Muslim Public Opinion and Al Qaeda Propaganda: Implications for U.S. Policy

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Abstract

"So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will fight without danger in battles. If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or may lose. If you know neither yourself nor your enemy, you will always endanger yourself." The Art of War by Sun Tzu.

The common perception around the world is that the U.S. is heavily engaged at the military and operational level in the "war on terror", but is much less engaged at the ideological level. Many believe the U.S. is losing the battle for "hearts and minds". Some say the U.S. is still struggling to understand Al Qaeda, while Al Qaeda has shown itself more adept at understanding the U.S. the enemy. This paper aims to provide a framework for assessing these claims by deconstructing the communication strategy of Al Qaeda and assessing its effectiveness. Communication is examined in terms of *target audiences* (who), *messages* (what) and *channels* (how), and how these elements have changed in response to events on the ground and changes in technology. The U.S. response is considered in terms of the major dimensions of national communication, including the traditional discipline of "public diplomacy" and the newer discipline of "strategic communications". The paper concludes with assessments of the effectiveness of the U.S. response and a number of policy recommendations.

Introduction

For over six years the United States and its coalition partners have been engaged in an unconventional war against Al Qaeda and its affiliates[1]. This war is being fought at two levels: at a tactical or military level, and at an ideological or strategic level. It is an asymmetric war: Al Qaeda must attempt to overcome the force advantage of the United States. It does so at the tactical level through a strategy of stealth operations and surprise attacks. It does so at the ideological level through a strategy of propaganda (see definition in appendix 1) and a powerful narrative of victimization. There is a stark difference in approach: "while the U.S. military conducts a largely kinetic campaign complemented with communication efforts against violent extremists, our adversary conducts an information campaign punctuated by kinetic exclamation points – suicide bombings and spectacular attacks to highlight their cause"[2].

The disproportionate emphasis the United States places on force relative to communications has led to frustration in the policy community. "How can a man in a cave out-communicate the world's leading communications society?" asked Richard Holbrooke shortly after 9/11[3]. "It is just plain embarrassing that al-Qaeda is better at communicating its message on the Internet than America" lamented U.S. Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, more recently[4]. Several authors have suggested that on its current trajectory the United States is losing the "battle for hearts and minds"[5]. At the same time, there is recognition that all is not going well for Al Qaeda, especially since the "tribal awakening" in Anbar province and the apparent successes of the Petraeus strategy in Iraq in 2007. "In large measure because of what is unfolding in Iraq, the tide within the Islamic world is beginning to run strongly against Al-Qaeda", claims one analyst in a recent op-ed[6].

The aim of the paper is to dissect such statements that refer to "winning" or "losing" the battle for hearts and minds, by conducting an objective, contextual assessment of the communication strategy of Al Qaeda and by assessing the U.S. response. This approach follows the wisdom of Sun Tzu. Knowledge of the enemy must be complemented by knowledge of self[7]. Put another way, we must seek to understand the enemy without the fog of our own propaganda[8]. The paper examines the target audiences, messages and channels of Al Qaeda's strategy as well as the political context and cognitive assumptions that underlie the strategy. This deconstruction of communication strategy captures the essence of Jowett and O'Donnell's analysis of propaganda[9], but does so in a five-step rather than a ten-step framework. The five steps are to describe the goals, the organization, the target audience and message, the historical evolution and instruments used, and the rhetoric and effectiveness of the communication.

Specifically, the paper sets out to answer a series of questions with the aim of deriving conclusions regarding the role and limitation of communication in the so-called "global war on terror". The paper begins with an examination of the importance of communication aimed at foreign publics. Why is public opinion important, and what does international relations theory tell us about the role of communication in its formation? What do polls tell us about public opinion towards Al Qaeda and toward the U.S.?

It then proceeds to deconstruct the communication strategy of Al Qaeda. What are its strategic and communication goals? Whom does it speak to, through what instruments or channels, and what is the message that is being conveyed? Do its actions and those of its adversary reinforce or detract from its communication? How effective is its strategy, and why? Finally, what are the implications

for U.S. foreign policy, strategic communications and public diplomacy? What is the U.S. doing right, and where is it falling short, in its efforts to combat Al Qaeda's ideological appeal?

The Importance of Foreign Public Opinion

This chapter examines the following questions: why is foreign public opinion an important factor in the "war on terror"? How does communication influence public opinion, what does international relations theory say? And what actually do the polls tell us about public support (or non-support) for Al Qaeda and for the U.S., and what lies behind this support or lack thereof?

Within U.S. policy circles since 9/11, the argument for mobilizing "non-kinetic" dimensions of national power has been put forward most convincingly by Joseph Nye, who advocates the use of "soft power" to inspire others to follow the lead of the U.S. through attraction and persuasion rather than force[10]. Although neo-conservatives such as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld have not embraced the term (when asked about soft power, he famously replied "I don't know what it means"[11]), there is a recognition that military power is not enough. In October, 2003, Rumsfeld wrote to the joint chiefs: "Today we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?"[12].

This calculus can also be articulated in market terms. Shibley Telhami writes that the United States has "focused its effort in fighting terrorism on confronting the 'supply side' of terrorism without equally addressing the 'demand side'[13]. As long as the demand side persists, terrorism will persist. "For every terror organization that is destroyed, other suppliers will arise to exploit the persistent demand"[14]. One example that Telhami cites was the U.S. efforts to encourage Arab governments to speak out in the spring of 2002 against the horrific spate of suicide bombings in Israel. Although

both the suicide bombings and the retaliatory Israeli operations were universally condemned, U.S. spokesmen neglected to project empathy with the innocent casualties on the Palestinian side, seriously undermining efforts to persuade peoples and governments in the region to reject terrorism. Other commentators go further, positing that the demand-side of terrorism has been fueled by the selective application of the term "terrorism" itself: the clear lack of any reference to state-sponsored terrorism, and the selective political use of the term to justify unpopular foreign policies, has exacerbated the distrust that Arabs and Muslims already held towards the U.S. and its allies[15].

One of the metrics that can provide an indication of the demand-side of terrorism is public opinion. Terrorist organizations need at least a passively supportive society in order to hide and obtain the resources necessary to survive[16]. Terrorist organizations also need a level of active support to flourish. Depending on circumstances, they may require financial backing, supplies of arms, false documentation, training, safe houses, communication equipment, or other logistical support[17]. Finally, terrorists need to appeal to a section of the population in order to recruit members. In short, a guerrilla movement can "neither survive nor flourish if it separates itself from the people's sympathies and cooperation"[18].

Classical realists find it difficult to accept that policy making needs to take foreign public opinion into account. For those schooled in a state-centric view of the world, the United States should leave the issue of Arab public opinion to Arab governments. The assumption has long been that authoritarian Arab governments have remained in power for decades by shaping public opinion or resisting it when necessary, a view that was reinforced in 1991 when Arab governments overcame public opposition and joined the American-led coalition to drive Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait[19].

However, the rise of cross-border satellite TV has broken the monopoly that Arab regimes once held over information, albeit not completely[20]. Even more profound has been the rise of the internet as an ungoverned information space and virtual sanctuary for terrorist organizations. Terrorist organizations are now able to enter the information market, compete with governments for the allegiance of "the masses"[21], and thrive and flourish in new and largely unregulated cyberspaces[22]. In fact, despite realist assumptions, Arab regimes have never enjoyed the degree of power exercised by totalitarian states such as the Soviet Union under Stalin, and have always depended to some degree for their legitimacy upon public support for their policies[23]. The new media has merely heightened their sense of vulnerability and made public opinion more important than ever for their survival. For the sake of its alliances in the Middle East, the U.S. cannot afford to ignore the opinion of Arab publics.

Traditional realist theories of international relations are unable to explain the rise in power of non-state actors, the impact of the media, and the power of ideas. The single, most important reason why public opinion has become so vital to the "global war on terrorism" is that Al Qaeda has metastasized since 9/11 into an ideological movement fueled by the power of ideas. The 2004 attacks in Madrid "demonstrated the global reach of bin Laden's ideas, not his operations"[24]. Similarly, attacks in Bali, Mombasa and Taba "have emanated from cells that, while undoubtedly motivated and inspired by Al-Qaeda, nonetheless have sought to 'operationalize' the group's ideological agenda according to their own interpretation and on their own initiative"[25].

In one respect Al-Qaeda has ceased to be an organization in the literal sense but has become "an idea moving across geographic boundaries carried by satellite television"[26]. In another respect, Al Qaeda has become an ideational construct. The new phenomenon of Al Qaeda 2.0[27] can only be

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understood in terms of constructivism, which holds the view that the building blocks of international reality are ideational as well as material, and that power needs to be re-conceptualized in social and contextual ways that take more account of legitimacy and ideas[28]. Public opinion lies at the heart of this new international reality.

Realist interpretations of public opinion fall short of explaining the impact of the internet. Since the early twentieth century, elites in the United States have believed that it is their role to manipulate the opinion of a largely uneducated public in the complex affairs of foreign policy. Walter Lippmann argued that public consent had to be manufactured[29]. Morgenthau wrote that public opinion "is a dynamic, ever changing entity to be continuously created and recreated by informed and responsible leadership; that it is the historic mission of the government to assert that leadership"[30]. These realist interpretations suggest propaganda, secrecy and selective dissemination as necessary means for achieving elite control.

The problem with these realist theories is that, unlike the one-to-many dimension of print and broadcast media, long the preferred vehicles for authoritarian control, the internet provides for many-to-many communication, interaction and dialog[31]. On the one hand, Al Qaeda has succeeded in creating a worldview or "pseudo-environment" for its constituency, based upon the propagation of a particular version of history. Because its narrative relies on the "positive resonance of its content with relevant and shared, extant realities", it has been adopted by a significant percentage of Muslims, to the extent that it has acquired the status of "real truth". On the other hand, because it has been born in the minds of Al Qaeda supporters within the context of a virtual network, this "pseudo-environment"[32] has been socially constructed through an ongoing collective dialog. Actors interpret the world and their own identities in unique ways, and as they communicate with

one another about their interpretations, their communicative process enables them to whittle down the diversity of multiple interpretations into one of a few socially legitimated interpretations[33].

A direct result of this dynamic, coupled with the general rise in power of non-state actors, is that pluralism and dissent is growing not just within the jihadi community[34] but also the wider Islamist community. As Peter Mandaville notes, "the "emerging infrastructure – on the Internet and satellite television, in widely-circulated books, through major international conferences and research centers – of a counterveiling effort by mainstream Islamic scholars to challenge Al-Qaeda's global rhetoric…in their minds, this community of shared knowledge and religious interpretation is explicitly designed as an antidote to bin Laden and the radical jihadis"[35]. The success or failure of Al Qaeda's experiment will rest upon the results of this collective dialog, a dialog that constructivist theory can help to explain. And public opinion polling is one way of measuring such success or failure.

What the Polls Say

Public opinion polls are useful for not just measuring sympathy toward Al Qaeda but can also be used to attempt to get at what lies behind this sympathy. In the same vein, public opinion polls can help to measure antipathy toward the United States. Such measurements and analysis is important, since "if we are to fashion public diplomacy and other policies that succeed in reducing the undeniable antipathy in [Arab and Muslim] societies towards the United States, it is essential to have an accurate view of what is fueling this antipathy"[36]. In cases where antipathy is fueled by misinformation or misperception, communication initiatives will have a strong role to play. In cases where antipathy is driven by policies, such information needs to be made available to policy-makers. Of course, having anti-American attitudes does not automatically lead to support for terrorism conducted against the United States and its allies[37]. It is important to look for the reasons behind both anti-Americanism and support for terrorism.

Public opinion polls are also useful for identifying opportunities, not just problems. Polling can reveal shared interests and attitudes[38]. When done properly, polling can also locate the convergence of opinion and ideals among moderate groups, information that could help message practitioners in formulating effective messages for critical, "swing" audiences[39]. At the same time, polling has its limitations. In some cases, responses to pollsters may constitute more of a "protest vote"[40] or "courtesy bias"[41] than an objective answer to a question. And polling is inadequate to unmask complex cultural and ideological attitudes, which may only be discernible through focus groups, interviews, the hands-on knowledge of diplomats, and in-country public diplomacy professionals who directly engage with local populations and opinion leaders[42].

The first question to ask is which foreign publics are relevant to the so-called "war on terror"? U.S. counter-terrorism strategy is focused on "destroying the larger al-Qaida network and also confronting the radical ideology that inspired others to join or support the terrorist movement"[43]. It describes "today's terrorist enemy" as a "transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals – and their state and non-state supporters – which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends"[44]. Based on this assessment of the enemy, the assumption that has been made is that U.S. public diplomacy efforts is targeted at countries with significant Muslim populations[45]. See figure 1.
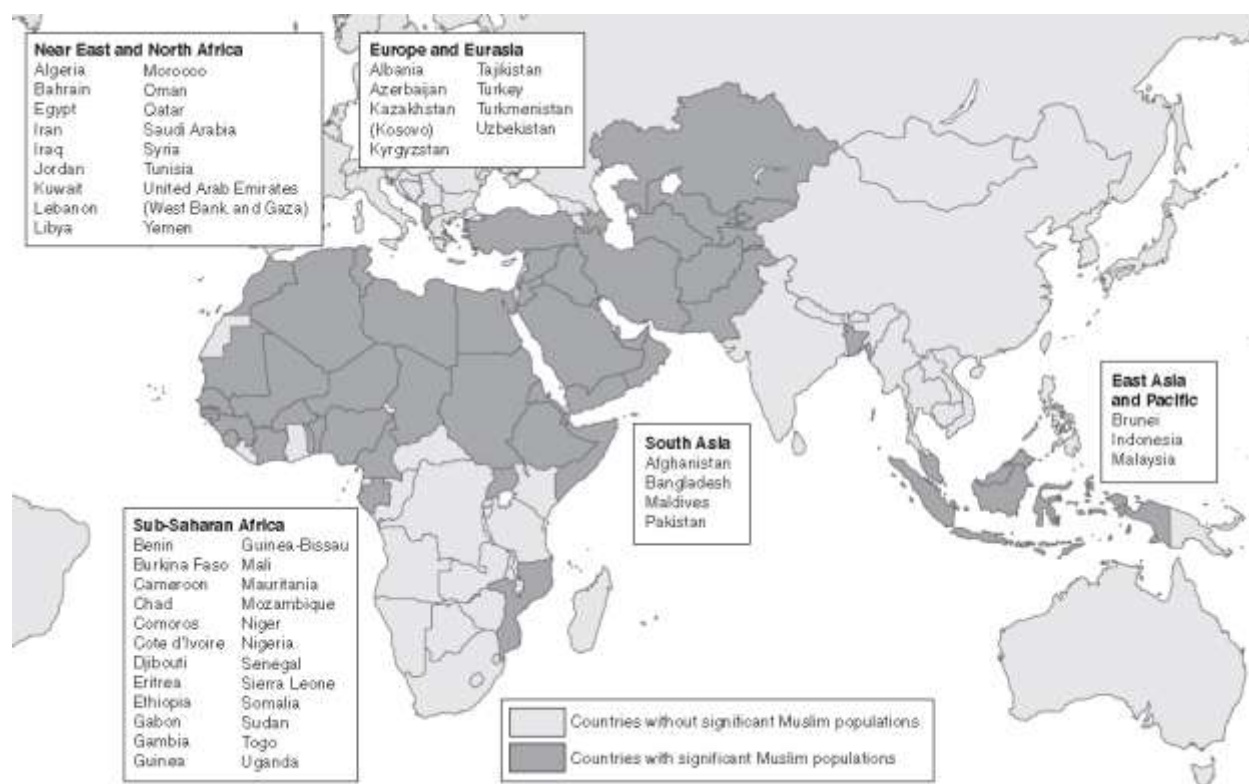

Figure 1. State Department Map of the Muslim World

Starting first with attitudes towards America in the Muslim world. The 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Survey reports that, while the image of the U.S. has declined in most parts of the world since 9/11

(favorable ratings are lower in 26 of 33 countries for which trends are available), "the U.S. image remains abysmal in most Muslim countries in the Middle East and Asia"[46]. Anger towards the U.S. reached a nadir in 2003 in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq. Attitudes have improved somewhat since then, but have not returned to pre-9/11 levels, with the exception of Lebanon[47]. Opinions remain overwhelmingly negative among Muslims in the Middle East and Asia, while African Muslims tend to express more positive views[48]. See figure 2 for those countries with trend data (shows % favorable).
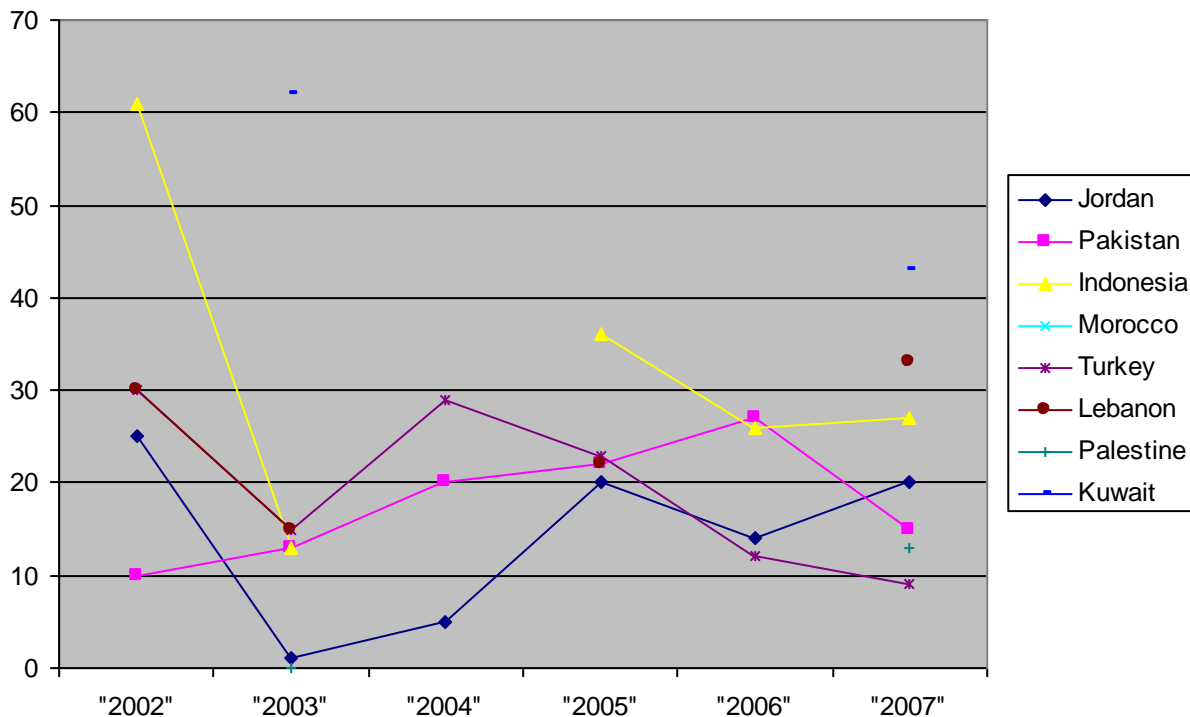

Figure 2. Trend in Muslim Opinion Towards the U.S. (shows %favorable)

Now looking at attitudes towards Al Qaeda in the Muslim World. Since 2003, Pew has been asking respondents how much confidence they have in Osama bin Laden. The question asked is "how

much confidence do you have in Osama bin Laden to do the right thing regarding world affairs – a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence, or no confidence at all?"[49]. Results for 2003, 2005 and 2007 are shown in figure 3 for a subset of countries. Al-Qaeda's influence in the Muslim world is in decline. Bin Laden is widely mistrusted in all but a handful of Muslim countries, including overwhelming majorities in Lebanon (95%), Turkey (74%), Egypt (69%), Jordan (69%) and Kuwait (68%). Only in the Palestinian territories and Nigeria do majorities of the Muslim populations say they have at least some confidence in bin Laden to do the right thing in world affairs[50].
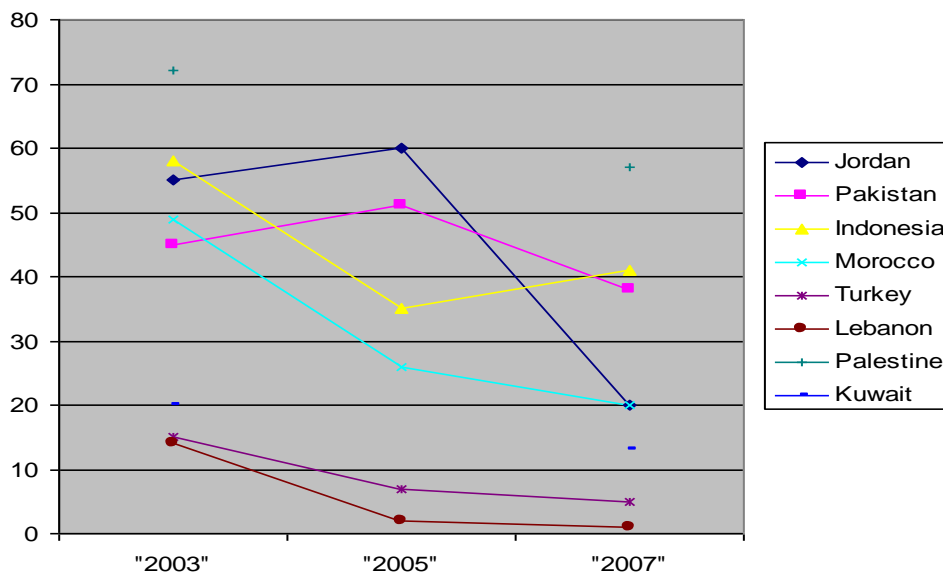

Figure 3. Trend in Muslim Confidence in Osama bin Laden (shows a lot or some)

One interpretation of this decline is that although the Iraq war may have temporarily buoyed up support for Al Qaeda, the volume of anti-jihadist voices in the Arab media has dramatically increased in recent years, with every Al-Qaeda-linked terror attack now met by a chorus of Arab

criticism and condemnation. The Amman Declaration of 2005 that brought together a wide range of Muslim figures condemned Islamist extremism[51], as did the recent 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference in Dakar, Senegal. "We continue to strongly condemn all forms of extremism and dogmatism which are incompatible with Islam, a religion of moderation and peaceful coexistence," the declaration said[52].
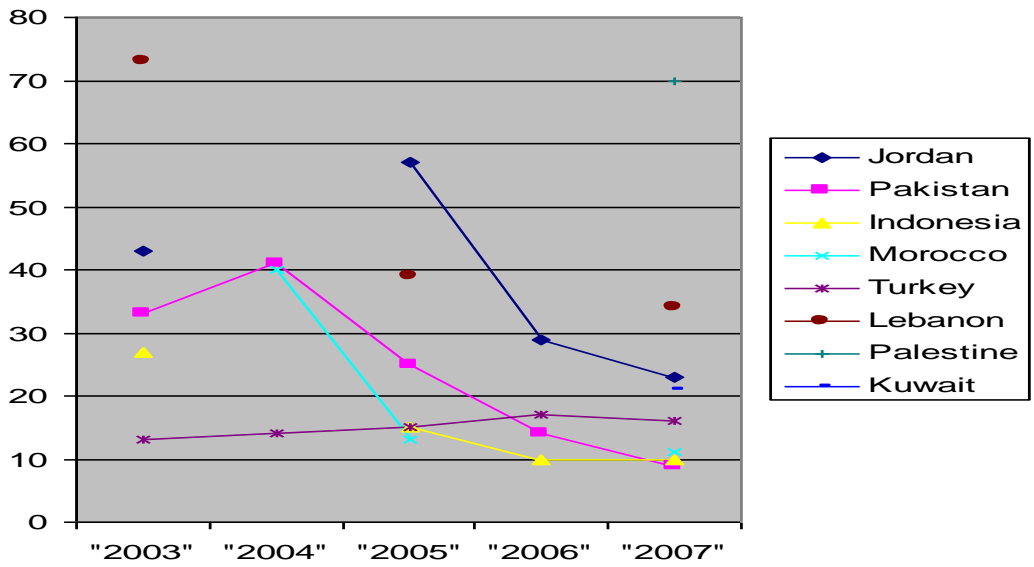

Figure 4. Trend in Support for Violence Against Civilians

Support for violence against civilians is also declining, although levels are still a major cause for concern. See figure 4. Here, it is important to distinguish between violence against Muslims and violence against non-Muslims. In a December 2005 survey by the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies, 94% of Jordanians saw the Amman bombings as a "terrorist act", while only 63% said the same of the July 2005 London bombings, and less than 40% felt the attacks by the Iraqi insurgency on American troops in Iraq to be the work of terrorists. Similarly, in a December 2005 survey of Palestinians, only 12% supported the Amman hotel bombings, while 65% still

supported Al-Qaeda actions in the United Stated and Europe[53]. In a more recent poll in Iraq, while Arab respondents overwhelmingly supported attacks against U.S. forces, Al-Qaeda attacks against civilians evoked strong disapproval[54].

It is important to drill down into these attitudes, to determine what lies behind them. Data from the 2007 Pew Survey suggest some of the reasons for anti-Americanism. Throughout Muslim countries of the Middle East, overwhelming majorities believe that the U.S. favors Israel too much[55], and across the Muslim world as a whole, large majorities say that the U.S. should withdraw its troops from Iraq and Afghanistan[56] (figure 5). Significant majorities say they oppose the US-led "war on terror", although this opposition has not been so strong in the immediate aftermath of a country experiencing a terrorist attack on their own soil[57] (figure 6).
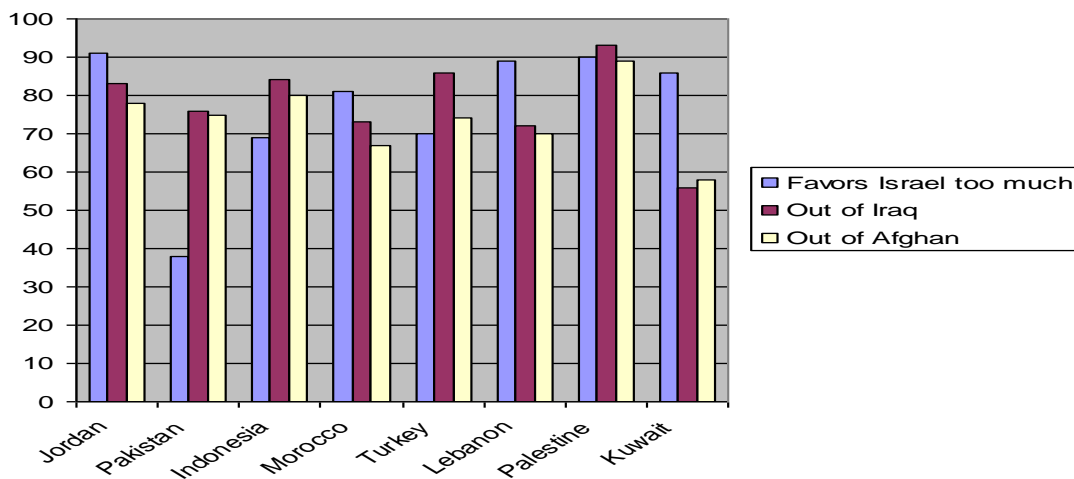

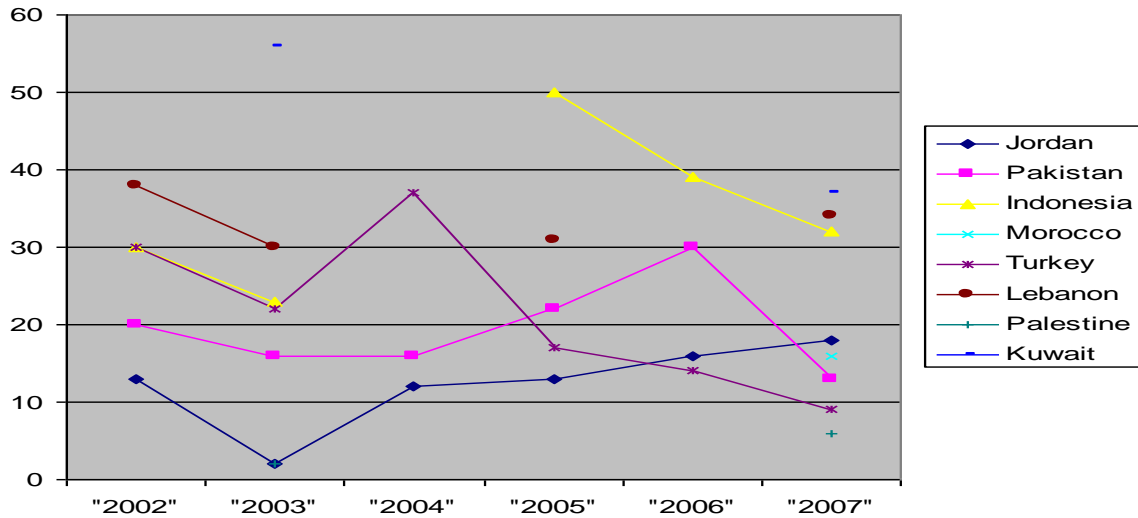**Figure 5**. U.S. Policy Towards Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan

Figure 6. Support for the U.S.-led War on Terror

On a more positive note, while most respondents to the survey had never traveled to the U.S., consistently, those who had, held more favorable views of the country than those who had not, and the image of America tends to be more positive among those who have friends or relatives in the U.S. whom they regularly call, write to, or visit[58]. In focus group research conducted in 2002 on behalf of the Defense Department[59], youth across the Muslim world were asked about their image of America. For those within one degree of separation (e.g. a neighbor) of someone living in or having visited the U.S., their image was overwhelmingly positive, described in terms such as innovation, technology, or equality of opportunity. For those within two or three degrees of separation, their image was more value-neutral, described in terms of U.S. business in the global marketplace, such as Nike, MacDonalds, Microsoft. For those who were four of five degrees of separation away from someone with direct experience in the U.S., their image was overwhelmingly negative, being described in terms of U.S. foreign policy.

Cause for hope also exists from the finding that "attitudes towards Americans are often more positive than attitudes towards their country [i.e. the U.S.]"[60]. The Gallup Organization conducted in-person interviews of nearly 10,000 residents of nine Muslim countries — Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey — in December, 2001, and January, 2002. The questions addressed attitudes about the attacks on Sept. 11 and the U.S. response to them[61]. In an analysis of the data, Giacomo Chiozza[62] separates anti-Americanism into two distinct strands – rejections of U.S. policy, and rejections of its polity. Negative views of U.S. policy do not necessarily reflect negative evaluation of culture and polity i.e. what people think about "what America does" can and does differ greatly from what people feel "America is"[63].

Although there are indications listed above from the 2007 Pew survey that antipathy towards America may lie with U.S. foreign policy, there are two common and somewhat interrelated assumptions about the reasons for this antipathy[64], which are also apparent within two of the most common ways in which the "war on terror" is framed in U.S. policymaking circles and western media[65]. It is important to look at what the polls tell us about the validity of these assumptions.

The first assumption is that there is a profound distaste for western values, norms and lifestyles within the Muslim world[66], an assumption that has been fostered by the frame that the West is in a "Clash of Civilizations" with the world of Islam[67]. Huntington's famous thesis argues that Muslim support for terrorism is one manifestation of the inevitable conflict between two

fundamentally opposed value systems that are being pushed into closer contact through the process of globalization, and each of which claims exclusive universal validity.

Several polls taken since 9/11, in addition to the Pew Global Attitudes Survey in 2007 already mentioned, expose this over-simplification and invalidate much of Huntington's thesis. For example, polls carried out by Zogby International in five Arab countries and three non-Arab Muslim countries in the spring of 2002 and in seven Arab countries in the fall of 2002 document antipathy towards the United States[68]. The European-run "World Values Survey" was established to assess the state of sociocultural, moral, religious and political values of different cultures across the world[69]. And a poll carried out by Gallup between 2001 and 2007 conducted tens of thousands of interviews in more than 35 Muslim nations, surveying a sample of more than 90% of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims[70].

The Zogby polls found that views of France and Canada turned out to be much less negative than views of the United States[71]. The Gallup poll found that unfavorable opinions of the United States and Great Britain contrast sharply with more positive opinions of France and Germany[72]. There is clearly something other than dislike of "western values" in the judgments of respondents. The Zogby polls also asked respondents for impression of various aspects of American society and policy[73] (see figure 7). What stands out at first glance is the degree to which policies are viewed much more negatively than culture. In related polls carried out by Zogby in Saudi Arabia in March 2002, Saudis overwhelmingly saw American policies rather than values as the source of their frustrations[74]. A recent poll conducted by Shibley Telhami asked respondents which aspect of Al Qaeda they sympathized with the most: 30% said "that it

confronts the U.S." and 18% said "that it stands for Muslim causes such as the Palestinian issue".

Only 7% showed sympathy for Al Qaeda's vision of a Taliban-like Islamic state, and only 10%

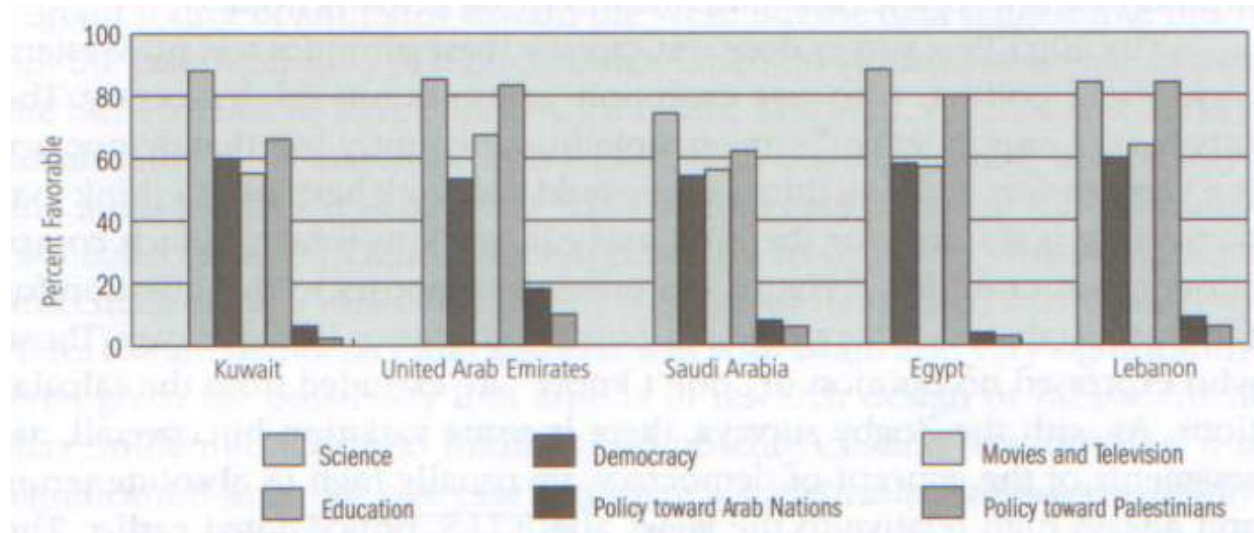sympathized with its methods of operation[75].

Figure 7. Impressions of American Society and Policies in 5 Arab Countries

An overwhelming majority in the Zogby studies held favorable views of American science and

technology, a finding that was confirmed in the Pew[76] and Gallup[77] studies. Majorities also

supported democracy in all countries in the survey. Much depends, of course, on how the term is

interpreted. Substantial majorities in nearly all nations surveyed in the Gallup poll want

"freedom of speech", defined as "allowing all citizens to express their opinion on the political,

social, and economic issues of the day"[78], exposing the false rhetoric of claims such as "they hate

us for our freedom". Interestingly, a significantly higher percentage of the so-called "politically

radicalized" (defined by those who said the 9/11 attacks were completely morally justified and

who also have an unfavorable or very unfavorable view of the United States[79]) say that "moving

toward greater governmental democracy" will foster progress in the Arab/Muslim world[80].

Another repudiation of the cultural thesis was highlighted by the World Values Survey, which collected data on ten data sets over fifteen years in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Morocco, Algeria, and Turkey. In not one case was there a statistically significant relationship between attitudes toward democracy and the personal involvement of Muslim respondents with their religion[81].

At the same time, the Gallup poll indicates that majorities in most countries want Islamic *sharia* as at least "a" source of legislation[82], and the Pew survey indicates that in many countries there has been a large decline in support for "American ideas about democracy" since 2002, an indication, perhaps, of the mental association that Arabs and Muslims have developed between "American democracy" and "occupation" since the invasion of Iraq in 2003. For example, favorability ratings regarding American ideas of democracy have fallen from 33% to 8% in Turkey, and 51% to 28% in Indonesia[83].

Other Muslim attitudes towards American culture are mixed, vindicating some of Huntington's thesis. While notable majorities say they like the American way of doing business, in contrast with the predominantly negative attitudes towards American business in non-Muslim countries, there is considerable dislike in several predominantly Muslim countries towards American music, movies and television[84]. These findings are mirrored by Gallup, which reports that while many are attracted to western films and music, many others are repulsed: "they perceive Western permissiveness as an assault on traditional religious and cultural values" and have a "predominant feeling that a secular and powerful West that does not share its values is overwhelming the Muslim world". Most importantly, a "significantly greater proportion of the politically radicalized than moderates cite Western cultural penetration, Western immorality and

moral corruption as the top reasons for resentment"[85]. Telhami cautions that much of this resentment and distaste is formed by the "impression that Hollywood's values are American values", and the perception that religion and family are not important in America[86].

The second widely shared assumption regarding antipathy towards the United States is related to the first, and states that the problem of terrorism lies within Islam itself, that Islam is an inherently violent religion. Huntington wrote about "Islam's bloody borders", and that "some Westerners have argued that the West does not have problems with Islam but only with violent extremists ..But evidence to support [this assertion] is lacking…The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam"[87]. In his essay "Sacred Rage" written in 1990, Bernard Lewis predated Huntington by coining the phrase "class of civilizations", and traced Muslim anger from an initial response to Western civilization of admiration and emulation, to one of hostility and rejection[88]. Lewis attributed this hostility to a growing humiliation and awareness of inferiority, and expanded on these themes in his book, "The Crisis of Islam", in which he frames the inevitable clash in binary terms between the House of Islamic Peace (*Dar al-Salam*) and the House of War (*Dar al-Harb*), run by infidels[89]. Unfortunately, the Huntington and Lewis theses are amplified by prominent voices in American media, such as Bill O'Reilly, and right-wing evangelicals such as Pat Robertson and Franklin Graham[90].

Polling data to test Lewis' thesis and ascertain the real "roots of Muslim rage" is sparse, but a survey conducted in 2004 in Algeria includes items on personal religiosity as well as attitudes towards Western culture, society and democracy[91]. A logistic regression analysis showed that religiosity was not significantly related to favorable or unfavorable views towards the West,

"indicating that the data did not support assertions that posit Islam as a major source of anti-Western sentiment"[92]. An interesting discovery of this research was that a lack of confidence in the domestic political and economic situation is correlated with antipathy toward the West, a topic that will be pursued below.

Further evidence against Lewis' thesis comes from two national surveys conducted in Algeria and Jordan in 2002[93]. This time the dependent variable involves both attitudes toward terrorism and the United States. For example, the question asked in Algeria was "As you know, a group of religious fundamentalists hijacked four civilian airliners in September and crashed them into buildings in New York and Washington, DC, killing several thousand people. What is your opinion of this action: strongly approve, approve, disapprove, strongly disapprove?"[94]. Independent variables included frequency of prayer and mosque attendance, and reliance on religious teachings in daily life, as well as attitudes towards Western society and culture, U.S. foreign policy and the domestic political system[95].

Results in both countries showed not only no correlation between support for 9/11, personal religiosity and attitudes towards Western culture, but statistically significant correlation between support for 9/11 and discontent with the U.S. foreign policy and the domestic political system[96]. In both cases, religious and cultural orientation has no ability to account for variance in attitudes toward terrorism, but political judgments, domestic as well as foreign, do have significant explanatory power. To explore the correlation between support for 9/11 and domestic discontent, the author conducted an analysis on data from the 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, using percent confidence in Osama bin Laden as the dependent variable, regressed against a number of

standard country-level indicators. The results provide evidence that sympathy for bin Laden in a particular country is significantly correlated with the level of civil rights abuse. See Appendix 2 for details.

The results of the Algerian and Jordanian surveys were corroborated across a much wider sample of the Muslim world in the Gallup poll, which found no correlation between personal piety and radical views, and that "the real difference between those who condone terrorist acts and other is about politics, not piety"[97]. Like the Algerian and Jordanian surveys, the Gallup poll used support for 9/11 as its measure of "political radicalization". It found that "no significant difference exists between the politically radicalized and moderates in worship attendance"[98]. Moreover, the Gallup poll was able to start forming a profile of the "politically radicalized", who were more educated and better off than moderates[99], more optimistic about the future but pessimistic about world affairs[100], feared U.S. domination more than moderates[101], and were more keen to see the *sharia* as the only source of law, in order to limit the power of authoritarian and corrupt regimes[102].

Clearly, international politics and domestic oppression lie much more at the "roots of Muslim rage" than religion. Telhami points out the secularism of militant groups such as the Tamil Tigers[103], or the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, "which should be a reminder of the mistaken assumptions many make about the relationship between the Islamic religion and violence"[104]. In fact, interviews and focus groups suggest that the West's pre-occupation with Islam as a violent religion is fueling resentment. As one Jordanian interviewee related to Gallup: "Islam is a religion of goodness and love, and not terrorism. The West must be willing to accept

the true picture of Islam and not hold on to the negative pictures that serves terrorists"[105]. A study conducted by Akbar Ahmed in Southeast Asia concluded that most Muslims believed the biggest threat facing the Muslim world was American and Western perceptions of Islam. Ahmed concludes that there is a huge unsatisfied demand in the Muslim world for dialog with the West[106].

Al Qaeda

Goals

To understand Al Qaeda's communications strategy requires an examination of the historical context of its creation, the historical trends that underlie its grievances, its ideology, and its goals. Firstly, it is necessary to look at historical context to understand its raison d'etre. At its core Al Qaeda is an outgrowth of the Soviet-Afghan war of 1979 to 1989. It is a non-state armed group driven by an anti-imperialist insurgency doctrine, justified in terms of Islamic *jihad (*struggle*)*. Thus, while its goals remain political in nature - to expel invaders of the *dar al-Islam* (land of Islam) and re-establish the global *umma* (Islamic community) under a caliphate, it has in essence come to be defined by what it does, by armed jihad, by a warrior culture. The Soviet-Afghan war defined the essence of Al Qaeda that remains to this day.

Al Qaeda was founded in 1998 by members of the MAK (*Maktab al Khidmat lil Mujahidin al-Arab*, or Afghan Service Bureau), which had recruited, housed, trained and financed mujahideen from across the Muslim world to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan[107]. Although bin Laden was chosen as "emir-general", it was Abdullah Azzam who conceptualized Al Qaeda, primarily to stabilize and harness the massive *mujahideen* organization he had created. Azzam was a Palestinian scholar who had joined the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan after being expelled in the 1967 war, and together with Osama bin Laden set up the Afghan Service Bureau in 1984[108]. He formulated the broad outlines of what would become Al Qaeda in 1987 and 1988, and completed its founding charter in that period. Azzam envisaged a vanguard organization that would channel the energies of the *mujahideen* into fighting on behalf of oppressed Muslims

worldwide, an "Islamic rapid reaction force" that would be ready to spring to the defense of fellow believers at short notice[109]: "Every principle needs a vanguard to carry it forward, and, while focusing its way into society, puts up with heavy tasks and enormous sacrifices…This vanguard constitutes *Al-Qaeda al-Sublah* [the solid base] for the expected society"[110].

From the very beginning of its formation, there has been dissent regarding its tactics. Azzam was against the use of terrorist tactics, and went as far as issuing a fatwa prohibiting the use of jihadi funds for terrorist training as anti-Islamic[111]. He was also strongly against the labeling of Muslims as apostates, and wanted nothing to do with a conflict among Muslims[112]. His ideas stood in direct opposition to a powerful inner core of Egyptians, who influenced bin Laden towards turning Al Qaeda into a terrorist organization. MAK's Egyptian fighters wanted to train the *mujahideen* in terrorist techniques in order to mount a campaign back home. In an interview with Al Sharq al Awsat in 2001, Arab Afghan veteran, *Hasan Abd-Rabbuh al Surayhi,* told the story of the founding of Al Qaeda: The idea of Al Qaeda is an Egyptian one by the Islamic Jihad group led by *Abu-Ubaidah al Banjshiri* and *Abu-Hafs*. They are the ones, especially *al Banjshiri*, who proposed the idea to Osama bin Laden after the end of *Jihad*"[113]. The Egyptians won over bin Laden to their cause, and assassinated Assam in 1989, leaving bin Laden in control[114].

Many insiders argue that it was Ayman al-Zawahiri, who became the leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad in 1991, who was responsible for transforming bin Laden from a guerrilla into a terrorist[115]. Zawahiri had left Egypt in 1985 after being imprisoned, tortured, tried and acquitted of the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. He met bin Laden for the first time in 1986 in Peshawar, and created a strong impression on him[116]. Al-Zawahiri was a powerful influence on bin Laden from the beginning, and positioned his fellow Egyptian loyalists as key aides to bin Laden.

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The Egyptian Islamic Jihad became officially allied with Al Qaeda in 1988 as part of the World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders[117]. Following the continual crackdown of the Egyptian government, and dissent within its ranks regarding co-operation with bin Laden, Islamic Jihad eventually declined to 40 members and was absorbed by Al Qaeda in June 2001, into a new joint entity called "Qaeda al-Jihad". The name reflected the fact that "the Egyptians still made up the inner circle; the nine-member leadership council included only three non-Egyptians"[118]. Whether it was the influence of Zawahiri and the Egyptians, or the simple cold realization of the cost-effectiveness of terror, Al Qaeda would become unapologetic about the use of terrorism: "Osama is a self-acknowledged terrorist and makes no pretence about his strategy of using and justifying terror as an instrument"[119].

To understand Al Qaeda communication requires an examination of the historical trends that underlie its grievances. Much of Al Qaeda's appeal comes from its aspirations to restore the glory of Islam in the face of centuries of decline. In this regard, Al Qaeda is one of the foremost proponents of Huntington's civilizational thesis. The unprecedented and spectacular success of the expansion of the Islamic empire in its first 100 years formed the powerful basis for the enthymeme of Al Qaeda rhetoric, the belief that power derives from and can be restored by true Islamic faith and practice. After the *Rashidun* period, centuries of dynastic rule were followed by internal decline, and much of the Islamic world came to be subjugated by the West. Starting with the gradual rise of western naval power, western superiority became unmistakable when Napolean invaded Egypt in 1798. This event was followed by the gradual annexation or colonization of Muslim territory in the Balkans, Southeast Asia, North Africa and eventually the Middle East itself, when the Ottomans made the fateful decision to join the losing side in World War I[120].

After the Ottoman empire finally collapsed, the lands of the Middle East were carved up by the British and French victors into nation-states, and since that time these states have experimented with secularism, monarchic rule, constitutionalism, Arab socialism, pan-Arabism and Islamic theocracy. A simmering Islamic fundamentalism was ignited by the collapse of pan-Arabism and the ignominy of defeat in the 1967 war, and accelerated by the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the liberation of Afghanistan in 1989. Since that time further revolutionary success has eluded the fundamentalist movement, which has come to be dominated by the ideology of liberation, enshrined in the doctrine of *jihad* and propagated by *Salafist* principles. The movement is spearheaded by Al Qaeda, and has been further ignited by the collapse of the Oslo Accords, the events of 9/11, and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Al Qaeda's ideology is based upon a mix of the quietist *Salafism* and the activism of the Muslim Brotherhood, a mix that created "an explosive blend that would detonate throughout the region and the whole world"[121]. It is a mix of the teachings of 18th century Arabian cleric *Muhammad ibn 'abd al-Wahhab* and 20th century Egyptian schoolteacher and leading intellectual of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, *Sayyid Qutb*. This mix is reflected in the leadership of the Arabian Osama bin-Laden and the Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Wahhab formulated a puritanical version of Islam based on strict adherence to the Qu'ran and the *Hadith*, which was accompanied by a clear set of conditions for *takfir*, the process by which Muslims were denounced as apostates. *Qutb* sharpened these conditions still further and rendered them applicable to Muslim leaders who failed to implement Islamic *sharia*. Moreover, he argued against established legal opinion that jihad was primarily a struggle against the soul or a defensive war to protect the Muslim community, advocating jihad to establish an Islamic state, and raising it

to the status of the 6th pillar of Islam[122]. Basing his arguments on the 14th century Islamic scholar *ibn Taymiyya's* fatwa against the Mongols, Abdullah Azzam then argued that this jihad becomes an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) as opposed to a collective duty (*fard kifaya*) when a group of Muslims fails to repel an aggressor.

The whole concept of defensive jihad remained dormant until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, but has been at the center of the Global Jihadi Movement since that time. It has come to dominate the *Salafi* movement, which aimed to emulate the practice of the Prophet and his companions - the "Pious Generation" (*Al-Salaf al-Saleh*), which grew out of the teachings of reformist intellectuals such as Jamal al-Din al–Afghani and Muhummad Abduh towards the end of the 19th century. The most important impact of this *jihadi* "texture" of principles and doctrines is that the reformist elements of the original *Salafism* were lost. Doctrines that have been used to develop some of the ideas of *Jihadi-Salafism*, such as the social justice of Sayyid Qutb, were neglected in favor of the "magic touch" of violent Jihad. Being a *Jihadi-Salafi* means above all creating, as much as possible, an exact copy of the first ideal generation of Muslims, but primarily in the militant dimension[123].

Moreover, contemporary Islamists such as Al-Zawahiri and bin Laden are engaged in an "unprecedented exercise of corrupting, misinterpreting and misrepresenting the word of God to generate support for their political mission"[124]. Not only has Al Qaeda adopted Azzam's interpretation of jihad as an individual duty, but it has gone a step further than Qutb and Wahhab, neither of whom argued that civilians could be targeted during combat[125]. In a position that has been forged out of a debate that started in the mid-1990's in response to the Algerian civil war, Al Qaeda has come to justify the killing of non-Muslim civilians on the basis of a "doctrine of

proportional response", or the civilians' "capacity to fight" in "deed, word, mind, or any other form of assistance" that includes personal responsibility in a democracy for electing leaders[126].

What type of organization is Al Qaeda and how can we interpret its goals? Clearly, Al Qaeda is a "terrorist" organization. However, academics and policy-makers appear unable to agree on a common definition of "terrorism" itself. Controversial aspects include whether to limit the definition to non-state actors, whether to limit the definition to acts specifically targeting civilians, and whether to include motive in the definition. Nevertheless, a majority of analysts concur with Bruce Hoffman that terrorism is a tactic that involves "the deliberate creation or exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change"[127].

But are Al Qaeda's goals political or religious? French social scientist Olivier Roy answers that the violence of Al Qaeda is politically, not religiously, inspired. After all, "al Qaeda did not target St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, but the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. It targeted modern imperialism"[128]. Yet, efforts to pigeon-hole Al Qaeda into a neatly defined category are problematical. Rohan Gunaratna outlines four categories of terrorist organizations: revolutionary (Hamas), ideological (Hezbollah), utopian (Abu Sayyaf), and apocalyptic (Armed Islamic Group). Terrorist organizations can move from one category to another.

Gunaratna places Al Qaeda in the utopian category (no rational political approach, seek to destroy the existing political order) prior to 9/11 and the apocalyptic category (believe they are divinely inspired, seek to destroy the existing social, economic and cultural order) after 9/11. Yet Gunaratna second-guesses himself: "contrary to popular belief, however, Al Qaeda has never sought an apocalyptic goal. Closer examination suggests that it is a very practical group, with clear aims and

objectives"[129]. Gunaratna concludes that Al Qaeda "retains strong characteristics of other categories", implying both religious and political goals: "By selecting elements of tradition and modernity, fundamentalists seek to remake the world in the service of a dual commitment to the unfolding eschatological drama (by returning all things in submission to the divine) and to self-preservation (by neutralizing the threatening Other)"[130].

Avoiding the issue of religion, "netwar" academics, Arquilla and Ronfeldt, categorize Al Qaeda in non-rational terms. They outline three paradigms: coercive-diplomacy (designed to achieve specific goals, violence is limited to the ends being pursued), war (no specific calls for concessions, rather strategic campaign to inflict damage in context of an ongoing war), and new-world (aim not to destroy society but to cause a rebirth after a period of chaos). Al Qaeda is placed squarely in the "war" paradigm, yet the authors do not outline what the "strategic" element of the war paradigm entails[131].

Most recently, Norwegian analyst, Brynjar Lia, takes issues with such non-rational categorizations. He cites several authors, including Pape, Brachman, and Ulph, to debunk the accepted wisdom that "the obsessive fanaticism of *jihadi* terrorists, their religious dogmas, their pursuit of martyrdom, and visceral hatred for the West made them blind, and their behavior was not rooted in any kind of rational strategy"[132]. Lia's biography of influential Al Qaeda strategist *Abu Musab al-Suri* describes how *al-Suri* "discarded traditional *jihadi* rhetoric about God's promised victory in favor of brutal honesty, putting hard-nosed realism before religious wish-fulfillment and pragmatic long-term strategies before utopianism"[133]. Al-Suri's much acclaimed "Global Islamic Resistance Call" clearly distinguishes "praiseworthy terrorism (*irhab mahmud*)" from "blameworthy terrorism (*irhab madhmum*)"[134], advocating its use by "Global Islamic Resistance Units" in pursuit of the

"common goals, which is to resist the invaders and their allies, and an oath to God on jihad in His way to defeat them, then to work on establishing His rule"[135].

In the end, trying to categorize Al Qaeda's goals as political or religious, as rational or non-rational may be fruitless. Religion clearly plays an important role. In the minutes of the founding meeting of Al Qaeda, the organization describes itself as "an organized Islamic faction: its goal will be to lift the world of God, to make His religion victorious"[136]. Perhaps Lawrence Wright captures the confluence of Al Qaeda's motives best: "Their motivations varied, but they had in common a belief that Islam — pure and primitive, unmitigated by modernity and uncompromised by politics — would cure the wounds that socialism or Arab nationalism had failed to heal. They were angry but powerless in their own countries. They did not see themselves as terrorists but as revolutionaries who, like all such men throughout history, had been pushed into action by the simple human need for justice. Some had experienced brutal repression; some were simply drawn to bloody chaos. From the beginning of Al Qaeda, there were reformers and there were nihilists. The dynamic between them was irreconcilable and self-destructive, but events were moving so quickly that it was almost impossible to tell the philosophers from the sociopaths. They were glued together by the charismatic personality of Osama bin Laden, which contained both strands, idealism and nihilism, in a potent mix"[137].

So how can we best articulate Al Qaeda's goals? A comprehensive analysis conducted in Spain of documents issued by the Global Jihadi Movement between 1996 and 2005 details the political and religious goals. The political goals are to remove tyrants that govern Muslim states, end western influence over Islamic territory manifested in the policies of the United States, and its allies in Iraq, Israel, Russia, India, China and the Philippines, and to re-establish the caliphate. The religious

goals are to return to the original grandeur of the early period of Islam and the path of the pious predecessors, to assure victory in this effort through divine help, and to be rewarded in the after-life for adherence to these beliefs[138]. The Spanish study goes further and details "instrumental goals" which support the achievement of these political and religious goals. This is the subject of Al Qaeda's communications strategy.

Communication Strategy

Since the rise of the mass media in the 19th century and the anarchists' recognition of the "propaganda of the deed"[139], terrorist groups have become increasingly adept at mobilizing media coverage to publicize their causes. Terrorism has become a form of psychological warfare which relies on the mass media: panic is produced in an enemy society via a constant broadcasting of vicious acts, threats, and declarations. Terrorism is sometimes, therefore, regarded as a type of theater, an attempt to communicate messages through the use of orchestrated violence[140]. Murder, threats, or kidnappings convert themselves into macabre reminders that permit the terrorist group to concentrate public opinion so its message is heard[141]. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, bin Laden described the actions of the 19 "martyrs", and argued that "those young men said in deeds, in New York and Washington, speeches that overshadowed other speeches made everywhere else in the world. The speeches are understood by both Arabs and non-Arabs, even Chinese"[142].

But propaganda of the deed must also be complemented by explanations and rallying calls to a terrorist group's constituency. These constitute the "instrumental goals" of Al Qaeda, which are to mobilize the Muslim world so that it can regain consciousness of its greatness and the humiliation it suffers, explain the asymmetric nature of the struggle against the oppressors of Islam and the

need for violence and suicide attacks, and to exhort the Muslim masses to unite behind the efforts of Jihadists groups against their common enemies[143]. Al Qaeda leaders place great importance on this aspect of its strategy. In a letter to Zarqawi, intercepted by the U.S. army in 2005, Zawahiri writes "I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of the *Umma*"[144]. Bin Laden goes as far as stating that "it is obvious that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods; in fact, its ratio may reach 90% of the total preparation for the battles"[145].

Organization

Al Qaeda's organizational structure was revealed in detail for the first time in 1996 by Sudanese "walk-in" Jamal Al-Fadl, and reflects the importance of communications[146]. Below the Emir-General stands the *shura majlis*, or consultative council, which consists of very experienced members. To ensure legitimacy and loyalty, bin Laden appoints prominent personalities and trusted personal followers to key positions. Below the *shura majlis* and reporting to it are four operational committees: military; finance and business; fatwa and Islamic study; and media and publicity, which ensure the smooth day-to-day running of Al Qaeda, each being headed by an Emir[147].

The media and publicity committee is responsible for the "means of communications setup in all categories of Islamic people, taking great pains in making it aware of its' enemies plans, aspiring to concentrate all of the scientific, legal, and Jihad capabilities in the first level in order to obstruct one line in front of the alliance of the infidel and the ugly ones"[148]. Prior to 9/11 this committee was

headed up by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the "planes operation"[149]. Since 9/11 it is unclear to what extent the original committee structure of Al Qaeda remains intact, and several clandestine denominations have emerged which specialize exclusively in the information dimension of the Jihad movement. These include the Global Islamic Media Front (or GIMF, possibly the successor of the Al Qaeda media committee[150]), the Jihad Information Brigade and the Jihad Media Battalion[151], al-Sahhab or the Sahhab Institute[152], the Center for Islamic Studies and Research[153], and the al Furqan Institute for Media Production and al Fajr Media Center which operate inside Iraq[154]. A recent study identifies GIMF, al Fajr, and al Sahab as the three most prominent "media production and distribution entities" in the Global Jihad Movement, constituting the virtual connective tissue in a well-developed production and distribution network[155].

In terms of individuals, al-Zawahiri is seen as the key leader who has driven Al Qaeda's communications strategy. John Miller, ABC News correspondent, who interviewed bin Laden in the spring of 1998, described his influence: "Zawahiri was to Osama bin Laden what Karl Rove is to the White House. I mean, he crafted the message, he called the tunes. Bin Laden seemed to be the inspirational leader, the front guy, you know the guy that they would put out on camera, but the guy who was working on policy and deciding the direction on reflecting back seemed to be Zawahiri"[156]. The increased use of violence, the manipulation of the media, and the development of a psychological strategy all came from Zawahiri, who urged bin Laden "Let the Americans become your personal media agents – they've got the biggest PR machine in the whole world"[157].

Besides the emir or head, the media committee also includes an official spokesman. In an effort to widen its appeal from ultra-conservative and mostly elderly clerics to the general population and especially the youth of majority-Muslim countries, shortly after 9/11 Al Qaeda appointed

Sulayman Abu Ghaith as the organization's spokesman[158], due to his affinity for public speaking and comparative youth. He became famous after 9/11 when, in October 2001 he appeared on two widely circulated videos (first broadcast on Al Jazeera television) to defend the attacks and threaten reprisals for the subsequent U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, saying "Americans should know, the storm of the planes will not stop... There are thousands of the Islamic nation's youths who are eager to die just as the Americans are eager to live"[159].

Target Audience and Message

This section deconstructs Al Qaeda's target audience and message by relationship (friendly or adversarial), religion (Muslim or non-Muslim), demographics (age, gender) and geography (region and country). Since these audiences and Al Qaeda's messages to them have remained largely consistent since its inception, the analysis in this section is time-independent. In contrast, since the instruments and channels of communication used by Al Qaeda have changed dramatically over time, a diachronic analysis of its propaganda and associated channels is offered in the next section.

Modern terrorists are not as interested in the death or injury of their direct victims as much as in the impact of these killings on a wider public. Thus Alex Schmid distinguishes between the "target of violence" and the "targets of attention", which internet terrorism expert Gabriel Weimann segments into four distinct groups: supporters of the terrorist organization, the population that the organization purports to serve, the enemies of the terrorists, and the international public[160]. Al Qaeda communicators appear to be acutely aware of the golden rule of any communication initiative, to understand the audience. It separates its "targets of attention" into the international court of Islamic and specifically Arab opinion, America and its allies, and the broader court of world opinion[161]. The group's propaganda aims to motivate its members and supporters, mobilize new recruits from its population base, intimidate its enemies, and win international sympathy for its cause[162].

Besides these primary aims, like all terrorist groups, Al Qaeda propaganda also takes great pains to legitimate its actions and overcome the "built-in drag" on its legitimacy caused by its deliberate use of violent methods against civilians[163]. This must be done by establishing both social and religious

viability. Social legitimation means having the communities in which they operate know their story, share their goals, and accept and support their efforts. For example, in a post-mortem of the jihad waged against the Syrian regime of Hafez al-Assad from 1976 to 1982, the importance of explaining policy and gaining support is highlighted: "The *mujahideen* failed to define their identity, their intentions and motivations; such an explanation was and still is the main pillar for attracting the masses and mobilizing the base members on an intellectual and ideological level to partake in this dangerous work"[164].

Religious legitimation means having the jihadis' efforts be seen as acceptable under the religious tenets of Islam[165]. Al Qaeda may be led by bin Laden and his deputy Zawahiri but neither of them have any standing as religious scholars, so they need to obtain legal and religious approval for their actions from recognized Islamic scholars. A key Islamic scholar for Al Qaeda has been the "blind Sheikh", Omar Abdel Rahman, who has a doctorate in Islamic jurisprudence from al-Azhar university in Cairo, the Harvard of Islamic thought. For example, at al Qaeda's May 1998 press conference, a plastic-laminated card with a fatwa from Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman was distributed to journalists[166].

Al Qaeda's enemies are further segmented by analysts into the near enemy (Israel plus "apostate" regimes and their supporters), and the far enemy ("Crusaders" and "infidels")[167]. This distinction grew in the 1990's out of Al Qaeda's frustration after the Afghan war against the Soviets at not making gains against the enemy regimes in Muslim lands. By the second half of the 1990's, jihadists and radical Islamists in Egypt, Algeria, and elsewhere were either defeated militarily by pro-Western Muslim regimes or they failed to build viable Islamic political and economic entities[168]. Bin Laden viewed operations within the lands of Islam as futile and ineffective. For him

the "apostate" regimes were "mere agents of the American-Israeli alliance, which he said controls politics, economics, and culture in Muslim countries"[169].

Influenced by his perceptions of U.S. withdrawals in Lebanon and Somalia, bin Laden "never wavered from his belief that America did not possess the nerve or the stomach for a prolonged confrontation"[170]. He believed that by attacking the "head of the serpent" the U.S. would withdraw from the peninsula and "its local clients would fall like ripened fruits"[171]. Moreover attacking the "lesser *kufr*" could spark *fitna* and alienate the *umma*, whereas attacking the "greater *kufr*" would create unity and mobilize the *umma*[172]. As the memoir from an inmate at Guantanamo Bay described it: "Al Qaeda then says if we fight the biggest of the unbelievers – the Big Satan America – the Muslims will rally around us. When they do, we can then teach the Muslims that their leaders are ruling by other than Allah's law, are apostates, and that they are the ones to be fought"[173].

How does Al Qaeda prioritize these multiple target audiences? Its top priority is clearly to target its "own societies and not Western regimes and their citizens"[174]. In the Spanish study of GJM propaganda from 2001 to 2005[141], only 2% of documents were targeted at non-Muslims, compared to 92% target at Muslims, and 6% targeted at both audiences. Most material is also in Arabic, and contains ritual expressions of Islam and Quranic references to Allah and the Prophet, all of which disappears when such messages are directed at a non-Muslim population[175]. The most obvious example of Al Qaeda targeting its "own societies" was 9/11, for which bin Laden's most important audience was not the American public but the populations of Muslims countries[176].

The main objective of its propaganda by both deed and word is to mobilize public support and gain grassroots legitimacy among Muslims[177]. The key three themes supporting this objective are that the West is implacably hostile to Islam; the only way to address the West is in the language of violence; and jihad is the only path for true believers to follow[178]. The first theme dominates Al Qaeda's narrative. As Middle East expert Paul Eedle argues: "The whole thrust of [Al Qaeda's web propaganda], from videos glorifying September 11 to Islamic legal arguments justifying the killing of civilians, and even poetry, is to convince radical Muslims that, for decades, the U.S. has been waging a war to destroy Islam, and that they must fight back"[179].

Al Qaeda's influence lies not in its call for a defensive jihad, but in its ability to construct a consistent, convincing case that an attack on Islam is underway and is being led and directed by the United States[180]. Osama bin Laden has been very consistent about his message. As Peter Bergen explains: "He's been pretty consistent about why he's attacking the United States. It's because of American foreign policies. He did not say anything about Madonna, Hollywood, drugs, sex, or any of the kind of cultural issues you might expect him to be concerned with. It's all about what America is doing in his backyard, as he sees it. He sees this as a defensive war responding to a record of humiliation that began after the end of World War I when the Ottoman Empire was carved up by the British and the French. And bin Laden believes that today Muslims are still being humiliated whether it is in Kashmir or Palestine or in Iraq. As far as he's concerned his was is about humiliation and reclaiming Muslim pride"[181].

The major types of communiqués that constitute this mobilizational propaganda since 9/11 are depicted in figure 8. Prior to 9/11 50% of propaganda was commentary on current affairs. Since 9/11 the *mujahideen* have been activated to fight the occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq,

dramatically changing the propaganda mix, 76% of which now consists of the "re-vindication" of *mujahideen* attacks[182]. In Iraq, for example, the vast majority of statements by the Islamic State of Iraq, or Al Qaeda in Iraq, are press releases that provide an overview of operations conducted within a certain time period or geographical area against coalition military forces, Iraqi government forces and institutions, or Shi'ite militias[183].
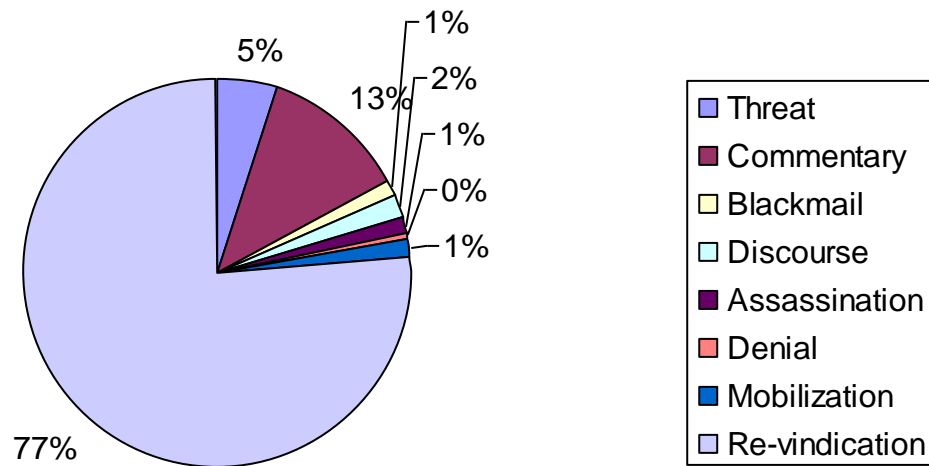

Figure 8. Propaganda of the Global Jihad Movement Since 9/11 By Type

Directed towards a committed audience, Al Qaeda's "auto-propaganda" aims to strengthen resolve and morale, dampen dissent, and justify, legitimize or explain particularly controversial decisions or operations[184]. Directed towards an uncommitted audience its more explicit propaganda aims to win sympathy and support. Zawahiri talks often of winning the support of "the masses": "the jihad movement must dedicate one of its wings to work with the masses[…] We must win the people's

confidence, respect, and affection"[185]. This strategic imperative is fully understood by strategist *Abu Mus'ab al-Suri*, who recognizes that incitement of a global resistance "can only happen once the masses understand the problems they face and why their help is needed to overcome them"[186].

Al Qaeda's call for a global Islamic resistance is directed first and foremost at potential *jihadi* warriors, most particularly Arab and Muslim youth[187]. Al Qaeda's leaders are astutely aware of the tabula rasa that impressionable young men offer as potential victims of their propaganda and the "many thousands of underemployed, disaffected men in the Muslim world" who are susceptible to their doctrine of anti-Westernism[188]. These young men, Marc Sageman explains, are chasing dreams of glory by fighting for justice and fairness as they define it. They are enthusiastic volunteers, trying to impress their friends with their heroism and sacrifice[189]. An analysis of insurgent media products in Iraq suggests that the primary audience is young, technically savvy, educated, and often middle-class and above[190]. Electronic material found in Al Qaeda safe-houses by security forces corroborates this targeting[191].

There is also evidence that Al Qaeda's targeting strategy has started to adopt "narrowcasting", or "making targeted pitches for recruitment and support among specific demographics like women and children"[192]. The internet is particularly suited to tailoring messages to different audiences. On August 26, 2004, Al Qaeda launched its online women's magazine, called *Al-Khansa*. The main goal of the magazine appears to be teaching women married to Islamist violent extremists how to support their husbands in their violent war against the non-Muslim world. It also provides advice on raising children to carry on the Jihad[193].

In terms of geography, Al Qaeda Central's principle audience is the world-wide global *umma*. Prior to 1996 bin Laden addressed his communiqués to Muslims in the Arabian peninsula, but starting with the so-called "Ladenese epistle" on August 23, 1996, in which he calls for a boycott of American goods and jihad against the "Judeo-Crusader alliance", bin Laden broadens his appeal to address Muslims across the world, "whose sufferings he invokes in the Middle East, Central Asia, the Horn of Africa, the Caucasus, the Balkans, and Southeast Asia"[194]. This outreach to the global *umma* has remained consistent since that time. For example, in a letter issued October 6, 2002, bin Laden summarized U.S. misdeeds in Palestine, Somalia, Chechnya, Kashmir, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan[195]. Note that contrary to conventional wisdom[196], Palestine has been an integral part of the Al Qaeda narrative since the beginning, even though bin Laden has long held antipathy towards secular Palestinian leaders such as Yasar Arafat[197], and more recently also towards nationalist organizations like Hamas[198].

However, with the rise of the internet as the dominant propaganda medium for the Global Jihadi Movement, Al Qaeda Central has been eclipsed in terms of aggregate jihadist media attention by its affiliates who are actively engaged in ongoing armed struggle in specific geographies. From a one month sample taken in July 2007, Daniel Kimmage concluded that the geographic focus of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements was topped by Iraq (78%), Afghanistan (10%), and Somalia (3%). To these Muslim populations "under attack", Al Qaeda central also targets some of its communication. In 1994 he chastised the chief mufti of Saudi Arabia for endorsing the 1993 Oslo Accords and neglecting his religious duties[199]. In 1995 he appealed to dissenting *Wahhabi* clerics within Saudi Arabia, reminding them of their duty to call for jihad against the presence of foreign troops on the Arabian peninsula[200]. On August 25, 2002 a letter from bin Laden was posted to the

internet addressed to "the people of Afghanistan", calling them to rise up and drive the western armies from their land[201]. And again on October 18, 2003, Al Jazeera released a "Message to the Iraqi People" from bin Laden, which reveled in America's difficulties, and called Iraqi youth to jihad[202].

In a similar manner, Al Qaeda also issues country-specific messages to its enemies or those it wishes to chastise. In 2004 bin Laden addressed the rulers of Arabia: "This is a short message to the Riyadh rulers and decision-makers - there is a contract between the ruler and his subjects entailing rights and obligations on both parties. One of its main features is that the ruler protects his people. But the truth is otherwise. You have oppressed the people without their agreement"[203]. In bin Laden's only post-9/11 newspaper interview, with Al-Quds Al-Arabi on November 7, 2001, he addressed the U.S. audience : "I demand that the American people take note of their government's policy against Muslims. They described the government's policy against Vietnam as wrong. They should now take the same stand as they did before. The onus is on Americans to prevent Muslims being killed at the hands of their government"[204]. On April 14, 2004, a month after the Madrid bombings, bin Laden addressed Europe as a whole, offering a truce that was to start "with the withdrawal of the last soldier from our land [Iraq and Afghanistan]"[205]. This message was followed up by Zawahiri in a video on September 1, 2005, that explained that the 7/7 London bombings were a revenge for Britain's participation in the war in Iraq, and came as a result of ignoring bin Laden's 2004 offer of a truce[206].

History and Instruments

The evolution of Al Qaeda's communication strategy is a case study in organizational adaptability. The instrumental component of Al Qaeda's strategy is a powerful blend of the propaganda of its own increasingly multi-media communication, the propaganda of its own deeds, and the propaganda of its opponents' misdeeds, amplified by the mass media. While its underlying message has remained constant, Al Qaeda's continued ability to capitalize in real-time on actions on the ground keeps its message fresh and provides it with an ongoing emotional resonance. This section traces the history of Al Qaeda's propaganda, based on communication, deeds and misdeeds, and centers analysis upon the evolution of Al-Qaeda's choice of media channels.

The evolution of GJM propaganda through different media is best understood in four phases: 1988-1996, 1996-2001, 2001-2003, and 2003 to the present.

Phase 1: Return from Afghanistan (1988-1996)

In the first phase, the focus of Al Qaeda was mostly on Saudi Arabia. Written and audio-visual documentaries were distributed to sympathizers but little attention was received by the mass media, so that diffusion was mostly internal. It is likely that at this time many of the veterans of Afghanistan, Algeria and Bosnia were unaware of the technological possibilities of the new information society, and the limitations inherent in the old dial-up transmissions and lack of access would have prevented any widespread adoption of the internet at this time[207].

Even before Al Qaeda was officially established, its predecessor MAK proved efficient at mobilizing media for the purposes of fund-raising and recruiting Muslim volunteers from around the world for the Afghan jihad. A key project of Abdullah Azzam was the creation of the magazine

Jihad which first start publishing in 1984[208], and which became the in-house organ of the Arab jihadists based in Pakistan in the 1980's[209]. The magazine proved very successful in lionizing Osama bin Laden as a hero within the Arab world for his bravery at the 1987 Battle of Jaji against the Soviets. Although the battle itself was of little strategic significance, it represented a huge public relations victory, and consequently "the youth started coming in waves", and bin Laden discovered the power of the press[210].

In fact, the "Afghan Arabs" had very little overall impact on the conduct of the war, which was won with the blood of Afghans and the billions of dollars and riyals invested by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia[211]. Yet the defeat of the Soviets was to become the most important "propaganda of the deed" in Al Qaeda's catalog. Zawahiri would later write in Knights under the Prophet's Banner: "*jihad* battles in Afghanistan destroyed the myth of a superpower in the minds of the Muslim *mujahideen* young men"[212]. Most importantly, Al Qaeda would later translate its putative success against one superpower into claims of imminent success against another. In a sermon for the Feast of the Sacrifice on March 5, 2003, bin Laden would explain: "America is a great power possessed of tremendous military might and a wide-ranging economy, but all this is built upon an unstable foundation which can be targeted, with special attention to its obvious weak spots. A small group of young Islamic fighters managed to provide people with proof of the fact that it is possible to wage war upon and fight against a so-called great power. They managed to protect their religion better than governments and peoples of the fifty-odd countries of the Muslim world, because they used Jihad as a means to defend their faith"[213].

In the 1990's bin Laden started to make use of cassette tapes to spread his own message inveighing against the Saudi government. He was no doubt influenced by the Ayatollah Khomeini's

successful use of this vehicle in inciting the Iranian revolution, as well as his own personal experience listening to cassette tapes of sermons against the U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia in 1991 by Saudi clerics, al Awdah and al Hawali[214]. After returning to Saudi Arabia from Afghanistan, bin Laden was showered with praise and donations and was in demand as a speaker in mosques and homes. "Over 250,000 cassettes of his fiery speeches were distributed, selling out as soon as they appeared"[215]. The "low-tech" weapon of audio cassettes is still widely used by Al Qaeda and its affiliates[216].

Apart from its own media during this early period, Al Qaeda made use of Al Imara (the Emirate), the Arabic language magazine of the Taliban, and also Asharq al Awsat, the leading pan-Arab daily newspaper launched in London in 1978[217]. However, its favored choice was Al Quds al Arabi, which also operated out of London, but claimed to be the only truly independent Arab daily, admired by bin Laden for its "uncompromising criticism of certain Arab regimes"[218]. As its editor-in-chief, Abdel Bari Atwan, explained in an interview with Peter Bergen: "we were a newspaper which was not under the umbrella of Saudi Arabia. Most of the Arab media is controlled by the Saudis"[219]. Al Quds al-Arabi has remained a favorite of bin Laden's, as indicated by its ability to obtain exclusives from Al Qaeda, such as its reporting of Al Qaeda's claim of responsibility for the Madrid bombings in 2004[220].

Phase 2: The Far Enemy (1996-2001)

In the second phase, which was marked by bin Laden's declaration of war against the United States, bin Laden became enamored with regional (Al Jazeera) and international (CNN) television, being catapulted to fame by the embassy bombings and Clinton's cruise missile response. In this

period the early videos of Al Qaeda were designed for diffusion amongst its members and recruits and were focused on training. For example, six videotapes were recovered in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban, dated August 2000, showing Abu Musab al Suri lecturing on how to incite jihadist followers by highlighting the "Jewish-Crusader oppression of Muslims"[221].

The 1998 embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam and the Clinton response produced a great increase in support for Al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia – "more than 11,000 recruits headed for the training camps in Afghanistan between 1998 and 2001"[222] – and created something of a bin Laden cult[223]. Exactly how much these events contributed to the surge in Al Qaeda's recruitment, and whether it was Al Qaeda's action or the U.S. response that was the major factor, is impossible to ascertain. But it appeared that "Al Qaeda's popularity reached an all-time high" within bin Laden's own country, and even the Saudi security police charged with countering Al Qaeda was reputed to be sympathetic to bin Laden[224].

Besides the use of videotapes for training purposes, during this period Al Qaeda also learned the power of video as propaganda, from the Chechen jihadists who had successfully raised morale among Muslim radicals by filming ambushes of Russian convoys[225]. Between late 2000 and early 2001 Al Qaeda debuted its video "The Destruction of the Destroyer, U.S.S. Cole", which was produced by an Al Qaeda communication commission[226]. The tape increased the prestige of Al Qaeda and contributed to its recruitment[227]. Al Qaeda was also quick to take advantage of the cause célèbre in the Arab world, the image that acted as a magnet for the anger of the Second Palestinian Intifada, the picture of 12-year old Muhammad al-Durrah dying in his father's arms after being shot by the Israeli Defense Forces[228].

In the middle of August 2001, *Al Sahab* (the Clouds), the newly created video production arm of Al Qaeda, produced its first professional videotape. On the video Osama bin Laden is dressed in white, and reads a poem recalling Saladin's victory over the Crusaders in the Middle Ages: "Saladin, his sword dripping with the blood of the Unbelievers". It is apparent that Bin Laden believes that the main departments of the U.S. government are dominated by Jews, including the Pentagon: "we speak of the American government, but it is in reality an Israeli government, because if we look into the most sensitive departments of the governments, whether it is the Pentagon or the State Department or the CIA, you find that it is the Jews who have the first word inside the American government. Consequently they use America to execute their plans throughout the world"[229].

Al Qaeda's strategy has been to use regional media to criticize the "near enemy" in preparation for political operations that build relationships with members and sympathizers, and to use international media to criticize the "far enemy" and mobilize international public opinion. International media has therefore been the preferred outlet for recordings regularly issued by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri[230]. It was during this period that Osama bin Laden achieved worldwide fame and some say that he became fascinated with the media. Frustrated by the lack of impact of his "Declaration of War against the United States" in 1996, he spent two years undertaking a publicity campaign, giving various interviews with Arabic and Western journalists[231] before reaffirming his threats in 1998 under the umbrella of the "World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders"[232]. Abu Walid al Misri, editor of Al Imara magazine, wrote that "during this period [1996-1998], it was noticeable that bin Laden was maniacally obsessed with the media, especially the international media"[233]. Abu Musab al-Suri even criticized bin Laden

directly in an email sent on July 19, 1999, charging that he had "caught the disease of screens, flashes, fans, and applause"[234].

The advent of satellite TV in the Arab world revolutionized the media industry and broke the monopoly control that authoritarian regimes and western media had hitherto enjoyed over the media: "the rise of a transnational Arabic language media allowed Al-Qaeda to reach out to a regional field of contention in real time, in ways that simply would not have been available to earlier such organizations"[235]. Jamal Ismail, a Palestinian journalist who was Al Jazeera's bureau chief in Pakistan, interviewed bin Laden in December 1998, heightening his media profile and antagonizing some Taliban officials. The interview was advertized for a month on Al Jazeera under the banner *See only on Al Jazeera a man against a state and a state against a man*. Jamal Ismail described the impact: "According to AFP, the streets of Riyadh and other Saudi cities, when Al Jazeera started broadcasting this program were deserted. And when it was broadcast, many articles and comments were published in Arab media. Some of them not supporting him directly, but at least defending his point of view and asking Americans to withdraw from our Holy Land or to finish their support to Israel"[236].

Understanding Al Qaeda's relationship with both regional and international media requires a more nuanced theory than some of the academic literature would propose. The symbiotic relationship described by Gadi Wolfsfeld's "political-contest model"[237] applies only to one type of terrorist group, namely what journalist, Michael Spiros, calls "type A" groups who have a "positive and non-violent interaction relationship with all news media, both foreign and domestic"[238]. Spiros argues that groups which do not enjoy international legitimacy and which are decentralized, are more prone to adopt a negative and violent stance towards foreign media ("type C"), while groups

in transition are not necessarily violent but may threaten the media for reporting unfavorable views ("type B")[239].

According to Spiros, Al Qaeda is "type C", although it is not clear that it has always been in this category, perhaps having transitioned from type B to type C as it morphed from a centrally controlled to a decentralized organization, with regional affiliates competing for attention with other insurgent groups. It may be more accurate to say that terrorists can alternate between different types, exhibiting different behaviors in different circumstances, perhaps even falling into multiple categories at the same time. Most modern terrorist groups frequently employ strategies that work to satisfy the news media's demands, while at the same time considering them an integral part of an enemy that they seek to overcome and annihilate[240].

In the case of Al Qaeda, antipathy towards the media in general is captured in Zawahiri's enunciation of its enemies. Western forces "have adopted a number of tools to fight Islam", including "the international communications and satellite media channels", and the "international news agencies and satellite media channels"[241]. There is a general frustration that the media are an integral component of the imperialist apparatus, imposing a "siege" on the "message of the jihad"[242], by ignoring or distorting Al Qaeda's message, and bolstering support for the policies of western governments. Al Qaeda believes that the media aim to hide the economic exploitation of the Muslim world and keep Muslims unaware of their situation as a people and of their obligation as believers[243]. Zawahiri's ire is directed not just at western media. "The Arab and Western media are responsible for distorting the image of the Arab Afghans by portraying them as obsessed half-made people who have rebelled against the United States that once trained and financed them"[244].

The one exception to Al Qaeda's animosity towards satellite TV during this period was Al Jazeera. The station was established with funding from the Emir of Qatar in 1996, and was staffed largely by former BBC World Service employees made redundant after censorship forced the BBC World Service's Arab-language station to close down[245]. As a relatively uncensored alternative to the tightly controlled stations of the region, it has become the preferred network for much of the Arab world. The continual criticism that the network has received from regimes in the Islamic world has contributed to its popularity[246]. A recent poll conducted by Shibley Telhami in 6 Arab countries shows a dominant 53% market share for Al Jazeera (the next competitor has 17%)[247]. From its inception, Al Jazeera prided itself on being an independent source of news, always providing both sides of any issue, even if this might be threatening to the authoritarian regimes of the region. Its coverage of the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000 broadcast both graphic footage and calls by Arabic citizens for their leaders to do more for the Palestinians. Thus the station represented an opportunity for Al Qaeda to get its message out in a relatively unfiltered manner.

Phase 3: On the Run (2001-2003)

In the third phase, marked by the attacks of 9/11 and the defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan, for security reasons Al Qaeda's preferred medium was audio and video recordings made available to Al Jazeera, rather than interviews. During this time, Al Qaeda attempted to terrorize its enemies by filming the brutal beheadings of hostages such as Daniel Pearl for propaganda gain, posting the videos on the internet. After losing its sanctuary in Afghanistan, the internet started to become a replacement, virtual sanctuary. Al Qaeda's flagship website alneda.com survived until July 2002, and thereafter was replicated on a number of moveable websites, accessible to Arab-speaking *jihadi* insiders through an always changing series of web links[248].

The propaganda effect of the 9/11 attacks was profound but mixed. The "status conferral" function of the 9/11 attacks elevated bin Laden to global prominence, and in the immediate aftermath it appeared that the architects of the attacks had achieved their media-centered objectives of gaining unprecedented media attention and publicizing their causes and motives[249]. Hundreds of jubilant Palestinians in Lebanon and the West Bank celebrated the footage of the World Trade Centers collapsing, as they viewed the attacks as punishment for U.S. support for Israel[250]. Bin Laden denied responsibility for the attacks but praised the hijackers: "God has struck America at its Achilles heel and destroyed its greatest buildings, praise and blessings to Him!"[251].

Yet the attacks brought condemnation from across the globe, from political leaders and clerics across the Muslim world including the chief of *Al Azhar* University[252], and even from Taliban leaders[253]. Most importantly, the attacks were condemned by notoriously violent groups such as Hezbollah, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiya* (Islamic Group) and even by members of Islamic Jihad and Al Qaeda itself. The criticism reflected a strategic rift within Al Qaeda that had begun in the mid 1990's over the wisdom of attacking the far enemy[254]. Well-known Islamist extremists, such as *Montassar al Zayyat*, the Egyptian lawyer who was jailed with Zawahiri following the assassination of President Anwar Sadat, and *Abu Musab al-Suri*, long time associate of bin Laden, criticized the attacks for the damage they caused to the *jihadi* movement[255]. Thus the attacks began to be regarded within the jihadist movement as a tactical victory but a strategic mistake, due to the loss of Afghanistan as a base and the US-led campaign to detain members of the jihadist movement around the world[256].

It would not be long, however, before bin Laden recaptured the propaganda momentum. This period was dominated by the war in Afghanistan, the defeat of the Taliban, and the hunt for bin Laden and his associates. The failure of U.S. forces to capture bin Laden, especially at the battle of Tora Bora, was highlighted as a huge victory for the *mujahideen*. In an audiotape that aired on Al Jazeera on February 11, 2003, he described the experience: "Now, I am going to tell you a part of that great battle so that I will prove to you how cowardly the Americans are. We were only three hundred fighters… American forces were bombing us by smart bombs that weigh thousands of pounds and bombs that penetrate caves and other kinds of bombs that enter into caves…With all its forces that were fighting against a small group of *mujahideen*…we lost [only] 6 percent of our force [eighteen men]"[257]. Like the Battle of Jaji before it, the Battle of Tora Bora was added to the Al Qaeda propaganda catalog, and would be replayed to its audience to remind them of the power of jihad and the "myth of the superpower".

Being on the run after 9/11, it is likely that Al Qaeda Central experienced communication problems and lost some of its control over the *mujahideen*. Some analysts even suggest that one of the consequences of 9/11 and the U.S. response was the acceleration of violence that lacked clear focus or even intentionality[258]. For example, it appeared unlikely that bin Laden would have sanctioned the bombing of the *al-Muhayya* housing compound in Riyadh in 2003, which killed 18, the majority of whom were Muslims, and led to a dramatic reduction in Al Qaeda's popularity[259].

After 9/11 the major international TV networks exhibited solidarity towards the United States, including some traditionally anti-American Arabic channels. For Al Jazeera, however, 9/11 was an opportunity to be true to its philosophy of telling both sides of the story. The Qatari network not only sheltered the most outlandish conspiracy theories concerning 9/11 but also had no qualms

about airing the views of Al Qaeda spokespeople[260]. It was also the only major network allowed by the Taliban to cover the war in Afghanistan. This was a win-win situation for both Al Jazeera and Al Qaeda and its affiliates.

The exclusive material on the bombings of Afghanistan and footage of bin Laden turned out to be very lucrative for Al Jazeera, bringing in $250,000, for example, for a 3-minute video of bin Laden from 1998. Although they differed on vision, imagining democracy and openness rather than a Taliban-like *sharia* society, Al Jazeera journalists were on the same page with Al Qaeda that a prerequisite step towards a successful future involved reducing the West's role in the Islamic world's affairs[261]. In this regard Al Jazeera was exhibiting what some analysts have called "contextual objectivity", the natural tension between objectivity and audience appeal[262]. Despite evidence from studies that have shown that Al Jazeera's viewers are more anti-American and pro-Al-Qaeda views than other stations[263], it is more likely that Al Jazeera reflects public opinion more than it shapes it[264].

For bin Laden Al Jazeera represented the best option to reach the widest audience with the minimum filtering of his message and with the minimal security risk. As one Al Qaeda member described it, Al Jazeera met the most important criteria for "Sheikh Osama"; it had not "taken a previous stand against the *mujahideen*"[265]. Some have suggested that the two organizations even had a formalized relationship, openly recognized by *Abi Osama*, the alleged head of Al Qaeda's media division, *Al Sahab*, in 2003, when he explained that "he had an agreement with Al Jazeera by which it was committed to broadcast any videotape that the *Sahab Institute* provides about Al-Qaeda"[266].

Whether or not Al Qaeda had a "publishing contract" with Al Jazeera, the period after 9/11 represented the high point of Al Qaeda's relationship with regional mainstream media, reflected in bin Laden's address to the *umma* on the first year anniversary of the attacks: "there is the group of the media people and writers who have remarkable impact and a big role in directing the battle, and breaking the enemy's morale, and heightening the *umma*'s morale (…) The time has come to have the media take its rightful place, to carry out its required role in confronting this aggressive campaign and the open declared Crusader war by all means that can be seen, heard, and read. It is upon the media people, whether writers, journalists, analysts or correspondents, to exercise responsibility in reporting events, and to carry out their required role by showing the *umma* the reality of the events, and to announce the real intentions of the enemy, to reveal his plans and his tricks."[267].

Besides the obvious advantages to both parties of their relationship, however, the big disadvantage for both Al Qaeda and Al Jazeera after 9/11 was the heightened security. Broadcasting official statements from the Taliban and Al-Qaeda's post-9/11 videos and manifestos was clearly a risky gamble for the network. Al Jazeera's graphic footage of civilian deaths in Afghanistan as a result of the U.S. bombing campaign against the Taliban was eroding public support for the war, even in the U.S.[268]. It began to appear that the U.S. was losing the "PR war". On November 12, 2001, American bombs leveled the Al Jazeera office in Kabul. Although the Pentagon initially claimed that the bombing was a mistake[269], a BBC investigation later confirmed that the offices were regarded as a "facility used by Al-Qaeda" and a legitimate target of "military significance" by the Pentagon[270]. There were also high risks for Al Qaeda, who used a complicated network of

messengers to transport tapes from the Afghan-Pakistan border to Al Jazeera's office in Islamabad, travelling less than 70 miles of intricate routes, and taking anywhere from 6 to 12 weeks. Pakistani intelligence services would eventually intercept some of these courier deliveries and provide actionable intelligence to the U.S., who would use it to strike Al Qaeda targets[271].

Attacks on Al Qaeda after 9/11 were not limited to physical infrastructure. In the world of cyberspace, some private individuals began to attack Al Qaeda websites directly. For example, Jon Messner's attack on alneda.com redirected visitors to the FBI's 'most wanted pages'. Other non-governmental organizations such as Rita Katz's SITE Institute, or Aaron Weisburd's Internet Hagenah (after the Hebrew word for "defense") took a more indirect approach[272]. Much of SITE's surveillance activities were conducted on behalf of fee-based clients such as the FBI, while Internet Hagenah adopted an effective "name and shame" strategy that has resulted in the closure of over 700 *jihadi* sites[273]. Weisburd reports criminal activity and legal infractions to the appropriate government agency[274], and informs ISPs that they are hosting "terrorist-supporter sites", who are usually quick to shut the sites down[275].

Al Qaeda and its affiliates responded to such actions in a number of ways. Firstly, they moved away from static websites, set up internet forums which were free of direct links to the terrorist organizations, and replicated content elsewhere, with only links to that content being provided by the forums[276]. Forums hosted by popular ISPs such as Yahoo provided an entry point for *jihadi* extremists[277]. Secondly, setting up short-life websites, hijacking websites belonging to other organizations, signing up to one of the popular jihadi email listserve groups, and using one-time email accounts all became standard techniques for avoiding detection by intelligence agencies or non-governmental surveillance groups[278]. Thirdly, when the alneda.com site in 2002 could no

longer survive the onslaught of attacks from government and private efforts to shut it down, Al Qaeda adapted by starting to publish online magazines instead, featuring articles such as "In the Shadow of the Lances" by the movement's spokesman, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith[279].

After 9/11, bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri starting releasing an average of one tape (audio or video) every six weeks[280]. Given the security risks associated with interviews or press conferences, Al Qaeda's focus on the production of its own content intensified. In a memo to bin Laden dated June 20, 2000, Al Qaeda adviser, Abu Hauthayfa had made the case that Al Qaeda's media profile could be dramatically enhanced by a number of innovations. These included the production of martyr videos, videos with scenes of normal life such as weddings, and the establishment of a website for placing all "legible, audible, and visible archives and news"[281]. Al Qaeda would soon adopt many of these proposals. All of the nineteen hijackers of 9/11 made videotaped statements[282], some of which were later broadcast on Al Jazeera; the marriage celebrations of bin Laden's son Muhammed in Kandahar in January 2001 received media coverage; and Al Qaeda increased its web presence in 2001[283].

One consequence of the shift toward its own production, of being shunned by the international press, and of the show of overwhelming force by the United State against Al Qaeda after 9/11, was that Al Qaeda attempted to overcome the force advantage of its adversary by spreading fear through the gruesome tactic of filmed beheadings. According to al-Arabiya director, Abd al-Rahman al-Rashad, decapitation videos represented public relations victories because they were broadcast directly over the internet to hundreds of thousands of youth, who could see and hear and read most of the information Al Qaeda wanted to impart[284]. The brutal killing of journalist Daniel Pearl on February 1, 2002 by the emir of Al Qaeda's Media Committee, Khalid Sheikh

Mohammad, sent shockwaves through the media industry. By disrespecting conventions of press immunity, and by specifically kidnapping and publicly beheading a member of the news media to spread a message of hate and fear, al-Qaeda sent its own message to the news media: "you are enemies, we will kill you, and we will use your death to further our own goals"[285]. As Rajiv Chandrasekaran, former Baghdad bureau chief of the Washington Post, explained: "if the goal of a militant organization is to 'terrify', then publicly terrifying the news media, and successfully influencing them to broadcast their own feelings of terror is priceless"[286].

Phase 4: Jihad in Iraq and Revival (2003-)

In the final phase, Al Qaeda managed to reconstitute in the badlands of Pakistan[287], as Iraq became the epicenter of the GJM, and Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi honed the use of the internet to mobilize and coordinate the insurgency and increase the propaganda effect of beheadings. In this period the number of GJM websites has increased dramatically world-wide, and Al Qaeda's video production arm, Al-Sahab has became increasingly sophisticated[288]. Al Qaeda now makes use of a full arsenal of high-tech weapons, including the "mini-cam and videotape, editing suite and attendant production facilities; professionally produced and mass-marketed CD-Roms and DVDs; and, most critically, the lap-top and desk-top computers, CD burners and e-mail accounts, and internet and worldwide web access" that define the information revolution today[289].

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 has dominated this most recent phase of GJM propaganda, feeding directly into the Al Qaeda narrative that the West is waging war against Islam: "What has happened in Iraq is what bin Laden could not have hoped for in his wildest dreams: the U.S. invaded an oil-rich Muslim nation in the heart of the Middle East, the very type of imperial

adventure that bin Laden has long predicted is the Crusaders' long-term goal in the region"[290]. In sharp contrast to clerical rulings following the 9/11 attacks, leading clerics across the Muslim world now condoned fighting against the American occupation[291]. This included *Al Azhar* University, which ruled before the invasion, that if "Crusader" forces attacked Iraq, it was an obligation for every Muslim to fight occupation forces[292]. The insurgency which followed the invasion seemed to bring Zawahiri's strategic goals ever closer. In 2001 he had written "victory for the Islamic movements against the world alliance cannot be attained unless these movements possess an Islamic base in the heart of the Arab region"[293].

Al Qaeda propaganda has sought to magnify U.S. woes in Iraq. Its *Sawt al-Jihad* magazine argues that the strategic chaos the U.S. is involved in is greater than the Soviet Union's mess in Afghanistan during the 1980s[294]. Bin Laden tries to reason directly with the American people that their leadership is misleading the country into economic collapse, reminding them of "the scope of the contracts won by large dubious corporations like Halliburton and others that have ties to Bush and to his administration", and adding "the losing side is in fact you, the American people, and your economy"[295]. There is even reference to the fiscal overstretch that Zawahiri has predicted from his avid reading of Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*: "The *jihad* fighters have recently forced Bush to resort to an emergency budget in order to continue the fighting in Afghanistan and in Iraq, which proves the success of the plan of bleeding [America] to the point of bankruptcy, Allah willing"[296].

Al Qaeda is quick to take advantage of events that will help to confirm its narrative. Most obvious are references to Abu Ghraib[297] and Guantanamo, and to rhetorical gafs such as President Bush's

use of the term "Crusade"[298]. In a March 2006 videotape aired by Al Jazeera, Zawahiri picked on the latest twists and turns in the Danish cartoons controversy, and referred to details of a French discrimination case[299]. Bin Laden and Zawahiri also try to benefit from events and intellectuals on the U.S. domestic scene. In 2003, Al Qaeda's Abu Hafs Brigades posted a claim of responsibility on the web for "Operation Quick Lightning in the Land of the Tyrant of this Generation", referring to the electricity blackout in the northeast[300]. And on September 7, 2007, to mark the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, bin Laden issued a videotape endorsing Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent* as applying to the manipulation of U.S. public opinion, and Michael Scheuer's *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*[301].

The migration of the jihad onto the Internet associated with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's rise to prominence directly responded to his dismay with Al Jazeera[302]. As long as the Al Qaeda narrative was in tune with the Al Jazeera narrative of the Palestinian struggle with Israel, the American "blockade of Iraq" and the failures of the existing Arab regimes, then Al Jazeera was a favored channel for Al Qaeda propaganda. But when Al Jazeera insisted on giving air time to both sides of the debate, it became clear to Al Qaeda that it was being denied the opportunity to present a monopoly opinion. Al Jazeera's leading Islamist figure, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, criticized Al Qaeda, and when Zawahiri released a video tape condemning Egypt's Kefaya movement, Al Jazeera counter-balanced with criticism from Islamist legal scholars and Kefaya supporters. Al Jazeera had become an unreliable ally, amidst an increasingly prevalent custom of diversity and competition within the Arab media market that was creating serious complications for the satellite television side of Al Qaeda's media strategy[303].

Bin Laden himself expressed his frustration. Al Qaeda was being relegated to the position of every other political actor, was being subjected to the "triangle of political communication" in which personal and direct contact with citizens is no longer possible, in which the mass media is in charge of providing the channels of communication between politicians and their constituents[304]. In January 2004 he made disparaging reference to the Arab media: "The media people who belittle religious duties such as jihad and other rituals are atheists and renegades"[305]. He was even more critical in December that year when he attacked Al Jazeera, Qaradawi and the "sultans of the airwaves" for "abandoning the mujahideen"[306].

With its causes being ignored by conventional media[307], with its access being restricted and coverage of its actions being severely censored[308], by the eve of the Iraq war Al Qaeda was already turning its energies to the internet as the medium of choice. For the first time in history, cyberspace allowed direct communication between a terrorist groups and its target audience[309], without the media distorting or influencing its message[310]. Not only can the internet reach a vast audience of potentially 12.7% of the world's population (around one billion people)[311] and act as an enormous "multiplier" of Al Qaeda's ideas[312], but it can empower small self-radicalizing groups, making them appear much larger than they are[313], and facilitate the conceptual contiguity of such groups across geographies into a global movement with a distinct political identity[314]. The internet enables the type of political interaction not possible through more traditional campaign communications[315].

At a practical level, the internet has become the dominant medium for GJM propaganda, since it offers advantages in terms of cost, security, and control[316]. The low cost of the internet means that poorly financed challengers can compete at some level with incumbents[317]. The internet levels the playing field. The anonymity offered by the internet is especially attractive to modern terrorists[318],

who must maintain secrecy in order to capitalize on their comparative advantage of surprise. Most importantly, the unencumbered perception management possible through the internet allows terrorist groups to portray themselves and their actions in precisely the light and context they wish, free from the filter, screening and spin of established media[319], and unconstrained by government censorship or traditional cultural norms[320].

This shift toward the internet does not mean that Al Qaeda is now ignoring conventional media. It is aware that a large part of its strategy's success depends on its capacity to reach the mass media. However, it is now taking an indirect approach that is more secure[321]. Sometimes called "information laundering", it involves using the internet as a bridging channel to create an "internet buzz"[322] around a newsworthy topic that is then picked up by mainstream journalists eager to be first to report on a story[323]. Sometimes the presence of internet postings is in itself enough of a story to warrant attention by conventional media[324].

The process involves a number of steps. For example, in the first step an attack on coalition forces by the Islamic State of Iraq (Al Qaeda in Iraq) is typically accompanied by a "press release" or video posted to one of the many internet forums. In the second step the message is reposted to other forums, amplifying the message to potentially thousands of internet users. And in the third step mainstream Arab media pick up the materials and use them in print and broadcast reports[325]. For more strategic messages, for example, from Al Qaeda Central, the process may be preceded by a series of publicity banners advertising the imminent diffusion of new materials, creating anticipation among its followers, and alerting mainstream media so that they echo the new message from the very instant the new material hits the web[326].

One of the disadvantages for Al Qaeda of its adoption of the internet is the opportunity the internet offers to counter-terrorism analysts to monitor communication and propaganda activities[327]. Of course, the mere presence of an individual surfing a jihadist website is neither incriminatory nor grounds for believing that the individual is planning or even more likely to carry out a terrorist attack. But an examination of the web history of individuals who have actually perpetrated attacks can provide potential insight into the role of the internet in the radicalization process. The cell that conducted the successful bombing of commuter trains in Madrid on March 11, 2004, was largely self-recruited and self-trained. An analysis by investigators of the hard disk drives and flash drives identified the forums and websites most visited by the bombers and the documents they downloaded. Most of the bombers were silent members of Al-Qaeda supporting forums, and their most visited websites included the major points of distribution for Al-Qaeda propaganda and *salafist* ideology. The documents they downloaded dealt with ideological justifications for jihad and tradecraft advice on the preparation and use of explosives[328].

What can surveillance of *jihadi* website traffic tell us about their visitor base? As a by-product of an undercover operation conducted from January to April 2007, Aaron Weisburd monitored the top 19 *Salafist/Jihadist* forums, including Arabic and non-Arabic forums[329], using passive monitoring technology (i.e. it did not require site visitors to install anything on their computers). 1,452 unique IP addresses were discovered accessing these sites during the period, some of which were being used by multiple users (this happens when users need to connect to their ISP using a proxy server, a common practice among satellite internet providers, or when they are using computers in a cyber café), yielding a total of 4,593 IP address occurrences. Weisburd's analysis of the countries of origin of these addresses is shown in figure 9.

%visitors to top jihadi websites by region

% visitors to top jihadi websites by country
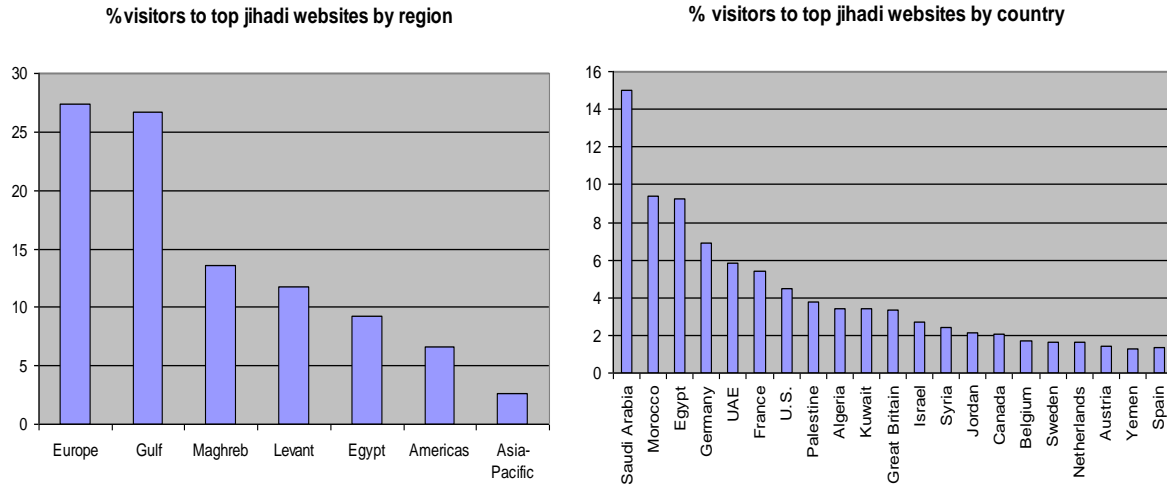
Figure 9. Percentage visitors to top *jihadi* websites by region and country, Jan-April 2007

Using population and internet usage statistics from Internet World Statistics[330], and statistics on religion from the CIA World Factbook[331], the author conducted further analysis on Weisburd's data. See figure 10. Without further data relating to these anonymous IP addresses, any conclusions can only be speculative; it is impossible, for example, to tell whether an IP address represents an intelligence operative, a journalist, a curious bystander, or a potential *jihadist*. It is also imprudent to extrapolate conclusions based on cyberspace data to the real world i.e. internet users in a country are not necessarily a representative sample of their populations, and neither are *jihadist* internet users necessarily a representative sample of the wider jihadist population.

visitors to top jihadi websites as % of population

visitors to top jihadi websites as % of internet users

visitors to top jihadi websites as % of Sunni Muslims
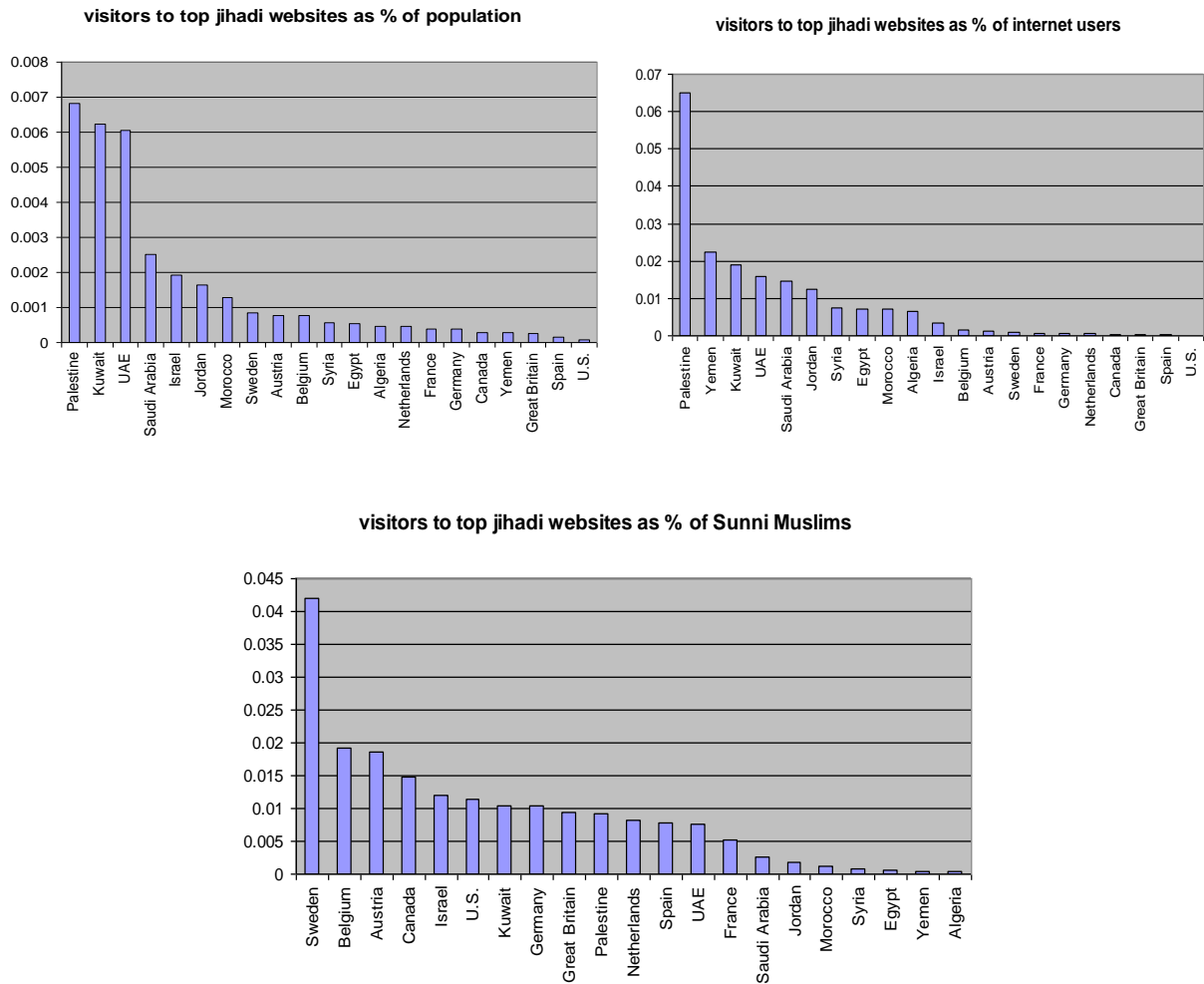
Figure 10. Visitors to top *jihadi* websites as % of population, internet users and Sunni Muslims, Jan-April 2007

Nevertheless, two tentative hypotheses can be drawn. Firstly, that Palestine has the most radicalized internet community (if the visitors identified are bona fide potential jihadists and not Israeli intelligence officers or journalists) and possibly the most radicalized population[332] (if the interest shown by those on the internet reflects the interests of the underlying population). Secondly, that the Muslim diaspora in Europe and North America are significantly more radicalized than Muslim communities within Arab and Muslims lands[333] (again, assuming that the interest shown by internet users is reflective of the interest of the Muslim populations of these

countries - a big assumption; it is entirely possible, for example, that if filtering, surveillance and censorship were not so prevalent in the Middle East[334], that internet users in these countries would exhibit a much higher interest in *jihadi* websites relative to Europe, where the diaspora have mostly unfettered internet access).

Closely associated with the rise of the internet and broadband access is the rise of the proliferation of videos and online games. The Iraq war honed Al Qaeda's use of the video as an emotive propaganda tool to exact revenge and spread fear, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was the most notorious proponent of its use. In May 2004 the Ansar Web site[335] posted the video of the shocking beheading of American civilian Nick Berg by a group of masked persons headed by Zarqawi[336]. One month later, a Saudi militant group connected to Al Qaeda and headed by *Abdelaziz al-Muqrin*, posted the gruesome slaying of engineer Paul Johnson[337]. A search on Google for Nick Berg in May 2004 was the second most popular request after "American Idol", and in June 2004 the most popular search in Google was for Paul Johnson[338].

Weisburd speculates that the shared experience of watching such videos is what constitutes the power of the internet to "bond" the *jihadi* online community, moreso than the interactivity of online *jihadi* forums. As evidence he highlights the limited degree to which postings on the popular al-Ekhlaas forum solicit responses, and anecdotal evidence of jihadists migrating to video-centric websites following *jihadi* website closures[339]. Popular videos of alleged attacks conducted by *jihadi* heroes, such as "the Baghdad Sniper" and the "Sniper of Fallujah" provide a sense of meaning and proof of victory to those sympathetic to Al Qaeda's cause[340].

The power of interaction, however, cannot be dismissed. The Global Islamic Media Front's focus on children and youth has been facilitated by rapid advances in gaming technology. Games such as Quest for Bush, aka Night of Bush Capturing, are offered free of charge, and are designed as instruments of radicalization and training[341]. In *jihadi* games such as "*Umma Defense*", Muslims are faced with a variety of aggressors – the American military, alien invaders, Israeli settlers, or even robots programmed to kill – that they must fend off for the sake of Islam[342]. Such games reinforce the Al Qaeda narrative by providing a virtual version of the participation that strategist al-Suri regards as essential for a full understanding of the political repression and economic exploitation that the Muslim community faces[343].

Rhetoric and Effectiveness

This section assesses the effectiveness of Al Qaeda's communication strategy by examining the rhetorical devices it employs, the legitimacy of its spokesmen, the credibility of its words, and the resonance of its message. The first two themes of Al Qaeda's message are that Islam is under attack by the West and that violence is the only language that the West understands[178]. Notwithstanding U.S. actions and "misdeeds" discussed in the previous section which have lent credence to these premises, Al Qaeda continually reinforces these themes through analogistic framing[344]. By referring to the West as "Crusaders", the "Zionist-Crusader alliance", the "Judeo-Christian" alliance, or the "American Zionist lobby", Al Qaeda makes a logical inference that is based upon the assumption that if a current event (e.g. the occupation of Afghanistan) and a past event (the Crusades of the Middle Ages) are alike in some respects, then they must be alike in other respects[345].

Examples abound of this important framing. Bin Laden's 1995 appeal to Wahhabi clerics who were unhappy with King Fahd's decision to allow the stationing of U.S. troops on the Arabian peninsula explains the "Crusader" motives: "For the first time, the Crusaders have managed to achieve their historic ambitions and dreams against our Islamic *umma*, gaining control over the Islamic Holy Places and the Holy Sanctuaries, and hegemony over the wealth and riches of our *umma*"[346]. Bin Laden's speeches in the 1990's make repeated reference to the "Judeo-Christian alliance"[347].

Bush's careless use of the word "Crusade" five days after the 9/11 attacks played directly into bin Laden's narrative. On September 24, 2001, after President Musharraf promised full cooperation with the U.S. in hunting down Al Qaeda, a typewritten note signed by bin Laden was faxed to Al Jazeera, expressing confidence that Pakistan would rise up to defend Islam against the "neo-Crusader-Jewish campaign led by Bush, the biggest Crusader, under the banner of the cross"[348]. And in a broadcast on November 3, 2001, bin Laden metonymically explained: "Bush left no room for doubts or the opinions of journalists, he openly and clearly said that this war is a crusader war[349]… the unequivocal truth is that Bush has carried the cross and raised its banner high and stood at the front of the queue"[350]. Bin Laden intensified his rhetoric in 2004 when he chose to demonize Bush: "We also call on Muslim *ulema*, leaders, youth, and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's troops and the devil's supporters allying with them"[351].

There are a number of related frames that Al Qaeda uses to disparage its enemy. Calling on an age-old differentiator, Al Qaeda rhetoric often refers to Islam's enemies as "Polytheists". In a videotape posted to the internet in October 2003 that included the wills of the May 12, 2003, suicide bombers in Riyadh, *Abu Tareq al-Asswad* referred to the "enemies of the religion of Allah", whose aim is to

"remove the religious law of Allah from the Muslims…See the Americans and the other polytheists going about the land of the two holy places as if it were one of their states"[352]. And in an online statement in June 2004, Al Qaeda renewed its warning to its "Muslim brothers against associating with the Crusaders: Americans, Westerners, and all the Polytheists in the Arab Peninsula"[353]. For bin Laden, it is always a struggle between different faiths: "It is a question of faith, not a war against terrorism, as Bush and Blair try to depict it"[354].

Since the invasion of Iraq, Al Qaeda and other groups have adopted the rhetorical innovation of referring to democracy as a religion, not a political system, and that the fight is one of the religion of faith versus the false religion of democracy[355]. As one report in September 2003 described, this new view is that Americans are not just "modern crusaders waging a religious war in the name of Christianity against Islam", but "an infidel people who believe in a new infidel religion – democracy – that is striving to achieve world hegemony"[356]. Note that, in contrast to Al Qaeda, many insurgent groups in Iraq with clear nationalist agendas adopt less religious frames to describe their enemies, referring to the "occupiers and collaborators" rather than the "Crusaders and Safavids"[357].

Al Qaeda describes the leaders of the West in ways that remind its audience of historical oppression and humiliation. The use of anamnesis to remind its listeners of the antecedents of the present war on Islam also serves to increase the ethos, or credibility of the author, in Aristotelian terms[358]. For example, in a broadcast on Al Jazeera in November, 2001, bin Laden prefixes his history lesson with the words: "Let us investigate whether this war against Afghanistan that broke out a few days ago is a single and unique one or if it is a link to a long series of crusader wars against the Islamic world". He then itemizes the "crusader" actions to take over the Islamic world

by the British, French and Italians over the past 83 years, including the litany of atrocities committed against the Palestinians. President Bush is the "pharaoh of the age"[359], while "Cheney and Powell have murdered and destroyed in Baghdad more than did Houlagou [the 13th century Mongolian warlord who conquered Baghdad]". With a historical reference that appears to be ingrained in the psyche of all jihadist rhetoricians, the Bush-Blair agreement to invade Iraq is likened to the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916[360].

Similar to President Bush's post 9/11 rhetoric, bin Laden refers to his enemies in epideictic rhetoric[361] and frames the struggle in Manichaean terms. In one recorded statement he says: "These incidents divided the entire world into two regions – one of faith where there is no hypocrisy and another of infidelity, from which we hope God will protect us", while in another speech he states "these events have split the whole world into two camps: the camp of belief and of disbelief. So every Muslim shall take – shall support his religion"[362]. On another occasion he segments his audience into three, but insists that the choice is still between faith and the infidels: "And every man should decide whether he is with the victorious party [the *mujahideen*], or with either of the other two, since there is no fourth party [the other two refer to the enemies of the *mujahideen* and to the "disloyal party" who purport to follow Islam but do not join the jihad]"[363].

The third theme of Al Qaeda's message is that jihad is the only path to confront the enemies of Islam, and that jihad is a duty for all Muslims[178]. This theme invites both explanation and inspiration, the former dominating websites and communiqués that justify attacks, the latter being integrated into the rhetoric of religious mobilization. Weimann explains terrorists' explanations for their actions using Albert Bandura's theory of selective moral disengagement[364], pointing to such

practices as displacement of responsibility, dehumanization of targets, euphemistic language, advantageous comparisons, and attribution of blame[365].

The most prevalent practices are displacement of responsibility and attribution of blame whereby violence is presented as a necessity foisted upon the weak and the victimized, and the focus is shifted toward the enemy for his brutality, inhumanity and immorality[366]. Thus in an interview with al-Quds al-Arabi on November 7, 2001, bin Laden explained the reason for the 9/11 attacks: "we ourselves are the victims of murder and massacres. We are only defending ourselves against the United States. This is a defensive jihad to protect our land and people. That's why I have said that if we don't have security, neither will the Americans. It's a very simple equation that any American child could understand: live and let others live"[367].

The most extraordinary exposition of this rhetoric of reciprocity was displayed after 9/11 by Al Qaeda's spokesman, Suleiman Abu Ghaith, who laid out a case for Al Qaeda's right to kill and maim millions of Americans using weapons of mass destruction: "For fifty years in Palestine, the Jews – with the blessing and support of the Americans – carried out abominations of murder, suppression, abuse and exile. The Jews exiled nearly 5 million Palestinians and killed nearly 260,000. They wounded nearly 180,000, and crippled nearly 160,000. Due to the American bombings and siege of Iraq, more than 1,200,000 Muslims were killed in the past decade…[references to Somalia, Sudan, Philippines, Bosnia, Kashmir, Chechnya, Afghanistan]. We have not reached parity with them. We have the right to kill four million Americans – two million of them children – and to exile twice as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands. Furthermore, it is our right to fight them with chemical and biological weapons"[368].

This tat for tat calculus was described succinctly by bin Laden in a videotape that was broadcast on Al Jazeera on November 12, 2002: "If you suffer to see your people killed and those of your allies in Tunisia, Karachi, Bali, remember our people killed amongst the children of Palestine, in Iraq. Remember our dead in Afghanistan. As you look at your dead in Moscow, also recall ours in Chechnya….as you assassinate, so will you be assassinated, and as you bomb so will you likewise be"[369]. Such argumentation has become second nature to Al Qaeda's followers, as Farhad Khosrokhavar discovered when he conducted extensive interviews with jailed Islamist militants[370].

In rhetorical terms this displacement of responsibility is described by the logical fallacies of *ad hominem, tu quoque and ignoratio elenchi*[371]. *Ad hominem* is an attack on the messenger rather than the argument, a use of epideictic rhetoric to respond to deliberative or forensic rhetoric. *Tu quoque* is probably the most common fallacy in all of political discourse and it responds to the charge of a speaker by highlighting his/her hypocrisy. *Ignoratio elenchi* is commonly known as "red herring", and is an attempt to change the subject from one in which the speaker is losing to one in which he is likely to win. CNN's interview with Bin Laden in 1997[372] provides an example of these techniques:

> Peter Arnett: Now, the United States government says that you are still funding military training camps here in Afghanistan for militant, Islamic fighters and that you're a sponsor of international terrorism…. Are these accusations true? …
>
> Osama Bin Laden: …At the time that they condemn any Muslim who calls for his right, they receive the highest top official of the Irish Republican Army at the White House as a political leader, while woe, all woe is the Muslims if they cry out for their rights. Wherever

we look, we find the U.S. as the leader of terrorism and crime in the world. The U.S. does not consider it a terrorist act to throw atomic bombs at nations thousands of miles away, when it would not be possible for those bombs to hit military troops only. These bombs were rather thrown at entire nations, including women, children and elderly people and up to this day the traces of those bombs remain in Japan. The U.S. does not consider it terrorism when hundreds of thousands of our sons and brothers in Iraq died for lack of food or medicine. So, there is no base for what the U.S. says and this saying does not affect us.…

Besides providing explanations and the requisite Islamic legal justifications, Al Qaeda rhetoric also inspires its followers to follow the path of jihad. The group's understanding focuses more on the autonomous power of faith than on strictly material concerns. "God Almighty said 'the believers fight for God's cause, while those who reject faith fight for an unjust cause'…victory comes only with God....all we need to do is prepare and motivate for the jihad"[373]. Underlying the logic of this faith is the deeply ingrained historical association between jihad, power and religion that the phenomenal success of the early experience of the religion provided for the followers of the Sunni brand of Islam[374]. This is the powerful enthymeme that gives force to the syllogism of Al Qaeda's rhetoric[375]. It is reinforced by allusion to the *sunna* (trodden path) of the Prophet. For example, bin Laden's recitations allude to the *hijra* (emigration) of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina[376], to the *khandaq* (trench) dug by Muslims in preparation for the Battle of the Trench in 627 in which Muhammad prevailed against considerable odds[377], and to the *Lailat al Qadr* (night of power) when the heavens open and Allah listens to the lucky ones[378].

In practical terms bin Laden's experience fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan gave him the confidence of these religious convictions[379]. He was quoted in the Saudi magazine al Majallah in 1988 as saying "It was God alone who protected us from the Russians"[380], and in an interview with the Australian magazine, Nida'ul Islam, he exclaimed "We are grateful to God Most Exalted in that He has facilitated jihad in His cause for us, against the Israeli-American attacks on the Holy Sanctuaries of Islam"[381]. And when the U.S. and its allies invaded Afghanistan after 9/11, the same faith was proclaimed: "Indeed, they [America, Russia and Britain] are worthless when compared to God's power and support for the faithful *mujahideen*"[382]. More recently, bin Laden calls Muslims to turn away from sin and unite to do God's will, since with His power they are capable of solving all of their own economic challenges: "Today, by the grace of God, our *umma* possesses enormous powers, sufficient to rescue Palestine and the rest of the Muslim lands. However these powers have been fettered and we must work to release them. For our *umma* has been promised victory. If it has been delayed, that is only because of our sins and our failure to help God"[383].

Evaluating the effectiveness of Al Qaeda propaganda is inevitably a subjective exercise and needs to marshal anecdotal evidence from three areas: the perceived credibility and effectiveness of its interlocutors, the impact of its chosen media, and, most importantly, the resonance of its message. The first area relates to the group's principle spokesmen and leaders. It is possible to gain some insight into bin Laden's influence from people who know him. Abdel Bari Atwan knows and appears to sympathize with Bin Laden, so his assessment needs to be judged carefully. He believes that although bin Laden is not a religious scholar, he commands a wide appeal in the Muslim world, in large part because of his own personal piety and because he is not corrupt – "he is a good example: a man who sacrificed all his wealth to come and live with them, among them, and to fight

for their causes. He is different and he is not corrupt and so he represents the pioneers of Muslim early Islamic history – the Prophet Muhammad's companions"[384].

Michael Scheuer tracked bin Laden for many years as the head of Alex Station[385] and appears to have developed the respect that the hunter develops for the hunted. He goes as far as suggesting that bin Laden is the Islamic faith's "ideal type", a "modern-day Saladin"[386]. Such characterizations are attributed to bin Laden's reputation for probity, austerity and courage, and they stand in sharp contrast to the reputation of most Arab regimes[387]. These leadership qualities are of vital military significance for Al Qaeda, since if the battle is deemed a defensive jihad, it is "*fard ayn*' (an individual duty) for every Muslim to participate if asked by a 'just and pious leader'. So long as its leaders are viewed as credible, just and pious, the argument is that no true Muslim can deny Al Qaeda's call to jihad[388].

The flipside is that whenever these conditions are not met, Al Qaeda's propaganda strategy runs into serious challenges. Since Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's demise, for example, Al Qaeda has lacked effective leadership in Iraq. The appointed leader Abu Umar al-Baghdadi lacks a public history of scholarship, and Zawahiri's recent response to questions on the leading jihadist forums even provides credence to the theory that he is a fictitious character, further adding to the difficulty the ISI has in getting its message to resonate there amidst the crowded market of insurgent voices[389].

Bin Laden's rhetorical style is not a display of histrionics but rather of a quiet inner power and mystical detachment[390]. His videos are deliberately staged appearances - with carefully chosen symbolic props to reinforce his message, such the white horse, the library, the cavern, the rifle, the combat gear, the head dress, the white robe – in which he is at once the sheikh-saracen, the desert

prince, the holy-man, the warrior-priest[391]. First and foremost he is a lyricist and polemicist[392]. His poetry captures the quiet power that he seeks to project:

"A destroyer: even the brave fear its might.
It inspires horror in the harbor and in the open sea
She sails into the waves
Flanked by arrogance, haughtiness and false power.
To her doom she moves slowly
A dinghy awaits her, riding the waves."[393]

Nearly all of his statements are constructed as Islamic arguments with real or imagined opponents. He weaves fluently back and forth between at least five Islamic genres unfamiliar in the West: the declaration, the juridical decree, the lecture, the written reminder, and the epistle[394]. And like all good lay preachers (*khuttaba*) his sermons adopt a preamble to draw his audience away from their daily toils and remind them of God (*dhikr*). He is skilled in the use of rhetorical terror (*tarhib*), admonishment (*wa'az*), and heavenly promise (*wa'd*)[395]. The credibility that these techniques bring to his speeches is strengthened by the strong correlation between his words and his deeds, between the forewarning of attacks and their execution. For example, in 2002 and 2003, attacks in Bali, Yemen, Pakistan, Turkey and Madrid were all prefaced by Al Qaeda rallying calls or condemnations[396].

So how effective has the rhetoric of al Qaeda leadership been? The impact of "propaganda of the word" is less easily observable than of "propaganda of the deed", or "misdeed", such as the boost in Al Qaeda recruitment after the 1998 African embassy bombings and the U.S. response, the loss of the Partido Popular in the general election in Spain after the 2004 Madrid bombings[397], or the sudden drop in popular support for al-Qaeda after the 2005 Zarqawi bombing of three hotels in Amman, Jordan[50]. Presidential candidate, John Kerry, claimed that the release

of a bin Laden videotape in late October 2004 denied him the general election in the U.S.: "we were rising in the polls up until the last day when the tape appeared. We flat-lined the day the tape appeared, and went down on Monday"[398]. Such claims, of course, are almost impossible to verify.

Similarly difficult to determine is the impact of propaganda on sympathy and recruitment, as it relies on anecdotal evidence. The story of Abdessater Dahmane, a Tunisian who had settled in Belgium, and who assassinated the Northern Alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massoud on the 9th of September 2001, as told by his wife, provides a chilling example[399]. She explained that one day Osama bin Laden appeared on the TV news. Abdessater spoke of the beauty of Osama bin Laden as he referred to the light of faith illuminating his face. His own face became very serene, but when bin Laden called out for combat against the aggressors of the poor and the unarmed, his face changed: "something had just put a shadow over the happiness of Abdessatar: he was scared of dying without having made the supreme effort on the path of God: Jihad. And he had the impression that it was to himself in particular that Osama was delivering a message"[400].

Another less obvious consequence of Al Qaeda's rhetoric is that its members are affected by their own propaganda, by the denigration that leads to an underestimation of one's foe, and by an over-attribution of worldly success to God's favoritism. Abu Walid al Misri, editor of the Al Imara Taliban magazine, wrote a book about the Afghan Arabs that discussed this point. He wrote that bin Laden began to believe "that the United States was much weaker than some of those around him thought. He stated this at several meetings and as evidence he referred to what happened to the United States in Beirut in 1983. Some young Saudi followers confirmed to bin Laden his delusions from the gist of the experiences they had gained from their visits to the United States, namely, that

the country was falling and could bear only few strikes. Relying on what apparently he liked to hear and what he had repeatedly asserted, they stressed to him that the United States could not bear two or three strong strikes. This view was basically wrong and dangerous"[401].

The second area to examine is the effectiveness of its choice of media, the channels that Al Qaeda chooses to communicate its messages to its target audiences. Like other fundamentalist groups, Al Qaeda has been able to take advantage of new technologies which have served to break the monopoly control of information enjoyed by western media conglomerates and the governments of the Arab world for so long. For the first time, stations like Al Jazeera brought Arab news seen and interpreted through Arab eyes, and the web brought "propaganda to the people, free of economic barriers and regulatory controls that put traditional media off limits"[402].

At the same time, Al Qaeda has taken advantage of this situation to mount a challenge to the monopoly enjoyed by the Sunni clerical establishment that has been co-opted by the governments of the Islamic world. This trend started with the rise of print technology in the 19th century that helped to diminish the traditional scholars' monopoly over religious knowledge[403]. It was further facilitated with the rise of audio cassettes and then accelerated by the rise of satellite TV and the internet. Thus, as an alternative to state-administered religious bureaucracies, a parallel institutional matrix for the reproduction of religious knowledge arose that grew in tandem with the Islamic Revival (*al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya*)[404]. The result has been a new breed of Islamist intellectuals[405], many of whom lack traditional training and access to traditional means of Islamic indoctrination, and have therefore turned to the internet, creating the new phenomenon of "*jihadi* internet scholars" and turning the internet into a "global *madrassa*"[406].

The major shifts in the information market created by satellite TV and the internet have been beneficial for players hitherto denied a place in the market. Fundamentalist Islamic groups have been quick to take advantage of these opportunities and enter the market. However, as the market evolves, groups like Al Qaeda are challenged by newer players and begin to lose their "first mover" advantage. Information and media consumers in the Arab world have become more sophisticated, and now have a wide spectrum of satellite stations and internet websites and forums to choose from. In this environment the challenge for producers is not just getting their message out, but getting potential consumers to "look at, pay attention to, and react to what [they] are saying in a cacophony of other information streams and voices"[407].

The practical consequence for Al Qaeda is that there has been a long fall-off in Arab TV coverage of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri over the past two years[408]. Bin Laden can no longer command the position that, for example, Gammal Abdel Nasser commanded in the 1960's. For TV networks Al Qaeda needs to offer material that will help them compete for audience share in a crowded market, so when they send a 90 minute tape to Al Jazeera, they should not be surprised when the station cuts to the most provocative statements and leaves out the larger context and message-setting[409]. On the internet the competition has also intensified at a rapid pace, where the top fifteen websites for the Middle East consist primarily of search engines such as Yahoo, MSN Arabia; news and information sites, such as Al Jazeera and Al Ahram; religious sites such as AmrKhalid and Islam Online; and entertainment and women's issues, such as DVD4Arabs and Arb3[334].

Assessing the impact of the internet on sympathy for Al Qaeda is also not easy. The proliferation of terrorist websites has produced staggering growth rates of around 4,500% per year between

1998 and 2006. It is estimated that there are around 5,000 terrorist websites in total, although experts believe that the bulk of activity in and original content from the Global Jihadi Movement is centered around twenty or so key sites[410]. As discussed above, IP monitoring can tell nothing about who is behind the IP address and how they are using information obtained from websites[276]. Statistics on downloads can inform us of the popularity but not the impact of content. For example, *Sawt al-Jihad* reported that between 300,000 and 400,000 people downloaded their video, *Badr al-Riyadh,* from the internet within the first five days of being posted.

Analysis of data from a poll conducted in Saudi Arabia by Terror Free Tomorrow and D3 Systems in December 2007, shows a slightly higher use of the internet for those holding favorable views of Al Qaeda[411]. See figure 11. Again, however, this tells nothing of the impact of internet propaganda. To assess the impact of propaganda, anecdotal evidence is necessary, such as the testimonies of terrorists themselves. Examples include the field coordinator of the 2002 Bali bombings, who admitted that he had been influenced by what he had absorbed from certain radical internet sites, and the suicide attackers responsible for the 2003 bombing of a Tel Aviv bar, who were seen a year later in a videotape quoting from statements posted by radical cleric, Al Muhajiroun of London's Finsbury Mosque.
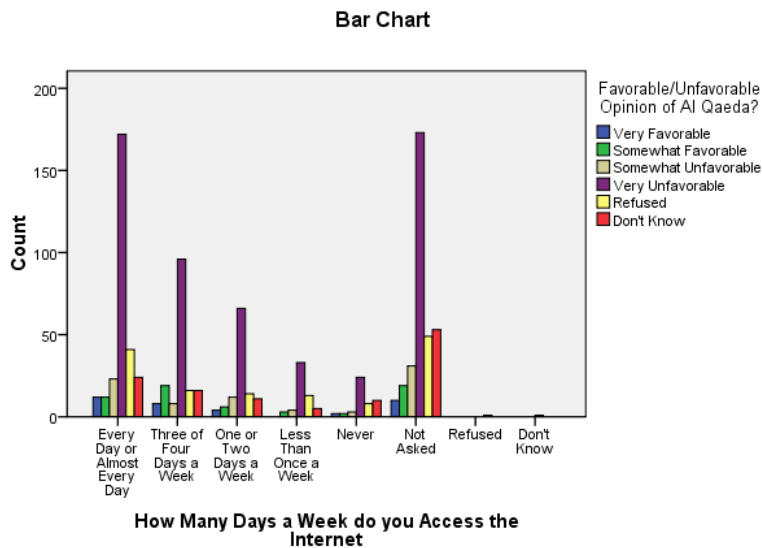
Figure 11. Bar Chart relating Saudi opinions of Al Qaeda to time spent on the internet

The last element to consider is the resonance of Al Qaeda's message. Despite the blatant exaggeration and one-sided nature of this narrative, much of it is builds upon partial truths. This is the reason it resonates with such a large segment of Arab and Muslim audiences. As Atwan states: "Support for groups like al Qaeda is born of political, social and economic circumstances that people find unacceptable. Al Qaeda offers them the chance to fight back – something that, for the Muslim world as a whole, has not been possible for a very long time. Muslims might not like what al Qaeda has to offer in the long term – how many of them really want to live under a Taliban-style regime? – but that is not the issue at present"[412].

However, part of the reason that Al Qaeda's popularity has fallen in recent years is that anti-jihadi voices are vastly more prevalent in the Arab media today than they were five years ago. Complaints are voiced for several reasons: that Al Qaeda's tactics have no justification in Islamic

teaching, that the Taliban has been destroyed, that the sleeping American giant has been woken up. The July 7 bombings were routinely criticized by more moderate Islamists, such as Qaradawi and the highly influential sheikh of Al-Azhar, Muhammad Sayed Tantawi. Similarly, the Amman hotel bombings provoked outrage in Jordan and beyond, with condemnations from Hamas, and Gamaa Islamiyya, among others[413]. In his recent internet Question and Answer session, Zawahiri side-stepped the question of the legitimacy of targeting civlians, by claiming that Al Qaeda does not target civilians and that loss of Muslim life was either accidental or the Muslims mixing with non-Muslims were fair game. "This is a hard argument to sell among the Muslim victims of Al Qaeda terrorism in Baghdad, Riyadh, Casablanca, Ammam, Algiers, and Istanbul"[414].

Well-known figures such as Egyptian columnist Fahmy Howediy and Qaradawi have done more damage to jihadism than all of America's efforts combined. "God's curse on Qaradawi, the American agent" is standard fare in jihadi Internet chat rooms[415]. And Ali Gomaa, the Grand Mufti of al-Azhar, has written "Attacking civilians, women, children, and the elderly by blowing oneself up is absolutely forbidden in Islam. No excuse can be made for the crimes committed in New York, Spain, and London, and anyone who tries to make excuses for these acts is ignorant of Islamic law (shari'ah), and their excuses are a result of extremism and ignorance"[416].

Bin Laden and Zawahiri's behavior has also been criticized by many Islamist extremists, such as Montasser al Zayyat, the Egyptian lawyer who was jailed with Zawahiri following the assassination of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in 1981. Al Zayyat believes that bin Laden's desire to take revenge, heedless of the American response, has given the Americans the power to destroy the Islamists – "in the post- September 11 world, no countries can afford to be accused of harboring the enemies of the United States"[417]. Former Muslim extremists in Britain have

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"resoundedly rejected" Islamism and Jihadism by establishing the Quilliam Foundation, which aims to "uphold Islam as a pluralistic, diverse tradition that can heal the pathology of Islamist extremism"[418].

Even long time associates of bin Laden's, such as Abu Musab al Suri, have written that the jihadist movement has been severely damaged by the 9/11 attacks[419], and Noman Benotman, the Libyan who fought with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan in the early nineties told Zawahiri "We failed. All the jihadi movements failed because we cannot recruit the people. It's as simple as that. That is the rules of the war, especially guerrilla warfare"[420]. More recently, Zawahiri's feud with Egyptian scholar, Sayyid Imam Sharif, the former Emir of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, has been particularly damaging to Al Qaeda's jihadist ideology[421].

Zawahiri complains that he is not reaching the masses but he is unable to see the Achilles' Heel of his message, that he offers no credible, positive vision: "al Qaeda presents no positive vision of the world it wants to create other than vague references to restoring the Caliphate"[422]. As Lawrence suggests "the absence of detail is deliberate, to magnify its appeal by mobilizing the greatest number in a cause for which the outcome can never be specified"[423]. In one of Al Qaeda's blueprints for the future, the author responds to a question posed by a fellow-jihadist about how the post-jihad Islamic state will be organized, how will the "ministries of agriculture, trade and economics be organized?". The response is empty, and displays the essential weakness of the vision: "in this atmosphere you will see wondrous things. When the winds of faith blows, it brings wondrous things"[424]. Only nihilism is left – the Al Qaeda message is essentially a negative one that will be ultimately self-defeating, "bin Laden and other leaders of al Qaeda seemed to have painted themselves into a corner where their only strategy is to call for more violence"[425]. As Juan Zarate,

deputy national security advisor for combating terrorism, predicts: "Al Qaeda's downfall and the end of the broader movement that it represents will follow inherently from their dark vision and terrorist tactics"[414].

Implications for U.S. Policy

Implications of Al Qaeda's Propaganda Strategy

What are the implications of the foregoing analysis for U.S. policy? This final section proposes a new, integrated approach to U.S. foreign policy, strategic communications and public diplomacy. In so doing it seeks to avoid the stove-piped approach that to-date has led to different branches of government working at odds[426], limited the effectiveness of national counter-terrorism strategy in general, and prevented public diplomacy studies from having a significant effect on policy[427]. It starts by identifying the drivers for Al Qaeda's successes and failures in winning hearts and minds from this paper's analysis of public opinion data and Al Qaeda's propaganda strategy. The paper concludes by drawing out implications for U.S. policies, using this framework to present an assessment of post-9/11 and current U.S. policy.

Al Qaeda is doing a powerful job of telling America's story. Its principle narrative is consistent, and although it is couched in Islamic language, the core premise is geo-political, that U.S. foreign policy aims to exploit and weaken the Lands of Islam through military aggression, in a clash of civilizations that pits the Judeo-Christian alliance against Islam. Although this is a huge distortion of U.S. actions and intentions, the partial truths within it resonate with a significant percentage of the Arab and Muslim population because of long-held grievances felt by Arabs and Muslims throughout the world. The anger and emotion harbored by many Muslims in the Middle East is fueled by political oppression and a resentment of corrupt, secular and modernist forces. The perception is that these forces are strengthened by the United States' incursions into the region and its relationships with Israel and authoritarian Arab regimes. In Europe the anger is fueled by social

exclusion, racism, and "humiliation by proxy" by which de-territorialized, re-Islamized 2nd and 3rd generation diasporic youth perceive the U.S. as the neo-imperialist successor to 18th and 19th century European colonial powers[428].

On the other hand, all is not going well for Al Qaeda. Their popularity in Muslim-dominated countries has fallen dramatically in the past two years, driven in large part by reactions to the slaughter of Muslim civilians, and reflected by an increasing plurality of dissenting voices from the Islamic mainstream, from non-violent Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and from extremists and scholars within the Global Jihad Movement itself. There is major competition and even conflict amongst jihadist groups between those with clear-cut nationalist agendas, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and Al Qaeda and its affiliates, whose unrealistic goals are to re-establish a pan-Islamic utopia based upon the Golden Medinan Period of Islamic history. This rift has caused intense debates within Al Qaeda itself and dove-tailed with the larger schism that was created in the Egyptian part of the group in the 1990's, by those who disagreed with Ayman al-Zawahiri's decision to support bin Laden's agenda to attack the "far enemy".

The open nature of such dissent, which is taking place largely within the top jihadi forums on the internet, has served to focus attention on the contentious issues of the killing of civilians, and on the failed and premature attempt by Al Qaeda in Iraq to establish an Islamic state[429]. The complete lack of any social program or detail, on what sort of state would be formed after expelling the infidels from Muslim lands and toppling the "apostate" regimes, means that Al Qaeda's message fails to resonate with the "median voter". Polls which show some support for Al Qaeda or bin Laden reflect the role he plays as the representative of Muslims who are unable to fight back, and who find their political, social or economic circumstances unacceptable. But the same polls clearly

demonstrate that the mainstream do not want bin Laden as a leader, do not subscribe to the phases of "disruption, exhaustion and barbarism"[430] that are deemed necessary to reach the goals, and are either not attracted to or do not buy into the feasibility of his post-jihad utopia.

As the explosive satellite TV market in the Arab world takes shape, Al Qaeda is finding it increasingly difficult to get its voice heard. The majority of people in the region identify their primary source of news as television, which is the "town square' of the public sphere in which opinions are formulated through discourse, shaped by cultural context and biased towards the intra-regional agendas of media owners. Television increasingly mediates the shaping of the public's "pseudo-environment" as it both reflects and provides the heuristical shortcuts used to understand a complex world. And Al Jazeera is clearly the dominant TV station. However, the comparative advantage that Al Jazeera gained in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 by showing the "other side" of 9/11 has lost its edge, as Al Qaeda's popularity drops and videos with long diatribes from bin Laden or al Zawahiri no longer have what it takes to boost audience ratings.

Obviously, U.S. public diplomacy strategy cannot be defined by responding simply to Al Qaeda's propaganda. U.S. public diplomacy is needed to inform, engage, and influence foreign public opinion[431] in support of a whole host of national objectives, not just defeating Al Qaeda. As a world leader it must project a positive vision of hope and reach out to bridge the gaps with other cultures in order to promote mutual understanding and respect. But U.S. public diplomacy needs to take cognizance of Al Qaeda propaganda in formulating its own communication, so as not fall into the enemy's traps, and to ensure that it's own message is not getting distorted.

There are several implications of the foregoing analysis for U.S. policy that will be listed here as "criteria for evaluation". Firstly, that part of Al Qaeda's narrative that is based upon a distortion of facts requires counterpropaganda and re-education programs (*criteria 1*). Where the distortion of facts builds upon existing anti-American historical revisionism and rote-learning based education[432], then it requires diplomatic initiative and financial aid towards alternative educational methods and curricula. Secondly, that part of its narrative that is based upon a distortion of U.S. intentions requires public diplomacy programs and daily initiatives that involve dialog with both opinion-shapers as well as direct engagement in the mass-mediated public sphere aimed at correcting misperceptions that are both systemic and arise on a daily basis. To counter the misperception that the West is at war with Islam, the U.S. counter-narrative needs to explain that Muslims are an integral part of the multi-cultural "West", and that Al Qaeda are as much at war with Muslims who do not subscribe to their agenda as they are at war with non-Muslims[414] (*criteria 2*). U.S. spokespeople also need to be very careful in their use of Islamic terminology in public discourse, especially when discussing terrorism. This includes not only government officials, but also leading media and religious figures (*criteria 3*). A term such as the "war on terrorism" is often heard as the "war on Islam", exacerbated by the use of terms such as "Islamo-fascism" and even less inflammatory terminology adopted by academics (author included), such as "jihadist", "Islamist" etc.

Thirdly, that part of its narrative that is based upon partial truths requires changes in the conduct of foreign policy. Even the best public diplomacy practitioners cannot reduce the antipathy caused by an aggressive, invasive and unilateralist foreign policy. This entails convincing mainstream Muslim and Arab populations that the U.S. is not at war with Islam by withdrawing troops from

Iraq (*criteria 4*), investing in peace processes in Palestine, Kashmir and Somalia (*criteria 5*), and speaking out against the disproportional use of armed force in Palestine, Lebanon, and Chechnya (*criteria 6*). It also entails using multilateral human rights diplomacy to speak out against civil rights abuses in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan (*criteria 7*).

Dealing with the partial truth component of Al Qaeda's narrative also entails responding to Muslim leaders continued call for a "dialog of civilizations". This involves traditional state to state diplomatic initiatives which put pressure on authoritarian regimes in the Arab world to open up their political system and accommodate Islamist parties (*criteria 8*). In this way those countries in which the jihadist fundamentalist provide the only opposing voice will have to compete against a pluralistic Islamist alternative. It also entails engaging more explicitly in public diplomacy dialog with Islamist parties which have renounced violence, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and which offer a serious threat to Al Qaeda's efforts to build sympathy for its cause among the "masses" and recruit Islamic fundamentalist youth[433] (*criteria 9*). Finally, it entails increased government support of citizen initiatives ranging from exchange programs and bi-directional education programs to inter-faith dialog (*criteria 10*).

Besides the practical and resource challenges that this proposed shift in policy will create, there will be philosophical challenges that require debate within the policy community. Rebalancing the global war on terror away from a head-on military and intelligence war towards more of a mix of hard and soft power ("smart power"[434]) in the manner described above raises several questions. How can we respond to terrorist grievances without being accused of making concessions (the Munich analogy), of validating their actions and inviting future acts of terrorism ("terrorism works"), of betraying alliances (U.S. credibility), or of withdrawing from national goals and

sacrificing national interests (isolationism)? The trick is to take the above actions, not in response to terrorism, but precisely in order to secure the national objective of restoring U.S. leadership in the world. The U.S. does not negotiate or respond to terrorist actions or communications. It must remain firm in its commitment to condemn and root out terrorists, and the "silent treatment" is often the best way to avoid raising the stature of terrorist groups.

However, the demand-side of Al Qaeda's terrorism builds upon the commonality of demands endemic in the Arab and Muslim worlds. In order to re-build its leadership role and the trust of others in the region, and re-establish itself as an honest broker, the U.S. needs to prove that it is not just a self-interested extra-regional hegemon or superpower. It needs to invest political capital in helping to find peaceful solutions to the most pressing conflicts affecting Muslim lands. It can do so without endangering alliances and friendships. These include Israel and authoritarian states in the Middle East and Pakistan. It also needs to engage closely with its European allies and solicit the help of Muslim Americans towards reducing the misperceptions about U.S. policy within the European Muslim diaspora.

With strong bipartisan support for Israel in the Congress, it is unrealistic to expect an "even-handed" approach toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but it is not unrealistic to put political capital into a resolution of the conflict based upon the widely understood "Clinton parameters". The conflict lies at the heart of anti-Western resentment in the Muslim World, and although Al Qaeda has never seen eye to eye with the secular or even the Islamist nationalists in Palestine, its narrative and its goals have always included the liberation of Palestine and expulsion of the Zionists, contrary to claims from the pro-Israel right. The active participation of the U.S. and Israel in the creation of a legitimate Palestinian state would remove the grievance that adds credence

every day to the "West versus Islam" thesis upon which Al Qaeda's rhetoric depends. The frequency of suicide bombings has also been shown to drop considerably when the peace process is actively pushed forward[435].

Putting pressure on authoritarian regimes in the Middle East is one of the trickiest areas of foreign policy in the region. The U.S. depends on Saudi Arabia, to use its influence within OPEC as the price-setter to avoid price hikes, and to use its 25% share of world oil reserves to prevent volatility in the supply side of the market. In return the U.S. provides security. This relationship has worked well since the creation of the Kingdom and the discovery of oil by Americans in 1932. The two countries also enjoy close intelligence relationships and are aligned in combating the threat of terrorism. The problem is that power in the country is largely controlled by the Saudi-Wahhab alliance and is mediated through tribal leaders. Being an oil-rich rentier state, there is no civil society to speak of, and the middle class that does exist is dependent upon the regime. The lack of plurality, the prevalence of Saudi-funded Wahhabist education within and beyond the Kingdom, the increased polarization of wealth, and the close relationship between the Saudi regime and the U.S., all contribute to Al Qaeda's popularity in the kingdom[436]. Apart from long-term efforts to wean the U.S. economy away from oil dependency, there do not appear to be significant changes that the U.S. can make in its policy towards the country in the short-term. This is a sticky problem.

The U.S. also relies on regimes such as Egypt and Jordan to maintain their peace agreements with Israel. The foreign aid the U.S. provides to these countries might even be considered an ongoing bribe to maintain the fragile status quo. There is a fear in some quarters in Washington that if "Islamist" parties gain power then such peace treaties would be scrapped[437], but the U.S. has many arrows in its quiver, not just the threat of withdrawing or reducing aid, it also the leverage of

security guarantees. The U.S. needs to find creative ways to exercise human rights diplomacy in such countries to ensure a balanced policy that reflects commitment to principle as well as power.

Finally, the dilemma in Pakistan that the U.S. has faced by supporting an unpopular dictator has changed considerably with recent events. The U.S. needs to balance its efforts to defeat Al Qaeda in the region with the need to resolve the Kashmir problem, recognizing that Pakistan's regional confrontation with India defines a policy that favors a weak and non-threatening Afghanistan, a cross-border Pashtu population that it can control, and the tacit help of extremist groups in keeping Kashmir out of India's hands. Another sticky problem that requires political investment and creativity.

The other core premise on which Al Qaeda's narrative is based is that jihad is the only way to counter the threat of the U.S.-led war on Islam, and that it is every Muslim's duty to participate in the jihad. The religious argumentation and Quranic exegesis required to refute this premise is not for the U.S. or its western allies to argue, although the U.S. can challenge the antecedent that it is waging war against Islam. The U.S. must leave the intra-faith issue of what constitutes the conditions for jihad for Muslim scholars and intellectuals to debate, and Islamic "re-education programs"[438] must be the domain of the clerical establishments and Muslim governments. Where the U.S. can get involved in this debate, however, is in leading multinational initiatives to highlight and condemn the deliberate killing of civilians as a heinous and deplorable crime, a tactic that cannot be morally justified under any legal system, including the *sharia* (*criteria 11*). Leaders across the Muslim world have condemned terrorism outright as being contrary to the *sharia*, and such condemnation needs to be integrated more broadly into a global multinational effort endorsed

by the U.N. to delegitimize the tactic of terrorism and reduce the "space of condonement" within which they operate.

Achieving the goal stated in the U.S. National Security Strategy of making clear "that all acts of terrorism are illegitimate so that terrorism will be viewed in the same light as slavery, piracy, or genocide" requires building a "global antiterrorist consensus"[439]. At the same time the U.S. must recognize that such efforts will be wasted if the U.S. itself appears to go against the rest of the world. When this happens "it is its actions that appear illegitimate"[440]. The practical implication for U.S. policy is that the U.S. must be seen as acting within the bounds of the law, a difficult task due to the premium placed on the human intelligence that is often required to detect and prevent terrorist attacks (*criteria 12*). If the pivot point for the balance between civil liberties and national security shifts, due to the increased threat of catastrophic terrorism, for example, then the law needs to change. As Philip Bobbitt argues emphatically: "all branches of government must act in conformity with the Constitution and the law"[441].

A summary of the Al Qaeda narrative and implications for U.S. policy is shown in figure 12.

Al Qaeda Narrative	Characteristic	Criteria	Implication for U.S. Policy	Instrument
The West is engaged in a U.S.-led war against Islam	Distortion of facts	1	Set the record straight	PSYOPS, public diplomacy, diplomatic and economic incentives for re-education, broadcasting
	Distortion of U.S. intentions	2	Clarify U.S. policy and intentions	Public diplomacy, broadcasting
		3	Care and attention in the use of Islamic terminology in public discourse	Cultural sensitivity
	Partial Truths	4	Withdraw troops from Iraq	Foreign policy
		5	Invest in peace processes in Palestine, Kashmir and Somalia	Diplomacy
		6	Speak out against disproportional use of armed force in Palestine, Lebanon, Chechnya	Diplomacy
		7	Speak out against civil rights abuses in Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan	Human Rights Diplomacy
		8	Pressure authoritarian regimes to accommodate moderate Islamist parties	Diplomacy
		9	Encourage political participation of Islamist parties which have renounced violence	Public diplomacy
		10	Support citizen public diplomacy initiatives involving bi-directional cultural education and inter-faith dialog	Citizen public diplomacy
Violent jihad is the only way to counter the U.S. threat and is a personal duty	Heinous and illegal acts	11	Lead international initiatives to highlight and condemn the killing of civilians	Information operations, multilateral diplomacy
		12	Act within the bounds of the law or change the law to deal with new threats	Constitutional and international law

Figure 12. Implications of the Al Qaeda Narrative for U.S. policy

U.S. Communications Policy Since 9/11

Before evaluating U.S. policies against the conceptual framework outlined above, it is important to outline some false assumptions that exist within the policy community. The first is that the U.S. is engaged in a "battle to win the hearts and minds" of the Arab and Muslim world. There are two misconceptions implicit in this assumption: firstly that the U.S. can have significant influence on Muslim attitudes towards terrorism through the direct application of soft power; secondly, the use of militaristic language presupposes the absence of dialog.

On the first point, it must be recognized that, being an outsider, the U.S. is at most a marginal player in the public sphere of the Middle East, that it lacks the cultural and religious credibility to participate in what is largely an intra-civilizational debate going on within Arab and Muslim communities. The flaw in Bush's execution of the "war of ideas" lies in his attempt to apply Cold War ideological strategy to a fundamentally different battle: "We will demonstrate that the forces of terror cannot stop the momentum of freedom"[442]. Instead of simply responding to a fringe group within the vast population of Islam with the Western message of freedom and democracy, the U.S. and its allies need to take action to "encourage Muslims to speak openly against the extremists' views and to make extremist ideology less attractive"[443]. The majority of Muslims do not subscribe to Al Qaeda's vision of a Taliban-style Islamic utopia, yet they would prefer some elements of sharia law rather than a completely secular, democratic society. Pushing a single message of western-style freedom and democracy ignores the burning desire of people on Arab and Muslim lands for a freedom that includes being free from foreign interference. A smarter supportive message from western countries would be built upon ideas of representative

government and justice, the latter being a value that resonates deeply within Arab and Muslim cultures.

On the second point, the bellicose language used in much of the policy community that is tied closely with the Global War on Terror simply serves to alienate the very mainstream voices that the U.S. wishes to influence. The war metaphor "forecloses too many strategic options, favoring the use of force when co-operation with local leaders might be more productive"[444]. While the term "war on terror" is still adopted within official government communication for legal reasons, guidelines need to be created to provide a clear delineation of language. It is better to reserve military metaphors to describe activities that only affect the enemies of the U.S., and to use inclusive terms such as "engagement" and "dialog" when talking to friendly or neutral audiences.

The second assumption is that explaining the truth behind U.S. policies will overcome misunderstandings or even anti-American attitudes. This will work with some, but not with all. The view rests on the misconceptions that words can always address emotion, and does not take into account that what is important is not what is said by the speaker, but what is heard by the listener[445]. When designing communication to address sympathy for terrorism, it is first vital to understand what attitudes the listener holds. Trying to convince a committed jihadist with speech or dialog to change the error of his ways is simply unrealistic. The difficulty lies in establishing clear boundaries to define the "enemy" when in reality there are gradations of radicalization. The Defense Science Board has suggested 5 categories ranging from hard opposition to hard support based on attitudinal research[446]. This is similar to the approach being adopted in the U.K's PREVENT strategy by the newly formed Research, Information and Communication Unit[447].

So what has been the U.S. policy on communications since 9/11 and how has it evolved? In the aftermath of 9/11 the executive branch very quickly seized control of messaging to define the terrorists. Phrases such as "bringing the terrorists to justice" were quickly turned to "bringing justice to the terrorists"[448]. The "global war on terror" was the frame given to the new reality, choices such as "with us or against us" were offered to nation-states, and the general public could choose to be "supporters" or "enemies of freedom"[449]. Richard Clarke described these tense days after the attacks when the cabinet was unsure whether to expect another attack, and was embroiled in discussions about whether to attack Afghanistan or Iraq. The cabinet decided to adopt a two stage approach facilitated by the "war on terror" frame: first Afghanistan, then Iraq; both operations under the umbrella of the global war on terror[450]. Legal advisers to the president invoked the "war" terminology to ensure the president had the emergency commander-in-chief powers required to act "with dispatch" to protect the nation[451].

The "kinetic" side of the war on terror and corresponding "information operations" and PSYOPS programs dominated the first few years after 9/11. The Office of Strategic Influence was set up to counter radical Islamism, but did not last amidst controversial allegations, since discredited, that the office was planning "strategic lies" and "disinformation" campaigns[452]. As part of the war in Afghanistan, the White House and the British Foreign Office set up a number of Coalition Information Centers to coordinate responses to adverse Taliban-controlled media coverage. And although the Washington CIC evolved into the Office of Global Communication[453], "no one at the White House took the initiative to strategize a well-resourced, creative campaign of ideas on a scale commensurate with the stakes in the war on terrorism"[454].

In preparation for the war in Iraq a considerable effort was made to "shape the battlefield", involving third parties such as the Lincoln Group, which was paid by the Department of Defense to place several favorable stories in the Iraqi press[455]. And once the war was underway, retired four star generals were recruited as military analysts or "message force multipliers" to counteract negative publicity from Guantanamo Bay and "generate favorable news coverage of the administration's wartime performance"[456]. The Department of Defense increased its commitment to strategic communications in 2006 with the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Strategic Communications Roadmap, which defined three key objectives: to institutionalize a process for incorporating strategic communications into strategy, to define roles and responsibilities, and to resource military departments and combatant commands to manage their communication support capabilities[457].

A number of initiatives at the State department were targeted at "countries with significant Muslim populations". These included the ill-fated "Shared Values" campaign in 2002 and "Hi" magazine in 2003[458], and the more successful Youth Exchange and Study (YES) and Partnerships for Learning Undergraduate Studies (PLUS) programs[459]. In January 2006 Condoleezza Rice announced her Transformational Diplomacy initiative, with a focus on building and sustaining well-governed democratic states. The initiative required shifting foreign service officers from Europe and the U.S. to other geographies including the Middle East[460], a decision that needs to be re-examined if Aaron Weisburd's internet data is a genuine indicator of the degree of radicalization of the Muslim diaspora.

In the area of the media, the State Department set up the Rapid Response Unit (RRU) in spring 2006, to produce a daily report on stories that were driving news around the world and to give the

U.S. position on those issues[461], and launched the Digital Outreach Team in November 2006 to engage in blogs and web chats in Arabic and correct misrepresentations of U.S. policy[462]. Meanwhile the Broadcasting Board of Governors' Middle East Broadcasting Network established Radio Sawa in 2002 and Alhurra TV in 2004 in Arabic[463]. Despite the State Department's various initiatives and the existence of the public diplomacy office, it did not develop a "battle-of-ideas strategy for the whole government. It was not leading an interagency effort to fight that battle"[464].

This task was left to the National Security Council. In September 2002 a Policy Coordinating Committee on Strategic Communication was established at the NSC[465]. A number of studies were carried out to evaluate strategic communications and public diplomacy, many of them focusing on internal organizational and coordination difficulties, and some of them recommending increased participation by the private sector[466]. Despite all these recommendations, the PCC was slow to come up with clear guidelines, and a number of initiatives failed to come to fruition[467]. It lacked direction and authority from the outset. There was a lot of internal wrangling over responsibilities, and there are still seventeen or eighteen definitions of "strategic communications" and "public diplomacy" circulating within the inter-agency community[468].

Nevertheless, the PCC did make some progress. A new deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach was appointed in 2005[469], and in April 2007 the Counterterrorism Communications Center (CCTC) was established at State to develop messages and strategies to discredit terrorists and their ideology[470]. In June 2007 the PCC released the U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication[471], which outlined the three main goals of offering a positive vision of hope and opportunity, seeking to isolate and marginalize violent extremists, and nurturing common interests and values. The document defined strategic

audiences to include key influencers such as journalists, clerics and educators, vulnerable populations such as youth and women, and mass audiences. It also prioritized education and exchange programs, the modernization of communications, and the diplomacy of deeds.

Assessment of U.S. Policy Since 9/11

How then does U.S. policy match up to the criteria established above to counter Al Qaeda propaganda? Although it is somewhat artificial and unfair to judge past performance upon current understanding, such a retrospective can be informative. The first four criteria involve DoD and State Department initiatives.

Criteria 1 - distortion of facts requires counterpropaganda and re-education programs

Responsibility for counterpropaganda lies in a gray area between State and Defense, specifically between public diplomacy and PSYOPS[472]. The DoD describes it as an element of Information Operations: "Counterpropaganda consists of programs of products and actions designed to nullify propaganda or mitigate its effects.. [It] degrades the harmful influence of adversary PSYOP on friendly forces and other audiences.. Counterpropaganda includes countering adversary misinformation, disinformation, and opposing information"[473]. It is not clear to what extent DoD and/or the intelligence community are engaged in active tactical and operational counterpropaganda[474], since Al Qaeda's historical revisionism may not be perceived as a direct threat to U.S. military forces. Al Qaeda's narrative lists several invented crimes: for example, U.S. interventions in Somalia (92-94), Bosnia (95), and Kosovo (99) are painted as violent predations against Muslim populations. These are gross distortions of the historical record: U.S. intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo ended Serb violence against Muslim-majority populations, and its intervention in Somalia saved over 40,000 lives[475]. Stephen van Evera suggests books, articles and media products to correct the record[476].

This example highlights a more general tension that exists between State and Defense over public diplomacy and strategic communications. The heart of the overlap is PSYOPS which involves the "cognitive dimension" of the Army information operations model (the other two are the physical and the information dimensions)[477] and is defined as "planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives"[478].

The definition of public diplomacy reads "Those overt international public information activities of the United States Government designed to promote United States foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers, and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad"[479]. The two definitions overlap on "influence" but the State definition also involves "understanding" and "dialog". Herein lies the major difference in the philosophies of the two departments. Defense concepts are information-centric, whereas State's are dialog-centric[480].

The overlap has caused more confusion since the end of the Cold War, according to Brian Carlson[481], when more expectations began to be put on the military to handle non-traditional missions. Although the State Department has responsibility for public diplomacy and delivering U.S. messages to foreign audiences, and may be supported in this task by the Department of Defense, the DoD has responsibility for PSYOPS in support of military operations within an area of conflict or declared war[482]. The problem is that many of today's non-traditional missions cannot be easily categorized in conventional terms. Since the end of the Cold War it has become

increasingly important to communicate with the civilian population before and during military activities.

Over time the concept of "phase zero" was added to the traditional lifecycle (phase 1 - mobilize and gather forces and equipment, phase 2 - move forces and equipment up to the battlefield, phase 3 - the actual battle, phase 4 – post-conflict reconstruction). "Phase 'zero' grew out of an old concept called 'shaping the battlefield' and now meant information activities directed at improving public support, or increasing public opposition to the adversary… Today there is a role for the military in almost any country in the world that could become a problem area"[483]. Carnes Lord suggests that to reduce confusion over roles there is an "immediate need to sort out lanes in the road" that separate these various disciplines[484].

At a minimum, a Presidential Decision Directive is needed to streamline responsibilities and clarify ownership of inter-agency coordination[467]. A vertical and hierarchical post-World War II bureaucracy is ill-equipped to deal with many of the challenges facing it. Most importantly, inter-agency processes must be made operational on a day-to-day basis: "people are struggling not so much with getting information to the field, or getting good strategic direction, but with achieving good day-to-day coordination and tasking in a uniform and coordinated way"[407].

Inter-agency collaboration is not easy. In order to sustain interorganizational relationships over time, individual and collective interests need to be reconciled, personal relationships need to supplement formal organizational relationships, psychological contracts need to substitute for legal contracts, and informal understandings and commitment needs to inform and complement formal organizational arrangements[485]. The organizational learning that has accompanied State and

Defense coordination of programs and messaging within the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq may provide a useful model for such grass-roots operational collaboration[407].

Besides counterpropaganda, the other way to address Al Qaeda's distortion of the historical record is to use diplomatic and economic levers to bring about alternative educational methods and curricula. After 9/11, the U.S. made diplomatic demands upon Saudi Arabia to amend the education system, and remove books and resources that advocated jihad[486]. The Saudi government is undergoing an "enlightenment program" to purge extremism and intolerance from religious education, although it is not known to what extent any efforts have been made to limit activities of Saudi sources that have propagated Islamic extremism beyond Saudi Arabia[487]. However, the above initiatives were targeted at the teaching of religious education, not political history.

General efforts to encourage educational reforms include USAID's September 2002 commitment of $100m over 5 years for reforms in Pakistan, and requests by the Administration for $260m in fiscal year 2008 to fund ongoing education assistance programs in Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Morocco, as well as $199m for similar programs in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act authorized the President to establish an International Youth Opportunity Fund to improve public education in the Middle East, but the fund does not yet appear to have been set up[488].

Criteria 2 - *counter distortion of intentions through public diplomacy programs and engagement with mass media*

This is the area where foreign service officers and public diplomacy practitioners in the field come into their own. The Advisory Group doing research for the Djerijian report was told in Morocco:

"if you don't define yourself in this part of the world the extremists will define you"[489]. Countering Al Qaeda's falsification of U.S. intentions in the arena of foreign policy is addressed by a number of programs, mostly run by the State department. Prior to the establishment of the RRU, the CCTC and the Digital Outreach Team, responses to misrepresentations of the U.S. by extremists such as bin Laden and al Zawahiri were carried out by local Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) and senior Washington officials. However, since the establishment of these units, a much more coordinated approach has been adopted involving embassy staff, combatant commanders and cabinet level executives.

The RRU office of 5 to 6 staff publishes a 1 to 2 page report every morning at 7.45am with a short synopsis of the key themes and issues from the day's media, coupled with 3 to 5 "message points" for addressing these issues. The message points are extracted from recent remarks made by U.S. officials on these issues, so that ambassadors and other officials are comfortable reiterating them. The RRU is typically not dealing with blatant anti-American content, but rather misperceptions of people who lack the knowledge of what U.S. policy is, or knee-jerk reactions to events or images on TV. The daily report is emailed to 1100 recipients ranging from cabinet secretaries, to ambassadors, consulates, and military commanders, and typically ambassadors will print out the short report, and fold it into their pocket for use at whatever events they are attending that day. Feedback from the field is very positive[490].

The CCTC plays a working-level coordination role amongst the GWOT strategic communications interagency group. It is tasked with developing themes and messages and related programs, and is, in effect, an unofficial think tank. Consisting of 8 staff drawn from State, Defense, Intelligence and other agencies, the CCTC uses open source materials only and generates message products which,

for example, emphasize the topics in Al Qaeda's words and actions that its supporters find troubling. The CTCC's goal is not to engage in a tit-for-tat debate that would provide legitimacy to Al Qaeda, but rather to turn the contest into one between Al Qaeda and its own communities and religion[491].

The Digital Outreach Team currently employs around 19 native speakers to post entries on influential Arabic-, Urdu- and Farsi-language blogs, challenging misrepresentations and providing accurate information about U.S. policy and American society. These bloggers speak the language and idiom of the region, know the cultural reference points, and are often able to converse informally and frankly rather than adopt the usually more formal persona of a U.S. government spokesperson. The team does not engage hardcore militant sites, but concentrates on mainstream sites with heavy traffic that discuss U.S. policy, such as BBC Arabic, Al Jazeera Talk, and Elaph On-Line News[492].

The other area relevant to challenging false statements about U.S. intentions and policies is broadcasting, for which there are two approaches. The first involves Radio Sawa and Alhurra TV, both run by the Broadcasting Board of Governors, a quasi-independent body established in 1994 by the International Broadcasting Act. Radio Sawa replaced the old VOA Arabic but was targeted at a younger audience. The focus of its content is musical entertainment, interspersed with news bulletins that accumulate to around seven hours per day. This change has been criticized by some proponents of the old VOA Arabic, who claim that Radio Sawa neglects the serious listener base established by VOA Arabic.

Alhurra (literally "the free one") was not targeted at any specific demographic, and its mission is to broadcast fair, objective and balanced news on events concerning the Middle East[493]. It was not intended to compete against Al Jazeera directly, but rather to fill a vacuum that existed for objective news. Although it has been criticized by some as being propaganda and by others for its low market-share, MBN President Brian Conniff explains that its mission and strict journalistic code distinguishes it as an alternative channel for seekers of objective news. Viewers whose primary channel is Al Jazeera may turn to Alhurra if they are not fully confident that Al Jazeera is reporting the facts. Alhurra receives consistently high reliability ratings ranging from 60% in Syria to 91% in Egypt, even though its market share is disputed, lying anywhere between low single digits and upward of 30%, depending on which poll is used[494].

The second approach to broadcasting is to engage directly in the leading stations such as Al Jazeera and Al-Arabiya. This approach was encouraged by Karen Hughes in a policy memo in October 2006 to coincide with the launch of regional hubs. In it she advocates speaking out, even if that means making the occasional mistake: "the real risk is not that we occasionally mis-speak, it's that we miss opportunities to present our views, and leave the field to our critics and detractors"[495]. At the same time she cautions against making policy, advising speakers instead to use "what's out there", which should be getting easier, due to the presence of sites such as the "Info Central Website" maintained by the Bureau of International Information Programs. Nevertheless, a lack of fluent Arabic speakers and inadequate training identified in the Djerejian report[496] has been difficult to overcome.

Last but not least in the area of public diplomacy to dispel misrepresentations of U.S. intentions are the Public Affairs Officers, Information Officers and Cultural Affairs Officers, and Ambassadors

who are constantly engaging with thought-leaders in the course of their day. Such discussions taking place "in the last three feet"[523] are an invaluable message multiplier within the region, reinforced by the personal touch and the respect that can grow over time in longer-term trusted relationships[497]. Together with exchange programs, these personal interactions can be the most influential public diplomacy in the region due to the power of the kinesthetic channel and the personal touch involved.

Criteria 3 - *care and attention in the use of Islamic terminology in public discourse*

Recent focus group research in the U.K. has concluded that language matters. The use of Islamic terms in the statements of ministers talking about terrorism creates a feeling of alienation within the mainstream Muslim population. As one commentator noted "I am a Christian and I would not like it if someone referred to a terrorist group as 'Christianist terrorists'"[498]. The use of inflammatory terms such as "Islamo-fascism" and even milder terms such as "Islamist" in conjunction with discussion of terrorism can feed into the social exclusion and marginalization felt by many Muslims today[499]. On the other hand use of terms such as "jihadist" or "Salafist" can serve to legitimate violent extremists. The British research team's results brought about a set of language guidelines that British ministers have now adopted[500]. A similar set of guidelines has now been issued by the Department of Homeland Security, developed by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, titled "Terminology to Define the Terrorists: Recommendations From American Muslims". The U.K. guidelines have led to a backlash against "political correctness" led by leading academics close to Whitehall[501], but this is less likely to happen in the U.S., where political correctness, equality and respect for other faiths are ingrained in American democracy.

Criteria 4-10 – *amendments to U.S. foreign policy towards Arab and Muslim lands*

A full review of foreign and domestic policy is beyond the scope of this paper. The key takeaway is that actions speak louder than words. As Bruce Riedel explains: "The most important thing in the battle of ideas is not necessarily words but actions. Effective public diplomacy begins with effective diplomacy. You cannot really get to the former until you deal with the latter. The most effective way to undermine the Al Qaeda narrative is to have actions demonstrate it is not true, such as promoting an Arab-Israeli peace agreement that is seen to be just and fair to the Palestinians"[502]. The Bush administration's diplomatic initiatives regarding Palestine are better late than never, but it will require the initiative of a new administration to regain the trust of leaders in the region that the U.S. is genuinely pushing for a two-state solution.

The issue of withdrawing troops from Iraq is particularly complex as it involves regional stability, balancing the growing power of Iran, and the success or failure of the democratization project, and potential consequences for bolstering Al Qaeda. In the short term the U.S. cannot win whatever it does: occupation means jihad, yet withdrawal without achieving the stated goals of the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq will be demoralizing for the armed forces and will be perceived as a setback to U.S. power. Riedel believes that the threat of Al Qaeda will be dealt with in Iraq by the Iraqis themselves once the U.S. troops withdraw, the Shi'a-Kurdish alliance will deal with the problem[503].

Criteria 11 – *lead international initiatives to highlight and condemn the killing of civilians*

Besides the emptiness of its vision, the killing of civilians, especially Muslims, is the component of the Al Qaeda strategy that most alienates its potential median voter. It therefore makes sense to

work with allies to "amplify mainstream Islamic voices countering AQAM ideology"[504] and tactics. It also makes sense to "exploit friction between AQ and associated movements"[505] caused by "AQ use of indiscriminate violence; killing Muslims"[506]. These actions are currently being undertaken by U.S. Armed Forces Information Operations aimed at defeating Al Qaeda.

Care must be taken, however, that highlighting Al Qaeda atrocities does not simply contribute to the "bombardment of horrific violence that is coming at audiences in the Arab and Muslim worlds"[408]. More importantly, information operations which "fabricate stories and exaggerate real jihadi mistakes"[507] need to be carefully considered. There are very real risks of a blowback effect that contributes to a loss of legitimacy and moral authority or even to poor policy-making. As Tom Casey explains "there really is no such thing as a local story anymore: anything that becomes a news item is potentially a global news item…even something that is supposed to be a small town local story may wind up being reported on or commented on just about anywhere in the world within 24 hours if it happening"[407]. Thus exaggerations of Al Qaeda's failures might potentially filter back into U.S. domestic policy debates and have adverse affects on policy[508].

Criteria 12 – *act within the bounds of the law or change the law*

The Bush administration's proclivity since 9/11 for secret actions that fall outside of international and even U.S. constitutional law has been a major factor in the reduction of U.S. standing in the world, and has therefore significantly impeded U.S. progress in the "battle of ideas". Rather than engaging the broader policy community in a debate about the moral dilemmas associated with fighting the new threat of cataclysmic terrorism, encapsulated in the conceptual "ticking bomb syndrome"[509], executive branch decisions that have resulted in or contributed towards the waiving

of the Geneva Conventions[510] and abuse of "high-value" military detainees[511], the creation of CIA secret prisons[512], the practice of extraordinary rendition[513], and the scandal of Abu Ghraib[514], have added more to Al Qaeda's popularity than anything its own propaganda could achieve. "You cannot put a spin on an action like Abu Ghraib. Once you are seen as having committed an atrocity like that your public diplomacy effort is going to be set back considerably"[502].

Such actions have brought short-term intelligence gains but long-term losses in the battle of ideas. There are signs, however, that the Administration is trying to find ways to close Guantanamo. In doing so, it must be very careful about which system it chooses to replace "Gitmo"[515]. A solution involving a formal system of preventive detention would "effectively move Guantanamo onshore"[516]. Rather than continue down the path of American exceptionalism that has eroded U.S. standing in the world, the U.S. needs to "remain confident in the strength and resilience of their criminal justice system"[517], and as Philip Bobbitt counsels, always "act within the law"[441]. Better to work through the difficulties of debating and amending U.S. domestic and international law to cater with the new realities than to work outside the bounds of the law. The alternative is handing victory to Al Qaeda.

Conclusion

Analysis of Muslim public opinion and al Qaeda propaganda has shown that a sizeable intersection exists between long-held grievances in the Muslim world and the political premise on which the Al Qaeda narrative is constructed. United States foreign policy lies at the heart of this intersection. After 9/11 the United States had several choices for framing the conflict it now faced: it could do so in civilizational, religious, political, legal or military terms. By choosing a civilizational-military frame, expressed in terms of a "global war on terror" whose aim was to destroy the enemies of the "civilized world" and of "freedom", the executive branch was able to mobilize latent domestic anger and vulnerability, and unsurpassed "hard power", to launch a revolutionary pre-emptive military campaign to deal with the supply-side of the terrorism phenomenon.

Appropriately the United States did not engage in a response to the message that Al Qaeda intended to convey on 9/11. To do so would have raised the stature of the group and legitimated their heinous tactics. It steered the terms of international discourse away from the political component of Al Qaeda's message. But by adopting expansive terminology to define the enemy[518] and restrictive terminology to define its friends[519], by neglecting its duty as upholder of its own constitution, and by failing to build an international consensus to legitimate its own actions and condemn the acts of the terrorists, the United States has diminished its standing in the world and indirectly raised the standing of its enemy. Its choice of frame neglected the legal dimension and failed to downplay the religious dimension in the eyes of many mainstream Muslims who perceived the "war on terror" as a "war on Islam".

By focusing on the civilizational and military dimensions alone, and neglecting to define its enemy in restrictive and legal terms, the United States reduced its own soft power and fed into a self-defeating cycle that appeared increasingly to validate Huntington's thesis. Freedom was under attack and demanded a military response. Islam was under attack and demanded a military response. The high regard that the majority of Muslims held for many of the freedoms enjoyed in the West were now being questioned, as the word "democracy" became an epithet for "occupation". The U.S. and the Muslim world became locked in a "race to the bottom", an illustration of the principle of reflexivity in which "the situations that men define as true, become true for them". As the Djerejian report feared, Americans and Muslims were becoming trapped in a "dangerously reinforcing cycle of animosity. Arabs and Muslims respond in anger to what they perceived as U.S. denigration of their societies and cultures, and to this Arab and Muslim response Americans react with bewilderment and resentment, provoking a further negative response from Arabs and Muslims"[520].

The United States has begun to stop this cycle but needs to do a lot more to reverse it. To reduce the appeal of Al Qaeda's narrative it needs to prove that it is not at war with Islam through its actions and its words. To halt the cycle, the United States needs to start thinking of the "long war" not in terms of potential terrorists, but rather in terms of potential allies who can help to shrink the space in which the terrorists operate. These allies do not need to like the United States, but must regain some sense of trust in the superpower, and this is only possible if it starts with policy. As Robert Grenier explained: "if U.S. policy were more clearly oriented, both rhetorically and substantively, toward addressing instances of fundamental injustice in the Islamic world and elsewhere, it could have profound impact on countering the [al Qaeda] narrative"[521]. Re-

engagement in the Palestinian peace process is a start but the U.S. needs to put a lot more political capital at the most senior levels into this process, and engage in multilateral peace initiatives in other parts of the Muslim world, including at a minimum speaking out against atrocities being committed in Somalia and the Ogaden.

The new language guidelines issued by the Department of Homeland Defense have gone a long way towards reducing inflammatory religious rhetoric[522]. But these guidelines are "For Official Use Only" and internal to government. A sanitized version of these guidelines needs to be promoted in non-government circles, especially the media and faith communities. Anti-Islamic rhetoric has as much to do with Muslims' perceptions of how Americans see the Islamic world as official government communication does.

Most importantly, the "unsung heroes" of public diplomacy, the field officers who counter misperceptions about the United States and its policies and intentions every day in the Islamic world, through dialog with their foreign counterparts, have continued their quiet diplomacy of the "last three feet"[523]. Washington has consistently supported the field by funding educational and cultural exchange programs, but its record on other forms of support has been mixed. After a false start with its "shared values" initiative[524], there was a realization that attempts to "win hearts and minds" with a centralized, solipsistic approach would have marginal effect and might even backfire. The U.S. shifted towards providing back office support to its front office diplomats and public diplomacy officers in the field: the Ambassadors, Public Affairs Officers, Cultural Affairs Officers, Information Officers and other staff at embassies overseas.

The Rapid Response Unit and Counterterrorism Communications Center were set up to provide talking points on a daily basis so that its culturally attuned practitioners could engage more effectively in the debates going on within the public sphere of the Muslim world. Only on the internet would the back office attempt to engage directly in debates taking place in the rapidly emerging "blogosphere" in the Middle East: the Digital Outreach Team was set up so that culturally aware native speakers could engage directly in online debates that were shaping the world views of thousands of young people.

But much is still missing from this reformed approach. Bruce Riedel remains "unconvinced that the Bush Administration has ever really seriously taken on the question of public diplomacy or the battle of ideas with Al Qaeda"[502], and cites the administration's appointment strategy as evidence. Appointing leaders who do not have the historical, cultural or political knowledge of the Islamic world is a reflection of this lack of commitment. Doug Feith opines that "the Bush Administration never put together a comprehensive strategy to counter ideological support for terrorism"[525]. And Stephen Van Evera calculates that the United States spent $454B for military services and support and $40B on homeland security in 2006, yet the budget for public diplomacy was a mere $1.36B. "The U.S. military spending was 344 times U.S. spending on the war of ideas"[526].

The 2008 figure for public diplomacy is not much larger, at $1.51B[527], despite Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' plea "for a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security"[528]. Reallocating funds across geographies or "robbing Petrov to pay Pasha"[529] might even be dangerous, since it fails to recognize the global network that the Global Jihadi Movement has become and the role that the diaspora play in this network. A serious commitment to public diplomacy as a tool to discredit Al Qaeda's ideas requires a dramatic increase in funds

and a commitment at the highest levels of government. This commitment needs to reach out to citizens and private sector enterprises who are eager to play a role[530], including those promoting inter-faith dialog[531].

But any successful effort to reduce the appeal of Al Qaeda's propaganda must persuade people and groups not of the illegitimacy of their narrative, but of the illegitimacy of their means; that deliberate attacks on civilian targets is unacceptable under any circumstances. For this argument to be more persuasive, others with moral authority must also use it, and the U.S. has to "clean up its own act". By focusing too heavily on defeating and destroying Al Qaeda, the U.S. has undermined its own ability to delegitimize Al Qaeda and terrorist means have become "increasingly legitimate in the eyes of more people in the Middle East". As Riedel explains: "You cannot put a spin on an action like Abu Ghraib. Once you are seen as having committed an atrocity like that your public diplomacy effort is going to be set back considerably"[502]. Initiatives such as the RRU, CTCC and Digital Outreach Teams also need to be replicated across the world with U.S. support. And the U.S. needs to work much more with international organizations such as the U.N. to denounce terrorist tactics and isolate Al Qaeda[532].

So is the U.S. winning or losing the battle of ideas against Al Qaeda in the global war on terror? Perhaps it is the wrong question. Part of the shift away from a U.S. centric approach by the government has been a redefinition of how to measure success. Instead of monitoring how well the U.S. is doing in an ideological contest with Al Qaeda, the U.S. has started to monitor how well it is doing in turning Al Qaeda's own communities and religion against it. As Michael Doran, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Support to Public Diplomacy, explains: "there needs to be a culture shift…countering ideological support for terrorism is not primarily about

creating 'Brand America'. … It should not be reduced solely to burnishing the image of America… We definitely have to get our message out but the key is influencing a primarily intra-Muslim conversation, with the goal of undermining the intellectual and perceptual underpinnings of terrorism"[533].

Seen through this prism, Al Qaeda's position in the "war of ideas" does not seem so strong. Polls show that its popularity is dropping, mainstream media in the Arab world are paying less and less attention to its propaganda, and while it is able to "operate with impunity in the virtual space"[534] of the internet, its position is increasingly isolated as dissent grows from mainstream and even extremist voices. Al Qaeda is "down but not out". Its failure to construct an Islamic State in Iraq needs to be judged cautiously. Al Qaeda's core competence is armed jihad through terrorist and guerrilla tactics, not nation building. As a threat to the U.S. and international order, it will be with us for a long time to come. Just as the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980's created a new generation of *jihadi* warriors, the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq is doing the same. The next U.S. president needs to invest much more in isolating Al Qaeda and reducing the power of its ideas, by adopting a new, integrated approach that aligns foreign policy and public diplomacy goals and makes a conscious shift towards working within the rule of law and building a "global antiterrorist consensus"[65].

Appendix 1: Definitions

Al Qaeda : There is broad agreement in the counter-terrorism community that the Al Qaeda of 9/11 – an organized army of *jihad* special operations personnel complete with training facilities – is a thing of the past. Al Qaeda quickly evolved into a broad alliance of established terrorist groups with a like-minded global ideology based on a *salafist* based violent *jihad*, sometimes referred to as "Al Qaeda and Affiliates"[535]. This alliance did not include traditional nation-specific terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas or Islamic Jihad, since their political agenda is too geographically specific to be considered part of the Global Jihadist Movement"[536].

After losing its base in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda started to metastasize into more of a social movement that is replicated by relatively disconnected and self-radicalizing groups (as in the cases of the Madrid and London bombings), than a network of cells controlled by a "mother ship"[537]. Counter-terrorism officials, therefore, refer to Al Qaeda now as "Al Qaeda and Associated Movements" (AQAM)[538] or the "Global Jihadist Movement" (GJM)[539]. These composite labels refers to the combination of "Al Qaeda Central", plus established affiliate groups, plus disconnected groups and cells that are inspired by Al Qaeda's ideology and may claim to be acting under the Al Qaeda "franchise", but operate largely independently of "Al Qaeda Central". The paper uses this broader definition, referring interchangeably to "Al Qaeda", "AQAM" or "GJM".

This definition adheres to the first two criteria for membership of AQAM proposed by Assaf Moghadam[540], but not the last two. His first criteria is that a group can be considered part of AQAM if "Al Qaeda is reflected in the group's name" and its members adhere to al Qaeda's agenda. In this category he includes al Qaeda in Iraq, which prior to September 2004 was known as

Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad. Founded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in October 2004 he declared the allegiance of the group to bin Laden and al Qaeda's strategy, and renamed the group. His second criteria is that a group can be considered part of AQAM if there is evidence it has "internalized the worldview of Al Qaeda and global Jihad"[541]. Several organizations fall into this category, including: the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU); Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), both whose base of operations is Pakistan; Indonesia' Jemaah Islamiyya (JI); and the Moroccan group Assirat al Moustaquim (Direct Path)[542].

Groups conforming to Moghadam's third and forth criteria are too broad to be included in the Global Jihadi Movement, as the criteria define nationalist or local agendas, which neither conform to the worldview of bin Laden and Zawahiri, nor involve explicit allegiance to Al Qaeda. His third criterion for membership is that a "group is devoted to and actively practices violence to overthrow an existing Islamic regime" and includes Ansar al Islam, a "radical Islamist group of Iraqi Kurds and Arabs who have vowed to establish an independent Islamic state in Iraq."[543] His fourth criteria is that a group may be considered an al Qaeda affiliate and part of AQAM if it "has engaged in the practice of *takfir",* such as the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria. In other words, it has labeled a Muslim regime or its leaders as apostates because they demonstrate disbelief[544]. Both of these criteria are not global enough in scope to form criteria for membership in "Al Qaeda and Associated Movements", or the "Global Jihadi Movement" as defined above.

Propaganda: Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist[545].

Salafism: Salafism refers to a movement that takes the first three generations of Muslims ("*al-salaf al-salih*" or "the virtuous ancestors") as an ideal community and espouses what one might call a "radically traditionalist" approach to personal behavior, and even political systems. *Jihadi-Salafists* endorse violent means to restore the early Islamic community's perceived way of life in the modern world[546].

Appendix 2: Country-Level Analysis of Sympathy for bin Laden

Percent of population expressing confidence in Osama bin Laden, from 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, was correlated with country indicators from the International Telecommunication Union, Internet World Statistics, UNDP Human Development Report and Freedom House. These included Population (2007), %Muslim (2007), %internet users (2007), Telephones per 100 (2007), Cellular subscribers per 100 (2007), Radio Sets per 100 Inhabitants (1997), TV Receivers per 100 Inhabitants (2000), GDP Per Capita (2006), Human Development Index (2003), Literacy (2003), Education Index (2003). Political Rights Index (2007), and Civil Liberties Index (2007). Results of the regression are shown in figure 13, the raw data in figure 14.

Since the sample size of 47 exceeds 30 the central limit theorem can be applied to the data, but caution should be exercised in interpreting the data, since the sample size of a multivariate regression should ideally be guided by the formula:

$$n >= 50 + 8*p$$

where n is the sample size and p is the number of independent variables[547].

Variable	Multiple Regression
Intercept	21.92
	(1.63)
Population (2007)	0.00
	(0.64)
%Muslim (2007)	0.21
	(3.74)***
%internet users (2007)	0.03
	(0.19)
Telephones per 100 (2007)	0.12
	(0.68)
Cellular subscribers per 100 (2007)	-0.14
	(-0.78)
Radio Sets per 100 Inhabitants (1997)	0.04
	(0.51)
TV Receivers per 100 Inhabitants (2000)	-0.04
	(-0.27)
GDP Per Capita (2006)	-0.00
	(-0.30)
HDI (2003)	-29.89
	(-0.93)
Literacy (2003)	-0.26
	(-0.61)
Education Index (2003)	46.41
	(0.86)
Political Rights Index (2007)	1.17
	(2.70)**
Civil Liberties Index (2007)	-1.12
	(-2.69)**
n	46
σ	8.26
R-square	0.695
F-value	5.62***

Note: t-values are in parentheses
** Statistically significant at the 0.01 level
*** Statistically significant at the 0.001 level

Figure 13. Regression Analysis on 47 Countries with % Confidence on Osama bin Laden as Dependent Variable

With this caveat in mind, the data offers tentative evidence that sympathy for bin Laden in a country is significantly related to the % of Muslims, which is not surprising. It is also related to the amount of civil rights abuse in the country, indicated by the negative coefficient for the Civil Rights index. This is constructed on a scale of 0 to 60 by Freedom House from 15 questions in their annual survey, related to freedom of expression and belief (16 points), associational and organizational rights (12 points), rule of law (16 points), and personal autonomy and individual rights (16 points)[548]. This result is also not surprising, given the prevalent history of imprisonment and torture amongst the personal histories of thought leaders in the Jihadi Salafist community, such as Sayyid Qutb, or Ayman al-Zawahiri.

What is somewhat surprising is the positive link to the political rights index, which is similarly constructed by Freedom House on a scale of 0 to 40, based on questions relating to the electoral process (12 points), political pluralism and participation (16 points), and the functioning of government (12 points)[549]. This finding is most likely a reflection of the fear of interviewees living under highly oppressive political regimes when answering pollsters. However, it could also reflect an awareness of the possibility of change amongst those who are able to experience a taste of the political system[550].

Figure 14. Data for Regression Analysis on 47 Countries with % Confidence on Osama bin Laden as Dependent Variable (see over)

Region	Country	%Conf UBL (2007)	Population millions (2007)	%Muslim (2007)	%internet users (2007)	Telephones per 100 (2007)	Cellular Subscribers per 100 (2007)	Radio Sets per 100 Inhabitants (1997)	TV Receivers per 100 Inhabitants (2000)	GDP per Capita (2006)	HDI (2003)	Literacy (2003)	Education Index (2003)	Political Rights Index (2007)	Civil Liberties Index (2007)
North America	Canada	3	32.9	2	65.9	122	58	95	68	38974	0.949	99	0.97	40	59
Latin America	Argentina	2	39.5	1.5	39.7	126	102	62	31	5476	0.863	97.2	0.96	33	48
	Bolivia	6	9.5	0	6.4	41	34	55	12	1193	0.687	86.5	0.87	28	43
	Brazil	2	191.8	0	22.4	84	63	37	34	5641	0.792	88.4	0.89	31	45
	Chile	4	16.6	0	43.2	122	84	31	28	8857	0.854	95.7	0.91	39	58
	Mexico	7	106.5	0.3	21.3	83	64	29	28	7755	0.814	90.3	0.85	33	43
	Peru	4	27.9	0	25.5	65	55	24	15	3286	0.762	87.7	0.88	32	41
	Venezuela	1	27.7	0.4	20.4	105	86	39	19	4164	0.772	93	0.87	20	31
West Europe	Britain	3	60.8	2.7	66.4	174	118	139	89	40114	0.939	99	0.99	40	58
	France	1	61.7	8.5	54.7	141	90	90	63	37027	0.938	99	0.97	38	56
	Germany	3	82.6	3.9	64.6	183	118	94	61	35225	0.93	99	0.96	39	57
	Italy	3	58.9	1.4	57	181	135	86	49	31840	0.934	98.5	0.95	38	54
	Spain	1	44.3	2.3	56.5	152	110	30	56	28373	0.928	97.7	0.97	39	57
	Sweden	1	9.1	3	77.3	165	106	91	57	43320	0.949	99	0.99	40	60
East Europe	Bulgaria	0	7.6	12.2	30	160	130	59	45	4105	0.808	98.2	0.91	36	50
	Czech Republic	2	10.2	0.1	49.9	150	128	81	51	14008	0.874	99	0.93	38	57
	Poland	2	38.1	0	36.6	136	109	53	40	8855	0.858	99.7	0.96	38	53
	Russia	8	143	12	20.8	137	119	43	54	2384	0.795	99.4	0.96	11	23
	Slovakia	1	5.4	0	41.4	134	112	96	41	10347	0.849	99.6	0.91	37	54
	Ukraine	7	46.2	1.1	12	147	120	98	47	2315	0.766	99.4	0.95	28	45
Middle East	Turkey	5	74.9	96.5	22.5	107	83	15	28	5210	0.75	88.3	0.82	28	37
	Egypt	18	75.5	90	7.5	55	40	3	23	1428	0.659	55.6	0.62	7	20
	Jordan	20	5.9	95	13.2	90	81	28	18	2419	0.753	89.9	0.86	14	28
	Kuwait	12	2.9	73.5	32.6	110	97	41	42	37069	0.844	82.9	0.8	19	27
	Lebanon	1	4.1	58	24.2	49	31	70	36	5074	0.759	86.5	0.84	17	34
	Morocco	20	31.2	99.3	18.1	72	64	28	17	1864	0.631	50.7	0.53	17	28
	Palestinian ter.	57	3.7	83.7	10.5	37	27	9	14	873	0.729	91.9	0.88	18	16
	Israel	5	6.9	14	57.6	167	123	44	33	20750	0.915	96.9	0.95	37	47
Asia	Pakistan	38	163.9	96.5	7.3	51	48	8	7	815	0.527	48.7	0.44	11	24
	Bangladesh	37	158.7	89	0.3	22	22	5	4	404	0.52	41.1	0.45	22	31
	Indonesia	38	231.6	86.7	8.5	43	35	14	15	1616	0.697	87.9	0.81	30	35
	Malaysia	21	26.6	60.4	60	104	88	34	19	6051	0.796	88.7	0.83	19	29
	China	12	1328.6	1.5	15.9	69	41	31	31	2096	0.755	90.9	0.84	2	15
	India	9	1169	12.7	5.3	23	20	10	8	813	0.602	61	0.61	34	42
	Japan	1	128	0.1	68.7	114	79	94	72	34054	0.943	99	0.94	37	51
	South Korea	4	48.2	0.1	71.2	139	90	99	41	26986	0.901	97.9	0.97	36	51
Africa	Ethiopia	14	83.1	38.9	0.2	3	1	14	1	139	0.367	41.5	0.4	14	20
	Ghana	10	23.5	15.6	2.7	34	32	19	6	358	0.52	54.1	0.51	37	47
	Ivory Coast	8	19.3	37.5	1.6	23	37	6	4	951	0.42	48.1	0.46	5	16
	Kenya	9	37.5	10	7.5	31	30	15	4	649	0.474	73.6	0.66	25	39
	Mali	30	12.3	90	0.7	21	20	10	2	426	0.333	19	0.23	30	44
	Nigeria	31	148.1	50	5.9	32	27	16	7	844	0.453	66.8	0.66	21	30
	Senegal	19	12.4	94.5	5.2	35	33	8	4	770	0.458	39.3	0.39	33	43
	South Africa	8	48.6	1.5	11.6	97	87	28	15	5403	0.658	82.4	0.81	35	51
	Tanzania	5	40.5	37.5	1	21	20	22	2	268	0.418	69.4	0.6	22	36
	Uganda	7	30.9	12.1	2.5	14	14	8	1	340	0.508	68.9	0.71	15	31

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[152] Hassan M. Fattah, "Growing Unarmed Battalion in Qaeda Army Is Using Internet to Get the Message Out," *The New York Times*, September 30 2006, sec. A; Foreign Desk, p. 6.

[153] Weimann, Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges, 70. Also Jarret M. Brachman, "High Tech Terror: Al Qaeda's Use of New Technology," The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs 30, no. 2 (2006). Available at http://fletcher.tufts.edu/forum/30-2pdfs/brachman.pdf. Accessed March 12, 2008.

[154] Daniel Kimmage and Kathleen Ridolfo, *Iraqi Insurgent Media. The War of Images and Ideas. How Sunni Insurgents in Iraq and Their Supporters Worldwide are Using the Media,* Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty Inc., 2007.

[155] Daniel Kimmage, *The Al-Qaeda Media Nexus: The Virtual Network Behind the Global Message,* Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2008. Available at http://docs.rferl.org/en-US/AQ_Media_Nexus.pdf. Accessed April 10, 2008.

[156] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 211.

[157] Abdel Bari Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 78, 79.

[158] US. Department of the Treasury, *Sulaiman Abu Ghaith,* 2004. Available at www.treasury.gov/press/releases/reports/1102_abo_ghaith.pdf. Accessed April 9, 2008.

[159] BBC, "Al-Qaeda threatens fresh terror attacks," *BBC*, October 10, 2001. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1590559.stm. Accessed April 25, 2008.

[160] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 38.

[161] Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, "Selling Terror: the Visual Rhetoric of Osama bin Laden," *Journal of Political Marketing* 1, no. 4 (2002): 92.

[162] Steven R. Corman and Jill S. Schiefelbein, *Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas,* Consortium for Strategic Communication, 2006, 2. Available at http://www.comops.org/publications.php. Accessed March 18, 2008.

[163] Ibid, 6.

[164] Ibid., 6.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Sheikh Rahman has long been the spiritual guide and leader of Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group) of Egypt, and since 1996 has been serving a life sentence in a jail in North Carolina for seditious conspiracy. The fatwa urged attacks on American corporations, ships, and planes and presaged the events of 9/11. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 206.

[167] Corman and Schiefelbein, *Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas,* 11.

[168] Fawaz A. Gerges, *The far enemy : why Jihad went global,* (Cambridge ;; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 130.

[169] Ibid, 144.

[170] Ibid, 127.

[171] Ibid, 149.

[172] Ibid, 145.

[173] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 197, 198.

[174] Paz, *Reading their Lips: the Credibility of Jihadi Web Sites as "Soft Power" in the War of the Minds,* 3.

[175] Torres, Jordan, and Horsburgh, *Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda,* 404, 405.

[176] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 42.

[177] Ibid, 44.

[178] Bruce Hoffman, *Al Qaeda, Trends in Terrorism and Future Potentialities: An Assessment ,* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2003) cited in Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 44.

[179] Brigitte L. Nacos, "The Terrorist Calculus behind 9-11: A Model for Future Terrorism?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 26, no. 1 (2003): 5. Available at http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/10576100390145134. Accessed April 16, 2008. Cited in Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 65.

[180] Scheuer. *Imperial hubris : why the west is losing the war on terror,* 7-8, 17-18, 131-138.

[181] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 182.

[182] Torres, Jordan, and Horsburgh, *Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda,* 406.

[183] Kimmage and Ridolfo, *Iraqi Insurgent Media. The War of Images and Ideas. How Sunni Insurgents in Iraq and Their Supporters Worldwide are Using the Media,* 11. Available at realaudio.rferl.org/online/OLPDFfiles/insurgent.pdf. Accessed April 2, 2008.

[184] Hoffman, *The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists,* 3.

[185] Laura Mansfield, *His own words : translation and analysis of the writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri,* (Old Tappan, NJ: TLG Publications, 2006), 209.

[186] Brachman, *High Tech Terror: Al Qaeda's Use of New Technology,* 161. See also Lia, *Architect of global jihad : the life of al-Qaida strategist Abu Mus`ab al-Suri,* 510.

[187] Paz, *Reading their Lips: the Credibility of Jihadi Web Sites as "Soft Power" in the War of the Minds,* 3. From its earliest days, youth have been seen as the target pool for recruitment. See, for example, Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 36, 44, 45.

Zawahiri's "Knights Under the Prophet's Banner" is explicitly directed at two audiences: intellectuals and mujahideen. Mansfield, *His own words : translation and analysis of the writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri.* Zawahiri both praises their past courage ("I say that the youth of the 1981 uprising [assassination of Anwar Sadat] were pure and vigilant, avoiding and even rejecting blandishments. They carried arms in defense of their religion, creed, sanctity, nation, and homeland" (Mansfield 63)); and motivates their future commitment ("It is better for the youth of Islam to carry arms and defend their religion with pride and dignity instead of living in humiliation in the empire of the New World Order" (Mansfield 118)).

Bin Laden offers practical instruction and guidance. Osama Bin Laden and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* (London ;; New York: Verso, 2005), 292.: "The youth should strive to find the weak points of the American economy and strike the enemy there" (Lawrence 155), or "I also urge the youth to pay attention to the truthful scholars and dedicated preachers" (Lawrence 205).

[188] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 391.

[189] Marc Sageman, *Radicalization of Global Islamist Terrorists,* ed. U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 2007, 2. Available at gac.senate.gov/_files/062707Sageman.pdf. Accessed March 18, 2008.

[190] The study does not distinguish between target audiences of Al Qaeda and non-Al Qaeda propaganda, but it is reasonable to believe that terrorist groups target the same demographic, whether they see themselves as fighting a local or a global insurgency. Kimmage and Ridolfo, *Iraqi Insurgent Media. The War of Images and Ideas. How Sunni Insurgents in Iraq and Their Supporters Worldwide are Using the Media,* 62.

[191] For example, videos found by Saudi security forces in a raid in Riyadh had been part of an Al Qaeda media blitz that was aimed at recruiting Saudi youth. Hoffman, *The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists,* 12.

[192] Layalina Press Review, "Al-Qaeda: Online, In Video Games, and On Air," *The Layalina Review of public diplomacy and the Arab media* 4, no. 6 (2008). Available at http://www.layalina.tv/press/PR_IV.6.asp. Accessed March 18, 2008.

[193] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 71.

[194] Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 23.

[195] Ibid, 160, 161.

[196] A recent example of the continued propagation of the myth that the Palestinian question is not of significance for Al Qaeda can be seen in Doug Feith's memoir. "Leading students of terrorism …[point out] that the Palestinian issue was for many years marginal to Al Qaida propaganda". Interestingly, Feith does not cite any "leading students of terrorism" to back up his point. Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 170.

[197] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 164, 170.

[198] Jarret Brachman, Brian Fishman, and Joseph Felter, *The Power of Truth? Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri,* Combating Terrorism Center at Wespoint, 2008. Available at http://www.ctc.usma.edu/questions/. Accessed April 21, 2008.

[199] Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 3.

[200] Ibid, 15.

[201] Ibid, 158.

[202] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 351.

[203] Ibid., 374.

[204] Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 139.

[205] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 373, 374.

[206] Ibid, 380.

[207] Torres, Jordan, and Horsburgh, *Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda,* 412.

[208] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 32.

[209] Ibid, xxx.

[210] Ibid, 50,57.

[211] Ibid, 50.

[212] Mansfield, *His own words : translation and analysis of the writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri,* 38.

[213] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 311.

[214] Ibid, 149.

[215] Donna Abu-Nasr and Associated Press Writer, "Bin Laden Aims to Rid 'Infidels'," *Associated Press Online*, September 15 2001. See also Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Saudi Exile Warns More Attacks Are Planned," *The New York Times*, July 11 1996, p. 6.

[216] Geoffrey Nunberg, "Bin Laden's Low - Tech Weapon," *The New York Times*, April 18 2004, sec. 4; Week in Review Desk, p. 4.

[217] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 209.

[218] Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 16. During this time Khaled al Fauwaz, a Saudi, worked both as bin Laden's media representative in London and for the Advice and Reformation Committee, a political organization founded by bin Laden in 1994 that ostensibly worked nonviolently to reform the Saudi regime. See Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 134.

[219] Ibid., 166. See also interview with Abu Jandal, bin Laden's bodyguard, on page 113.

[220] Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 121, 122.

[221] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 244.

[222] Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 169.

[223] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 258.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Torres, Jordan, and Horsburgh, *Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda,* 412.

[226] It is not clear whether this was produced by Al Sahab or a forerunner to Al Sahab.

[227] Ibid, 413.

[228] O'Shaughnessy, *Selling Terror: the Visual Rhetoric of Osama bin Laden,*

[229] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 291.

[230] Corman and Schiefelbein, *Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas,* 12.

[231] For example with Abdel Bari Atwan of Al Quds al Arabi in 1996, and with Peter Arnett and Peter Bergen of CNN in 1997. See Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 166,179.

[232] Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 9.

[233] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 209.

[234] Cited in Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 9.

[235] Lynch, *Al-Qaeda's Constructivist Turn,* 4.

[236] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 241-243.

[237] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and political conflict : news from the Middle East,* (New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 255.

[238] Michael Spiros, "Violence and Voices: Armed Political Opposition Groups' Interaction With the Foreign News Media" (MALD Thesis, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, 2007), 53, and generally 36-59. Available at http://fletcher.tufts.edu.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/research/2007/Spiros.pdf. Accessed April 30, 2008. Spiros' type A corresponds roughly to French sociologist, Michael Weivioska's "media-oriented" behavior model. See Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 6.

[239] Ibid. Spiros' type C corresponds roughly to Weivioska's model of "complete breakaway". There is no equivalent to Spiros' type B in Weivioska's theory, which proposes two additional categories of "complete indifference" and "relative indifference" not covered in Spiros' "Spectrum of Violence Media Interaction Model".

[240] Ibid.

[241] Mansfield, *His own words : translation and analysis of the writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri,* 203.

[242] Ibid, 16.

[243] Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 7.

[244] Mansfield, *His own words : translation and analysis of the writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri,* 24.

[245] See, for example, Mohamed Zayani, *The Al Jazeera phenomenon : critical perspectives on new Arab media,* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2005), 223.

[246] Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 11.

[247] Available at www3.brookings.edu/events/2008/~/media/Files/events/2008/0414_middle_east/0414_middle_east_telhami.pdf, accessed April 24, 2008.

[248] Torres, Jordan, and Horsburgh, *Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda,* 413.

[249] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 42.

[250] Indira A. R. Lakshmanan. "Attack on America / Nations Respond. World Condemns, Cheers attack on US", *The Boston Globe*, September 12, 2001. For some weeks after 9/11 there were also anti-U.S. protests, but these were limited in size, usually involving less than 1,000 people. See O'Shaughnessy, *Selling Terror: the Visual Rhetoric of Osama bin Laden,* 92.

[251] Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 104.

[252] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 351.

[253] Indira A. R. Lakshmanan. "Attack on America / Nations Respond. World Condemns, Cheers attack on US", *The Boston Globe*, September 12, 2001.,

[254] Gerges, *The far enemy : why Jihad went global,* chapter 5.

[255] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 387.

[256] Ibid, 392.

[257] Ibid, 334.

[258] Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad : militancy, morality, modernity,* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2005), Chapter 1 "Effects Without Causes".

[259] Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 171.

[260] Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 10-14.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Mohamm El-Nawawy and Adel Iskander, *Al-Jazeera : how the free Arab news network scooped the world and changed the Middle East,* (Cambridge, MA: Westview, 2002), chapters 1 and 2.

[263] Matthew A. Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro, "Media, Education and Anti-Americanism in the Muslim World," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18, no. 3 (2004)

[264] Telhami. *The stakes. America in the Middle East : the consequences of power and the choice for peace,* 77.

[265] Karen J. Greenberg, *Al Qaeda now : understanding todays terrorists,* 1st ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 117. Cited in Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 14.

[266] MEMRI Special Alert, "Arabic Daily: Al-Qaeda Preparing Big Operation to Coincide with Eid Al-Adha [Feast of the Sacrifice] on Feb 2, 2004 - New Bin Laden Tape Will Explain Details," *MEMRI* Special Alert 13 (2003). Available at http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sa&ID=SA1303. Accessed April 15, 2008.

[267] Bin Laden's statement "To the Islamic Ummah on the First Anniversary of the New American Crusader War", October 12, 2002. Cited in Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 12.

[268] Hugh Miles, *Al-Jazeera : how Arab TV news challenged the world,* (London: Abacus, 2005), 162.

[269] Ibid, 164.

[270] Ibid, 166.

[271] Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 15.

[272] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 199.

[273] Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 137.

[274] Email from Aaron A. Weisburd to author, May 1, 2008.

[275] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 199.

[276] Aaron A. Weisburd, *Jihadis Online: Concepts and Frameworks for Online Counter-Terrorism,* NATO Conference Paper. (Berlin, 2008)

[277] Brachman, *High Tech Terror: Al Qaeda's Use of New Technology,* 151.

[278] Ibid, 152. See also Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 133.

[279] Hoffman, *The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists,* 8.

[280] At least through to the end of 2005. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 377.

[281] Ibid, 248.

[282] 9/11 Commission, *9/11 Commission Report,* 235.

[283] Ibid.

[284] Lynch, *Al-Qaeda's Constructivist Turn,* 6. According to Hugh Miles, contrary to claims by longstanding U.S. diplomat, Dennis Ross, and others, Al Jazeera has never shown a beheading. See interview at http://www.mslaw.edu/about_tv.htm, accessed April 17, 2008.

[285]   Spiros, *Violence and Voices: Armed Political Opposition Groups' Interaction With the Foreign News Media,* 104.

[286] Ibid.

[287]   Bruce Riedel, "Al Qaeda Strikes Back," *Foreign Affairs* (2007)

[288]   Torres, Jordan, and Horsburgh, *Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda,* 417.

[289]   Hoffman, *The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists,* 1.

[290]   Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 350.

[291] Shi'a clerics, in contrast, such as Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, issued fatwas that mandated their followers not to resist coalition forces. David R.Sands, "Top cleric urges Shi'ites not to resist allied efforts," *The Washington Times*, April 4 2003, p. A01.

[292] Ibid, 351.

[293]   Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 201.

[294]   Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 102.

[295]   Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 225.

[296] Ibid, 227, 228.

[297]   Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 99.

[298]   Corman and Schiefelbein, *Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas,* 18.

[299]   Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 398.

[300]   Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 69.

[301]   SITE Intelligence Group, ""The Solution" - A Video Speech from Usama bin Laden Addressing the American People on the Occasion of the Sixth Anniversary of 9/11," *SITE Institute Intelligence Brief* (2007). Available at http://www.siteintelgroup.org/. Accessed March 19, 2008.

[302]   Lynch, *Al-Qaeda's media strategies,* 1.

[303] Ibid, 2-3.

[304]   Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 1.

[305] Ibid, 2.

[306] Ibid, 4.

[307]   Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 25.

[308] Ibid, 43. In the U.S., following the announcement of the American military response to 9/11 on October 7, 2001, Al Jazeera broadcast a video of bin Laden. The video was aired by some American TV networks, but the Bush administration quickly prevailed upon media owners not to broadcast any further tapes from bin Laden. In this way, most Americans were not informed about Al Qaeda's "grievances, goals, dreams and delusions". Bruce Lincoln, "The Rhetoric of Bush and Bin Laden," *The Fathom Consortium, University of Chicago Library* (2002). Available at http://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/1/777777190152/ . Accessed March 12, 2008.

[309]   Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 16.

[310]   Torres, Jordan, and Horsburgh, *Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda,* 407.

[311]   Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 19. Note, however, that in most Arab and Muslim countries the large percentage of the population do not have access to the internet. Penetration rates range from 0.1% (Iraq) to 57.6% (Israel), and are under 30% for most countries. See http://www.internetworldstats.com.

[312]   Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 390.

[313]   Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 26.

[314] Ibid, 24.

[315] Ibid, 23.

[316] Torres, Jordan, and Horsburgh, *Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda,* 407.

[317] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 23.

[318] Ibid, 29.

[319] Hoffman, *The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists,* 4.

[320] Brachman, *High Tech Terror: Al Qaeda's Use of New Technology,* 151.

[321] Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 15.

[322] Hoffman, *The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists,* 4. See also Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 109.

[323] Arab media specialists at the State Department contest the claims that Arab media are on the look out for new Al Qaeda content, and believe that such interest has all but dried up over the past two years. Interview with Arab media specialists at the State Department. April 22, 2008.

[324] Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 15.

[325] Kimmage and Ridolfo, *Iraqi Insurgent Media. The War of Images and Ideas. How Sunni Insurgents in Iraq and Their Supporters Worldwide are Using the Media,* 61.

[326] Torres Soriano, Manuel R., *Terrorism and the Mass Media after Al Qaeda: A Change of Course?*, 15.

[327] Monitoring communication, however, is becoming increasingly difficult, due to the sophistication and availability of encryption technology. See http://www.computerworld.com.au/index.php/id;1174177879.

[328] Weisburd, *Jihadis Online: Concepts and Frameworks for Online Counter-Terrorism,* NATO Conference Paper. (Berlin, 2008).

[329] Weisburd did not identify the websites for reasons of operational security, but his report to NATO in Berlin lists 11 of the "Top Jihadi Forums" from April 2007 as muslm.net, alfirdaws.org, alhanein.com, tajdeed.org.uk, al-boraq.com, alhesbah.org, alnusra.net, ekhlaas.org, al-faloja.com, farouqomar.net, and al-ommh.net. Most of these sites did not survive past summer 2007.

[330] See http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm. Accessed April 20, 2008.

[331] See https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html. Accessed April 20,2008.

[332] Adding credence to Robert Pape's thesis that occupation drives suicide terrorism. See Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to win: the strategic logic of suicide terrorism,* Random House Trade Paperback ed. (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006), 353.

[333] Adding credence to Oliver Roy's thesis that the power of Al Qaeda is being drawn primarily from deterritorialized 2nd and 3rd generation Muslims in Europe, and to Farhad Khosrokhavar's suggestion that Europe is the hotbed of jihadi radicalism, where "humiliation by proxy" runs strong. See Roy, *Globalized Islam : the search for a new Ummah,* 349. Also, Khosrokhavar, Farhad. Lecture at Tufts University, February 27, 2008. Based on extensive interviews of jailed Islamist extremists.

[334] El Gody, Ahmed. "New Media, New Audience, New Topics, and New Forms of Censorship in the Middle East", in Philip M. Seib, *New media and the new Middle East,* 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 263.

[335] www.al-ansar.biz

[336] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 99.

[337] Neil MacFarquhar, "Acting on Threat , Saudi Group Kills Captive American," *The New York Times*, June 19 2004, sec. A; Foreign Desk, p. 1.

[338] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 110.

[339] Weisburd, *Jihadis Online: Concepts and Frameworks for Online Counter-Terrorism,* NATO Conference Paper. (Berlin, 2008).

[340] Brachman, *High Tech Terror: Al Qaeda's Use of New Technology,* 155.

[341] Layalina Press Review, *Al-Qaeda: Online, In Video Games, and On Air,* March 18, 2008.

[342] Brachman, *High Tech Terror: Al Qaeda's Use of New Technology,* 157.

[343] Ibid, 161.

[344] For a comprehensive definition of framing see Robert M. Entman, *Projections of power : framing news, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)

[345] Recent sociological studies highlight the ways in which a history of prior conflict is likely to increase the likelihood of future conflict. People are inclined to subscribe to simplified or invalid inductive reasoning in the form of analogism, and are innately disposed to an ordering of events in teleological narratives. The collective memory bias inherent in analogical reasoning often leads people to overestimate the likelihood of future conflict, which may lead them to mobilize in order to defend themselves. See Jens Rydgren, "The Power of the Past: A Contribution to a Cognitive Sociology of Ethnic Conflict," *Sociological Theory* 25, no. 3 (2007): 225-244.

[346] Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 16.

[347] Ibid 25-26, 27, 42, 60, 73.

[348] Ibid.

[349] Karen Cronick, "The Discourse of President George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden: A Rhetorical Analysis and Hermeneutic Interpretation," *FQS* 3, no. 3 (2002). Available at http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/3-02/3-02cronick-e.htm. Accessed March 12, 2008.

[350] Ibid, section 5.2.

[351] Ibid, section 5.4.

[352] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 62,63.

[353] Ibid, 62.

[354] Cronick, *The Discourse of President George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden: A Rhetorical Analysis and Hermeneutic Interpretation,* section 5.4.

[355] Khosrokhavar, Farhad. Lecture at Tufts University, February 27, 2008. Based on extensive textual analysis of thousands of online jihadist texts.

[356] Cited in Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 97.

[357] Kimmage and Ridolfo, *Iraqi Insurgent Media. The War of Images and Ideas. How Sunni Insurgents in Iraq and Their Supporters Worldwide are Using the Media,* 12, 61, 67.

[358] Cronick, *The Discourse of President George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden: A Rhetorical Analysis and Hermeneutic Interpretation,* March 12, 2008. See also Aristotle and John Henry Freese, *Aristotle, with an English translation: the "Art" of rhetoric,* (London; New York: W. Heinemann; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926)

[359] Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 174.

[360] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 373.

[361] Aristotle's category of rhetoric used in praising or blaming people. See Aristotle and Freese, Aristotle, with an English translation: *The "Art" of Rhetoric.*

[362] Cronick, *The Discourse of President George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden: A Rhetorical Analysis and Hermeneutic Interpretation,* ection 5.2.

[363] Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 104.

[364] Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 54.

[365] Ibid 7,8. For an insightful discussion on dehumanization as a way of clarifying the out-group see "Human Rights, Rationality and Sentimentality" in Richard Rorty, *Truth and progress,* (Cambridge ;; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 167-185.

366 Ibid. Responsibility is sometimes even displaced by referring to God as the invisible guiding hand: "God has struck America at its Achilles heel and destroyed its great buildings, praise and blessings to Him!". Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 104.

367 Ibid., 141.

368 Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 347.

369 Ibid, 373.

370 Farhad Khosrokhavar and David Macey, *Suicide bombers : Allah's new martyrs,* (London ; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005), 27, 28.

371 See, for example, Douglas N. Walton, *Informal logic : a handbook for critical argumentation,* (Cambridge ;; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 292.

372 Available at news.findlaw.com/cnn/docs/binladen/binladenintvw-cnn.pdf, accessed April 21, 2008.

373 Lynch, *Al-Qaeda's Constructivist Turn,* 10.

374 The experience of the Shi'a in the early period of Islam was just the opposite from that of the Sunni, being characterized by repression and alienation. See Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Shia revival : how conflicts within Islam will shape the future,* 1sted. (New York: Norton, 2006), 287.

375 An enthymeme is a deductive argument with at least one missing premise. See Shand, John. "Arguing well," New York. Available from http://www.netLibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=60916. Accessed April 30, 2008.;

376 Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 146.

377 Ibid, 152.

378 Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 57.

379 Ibid, 57.

380 Ibid, 59.

381 Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* 39.

382 Ibid, 159.

383 Ibid., 190.

384 Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 381.

385 See, for example, Michael Kenney, *ORCON or All Con?: Institutional Impediments to Intelligence Sharing Before and After 9/11.*

386 Scheuer. *Imperial hubris : why the west is losing the war on terror,* 104.

387 Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* xvii. Atwan writes that bin Laden's humility contributes to his popularity – "He is never aloof, eats with his mean and dresses as they do…when bin Laden was in Sudan he had air conditioning in his quarters but, even when the temperature reached 50 degrees Celsius, never turned it on…bin Laden fasts for two days every week, in summer and winter". See Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 59.

388 Ibid., 85.

389 Zawahiri's revelation that the Islamic Jihad in Egypt used a pseudonym as a public personification of the group's leadership has lent credence to the theory that the Emir of the Islamic State of Iraq, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, is a fictitious character. Brachman, Fishman, and Felter, *The Power of Truth? Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri,* 5, 25.

390 O'Shaughnessy, *Selling Terror: the Visual Rhetoric of Osama bin Laden,* 90-91.

391 Ibid.

392 Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* xvi.

[393] Referring to the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 256.

[394] For example, Flagg Miller explains that epistles became a defining medium of eloquence in the 9th century Abbasid court of Baghdad that blended together colorful pleasantries, competitive verbal jousts and political wrangling. See Bin Laden and Lawrence, *Messages to the world : the statements of Osama Bin Laden,* xvi. and Bruce B. Lawrence, *OBL as a Media Star: The Making of an Information Age Anti-Hero,* 2007, 17. Available at http://www.international.ucla.edu/cnes/events/showevent.asp?eventid=5986. Accessed March 12, 2008.

[395] For a discussion of these genres of Islamic rhetorical style see Charles Hirschkind, *The ethical soundscape : cassette sermons and Islamic counterpublics,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 7,94,149,151.

[396] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 371.

[397] Lizette Alvarez and Elaine Sciolino, "Spain Grapples with Notion that Terrorism Trumped Democracy," *New York Times*, March 17, 2004

[398] Adam Nagourney, "Kerry Says Bin Laden Tape Gave Bush a Lift," *New York Times*, January 31, 2005.

[399] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 258-9.

[400] Ibid.

[401] Ibid, 287.

[402] Shyam Tekwani. Cited in Weimann, *Terror on the Internet : the new arena, the new challenges,* 109. But ownership and funding still yielded some degree of control. See Fandy, *(Un)civil war of words : media and politics in the Arab world.*

[403] Peter G. Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim politics : reimagining the umma,* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001), 3.

[404] Hirschkind, *The ethical soundscape : cassette sermons and Islamic counterpublics,* 2,57.

[405] Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim politics : reimagining the umma,* 4.

[406] Paz, *Reading their Lips: the Credibility of Jihadi Web Sites as "Soft Power" in the War of the Minds,* March 18, 2008.

[407] Tom Casey. Deputy Spokesman, State Department Bureau of Public Affairs. Interview. February 27th, 2008.

[408] Interview with Arab media specialists at the State Department. April 22, 2008.

[409] Ibid.

[410] New material typically starts out on less than 25 or so Arabic language sites but can also be posted on sites in other languages. For example, new material in Pashtu is typically posted on fewer than 10 sites. Email from senior U.S. defense official, April 30, 2008.

[411] Terror Free Tomorrow, *Saudi Arabians Overwhemingly Reject Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, Saudi Fighters in Iraq, and Terrorism; Also among most pro-American in Muslim world.* 2008. Available at http://www.terrorfreetomorrow.org/articlenav.php?id=5#saudi. Accessed April 24, 2008.

[412] Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 234,235.

[413] Lynch, *Al-Qaeda's media strategies,* 5.

[414] Juan Zarate, *Winning the War on Terror: Marking Success and Confronting Challenges* (address to Special Policy Forum of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2008). Available at http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/print.php?template=C07&CID=393. Accessed April 29, 2008.

[415] Ibid, 6.

[416] Ali Gomaa. *The Meaning of Jihad in Islam.* 2007. At http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/muslims_speak_out/2007/07/sheikh_ali_gomah.html. Accessed April 30, 2008.

[417] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 387.

[418] "About the Quilliam Foundation," Available from http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/AboutUs.htm. Accessed April 30, 2008.

[419] Ibid.

[420] Ibid, 388.

[421] Brachman, Fishman, and Felter, *The Power of Truth? Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri,* 10,11.

[422] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 392.

[423] Lawrence, *OBL as a Media Star: The Making of an Information Age Anti-Hero,* 15.

[424] Naji, Abu Bakr (translated by William McCants), *The Management of Savagery,* 2006, 147-149. Available at www.wcfia.harvard.edu/olin/images/Management%20of%20Savagery%20-%2005-23-2006.pdf. Accessed April 22, 2008.

[425] Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know : an oral history of al-Qaeda's leader,* 393.

[426] An integrated communication strategy has remained elusive. Doug Feith writes that "State's approach … focused chiefly on public diplomacy. The need for a broader strategy remained unaddressed". See Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 177. But an integrated communication strategy also needs to be part of an integrated counter-terrorism strategy that involves all dimensions of national power. See, for example, Daniel Byman, "US Counter-terrorism Options: A Taxonomy," *Survival* 49, no. 3 (2007).

[427] Thoughtful groups such as the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, led by Edward P. Djerejian, had a keen understanding of what fuels anti-Americanism and support for jihadist groups in the Arab and Muslim World, but their "mandate" was "clearly limited to issues of public diplomacy". Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for the Muslim World, Edward P. Djerejian, Chair. Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for the U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab World, Report Submitted to the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, Washington DC. 2003. Available at www.state.gov/documents/organization/24882.pdf. Accessed April 14, 2008.

[428] Roy, *Globalized Islam : the search for a new Ummah,* 349.

[429] Brachman, Fishman, and Felter, *The Power of Truth? Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri,* 6,13.

[430] Naji, Abu Bakr (translated by William McCants), *The Management of Savagery,*

[431] William A. Rugh, *American encounters with Arabs : the "soft power" of U.S. public diplomacy in the Middle East,* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Security International, 2006), 4.

[432] For an overview of Islamic education, see Christopher M. Blanchard, *CRS Report to Congress. Islamic Religious Schools, Madrasas: Background,* 2008. Available at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21654.pdf. Accessed April 22, 2008. Memorization of the Qu'ran is an important aspect of Islamic education – "a process of embodying the divine – the words of God" and is concerned with developing spirituality and morality as well as an alternative to public education. See Boyle, Helen N. "Memorization and Learning in Islamic Schools". *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2006.

[433] Brachman, Fishman, and Felter, *The Power of Truth? Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri,* 25.

[434] See www.csis.org/smartpower/. Retrieved April 23, 2008.

[435] Mia M. Bloom, "Palestinian suicide bombing: public support, market share, and outbidding*". Political Science Quarterly*, 2004, vol. 119, issue 1, 61(28).

[436] Although Al Qaeda's popularity in the Kingdom has dropped considerably of late. See Terror Free Tomorrow, *Saudi Arabians Overwhemingly Reject Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, Saudi Fighters in Iraq, and Terrorism; Also among most pro-AMerican in Muslim world.*

[437] Although there is also growing recognition that co-opting Islamist parties can be a successful strategy to sideline extremists. King Hussain's strategy in Jordan is an example. Comments from Ambassador William Rugh, May 8, 2008.

[438] See, for example, Christopher Boucek, "Extremist Reeducation and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," *Terrorism Monitor* 5, no. 16 (2007)

[439] McMillan et al., *"In the same light as slavery" : building a global antiterrorist consensus,* 1.

[440] Telhami. *The stakes. America in the Middle East : the consequences of power and the choice for peace,* 16.

[441] Niall Ferguson, "War Plans," *New York Times*, April 13, 2008. Also, Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and consent : the wars for the twenty-first century,* 1st American ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2008), 672.

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[442] See See Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 167.

[443] Ibid, 168.

[444] "Can the Bush Doctrine Last?" in "After Bush. A Special Report on America and the World", *The Economist*, March 29, 2008.

[445] Careful self-examination is needed to determine if such assumptions are based upon an unrealistically benign self-image or simply a lack of the understanding of other cultures.

[446] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Public Diplomacy. State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges,* 23.

[447] RICU hired private sector marketing companies to conduct focus group research within Muslim communities in the U.K. to test government messaging. A by-product was the creation of a segmentation that broke the population up by attitudes: angry, alienated and would not listen; frustrated but willing to listen etc. Interview with British government official. February 11, 2008. See also Michael Evans and Richard Ford, "New anti-terror chief is building elite team," *The Times (London)*, August 30, 2007.

[448] Craig Allen Smith, "President Bush's Enthymeme of Evil: The Amalgamation of 9/11, Iraq, and Moral Values," *American Behavioral Scientist* 49 (2005): 39.

[449] J. Maggio, "The Presidential Rhetoric of Terror: The (Re)Creation of Reality Immediately after 9/11," *Politics & Policy* 35, no. 4 (2007): 822,825.

[450] Smith, *President Bush's Enthymeme of Evil: The Amalgamation of 9/11, Iraq, and Moral Values,* 38, 40.

[451] See, for example, John Yoo, *War by other means : an insider's account of the war on terror,* 1st ed. (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press : Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2006), 292.

[452] Lord, *Losing hearts and minds? : public diplomacy and strategic influence in the age of terror,* 60. The Office of the General Counsel exonerated the OSI – "none of these proposals includes language that suggests, directly or indirectly that [OSI] had engaged in, was planning to engage in, or was seeking approval to engage in 'disinformation activities'". See See Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 174-175. Feith writes that "the government never recovered from the dishonest smearing of OSI", and that, after its demise, "no one took responsibility for producing a comprehensive information or influence campaign for the war on terrorism". Ibid, 176-177.

[453] Ibid, 69.

[454] See See Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 321.

[455] Mark Mazzetti and Borzou Daragahi, "U.S. Military Covertly Pays To Run Stories in Iraqi Press," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 2005.

[456] David Barstow, "Behind TV Analysts, Pentagon's Hidden Hand," *New York Times*, April 20, 2008. See also Ralph Peters, "Pentagon Payola Retired Generals' TV Grift," *New York Post*, April 22, 2008.

[457] England, Gordon (Deputy Secretary of Defense), *Quadrennial Defense Review Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication,* Department of Defense, 2006. Available at www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/QDRRoadmap20060925a.pdf. Accessed March 20, 2008.

[458] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Public Diplomacy State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges,* 11-12.

[459] Ibid, 14.

[460] Ibid, 11.

[461] Ibid, 16.

[462] U.S. Department of State, Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), *National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication,* 2007, 32. Available at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/87427.pdf. Accessed March 11, 2008.

[463] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Public Diplomacy. State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges,* 7. Available at www.gao.gov/new.items/d06535.pdf. Accessed March 12, 2008.

[464] See See Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 158.

[465] Lord, *Losing hearts and minds? : public diplomacy and strategic influence in the age of terror,* 70.

[466] Studies were conducted by the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Defense Science Board, and Business for Diplomatic Action.

[467] Interview with senior U.S. defense official, February 4, 2008.

[468] Ibid.

[469] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Public Diplomacy State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges,* 5.

[470] U.S. Department of State, Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), *National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication,* 8,17-21.

[471] Ibid.

[472] Lord, *Losing hearts and minds? : public diplomacy and strategic influence in the age of terror,* 32.

[473] U.S. Army War College, *Information Operations Primer,* 2007, 105. Available at www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/info_ops_primer.pdf. Accessed March 20, 2008.

[474] See, for example, Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, "U.S. Adapts Cold-War Idea to Fight Terrorists," *The New York Times*, March 18 2008, sec. A; Foreign Desk, p. 1.

[475] Stephen Van Evera, "Bush Administration, Weak on Terror," *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 4 (2006): 32.

[476] Ibid.

[477] U.S. Army War College, *Information Operations Primer,* 4.

[478] Ibid.

[479] Ibid, 167.

[480] While the concepts are dialog-centric, public diplomacy activities involve a lot more than dialog. "State's public diplomacy programs and activities are designed to counter [negative attitudes towards the United States] through ongoing attempts to communicate with elites and mass audiences overseas. These efforts include crisis management and daily news operations designed to explain U.S. foreign policy positions and actions; strategic information programs designed to more broadly engage, inform, and influence target audiences; and long-term activities, such as exchanges, to promote relationship building and mutual understanding." U.S. Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Public Diplomacy State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges,* 2006, 1.

[481] Under Secretary Liaison for Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy between State and Defense. Interview March 24, 2008.

[482] Email from senior U.S. defense official, April 30, 2008.

[483] Ibid.

[484] Lord, *Losing hearts and minds? : public diplomacy and strategic influence in the age of terror,* 94.

[485] Ann Marie Thomson and James L. Perry, "Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box," *Public administration review* 66 (2006): 20-32.

[486] Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda,* 169.

[487] Government Accountability Office, *Information on U.S. Agencies' Efforts to Address Islamic Extremism,* 2005.

[488] Christopher M. Blanchard, *CRS Report to Congress. Islamic Religious Schools, Madrasas: Background,* 2008. Available at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21654.pdf. Accessed April 22, 2008.

[489] Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for the Muslim World, Edward P. Djerejian, Chair, *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for the U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab World, Report submitted to the U.S. House Appropriations Committee,* Washington DC, 2003.

[490] Interview with Arab media specialists at the State Department. April 22, 2008.

[491] Email correspondence with background source BR9. April 25, 2008.

[492] Duncan MacInnes, *Strategic Communication and Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism,* edited by U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee and Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, 2007. Available at armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/TUTC111507/MacInnes_Testimony111507.pdf. Accessed April 22, 2008.

[493] Interview with Brian Conniff and Deirdre Kline, MBN. February 15, 2008.

[494] Statistics from poll conducted by Intermedia in August 2005 in 11 countries with sample sizes ranging from 1000 to 2500 and a margin of error of +/- 2.6%

[495] Available at www.hacusa.org/NoticedInThePress/2006/Diplomacy_WP_110806.doc. Retrieved April 23, 2008.

[496] Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for the Muslim World, Edward P. Djerejian, Chair, *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for the U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab World, Report submitted to the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, Washington DC,* 26-28.

[497] Rugh, *American encounters with Arabs : the "soft power" of U.S. public diplomacy in the Middle East,* 220.

[498] Transcript of hearing of Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee Hearing. November 15, 2007 available at armedservices.house.gov.

[499] Richard Jackson, "Constructing Enemies: 'Islamic Terrorism' in Political and Academic Discourse," *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 3 (2007): 394-426.

[500] Alan Travis and Home affairs editor, "Phrasebook diplomacy: Whitehall draws up new rules on language of terror: Phrasebook designed to avoid blaming Muslims for extremism: New rules on the language of terror," *The Guardian (London) - Final Edition*, February 4 2008, sec. Guardian Home Pages, p. 1.

[501] Interview with British government official. February 11, 2008

[502] Interview with Bruce Riedel, Brookings Institute, March 20, 2008.

[503] Ibid.

[504] Lloyd, Col. Karen of J3, Joint IO Warfare Center, *Experiences from the field: Using Information Operations to Defeat Al Qaeda*, 2008. Slide 6. Available at http://www.jhuapl.edu/urw_symposium/Proceedings.aspx, accessed April 30, 2008.

[505] Ibid.

[506] Ibid.

[507] Ibid, slide 10.

[508] "Using Info Operations to Defeat AQ", April 29, 2008. Available from http://abuaardvark.typepad.com/abuaardvark/2008/04/using-info-oper.html. Accessed April 30, 2008.

[509] Charles Krauthammer, "The Truth About Torture," *The Weekly Standard* (2005). See also Michael Kinsley, "Torture for Dummies," *Slate* (2005). Available at http://www.slate.com/id/2132195/. Accessed April 29, 2008.

[510] See, for example, Alberto Gonzales, *Decision Re. Application of the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War to the Conflict with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban*, 2002. Available at http://www.visaportal.com/downloads/12502memo.pdf. Accessed April 30, 2008.

[511] Tim Golden, "After Terror, a Secret Rewriting of Military Law," *New York Times*, October 24, 2004; Tim Golden, "Administration Officials Split Over Stalled Military Tribunals," *New York Times*, October 25, 2004.

[512] Dana Priest, "CIA Holds Terror Suspects in Secret Prisons," *Washington Post*, November 2, 2005.

[513] Jane Mayer, "Outsourcing Torture," *The New Yorker*, February 14, 2005, pp. 106-123.

[514] Walsh, Joan. "The Abu Ghraib Files," March 14, 2006. Available from http://www.salon.com/news/abu_ghraib/2006/03/14/introduction/index.html. Accessed April 30, 2008.

[515] Kenneth Roth, "After Guantanamo: The Case Against Preventive Detention," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2008)

[516] Ibid.

[517] Ibid.

[518] Doug Feith recalls the seminal flight Sep 12, 2001, in which he strategized with Lieutenant General John Abizaid, Peter Rodman, and William Luti about how to define the enemy. The group wanted to avoid what they believed had been a mistake by the President's father in the Gulf War of 1990/1991, who had set a "limited, inflexible war aim". The focus needed to be on defending the United States from further terrorist attacks, which was construed as implying that the enemy needed to be defined in much broader terms than just the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks. Referring to Claire Sterling's book, The Terror Network, the assumption was that terrorist groups "could be understood fully only by seeing how they worked with each other and with their state supporters". The term "war on terror" was coined by the President as a "useful stopgap" that "allowed the Administration to defer naming the enemy" while considering how extensive the threat to the U.S. really was. See See Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 5-10.

The President's instinct was to avoid defining the fight narrowly, Wolfowitz declared that "the chief purpose of U.S. military action was not punishing those behind 9/11 but attacking those who might launch the next 9/11", and Rumsfeld believed that "9/11 did not mean simply that the United States had an Al Qaeda problem. We had a terrorism problem. A strategic response to 9/11 would have to take account of the threat from other terrorist groups – Jemaah Islamiyya in Southeast Asia, Lebanese Hezbollah, various Africa-based groups – and state sponsors beyond Afghanistan, especially those that pursued weapons of mass destruction". Rumsfeld's innate tendency was to "think big" about the strategic response to 9/11, and to adopt initiative and surprise to bring about "geopolitical changes substantial enough to cause every regime supporting terrorists to worry about its vulnerability". Ibid, 49-51, 67-71, 80-82.

Philip Gordon of the Brookings Institution argues that the "war on terror" amounted to both poor analysis and poor strategy. "It is poor analysis because it lumps together diverse threats that are often rooted in local squabbles". Gordon points out that radical Islam is divided into warring camps. "It is poor strategy because the 'war' forces these enemies together and prevents America from exploiting internal rivalries". See "Can the Bush Doctrine Last?" in "After Bush. A Special Report on America and the World", *The Economist*, March 29, 2008.

[519] "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists". President's first speech to Congress after the 9/11 attacks. By framing the question of allies of the war on terror in this way, Bush failed to recognize "the many people around the world who are anti-American and are not terrorists" or do not sympathize with terrorists. See Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 68, 513.

[520] Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for the Muslim World, Edward P. Djerejian, Chair, *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for the U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab World, Report submitted to the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, Washington DC,* 17.

[521] Matt Korade, "U.S., West Need to Fight the 'Stealth Jihad', Terrorism Experts Tell Intelligence Panel," *CQ Homeland Security* (2008). Available at public.cq.com/docs/hs/hsnews110-000002700584.html. Accessed April 23, 2008.

[522] A communications specialist in the U.K. government has been pleasantly surprised by the new tone of official statements coming out of the U.S. government. Although the "war on terror" is still being used for legal reasons, the use of terms related to Islam has dropped considerably, and constructive terms like "justice" that resonate well in the Islamic world are being deployed more. Interview with British government official. April 11, 2008.

[523] Keith, Kenton W. "The Last Three feet: Making the Personal Connection", in William A. Rugh, *Engaging the Arab & Islamic worlds through public democracy : a report and action recommendations,* (Washington, DC: Public Diplomacy Council, 2004), 174.

[524] Charlotte Beers' failed campaign was called a "blind alley" by Carnes Lord. Lord, *Losing hearts and minds? : public diplomacy and strategic influence in the age of terror,* 75.The campaign did not address the real issue, which was the circumstances of Muslim life in the Middle East and other parts of the Muslim world, not the circumstances of American Muslims. Besides which,

given the stark difference in wealth between many parts of the Muslim world and the U.S., "pictures of a 4-bedroom house in Lansing, Michigan, simply did not resonate with the vast majority of Muslims". Interview with senior U.S. defense official, February 4, 2008.

[525] Feith, Douglas J. *War and Decision. Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 140.

[526] Van Evera, *Bush Administration, Weak on Terror,* 35. This statement is not 100% accurate, since the Department of Defense spending on PSYOPS, Defense Support for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs also need to be counted. However, budget figures for these items are not made public, and may not even exist as easily identifiable line items.

[527] Includes $668M for Civilian International Broadcasting (BBG), $486N for Education and Cultural Exchange, $309M for Regional and Functional staff, and $50M for International Information Programs. Figures from Brian Carlson, Under Secretary Liaison for Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy between State and Defense, March 24, 2008. See also http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/c6112.htm.

[528] Robert M. Gates. Landon Lecture at Kansas State University, November 26, 2007. Available at http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199. Accessed April 28, 2008.

[529] Remarks by Leonard Baldyga, Director of the Public Diplomacy Council, at the 100th Anniversary Edward R. Murrow Memorial Conference, Tufts University, April 14th, 2008.

[530] U.S. Government, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Defense Science Board, "Report of the Task Force on Strategic Communication," (2008): Chapter 5. Available at www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2004-09-Strategic_Communication.pdf. Accessed March 11, 2008.

[531] See, for example, Douglas Johnston, Cynthia Sampson, and Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.), *Religion, the missing dimension of statecraft,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 350.

[532] Michael Chandler and Rohan Gunaratna, *Countering terrorism : can we meet the threat of global violence?* (London: Reaktion, 2007), Chapter 6.

[533] Doran, Michael (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Support to Public Diplomacy), *Strategic Communication and Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism*. House Armed Services Committee, 2007. Available at http://www.house.gov/hasc/hearing_information.shtml. Accessed April 20, 2008.

[534] Sawmiller, Jennifer. "Abizaid addresses Middle East problems". April 14, 2008. http://media.www.arbiteronline.com/media/storage/paper890/news/2008/04/14/News/Abizaid.Addresses.Middle.East.Problems-3321887.shtml. Accessed April 21, 2008.

[535] Lumpkin, *Sub-groups and Affiliates of Al Qaeda. Available at* http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/profiles/generate_subgroups.php?name=Al-Qaeda. Accessed March 20, 2008.

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[541] It must be recognized that this criteria is subjective. In particular, groups may espouse a global jihadist ideology in order to gain international support, even though their underlying goals are nationalist in scope. See Kimmage and Ridolfo, *Iraqi Insurgent Media. The War of Images and Ideas. How Sunni Insurgents in Iraq and Their Supporters Worldwide are Using the Media,*

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