various terrorist tactics and urban warfare, including increasingly proficient use of improvised explosive devices. Furthermore, the proliferation of such tactics - thanks to traveling fighters and information-sharing via the Internet - has made it likely that the style of urban warfare tactics will likely be exported to distant regions. Where the collapsed state of Afghanistan allowed numerous opportunities for bin Laden's endeavors, the ongoing insurgency in Iraq has produced a new type of threat: a real-time, authentic 'jihad' experience which is grooming a new generation of committed fighters.

These fighters will likely have a durable sanctuary in al-Anbar province in western Iraq – it is an unwelcome development that five years after being run out of Afghanistan, the jihadist movement can now boast a sanctuary in the heart of the Arab world as well as one in South Asia. It is too early to say what the long-term orientation of these Iraqi jihadists will be - will they focus their violence solely on the fledgling regime in Baghdad, or will some of them join the global jihad and seek to export violence beyond their borders? Many, undoubtedly, will continue to focus on Baghdad, and the continuing sectarian violence may well reorient some jihadist energies into anti-Shia activity. Still, U.S. intelligence officials have cautioned that the radicals are also looking for outside targets. The November 2005 bombings of three hotels in Amman may give us a foretaste of what is to come. The presence of large refugee populations – a well-documented source of radicalism -- in Jordan, Syria and other regional nations could help the jihadists as they seek to spread their violence. [4]

There is a clear lesson in our experience in Iraq: the instrument of military force is a highly problematic one for fighting terror, especially fighting an ideologically-driven movement like the jihadists'. Undoubtedly, there will be times when military operations against terrorists are appropriate – as they were in 2001-2002 in Afghanistan, and as they might be in a range of other circumstances. But confronting jihadists with military force too often glamorizes the terrorists. They can portray themselves as the true standard-bearers of Muslim dignity, and the only ones who are prepared to confront the hated occupier. As we have seen, the tableau of these fighters in action has had a galvanizing effect on radicals around the world. Military forces typically have a large footprint, and their presence can alienate exactly those individuals in a given community who do not want to radicalize. Military action against terrorist targets often causes the deaths of many innocents, no matter how much care is taken. With tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths during the years of the U.S. presence, inevitably many Iraqis have come to blame the tragedies that have befallen their families on us. It is also noteworthy that the Sunni insurgency in Iraq has become increasingly salafist/jihadist across the board, and the Baathist component appears to have shrunk. In short, we may well face a specifically Iraqi jihadist threat for many years to come.

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[4] This conclusion was reached by the U.S. Intelligence Community and appears in the controversial National Intelligence Estimate "Trends in Global Terrorism," whose key judgments were released in September, 2006. Declassification of this document came after the text of this article was completed, but its conclusions are broadly consonant with the picture described herein.

The Geography of Jihad

Let me turn briefly now to the geography of jihad. Here the picture is one of metastasis. With more than 30 failed plots across the continent in roughly five years, Europe has become a central battlefield. In Australia, meanwhile, a major dragnet wrapped up 18 conspirators who appear to have been plotting an attack on the country's one nuclear research reactor. In South Asia—as the recent bombings in Mumbai and the worrisome spread of violence in Bangladesh demonstrates—the incidence of Islamist violence has grown dramatically. In Southeast Asia, the threat persists, but the inroads, especially against Jemaah Islamiya and Abu Sayaaf have been significant and provided one of the most promising developments in the fight radical Islamist violence.

The implications in the Middle East/Persian Gulf region of so much jihadist activity in Iraq are ominous, and it is important to note that jihadist violence had largely been absent from the area since the late 1990s. At that time, the Arab security services had succeeded in dismantling many of the extremist organization, and the remainder of the problem had been exported to Afghanistan or Europe. The war in Iraq has changed all that, and a rash of violent acts has occurred. In November 2005 when three hotels in Amman were bombed by Iraqi suicide operatives -- the first major attacks in Jordan and the most stunning demonstration of the spillover effect of the turmoil in Iraq. But they were hardly the only such cases. Kuwait, a country with no history of jihadist violence, experienced running gun battles between authorities and militants and discovered plotters within its own military. Syria, a country that waged a campaign of extermination against Islamists in the early 1980s, has seen Sunni radicalism reemerge. Qatar experienced its first vehicle bombing in early 2005. Saudi Arabia suffered a series of bombings and attacks, and while the authorities have gained the upper hand against al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the group still exists, as the near-miss at the vast Abiqaiq oil production facility last year demonstrated. According to intelligence sources, an al Qaeda cell now exists in Gaza, as well. One hardly needs to speculate on the possible consequences of an al Qaeda attack against an Israeli target.

The United States has been fortunate not to have been struck again since 9/11, and a number of reasons can be adduced for this: The American Muslim community has thus far been largely immune to the jihadist virus because of its high level of integration, education and affluence compared with Europe's communities. Thanks to successful intelligence, law enforcement and homeland security performance, it is more difficult for radicals from abroad to gain entry into the country.

We should not draw the conclusion, though, that attacking us at this time is the jihadists' top priority. In a real sense, the terrorists are getting what they need in Iraq. It is easier for jihadists to kill Americans there than it is in the United States, and those casualties provide the radicals with the proof they need to show the global community of Muslims of their devotion to their cause. Although jihadists are not responsible for killing all of the more than 3100 U.S. soldiers who have fallen in Iraq, they undoubtedly will stake a claim along those lines.

Over the long term, however, the terrorists will seek to rebuild their networks and capabilities to attack the United States at home. This is the gold standard for them, and if the overall strength of the movement is growing, reestablishing the capacity to carry off "spectaculars" will be on their agenda. No one, Americans least of all, should be complacent and believe that radicalization and terrorist attacks are not going to happen at home. The United States is experiencing a significant rise in anti-Muslim sentiment, fanned in no small part by right-wing religious groups, some of which have cast Islam as the replacement for the Soviet Union. Incidents of attacks against Muslims have been increasing as well. In these circumstances, the chances that angry and alienated young individuals will turn to violence could well increase.

How long might it take for the jihadist movement to run its course? David Rapoport, one of the founders of modern terrorism studies, has argued that terrorism comes in "waves" that have a life-cycle of 30-50 years, and he contends that we are in the middle of a fourth wave of modern terror that has been characterized by religious motivation.[5] Rapoport may be right, but a number of factors make prediction hazardous. The first is the terrorists' motivation. Drawing distinctions between religious motivation and the more traditional political forms of terrorism is difficult to do – it would be folly to say that al Qaeda's goals, for example, are not political, or that another ideology, say Nazism, did not have a cult-like religious quality. But because of the jihadists' appropriation of sacred texts to buttress their case that they are avatars of a true and uncorrupted faith, their ideology may prove more durable than those that have animated other causes. Though their actions may be appalling to many Muslims, those who are attracted to it may find in it a rare authenticity. The sense of sanctification can provide an emotional energy that can perhaps carry believers far, and it is impossible to say that this movement will peter out in the same manner that, say, anarchism did. It is conceivable that the same forces of acceleration that has driven acceptance of the jihad over the Internet could also speed its decline. But here, too, we are in uncharted territory.

Beyond Radical Islam

Perhaps because of the historical discontinuity represented by al Qaeda, there is a tendency to identify catastrophic terrorism solely with radical Islam and believe that the two will one day disappear together -- that the only acts of such terror that we need to fear are ones carried out by Muslims. But this thinking is mistaken. Events outside of Islam in the period before 9/11 suggest that the motivation to commit acts of catastrophic terror.

It is not news that a global religious revival has been underway for several decades in virtually every faith and, with the exception of Western Europe, in virtually every part of

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[5] The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11(1) David C Rapoport Anthropoetics 8, no. 1 (Spring / Summer 2002) and accessed at http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0801/terror.htm#n1

the world. This tide of spiritual reaffirmation is, in effect, raising all boats, including those of individuals inclined to violent expression. The advances of globalization and the technological society appear ineluctably to be conjuring and empowering separatists, absolutists and apocalyptics – those whose eyes are fixed on the sacred, and who view negotiation as betrayal of faith.[6]

One can cite examples of dangerous, violent trends in several traditions: Among Jewish extremists, there was a conspiracy to blow up the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem as a way of purifying the Temple Mount and ushering in a new and fateful millennial era, and in 1995, a religious student carried out the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in what was surely one of the most strategic acts of terror since the killing of the archduke in Sarajevo in 1914. Timothy McVeigh, the chief author of the destruction of the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995 had been influenced by the American Christian Identity movement. He expected that the detonation of the 4400 pound bomb in his truck was meant to ignite an Armageddon-like rising against the U.S. government. Finally, the global rise of cults adds a further dimension to the danger. It was, after all, the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo that truly broke the taboo on using a weapon of mass destruction in its sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway. Aum, which emerged from the bubbling mass of Japanese "New New Religions" combined elements from the Book of Revelations with some Buddhist doctrines into a surpassingly weird doctrine, and the attack, it appears, was meant to serve as a harbinger and confirmation of the sect's vision of a coming apocalypse. Impressively, Aum had also worked on biological and nuclear procurement before the subway attack, and, with its large business empire, had extraordinary resources at its command.

What makes this all so worrisome is that industrial societies provide a wealth of targets which, if attacked could cause massive destruction – the United States has 123 chemical plant that, if successively struck, would each put 1 million or more people at risk. Moreover, the barriers to entry for those who wish to fabricate the most dangerous weapons are falling. So, for example, in the coming years, for example, the technology for making chemical weapons is likely to become more accessible. The development of "micro reactors," machines that are only a bit larger than an average bread basket, will allow chemical companies to produce chemicals in smaller quantities on short order. This serves the needs of "just-in-time" manufacturing, but the same technology in the wrong hands will make it easier to produce some of the most dangerous nerve agents, such as VX and Sarin.

Biological weapons may pose a greater threat, because small quantities can go further – one kilogram of anthrax spores could kill 10,000 people under the right conditions – some agents are infectious, and detection is often slow. Most worrisome of all is the galloping technological progress that is putting the means for producing biological agents in the hands of thousands of people. Biological weapons production is not easy: producing anthrax spores that are the right size so that they are inhaled into the lung is quite difficult, as is drying the agent and dispersing it.

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[6] For a more detailed discussion of violence and the global religious revival, see Benjamin and Simon *Age of Sacred Terror*

Technology, however, will soon lower these hurdles considerably, and, at the same time, the number of people with the training to prepare dangerous biological agents is growing rapidly. Today, there are perhaps 10,000 individuals in the world with the range of expertise necessary to produce military-quality biological weapons. But the number of people who have the training not just to culture pathogens but also to manipulate their genetic material in a variety of ways that can make these agents more dangerous – by increasing infectiousness, lethality, drug-resistance and the like – runs into the hundreds of thousands and possibly millions. The revolution in biotechnology has meant that the number of facilities where such work could be done is undoubtedly in the thousands, and genuinely global oversight is impossible. [7]

The threat of nuclear terrorism has also become much more real. Already, it is conceivable that terrorists could engineer a crude bomb if they acquired fissile material. Concerns about radical Islamists doing exactly that are already widespread. When the Center for Strategic and International Studies canvassed a group of leading scholars of radical Islam and nuclear weapons experts in 2005, a third of the respondents believed that the terrorists already had the capability to make a bomb, while the average of the other respondents put the necessary skill in the terrorists' hand in about five years. What the Islamists can do now, other groups will likely be able to do in the future. Given that there are still hundreds of tons of poorly secured nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union and many tons of highly enriched uranium in research reactors around the world, some with weak defenses, the specter of nuclear terrorism looks like it is here to stay.

"The privatization of violence," is a phrase that has been much used to describe the rise of the new terror and the appearance of terrorist groups with the capacity to do as much or more harm than states. The expression, though, needs to be understood as the description not of a simple action but a historic dynamic. Because of the relentless advance of technology, violence will be privatized into the possession of ever smaller, "more private" units. The power that will soon be at the disposal of very limited groups and even individuals will be considerable – think about how few people it might take to create a biological weapon.

The situation is by no means hopeless; the societies of the West, with their enormous research establishments, will develop many technological remedies and countermeasures to defend themselves. But it will take great ingenuity, vision and determination to keep ahead of those drawn to terrorist violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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[7] I am indebted to former U.S. Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig for his assistance on these estimates.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(4), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 110th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule.

Witness name: Daniel Benjamin

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

✓ Individual

___Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented:_____

FISCAL YEAR 2007

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
—			

FISCAL YEAR 2006

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
—			

FISCAL YEAR 2005

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2007):_____;
Fiscal year 2006:_____;
Fiscal year 2005:_____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2007):_____;
Fiscal year 2006:_____;
Fiscal year 2005:_____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2007):_____;
Fiscal year 2006:_____;
Fiscal year 2005:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2007):_____;
Fiscal year 2006:_____;
Fiscal year 2005:_____.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2007): 0;
Fiscal year 2006: —;
Fiscal year 2005: —.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2007): —;
Fiscal year 2006: —;
Fiscal year 2005: —.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2007): 0;
Fiscal year 2006: —;
Fiscal year 2005: —.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2007): 0;
Fiscal year 2006: —;
Fiscal year 2005: —.

Rita Katz
Director
SITE Institute

Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee
Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives

"The Online Jihadist Threat"

written by

Rita Katz
Director
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&

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February 14, 2007

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A Plain Paradox

Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's main leadership, remain isolated and likely hidden along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, relegated to one of the most remote areas of the world. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who terrorized Iraq since the US invasion in March 2003, is now dead and buried. Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, Abu Zubaydah, and a host of other top and mid-level al-Qaeda operatives have been killed or captured. The US military destroyed al-Qaeda's most significant training camps in Afghanistan. The United States, the United Nations, and numerous other countries and entities have embarked on ambitious campaigns to stem terrorist financing, exposing terrorist front groups and blacklisting individuals involved in providing logistical and financial support to al-Qaeda and similar groups. Measured by these benchmarks, the Global War on Terror is an unmitigated success.

Yet, anyone who reads the front page of a newspaper today quickly recognizes that al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups are far from defeated. Despite their isolation, bin Laden and Zawahiri maintain an active dialogue with followers, issuing statements through the internet to a worldwide audience. Jihadists continue to hold al-Qaeda in the highest esteem, with localized terrorist groups in Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, Somalia, and elsewhere pledging their allegiance to bin Laden. For example, in December 2006 and January 2007, the SITE institute retrieved two official statements from the Algerian Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC). In these communications, disseminated via the internet, the local group renewed its allegiance to bin Laden and changed its name to "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," following bin Laden's approval. Situations like this one are mere examples of how the support for Al-Qaeda seems to be growing, rather than the opposite.

On a daily basis, a wide range of jihadist supporters re-experience the increasing violence in Iraq by watching online videos that exalt such figures like "Juba, the Sniper," champion the destructive power of the constantly refurbished IED systems, and highlight the vulnerability of the might of Chinooks, Apaches, or Black Hawks. Instead of being discouraged by Abu Musab al Zarqawi's death, the entire jihadist online community used this opportunity to eulogize him as a martyr and continue rallying support for the cause. Likewise, as evidenced by the detailed operational reports known to the online jihadist community as "harvests," suicide bombings now appear regularly in Afghanistan, a country that has never seen such types of attacks in the past. Post-9/11 terrorist bombings in Madrid, London, Bali, Istanbul, and elsewhere poignantly demonstrate that the war on terror is not won. In addition to these successful attacks, it seems as though a never-ending series of terrorist plots and training camps are constantly being broken up across the world, from China to Canada. Nowhere appears to be immune from terrorist activity.

The paradox is plain: Despite very real and significant successes in dismantling and disrupting terrorists and their supporters, the terrorist threat remains and does not appear to be shrinking. What, then, enables jihadist terrorist groups to continue recruiting, planning, and fundraising, undeterred by the litany of measures taken against them? The short answer is that jihadist

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networks have evolved to the point where no gun, bomb, or assassination can harm them permanently.

A New War

The United States military has the most advanced weapons in the world and yet is currently unable to defeat the jihadist movement, whose weapons pale in comparison. While the United States military has demonstrated some remarkable successes, such as eliminating Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the resulting impact on the jihadist movement has been minimal. As has been noted repeatedly since 9/11, al-Qaeda has transformed into a decentralized movement led by an ideology, not any particular leader. The military and law enforcement agencies will always have a role in disrupting the activities of jihadist groups on the ground, but combating an ideology with bullets only is not enough.

The defense establishment and other branches of our government need to further refine their understanding of various dimensions which are playing an increasingly important role in the transformation of this global challenge. The impact that ideology and information technology are having on the evolution of the jihadist phenomenon can not be underestimated by any institution tasked with the defense of national or worldwide constituencies.

So long as there remain individuals who believe in the jihadist ideology, jihadists will continue to exist, able to replace the leaders and operatives who are killed, arrested, or otherwise marginalized. The challenge is to defend ourselves from the jihadist threat to the best of our ability. However, we can not develop effective counter-strategies without understanding the enemy completely, both ideologically and operationally. Though studying the jihadists on the ground and in the battlefield is a vital component to understanding their modus operandi, it is not the only place we must look for answers. We must examine the space where jihadism exists unabated: the internet.

It is the internet that enables jihadist networks to continue to exist despite the military might of the United States. Regional jihadist groups throughout the world, whether in Pakistan, Indonesia, Somalia, Iraq, or elsewhere, may have difficulty in contacting and connecting with one another in the physical world; however, on the internet, these jihadist networks all share the same virtual space, forming a unified online jihadist network that knows no physical boundaries.

Though guns, IEDs, and other weapons are necessary for terrorists to maintain their relevance and dangerousness, the internet is what enables jihadists to coordinate, share information, recruit new members, and propagate their ideology. If we do not treat the internet as a crucial battleground in the war on terror, we will not be able to defeat the jihadist threat.

In addition, by studying jihadists on the internet, we can learn about our enemy, including who they are, their location, their ideology, trends in tactics, and their training. Understanding our enemy will help us to counter their propaganda, predict types of future attacks, find them, and

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defend ourselves against their methods. Though by no means a panacea to the jihadist threat, examining their activity on the internet will aid the Global War on Terror.

The Power of Open Source Intelligence

Undeniably, classified information will always comprise an important source of intelligence. However, since the global jihadist movement exists in the public domain accessible to non-governmental organizations, open source methods of intelligence gathering provide a wealth of intelligence that can result in very real strategic, operational, and even tactical successes.

The SITE Institute has spent several years infiltrating, studying, and analyzing the online jihadist community and has been able to gather actionable intelligence from jihadists on the internet. This information, obtained using open source methods, has directly helped warfighters in Iraq. The *Christian Science Monitor* noted, "According to a Marine colleague who just returned from Iraq, information on the SITE website was used within hours of posting to prevent a terrorist attack in Iraq, demonstrating that third-party analysis has become a key component of intelligence."[1]

The SITE Institute has also provided intelligence to foreign governments that has aided in preventing jihadists from leaving European countries to joint jihadists in foreign countries to attack coalition forces. After infiltrating and monitoring an online jihadist internet forum used for recruiting individuals to jihad, the SITE Institute obtained intelligence that members of the forum were soon leaving their countries of residence in Europe to engage in suicide operations against coalition forces in conflict areas. We contacted a federal US law enforcement agency to provide them with the intelligence, but the agency was uninterested. The SITE Institute then reached law enforcement agents in the European countries, who eagerly received the information. The European governments determined that the intelligence was indeed actionable and promptly detained the individuals.

In other cases, just by monitoring jihadist forums, the SITE Institute has informed the US military of potential threats. For example, previously in 2004, the SITE Institute discovered a posting on the now defunct Ansar jihadist forum. The message, titled "A Photo and Important Information,"[2] concerned a Sergeant[3] of Arab descent in the US Air Force. The message included detailed information about the Sergeant taken from the Air Force's website. The message concluded, "This hypocrite will be going to Iraq in September of this year – I pray to Allah that his cunning leads to his slaughter. I hope that he will be slaughtered the Zarqawi way, and then [go from there] to the lowest point in Hell." The message also contained information not available publicly on the Air Force's website that the soldier was to be deployed to Iraq soon. The SITE Institute promptly alerted the serviceman's line of command, who, we were told, had

[1] Douglas Raymond and Paula Broadwell. "The Wikipedia way to better intelligence." *Christian Science Monitor*. January 8, 2007.
[2] http://www.ansarnet.ws/vb/showthread.php?t=11241
[3] Name withheld for his security.

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not received any other warnings pertaining to the Sergeant from any government agency or anyone else, which then prompted them to start their own investigation into how the soldier's deployment details were known by the jihadists.

Clearly, intelligence gathered with an open source method can be extremely valuable. While classified sources will always serve as essential means of crafting intelligence, open source information can just as often lead to actionable intelligence, as well as provide us with a strategic understanding into how the current jihadist movement operates. Indeed, the intelligence related in the following pages has all been gathered using open source methods.

Current Structure of the Online Jihadist Movement

In order to understand the global jihadist threat, it is necessary to review the structure of the online jihadist movement. After developing a basic knowledge of how jihadists groups utilize the internet, one can see how established jihadist groups like al-Qaeda direct the jihadist movement and can continue to exist despite the traditional measures taken against them. Once dissected, the online jihadist movement can be infiltrated, analyzed, and countered. The following provides an overview of how jihadists uses the internet, how information is disseminated and circulated, and how the internet serves all the necessary functions jihadist groups need to continue to survive.

At least since the 1990s, Al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups have used the internet to broadcast propaganda and recruit members. After 9/11 and the resulting destruction of terrorist training camps followed by the ensuing decentralization of al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups, the internet became essential to allowing jihadist groups to continue to operate effectively. Today, jihadist groups utilize websites, messageboards,[4] e-groups, blogs, instant messaging, and other services available through the internet to continue to indoctrinate, communicate, recruit, and plan attacks.

While many may perceive that jihadist activity on the internet is chaotic, it is in fact very structured. Only a handful of primary source jihadist websites distribute the media of the leaders of al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups. Through this small number of specific, password-protected online forums, the leading jihadist groups, like al-Qaeda, post their communiqués and propaganda. By keeping the number of primary source jihadist websites small, online jihadist ideologues and leaders of jihadist groups can provide a transparent mechanism to authenticate communiqués. In this way, the global jihadist movement can instantly discern the difference between official and fake communiqués by checking the source of the website and the individual who posted it. Though the number of primary source forums is small, there are tens of thousands of members registered on these websites, giving the jihadists a wide reach.

[4] An online messageboard, also called an online forum, allows users to communicate and discuss topics easily with each other on the same website. Messageboards, which may be password-protected, foster the creation of virtual communities and are essential to reinforcing a shared global jihadist identify.

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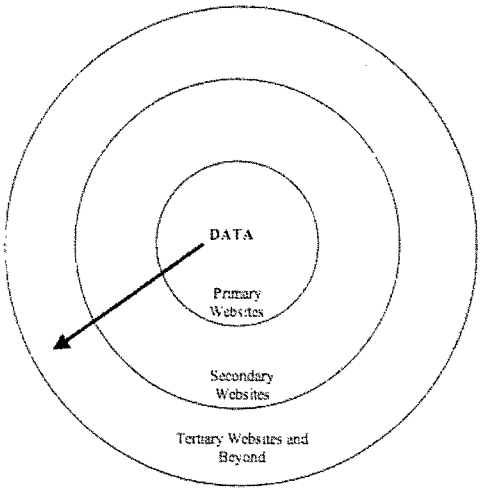
Once an official message from a jihadist group is posted to a primary source message forum, members of the primary message forum will then disseminate that posting to other secondary messageboards. From these secondary messageboards, other peripheral individuals will then disseminate the information onto other messageboards (See Figure Below)



Dissemination of Primary Source Jihadist Data

Thus, the online jihadist movement has developed in such a way that it is at once decentralized but rigidly hierarchical. The jihadists can demonstrate that their communiqués are authentic by releasing information only on the primary websites and then rely on the secondary and tertiary websites to disseminate their data to larger groups of people.

Al-Fajr Center

The group that coordinates the online distribution of authentic jihadist communiqués, such as a video by bin Laden, Zawahiri, and other jihadist leaders, is called Al-Fajr Center. Established officially in January 2006, Al-Fajr Center is entirely virtual and exists only online. The organization serves not only al-Qaeda but numerous jihadist groups who share the same ideology. Besides al-Qaeda, the groups that utilize Al-Fajr Center include several of the Iraqi insurgency groups, Palestinian jihadist groups, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (formerly the GSPC), the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, Somali jihadist groups, Saudi jihadist groups, the Taliban and other insurgent groups in Afghanistan, and even a group in western China.

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The underlying purpose of Al-Fajr Center is to coordinate propaganda efforts through highly centralized and secure channels. This enables the groups utilizing al-Fajr to unify strategies, achieve economies of scale, and establish trusted channels of communication. Through the center's efforts, individuals across the globe are provided with easy access to authentic jihadist propaganda coming from a single source. This tactic slowly erases the lines between the regional terrorist groups, effectively portraying a strong, united group against the West. Because of the apparent closeness between al-Qaeda and the other groups using Al-Fajr Center, those indoctrinated by Al-Fajr Center will support any jihadist group releasing media through the center, not just al-Qaeda.

The group's products are eclectic and very frequent, creating a stimulating environment for jihadists. Al-Fajr Center distributes dozens of daily communiqués from jihadist groups taking credit for attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria, and elsewhere. In addition to these daily communiqués, the group also regularly dispatches special releases. For example, in November 2006, Al-Fajr released a written analysis of the current state of conflict in Afghanistan. The following week, the organization released a strategic manual, the "Technical Mujahid," devoted to understanding the internet and internet security. The very next day, the center was responsible for the release of a video provided by a representative of a Somali jihadist group. These releases came only days after a video calling for jihad in Xinjiang, China, called East Turkistan by the jihadists.

Al-Fajr Center itself is very structured and is divided into several different brigades, each with a designated purpose.

These brigades include:

- **Hacking Brigade**, in charge of hacking websites, carrying out Denial of Service (DoS) attacks, and identifying vulnerable websites
- **Intelligence Brigade**, in charge of gathering information, both online and in the physical world. For example, this brigade monitors the websites of the government, think tanks, and the media, like the White House, the U.S. Army, the Rand Corporation, the Jamestown foundation, Newsweek, Time Magazine, and others.
- **Distribution Brigade**, in charge of distributing the propaganda released by jihadist groups, such as taking credit for daily attacks, media from jihadist leaders, videos of attacks, training videos, and other videos of fighting from all over the world
- **Publications Brigade**, in charge of producing studies and training manuals in magazine form, like the "Technical Mujahid"
- **Cybersecurity Brigade**, in charge of protecting the security of jihadist websites
- **Multimedia Brigade**, in charge of producing multimedia jihadist propaganda, including attacks on American forces, preparation of IEDS, audio and video messages from jihadist leadership, statements of martyrs, and other propaganda

Each of these groups has its own special messageboard which only members of each brigade can access. Each brigade contains leaders who coordinate their efforts with the jihadist leadership.

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The costs to run these brigades are minimal, as those involved are donating their time and effort for their cause. The members of these brigades do their work not for any particular jihadist group but for the entire movement. The virtual layer between the members of these brigades and the actual jihadist groups themselves creates an extremely operationally secure mechanism to transmit information.

While these propaganda efforts are the driving force behind Al-Fajr Center, the organization does serve another purpose for jihadist groups by providing numerous services for jihadist leaders. Because Al-Fajr Center is in communication with representatives of all the major jihadist groups, including al-Qaeda, it can also facilitate the rapid transfer of information between jihadist groups and pass on information that the center has gathered. In this way, the online representatives of jihadist groups can then pass the information on to the leaders of there groups via courier, even in the remote areas of the Northwest Frontier Province in Pakistan.

This mechanism may help explain how isolated jihadists like bin Laden and Zawahiri can reference extremely current events in the propaganda they release. Likewise, the efficiency of Al-Fajr Center may also explain how jihadist leaders have been able to release messages more frequently than in the past. Reinforcing this trend is that jihadist leaders have begun to release their videos online first, rather than relying on the al-Jazeera television network, which often only shows a small portion of the entire propaganda piece.

Al-Fajr Center is a powerful tool for jihadist groups because their messages can be spread rapidly while retaining their authenticity. As the primary outlet for most of the major jihadist groups, Al-Fajr Center's operations contribute greatly to fostering a unified, global jihadist community. Similarly, the center benefits jihadist groups themselves by allowing them to coordinate, share information, and consolidate their power to continue to lead the jihadist movement. Damaging Al-Fajr Center would prove a severe blow to the jihadist groups' ability to gather information, proselytize, and recruit.

Global Islamic Media Front and Other Online Jihadist Media Organizations

Al-Fajr Center serves the role of the official distributor for the propaganda of many jihadist groups, but the center is not the only major outlet for jihadist propaganda. Other virtual groups, like the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), the Jihadi Brigades, the Ansar e-Group, and smaller groups, also contribute propaganda to the online jihadist community. Some groups have no direct affiliation with any particular jihadist organization but are made up of supporters who believe in the jihadist ideology. The existence of these groups provides the online jihadist with a continuous stream of propaganda, never leaving the online jihadist community without movies, documents, messages, magazines, training manuals, and even video games, all of which are created to indoctrinate others to support the jihadist cause.

One of the oldest and most prominent virtual propaganda groups is the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), which also disseminates its propaganda through Al-Fajr Center. GIMF, which

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openly supports al-Qaeda, produces copious amounts of propaganda, but the identity and location of the individuals who comprise GIMF are kept secret. What is known about GIMF is that its members are jihadists who have taken on the duty of disseminating the propaganda of al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups. At the same time, GIMF provides potential jihadists with the tactical knowledge and tools needed to carry out jihad.

GIMF's Internet material includes Flash presentations, videos of "Americans and Western crimes against Muslims," and even indoctrinating entertainment in the form of TV programs and video games. One such program, fashioned as a television network's nightly news is titled "Voice of the Caliphate." The news program features masked anchors seated in front of the backdrop of an assault weapon and providing news, including video segments, from fronts of jihad, such as Iraq, Chechnya, and Palestine. One of GIMF's most popular video games recently was titled "Night of Bush Capturing." The first-person perspective shooting game, in which the player targets American soldiers, President George Bush, Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, was distributed in September 2006 throughout jihadist message boards and created for "terrorist children." Besides these visual media, GIMF distributes numerous print and multimedia material very frequently. Within hours after release, the material is spread across numerous jihadist forums, websites, e-groups, email lists, and other internet forums, reaching a large audience. Occasionally, the GIMF's material attracts mainstream media attention and can appear on Arab and worldwide media.

Because of the huge audiences they can reach, GIMF and groups like it provide the jihadists with relentless propaganda and are succeeding at indoctrinating, radicalizing, and recruiting new supporters. Countering these jihadist media organizations is essential to stemming the flow of new recruits and to prevent jihadist groups from having a powerful, global voice. By taking measures against them, jihadist groups would find it more difficult to broadcast and glorify their activities, eliminating a powerful piece of propaganda.

The Virtual Jihadist Network

Jihadist groups use the internet to provide a virtual social network to indoctrinate, recruit, and train followers. Because of the constant and overwhelming propaganda the jihadists produce, any individual, even with no prior association to jihadist ideology, can quickly feel like he or she is part of the global jihadist community and self-radicalize himself or herself. Once a believer, these self-radicalized individuals will seek out others who think like them online, eventually discovering the primary source jihadist websites run by the jihadists themselves. By studying these primary source websites, jihadist groups can cull new recruits while exerting much less effort, as potential recruits come to them, rather than the opposite.

In addition, through this virtual jihadist network, jihadist groups can indoctrinate individuals and them provide them with the tools they need to carry out either individual or small group attacks, without having to be specifically recruited by an established jihadist group. Jihadists provide strategies and tactics for the entire community so that independent terrorist cells can spring up

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throughout the world. From online training manuals, these independent cells can learn which are the best targets to attack, how to attack them, and how to make sure that the attack will be inline with the overall jihadist strategy.

The virtual jihadist network revolves around these dimensions:

- Propaganda, Indoctrination, and Psychological Warfare
- Training and Tactics
- Communication and Coordination
- Strategy
- Financing
- Recruitment

The following will examine each dimension of the virtual social network in further detail.

Propaganda, Indoctrination, and Psychological Warfare

The propaganda the jihadists release is powerful and reaches a global audience. As one jihadist recalled, "The first time I saw an al-Qaeda video, I was ready to go. I wanted to kill the disbelievers."[5] The propaganda in jihadist videos is compelling, convincing, and able to be accessed in a growing number of languages. While most primary source propaganda is released in Arabic, individuals and groups dedicated to the jihadist cause will translate them into their vernacular language, so that the message of jihadist leaders can be heard across the world.

Jihadist propaganda is released in English, Turkish, French, Somali, Russian, and a host of other languages. Jihadist messageboards and websites also exist exclusively in English and other languages as well. Even some extremely prominent Arabic jihadist messageboards, like the Al-Hesbah[6] forum, now contain an English section. Because of the availability of jihadist propaganda in so many languages, potential jihadists can know only their native language and still be radicalized.

By being able to reach a global audience, jihadist groups can continue to indoctrinate many more individuals than they could otherwise without a propaganda outlet through the internet. In an interview released in December 2005, Zawahiri explicitly discussed al-Qaeda's policy of distributing important videos and messages as widely as possible. At the conclusion of the 43 minute interview, Zawahiri calls upon media organizations to distribute the interview in "all languages and as widely as possible." The release of the interview itself carried English subtitles and was distributed shortly thereafter with French, German, and Italian subtitles on online forums by December 2005.

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[5] Stewart Bell. "Making of a Zealot." *National Post*. June 30, 2006.
[6] http://www.alhesbah.org

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In the last year, al-Qaeda's production company, As-Sahab, has begun to produce English transcripts and subtitles for most of al-Qaeda's major releases, especially messages from bin Laden and Zawahiri. In the past year, at least 20 videos from As-Sahab have been released with either English subtitles or transcripts, broadening the group's reach. Al-Qaeda has also issued videos in English speaking directly to Americans. A native Californian wanted by the FBI for his role in al-Qaeda, Adam Gadahn, or Azzam al-Amriki, provides a voice directly from the al-Qaeda leadership in Afghanistan to the American people. His September 2006 video, "An Invitation to Islam," carried the messages of al-Qaeda but in an American accent. Gadahn devoted much of his 45 minute video to explaining al-Qaeda's ideology, rationale, and motivations.

While Adam Gadahn speaks to an American audience, al-Qaeda uses the British men who perpetrated the July 7, 2005, bombings in London. In commemoration of the bombings, an annual video is released to the forums in which one of the bombers discusses his reasons for the attack in a thick English accent. As with "An Invitation to Islam," each of the 7/7 commemoration videos are edited as compilations combining clips of al-Qaeda leadership with a significant portion read by a native speaker to the people of the country being addressed.

The demand for jihadist materials in other languages is high. Recently, an influential French jihadist forums, al-Mourabitoune[7], has begun providing translations of videos and statements of responsibility from Arabic into French with very little lag time. For example, on May 23, 2006, GIMF released bin Laden's "A Testimony to the Truth" with both Arabic and English transcripts. By the next day, al-Mourabitoune was carrying a French translation of the transcript. Following a flood of requests posted to English and French messageboards, GIMF provided subtitled editions of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's April 26, 2006, video, entitled, "A Message to the People." A version of "A Message to the People" with French subtitles was soon released along with a full French transcript to French-language jihadist forums on May 4, 2006.

There is a rising trend of jihadist material being released in Turkish. The videos distributed through the Mucadele[8] Turkish online messageboard are predominantly those from Chechen jihadists. On October 16, 2006, Mucadele distributed the Ramadan video address of Abu Hafs Al-Urdani, a Jordanian leader of Chechen jihadists until his reported death in November 2006. In the video, Abu Hafs, speaking in Arabic, beseeches his audience for additional funding for the mujahideen. Ten days later, another jihadist commander in Chechnya, Abu Abdullah al-Turki, appeared in a video speaking directly to the Turkish people about the need to support jihad in Chechnya, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The 8 and a half minute video, which also featured Abu Hafs Al-Urdani, was narrated in Turkish and given Arabic subtitles.

In August 2005, As-Sahab released a long video titled, "The War of the Oppressed." The video showed how Al-Qaeda fighters began regrouping in Afghanistan, attracting volunteers from around the world, and featured the attacks that al-Qaeda members carried out on American

[7] http://www.ribaat.org
[8] http://www.mucadele.com

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forces in Afghanistan, including the downing of a SOCOM helicopter. The video also interspersed clips of popular jihadist ideologues like Abdullah Azzam, bin Laden, Zarqawi, and Zawahiri with speeches from jihadists currently in the field in Afghanistan. A powerful montage sequence of mujahideen addressing the camera in their native language occurs in the video. An Australian, a Turk, an Italian, and other nationalities espouse their jihadist ideology in their vernacular with Arabic subtitles, calling on the viewer to join them in jihad.

While many may perceive jihadist propaganda as crude and barbaric, replete with beheadings and bombs, much propaganda is instead strongly argued rhetoric that is becoming increasingly sophisticated. Jihadist ideologues, like Hamid Al-Ali in Kuwait, release masterful pieces of religious rhetoric exhorting others to jihad. Many of the white papers, studies, books, and other documents that the jihadists release are heavily footnoted and maintain a scholarly tone. The result is that the propaganda takes on an air of professionalism and scholarship that is extremely convincing to critically thinking potential jihadists.

Oftentimes jihadist ideologues appeal to baser emotional responses to violence and sex. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's filmed beheadings attracted an instant audience, and videos are released daily of attacks, gruesome shots of dead victims and mujahideen, and other gore. This gore serves as powerful psychological warfare, and sensationalized murders, like beheadings, intimidate the enemies of the jihadists while bolstering jihadist support. On the other hand, the death of mujahideen is portrayed as painless, desensitizing many to the fear of participating in such violence.

While not commonly addressed, sometimes sex is exploited to attract jihadists. In November 2006, a three and a half minute audio message from Hamid Al-Ali, an extremely important jihadist shaykh famous for his fatwas and designated a terrorist by the United States, was posted to jihadist messageboards explaining the great rewards in heaven waiting for those who die in battle. The speaker provides strikingly erotic details about the "wives" which pleasure martyrs in paradise:

> "Paradise has eight great gates through which whoever enters will never come out again. Each gate determines what the martyr has achieved; in Paradise they will enjoy endless tasteful food and drinks, with a beloved wife. She will astonish your mind. Her hair is made of silk. Her flirtation appears in the bed as politeness and expertise in these things; she knows all about sexual intercourse. By touching, looking, and hearing, her vagina never complains about how much sex she had. She becomes a beautiful virgin again. The more intercourse she has the more love she gives, and she gives a beautiful smile."[9]

[9] Hamid Al-Ali. "Description of Martyrs in Paradise." Audio clip circulated on jihadist forums and posted on Hamid Al-Ali's official website at http://www.h-alali.info/snd_open.php?id=b75e9fb4-f2b5-1029-a701-0010dc91cf69

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Demonstrating how closely jihadists study the West, they are becoming much more adept at using American officials' own words against America. On February 17, 2006, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld gave a speech before the Council on Foreign Relations in which he admitted America's weakness on the media front in the war in Iraq, stating, "Our enemies have skillfully adapted to fighting wars in today's media age, but for the most part we, our country, our government, has not adapted."[10] Three days later, GIMF issued a message responding to Secretary Rumsfeld's speech and ridiculed American efforts to conduct an effective media war.

Ahmad al-Watheq Billah, the author of GIMF's document, mocked this "failing project of the American army" and lauded the jihadist media as "superior on the internet network and other information sources." GIMF used Secretary Rumsfeld's comments to call upon jihadists to join the ranks of "information jihad," capitalizing on their current presence on the internet. The author encouraged, for instance, those who can use mobile phones to capture photos and videos that depict the "failure and disgrace" of the enemy in Muslim lands to disseminate those through appropriate venues. Billah charged that such pictures that represent the "truth" will be used to attack America's "weak point." Many other pieces of jihadist propaganda reference the speeches of American leaders and spokespeople, and use these speeches to demonstrate that the jihadists are winning the media war.

In another remarkable example of the jihadists turning our mistakes into their own benefit, insurgents in Iraq retrieved an American soldier's USB flash drive filled with sensitive information to create a powerful propaganda video aimed to debase support for the U.S. military. The Islamic Army in Iraq, a prominent insurgent group, in collaboration with Al-Boraq Media Organization, another online distributor of jihadist propaganda, produced a video called "Lee's Life for Lies." The video, released in January 2007, refers to PFC Lee Kendall Tucker, an actual US soldier whose USB flash drive apparently fell into the hands of the Islamic Army in Iraq.

The video marries authentic information, such as PFC Tucker's social security number and official U.S. Army documents, with a fabricated letter allegedly written by PFC Tucker criticizing the US military that the Islamic Army in Iraq maintained was found on the flash drive. The sham letter describes hellish and stressful conditions amid mortar fire for American soldiers, describing IED detonations, sniper fire by insurgency groups, and criminal acts committed by fellow soldiers. The letter is a narrative that portrays a failing and unnecessary war, launched for the benefit of a few at the expense of many.

While the letter is fake, the video contains the voiceover of an American reading the letter, making it more believable. As the letter is read, several scenes are shown of mujahideen launching military operations, images of PFC Tucker posing for the camera, and footage of combat taken from media sources such as The History Channel. As propaganda, the aim of the presentation is to influence the opinion of the target English-speaking audience, showing the frustration of a soldier on the front lines and disenchantment with what is claimed to be a failed

[10] "New Realities in the Media Age: A Conversation with Donald Rumsfeld." Council on Foreign Relations. Transcript online at http://www.cfr.org/publication/9900/

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war. The jihadists recognize that domestic public opinion has a great effect on foreign policy and modeled the video as such for this purpose.[11]

The amount of propaganda the jihadists produce is staggering. With jihadist propaganda widely available in numerous languages, the jihadists can reach an extremely large audience. This large reach of jihadist propaganda, coupled with the shrewd use of rhetoric, has created an online jihadist environment where individuals are capable of self-radicalizing themselves with little direct guidance from established jihadist groups. So long as this propaganda is not countered, jihadists will always have a steady stream of potential recruits.

Training and Tactics

Using the internet, jihadists have created a virtual classroom that teaches the online jihadist community how to produce and construct weapons ranging from simple IEDs to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Not only are jihadists taught military tactics; they also learn how to mine the internet for information, protect their anonymity online, encrypt the contents of their computers, and use the internet to benefit the global jihadist movement. Given the difficulty many individuals have in reaching training camps in the post-9/11 world, online training gives jihadists the tools they need to plan, coordinate, and execute terrorist attacks. Indeed, soldiers from Iraq have informed us that training manuals discovered in jihadist safe houses in Iraq were printed from the jihadist manuals found online.

Al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups have produced magazines and multimedia exclusively for training purposes. "Al-Battar," a publication of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, is solely dedicated to training prospective mujahideen, even supplying ideal targets. Issues have featured weapons discussion, such as using a pistol for sniper training, how to hold and target a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG), and survival tactics. Even though the most recent issue of "Al-Battar" was released two years ago, the magazine continues to widely circulate online on jihadist websites.

Excerpts from large compendiums of urban warfare, explosives and poisons training manuals are frequently posted to the jihadist forums, in addition to members own suggestions, often using photographs and video to support their explanations. Videos exist which give training instructions for suicide bombings, construction and dismantling of landmines, and composition of various explosives substances. Electronic books, or e-books, are also used to provide a single resource for particular training. For example, an e-book compilation of IED construction, camouflage, and placement was distributed to the password-protected al-Firdaws[12] forum, which contains a special military section. This publication suggested the planting of explosives in shopping bags in markets, butter tubs, flower bouquets, candy boxes, briefcases, and buses.

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[11] More about the letter and the video can be found at http://siteinstitute.org/bin/articles.cgi?ID=publications242207&Category=publications&Subcategory=0

[12] http://www.alfirdaws.org

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In addition to traditional explosives, jihadists are also attempting to educate themselves about chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons, which are incessantly discussed on jihadist forums. The "Encyclopedia of Poisons" offers a variety of methods to kill an enemy with a several toxic substances and is freely available to any member of the online jihadist community. Ricin and botulism bacilli are just two examples of individual poisons that have received much attention on jihadist forums. Members on these forums detail the speed with which a victim will die when receiving the poisons by injection, inhalation, or digestion. Other weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and radiological devices have also been the subject of interest and instruction by the jihadists. One author, calling himself "Ozooo", produced a large compendium offering nuclear knowledge among other security, espionage, and military training.

In addition to physical preparation and military training manuals, the jihadists also impart knowledge to each about computer technology. Internet anonymity, of primary importance to members to avoid surveillance and capture, is frequently addressed. Al-Fajr Center, GIMF, and other jihadist media groups release cybersecurity manuals to aid the online jihadists. Al-Fajr Center created a specific cybersecurity magazine, "Technical Mujahid," which provides information remain anonymous online, how to utilize Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) software for encrypted communications, and detailed methods for a user to hide their sensitive files using a virtual machine. In its first pages, the "Technical Mujahid" states the jihadist stance concerning the virtual battle ground: "the internet provides a golden opportunity... for the mujahideen to break the siege placed upon them by the media of the crusaders and their followers in the Muslim countries, and to use [the internet] for [the sake of] jihad and the victory of the faith." The GIMF provides similar information and recently distributed an encryption program built by the jihadists themselves to facilitate anonymous communications.

Tactical information is rapidly shared on jihadist messageboards. They study our analyses, distribute our reports, and quote our editorials, searching for our weaknesses. On their own initiative, jihadists are constantly providing data to the forums, posting maps of suggested targets, locations of American bases throughout the Middle East, and distributing aerial photographs captured by the Google Earth software, while others pull maps from government and university libraries.

Furthermore, the jihadists also inform each other about new technology being employed against the mujahideen, such as the Joint IED Neutralizer and Stryker armored vehicle, advising in ways the devices' defenses may be circumvented to launch a successful hit. In August of 2006, a forum member posted to the military section of a password-protected forum a US report written in 2003 at the behest of Congressman Jim Saxton, detailing the susceptibility of Stryker combat vehicles to an RPG7. The member then urged mujahideen to exploit the weakness found in this report, which had been unearthed from the Defense and National Interest website, a US think tank.

Several primary jihadist websites house areas solely dedicated to training. Within these training areas, jihadists are encouraged to contribute their own expertise and data, so that all the jihadists

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can benefit from the knowledge of the entire jihadist community. Indeed, some of these forums even hold online training seminars, where less experienced jihadists can ask questions to jihadist weapons experts and receive direct responses online. In this manner, should any jihadist have difficulty in successfully manufacturing a bomb, or has a question regarding the procurement of required ingredients, there are thousands of other members, some with significant experience, who are available to provide the desired information.

By studying the training manuals and tactical material that exist on jihadist messageboards, warfighters can understand better the types of weapons likely to be used against them as well as the targets that jihadists are choosing for attack. Additionally, observing the training jihadists receive online will help security officials plan for threats discussed on jihadist websites, eliminating some of the guesswork involved in imagining the types of attacks jihadists are planning. While finding and destroying physical training camps will be essential to prevent jihadists from learning how to attack us, jihadists can instead rely on the internet for an interactive, comprehensive military education.

Communication and Coordination

Due to the efforts of security forces around the world, jihadists have an increasingly difficult time communicating and coordinating with one another utilizing traditional communication devices that can be easily traced, such as cellular or satellite phones. However, the internet provides a flexible, instant communication tools for jihadists. Whether via email, chat rooms, instant messaging services, e-groups, messageboards, websites, or voice over IP (VOIP), jihadists can communicate securely with one another rapidly using sophisticated, freely available encryption methods.

Jihadist media groups like GIMF and Al-Fajr Center release programs and training manuals to ensure that members of the online jihadist community know how to communicate with each other securely, using encryption methods like PGP. Groups and individuals desiring to form their own cells can therefore coordinate online with each other clandestinely below the radar of security officials. Even individuals spread across vast geographic areas can communicate with one another instantly and securely, forming virtual cells that work together. The members of these virtual cells may never meet each other in person but can nevertheless aid one another in planning attacks.

Established jihadist groups like al-Qaeda can also communicate online to discuss everything from strategy to attacks. In one telling example, in December 2005, a top jihadist ideologue using the pseudonym Louis Attiyah Allah wrote to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, discussing Zarqawi's role in Iraq and its place within the larger jihadist movement. At the end of the letter, Attiyah Allah notes to Zarqawi that he can be contacted on the "Ana Al-Muslim"[13] jihadist forum, indicating that even the top leadership of al-Qaeda uses the internet to communicate.

[13] http://www.muslm.net

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Jihadist leaders have also used public messages to alert jihadists of their need for support or to exchange information. Bin Laden and others use public messages also to alert their need for support or to exchange messages. For example, in a July 2006 audio message, bin Laden exhorted the jihadist community to support the mujahideen in Somalia and elsewhere, stating, "I also urge the Muslim youths and their merchants to sacrifice everything valuable and to provide for all the needs of the mujahideen through trusted people, especially in Palestine, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Sudan."[14] In March 2005, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi posted a public message on jihadist forums addressed to the jihadists in Saudi Arabia praising them and openly welcoming Saudis to come fight in Iraq. Three days later, Saleh Al-Oufi, a now deceased leader of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, responded with a public audio message distributed on jihadist messageboards congratulating Zarqawi for his efforts and offering his group's support.

As one notable example of cross-continental coordination, the infamous online jihadist Irhabi007, whose real name is Younis Tsouli, was arrested in England in October 2005 and was indicted under the UK's Terrorism Act 2000, with charges including "conspiracy to murder, conspiracy to cause an explosion, conspiracy to obtain money by deception, fundraising and possession of articles for terrorist purposes." Tsouli gained fame online for his teaching the global jihadist movement hacking and cybersecurity skills while facilitated the dissemination of jihadist propaganda coming from jihadist groups in Iraq and elsewhere.

As part of his online activities, Tsouli was also in communication with a jihadist cell in the United States. In March 2006, two Americans in Atlanta, Georgia, were arrested and eventually charged with "material support" to a terrorist group and are accused of plotting to attack oil refineries in the United States. These men, Ehsanul Islam Sadequee and Syed Haris Ahmed, visited Washington, DC, in spring 2005 and recorded video footage of the U.S Capitol, the Masonic Temple, the World Bank, and a fuel depot. Remarkably, this footage was also found among Tsouli's belongings, indicating that the two American terror suspects were indeed in contact with Tsouli and were feeding him tactical information via the internet.

Aside from the obvious means by which small cells can coordinate and plan attacks through the internet, the online jihadist community has also engaged in coordinated cyberattacks on numerous websites. Because the jihadists can freely communicate while online, jihadists can designate electronic targets to a widespread audience and establish common timetables to launch cyberattacks. The electronic attacks usually involve "Denial of Service" (DoS) attacks whereby a targeted websites is flooded with requests at a single time. For these attacks to be successful, numerous individuals must attempt to access a website simultaneously.

Because the internet provides the jihadists a means to advertise the timing of a DoS attack to a large number of jihadists in a short time, these types of attacks only fail when too few jihadists participate in the attack at the same time. Prominent members of the jihadist Internet community, such as Irhabi007, have instructed jihadists in how to execute DoS attacks, and some

[14] Osama bin Laden. Audio speech released on jihadist messageboards on July 1, 2006.

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groups that have announced a planned attack provide the necessary software with the address of the target already inputted. This method of attacking the enemy allows online jihadists to target Western interests from their own home and with little risk.

The results of these hacking initiatives have resulted in breaches of government security. Jihadists have hacked government and military websites and have retrieved extremely sensitive information on soldiers, including their areas of deployment, their health status, their social security numbers, their salary, their bank accounts, and other demographic information.

Jihadist cyberattacks launched on Dutch websites, including those belonging to the Dutch government, in January and February 2006 took many offline. The DoS operation, results, and images of a dead Theo van Gogh, a Dutch filmmaker who was murdered by a jihadist, were included in a video distributed shortly celebrating the attack. In another case, on November 27, 2006, a message was distributed on jihadist forums announcing the "Electronic Battle of Guantanamo," which was to target the websites of American stock exchanges and banks. The Department of Homeland Security warned about the attack and its danger, and though nothing came of the electronic jihadist operation, it fueled the desire for additional attacks. Even the Vatican's website was targeted by jihadists.

Retarding the ability of jihadists' to communicate is another necessary step in minimizing the jihadist threat. Though governments have done well in preventing jihadists from utilizing traditional means of communication, the internet remains the best communication device for the entire jihadist community. Allowing them to communicate instantly over vast distances, virtual cells can form quite easily, and coordinating cyberattacks requires a mere posting to a messageboard announcing the time and date of such attack.

While obviously we can never shut down the internet, we can monitor jihadists' use of the internet and track down their physical locations. Once jihadists learn that the internet is not a safe haven for their communications, many will become fearful of utilizing the internet as a means to communicate. It is unlikely that we will ever cut jihadist communication online to nothing, but at the very least, we can provide disincentives to jihadists using the internet by punishing those who do.

Strategy

The strategy behind the jihadist movement is not amorphous. Jihadist ideologues have developed a timeframe for their jihad, thinking both short-term and long-term, and understanding that success will only come after years of struggle. Major jihadist ideologues are able to direct the global jihadist movement by releasing white papers and books analyzing the situation of the jihadist movement and providing the jihadists with long-term strategies to ensure that the movement itself always has directions and goals. Jihadist strategies are released online and are widely circulated on jihadist forums so that the entire jihadist community can follow the same strategies and goals, reducing the discord amongst them.

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In the run up to the war in Iraq, jihadists immediately began releasing online propaganda encouraging jihadists to prepare for a jihad against the United States in Iraq. Even after the war began, Yusuf Al-Ayiri, a now deceased leader of Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia and an influential jihadist ideologue, published an online study in August 2003 entitled, "The Future of Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula after the Fall of Baghdad." Al-Ayiri describes the advantages of the removal of the Ba'ath regime and harps on the window of opportunity for the establishment of an Islamic state ruled according to the Sharia law.

One of al-Qaeda's most important strategists subsequent to 9/11 is Abu Musab al-Suri, an al-Qaeda operative who ran terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. Al-Suri's publications and studies are highly regarded by jihadists and are always housed on primary source jihadist websites and others. His 1600-page magnum opus, "The Global Islamic Call to Resistance," is an extremely influential jihadist manifesto and is available to download in a variety of digital formats. Jihadists discuss and analyze Al-Suri's writings both publicly and secretly to understand, develop, and expand upon his ideas.

In "The Global Islamic Call to Resistance," Abu Musab al-Suri details his theories of how to best wage jihad in the twenty-first century. The scope of the book is very broad, with topics ranging from a history of the Islamic world to autobiographical anecdotes about his role in the jihadist movement. However, a significant portion of the book discusses the most effective strategies for waging jihad against the West. Focusing on the types of attacks that will bring the mujahideen the most success, al-Suri advocates establishing self-starting, independent cells in Western countries with no direct affiliations to established jihadist groups. These cells operate to support the global jihadist movement, rather than any particular organization or leader.

Many of al-Suri's publications reiterate that jihadists must set up independent cells within their country of residence, bide their time, and only strike when the time is appropriate. Better, al-Suri intimates, to wait ten years studying and planning for a large, poignant attack rather than carry out a quick suicide bombing at a mall in America doing little damage. Demonstrating the power of the internet, Al-Suri was arrested late 2005, yet his strategies and theories continue to exist in cyberspace. Al-Suri's videotaped lectures at Al-Ghurabaa training camp in Afghanistan prior to 9/11 have been digitized and are available online as well. Whether dead or captured, the internet provides jihadists with a virtual immortality.

Available online, the publications of al-Suri and other ideologues share common themes in their strategies. These strategies include:

- Utilizing guerilla warfare
- Establishing self-starting, independent cells in Western countries with no direct affiliations to established jihadist groups
- Damaging the United States' economy through terrorist activities
- Attacking Arab governments that work closely with the West
- Attacking Western targets in Arab countries.

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These strategies also include specific targets. For example, Al-Suri organizes the most important targets to attack in America and its allies as follows:

- Politicians
- Major economic targets, like the stock exchange, airports, bridges, metros, tourist attractions
- Military bases
- Media personalities
- Computers and information centers that connect the institutions of the country
- Jewish gatherings and notable Jews
- The offices of supranational targets, like NATO and the EU
- Buildings belonging to the CIA, FBI, and other security institutions
- Civilians, while avoiding women and children if possible, to prevent generating negative publicity

Obviously these targets are not the only vulnerable individuals and institutions in the West. However, by studying and understanding the strategy the jihadist ideologues propose, we can better prepare ourselves against attacks that independent jihadist cells are likely to target. Also, we can develop more effective long-term counterstrategies against jihadists once we discern how they plan on expanding the jihadist movement. Therefore, the need to study jihadist strategies on the internet is paramount; it is an open window showing us how the jihadist movement will likely develop in the future.

Financing

Stemming the flow of money to jihadists is essential. Though carrying out terrorist attacks usually requires relative little money, jihadists do need funding for weapons, training, distributing propaganda, and the costs of hosting internet websites and messageboards. Since 9/11, the US, the UN, and other countries have worked hard to locate the methods and means by which terrorists transfer money. Prior to this crackdown, money was transferred to terrorist groups through sham front groups and charities or through offshore banking techniques. The US and others had much success in identifying the financiers of terrorism and exposing them.

While these traditional techniques no doubt still play a role in terrorist financing, jihadists have also turned to using the internet to transmit funds. Online remittance systems and other means of transferring money over the internet are constantly being used by jihadists to finance the jihadist movement. Jihadist webmasters use these electronic means to pay for their servers, and virtual jihadist groups have now appeared online soliciting donations from followers.

The Islamic Army of Iraq, an insurgent group operating within Iraq, released a video celebrating its October 15 attack on an American ammunition facility in Baghdad. Interestingly, this video ended with a plea for donations to be sent to "The Electronic Nusra Society." Two days later,

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the group released the tenth issue of its online magazine, "Al-Forsan," which contained a full page advertisement seeking donations for the "The Digital Nusra Society." Though these advertisements offered no physical address to which to send donations, they indicated that donors could contact the group electronically for further instructions on how to donate.

Discussions on jihadist messageboards have gone into specific detail explaining how jihadists can donate online to jihadist groups. On the influential Al-Hesbah online forum, one jihadist described the process by which cash can be transferred through online remittance services. With certain online remittance services, individuals can add money to their online bank accounts by using cash to purchase physical cards (similar to phone cards) of various values from designated "brick and mortar" retailers across the world.

Using such an online bank account, an individual could then transfer cash to a jihadist group in the following manner:

1. The individual wishing to send jihadist groups cash purchases a physical bank card and transfers the value to an intermediary jihadist via an email with the required information to transfer the money.
2. The intermediary jihadist, in direct contact with the mujahideen, receives the online money transfer and then gives the mujahideen the value of the transfer in cash.
3. The jihadist groups receiving the cash from the intermediary can use the funds however they like, while the intermediary jihadist who received the initial online money transfer can use that money to purchase online goods.

As an example, a donor could purchase $100 worth of online virtual money from a physical store and then email the value of that money to an intermediary jihadist. That intermediary, now $100 richer, will give a jihadist group $100 in cash out of his own pocket. The intermediary, however, now has $100 worth of virtual money to spend online, while the jihadist group now has $100 in cash.

While this type of remittance is just developing and is only one way of transferring money, the chatter surrounding the ways to transfer money through the internet has been increasing on jihadist messageboards. Discovering and monitoring how jihadists transfer money online will enable us to further act against their financing methods, as we have done successfully before with traditional remittance services. If we are to continue our assault on terrorism financing, authorities must devise new ways to monitor and regulate online remittance services that can be abused by jihadists.

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Recruitment

Recruitment takes on two forms in the online jihadist community. The first path is attempting to head to a current theater of conflict to fight with the mujahideen. These recruits are sometimes required to bring money with them to support the jihad. Though many jihadists likely utilize local connections to make their way to the lands of jihad, some online handlers do exist to aid jihadists wishing to travel to an area where they can fight. Mark Robert Walker, a 19-year-old student in Laramie, Wyoming, originally from Rochester, New York, pled guilty to aiding a terrorist organization in October 2005. Walker, using the screen name "Abdullah," was in contact with an online individual named "Khalid" who had agreed to help Walker leave the United States to fight with jihadists in Somalia. The FBI intercepted Walker's online communications with "Khalid" and arrested Walker at El Paso International Airport, as he attempted to leave the country.

Walker's case is not isolated; many like him exist within the online community. These members who desire to travel to lands of jihad to fight with the mujahideen are reinforced by the material found on the forums. Jihadist messageboards proudly announce when a member of a forum has been killed while fighting. On February 6, 2007, the al-Hesbah jihadist forum carried a message announcing that one of its members had carried out a successful suicide attack in Iraq that "shook the crusaders" in Iraq. The individual, an established jihadist online figure known by the alias "Risalah," died while fighting since the start of 2007. On January 3rd, 2007, Na'im Muhammad bin Abdullah, also a member, was announced to have been killed fighting U.S. forces in Baghdad. Both were prominent members of the online jihadist community. The announcements of their deaths prompted praise from other members, reinforcing the strength of the community. This praise also paints physical jihad as a natural outgrowth of participation in the online forum.

Al-Hesbah is not the only jihadist forum with members who have left to join the jihad. For example, after a Saudi administrator of the Hedayah forum[15] was killed fighting in Iraq in December 2006, one member eulogized him, "In the forum he was special and was a provider . . . and there he is today, writing . . . with his blood, not with his pen." Just traveling to a land of jihad garners praise, as well. In December 2006, it was announced that Firas al-Ta'an, a moderator of Al-Ekhlaas[16] jihadist forum, had traveled to Iraq and reached the mujahideen safely.

Rather than travel to where there is active fighting, the other path a recruit can take is to engage in a local terrorist plot, where no handler is needed. Instead, the training manuals, tactics, and strategies available within the online jihadist community take the place of a handler. For example, in March 2004, Mohammad Zaki Amawi, a US citizen, returned to Ohio after a failed attempt to enter Iraq through Jordan to fight against US and coalition forces. Undeterred by his

[15] http://www.hedaaya.net
[16] http://www.alekhlaas.net/

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inability join an active front, Amawi gather jihadist training manuals and videos through jihadist websites to build his own cell in Toledo. He soon recruited others local to the area.

Among the materials Amawi collected from online sources to train the cell were a "Basic Training" course for jihadists, a prerequisite for an "Advanced Training" course, videos on the production and use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and an instructional video for building a suicide bomb vest, titled "Martyrdom Operation Vest Preparation." One member of the cell, Marwan Othman El-Hindi, proposed downloading the videos to show to two of his recruits in Chicago. For practice, the cell traveled together to a shooting range in Toledo. During this time, Amawi maintained contact with jihadists traveling into and out of Iraq using encrypted e-mail messages, contacting them for technical assistance.

These self-starting cells can also span continents. As described previously, the online jihadist Irhabi007 in England, was in contact with two men from Atlanta, Georgia, who were providing Irhabi007 with surveillance videos of American targets. The men, Ehsanul Islam Sadequee and Syed Haris Ahmed, visited Washington, DC, and recorded video footage of the U.S Capitol, the Masonic Temple, the World Bank, and a fuel depot. Their footage was found amongst Irhabi007's belongings.

This cell, however, also had another component connected through the internet. In June 2006, Canadian authorities disrupted the cell in Ontario, arresting 17 individuals, including 5 minors. Many members of this cell are charged with attempting to blow up targets throughout Canada. It was soon revealed that the two Georgian men providing support to Irhabi007 had traveled to Canada to meet with members of the cell, after having met online. The men from Georgia were also members of the same jihadist messageboard as some of the members of an alleged cell in Canada.

Jihadists will continue to utilize the internet to recruit others to plan attacks so long as the internet remains a safe haven. Recruitment takes place on jihadist forums in many languages, from Arabic to German to English. By infiltrating the jihadists' online forums, we can better monitor the relationships between online jihadists, looking for both those who wish to travel to lands of jihad as well as those seeking to do harm locally. Studying messageboards allows us to determine which online jihadists participate in the recruiting process and enables us to develop countermeasures to act against them. Furthermore, identifying the physical locations of online jihadists can disrupt actual cells and prevent actual attacks.

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Conclusions

The internet remains one of the most valuable tools the jihadists have at their disposal, serving all the functions necessary to sustain a violent jihadist movement at minimal cost. Through virtual means, jihadists have in many ways replaced the training camps of the 1980s and 1990s that jihadist groups established in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Indoctrination, recruitment, financing, and training continue 24 hours a day on jihadist messageboards. A National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) Report produced in April 2006 and declassified in September 2006 agreed, "We judge that groups of all stripes will increasingly use the Internet to communicate, propagandize, recruit, train, and obtain logistical and financial support."[17]

In recent years, many have realized the extraordinary power that jihadists obtain by being able to exploit the internet. However, little seems to have been accomplished in preventing jihadists from using the internet to their advantage, directly harming our security, both domestic and foreign. As General Abizaid maintained in his testimony before this Committee in March 2006, the internet remains a "safe haven" for jihadists that has not been explored and countered:

> "But there are other safe havens used by the enemy that are truly safe. These are places where al Qaida also conducts military training, propaganda operations, and plans for future terrorist attacks. It is also where they do most of their fundraising. It is the virtual world. And this safe haven of websites and the internet is proliferating rapidly, spreading al Qaida's hateful ideology well beyond its birthplace in the Middle East. Parts of Europe, for example, have now become intellectual hubs of extremist Islamic thought, largely because of the internet and lax government policies regarding extremist activities. **Yet we have done little to contest these safe havens, even though they are at least as dangerous to our security as the enemy's physical sanctuaries have been. [Emphasis Added]**"[18]

As long as the internet remains an uncontested safe haven for jihadists, the jihadist movement will continue to grow, regardless of the death or arrest of any jihadist leader or ideologue. The internet provides immortality to the ideology behind the jihadist movement, and countless individuals can absorb this propaganda, which is readily available in numerous languages. While not all individuals exposed to jihadist propaganda will succumb to it, the images, sounds, and thoughts that the jihadists produce are carefully woven, attractive, and compelling. Many will buy into the ideology and become part of the online jihadist community. So long as this virtual community exists unopposed, jihadist groups will always be able to refill their ranks and keep their movement alive, indoctrinating and training their future army.

The challenge now is to infiltrate and erode this virtual network to weaken this driving force behind the global jihadist movement. Studying the online jihadist community empowers us. We

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[17] http://odni.gov/press_releases/Declassified_NIE_Key_Judgments.pdf
[18] Statement of General John P. Abizaid, United States Army Commander, United States Central Command before the House Armed Services Committee on the 2006 Posture of the United States Central Command. March 15, 2006.

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can listen to what they say, understand the way they think, and determine how they operate. We can grasp their ideology and devise effective counter-propaganda. We can better defend known targets, identify potential threats, devise countermeasures to their tactics, undermine their strengths, and exploit their weaknesses. There is a wealth of information available online, if we are willing to take the time to collect, study, and analyze the data, as the SITE Institute is doing.

To take advantage of this online intelligence and counter the jihadists on the internet, policy makers and authorities should embark on the following steps:

1. Understand how jihadists utilize the internet, including the hierarchy and structure of online jihadist networks, the technical process of distributing the videos, and how jihadists exploit services on the internet.
2. Effectively monitor jihadist activity on the internet. Because monitoring the entire internet is impossible, understanding the hierarchy of online jihadist networks will help focus efforts on the most important websites and other internet services the jihadists use.
3. Identify and exploit the weaknesses of the jihadists on the internet.
4. Mine jihadist activity on the internet for intelligence. By successfully infiltrating the most important jihadist forums, more specific, actionable intelligence can be obtained than simply by monitoring secondary and tertiary jihadist websites. This intelligence can then be used to deal severe blows to the global jihadist movement.

The SITE Institute has implemented these steps to understand, monitor, and infiltrate jihadist websites and has achieved tangible results. Authorities must continue to study the internet as a vital battleground in the war on terror and undertake further efforts to combat jihadists on this front. Delving efficiently into the online world of jihadists will be one significant step in the war on terror.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(4), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 110th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule.

Witness name: Ms. Rita Katz

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

___ Individual

✓ Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: SITE Institute

FISCAL YEAR 2007

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
USEUCOM	US Army	20,000	Subscription

FISCAL YEAR 2006

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Blackbird Tech	DoD	327,800	Research Project
Bagram AF Base	USAF	5,000	Intel Subscription
Asymmetric Warfare	US Army	5000	"
Lincoln Group	US Army	5000	"
SISCOM Library	US Army	22,000	"
USSOCOM	US Army	25,000	"
"	US Army	5,000	"

FISCAL YEAR 2005

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Lincoln Group	US Army	5,000	Intel Subscription
CENTCOM	US Army	15,000	"
NSEWCOM	US Army	2,500	"
USSOCOM	US Army	2,500	"
SISCOM	US Army	7,500	"
Joint IED	Pentagon	2,500	"
Marines	USMC	2500	"

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2007): 1;
Fiscal year 2006: 6;
Fiscal year 2005: 5.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2007): US Army;
Fiscal year 2006: US Army, DoD, USAF;
Fiscal year 2005: US Army, Pentagon.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2007): Intel Subscription;
Fiscal year 2006: Intel Subscription, Research Project;
Fiscal year 2005: Intel Subscription.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2007): 20,000;
Fiscal year 2006: ;
Fiscal year 2005: 37,500.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2007): 0;
Fiscal year 2006: 0;
Fiscal year 2005: 0.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2007): 0;
Fiscal year 2006: 0;
Fiscal year 2005: 0.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2007): 0;
Fiscal year 2006: 0;
Fiscal year 2005: 0.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2007): 0;
Fiscal year 2006: 0;
Fiscal year 2005: 0.

STATEMENT OF

JARRET BRACHMAN

BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM,

UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

ON THE TOPIC OF

CHALLENGES POSED TO THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND BY THE

GLOBAL TERRORIST THREAT

14 FEBRUARY 2007

STATEMENT OF
JARRET BRACHMAN [1]
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM,
UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES
14 FEBRUARY 2007

Chairman Smith, Congressman Thornberry, distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

It is an honor and privilege to discuss with you the future challenges facing the nation by the global Jihadi Movement. My comments will focus on fighting the ideological and strategic dimensions of this war. I will begin by mapping the emergent trends with regards to the Jihadi Movement's ideology, then review some approaches that may improve our ability to combat those trends in the short-term, and finally conclude by proposing the establishment of a new research center, which I believe would further bolster our ability to lead us to long-term victory against the Jihadi Movement.

Emergent Trends

Our principal enemy in the global war on terrorism is the Jihadi Movement, which, at the most basic level, consists of like-minded individuals and groups worldwide who are loosely bound by a shared ideological worldview and a collectively held identity.[2] Many of the Jihadi Movement's participants can be considered, without question, terrorists, insurgents and enemy combatants and, therefore, dealt with as such. That said, there are a growing number of participants in the Jihadi Movement that do not fit into our existing characterizations. This category includes Jihadi-minded webmasters, graphics designers, social activists, software engineers, Internet bloggers and translators.

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[1] This testimony represents the personal opinion of the author and not necessarily the opinion of the U.S. Military Academy or any other government agency.

[2] In 2005, Quintan Wiktorowicz published a compelling book entitled, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Rowmand and Littlefield), in which he demonstrates how the theoretical and methodological insights provided by Social Movement Theory can be usefully applied to understanding the challenges of radical Islamic activism conceived as a movement.

In the past three years, our enemy's chief priority seems to be giving more people from more places more ways and more reasons to join their Movement, whether that be in the streets of Baghdad or on websites in cyberspace. In so doing, they have pioneered new tactics, techniques and procedures on the battlefield and they have learned to leverage technology in more creative and sophisticated ways online.[3]

We have seen Jihadi activists develop heightened media savvy in terms of using propaganda for strategic image manipulation. Jihadi propagandists, whom we still know relatively little about, have improved their abilities to spin the unpopular aspects of their Movement – attacks that kill Muslim women, children and the elderly, for instance – while drawing the broader Muslim world's attention to what they view as the more resonant dimensions of their activities – such as fighting American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This proliferation of ways to support the Jihadi Movement is due to the fact that al-Qa'ida and its associated networks have focused on fomenting a grassroots social movement. This is an important permutation in the strategic look of our enemy. Simultaneously combating al-Qa'ida as a hierarchical organizations, as a decentralized network and as a worldview poses both unique challenges to the nation's efforts to contain, diminish and eventually defeat the Jihadi Movement around the world.

Since Jihadi thinkers see themselves waging a series of interconnected insurgencies, the key to their victory, they argue, is winning the hearts and minds of various Muslim constituencies. The two primary ways in which the chief Jihadi thinkers have sought to do this is by: 1) indoctrinating successive generations of Muslim youth with the Jihadi value-system; 2) creating as many possible new avenues for Muslims to participate in the Jihadi Movement.

1. Educating the Youth

With regards to the inculcation of new generations, we have seen an intense emphasis being placed on ideological education in the past several years among high-level Jihadi authors. Jihadi scholars, pundits and propagandists have leveraged the

[3] Jarret Brachman, "High-Tech Terror: Al-Qaeda's Use of New Technologies," Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, May 2006.

Internet to establish and maintain a rich distance-learning curriculum that instructs Jihadi candidates on all dimensions of warfare. In fact, one of the Jihadi Movement's most prominent thinkers, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, maintains a website that serves as al-Qa`ida's library.[4]

This online library serves as a dynamic repository for over 3,000 books and articles written by Jihadi authors on various dimensions of the Jihadi ideology and strategy. We know that these texts have been downloaded tens-of-thousands of times. We know that these texts have been found in the possession of both dead and aspiring terrorists. We also know that these texts are being actively translated from their original Arabic into a variety of languages.[5]

Take for example the book written by Jihadi strategist, Abu Bakr Naji, called the *Management of Savagery*. Writing as a high-level insider, Naji explains in painstaking detail how al-Qa`ida plans to defeat the U.S. and its allies in the Middle East, establish sanctuaries in security vacuums around the world and create propaganda that resonates better with local Muslim populations. It has become essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the strategic thinking of al-Qa`ida's leadership and the future of the Jihadi Movement.

Or consider the 1,600 page treatise written by Jihadi historian, Abu Musab al-Suri, which clearly spells out the operational and strategic lessons-learned by Jihadi groups over the past century, highlights the present obstacles that current Jihadi participants need to overcome, and articulates a number of strategic goals for the Jihadi Movement's aspiring leadership to understand.

2. Increasing Accessibility

Jihadis have been aggressive in identifying new ways for members of the wider Islamic community to participate in their movement. The popular Jihadi book entitled, *39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad,* perhaps best encapsulates how this process

[4] http://tawhed.ws [this website is no longer accessible to North American based IP addresses].

[5] In 2006, the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point drew on this library in its research on mapping the Jihadi Movement's ideological sources of influence now available in the *Militant Ideology Atlas*, edited by William McCants. The report is available at: http://www.ctc.usma.edu/atlas.asp

manifests itself.[6] The book's author introduces a variety of ways in which Muslims, who may not be able to fight on the frontlines because they are too young or too sick, for instance, could still prepare for and support active Jihadi insurgent campaigns around the world.

Some of those ways include urging women to socialize their children with a Jihadi mindset from an earlier age by reading them bedtime stories of the great Jihadi fighters or playing them videos of successful attacks against American forces.

Other ways in which Jihadi thinkers have sought to increase participation is by encouraging members to study anthropology, sociology and public administration in universities. Having this knowledge, one Jihadi strategist argues, will help the Movement become more effective in exploiting and co-opting local tribal politics throughout the Middle East. It will help them know how to provide social services and establish governing institutions in areas where Jihadis seize control.

A particularly disturbing book recently released by Muhammad Khalil al-Hakaymah, a rising star in the Jihadi movement, is an exhaustively researched exposition on the structure, practices and vulnerabilities of America's law enforcement and intelligence communities, particularly with regards to information sharing and policy coordination. Although Hakaymah's analysis is riddled with errors, due largely to his inability to discriminate among sources, he still makes his point: Jihadi minded Muslims should innovate new ways to exploit America's existing vulnerabilities. [7]

In short, these various writings are but a sample of the Jihadi Movement's broader effort to capitalize on the broader knowledge, creativity and insights of its membership. By doing this, our enemy hopes to catalyze the transformation of the various local insurgent and revolutionary efforts into an organic, global social movement, one that transcends organizational limitations, adapts to changes on the ground and allows for anyone to support these efforts at any level of commitment.

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[6] Muhammad bin Ahmad as-Salim, *39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad.* At-Tibyan Publications, 2003.

[7] For an in-depth analysis of this work, see Brian Fishman's assessment, "Al-Qa`ida Spymaster Analyzes U.S." at: http://www.ctc.usma.edu/hakaymah/

Short-Term Improvements

As a government, we now know that the Jihadi Movement's ideological goals and strategic objectives have been methodically articulated by the Movement's brightest thinkers. In fact, their public and private writings of these Jihadi scholars, which can be viewed as today's *Mein Kampf*, hold the key for America's ability to formulate effective strategy against the Jihadi Movement. [8]

Given the importance of these operational, strategic and ideological texts for our enemy's recruitment, educational and propaganda purposes, a more concentrated national effort to exploit these texts for policymaking is vital. Specifically, the United States should consider following two courses of action.

First, we should raise overall expectations within the government about how it is both possible and desirable to leverage knowledge against our enemy. USSOCOM has already proven itself to be among the most forward thinking agencies in this regard. By making previously restricted al Qa'ida, and other terrorist groups' internal documents from the Harmony Database, available to the broader terrorism research community, USSOCOM has exponentially increased its analytical power.[9] This process could achieve even more significant results if additional resources were dedicated to translating, processing, and releasing these documents and making more of them available to analysts and scholars in a more timely fashion.

By setting a new standard for the granularity with which we understand our enemy's strategic and ideological strengths and weaknesses, we will be much better able to operationalize the second recommendation; namely, to deepen the ways in which America integrates insights from the study of these works into its strategy formulation.

We are increasingly seeing the need to implement flexible, synchronized multidimensional policies aimed at intelligently combating the Jihadi Movement, leveraging those key thinkers, immunizing the Jihadi Movement's target constituencies, degrading its strengths and exploiting its vulnerabilities.

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[8] For more details on how to understand Jihadi strategic and ideological writings, see "Stealing al-Qa'ida's Playbook" at http://www.ctc.usma.edu/Stealing Al-Qaidas Playbook-CTC.pdf

[9] The positive results of USSOCOM's efforts to increase the avenues by which outside scholars can analyze these documents was recently demonstrated in *Harmony and Dishmarony: Exploiting Al-Qaeda's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, ed. LTC Joseph Felter, published in 2006 by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. It is available at: http://www.ctc.usma.edu/harmony.asp

The Jihadi Movement's scholars have dedicated decades of deep thought to analyzing their internal fractures and debates. They have paid careful attention to the types of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency tactics have hurt their movement in the past. They also discuss how Jihad organizations have adapted their tactics and strategies to overcome those challenges. By extracting these insights from their works, the United States will be able to more effectively and efficiently deploy its resources in this fight. The role of the broader academic community in helping the overall national effort to formulate such nuanced strategic approaches cannot be underestimated.

Toward a Long-Term Solution

During the Cold War, a similarly protracted conflict involving both aggressive military and ideological campaigns, the United States found ways to involve scholars from all disciplines in its efforts. To date, the United States government has not found a way to parallel that sweeping effort in our fight against the global Jihadi Movement. On the flip side, however, the Jihadi Movement has made their scholars and substantive experts the cornerstone of their strategies against us.

The United States government should lead this fight in combating the ideas driving the Jihadi Movement by establishing an interagency research center whose sole purpose would be to identify influential advocates of terrorism, analyze their strategic and ideological works and disseminate their analysis to other government agencies involved in this fight.

By standing up this kind of strategic research center, under the direction of USSOCOM or another agency in government, the United States would be making a public commitment to empowering our warfighters with the intellectual tools that they need to win the long-term fight. Such an entity can only be successful, however, if it resists bureaucratic temptations to classify or restrict the external distribution of this material, and if it aggressively draws upon the world's leading substantive experts on this movement, most of whom are in the country's graduate programs and teaching in our universities. Beyond the immediate benefit having such experts involved with government thinking, the establishment of a strategic research entity proposed here would serve to rebuild a positive working relationship between academe and the military.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before this committee and for your devoting your time and attention to this important issue. We are keenly aware of the importance of this issue because the cadets that we teach every day at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, will be the lieutenants serving on the front lines in a few short months. They will certainly benefit from your efforts as we strive to better confront the enemy that we face.

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