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Understanding al-Qaeda: History, Ideology and Infrastructure

Sarah Dickens

Candidate for B.A. Degree
in International Relations with Honors

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APPROVED

Thesis Project Advisor: Professor Michael Barkun

Second Reader: Professor Guitty Khorsand-Tabatabai

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PREFACE

Intellectual discovery is much like a tapestry. Weaving the threads of research, analysis, introspection, and critical thinking, discovery leads to new questions while seeking answers. The process of researching and composing *Understanding al-Qaeda: History, Ideology, and Infrastructure* has been a meaningful journey, fusing my academic experiences in the fields of International Relations and Middle Eastern Studies.

This project began as an inquiry on changes in US counter-terrorism procedure since the devastating attacks on September 11, 2001. However, it was not long before I realized that, like many areas of study, counter-terrorism is one which requires a foundation if it is to be analyzed insightfully. From this moment, the goal of my work evolved; my focus shifted to cultivating an understanding of the formation, ideology, and organizational strategies of a particularly menacing terror threat: the al-Qaeda network. There were many reasons for selecting al-Qaeda as the specificity for this work. Clearly, a study of al-Qaeda provides the most relevant information for understanding September 11th, the event that motivated me to explore terrorism issues in greater depth. At the same time, al-Qaeda begs further research because of its unique character. As a global terror network with a transnational membership, al-Qaeda poses a threat not only to the United States, but also to its allies in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Indeed, understanding the nature of al-Qaeda will play a key role in developing international counter-terrorism policy in future years.

As an exploration of al-Qaeda's growth and evolution, this thesis represents an underpinning for future research. By thoroughly tracing elements of

al-Qaeda's history and its development of radical discourses, the work concentrates on issues that current research on al-Qaeda, often eager to focus on the 9/11 attacks, may overlook. Broadly speaking, the goal of my project has been to attain a clearer understanding of al-Qaeda's philosophies and objectives and to examine how the terrorist network has developed in order to accomplish its aims.

Though the project's specificity is al-Qaeda, it also retains a broader scope, allowing the reader to understand how this particular terror group is integrated in the larger realm of Islamic extremism. Opening chapters emphasize links between key Islamic terrorists, such as those responsible for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. The thesis also offers perspective on how the training of *mujahideen*, holy warriors, during the Soviet-Afghan War later served as a backdrop for the development of a terrorist network based on the premise of global jihad.

This historical analysis is enhanced by a study of al-Qaeda's ideology, which critically examines Osama bin Laden's public statements against the discourses of the leading Islamic fundamentalist thinkers that preceded him, including Sheikh ibn Taymiyyah, Hasan al-Banna, and Sayyid Qutb. The final chapters on al-Qaeda's infrastructure, in particular recruitment, training, and structural issues, provide readers with a sense of al-Qaeda's global reach, not only in its missions but also in its ability to exploit globalization and technology for its lethal purposes.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my project has been researching al-Qaeda from a variety of perspectives and voices. *Understanding al-Qaeda: History, Ideology, and Infrastructure* offers a blend of information from former FBI and CIA officials (Paul William's *Al-Qaeda: Brotherhood of Terror*, Marc Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks*), government sources (information released by the Justice Department, as well as the *9/11 Commission Report*), and media perspectives (Peter Bergen's *Holy War, Inc*, Jane Corbin's *al-Qaeda: In Search of the Terror Network that Threatens the World*). Over the course of two years, I have analyzed the work of key Western scholars (Steven Coll, John Parachini, Roland Jacquard), as well as the writings of Israeli researchers (Emmanuel Sivan, Benjamin Netanyahu, and leading voices from the Institute for Counter-Terrorism), and the texts of Islamic fundamentalists themselves (bin Laden, Qutb, al-Zawahiri, and others).

The experience of researching and drafting this thesis will be invaluable in my future endeavors to conduct in-depth studies on terrorism issues, Middle Eastern affairs, and in particular, the operational strategies of al-Qaeda. In closing, I would like to urge future honors students to pursue their research with vigor and enthusiasm. Tackling a thesis project reminds us of the importance of discovery, of the necessity of looking beyond the surface in order to contemplate the underlying meanings of complex situations. So that this process flows smoothly, it is important that the researcher be highly motivated to investigate his or her topic. Intellectual discovery is not a process that can be rushed; time is required for research to be conducted and for the project to evolve. The most

important element in composing a thesis, however, is commitment. The honors student that pursues a thesis with dedication, diligence, and attentiveness is the one that is the most satisfied with his or her discoveries.

The opportunity to develop a thesis has been a privilege and a challenge. An intellectual mission unifying my principal areas of study, this honors thesis represents perhaps the most significant accomplishment of my academic career.

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There are many individuals to whom I owe gratitude for supporting my academic achievement and the momentous accomplishment of researching and composing an honors thesis.

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to interact with professors whose intellect inspire me to explore my research wholeheartedly. I am indebted to Professor Michael Barkun for sharing his insight, time, and resources with me. His willingness to advise me over a two-year period testifies to his commitment to scholarly activity. I am also grateful to visiting scholar Professor Guitty Khorsand-Tabatabai. Her courses on Islamic radicalism and Muslim Diaspora populations have intensified my interests in Middle Eastern affairs and have allowed me to cultivate the background information necessary to tackle this thesis. As my Second Reader, she has helped me shape my work into a polished finished product.

I would like to extend my thanks to Florence Di Gennaro, Matt Powers, and Stephen Terzolo for their friendship and continued support. They have never failed to provide me with encouragement and hopefulness during the most challenging periods of my academic career.

Finally, I am profoundly indebted to my family—my parents Hannah and Harvey Dickens and my sister Michelle—for their love and guidance. My family has been my most important foundation, supporting my endeavors and instilling in me the importance of creating dreams and working hard to achieve them.

I. THE NEW YORK JIHAD

“Oh you Muslims everywhere, sever the ties of their nation, tear them apart ruin their economy, instigate against their corporations, destroy their embassies, attack their interests, sink their ships, and shoot down their airplanes. Kill them in land, at sea, and in the air, kill them wherever you find them.” –Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman (In Their Own Words)

In the early afternoon of February 26, 1993, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center climbed 107 stories into the heavens, standing prominently among the skyscrapers of Manhattan’s horizon. In minutes, this proud emblem of American financial prowess would be transformed into an early battlefield of a global holy war against the United States and its allies. At about 12:18pm, a yellow Ford Econoline van truck packed with four canisters of explosive material detonated, unleashing a ferocious blast in the B-2 level of the World Trade Center’s underground parking lot (McCarthy). The explosion, set off by a mixture of fuel oil, fertilizer, and nitroglycerine attached to a timing device, sent ravaging flames across the garage and a rainstorm of shrapnel traveling at thousands of feet per second (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 95). In the aftermath of the colossal blast, the once World Trade Center parking area was but a gaping hole seven stories high filled with billowing black smoke (9/11 Commission 71). Six people trapped in the garage at the time of the blast died instantly; 1,042 others were wounded (9/11 Commission 71).

Alongside fire trucks and NYPD cars, broadcast journalist John Miller rushed to the financial district. “I jumped out of the car across from the North Tower. People, choking, coughing, were streaming out into the snow. When I got across the street, I heard glass breaking. People in the towers were trying to let the smoke out. The shards fell around me on the street like daggers” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 98). The explosion’s effects created a dizzying nightmare for survivors trying to evacuate the Towers, many unaware of the cause of such sudden pandemonium. Eyewitness Bruce Pomper provided journalists with the eerily portentous comment that when the bomb blasted, “It felt like an airplane hit the building” (1993: World Trade Center). Firefighter Edward Bergen was immersed in this hellish aftermath of the bombing, recalling that he and his colleagues “crawled under pipes when [they] arrived, and everything was on fire” (Corbin 45). For Neil Herman, then chief of domestic terrorism in the FBI’s New York

headquarters, the event was a bitter awakening to the brutality that man can inflict on fellow man (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 99). “I was thinking at that moment of the horrific crime scenes I’d witnessed...The LaGuardia Airport bombing where eleven people lost their lives. The Frances Tavern bombing, which I thought was the worst I’d seen. But nothing--- nothing on the scale of this” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 99). He also remarked that day that the relatively few casualties caused by the blast might be considered “a miracle” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 99).

Investigators would later find out that the perpetrators of the “Bomb Project” projected a death toll around 250,000 (Gunaratna 238). Imagining the collapse of the Towers like the tumble of two gargantuan dominos, the 1993 bombers intended an utmost demonstration of mass murder and destruction (Gunaratna 238). That day would ultimately arrive, when the image of people “covered in soot and gasping for breath...[with] fear in their eyes and little black mustaches from breathing the acrid smoke” would awaken America as an eerie and haunting *déjà vu* (Corbin 42). Until then, the 1993 bombing served as a kind of “dress rehearsal for al-Qaeda’s devastating attack on the Twin Towers eight years later” (Bergen 139).

The 1993 World Trade Center bombing provides a natural point of departure for understanding the history, ideology, and inner workings of al-Qaeda. Distinct in its multiethnic membership and demonstrated ability to conduct well-orchestrated attacks against high profile targets, al-Qaeda is a terrorist network that, since 1993, has begged further research on the part of American scholars. While much recently published literature on al-Qaeda suggests elements of “media hype” or efforts to gratify an insatiable appetite for information on terrorism (credible or otherwise), an understanding of the origins and bases of al-Qaeda’s operations are not always thoroughly developed. As the most devastating attack on an American target, September 11th is often the focus of current studies on al-Qaeda. The psychological need to recreate the chronology of events on that dreadful day has driven not only much of the current interest in terrorism and Middle Eastern affairs in general, but also the discourse on al-Qaeda specifically. A close analysis of September 11th sheds considerable light on the attacks’ perpetrators and their *modus operandi*, but a deep understanding of this fateful moment in US history can only come from a broader study of al-Qaeda’s formation and evolution.

September 11th, with thousands of fatalities and excessive damage, has in many ways eclipsed the 1993 World Trade Center bombings in the American consciousness. Even the attacks' victims—Bob Kirkpatrick, Steven Knapp, Bill Macko, Monica Rodriguez Smith, Wilfred Mercado, John DiGiovanni, and the many injured—seem to have been sadly forgotten by certain researchers and the general public (Hirschhorn). In a CNN report posted two years after 9/11, Bill Macko's son Michael commented, "The families of 9/11 victims suffered tragic losses and there's no begrudging of anything that is done for them...We would just like to be included, because we also lost loved ones in the same place, in the hands of the same people. The only difference is the dates" (Hirschhorn). At the time, law enforcement officials were unfamiliar with the nature of the WTC attack, and as such, missed a key opportunity to work toward the prevention of the more distressing mission that al-Qaeda proved determined to launch. On the tenth anniversary of the 1993 bombing, New York Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly commented that the attack "should have been a wake up call for America. We simply didn't see it as an international conspiracy to destroy our society" (First Trade Center Attack). As Kelly's remark indicates, the 1993 bombing, serving as a prelude to the more devastating attack in 2001, was the United States' first rude awakening to al-Qaeda's particular breed of terrorism. In hindsight, analysts like BBC News' Simon Reeve have come to view the 1993 episode as "the opening salvo of al-Qaeda's campaign against the West" (Lessons of first WTC bombing).

In 1993, New York State Governor Mario Cuomo asserted, "Until now we were invulnerable" (Lessons of first WTC bombing). Though his words rang true in the early 1990s, they were not fully understood until 9/11 testified to the accuracy of his statement. It is only through the lens of September 11th that we have understood the implications of the 1993 attack. Sadly, James Kallstrom has pointed out that, despite the initial shock of the 1993 bombing, the incident did not cause the kind of devastation necessary to truly capture the attention of investigators or the American public (First Trade Center Attack). It is worth considering that FBI and ATF personnel were dealing simultaneously with the Branch Davidian siege in Waco, Texas from February 28, 1993 to April 19th, thereby unable to fully analyze the implications of the WTC attack (Chronology of the Siege). However, Kallstrom commented, "We just never as a nation

responded the way, in my view, we should have responded” (First Trade Center Attack). “It’s a lot easier to have consensus when you have 3,000 people dead on the streets of New York and the Pentagon” (First Trade Center Attack). Now, instead of using September 11th as a means of understanding the 1993 bombings, the 1993 bombings serve as an important tool in reconstructing how al-Qaeda was able to develop into a terror network capable of tumbling the towers of the World Trade Center in 2001.

On the whole, the 1993 terrorists were a relatively unsophisticated bunch; even New York Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly remarked that at the time, they seemed like “an ad hoc group of amateurs” (First Trade Center Attack). It is also true that there is no “crystal-clear connection” between the 1993 bombing perpetrators and al-Qaeda. However, investigators generally acknowledge that “Many of the individuals involved in the 1993 WTC bombing were connected in some way to Osama bin Laden and [the organization now recognized as] al-Qaeda (Lessons of the First WTC Attack). The Council on Foreign Relations describes these connections between the bombers and al-Qaeda as “strong links,” noting that the spiritual advisor of the bombers, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, “once led an Egyptian group now affiliated with al-Qaeda; two of his sons are senior al-Qaeda officials” (al-Qaeda, Council on Foreign Relations). A report conducted by PBS Frontline indicates that “Osama bin Laden’s name surfaces during the 1993 WTC investigation as a financier...His name is also found on a list of individuals who were called from a safe house used by the conspirators” (al-Qaeda’s Global Context). In addition, the investigation recognized bin Laden as one of several “unindicted co-conspirators” (al-Qaeda’s Global Context). As we shall see, the 1993 bombers—with their ambitious choice of target, fascination with radical Sunni Islam, and hardened determination to kill indiscriminately—mirror the variety of terrorists that al-Qaeda has produced in the subsequent thirteen years. The bombers’ resolve and audacity may have even been a driving force among al-Qaeda’s leadership to pursue the goal of destroying the World Trade Center. Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, the “principal architect of the 9/11 attacks,” was, after all, the uncle of the 1993 head bomber, Ramzi Yousef (9/11 Commission 145). Elaine Shannon, who led Time magazine’s report on the 1993 bombing, has even argued that this early attack “encouraged al-Qaeda to launch their own fully-fledged

campaign of terror” (Lessons of First WTC Bombing). No matter which angle is taken, the 1993 bombing and its perpetrators emerge as indispensable elements in understanding al-Qaeda’s long and complicated history.

The identities of the 1993 bombers began to unravel when police decoded a C-VIN (confidential vehicle identification number) found on a piece of metal strewn amid the World Trade Center debris (D. Williams). The number revealed that the explosives had been packed in a Ford van, rented in Jersey City by Mohammad Salameh, a 25 year old Jordanian of Palestinian origin (Salameh, Mohammad A.). Saleme had arrived in the United States in 1988 on a tourist visa and remained in an Arab neighborhood of Jersey City dubbed “Egyptian City” as an illegal alien at the time of his involvement in the World Trade Center attack (Salameh, Mohammad A.). On February 25, 1993, one day before the bombing, Salameh reported the van stolen and pressed the rental company persistently for a return of his cash deposit (9/11 Commission 72). This maneuver, strikingly at odds with the prudent, secretive nature of Mohammad Atta, the leader of the al-Qaeda cell ultimately responsible for the Twin Towers’ collapse, led terrorism expert Neil Livingstone to remark in 1993, “We encountered probably the dumbest terrorists we’ve ever encountered” (Lessons of the First WTC Bombing). In a resourceful scheme, the FBI instructed the DIB rental agency to request Salameh’s completion of a form, drawn up by prosecutors to attain additional information, the next time he turned up to hassle the company on account of the \$400 (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 105). The action unfolded as planned on March 4 when Salameh was deftly picked up by an FBI SWAT team in the DIB parking lot (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 105).

In his chapter, “The World Trade Center Bombers,” John V. Parachini argues that Mohammad Saleme is best understood as “a follower and a bumbler” (3). “Despite the ‘evil’ terrorist profile that government prosecutors laid out for the jury, Saleme was a pathetic figure. The eldest of a family of eleven, he struggled to achieve mediocrity in life” (Parachini 3). If Parachini’s estimation is indeed correct, Salameh likely found a sense of purpose through his participation in the bombing. In contrast to his shoddy maneuvers—the attempt to receive a

refund of the truck rental deposit, his four failures of the New Jersey driving test before finally obtaining a New York State license—the 1993 bombing was nothing but a “high-stakes venture” (Parachini 10). Though the bombers fell short of their initial goals in attacking the World Trade Center, they were certainly not far from materializing their grandiose vision. Mark Juergensmeyer notes that only technical elements requiring a specialized knowledge came between the bombers and their aspirations: “If the amount of explosives in the truck had been just a little larger and the truck placed slightly differently in the basement parking area, it would have brought down an entire tower” (63).

The very choice of the World Trade Center as a target indicates that Salameh and his comrades, a handful of foreign nationals, sought to create forceful and menacing implications for the United States’ political and economic conditions. Had the damage and casualties been greater, Salameh was likely to have experienced feelings of accomplishment from his decision to conduct violent political action in the name of Islam. Still, it can be argued that the intended message of the bombings was acknowledged in some form by American authorities and security specialists. Terrorism expert Neil Livingstone aptly expressed this idea when he said, “What the attack in ’93 demonstrated was that a relatively small group of relatively unsophisticated people could carry out a massive attack with very little money and nearly topple the World Trade Center” (Lessons of the First WTC Bombing). The fact that the United States was again taken “off-guard” on 9/11 indicates that American authorities were too quick to breathe a sigh of relief and slip back into the routine of relying on the same data-collection and analysis techniques that proved inadequate on February 26, 1993.

A simple search of Mohammad Salameh’s pockets led to the discovery of the business card of Nidal Ayyad, an engineer working for New Jersey chemicals company, Allied Signal (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 107). Ayyad, who immigrated to the United States from Kuwait in the early 1990s to study chemical and biochemical engineering at Rutgers University, became a US citizen and married shortly after receiving his degree (Parachini 4). He remained in Morristown, NJ, where Allied Signal employed him as a research engineer (US v. Salameh). As his work required frequent handling of “chemicals used in pharmaceuticals and paints,” Ayyad

was instrumental in procuring the substances that would later be combined in a lethal mixture to ignite the World Trade Center from bottom up (Ayyad, Nidal). Ayyad was also able to “order hydrogen tanks from ALG Welding Company that would enhance the bomb’s destructive force” (US v. Salameh). Ayyad’s level of education, career potential and marital status (his wife was pregnant at the time of the 1993 attacks) made him seem an “unlikely terrorist,” though his credentials are more or less consistent with those of other al-Qaeda terrorists (Parachini 4). As later chapters of this thesis explore, al-Qaeda’s affiliates have challenged stereotypes suggesting that Islamic terrorists are almost always young, unmarried, economically dispossessed Arab males. Like the cell leaders of the 9/11 attacks eight years later, Ayyad was highly educated and possessed the skills necessary to adapt to life in a pluralistic, Western society. Following the arrest of the 1993 bombers, a letter appeared in *The New York Times* that “promised more bloodshed if the United States did not disengage from the Middle East and promptly cease all economic, military, and political support of Israel” (McCarthy). Police later found that the letter, which also warned that there were more “cells ready to strike at America,” was saved as a document on Ayyad’s computer (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 137).

Unlike Ayyad, who remained in New Jersey following the attack, Mahmoud Abouhalima, a tall redheaded New York City cab driver, fled to Saudi Arabia and then to his native Egypt immediately after the bombing (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 109). Since his arrival in the United States in 1985, Abouhalima’s record was less than exemplary (Abouhalima, Mahmoud). Though he received amnesty in 1986 for residing in the United States as an illegal alien, Abouhalima obtained a chauffeur’s license that was “suspended 10 times for failing to respond to summonses for traffic violations” (Abouhalima, Mahmoud). Sources note that Abouhalima “regularly ran red lights, drove without a license and neglected to have his car registered and inspected. Once, he was found guilty of driving with broken meter seals, a telltale sign of an attempt to rip off customers” (Abouhalima, Mahmoud). Nicknamed “Mahmud the Red,” Abouhalima was portrayed during his 1994 trial as an integral player in collecting explosive materials, establishing a safe house, building the bomb, and transporting it to the World Trade Center (Juergensmeyer 62). Like many of al-Qaeda’s associates, Abouhalima was a veteran of the

Afghan-Soviet war, a conflict that left him, and other displaced Muslim fighters, eager to wage holy wars in new locations (Parachini 4).

The indictment of the bombers' spiritual mentor, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman suggests that Abouhalima had been directed by the imam to flee to Sudan, instead of Egypt after the bombing (US v. Rahman). It may have been wise to follow Rahman's advice, for the Egyptian Intelligence Service rather quickly seized Abouhalima (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 109). It is possible that his membership in the Muslim Brotherhood and previous association with members of the illegal al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya, the Egyptian Islamic Group, made Abouhalima a conspicuous target for Egyptian authorities (Abouhalima, Mahmoud). It was not long before Abouhalima was handed over to FBI agents by being tossed, blindfolded, out of a fast-moving car outside an Egyptian airport (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 109). Abouhalima, who had suffered second-degree burns at the hands of Egyptian authorities, kissed and embraced the FBI agents who had come to extradite him to the United States, eager to escape any subsequent interrogations with Egyptian Intelligence (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 109).

In August 1997, Mark Juergensmeyer had the opportunity to conduct two interviews with Abouhalima in the maximum-security prison of Lompoc, California, where Abouhalima is carrying out his sentence (63). At the time, Abouhalima believed his conviction might be appealed and so he does not discuss nor claim any responsibility for the 1993 attack (Juergensmeyer 63). Though Abouhalima's comments do not speak for all of the perpetrators of the 1993 "Bomb Project," his interviews with Juergensmeyer do shed light on the political and religious motivations of like-minded terrorists. Many of his remarks denounced what he perceives as a lack of morality in non-Islamic societies (Juergensmeyer 70). Reflecting on his 17 years of life in the West, Abouhalima told Juergensmeyer in a voice barely above a whisper that this is "a fair amount of time to understand what the hell is going on in the United States and in Europe about secularism or people, who have no religion" (Juergensmeyer 70). According to Abouhalima, Westerners are lacking their very "soul" because "the soul, the religion, you know that's the thing that's revived the whole life. Secularism has none, they have none, you have none" (Juergensmeyer 70). If secular individuals are lacking their souls, it is not hard to imagine

why the innocent victims of the 1993 attack were completely dehumanized in the eyes of Abouhalima and his companions. Abouhalima himself claims that these people, the secular people of the West, are “just moving like dead bodies” (Juergensmeyer 70).

However, Abouhalima demonstrated that Islamic terrorism is more than a critique of Western morals. While terrorist actions do deliver a blow of vengeance against those the Islamists view as having departed from the true, pure way of life, they also serve to shake the foundations of US hegemony in international affairs. Abouhalima considered it hypocritical that he should even be branded a terrorist, demanding, “What about the United States government?...How do they justify their acts of bombings, of killing innocent people, directly or indirectly, openly or secretly? They’re killing people everywhere in the world: before, today, and tomorrow. How do you define that?” (Juergensmeyer 64). It is important to note, therefore, that Abouhalima considers American civilians not only directly responsible for their nation’s foreign policy but also for indirect harm to other peoples caused by the US government. Making no discrimination between different US administrations, the hyperbole contained in Abouhalima’s statement calls attention to his belief that current American civilians are guilty of actions taken by previous US governments. For example, he cites the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings as indicators of American injustice and cruelty on the global stage (Juergensmeyer 64). He also holds the US responsible for actions contrary to the interests of fundamentalist Islam. Juergensmeyer informs his readers that Abouhalima “singled out America for special condemnation because it helped to create the state of Israel, supported the secular Egyptian government, and sent its troops to Kuwait during the Gulf War” (68). Ironically, Abouhalima “praised America for its religious freedom, claiming that it was easier for him to be a good Muslim in this country than in Egypt” (Juergensmeyer 69). Yet, he argued that it would be better for the United States to have a religious government based on Christianity, to ensure that “at least it would have morals” (Juergensmeyer 69).

The identities of the remaining perpetrators—two men whose roles were similar to those of Salameh, Ayyad and Abouhalima’s and the one man considered the true “brain” of the attack treated later in this chapter— were uncovered by the police with relative ease. When police conducted a search of Salameh’s apartment at 34 Kensington Avenue in Jersey City, they came in

contact with Abdul Rahman Yasin, a man who admitted having taught Salameh how to drive the Ryder van that had been rented from DIB only days before the attack (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 85). Born in Indiana in 1960 while his Iraqi father completed his graduate studies, Yasin was raised primarily in Iraq but returned to the US in the early 1990s to join his mother and brother in New Jersey (Yasin, Abdul Rahman). When police first detained Yasin, he expressed his disbelief that “Salameh was involved in such a terrible act” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 107). Still, he was able to direct police to 40 Pamrapo Avenue, the site used by the “Bomb Project” terrorists as their chemical lab (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 107). Although police initially released him as a cooperative informant, it was later determined that “Mr. Yasin helped mix the chemicals used in the blast, at one point severely burning his leg” (Yasin, Abdul Rahman). On March 5, 1993, Yasin flew to Jordan and then fled to Iraq, where it is claimed he “received not only safe haven...but also funding from the former Iraqi regime” (Yasin, Abdul Rahman). Today, Yasin remains at large and on the FBI’s list of Most Wanted Terrorists (Most Wanted Terrorists).

In 2002, CBS reporter Lesley Stahl conducted an interview with Yasin near Baghdad that later aired on 60 Minutes. Yasin offered new information on the attack, asserting that Ramzi Yousef, the attack’s “brain,” settled on the World Trade Center as a second choice target (The Man Who Got Away). Instead, Yousef was captivated by the idea of striking Jewish targets in New York (The Man Who Got Away). Yasin claimed that Yousef told him, “I want to blow up Jewish neighborhoods in Brooklyn” and that Yousef had paid particular attention to the areas of Crown Heights and Williamsburg (The Man Who Got Away). However, Yousef later explained to his comrades that he had changed his mind because “we should do one big explosion rather than do small ones in Jewish neighborhoods” (The Man Who Got Away). Yasin believes that the World Trade Center was still consistent with Yousef’s intention of killing Jews. “The majority of people who work in the World Trade Center are Jews,” he told Stahl (The Man Who Got Away).

The site on Pamrapo Avenue pointed out by Yasin contained evidence that connected the identified conspirators with yet another man, Ahmed Mohammad Ajaj, a Pakistani who had arrived in New York’s JFK International Airport on September 1, 1992 (US v. Salameh). Hardly off the plane, Ajaj caught the attention of airport officials when he presented them with a poorly

altered, stolen Swedish passport (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 77). In addition to a collection of other forgeries, Ajaj's bags contained videos on arms and a guidebook on bomb building (Parachini 4). The guidebook's title was originally translated as "The Basic Rule" during the World Trade Center Trial but the misnomer was subsequently corrected by the *New York Times* to read "al-Qaeda, The Base" (Bergen 14). Salameh's indictment argues that Ajaj had been living in Houston, Texas until April 24, 1992, when he traveled to the Afghan-Pakistani border to be trained in terrorist techniques at "Camp Khaldan," later known to be financed by Osama bin Laden (US v. Salameh). It is there where he became acquainted not only with the skills "to construct homemade explosive devices" but also with Ramzi Yousef (US v. Salameh). Police found Ajaj's name among Salameh's possessions at the chemical mixing site, even though he was serving his brief prison sentence for passport-fraud at the time (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 77).

FBI agents also learned that following his arrest at Kennedy Airport, Ajaj, "using his free lawyer from one of the nation's top law firms," petitioned for a return of his "reading material" (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 108). The judge's decision to grant his request allowed all of Ajaj's bomb-making resources to fall into the hands of Ramzi Yousef, the man who had traveled from Pakistan with Ajaj on September 1 and who would soon send the FBI globetrotting on his heels (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 108). Ajaj found other creative ways to assist in the World Trade Center bombing while serving his prison sentence. Prosecutor Gil Childers explained, "Ajaj would call Dallas from prison, and his friend would then either relay messages to Yousef or patch a three-way call through to him, thereby rendering law enforcement efforts to detect contact between Ajaj and Yousef far more difficult" (Parachini 6).

With the majority of the World Trade Center conspirators in police custody- Salameh, Ayyad, Abouhalima, and Ajaj- the FBI was still hard-pressed for answers. What was the connection between these men who had immigrated to the United States from various Middle Eastern countries? When had the World Trade Center plot been conceived and by whom? One clue gathered early in the investigation aided the FBI in its mission to determine links between the conspirators and to understand their activities in a broader context. When Mohammed Salameh acquired the Ryder van to be exploded under the World Trade Center, he listed a New York

residence, rather than his Jersey City apartment, as his address on the rental agreement (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 104). “57 Prospect Park Southwest, Brooklyn. Apartment 4C,” however, belonged to Ibrahim el-Gabrownny, the cousin of a man already familiar to investigators (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 104). By the time Salameh was arrested in New Jersey, Detective Tommy Corrigan and another member of the Joint Terrorism Task Force of New York obtained a warrant to search the Brooklyn apartment (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 107). Arriving just as el-Gabrownny was leaving the building, Corrigan and one of his colleagues intercepted him, engaging in a mild struggle as they frisked and cuffed him (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 107). A bulky packet in el-Gabrownny’s pocket that Corrigan feared might have been plastic explosives contained five Nicaraguan passports with fabricated names (Miller, Stone and Mitchell 107-08). Each of the passports’ photos matched the identity of el-Gabrownny’s cousin, El Sayyid Nosair (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 108).

According to Miller, Stone, and Mitchell, “there was little in his background to distinguish [Nosair] from countless other Middle Eastern men who had come to the U.S. in the 1970s and early 1980s” (47). A twenty-six year old Egyptian who was born near Port Said, Nosair arrived in the United States in 1981, shortly after attaining a degree in industrial design and engineering at the Helwan University Faculty of Applied Arts in Cairo (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 47). Though he first settled in Pennsylvania, Nosair drifted between various jobs and locations until work as an electrician’s assistant resulted in serious injury in September 1986 (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 49). The disabled Nosair then found lodging in Brooklyn with his cousin el-Gabrownny, where his affiliation with the borough’s Islamic organizations began to spin his life in a radical direction (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 49).

During the period between 1986 and 1990, Nosair spent an increasing amount of time at the al-Khifah Refugee Services Center on Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn and even accepted employment in its offices (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 49). Literally meaning “the struggle” in Arabic, the al-Khifah was allegedly established to “provide for the needs and welfare of Afghan people, particularly the refugees due to the Soviet invasion” (Bergen 134). The institution’s primary goal, however, was to serve as a recruitment post for *mujahideen*, or “holy warriors,” an

aspect of its agenda not widely publicized in the West (Bergen 134). It is estimated that the center contributed some 200 militants to the Afghan jihad (Bergen 134). The center's founder and most esteemed preacher was Abdullah Azzam, an associate and mentor of the Saudi-born millionaire Osama bin Laden, a fiery Palestinian who earned a reputation as a "scholar, soldier, orator, organizer, prophet, and propagandist" (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 49). As a frequent visitor of the al-Khifah Center's al-Farouq Mosque, reportedly a "hotbed of radicalism," Nosair was immersed in a *souk* of extremist ideas from local fanatics (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 49). Nosair was particularly swayed by Azzam's claim, "Whenever Jihad is mentioned in the Holy Book, it means the obligation to fight. It does not mean to fight with the pen or to write books or articles in the press or to fight by holding lectures" (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 49-50).

It was not long before Nosair, who remained impotent as a result of the 1986 electrocution accident, was motivated by Azzam's zealous sermons to take on a jihad mission for which his condition would allow (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 49). His first step involved constructing a team of young extremists with whom to engage in jihad training. His coach, Ali Mohammad, an Egyptian-born US Army Special Forces instructor with terrorist sympathies, offered lessons to Nosair and his colleagues, among them Mohammad Salameh, Mahmoud Abouhalima, and Nidal Ayyad, at several locations in upstate New York, Long Island, and Connecticut (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 134). Nosair tested his newly-learned skills in a series of ambitious, albeit unsuccessful, terrorist plots in 1989—an attempted assassination of Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, the detonation of a six-inch pipe filled with M-80 firecrackers at a gay bar in Greenwich Village, even the shadowing of a United Nations official and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 52-53).

Less than one year later, Nosair's eagerness to wage jihad in America was recognized by the newly arrived Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, an Egyptian Sunni cleric who had come to Brooklyn to preach his infamously radical message at the al-Farouq mosque of the al-Khifah Center (9/11 Commission 72). Abdel Rahman was a long-time associate of Abdullah Azzam when he was issued a multi-entry visa for the United States (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 54). Despite his round face, fluffy white beard and "crimson-and-white fez that...[made him look] less like a

terrorist than a hip Santa,” fifty-two year old Abdel Rahman was a “world figure in jihad, a man whose writings, preachings, and political savvy had helped create an international network of armed militants devoted to the re-creation of an Islamic empire” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 53). Sightless since birth, the “Blind Sheikh,” as he came to be known, was a key inspirational figure on the front lines in Afghanistan, a roaming fundraiser for fundamentalist causes, and the cleric who had given holy sanction to the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Egyptian Islamic Group for the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981 (Bergen 70).

The Blind Sheikh had also been connected to Osama Bin Laden since the 1980s. Two of his sons were living in Afghanistan and working with bin Laden, helping him lay the foundations of an organization that would eventually spawn a network of global jihadists (Corbin 51). Miller, Stone, and Mitchell note that why Abdel Rahman, a “known terrorist and fugitive” was permitted to legally enter the United States “remains a mystery” (54). Even more puzzling is why the FBI failed to detain Abdel Rahman prior to the World Trade Center attack. In September 1992, just after Ajjaj and Yousef landed in the United States, the FBI launched a “formal investigation” of the Egyptian cleric in connection with the unsolved murder of Mustafa Shalabi, the imam Abdel Rahman had arrived in New York to replace (Corbin 51). Yet, “Rahman himself was never questioned; neither were his offices bugged or his phones tapped” (Corbin 51). The fact that Abdel Rahman was permitted to settle in the United States typifies the naiveté and inexperience of American authorities in dealing with Islamic terrorism in the early 1990s. In hindsight, security officials have realized the danger of approaching investigations from the perspective of building cases rather than preventing future attacks. It is only after September 11th that this lesson was finally absorbed. On March 16, 2005, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff spoke at Washington University, where he informed his audience that contrary to the pre-9/11 era, DHS manages risk in order to “prioritize” and “fashion a series of preventive and protective steps that increase security at multiple levels.” In 1993 however, security officials were hindered by a lack of communication between agencies possessing important information. As former FBI assistant director James Kallstrom remarked on the tenth anniversary of the 1993 bombing, “During that period of time, we built the Chinese wall between counterterrorism agents

and criminal agents higher and higher every year...We did less intelligence sharing, not more” (First Trade Center Attack). A critical missed opportunity allowed the “Bomb Project” to continue as planned.

Roughly four months after Abdel Rahman’s arrival in Brooklyn, Nosair and his associates became more serious about their terrorist ventures (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 41). Nosair began trailing Rabbi Meir Kahane, the leader of both the Jewish Defense League and the Kach party, a political faction banned in Israel for its extremist views (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 41). On November 5, 1990, El Sayyid Nosair and one of the members of his jihad team, Bilal Alkaisi, stood in the back of the ballroom of the Manhattan Marriot Hotel where Kahane had just delivered a speech to his supporters (US v. Rahman). While Alkaisi’s ‘cold feet’ compelled him to slip away to the men’s room, Nosair aimed his .357 Magnum at the rabbi and fired two shots that pierced Kahane’s neck and chest (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 39). Nosair screamed, “It’s Allah’s will” and bolted, shooting a man named Irving Franklin who tried to block his getaway. He then jumped into a taxi that he mistook for Mahmoud Abouhalima’s cab (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 39). As Nosair peeled away, Alkaisi slinked out of the Marriot and entered Nosair’s parked car (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 43). Behind the wheel was Mohammed Salameh (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 43).

Only several weeks of investigation revealed that at least three of the major players of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing were members of a militant cell linked by their extreme reading of the Qur’an and hate-charged anti-Western political attitudes. The men were driven by the fundamentalist doctrines of leading Sunni ideologues, whose discourses are treated in detail in the third chapter of this thesis. They had entered the United States inconspicuously, though none were adverse to the perpetration of lethal attacks against the country that offered them an escape from the oppressive regimes of their native countries. Nearly a decade before militant Islam would be openly recognized as a growing threat to Western democracies, the “Bomb Project” perpetrators offered security officials an introduction to the profiles and tactics that have come to characterize operatives of the al-Qaeda network. One CIA report from the early 1990s suggested that authorities were beginning to acknowledge the emergence of specific patterns:

Increasingly, Middle Eastern extremists, particularly Sunni fundamentalists, are working together to further the cause of radical Islam, most importantly the installation of Islamic theocracies in their home countries. The suspects tried and convicted in the World Trade Center bombing...were part of a loose grouping of politically committed Muslims living in the New York City area. They were followers of Egyptian Imam Sheikh Umar Abd al-Rahman and included non-Egyptians...The transnational character of these groups is also underscored by their ability to travel and operate in a variety of countries (Gunaratna 48).

Despite their connections to the man incarcerated for Kahane's assassination, individuals like Salameh and Abouhalima, remained off authorities' radar screens of potential threats. Life on American soil had allowed them to engage in terrorist training undetected and to refine their targets in order to inflict increasing amounts of damage and suffering. Also striking is that some of the 1993 bombers were intimately connected to other jihadists even before their affiliation with the al-Khifah center. Abouhalima had been exposed to radical Islam during his studies at Alexandria University and had become "increasingly active in Islamic politics, especially the outlawed Gamaa-i-Islamiya" since that time (Juergensmeyer 66). Parachini notes that "Ajaj was also suspected of having connections to terrorist factions of Hamas and al-Fatah" (4).

Had they not been not been convicted of a 240-year sentence, the World Trade Center bombers intended to execute other deadly plots which were already in planning stages (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 147). In a State Department report that refers to the 1993 bombing as an "international terrorist spectacular," the conspirators are said to have discussed other schemes involving the (perhaps simultaneous) bombing of the United Nations building, the Lincoln Tunnel, and the Holland Tunnel (Patterns of Global Terrorism). Miller, Stone, and Mitchell purport that the conspirators still entertained Yousef's idea of bombing twelve "Jewish locations" in the New York area (113). Their first undertaking directly following the World Trade Center bombing, however, would most likely have been of a different nature. The passports found on el-Gabrownny's person, in addition to a hand gun and stun guns retrieved from his apartment,

suggested that the “Bomb Project” perpetrators’ next move was to assist Nosair in a jail break (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 108).

Regrettably, the United States would lose many more of its citizens before men like Salameh and Abouhalima—displaced, radical, young Muslim immigrants with ties to fundamentalist institutions—would begin to sound alarm bells within the American intelligence community. As BBC journalist Jane Corbin notes, before security officials regarded the patterns illustrated by the 1993 World Trade Center bombers in earnest as a precedent for future attacks, “Political correctness, a lenient immigration policy, legal safeguards to protect the rights of citizens which built walls between the FBI and CIA...[became] a pattern...[that] would repeat itself over and over again, until reality dawned on September 11” (51).

“**Y**es, I am a terrorist and proud of it,” claimed the cell leader of the 1993 World Trade Center attacks (P. Williams 144). Unlike Salameh, Abouhalima, and Ayyad, who had forged an operational relationship through affiliation with the al-Khifah Center, the mastermind of the “Bomb Project,” Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, was an imported chemicals expert (P. Williams 144). The man with large, dark eyes, sinister-looking arched eyebrows, tight lips and a long, thin neck was considered a “riddle wrapped in a mystery” and an “evil genius” by investigators before he was incarcerated in Colorado’s Supermax prison for a 240-year sentence (Corbin 46). On February 26, 1993, Yousef watched the explosion of the Twin Towers from the Jersey shore before fleeing to Pakistan and then to the Philippines on orders by Osama bin Laden (Corbin 47).

Born Abdul Basit Karim on April 27, 1968, Yousef was raised in Kuwait, though his mother’s origin was Palestinian and his father, an engineer working for the Kuwait airlines, was a native of the untamed Baluchistan province of Pakistan (Miller 78). During his adolescence, his father became captivated by fundamentalist Islamic discourses and decided to move the family to the village of Turbat in Baluchistan, where “local tribesmen roamed unhindered, smuggling drugs and weapons.” (Gunaratna 236). Shortly after in 1987, Yousef traveled to the United Kingdom to study English at Oxford and electrical engineering at the West Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education in Wales (Gunaratna 236). There, the “science-mad” Yousef received a Higher

National Diploma in computer-aided electrical engineering (Corbin 46). Miller, Stone, and Mitchell, however, charge that Yousef obtained his more important “advanced degree” in “bin Laden’s terrorist training camps, where he spent several months in 1988 honing his bomb making skills” (78). His expertise in mixing lethal chemicals certainly aided Yousef in launching a “terrorism career” on an international scale that set him trotting to such locations as “Afghanistan, New York, Thailand, the Philippines, and Pakistan” (Bergen 36). By Peter Bergen’s estimation, Yousef, “the prototype of the technically savvy, worldly men” who are leaders of al-Qaeda’s operational cells, was “truly, a one-man global jihad” (36).

Though several sources confirm that Yousef was not an intensely religious Muslim, his devotion to “holy war” seemed to be inspired by his father’s puritanical beliefs and his desire to wage jihad on behalf of Palestinians (Corbin 46). In a 1995 interview with Egyptian newspaper *al-Hayat* (Life), Yousef asserted that his terrorist activities were a form of retaliation against the suffering of Arab people at the hands of Israelis and Americans (Corbin 48). Yousef justified his attacks on American civilians through a chain of twisted reasoning: “America finances these crimes and these funds are taken from the taxes which Americans pay...[Americans are therefore] logically and legally...responsible for all the killing crimes and the settlements and the torture which the Palestinian people are exposed to” (Corbin 48).

FBI Agent Chuck Stern remembers that when Yousef arrived with Ahmed Ajaj at JFK International on September 1, 1992, he was “dressed in these Ali Baba-type pants and a shirt with balloon sleeves” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 77). Yousef entered the United States effortlessly with an Iraqi passport and a fabricated claim that he was escaping persecution under Saddam Hussein (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 77). From the airport, he met Abouhalima at a Manhattan mosque (investigators speculate that Yousef already knew Abouhalima from a bin Laden training camp), who in turn introduced Yousef to the other World Trade Center plotters and their spiritual mentor, Sheikh Abdel Rahman (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 77). Yousef then remained in the United States only long enough to concoct one of his nitroglycerine specialties (Corbin 47). He would quickly flee once he witnessed that his mixture, though lethal, had failed to bring down the Twin Towers (Corbin 47).

In the aftermath of the World Trade Center bombing, Yousef hopped from Islamabad to Bangkok while the FBI slowly connected scarce evidence on the man they only knew as “Rashid” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 119). Although Yousef had not been successful in his goal to destroy the World Trade Center, his career as a terrorist was active and his reputation flourishing among like-minded radicals. Not long after his return to Pakistan, Yousef and neighborhood friend Abdul Hakim Murad, then a commercial pilot, were twice enlisted to assassinate Pakistan’s female prime minister, Benazir Bhutto (P. Williams 145). Yousef’s face was badly injured in one of the attempts on Bhutto’s life but he showed no sign of discouragement toward his malevolent ambitions (P. Williams 145). His subsequent venture was an effort to bomb the Israeli embassy in Bangkok, although the bomb never made it to the embassy as one Yousef’s associates reneged his responsibilities in the plot (Williams 145). Yousef was, however, able to further season his reputation as a professional terrorist in launching a successful attack against Iran’s holiest Shiite site (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 120). On June 20, 1994, Yousef detonated a bomb in the women’s section of the Imam Reza Shrine, killing 26 and injuring numerous others (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 120).

Yousef and Murad’s terror campaign would soon relocate to the Philippines as part of a larger effort to develop an al-Qaeda base in Southeast Asia, which remains, according to terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna, “long-standing, well-entrenched and extensive” (Gunaratna 233). Upon their arrival, the two conducted terrorist training courses for members of the fanatic Abu Sayyaf group in Basilan (Corbin 47). Their instruction offered lessons in the art of bombs, including mixing, handling and detonating explosive substances (Corbin 47). When the terrorist duo later moved their base of operations to Manila, they were joined by Yousef’s Kuwaiti uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, a man who would later become instrumental in the al-Qaeda leadership ring and the formation of the 9/11 attacks (P. Williams 145). Investigators suspect that Mohammad, often identified by the initials KLM, had aided Yousef in his preparations for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and would continue “nurturing his [Yousef’s] ambition for many years with disastrous consequences” (Corbin 48).

The trio's activities in the Philippines were varied: they planted bombs in a shopping center in Cebu City, exploded the Greenbelt Theater, and were speculated to have conducted meetings with Terry L. Nichols, the man charged with Timothy McVeigh of bombing the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995 (P. Williams 145). Though evidence remains ambiguous, some, including Paul L. Williams, author of *Al-Qaeda: Brotherhood of Terror*, have argued that Nichols was connected with Ramzi Yousef through "Muslim students at Southwest College in Weatherford, Oklahoma" and that Yousef's instruction was essential to the construction of a "5,600 pound bomb made of ammonium nitrate and nitromethane" (146). Murad has claimed, both verbally and in writing, that the "Liberation Army," an al-Qaeda offshoot under Yousef's direction, was responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing (P. Williams 146).

Still, the main focus for Yousef, Murad and Mohammad while based in the Philippines was the development of *Oplan Bojinka*, (also referred to as the *Bojinka Plot*), Serbo-Croatian for "big explosion" (Gunaratna 236). Launched in 1994, *Oplan Bojinka* was an al-Qaeda mission that designated Ramzi Yousef, a man Osama bin Laden "praised publicly...[as] al-Qaeda's most celebrated deep undercover operative," as the operational leader of the organization's most ambitious plot to date (Gunaratna 236). In a study of Yousef's US trial, Rohan Gunaratna determined the key objectives of *Oplan Bojinka*:

Its principal elements were to assassinate Pope John Paul II and President Clinton during their visits to Manila; to assassinate President Fidel V. Ramos, two senior government officials, several foreign ambassadors to the Philippines, and other diplomats, military and police officials and private individuals and private individuals; to bomb commercial centers, department stores, the US embassy, an international school, Catholic churches and vital government installations; to kidnap prominent personalities for ransom, hold up banks and financial institutions and rob commercial establishments such as SM department stores; to assassinate miscellaneous US and Israeli nationals; to bomb eleven US passenger aircraft flying over the Asia-Pacific region (233).

A strategic aspect of the operation to bomb eleven airliners involved a task that would take full advantage of Ramzi Yousef's skill set. In order for this spectacular aspect of *Oplan Bojinka* to be

successful, it was necessary for Yousef, nicknamed “the Chemist,” to develop a bomb that would be very small and virtually undetectable by airport security (P. Williams 145). Yousef jumped this hurdle by creating a bomb that “consisted of small amounts of stable liquid nitroglycerine in contact lens cases...designed to be detonated by Casio digital watches that Yousef had rigged as timing devices” (P. Williams 145). FBI investigators believe that knowledge Yousef had gleaned from a course on microelectronics at the West Glamorgan Institute played a central role in his ability to manufacture the miniature bomb (Gunaratna 236). On December 11, 1994, Yousef conducted a test of the explosive by placing it underneath a seat on a flight from Manila to Cebu (Gunaratna 233). When the airplane continued to Tokyo, the bomb blasted, killing twenty-four year old engineer Haruki Ikegami and injuring eleven others (Gunaratna 233). While the explosion left a cavity in the plane’s fuselage, the skillful pilot made an emergency landing in Okinawa, thereby preventing further casualties that day (Gunaratna 233).

It was only by chance that *Oplan Bojinka* was foiled and Ramzi Yousef arrested before his latest schemes proved deadly. On January 7, 1995, Yousef accidentally set his Manila apartment on fire while mixing some chemicals for a bomb (Corbin 52). Though he managed to escape before the arrival of authorities, he sent Murad back to the scene to retrieve his laptop, for fear police would obtain its files concerning the specifics of *Oplan Bojinka* (Corbin 52). Unfortunately for Yousef, both Murad and the precious laptop were intercepted at the scene (Corbin 52). Yousef was indeed correct—the details contained in the laptop’s files and Murad’s interrogation provided Filipino investigators with a chilling and detailed glimpse of his ruthless intentions. The targeted planes, aircraft from United Airlines and Northwest mentioned specifically in Yousef’s notes, were each destined to explode in-flight (Gunaratna 234). As for the assassination of Pope John Paul II, Yousef had obtained priests’ habits that were intended to allow the appointed assassins to gain greater access to the Pope through disguise (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 124). Murad, proud to show off the depth of his terrorist training, explained to investigators, “I know how...how to kill people. You can kill them by gas. You can kill them by gun, by knife. You can kill them by explosion” (P. Williams 148). He added that his contribution to *Oplan Bojinka* was to be a martyrdom mission in which he would crash a plane into CIA

headquarters at Langley, Virginia (Bergen 141). “I have a lot of plans in the United States,” Murad revealed. “I’m planning to explode this airplane, killing Americans. That is my, the best thing. I enjoy it” (P. Williams 148).

Upon Murad’s arrest, Yousef fled to Pakistan while hatching a scheme to kidnap the Filipino ambassador and demand Murad’s release (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 135). Istiaque Parker, though enlisted to aid Yousef in this mission, instead hesitated and contacted the U.S. Embassy with information on his accomplice’s whereabouts (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 135). Yousef was at last arrested on February 7, 1995 by a team of Americans and Pakistanis at the Su Casa Guest House outside Islamabad (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 135).

As if a specialist lecturing on previous accomplishments, Yousef excitedly described his original intentions for the World Trade Center bombing to his captors. Essentially, the South Tower was to “topple ‘like a tree’ into its twin” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 135). Yousef also revealed that he had intended to “[incorporate] a cylinder of sodium cyanide in the truck bomb...in the hope that it would be sucked into ventilation shafts, elevator shafts, and stairwells” (Corbin 52). Fortunately, financial constraints prevented Yousef from fulfilling this ambition (Corbin 52). On his flight back to the United States, FBI agent Louis Schaliro removed the blindfold from Yousef’s eyes when the plane reached Manhattan (Corbin 53). Shilaro remembers, “It was just as the chopper flew in front of the World Trade Center” (Corbin 53). When an agent shouted, “You see, it’s still standing,” Yousef responded with his unnerving logic, “It wouldn’t be, if I had had more money” (Corbin 53).

Though Yousef’s career in terror unraveled to an ignominious end, his uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, managed to escape police and eventually join Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan (Corbin 53). Determined to execute at least one element of *Oplan Bojinka*, Mohammad refined the plan so that it could fulfill both Yousef and Murad’s ambitions in one spectacular operation: the crash of multiple airliners to bring the World Trade Center to the ground. But as of 1995, the FBI congratulated itself on its capture of “the world’s most wanted terrorist” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 135).

II. OSAMA MUHAMMAD AL-WAHAD BIN LADEN: PROFILE OF A TERRORIST LEADER

“We are sure of our victory. Our battle with the Americans is larger than our battle with the Russians. We predict a black day for America and the end of the United States.”
-Osama bin Laden, in a 1998 interview (“American Soldiers are Paper Tigers)

The “Gucci terrorist” was the American intelligence community’s epithet for Osama bin Laden around the time of the World Trade Center bombing (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 137). While investigators had a hazy picture of the Saudi millionaire’s role as a patron of the Afghan war, he was discussed, if at all, as “soft” and “scholarly,” someone who seemed “more of a tycoon and a lecturer than a hardened terrorist tactician (Coll 268). The CIA certainly did not consider bin Laden a fundamentalist leader or a Yousef-style terrorist. For the next three years, the US State Department would stress bin Laden’s fiscal contribution to jihad, citing him as “one of the most significant financial sponsors of Islamic activities in the world” (Shahar). Investigators were aware that Ramzi Yousef maintained important connections in Pakistan and that his multiple visits to Afghanistan following the 1993 attack indicated the existence of “some sort of organizational infrastructure there” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 138). Yet, at a time when bin Laden was acknowledged only for his financial exploits and when connections among participants of the Afghan jihad were murky at best, the thought of “bin Laden running Yousef would have been the tail wagging the dog” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 139).

Only two years later did the evidence connecting bin Laden and Yousef begin to take shape. Gil Childers, the lead prosecutor in the Yousef case, remarked, “By late spring 1995, bin Laden was definitely on our charts...he wasn’t the godfather yet, more like a *capo regime*. But he was someone we felt needed to be looked at” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 146). Over the course of the Yousef investigation, bin Laden appeared increasingly connected to other key figures already on intelligence radar screens. Bin Laden made significant financial contributions to the defense efforts of El-Sayyid Nosair and was associated with the Blind Sheikh (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 138). Investigators also learned that bin Laden had poured finances into militant Egyptian groups for “printing presses and weapons” and aided some 480 radicals in gathering at his base in Khartoum, Sudan (Coll 268). While the threat coming from bin Laden himself was

consistently underestimated, the CIA's branch in Khartoum was well-aware, within two years of the World Trade Center bombing, that "bin Laden's own aides included some hardcore, well-trained killers" (Coll 272).

As a response to mounting evidence against Osama bin Laden, the FBI officially opened a case on him in October 1995 and began to sort additional information on his activities contained in some 40 files at the CIA Counter-Terrorism Center (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 148). Still, Steve Coll notes that when President Clinton issued Executive Order 12947 on January 23, 1995 to limit the financial capabilities of twelve terrorist groups considered a threat to Middle East peace, "neither al-Qaeda nor bin Laden made the list" (277). Despite the foggy connections to bin Laden and other prominent jihadists, the CIA was not in a position to focus closely on bin Laden or to analyze the implications of his shady activities. Still immersed in a Cold War mindset, the CIA did not thoroughly assess the threat of an emerging multinational Islamic terrorist enterprise.

The CIA's files on bin Laden, a crude collection of "itineraries, phone records, associates lists, investment holdings...[and] bank transfers" presented but a scratch on the surface of bin Laden's commitment to holy war (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 148). In fact, bin Laden's ascent to global terrorist leadership had begun long before the first attack on New York's World Trade Center.

Al-Rubat Ba'eshn, nestled in the desert valleys of the Hadramawt region of central Yemen, is a dusty village that appears untouched by the advances of the last several centuries (Corbin 3). A stony donkey path is the only road that leads to the tribal area, where houses are made of mud and villagers are distinguished by their conservative lifestyle (Bergen 44). Named for a Sufi saint who is buried in the surrounding hills, this ancestral home of the bin Laden family is isolated from the modern world, sustaining itself on meager agriculture and a strict observance of Islam (Bergen 46). Covered from head to toe in black *abayas*, the women of al-Rubat "flit like wraiths down the alleys" and harvest crops under a merciless sun (Bergen 47). In this region of poverty and piety, women are kept so painstakingly separate from men that they have developed their own dialect of Yemeni Arabic (Bergen 47).

The Hadrami males are traditionally merchants and builders who pride themselves on being “frugal and scrupulously honest” (Bergen 45). It is not uncommon for men to escape al-Rubat’s stark economy by seeking trade opportunities and building projects in surrounding Arab countries, some traveling as far as Malaysia and remaining in their host countries for decades at a time (Corbin 4). Of many Hadramis that migrated north in search of employment during the early twentieth century was an illiterate, one-eyed bricklayer named Muhammad Awad bin Laden (Corbin 4). He is said by his children to have “walked a thousand miles” in 1925 to reach his destination in the Hejaz province of Saudi Arabia (Corbin 4).

A six-foot tall man with a strong build, bin Laden began work as a porter in Jeddah, an important Red Sea harbor at times bustling with Muslim pilgrims making their Hajj to Mecca (Burke;” Bergen 46). He also labored as a bricklayer for Aramco, the Arabian-American oil company, earning, according to a 2001 article in *The Observer*, no more than “one riyal, about 10p, a day,” a wage demanding that he “lived frugally” and “saved hard” (Burke). A French engineer who later worked with bin Laden commented that the Hadrami “couldn’t read or write and signed his name with a cross all his life, but he had an extraordinary intelligence” (Burke). It is this uncommon wit that aided him in establishing his own contracting service in 1931, the beginning of his rags-to-riches ascent to become the Kingdom’s most important construction magnate (Bergen 46). The business venture, which offered employment to many Hadramis seeking a fortune in Saudi Arabia, enjoyed a well-documented success over the subsequent two decades (Bergen 47).

It was during the 1950s, however, when the modest construction firm evolved into the multi-million dollar Saudi bin Laden Group (Corbin 7). Winning bids to work on King Saud’s palaces in Riyadh, Muhammad bin Laden expanded his business with prestigious projects and developed an influential rapport with the monarch, his brother Faisal, and other members of the royal family (Bergen 47). At this time, bin Laden’s firm took on the improvement of Saudi Arabia’s infrastructure as its principal mission, with one of its most important projects the construction of the Medina-Jeddah highway (Jacquard 11). The firm’s ambitions allowed for the accumulation of great wealth; by the 1960s, the Bin Laden Group ranked as a \$5 billion enterprise

(Gunaratna 22). At times, bin Laden's profits even exceeded the financial holdings of the royal family, as when the ruling clan was hit hard by falling oil prices in the late 1950's (Corbin 7). On one occasion, bin Laden provided financial assistance to a floundering Saudi Treasury, as he "came up with the funds to guarantee payment of the salaries of government employees" (Jacquard 11).

The royal family displayed their appreciation by awarding bin Laden's corporation coveted contracts for the renovation of Islam's most revered houses of worship, including al-Masjid al-Haram of Mecca, Masjid al-Nabawi of Medina, and al-Aqsa mosque of Jerusalem (Gunaratna 22). These projects earned bin Laden an esteemed reputation across the Arabian Peninsula (Coll 84). As Prince Turki claimed, bin Laden was considered "a worthy man...truly a genuine hero in the eyes of many Saudis, including the royal family, because of what he did for the kingdom" (Coll 84). Bin Laden's son Osama would highly praise his father's contributions to the Islamic world. "It is no secret that my father was responsible for the infrastructure of Saudi Arabia...God blessed him and bestowed on him an honor that no other contractor has known. He built the Holy Mecca Mosque where the Holy Kaba'ah is located and...he built the Holy Mosque in Medina for our Prophet," he later remarked (Corbin 4). Muhammad bin Laden, himself a devout worshipper, also prided himself on these accomplishments, sometimes using his private helicopter to pray in each of Islam's holiest cities in a single day (Burke).

Perhaps in contrast with his material successes, bin Laden is strongly remembered for his humility and religious devotion. As a native of the conservative Hadramawt, Muhammad bin Laden's practice of Islam offered no exception to the Saudi Arabian commitment to the purist Sunni Islamic movement known as Wahhabism (Bergen 47). Wahhabism first took hold of the Arabian peninsula around the time of the American Revolution, when Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, a wealthy, educated Arab, began a veritable "spiritual revolution" based on a fundamentalist interpretation of the Qur'an (P. Williams 74). The movement gained momentum with the conversion of powerful Bedouin leader ibn Saud, whose followers spread Wahhab's ideology by sword and by firearm (P. Williams 74). Centuries later, ibn Saud's descendent Abdul-Aziz gained control of the Arabian Peninsula, reviving both his family's power legacy and

Wahhabi religious ideals around the time that Muhammad bin Laden began his grueling trek north to Saudi Arabia from the valleys of Yemen (P. Williams 74; Corbin 4). Bin Laden was, in particular, a firm believer in the coming of the *Hazrat Mahdi*, an Islamic messiah figure whose name translates roughly as “guided-one” (Jacquard 12). Jacquard writes that bin Laden “had even established a charitable fund of about \$12 million to assist the *Mahdi*, were he to appear during bin Laden’s lifetime, in restoring the grandeur and glory of Islam throughout the world” (12). Some sources indicate that bin Laden firmly counseled his children not to take part in religious disputes (Gunaratna 23). If true, it is ironic that his son Osama has achieved notoriety for his violent fusion of religious and political discourses.

As permitted in Islam, Muhammad bin Laden was a man of four wives, although the women who occupied the designation as the fourth and most recent wife were regularly divorced and replaced (Burke). Corbin writes that this woman was a “movable fixture, frequently finding herself divorced to make way for a new favorite” (5). According to a French engineer who had worked closely with bin Laden, his colleague “changed wives like you or I change cars” (Burke). The engineer’s remark may not be terribly exaggerated: over his lifetime, bin Laden accumulated a total of twenty-one spouses and even more concubines (Corbin 5; Corbin 47). Bin Laden’s three more or less permanent wives were Saudi Wahhabs like himself, one an alleged descendent of the Prophet Muhammad himself (Corbin 4). However, Bin Laden’s continual search for a new fourth wife took the form of an international scavenger hunt, as “the magnate would send his private pilot all over the Middle East to pick up yet another bride” (Burke). The widow of this pilot told journalists that some of these women “were as young as 15 and were completely covered from head to toe.” Yet, she added that they all shared a common feature—“they were all exceptionally beautiful” (Burke).

During a trip to Jordan, where he settled his contract for the renovation of the al-Aqsa mosque of Jerusalem, Muhammad bin Laden met a young woman from Damascus named Hamida, destined to become the tenth wife of the billionaire (Corbin 5). Unlike bin Laden’s other spouses, Hamida was not a Wahhabi, rather a “stunningly beautiful, cosmopolitan, educated 22-year-old daughter of a Syrian trader” (Burke). Her fashionable attire and overseas travel experience

testified to her progressive, even Westernized, attitudes (Burke). Refusing to don a burka even while traveling, Hamida regularly “shunned the traditional Saudi veil in favor of Chanel trouser suits” (Burke). Her stylish appearance and foreign origins quickly fueled tensions between Hamida and bin Laden’s more devout Muslim wives (Burke). As such, they regularly labeled her the “slave wife” (Corbin 5).

In 1957, Hamida gave birth to Muhammad’s seventeenth son, whose name “Osama” translates roughly from Arabic as “young lion” (Coll 84). An adult Osama would offer a nostalgic glimpse of his birth, remarking, “God Almighty was gracious enough for me to be born to Muslim parents in the Arabian peninsula in al-Malazz neighborhood, in al-Riyadh, in 1377 hijra” (Corbin 3). Information on Osama’s upbringing is often complex and varied. Osama’s early life seems to have unraveled “amid a huge family and the solid gold statues, the ancient tapestries and the Venetian chandeliers” of his father’s palace (Burke). At the same time, his childhood is usually depicted as one of disaffection and detachment. Like his mother, Osama was alienated in the context of the bin Laden household (Jacquard 14). “Osama is said not have been one of the favorite sons of the patriarch,” Jacquard claims in his work, *In the Name of Osama bin Laden* (14). One member of the bin Laden family assumed that Osama’s situation “must have been very difficult for him” (Weaver). He continued, “In a country that is obsessed with parentage, with who your great-grandfather was, Osama was almost a double outsider. His paternal roots are in Yemen, and within the family, his mother was a double outsider as well—she was neither Saudi nor Yemeni but Syrian” (Weaver). The reality that Osama was the seventeenth son of a less favored wife meant that from birth, he was relegated to play a relatively unimportant role on the periphery of the bin Laden clan (Corbin 5).

Muhammad bin Laden’s commitment to hard work played a significant role in his children’s upbringing, and as a boy, Osama labored on some of the Bin Laden Group’s construction sites (Coll 85). Though he may have received less attention from his father than some of his older brothers in the family setting, Osama’s early work experiences provided him with an important glimpse of his father’s managerial skills (Coll 85). Muhammad’s influence on his sons also appeared in the form of religious guidance, as he would regularly invite Muslim

clerics and other Mecca-bound pilgrims to his palace to expose his children to Islamic teachings (Bergen 48). It is questionable whether radical Islamist ideology was an element of Osama's education since his early days. In a 1998 interview with Syrian reporters, for instance, Osama reflected, "Every grown-up Muslim hates Americans, Christians and Jews. It is part of our belief and our religion. Ever since I was a boy I have been harboring feelings of hatred towards America" (Corbin 7). While it is clear that Osama's father emphasized an austere practice of Islam, it is unknown whether extremist ideals stirred the bin Laden household. Until further evidence can corroborate Osama's claim, Jane Corbin warns of the danger of accepting it on face value. She recognizes that "Osama bin Laden has never been averse to subtly rewriting his own history or, less subtly rewriting religious texts, for the benefit of his Muslim audience" (Corbin 7).

At the time of his father's death in 1972, Osama was immersed in his studies, proving himself "intense and diligent at school" (Corbin 6). Brian Fyfield-Shayler, a British instructor, taught English to Osama and other sons of prominent Saudi families in the al-Thagh school of Jeddah between 1968 and 1969 (Burke). Fyfield-Shayler's comments about bin Laden during this period offer some insight on Osama's adolescent years. He claims that bin Laden's physical stature was remarkable because he was "taller, more handsome and fairer than most of the other boys" (Burke). Both his precision in his work and his manners were noteworthy according to Fyfield-Shayler (Burke). He recalls that Osama, who sometimes called himself "Sammy," "stood out as he was singularly gracious and polite" (Burke). Though he "had a great deal of inner confidence, he was wasn't pushy at all. Many students wanted to show you how clever they were. But if he knew the answer to something he wouldn't parade the fact. He would only reveal it if you asked him" (Burke).

After finishing his secondary education in Jeddah at about fifteen years of age, Osama, "like many well-off young Arabs," Jacquard notes, "had the opportunity to travel" (14). It is during this period that debate arises concerning "Osama's character and behavior" (Jacquard 14). Some relatives of bin Laden, including his brother Bakri, argue that the adolescent Osama "gave no evidence of exemplary piety" (Jacquard 14). Yet, other brothers have argued quite the contrary, citing that Osama preferred to remain "ensconced in Saudi Arabia" and usually limited

his travels to other Arab countries (Jacquard 14). In a July 3, 2005 interview with al-Arabiyya TV, Osama's brother Yaslam bin Laden claimed, "From a young age, many of us were sent overseas to study. Some went to Lebanon, some to Syria, some to Egypt and some remained in Saudi Arabia. Some of my brothers and I studied in Lebanon...Osama was one of those who did not leave Saudi Arabia [for his studies]" (Osama bin Laden's Brother Interviewed). According to Yaslam, it was evident early on that "Osama was more religious than the rest of us. Those of us who went to Lebanon had other things on our mind" (Osama bin Laden's Brother Interviewed). He went as far as to suggest that had Osama spent significant time in Beirut, then a Paris of the Middle East celebrated for its buzzing nightlife, "he might have turned out a little different" (Osama bin Laden's Brother Interviewed). Relatives who support Yaslam's remarks also point out that Osama was neither well versed in the French language, nor particularly skilled in English during these years (Jacquard 14). Since French and English would have been "indispensable in Beirut at the time for anyone wanting to live a life of pleasure," Osama's deficiency in these languages provides some evidence that, even at an early age, he may have been more concerned with piety than partying (Jacquard 14). Still, some early photos present a more carefree, if not less devout Osama, which contrast his sinister, disapproving gaze in more recent media coverage (Corbin 5). Photos from a family vacation in the Swedish copper mining town of Falun in 1971 show Osama smiling as he leans against a Cadillac in a bright green chemise and blue bell bottoms (Corbin 5).

By the time he reached the age of seventeen, Osama took his first wife, Najwa Ghanem (No Man's an Island). This Syrian first-cousin of Osama would bear eleven children, including a son Sa'ad who is currently suspected of being a highly ranked member of the al-Qaeda leadership (Loeb and Pincus). When Osama arrived in Latakia, Syria, a place where "women did not wear veils and were free to live secular lives," to "collect" the fourteen year old Najwa, her relatives were afforded the opportunity to observe the mannerisms of the soon to become holy warrior (No Man's an Island). While her immediate family insisted that Osama was "smart" and "modest," an al-Ahram Najwa's cousins recalled some other impressions of Osama (No Man's an Island). They described him as a solitary figure with aspirations of power and grandeur (No Man's an Island).

He was “very, very quiet...a loner who stayed to himself and had trouble relating to other people. And he often spoke of his desire to grow up so he could take control of his father’s business empire,” they told reporters (No Man’s an Island). Though her relatives recently publicized their anxiety for Najwa while she was living with Osama in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, they also presumed that she had confidence in his cause (No Man’s an Island). Her older sister Laila Ghanem claimed, “Everything that her husband is convinced of, she is convinced of. They share a conviction in a certain lifestyle, and she is convinced of this” (No Man’s an Island).

Roughly two years after this marriage, Osama enrolled in Jeddah’s Abdul Aziz University to study economics and management with the intention of taking part in the family business (Bergen 50). The 1970s, however, proved a turbulent decade in Middle East history and an equally important crossroads in Osama’s development from an alienated son to an Islamic fanatic. Learning both the management skills and the ideologies indispensable to his later terrorist enterprise, his college years immersed Osama in a wave of Islamic radicalism then drenching the Middle East (Bergen 50). Saudi dissident Dr. Sa’ad al-Fagih, who studied medicine in Riyadh at the same time Osama was being educated in Jeddah, explained, “There was an atmosphere of increasing openness, but at the same time a resurgence of Muslim thinking, inspired by people from countries like Egypt and Syria as well as in Saudi” (Corbin 8). Steve Coll notes that some of the professors of Abdul Aziz University during this decade were agents of the Muslim Brotherhood, affiliated with the organization’s “underground proselytizing networks” (85).

As Saudi Arabia’s King Khaled allowed liberal forces to sweep the country and Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser preached a secular Arab nationalism, Osama took an increasing interest in Islamic studies (Corbin 9). In order to absorb the ideas of the decade’s leading radicals, Osama officially joined the Muslim Brotherhood (Bergen 50). Though reports suggest that he was only an average student at Abdel Aziz University, Osama was a committed participant in the religious activities stirring his campus (Gunaratna 22). He attended lectures with “dissidents from all over the Muslim world,” who argued in favor of “an absolute return to the values of conservative Islam” (Burke). He also listened to radicals proclaim the need to “protect the Muslim world from the dangers and decadence of the West” (Burke). Cultivating a particularly close relationship with

al-Khifah Center founder Abdullah Azzam, Osama was mesmerized by the ideologue's intoxicating audiotape sermons (Burke). Osama was also heavily influenced by his studies under the Egyptian Muhammad Qutb, the brother of the author Sayid Qutb whose text *Signposts on the Path* serves as key text for global jihadists today and resulted in his execution by Egyptian authorities in 1966 (Coll 85). Finally Osama's brother Abdelaziz recalls that his Osama was "reading and praying all the time" during his college years, apparently hypnotized by the ideas brewed in the radical hotbed that was King Abdul Aziz University (Burke).

Though Osama would abandon his formal studies during his third year, never to finish his degree, his university experience was integral in allowing him to determine his future choice of vocation (Gunaratna 22). The impact of Osama's associations with Azzam and Qutb were augmented by the momentous transitions that shook the Middle East at the start of the new Islamic century in 1979 (Bergen 51). A revolution that toppled the Shah of Iran and a peace agreement between rivals Egypt and Israel roused bin Laden's Islamic sensibilities (Burke). Osama's radical vein was also inflamed when Islamists had taken brief control of Mecca's grand mosque but were defeated by Saudi authorities in a bloodbath (Burke). Bergen argues that the start of the Soviet-Afghan War was "the most earthshaking news of all," as "the godless communists had taken a sovereign Muslim nation by force" (51). Bin Laden himself told a reporter from *al-Quds al-Arabi* (Arab Jerusalem) that upon hearing the news of the Soviet invasion, "I was enraged, and went there at once" (Corbin 13). On December 26, 1979, Osama did indeed travel to Pakistan to participate in the Afghan jihad (Weaver). Raising money from mosques, Saudi rulers and businessmen, as well as other elites spanning the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf, bin Laden embarked on a mission that developed into a global extremist movement (Weaver). A new chapter in the life of Osama bin Laden was about to begin.

"One day in Afghanistan counted for more than a thousand days praying in a mosque" was only one of Osama bin Laden's estimations of the significance of the Afghan jihad (Jacquard 11). Osama arrived in Peshawar only a month after the Soviet invasion, along with scores of other Arabs en route to fight a holy war (Gunaratna 24). The young Arabs who congregated in

Peshawar were a mixed bunch, varying in their knowledge of Islam, battle skills, and personal objectives (Corbin 16). Sources note that each contributed to the jihad as much as their circumstances would allow. “Some volunteers stayed for years, some professionals for a few weeks at a time, to lend their expertise as engineers and doctors. Some even went for their holidays, just to say they had been there,” Jane Corbin explains (16). Upon arriving, Osama realized “at once that the Afghans were lacking both infrastructure and manpower to fight a protracted conflict” (Shahar). In time, he became an integral figure in financing and organizing these *mujahideen* fighters known as “Afghan Arabs” (Shahar).

In early 1980 Peshawar, the Pakistani city located just 20 miles from the Afghan border, was “seething with soldiers, spies, gun-runners, drug dealers, Afghan refugees, exiles, journalists and, of course, the thousands of sympathizers who had flocked from all over the Muslim world to fight the Soviet forces” (Burke). Milt Beardon, then CIA station chief in Peshawar, observed the diverse group of young men who had arrived to participate in the jihad, commenting, “Some were genuine, on missions of humanitarian value, while others were adventure-seekers looking for paths to glory, and still others were psychopaths” (Corbin 16). Bin Laden’s presence among them was a conspicuous one. In contrast to many of the slapdash soldiers, Osama was “lean and elegant, and dressed in the traditional shalwar kameez of the afghan tribes—a blousy knee-length tunic top—over tailored trousers of fine English cloth, and he always wore English custom-made Beal Brothers boots” (Weaver). Certainly, Osama was just as much caught up in the “excitement” as the other inexperienced *mujahideen*. Perhaps Moroccan fighter L’Houssaine Kerchtou’s comment in a US court best described the scene of fighters preparing their weapons and setting up camp in the horizon of the Hindu Kush. He explained that the group of jihadists seemed to say, “We are young, we don’t know anything; let’s go, it’s an adventure!” (Corbin 17).

Bin Laden’s initial visit in Peshawar was a short one; roughly one month following his arrival, he returned to the heart of the Arab world to conduct an international lobbying and fundraising mission on behalf of the *mujahideen* (Weaver). Bin Laden’s fundraising contributed some millions of dollars to the Afghan effort, with backing coming from Saudi government, mosques, and corporations—the Bin Laden Group included (Burke). He also petitioned “his

brothers, relatives and old school friends to support the fight against the Soviet Union” (Weaver). According to the *9/11 Commission Report*, bin Laden collected financial contributions from charities and nongovernmental organizations (55). His “financial support network” became so widespread across the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf states that it has since been identified as the “Golden Chain,” a system that included agents who “roamed world markets to buy arms and supplies for the *mujahideen*” (9/11 Commission 55).

When bin Laden returned to the combat zone in 1984, he brought not only colossal amounts of funds but also his expertise in the building business (Corbin 17). His relocation to the base camps marked the beginning of an infrastructure transformation of the “ungovernable tribal areas on the Pakistani-Afghan frontier” (Weaver). His equipment included “hundreds of tons of construction machinery, bulldozers, loaders, dump trucks and equipment for building trenches,” allowing the *mujahideen* to construct crude roads, tunnels, storage areas and medical depots (Bergen 54). The equipment provided by bin Laden also allowed for minesweeping missions along the Khyber Pass (Bergen 52).

Before long, an oral lore surrounded bin Laden’s contribution to the jihad, a blurring of fact and fiction that has amplified his role on the international stage during the last decade. Current al-Qaeda supporters like to describe him as a man who “often drove one of the bulldozers himself across the precipitous mountain peaks, exposing himself to strafing from Soviet helicopter gunships” (Weaver). Bin Laden was lauded as a generous, selfless man, his appeal emanating from his reputation as the Sheikh who had abandoned his palaces in order to join the struggle of the common Muslim (Burke). From the time of his second arrival in Peshawar, narratives circulated about the Osama who “would visit wounded fighters in the university town’s clinics, dispensing cashew nuts and chocolates” (Burke). It is alleged that he would note their names and addresses and soon a generous cheque would arrive at their family home” (Burke). The mythical descriptions of his activities in Afghanistan make it all the more difficult to determine the extent of his participation in actual battles. Some former *mujahideen* claim that between the years of 1986 and 1987, bin Laden “engaged in bloody hand-to-hand combat against soldiers of the Red Army,” particularly at the fierce battle of Jaji (Corbin 19). Yet, many Western journalists wrote of

an Osama who “conducted himself like a ridiculous madman” in the field, sometimes requiring other *mujahideen* to shoot his men “because of their incompetence in battle” (Jacquard 23). CIA chief officer Bearden was also able to provide some insight on bin Laden’s activities in Pakistan (Burke). When asked if he was aware of Osama, Bearden recalled that Osama was not an extremely influential figure in the Afghan Arab effort. “Did I know he was out there? Yes, I did, but did I say that this tall, slim, ascetic Saudi was instrumental? No, I did not” (Burke). Bearden added, “There were a lot of bin Ladens who came to do jihad...He spent most of the war as a fundraiser, in Peshawar. He was not a valiant warrior on the battlefield” (Burke). In contrast with bin Laden, there were some more moderate leaders of anti-Soviet rebels in Peshawar at this time. The Afghani Ahmed Shah Massoud, for example, “sought to attract American attention” to his efforts but was, perhaps to the regret of more recent US administrations, sidelined by the international community (Coll 346). He is still continually marginalized from discourses on the Afghan-Soviet War today.

Be it not for his specialized knowledge of construction, his alleged generosity or his combat skills, bin Laden would find a way to make a long-lasting contribution to international jihad. In 1984, Osama founded Beit al-Ansar (House of Supporters), a Peshawar guesthouse that served as transit point for fighters making their way to Afghan military bases (Bergen 54). Around the same time, Osama funded the establishment of an institution called Maktab al-Khadimat (MAK), usually translated into English as the Services Office, by his former instructor Azzam (Gunaratna 24). The Maktab functioned as a recruiting station for *mujahideen*, also publishing propaganda on the Afghan jihad to aid its worldwide campaign for holy warriors (Bergen 54). In fact, the Maktab’s recruitment activities would eventually connect headquarters in thirty US cities and a total of thirty-five countries (Gunaratna 5). Bin Laden’s exploits continued with the establishment of several military training facilities, such as the camp at Jaji, Ma’sadat al-Ansar (House of Lions), and Sidda (Corbin 18; Gunaratna 26). The development of such infrastructure to aid the jihad served as the underpinnings of the organization al-Qaeda al-Sulbah (the Solid Base), although bin Laden would not publicly refer to the organization according to the familiar name “al-Qaeda” until after the September 11th attacks (Gunaratna 3).

Jane Corbin notes that the “Muslim warriors fighting a jihad” in Afghanistan “would eventually expand to challenge the Western world” (19). MAK’s founding documents, drafted by Azzam and distributed in the publication *al-Jihad* in 1988, offers some insights to the ideological foundation of MAK and its growth into the current al-Qaeda organization:

Every principle needs a vanguard to carry it forward and, while focusing its way into society, puts up with heavy tasks and enormous sacrifices. There is no ideology, neither earthly nor heavenly, that does not require such a vanguard that gives everything it possesses in order to achieve victory for this ideology. It carries the flag all along the sheer, endless and difficult path until it reaches its destination in the reality of life, since Allah has destined that it should make it and manifest itself. This vanguard constitutes al-Qaeda al-Sulbah for the expected society (Gunaratna 4-5).

As the first leader and chief ideologue of the organization, Azzam emphasized the role of *mujahideen* as a “rapid reaction force” that could defend Muslims in their struggles across the globe (Gunaratna 29). Sa’ad al-Fagih argues that Osama was motivated to establish MAK as a means of organizing the Afghan jihad and keeping records on the *mujahideen*, including their biographical information, addresses, and role in the war (Bergen 62). As Azzam traveled through the Middle East, the United Kingdom, and the United States to mobilize fighters, bin Laden offered funding, supervision of the military camps, and the recruitment of “experts in guerrilla warfare, sabotage, and covert operations” (P. Williams 76). By 1985, MAK could boast the training of over 5,000 *mujahideen* in Peshawar, who had come to participate in the jihad from such countries as Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan and Sudan (P. Williams 77). These participants would come to typify a characteristic element of al-Qaeda members in future years—they formed an alliance of warriors from diverse Muslim countries for the common goal of advancing a fundamentalist defense of the Qur’an.

While the organization developed, however, the relationship between Osama and Azzam became increasingly strained. Though Azzam remained committed to the idea of the founding of an Islamist state in Afghanistan, bin Laden developed a rapport with Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of

the Egyptian Jihad Group, who advocated the training of the mujahideen for global terrorist operations (P. Williams 78). On November 24, 1989, Azzam and his sons Ibrahim and Muhammad were killed by a bomb as they drove to a mosque in Peshawar (Gunaratna 31). Osama has naturally been implicated in the murder of his former mentor; Gunaratna argues that Osama is guilty in the sense that he must have known, and clearly did not prevent, plans to murder Azzam (31). He states, “All this is of a piece with Osama’s exceedingly duplicitous nature. He has never attacked in print, in speeches or in conversation the mentor whose murder he sanctioned, if not condoned, and in his writings Osama only praises him. By acquiescing in Azzam’s murder, Osama freed the organization from being constrained by its founder’s guiding principles and rules, allowing him to refashion it in his own image and channel it in directions he preferred” (Gunaratna 31).

Only months prior to Azzam’s death, the Soviet army retreated from Afghanistan (Gunaratna 31). The importance of this moment as a turning point in the life of Osama bin Laden and the evolution of al-Qaeda must not be underestimated. By Osama’s own admission, it “would have been impossible for me to gain such a benefit from any other chance...What we benefited from most was [that] the glory and myth of the superpower was destroyed, not only in my mind, but also in [the minds] of all Muslims” (Bergen 61). It would not be long before Osama set the sights of his organization on the destruction of the only remaining superpower. An attempt to accomplish this goal also relied on the experience of the Afghan jihad as its backing. The resistance against Soviets allowed Muslim fanatics from various corners of the globe to meet, form strong relationships, and radicalize their ideas. It is for this reason that Marc Sageman identifies the Afghan jihad as a “watershed in militant Muslim revivalist movements” (18). For Sageman, the common experience of fighting the Soviets prompted the jihadists to “...analyze their common problems with a more global perspective, transcending their countries of origin...The Muslim militants’ reaction to infidel troops on Muslim soil was originally a call to traditional jihad to throw the infidels out of Muslim lands” (18).

Jane Corbin adds that the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was the moment “the legend of bin Laden and his Arab fighters was born...It was the beginning of al-Qaeda...The men

who came together in these early days, from all over the Muslim world, formed the hard core, the loyalists around bin Laden. Their names would come to dominate the ‘wanted’ lists in years to come” (19). For Osama personally, participation in the Afghan war was not only an opportunity to develop weapon handling skills and battle tactics, but also a crossroads in the development of his increasingly radical Islamic and anti-Western sentiments. As one jihadist remarked, Osama “came to the jihad a well-meaning boy and left a man who knew about violence and its uses and effects” (Burke).

After the Soviet withdrawal in February 1989, many of the Afghan Arabs, as did Osama, returned to their countries of origin (Bergen 63). Osama’s arrival in Saudi Arabia was accompanied by celebrations of his heroism and his status as a defender of Islam (Bergen 65). However, the start of a new conflict in the Arab world would quickly shake Osama’s reputation. When Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi army invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, he sent shock waves to the al-Saud family about the security of their rule and oil possessions (Gunaratna 37). Osama was revolted that the royal family flirted with the idea of inviting US troops to defend the Saudi kingdom, especially since Muslims had just fought an intense battle to remove the Soviets from Muslim land (Bergen 80). He did not hesitate to express his sentiments publicly, advocating boycotts of American goods and holding fast to the Prophet Muhammad’s decree, “Let there be no two religions in Arabia” (Bergen 80). Osama believes to have predicted the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a premonition that he claims fell on deaf ears among the Saudi royalty (Bergen 80). “I said many times in my speeches at the mosques, warning that Saddam will enter the Gulf. No one believed me. I distributed many tapes in Saudi Arabia. It was after it happened that they started believing me and believed my analysis of the situation” (Bergen 80).

Yet, Osama faced his most humiliating blow when his zealous proposal to lead some 5,000 Afghan Arab veterans in the defense of Arabia was flatly rejected by the royal family in favor of American intervention (Burke). Prince Abdullah offered peaceful words to bin Laden and his troops, stating, “The family of Mohammad bin Laden have always been faithful subjects of our kingdom and have helped us greatly in our times of need. We are sure that nothing will be allowed to mar our good relations in the future” (Burke). One Afghan noted that Osama’s fury

was apparent, “He was seething. You could see it in his eyes” (Burke). This dishonor triggered bin Laden on a public campaign against the ruling family of Saudi Arabia, which continued throughout the 1990s (Corbin 28). Osama gave heated sermons, disseminated taped hate-filled speeches, formed alliances with Islamist scholars, and recruited fanatics to be trained de nouveau in the military bases of Afghanistan for a new al-Qaeda jihad (Corbin 28). While bin Laden’s words were concerned primarily with denouncing the Saudi regime, his speeches also centered on a condemnation of the United States on religious, political and cultural grounds (Corbin 29). In his anger, bin Laden proclaimed, “We believe that we are men, Muslim men who must defend the greatest place in existence, the Holy Kaba’ah. We want to have the honor of defending it. We do not want American women soldiers, including American Jewish and Christian women soldiers, defending the grandchildren of great Muslim leaders” (Corbin 29).

When Saddam was defeated in February 1991, Osama became further agitated that the royal family refused to remove US troops from Saudi soil immediately following the victory. This sequence of events “only reinforced Osama’s sense of betrayal” (Gunaratna 37). Aware that he would be arrested as a political dissident, Osama fled his home country for Pakistan soon after. Once he arrived, he intensified his verbal struggle against al-Saud and took to “reestablishing communication with, and lending support to the dissidents he had cultivated in Saudi Arabia” (Gunaratna 39). However, bin Laden’s attention also turned to the strengthening of his organization, as he promptly “dispatched al Qaeda cadres to build cells within the kingdom, where they have a significant presence” (Gunaratna 39).

While in exile, bin Laden courted a relationship with Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, the Sorbonne educated scholar and National Islamic Front power player who sought to establish an Islamist state in his native Sudan (Corbin 30). In later interviews, al-Turabi expressed the patronizing view that Osama really was not “focused on advancing Islamic thoughts or new programs and policies for a new society” (Corbin 32). Corbin suggests that al-Turabi may have been attracted to Osama’s enthusiasm to fight for “Muslims suffering anywhere, being oppressed or attacked” (32). However, he was probably more interested in Osama’s willingness to “try and put as much money as he can behind any Muslims fighting for a cause” (Corbin 32). Whichever the case, bin Laden

found himself stripped of Saudi citizenship in April 1994 for the reason of “irresponsible behavior,” with no choice but to move his four wives, as well as his base of operations, to Sudan, a country long recognized by the US State Department for its support of terrorism (Shahar).

Khartoum, located on the shores of the Nile, is a city that has been described as “overwhelmingly Islamic” (Corbin 31). Yet, an article in the *Observer* article notes that for bin Laden and his men, “Life in Sudan was odd” (Burke). “There were football matches and bathing trips,” the article notes, as well as, “long junior common room-type arguments over whether Shia and Sunni Muslims should unite to fight the common enemy, and points of Islamic doctrine” (Burke). Bin Laden friend and long-time operator of al-Qaeda’s media wing in London, Khaled al-Fawwaz, has told the Western media that bin Laden himself lived extremely modestly during this five-year period in Sudan (Bergen 82). “When I observed his house and his way of living, I couldn’t believe my eyes. He had no fridge at home, no air conditioning, no fancy car, nothing,” he told CNN’s Peter Bergen (Bergen 82).

Osama lived a true double life during his exile in Sudan, immersed in what the *9/11 Commission* report describes as a “large and complex set of intertwined business and terrorist enterprises” (57). He bolstered his ego through large-scale infrastructure development in the Sudan, perhaps trying to carry out his father’s legacy or, as scholar Reuven Paz puts it, to present himself as “a model businessman” (qtd. in Shahar). Osama’s commercial ventures in the Sudan were extensive and varied. His enterprise “al-Hijrah for Construction and Development” teamed up with the National Islamic Front and Sudanese military to construct an airport at Port Sudan and also undertook the building of roads and bridges (Gunaratna 42). Gunaratna writes that the firm’s commissions included the “eighty-three mile road between Damzine City and Kormuk City (Gunaratna 42). The Tahaddi road—‘Revolutionary Highway’—between Khartoum and Port Sudan made Osama a household name” (Gunaratna 42). In addition, Osama founded several other businesses, such as Wadi al-Aqiq, an export-import company, and the Taba Investment Company, Ltd (Shahar). He enjoyed a partnership in the “al-Shamal Islamic Bank” and ownership of the Khartoum Tannery and al-Ikhar Company for the production of honey (Shahar). His Bank of Zoological resource took on cattle breeding while other businesses cultivated peanuts and

sunflowers (Sharaf). Despite his efforts, bin Laden's business ventures could hardly be deemed a success—over a period of five years, he lost \$150 million in failed farming and construction projects (Gunaratna 42).

The extent of Osama's entrepreneurial enterprises did not, however, divert his attention from militant Islam, but rather provided a cover for him to operate and expand al-Qaeda's base of operations. Many sources note that Osama pursued relations with "about twenty Islamist groups engaged in guerrilla warfare and terrorism, [and] supported them with funds, training and weapons" (Gunaratna 41). His activities in terror began "as soon as he got settled in Khartoum" and involved many meetings with Egyptian radicals, including Ramzi Yousef (P. Williams 83). When Yousef's attack on the World Trade Center resulted in some \$500 million worth of damage, "bin Laden was elated, and special prayer services of thanksgiving were held in his apartment" in Sudan (P. Williams 83). Many of the bin Laden farms were used as bases for advanced military training while al-Qaeda began to acquire equipment in the form of communication technology and weapons (Weaver). The State Department maintains that bin Laden created three terrorist training camps in northern Sudan and transported at least 500 Afghan veterans to the country (Weaver). Some of these *mujahideen* regularly worked alongside thousands of employees unaware of bin Laden's terrorist operations (Weaver). The *mujahideen*, however, played various roles in Sudan: "Some were instructors in his military training camps; others, management experts and economists, ran his businesses. Still others served as liaisons among a dozen or so bin Laden-supported militant Islamist groups" (Weaver). Some al-Qaeda members were entrusted to run the organization's daily magazine, entitled *Newscast* (Gunaratna 112). The publication offered weekly issues that covered news of the Islamic world and included numerous articles on jihad (Gunaratna 112).

At some point in Sudan, bin Laden's "thinking changed and the military increasingly took precedence over the political and economic," as evidenced by his increasing interest in acquiring chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons (Gunaratna 48). A study completed by Sara Daly, John Parachini, and William Rosneau documents al-Qaeda's efforts to obtain apocalyptic weapons. In their conclusions, which are consistent with views of the

American intelligence community, they note that “al-Qaeda has actively pursued the acquisition of nuclear weapons” while in Sudan (Daly, Parachini, and Rosneau 13). Interestingly, al-Qaeda’s agenda on WMD’s has been completely intertwined with its radical ideology, with bin Laden’s rhetoric implying that he “believes he is divinely entitled to have nuclear weapons” (Daly, Parachini, and Rosneau 14). In line with his defensive outlook toward the non-Muslim world, bin Laden’s statements in Sudan stressed the need for WMD’s as a means to defend his Muslim brothers from the “Jews and Crusaders” (Daly, Parachini, and Rosneau 14).

Jamal Ahmad al-Fadl, an al-Qaeda defector who spent time with bin Laden in Sudan, points out that bin Laden’s business ventures were fused with his terror operations, suggesting that al-Qaeda itself was run as a “Terror Incorporated,” an enterprise that could be micromanaged like a large business (Corbin 33). For starters, Bergen observes that at this period, “al-Qaeda was as globally minded as any other international company,” holding bank accounts in Europe, the Middle East and the Far East and purchasing supplies from varied locations (83). Al-Fadl’s work involved managing the payroll of al-Qaeda operatives, a task that was carried out according to general business practice (Corbin 33). “A visitor would hand over his business card and the secretary would check the appointments list,” he recalled (Corbin 35). Al-Fadl admits that he was paid \$200 per month for his role as an al-Qaeda employee and earned an extra \$300 per month for payroll management (Corbin 35). He also told investigators that bin Laden offered workers medical plans or other benefits (Corbin 35). “Sometimes al-Qaeda workers would be given sugar and tea and oil and other stuff to help them, because it was hard to get these things in the Sudan,” he stated (Corbin 35).

In 1992, bin Laden issued a *fatwa* urging holy war against US troops in Islamic countries, claiming the need to “cut off the head of the snake” and is heavily implicated in several attacks on Americans during the early to mid-1990s (9/11 Commission 59). The *9/11 Commission Report* acknowledges that those who bombed an Aden hotel filled with US soldiers destined for Somalia in December 1992 had been trained in bin Laden’s Sudanese military camps (59). In the following year in Mogadishu, two US Black Hawk helicopters were shot down by Somalian warlords, who had been trained and given weapons by “scores of trainers” from an al-Qaeda

Nairobi cell and were allegedly accompanied by “most of the senior members and weapons training experts of al-Qaeda’s military committee” (9/11 Commission 60). In a 1997 CNN interview with Peter Bergen, bin Laden claimed, “Resistance started against the American invasion because Muslims did not believe the US allegations that they came to save the Somalis. With Allah’s grace, Muslims in Somalia cooperated with some Arab holy warriors who were in Afghanistan. Together they killed large numbers of American occupation troops” (Bergen 22). For bin Laden, the success of the attack on US helicopters at Mogadishu and the subsequent American retreat from Somalia was evidence of the “weakness, frailty and cowardice of the US troops” (Bergen 22). The event further emboldened Osama in his bloody mission of jihad against America (Bergen 22). Attacks continued in 1995 with the explosion of a car bomb in a joint Saudi-US training facility in Riyadh, killing five Americans and two Indians (9/11 Commission 60). It is clear that the four terrorists arrested by Saudi authorities were at least “inspired by bin Laden,” though they were all beheaded before US investigators could interrogate them (Bergen 90).

By mid-1996, Sudan was under heavy pressure from the US government to cease providing a safe haven to bin Laden and, in a scene likened by jihadists to the Prophet’s hijra from Mecca to Medina, bin Laden had no choice but to migrate (Corbin 60). With three wives, numerous children, and scores of holy warriors, he set off for Afghanistan, having already cultivated strong relations with the increasingly powerful Taliban. He was, as Peter Bergen puts it, “in a sense coming home” (95). In providing Osama with a personal escort to Afghanistan, Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar affirmed, “The Taliban would be honored to protect him because of his role in the jihad against the Soviets” (Bergen 96). Though US pressure had been a central factor in instigating bin Laden’s expulsion from Sudan, his migration created a confounding and paradoxical situation for the US intelligence community (P. Williams 95). In fact, Milton Bearden has described Osama’s return to Afghanistan as a regrettable event for the United States (P. Williams 95). “Sending bin Laden back to Afghanistan was like sending Lenin back to Russia,” he quipped. “At least in Sudan we could monitor some of his activities” (P. Williams 95).

Only a month after Osama's relocation to Afghanistan, a deadly bomb exploded a fuel truck in Dhahran, claiming the lives of nineteen members of the US Air Force and injuring 372 others at the Khobar Towers military compound (9/11 Commission 60). Evidence that it "tore the front off the eight-story Khobar Towers building and was felt twenty miles away in the Gulf state of Bahrain" testifies to the strength of the bomb blast (Bergen 91). Though it is clear that the principal operatives were members of Saudi Hezbollah, authorities argue that there is some evidence of al-Qaeda involvement. Certainly, the operation was not inconsistent with bin Laden's objectives (9/11 Commission 60). Additionally, some six hundred Afghan Arabs were arrested in the aftermath of the bombing, suggesting that bin Laden's name had probably come up in investigations (Bergen 91). Though bin Laden has denied responsibility for the attack, he is openly supportive of the bombers themselves. In a 1997 interview, he claimed, "I have great respect for the people who did this. What they did is a big honor that I missed participating in" (Bergen 91).

When bin Laden first left Sudan in May 1996, he arrived in Jalalabad and did not meet Mullah Omar until October, about one month after the Taliban capture of Kabul (Burke). Officially self-titled the "Commander of the Faithful and Supreme Leader of the Taliban," Omar is often remembered for his black turban, enveloping robes and characteristic eye patch (Bergen 165). According to legend, shrapnel hit Omar's eye during a battle against the Soviets, prompting him to use his own finger to remove his eye from its socket, without flinching (Corbin 64). In a secret video shot on April 4, 1996, when Mullah Omar proclaimed his rule on a Kabul rooftop, Omar "reverently wraps and unwraps the cloak of the Prophet Muhammad about him, as the monotone all-male crowd, in their gray and black and beige garments, shout, 'Amir al-Momineen'[Leader of the Believers]" (Corbin 65). Omar, who would wed one of bin Laden's daughters in a move to further forge an alliance, protected bin Laden with loyalty (Gunaratna 57).

The Taliban's principal mission was to create a twentieth century caliphate, thereby recreating the form of rule that prevailed in the Islamic world directly following the death of the Prophet Muhammad (Egger 34). Their rule produced a nightmarish existence for some millions of Afghans, though at the same time, an ideal base of operations for bin Laden. Women, legally

obligated to wear full-length burkas and remain completely isolated from public life, suffered particularly brutal treatment at the hands of the Taliban leaders (Coll 297). Bergen describes Taliban-ruled Afghanistan as a place where “amputations and executions were the only public entertainment in a country starved of diversions” (15). Taliban control officially restricted a multitude of light-hearted and/or Western influenced pastimes. Although his list is not exhaustive, Gunaratna notes that “television was banned, as were photography, singing, flying kites or playing or listening to music; prison was mandatory for those who failed to pray five times a day or did not fast for thirty days during Ramadan; Western hairstyles and the shaving or trimming of beards was outlawed, as were gambling, pigeon racing and dog racing” (57). Bin Laden, whose ideology has long included a component on resurrecting the Islamic caliphate, has mentioned publicly that Taliban rule does not exactly fit his idea of an ideal model, but that it “comes pretty close” (Gunaratna 58).

While they retained certain ideological differences, Osama and the Taliban were quick to develop a committed relationship. Saudi’s Prince Turki, who described Omar as a “very heated” man, recalled that the Taliban leader “in a loud voice denounced all our efforts and praised bin Laden as a worthy and legitimate scholar of Islam. He told me we should not do the infidels’ work by taking bin Laden from them” (Corbin 69-70). Osama provided the regime with much needed financial support, as well as an al-Qaeda military unit to aid the Taliban in its struggle against the Northern Alliance (Gunaratna 54). This unit, known as the 055 Brigade, included some 2,000 Arabs (Gunaratna 54). Gunaratna argues that these Arabs were practically “integrated into the Taliban forces, with the result that al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters camped, trained and operated together” (54). Interestingly, the al-Qaeda-Taliban alliance seemed to create a new form of terrorism that created difficulties for intelligence officials by blurring the general liaison between states and terrorists. A CIA director described the paradox very precisely: “We often talk of two trends in terrorism—state-supported and independent—but in bin Laden’s case with the Taliban we had something completely new; a *terrorist* sponsoring a *state*” (Corbin 70). As bin Laden supported the brutal regime financially and militarily, the Taliban offered al-Qaeda an opportunity to conduct rigorous training and acquire weapons without disruption. Al-Qaeda

developed increasingly bold terrorist ambitions during this period, the deserts of Afghanistan providing a concealing environment for its leader and growing number of followers.

Hidden in the caves of Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden declared war on the United States.

III. DISCOURSE OF VIOLENCE ECHOES ACROSS ABODE OF ISLAM

*“A youth fighting in smile, returning with the spear colored red.
May Allah keep me close to knights, humans in peace, demons in war.
Lions in jungle but their teeth are spears and Indian swords.
The horses witness that I push them hard forward in the fire of battle...
I am willing to sacrifice self and wealth for knights who never disappoint me.
Knights who are never fed up or deterred by death...”*
-Osama bin Laden, 1996, addressing then US Secretary of Defense William Perry (Who Is Osama bin Laden?)

In the months following September 11, 2001, Harvard professor Samuel Huntington’s forecast that cultural and religious conflict would replace ideological warfare in the post-Cold War world received amplified attention. The events of the ill-fated morning seemed the most prevailing evidence of Huntington’s “clash of civilizations,” with al-Qaeda bringing Islam’s “bloody borders” to North American soil (Huntington 254). While Osama bin Laden has repeatedly rejected Western civilization as *kufir*, or infidel, do his motives epitomize the latest breed of cultural conflict? Or are his aims, as evidenced by his statements and al-Qaeda documents, only one facet of a much broader scope of Islamic extremist ideology? An area of ambiguity in the eyes of many Westerners, the philosophy that serves as the global jihadist network’s backdrop represents more than a culturally-based criticism of Western notions of modernism and pluralism. Sounding a drum of interwoven religious and political principles, al-Qaeda’s discourse echoes key characteristics of a radical ideology that has been brewed by Islamic fundamentalists over the course of several decades. Occasionally injecting innovative interpretations of jihad and political Islam into an already lethal worldview, Osama bin Laden sponsors rampant brutality in the name of a dogma inconsistent with mainstream Muslim practice.

Though Osama bin Laden’s pronouncements are notorious for hyperbole and an aim to inspire fear among American listeners, two key texts emerge as cornerstones framing al-Qaeda’s calls for jihad against the United States and its allies. At this point, it is important to clarify that the concept of jihad does appear in the Qu’ran, as both an individual and communal obligation, with certain limitations. Essentially, jihad constitutes an internal or external struggle to defend the Islamic faith. However, it cannot be simply “declared” (Egger 233). On August 23, 1996, bin Laden offered his own interpretations of jihad when he addressed his “Muslim brethren all over

the world” with his *Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places*, a statement insisting that Americans and Israelis represent a potent threat to the very survival of Islamic communities. The full text of this statement is located in the appendix. At first glance, the document appears to be a prayer to Allah, opening with the traditional *shahadah*, but very quickly transforms into a list of grievances with political implications. Bin Laden takes center stage in informing Muslims of the “injustice and iniquity imposed on them” and in urging that “The people of Islam [awaken] and [realize] that they are the main target for the aggression of the Zionist-Crusader alliance and their collaborators.” The United States and Israel are specifically berated for the deaths of Iraqis and Palestinians, respectively. They are likewise accused of deliberately disregarding the fate of Muslims in such areas as Lebanon, Burma, Kashmir, the Philippines, Somalia, Chechnya, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, among others, as part of a “clear conspiracy” to prevent Muslims from defending themselves. Bin Laden’s charges against the United States and Israel are ultimately topped by the two countries’ “occupation” of Muslim holy sites, the Americans by their military presence in the “land of two holy places” [references to the cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia] and “the Zionist Jews fiddling as they wish with the Al Aqsa Mosque.” As suggested by its title, the document’s key theme affirms that the policies of the United States, Israel, and their supporters have effectively declared war on the Muslim world and that Muslims must reciprocate by waging jihad against their enemies. For bin Laden, one of the primary goals of the Islamic community is clear, namely to “lift the iniquity that had been imposed on the *ummah* by the Zionist-Crusader alliance.”

The *Declaration of War*’s condemnation of the non-Muslim world, however, is but the surface of a politically-charged extremist discourse. While there is a tendency to overlook the totality of bin Laden’s ideology in emphasizing his insistence on the destruction of “infidels,” nearly two-thirds of the statement is devoted to a denunciation of the Saudi regime on political, economic, and religious grounds. Bin Laden could not paint a darker picture of the difficulties that plague the Arabian peninsula: “Injustice had affected...the people of the rural and urban areas...[there is] severe oppression, suffering, excessive iniquity, humiliation and poverty.” A sense of urgency characterizes bin Laden’s discussion of the country’s economic situation,

accompanied by assertions that “people are fully concerned about their every day livings.” The analysis culminates in forecasting that “the country is heading toward a great catastrophe, the depth of which is not known except by Allah.”

It becomes clear that bin Laden attributes this situation to two errors committed by the Saudi regime, both of which play a central role in motivating al-Qaeda’s jihad: not only has the Saudi royal family allowed “the enemy of the *ummah*, the American crusader forces, to occupy the land for the longest of years,” but it has also committed the sin of replacing divine *Shari’a* law with man-made law. As the *Shari’a* represents a comprehensive body of regulations addressing all aspects of Muslims’ lives, the House of Saud’s abandonment of Islamic jurisprudence constitutes the abysmal sin of apostasy in the eyes of bin Laden. The greatest irony for the terrorist leader is that while the Saudi royal family is charged with watching over the most holy areas of Muslim worship, its rule is an outright affront to Allah. Yet, despite bin Laden’s acknowledgement of the Saudi regime’s responsibility for the deteriorating situation in Arabia, he ultimately reproaches the United States as the explicit cause of troubles in the Muslim world. He therefore proclaims that “efforts should be concentrated on destroying, fighting and killing the enemy [the United States] until, by the Grace of Allah, it is completely defeated.”

The August 1996 *Declaration*, in fact bin Laden’s first *bayan*, is perhaps most useful in providing a glimpse into the mind of bin Laden himself, as opposed to detailing a fully-developed philosophy of al-Qaeda as an organization. As indicated in the previous chapter, bin Laden had released the statement after his recent expulsion from Sudan, his nearly \$300 million fortune being used to fund terrorist activities worldwide (P. Williams 92). Lagging US intelligence recognized him as one of the world’s most important financiers of terror, but failed to pinpoint his role as the emir of a global jihadist network that had been growing since the late 1980’s (P. Williams 80). Already three years earlier, while residing in Khartoum, bin Laden had aided in the planning of the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing, transported nearly 500 *mujahideen* to training camps in Sudan, and opened terror cells in Kenya and Somalia (P. Williams 83-4). The ideas expressed in the *Declaration* would eventually attain greater clarity in providing al-Qaeda with a sense of mission. But as of 1996, bin Laden, a Saudi national, retained a very personal stance on the issues

at hand. It is not coincidental that the heart of the *Declaration* is devoted to a denunciation of the House of Saud. Bin Laden's educational background also comes to the surface, particularly his training in economics (Bergen 50). His lengthy discussion of unemployment, income disparities, falling production in industrial and agricultural sectors, government debt, and even currency depreciation appears to stem from his own interests.

Ironically, the statement's content actually suggests that bin Laden is not condemning the United States on grounds that are purely Islamic, but on the basis of political and economic principles. As a whole, it is important to note that Islamic fundamentalists, though incorporating political philosophy as a key component of their religious ideas, are conspicuously quiet in addressing the realm of economics. Capitalism is often cited as a basis for Western debauchery and communism as a false religion, though Islamic discourse provides no definitive picture of a functioning economic system. The content of the 1996 text also testifies that bin Laden is not a trained Islamic scholar. Though he begins and concludes the *Declaration* with prayers and citations from the Qur'an, he fails to connect his arguments about the political and economic situation of Saudi Arabia and American and Israeli foreign policy to religious thought. With the exception of his assertion that no Americans set foot on Muslim holy ground and that the Saudis adopt *Shari'a*, he makes it clear in this first statement that his goals are, essentially, political rather than religious ones. Michael G. Knapp, in his analysis, *The Concept and Practice of Jihad in Islam*, concurs that bin Laden's ideology, "a carefully crafted...appeal to the disgruntled...of the Islamic world" is "really more political than religious." Accordingly, he explains that "although [bin Laden] appears to be fired by the religious zeal of Saudi Arabia's puritanical Wahhabi movement...[and] quotes selective (but incomplete) passages from the Qur'an)...bin Laden's motivations are really not that different from the anti-imperialistic doctrines that sustain religious and nonreligious extremist groups all over the world." The accuracy of Knapp's observation is confirmed by many of the targets that bin Laden has chosen to strike—the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, American embassies in Africa, the *USS Cole*, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Rather than symbols of Western culture that might play into Huntington's argument of

a “clash of civilizations,” these carefully chosen targets represent the politics, economy and foreign policy of the United States, and in particular, its “military might” (Bergen 227).

Two years later, on February 23, 1998, Osama bin Laden announced the formation of the World Islamic Front and issued its *Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders*, a text indicating a development of bin Laden’s thought into a body of clear objectives for al-Qaeda operatives and terrorists worldwide. Co-signers of the statement included Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian doctor that founded the Jihad Group in Egypt and remains one of bin Laden’s most trusted aides, Abu-Yasir Rifa’i Ahmad Taha, leader of the Egyptian Islamic Group, Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat-al-Ulema-e-Pakistan, and Fazlur Rahman, leader of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh (Laqueur 412). CNN terrorism analyst Peter L. Bergen, in his book *Holy War, Inc.*, advances the position that bin Laden’s collaboration with other terrorist leaders in issuing the *Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders* attests to al-Qaeda’s role as an umbrella group fusing terrorists from many different nationally-based groups. According to Bergen, the al-Qaeda network is truly global in its focus: its cells have operated out of such varied locations as “Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Albania, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kenya, Tanzania, Kashmir, and Chechnya” and it has gained followers from the United States and United Kingdom (200). Bergen brands al-Qaeda members “bona fide world travelers” and suggests that “al-Qaeda’s global scope is further underlined by calls made from bin Laden’s satellite phone...to London, Sudan, Iran, Yemen, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Kenya” (201). Essentially, the underpinnings of al-Qaeda’s global mission may be traced to the *Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders*, not only as a product of terrorist collaboration, but in that its signers “call on every Muslim who believes in Allah and wishes to be rewarded to comply with Allah’s order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it” (Laqueur 412).

The 1998 World Islamic Front statement, a more poetic text than bin Laden’s 1996 *Declaration*, launches into its grievances on the basis of bin Laden’s view that the American presence must be eliminated from the Arabian Peninsula. The statement declares that “The Arabian Peninsula has never—since Allah made it flat, created its desert, and encircled it with

seas—been stormed by any forces like the crusader armies spreading in it like locusts, eating its riches, and wiping out its plantations” (Laqueur 410). The 1998 text considers America’s usurpation of the Islamic world’s resources, the image of a mighty nation ravaging Arab lands and leaving them dry, to be an obvious point, just as the threat posed to Muslims by the again reproached “Zionist-Crusader” alliance is supposedly “known to everyone” (Laqueur 411). The main arguments of the document are made systematically, specifically citing three proofs of American and Jewish aggression that are worth quoting at some length:

First, for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors and turning its bases in the peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples. If some people have in the past argued about the fact of the occupation, all the people of the peninsula have now acknowledged it. The best proof of this is the Americans’ continuing aggression against the Iraqi people using the peninsula as a staging post, even though all its rulers are against their territories being used to that end, but they are helpless.

Second, despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance, and despite the huge number of those killed, which has exceeded one million...despite all this, the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific massacres, as though they are not content with the protracted blockade imposed after the ferocious war or the fragmentation and devastation. So here they come to annihilate what is left of this people and to humiliate their Muslim neighbors.

Third, if the Americans’ aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews’ petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and Muslims there. The best proof of this is their eagerness to

destroy Iraq, the strongest neighboring Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan into paper statelets through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival and continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the peninsula. All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on Allah, his Messenger, and Muslims (Laqueur 411).

Though echoing several of the themes among the myriad of issues discussed in bin Laden's 1996 document, the Declaration of the World Islamic Front represents a more coherent pronouncement on behalf of its co-signers. An important shift of argument places the 1998 declaration as a key text defining al-Qaeda's most recent ambitions. Bin Laden's earlier text is largely devoted to a criticism of the Saudi regime and in particular, their abandonment of *Shari'a*. The 1998 declaration, however, condemns the United States wholeheartedly. Though the World Islamic Front implies that the Saudis have failed to protect the peninsula from Western aggressors, nowhere does the statement openly condemn the Saudi regime. Instead, Arab governments are portrayed as "helpless" in the face of destructive crusader troops (Laqueur 411). Michael G. Knapp acknowledges bin Laden's change in focus by suggesting that, "two years later [following the 1996 *Declaration*], he seems to have concluded that only by striking directly at the United States could he mobilize popular support and convince Arab regimes to overlook his operations in those countries or their neighbors' lands." The tone of the 1998 text also appears much more defensive, if not paranoid, in proclaiming that this is a time "in which nations are attacking Muslims like people fighting over a plate of food" (Laqueur 410). The three points that function as evidence in the World Islamic Front's argument suggest a conspiracy guiding the foreign policy of the United States and Israel, who allegedly hold the destruction of the Muslim world as their primary goal. With the assertion that "Nothing is more sacred than belief except repulsing an enemy who is attacking religion and life," the statement's signatories clearly sought to inflame the hearts of Muslims capable of fighting and convince them that the Islamic world is in a state of

peril (Laqueur 412). In this respect, the document is important not only in defining al-Qaeda's motivations, but also as a material for recruiting Muslims to wage holy war.

Following the above mentioned charges, the document culminates in a *fatwa*, traditionally a decision based on Islamic law made by a religious scholar (i.e., an *alim*). It should again be noted that neither bin Laden nor any of the document's signers are studied in Islamic jurisprudence, but that this lack of training does not hinder bin Laden from using religious rhetoric in order to strengthen his political goals. Thus the document orders, "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies-civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslims" (Laqueur 412). The *fatwa*, considered by bin Laden a "crystal clear" description of the World Islamic Front's notion of individual jihad against Americans and Jews, assumes that it is justified to attack not only American military personnel in the Middle East, but also to incite a global holy war (9/11 Commission 70). In an interview by ABC-TV in Afghanistan in May 1998, bin Laden reiterated the significance of this point: "It is far better for anyone to kill a single American soldier than to squander his efforts on other activities... We believe that the worst thieves in the world today and the worst terrorists are the Americans... We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets" (9/11 Commission 47). Aware that traditional definitions of terrorism assume attacks on unsuspecting civilians, Osama bin Laden rejects any notion of being judged by a Western value system. In open defense of the World Islamic Front's position, bin Laden has declared that if the *Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders* is "considered a crime...let history be a witness that I am a criminal" (9/11 Commission 70).

The two epistles, bin Laden's statements of 1996 and 1998, have shed considerable light on the foundations for al-Qaeda's attacks but the information that they contain may be supplemented by another of bin Laden's early public pronouncements. In 1997, Peter Bergen traveled to a remote area outside Jalalabad with several CNN colleagues to conduct Osama bin Laden's first televised interview (Bergen 97). In a manner described by Bergen as "soft-spoken

but focused,” bin Laden explained not only his decision to declare jihad against the United States and Jews, but also his interest in sparking an Islamic revolution in Saudi Arabia (Bergen 19). Bin Laden claimed, “We are confident...that Muslims will be victorious in the Arabian peninsula and that God’s religion, praise and glory be to Him, will prevail in this peninsula. It is a great...hope that the revelation unto Muhammad will be used for ruling” (Bergen 19). Bin Laden is essentially imagining an overthrow of the House of Saud, not unlike the toppling of Iran’s Shah, that would result in a society governed only by laws contained in the Qur’an and *Shari’a*. As Osama bin Laden’s interview reiterated his demand that US forces be chased from Arabia, the removal of the American “infidel” presence emerges as a mere first-step to the attainment of a larger goal.

Bin Laden does not limit the establishment a truly Islamic society to the boundaries of the Arabian peninsula, however. Instead, he is motivated by an aspiration of unifying the international Muslim *ummah*. Benjamin Orbach, in his article “Usama bin Laden and Al-Qa’ida: Origins and Doctrines” that appeared in the December 2001 issue of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, explains his interpretation of bin Laden’s calls for jihad. Orbach emphasizes bin Laden’s belief that “all Muslims need to pool their resources, stand together, and fight against the threat to Islam, acting as a unified nation that overcomes superficial, contrived national differences to fight against its common enemies.” Accordingly, when bin Laden calls for the establishment a society based on *Shari’a*, he is envisioning an all-encompassing *ummah* functioning according to Islam’s comprehensive law. Just as the unification of Muslims has served as a common thread among contemporary fundamentalist discourses, this objective likewise represents the essential long-term goal for bin Laden.

The significance of this issue has led Peter Bergen to accurately denote that bin Laden’s calls for violence are not of the same strain of terrorism that characterizes nationalist movements, such as Palestinian terrorist activity or the fight for the realization of a pan-Arab community by Islamic militants of earlier decades (Bergen 41). Instead, bin Laden “has wholeheartedly embraced the most extreme reading of jihad, not only against the infidel West, but also against every ‘apostate’ regime of the Middle East” (Bergen 41). Bin Laden’s ideas of a pan-Islamic state are bolstered by his dream of restoring the *khalifa*, or caliphate, as the pinnacle of his political and

religious ambitions. The “rebirth of the *khalifa*, where the *ummah* would live under the rule of the Prophet Muhammad in a continuous swath of green from Tunisia to Indonesia, much as the red of the British empire colored maps from Egypt to Burma before World War II,” is the conclusion bin Laden envisions to his holy war (Bergen 41).

Peter Bergen recapitulated the nature of bin Laden’s hostility in stating that “Bin Laden is at war with the United States, but his is a political war, justified by his own understanding of Islam, and directed at the symbols and institutions of American power” (227). A very accurate account of bin Laden’s basis for violence, the summary leaves only one detail missing—the concept that bin Laden’s ideology is undeniably linked to the thought of the Islamic fundamentalists that preceded him. The importance of this point is that all too often, it is overlooked. Just as the September 11th strikes sadly caught America off-guard, Osama bin Laden’s creed of holy war is frequently perceived as a new breed of conflict in the modern world. One may argue that the global nature of al-Qaeda as well as the tactics it embraces in operating as a network represent a unique threat to the United States; the ideology that serves as the basis for all such activity is hardly original. As noted by Ahmed S. Hashim, “Laden is not among the foremost Islamists...Over the past two decades, Islamists have sought to explain the causes of the political, socioeconomic, and identity-related crises of their own societies and of the Islamic world and to provide solutions to them. Bin Laden drew many of his ideas from such Islamists.” As such, a thorough understanding of al-Qaeda may not be achieved through the study of bin Laden’s philosophies alone. In reality, bin Laden represents but a grain of sand in the much larger desert of Islamic radicalism.

Perhaps the oldest of bin Laden’s inspirations is the ideology of Shaykh ibn Taymiyyah, an Islamic jurist of medieval times who lived in modern-day Syria. In 1258, ten years before ibn Taymiyyah’s birth, the Abbasid Empire fell to invading Mongols. It is this deterioration of Islamic rule that ibn Taymiyyah sought to explain through the lens of conservative Hanbali thought. Believing that the purest Muslim community was that of Medina under the leadership of Mohammad, Taymiyyah asserted that purity had been lost under the reign of corrupt caliphs and through the encroachment of Muslim lands by infidel Mongol forces. Even following the

conversion of many Mongols to Islam, Taymiyyah did not abandon his position that they remained a serious threat to the survival of the *ummah*. He thus issued a *fatwa* to fight Mongols as apostates and advanced the notion that Muslims, despite sectarian differences, are obligated to join forces in removing an enemy from the abode of Islam (Mohammad, Aisha bint).

The ideas of ibn Taymiyyah have been adopted unreservedly by Osama bin Laden, particularly as evidenced by the 1996 *Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of Two Holy Places*. As ibn Taymiyyah berated the Mongols for preferring to adhere to the laws of Genghis Kahn instead of the *Shari'a*, Osama bin Laden's chief grievance against the Saudi regime is its abandonment of Islam's holy law (Mohammad, Aisha bint). Likewise, ibn Taymiyyah's emphasis on waging jihad serves as the core for bin Laden's call that "Muslim ulema, leaders, youths, and soldiers...launch the raid on Satan's U.S. troops and the devil's supporters allying with them, and...displace...them so that they may learn a lesson" (Laqueur 412). Most likely in awareness that he is not an Islamic scholar and thus technically unqualified to issue a *fatwa*, Osama bin Laden attempted to establish legitimacy for the World Islamic Front's *Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders* by quoting the medieval jurist's ruling that "after faith, nothing is more obligating than defending against the enemy who spoils the religion and the world" (Bergen 102-03).

The other manner in which ibn Taymiyyah may have influenced bin Laden is in the convergence of his ideology with the practice of Wahhabi Islam. Wahhabism, the traditionalist form of Sunni Islam practiced mainly in the Arabian Peninsula, largely encompasses the thought of ibn Taymiyyah (P. Williams 73). In essence, Wahhab ideology advocates a return to the most pure forms of worship, strict interpretation of the Quran, and the elimination of certain practices accepted by less austere Muslims such as tobacco use, use of prayer beads, offensive language, decorations in mosques, and minarets (P. Williams 74). Historically, Wahhabism has been firmly opposed not only to Western influences, but to Shiite Muslims and Sufi, or mystical, Islam as well (Qamar). Ibn Taymiyyah's influence is especially apparent in Wahhabi theories on the legitimacy of a state or government. According to Talip Küçükcan of the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom, ibn Taymiyyah advocated that "the '*ulama*' are responsible for the protection of

the Divine Law [and]...a government is regarded as Islamic by virtue of the support it gives to Islam and to the *'ulama'*.” Therefore, “one can accept the rule of anyone who follows the *Shari'a*.”

The influences of Osama bin Laden’s devout Wahhabi upbringing are apparent in his condemnation of the House of Saud (Burke). Though the Saudi royal family nominally espouses the *Wahhabi* tradition, Osama bin Laden’s 1996 *Declaration of War* claims that “Through its course of actions the regime has torn off its legitimacy.” The evidence cited by bin Laden echoes Taymiyyah’s ideas, namely that the regime has replaced *Shari'a* law with man-made law and has “entered into a bloody confrontation with the truthful *ulema* and the righteous youths” (bin Laden). The ultimate effect of these acts of apostasy, according to bin Laden, has been Saudi Arabia’s inability to shield itself from American “crusader” armies, who are the cause of Saudi’s political and economic troubles. Paul L. Williams claims that bin Laden “condemns Saudi king Fahd above all others for his hypocritical public support of purist Wahhabism while the king himself corrupts its principles by living impiously and consorting with the United States” (92). P. Williams emphasizes the importance of Wahhabism on al-Qaeda’s philosophies in noting that not only is bin Laden a Wahhabist, but all of the Saudis holding leadership positions within al-Qaeda also ascribe to this purist form of worship (93). Indeed, a return to purity is of the essence for bin Laden by way of a very simple logic. Marc Sageman, in his *Understanding Terror Networks*, clearly explains this point. He argues that for bin Laden, “Islam is decadent because it strayed from the righteous path...Recapturing the glory and grandeur of the Golden Age requires a return to the authentic faith and practices of the ancient ones, namely the Prophet Mohammed and his companions” (4).

In addition to the centuries-old thought of ibn Taymiyyah and Abdul Wahhab, the ideology on which al-Qaeda bases its violent missions is essentially linked to the fanaticism of contemporary Islamic fundamentalists, with the thought of Egyptian radicals at the forefront. During the late 1970’s, Osama bin Laden was living in Jeddah, attending King Abdul-Aziz University as he worked toward obtaining a degree in economics and public administration (Bergen 50). The influence of the ideas of the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood on Osama bin

Laden cannot be overstated. Founded by Egyptian school-teacher Hassan al-Banna, a Wahhabist, the organization espoused two long-term goals: inspiring a renaissance of Islamic worship through uncompromising interpretation of the Qur'an and eventually establishing a pan-Islamic state (P. Williams 75). In the short-term, the Brotherhood challenged colonialism and sought involvement in Egypt's political system through the improvement of healthcare, education, and other elements of the social infrastructure (Moussalli 83). Al-Banna, however, "never denied that the Brotherhood was a movement that sought the revival of religion and had its own political, educational, and economic aspirations" (Moussalli 83).

Such aspirations draw a clear parallel with Osama bin Laden's blend of religion and politics as he calls for the establishment of a truly Islamic state. For al-Banna, Islam is based on four corner-stone values, identified by Ahmad S. Moussalli as "pure creed," "correct worship and good religious deeds," "unity that completes the faith," and "just legislation and good laws" (109). Relying on these principles, al-Banna's vision dealt with a return to traditional Islamic practices and a sole reliance on the holy texts of Islam in order to ensure "pure creed" and "correct worship" (Moussalli 109). In addition, al-Banna emphasized the importance of reunification of the *ummah* and also a legal system based on the Qu'ran and *Shari'a* law (Moussalli 110). This is not unlike the ideas of Osama bin Laden, who vigorously advocates the notion that true Islam may thrive only in an Islamic state where believers' practice echoes the Wahhabi tradition and where the state's laws are implementations of *Shari'a*. Al-Banna and bin Laden are also both proponents of the reestablishment of the caliphate as a "revival of the highest political institution" (Moussalli 115).

It should be noted that Osama bin Laden does depart from some of al-Banna's ideals in order to take a more radical turn. Throughout his lifetime, al-Banna made a point of including the Muslim Brotherhood within the Egyptian political system as a means gaining a foothold in political power and society while bin Laden sees no compromise with the apostate Saudi regime (Moussalli 83). Still, bin Laden's principal ambitions may be justified through Hassan al-Banna's ideology. His call for the establishment of an Islamic political entity is rooted in al-Banna's interpretation of Islam as a comprehensive worldview. Al-Banna explains that Islam is a

“complete system that regulates all aspects of life and includes a system of social norms, government, legislation, law and education.” (Moussalli 109). On the surface, al-Banna’s discourse appears to espouse pluralism because of his emphasis on the idea that Islam is based on communal obligations. However, he considers a threat any group or viewpoint that does not conform to purist Islam. Al-Banna arrives at the conclusion that the “function of the Islamist state [would be] to refuse to yield to those ideologies that disrupt the unity of Muslims” (Moussalli 112). Bin Laden echoes this concept through his belief that the truth of Islam should not be contaminated by apostate leaders in the Arab world or the *kufir* Western presence in the Middle East. Overall, Moussalli notes that leaders of radical Islamic movements have been able to justify themselves through the thought of al-Banna, believing that al-Banna’s interpretation of “the Islamic spiritual dimension could aid in developing a clear portrait of the enemy and condemning moral corruption” (112).

It is important to again emphasize Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian member of the Muslim Brotherhood and a fiery instigator of jihad, as Osama’s mentor in launching a career in terror (Bergen 51). In the eyes of Peter Bergen, “Azzam was both the ideological godfather and the global recruiter par excellence of Muslims drawn to the Afghan jihad; he would exert a strong pull on bin Laden by virtue of his Islamic credentials and greater experience in the world” (54). In terms of ideology, Azzam was a fierce proponent of the reunification of the Islamic world under the leadership of the *khalifah*, but believed that this aim may only be reached through global jihad (Bergen 56). In his pamphlet, “Defending Muslim Territory is the Most Important Duty,” he wrote: “This duty [jihad] will not end with victory in Afghanistan; jihad will remain an individual obligation until all other lands that were Muslim are returned to us so that Islam will reign again” (Bergen 56). Leading voices of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism acknowledge that Azzam’s ideology, coupled with the unfolding of jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan, resulted in long-lasting impacts on radical Islamic movements, including bin Laden’s. They claim that Azzam’s influence served to augment the spread Islamic terrorism on a global scale. His use of the media to spread his ideas and recruit *mujahideen* to fight in Afghanistan created “a kind of Islamic ‘internationale’” that is essentially being continued through

Osama bin Laden's support of terror networks all over the world (J. Fighel). The lasting effect of Azzam's ideology is that it has resulted in the "creation of a mystique of invincibility. The Islamic fighters' victory over the Soviet forces won them international acclaim and served as a source of inspiration to Islamists throughout the Muslim world" (J. Fighel).

As we have seen, in a number of years, Abdullah Azzam would actually fall out of favor with bin Laden as the professor and his protégé disagreed about where to redirect the energy of the *mujahideen* following the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan. Azzam, ever dedicated to his dream of an Islamic state, proposed establishing one in Afghanistan, launching a campaign to gain the support of Muslims the world over and at some point waging jihad against Israel (P. Williams 78). This option was not sufficiently appealing to bin Laden, who, under the influence of several Egyptian colleagues, believed it better to simultaneously employ jihad against a number of the world's infidel nations (P. Williams 78). One of these prominent Egyptians was Ayman al-Zawahiri, often known as "the Doctor" among the circle of al-Qaeda leadership and later a signer of the World Islamic Front's Declaration in 1998. With a white turban, full beard, and tight-fitting glasses, al-Zawahiri is sometimes seen sitting beside bin Laden in video clips (P. Williams 3). According to al-Qaeda defector Jamal al-Fadl, al-Zawahiri is a founding father of al-Qaeda who now holds the position of "chief counsel" to Osama bin Laden (P. Williams 6). In 1984, al-Zawahiri traveled to Peshawar for a meeting with bin Laden and Azzam with an already impressive résumé as a professional terrorist (Bergen 204). While still a medical student at the University of Cairo in 1973, al-Zawahiri collaborated with several others to establish the Egyptian Jihad group as a counterpart to the Egyptian Islamic Group (Bergen 204). The Jihad group was formed with the specific goal of toppling the *kufri* Egyptian government and came closest to achieving its objective when cooperated with the Islamic Group to assassinate Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981 (Bergen 204-05).

Though al-Zawahiri's rank may be second-in-command to bin Laden, the physician's ideology is central to al-Qaeda's mission, if not "more important to al-Qaeda than bin Laden himself" (Bergen 206). Montasser al-Zayyat, the Islamic Group's unofficial spokesman, revealed in an interview with CNN that it is al-Zawahiri's thinking that influenced bin Laden to become

more radical and violent (Bergen 207). Al-Zayyat compared al-Zawahiri to “bin Laden’s mind” and claimed that “the Doctor’s” most important contribution to the development of al-Qaeda has been his ability to transform Osama bin Laden “from primarily a donor of money into a holy warrior” (Bergen 207). Ayman al-Zawahiri’s thought, serving as a foundation for al-Qaeda’s operation, may be traced in his *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*, which appeared in the London based Arabic newspaper *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (The Middle East) on December 12, 2001. Like bin Laden, al-Zawahiri pinpoints his chief goal as the “establishment of a Muslim state in the heart of the Islamic world” (Laqueur 433). While he acknowledges that this is “not an easy goal or an objective that is close at hand,” he claims that “it constitutes the hope of the Muslim nation to reinstate its fallen caliphate and regain its lost glory” (Laqueur 433). However, the theme central to his work is that there simply “is no solution without jihad” (Laqueur 428). If reviving Islam through political means is an arduous task, then it is only by defeating those hostile to Muslims, including the infidel West, Israel, and apostate Arab governments which have departed from ‘true’ Islam, that progress can be made. To emphasize and clarify the need for mobilizing global jihad movements, al-Zawahiri sets out several goals which are considered, broadly speaking, as al-Qaeda’s objectives:

The Islamic movement in general and the jihad movement in particular must launch a battle...by:

- Exposing the rulers who are fighting Islam;
- Highlighting the importance of loyalty to the faithful and relinquishment of the infidels in the Muslim creed;
- Holding every Muslim responsible for defending Islam, its sanctities, nation and homeland;
- ...reminding the nation of the virtues of the ulema of jihad and the imams of sacrifice and the need for the nation to defend, protect, honor and follow them; and
- Exposing the extent of aggression against our creed and sanctities and the plundering of our wealth. (Laqueur 432).

Central to al-Zawahiri's steadfast calls for jihad is his aim to inspire violence. Historian and author Walter Laqueur sums up the Egyptian terrorist's leading argument rather clearly: "Al-Zawahiri urges members of the fundamentalist movements to cause the greatest damage and inflict the maximum casualties on the opponent, no matter how much time and effort these operations take, because this is the language understood by the West" (426). In the body of his text, al-Zawahiri urges jihadists to terrorize 'infidels' by all and any means possible in order to facilitate the establishment of an Islamic state. His propensity for violence is disturbing:

Tracking down the Americans and the Jews is not impossible. Killing them with a single bullet, a stab, or a device made up of a popular mix of explosives or hitting them with an iron rod is not impossible. Burning down their property with Molotov cocktails is not difficult. With the available means, small groups could prove to be a frightening horror for the Americans and the Jews (Laqueur 432).

Al-Zawahiri's text, littered with historical references to conflicts in the Muslim world, attempts to appeal to both reason and emotion. However, it is particularly important in revealing al-Zawahiri's importance within the leadership core of al-Qaeda. Not only is he revered as a scholar, al-Zawahiri is viewed as an authority offering guidance on both the ideological and tactical planes, having clearly made significant investments in determining how best to strike a foreign population (Laqueur 432). Evidently, bin Laden found Ayman al-Zawahiri's support so valuable that, according to the 1998 US indictment against bin Laden, al-Qaeda had "effectively merged" with the Egyptian Jihad group (Bergen 203). Peter Bergen takes a different spin on this issue to suggest that, since "its [al-Qaeda's] key members are Egyptian and its ideology and tactics are based on Egyptian models...the argument can be made that a group of Egyptian jihadists took over bin Laden's organization rather than the other way around" (Bergen 203).

While Ayman al-Zawahiri attempts to portray his ideology as part of a "new phenomenon that continues to gain ground," his concepts are preceded by yet another Egyptian, Sayyid Qutb, dubbed "the founder of radicalism in the Arab world" (Moussalli 96). Considered a liberal thinker at the starting points of his career, Qutb's experiences under Nasser's regime revolutionized his

thought into a “radical political theology of violence and isolation” (Moussalli 96). Because his early writing in Egyptian newspapers *al-‘Alam al-‘Arabi* (“The Arab World”) and *al-Fikr al-Jedeed* (The New Thinking) challenged the Egyptian government, the journals were halted and Qutb sent to further his education in the United States in 1948 (Moussalli 91). Over the course of Qutb’s three-year stay in various locations in the United States, he developed an extremely negative stance toward American culture, particularly what he viewed as Western “materialism,” “racism” (note that Qutb was able to witness segregation in the United States) and “pro-Zionist” leanings (Moussalli 97). Qutb’s return to Egypt converged with his enlisting in the Muslim Brotherhood and his effort to offer solutions to Egypt’s political, economic, and social ills through analysis of the laws and teachings of Islam. Qutb was arrested for his writings in *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* (The Muslim Brotherhood) in 1954, sentenced to fifteen years of imprisonment in 1955 and subsequently endured intense and brutal torture at the hands of Egyptian authorities (Moussalli 97). After years of affliction and witnessing equally vicious treatment of other Muslim Brethren, Qutb drafted his most influential discourse, *Ma’alim fi al-Tariq* (Signposts on the Path or Milestones) in the isolation of his jail cell (Moussalli 98). Though released briefly in 1965, Qutb was soon arrested a second time and finally hanged in 1966 on the charge of conspiring to overthrow the Egyptian government (Moussalli 98).

The message carried in *Ma’alim fi al-Tariq* resonated like gunshots across the Middle East, as “Qutb’s martyrdom bestowed instant credibility upon his ideas” (Sageman 14). The work is simply an “exclusive and uncompromising attitude with respect to all other ideologies, societies, and ways of life” that serves as the guiding light for today’s radicals carrying out terror in the name of Islam (Moussalli 100). Essentially based on the concept of *tawhid*, the principle that describes the unity and oneness of Allah, the work emphasizes that justice and peace are only possible through the spread of the Islamic faith. Qutb asserts that Islam and Islam alone is the system “wherein man... is reserved for the worship and servitude of One and Only God, derives light and dance from Him alone and prostrates himself before Him only” (50). As such, the system of Islam is to be revived as a society, with appropriate political leadership based on the

divine law of the Qur'an in order to give rise to a community based on "goodwill, solidarity, security, peace and equality" (Moussalli 99).

Integral to Qutb's worldview is an absolute rejection of Western politics and culture as not only belonging to that which is *kufir* (unbelief or infidel), but also to the condition of *jahiliyya*, which describes the barbarity of the pre-Islamic world. Qutb's theories specifically condemn Western civilization as the reason why "the danger of total extinction is hovering over the head" of mankind and as a culture that "has no healthy values of life to offer humanity" (Qutb 44). By categorizing the whole of Western civilization within the context of *jahiliyya*, Qutb legitimizes its complete destruction. In a manner that is almost child-like in its insistence, Qutb claims, "The basis of message is only 'ISLAM.' The reality which Islam connotes is to accept the *Shari'a* of Allah without demur in every circumstance and to refuse and reject every other law in any form" (Qutb 84).

Because true Islam may only be established in the complete absence of anything *jahili*, Qutb's discourse transforms into a case for active and offensive jihad. The thrust of his argument is that jihad, as a form of "serious realism," is the instrument by which authorities that are based on law other than the Qur'an may be overhauled. It is also a system that allows mankind to "establish the Islamic order wherever possible" (Qutb 151). It is crucial that Qutb also denounces the idea of jihad as a defensive movement. In Qutb's eyes, jihad is not a struggle to be employed only when the lands of Islam are attacked by some infidel force. By contrast, jihad is the tool of mankind to "establish the Sovereignty and Authority of God on earth, to establish the true system revealed by God for addressing the human life; to exterminate all the Satanic forces and their ways of life, to abolish the lordship of man over other human beings" (Qutb 134). Therefore, one may only apply the term "defensive" to jihad to the extent that it denotes the "natural defense of mankind," as Qutb believes that Islam is the means of guaranteeing the true freedom and equality of human beings (Qutb 120).

The lasting impacts of Qutb's thought are evident not only in their significance to today's radical sentiment in the Middle East in general, but also in their relevance to Osama bin Laden's goals in particular. The degree to which al-Qaeda fits the scope of the radical Islamic thought

outlined by Qutb is marked by certain underlying characteristics that are shared by both bin Laden and Qutb. Their ideas are notably parallel with respect to five dimensions, namely, the issues of internal struggle within Islam and an inability to cope with modernity; nostalgia for Islam's former glory; a rejection of the West and secularism as elements of *jahiliyya*; the importance of attaining political power; and the necessity of waging global jihad.

An understanding of the similarities of bin Laden and Qutb's ideologies provides an important background to understanding the heart of the radical Islamic movement. The Qur'an states, "And do not be like those...who split up their religion and became mere sects, each rejoicing in what it claims it has" (qtd. in P.Williams 37). The Islamic faith stresses unity, whether as a characteristic of a cohesive *ummah* or in describing *tawhid*, the "oneness" of Allah. Yet, the reality of the Muslim world is that it is plagued by divisiveness, an internal struggle that is just as fierce as the radicals' battle against the West. In the eyes of fundamentalists, not a single existing state truly embodies the characteristics of an Islamic polity; even the governments of Muslim populations have crossed the boundaries of apostasy. Abdullah Azzam mentioned this challenge outright when he claimed, "We Muslims are not defeated by our enemies, but instead, we are defeated by our own selves" (Laqueur 424). The theories espoused in *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* indicate Sayyid Qutb's agreement that leadership all over the world has completely deviated from the life-sustaining values of Islam. These tensions within the Muslim world prompt fundamentalists to dwell on the urgent need of ridding Islam of its apostates so that the unity of the *ummah* may be established.

As such, it is hardly surprising that so much of bin Laden's rhetoric is focused on fighting the enemy within. The lack of unity within Islam is deeply troubling for bin Laden, who sees a "great evil...spreading throughout the Islamic world: the imams calling people to hell are those who appear more than others at the side of rulers in the region, the rulers of the Arab and Islamic world...through their ruin of the country by their adoption of destructive ideas, and laws created by man...from morning to evening, they call the people to the gates of hell..." (Hashim). Muhammad Abdel Salam Al-Farag, the Egyptian Islamic radical who published *Al-Faridah Al-Gha'ibah* (The Neglected Duty) but is better remembered for his role in the assassination of

Anwar Sadat, is a lesser known influence on bin Laden and al-Zawahiri that significantly clarified the importance of focusing the fight on the enemy nearby (Hashim). For Farag, the only way to revive Islam is by “establishing the rule of God in our nation...[T]he first battlefield for jihad is the uprooting of these infidel leaders and replacing them with an Islamic system from which we can build” (Hashim).

The underlying cause of division within the world of Islam is pointed out very precisely by Emmanuel Sivan as Islam’s inability to cope with modernity. Muslims are challenged by the very fact that the ‘modern’ lifestyle creates tension with Islamic law as modern living redefines norms, social roles, and behaviors. In discussing the impact of commercialism, Sivan explains that even “the fundamentalist press itself carries lavish-colored publicity on glossy paper for men’s underwear...crowded public transport encourages promiscuity...women...quit the home for the job market [and] acquire in turn new and depraved needs...and may even go so far as to join the nascent women’s liberation movement” (12). The irony expressed by Sivan’s observation describes a situation that also exists within the ranks of fundamentalist organizations, al-Qaeda not excluded. Qutb argues that it is not necessary for Muslims to forsake modern technology (only modern secular values), even though instruments of modern technology, particularly the media, are responsible for spreading the very *jahiliyya* that Qutb so disdains. Similarly, al-Qaeda makes widespread use of technology and the media as an important tool in recruiting jihadists (Sivan 25). Even Osama bin Laden’s 1996 *Declaration of War* was found to have been written on an Apple Macintosh (Bergen 97). Sivan, therefore, concludes that “Islam thus comes out badly bruised from the encounter with modernity,” a principal factor contributing to the radicals’ “paranoid style in politics” (Sivan 14-15).

The challenges posed by modernity on the traditional values of the Islamic world contribute to yet another factor that tends to define Islamic fundamentalism as a whole. Common to the vast majority of fundamentalist discourses is the sense that Islam has lost its footing in recent times, its ideals being eroded by modern lifestyles. As a result, the stress of modernity has given rise to a sense of nostalgia among fundamentalists, a hunger for Islam’s former days of glory. In an attempt to explain the appeal of Bin Laden’s message in the Middle East, the *9/11*

Commission reported that the seductiveness of al-Qaeda's ideology for young Muslims is its "[promise] to restore pride to people who consider themselves the victims of successive foreign masters" (48). Benjamin Orbach provides an intriguing analysis of bin Laden's redundant allusions to the Crusades. Reminding his readers that the crusaders' attack of Hijaz provoked Saladin to declare a jihad to remove the infidels from *dar al-Islam*, Orbach describes Osama bin Laden's twelfth century mindset: "More than eight hundred years later, bin Laden applies the same principle and interprets the US presence as an equal provocation requiring a similar solution." Bin Laden's fixation on the Crusades is also evident in his attitude toward the use of biological weapons. Given that the crusaders spread disease among Muslims by propelling the remains of dead animals over the walls of Antioch, bin Laden acknowledges the use of biological weapons in the twenty-first century as legitimate retaliation (P. Williams 176). While it may be true that Islam in general represents a "past-oriented, classicist [civilization]," the nostalgia expressed by bin Laden and Qutb is extreme (Sivan 64). Qutb opens his influential discourse with a chapter entitled, "the unique Qur'anic generation" and is, like bin Laden, dismayed that cultural contamination has stripped the Islamic world of its core values (53). He therefore insists on an in-depth examination of Islam's history during the time of Prophet Muhammad, asserting that "no generation of this caliber and character ever came into existence in the subsequent periods or history" (Qutb 53).

Coupled with the notion that the values of Islam have been corroded by influences of the West and elements of modernity is the idea that the world has reverted to the pre-Islamic state of *jahiliyya*. A discussion of *jahiliyya* takes a prominent role in the theories of Qutb, who claims that "Whenever a human society deviates from the right path of Islam, whether in the past or present, this state of *jahiliyyah* relapses" (250). The importance of *jahiliyya* to the recent wave of radicalism is its application to not only the infidel West, but also to the Arab regimes that have abandoned the divine laws of Islam. Qutb himself advocates that Muslims "should rise in revolt against...*jahili* leadership in whatever garb or form it may be" (Qutb 100). Sivan tells an interesting account in which imprisoned members of the Muslim Brotherhood were urged to fight Israel in 1967 (Sivan 16). One of them, Sheik 'Ali Abduh Isma'il expressed no interest on the

grounds that Egypt “is infidel and so is whoever supports it. Israel and Nasser were both...but two variations of tyranny, both totally inimical to Islam” (Sivan 16). Similarly, bin Laden explicitly equates the Saudi regime with *jahiliyya* in his 1996 *Declaration of War* in stating, “It is not a secret that to use man made law instead of the *Shari’a* and to support the infidels against the Muslims is one of the ten ‘voiders’ that would strip a person from his Islamic status.”

Evidently, simple rejection of the West and Israel are also crucial components of the pervading theories of *jahiliyya*. In fact, the *9/11 Commission* noted that for Muslims, Osama bin Laden himself is a very strong symbol of opposition to the Western world and particularly its most influential nation, the United States of America (54). His rhetoric denouncing the USA has been so strong that Bergen concludes, “bin Laden was able to convince a transnational coalition of Arabs that the myriad of problems of their home countries were somehow all the fault of the United States” (234). This point is in direct agreement with Qutb’s theory that *jahiliyya* is a threat in that has “permeated in our beliefs and ideas, our habits and manners, our culture and its sources, literature and art, and current rules and laws to the extent that what we consider Islamic culture, Islamic sources, Islamic philosophy and Islamic thought are all the products of *jahiliyya*” (61). Al-Qaeda accepts the core of Qutb’s ideas enthusiastically, adding a few specifics with al-Zawahiri’s claim that “America, with the collaboration of the Jews, is the leader of corruption and the breakdown [of values], whether moral, ideological, political or economic.”

The most important aspect of the theory of *jahiliyya* is that it becomes meshed with the political goals of radical Islam. As it was earlier established that the creation of an Islamic state to be ruled under the leadership of a restored *khalifa* is an essential component of the bin Laden philosophy, a most crucial idea is that a true Islamic state cannot exist so long as elements of *jahiliyya* remain. P. Williams very aptly makes this point in stating that for bin Laden, the triumph of Islam “must be comprehensive in order to be effective” (48). This stems directly from Qutb’s *Ma’alim fi al-Tariq*, which states clearly that “Islam does not accept any half-way compromise with *jahiliyyah*” (228). Furthermore, Qutb seeks to strengthen his argument by attempting to show that the West has already demonstrated its inability to lead mankind. Just as

“democracy has proven sterile,” the West is plagued by injustice, racism, petty nationalism, feminism, and other forms of depravity because it lacks the values unique to pure Islam (Qutb 44).

Sivan highlights Qutb’s views of polluted Western culture in a quote that recalls Qutb’s stay in the United States. Qutb explained, “I took an offensive position...[vis-à-vis] its [the West’s] depraved and dissolute socioeconomic and moral conditions: This Christian idolatry of the Trinity and its notions of sin and redemption which make no sense at all; this Capitalism, predicated as it is on monopoly and interest-taking, money-grubbing, and exploitation...that animal freedom which is called permissiveness, that slave market dubbed ‘women’s liberation’” (Sivan 68). Because the struggle against *jahiliyya* must achieve complete victory, jihad becomes characterized as an eternal conflict. Bin Laden expressed this opinion in the 1998 Declaration of the World Islamic Front, which stated, “Fight them [pagans] until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah” (Laqueur 412). Again the underpinnings of these ideas can be traced to Qutb, who likewise acknowledged that the “struggle is not a temporary phase but a perpetual and permanent war...the surging tide of Jihad cannot cease until the satanic forces are put to an end” (125).

Each of the commonalities between the philosophies that motivate bin Laden and the discourse set out by Sayyid Qutb, from nostalgia to *jahiliyya*, culminate in one major idea that serves as the axis on which the Islamic radicalist movement spins: the concept of global jihad. From a theoretical standpoint, the recent wave of Islamic fundamentalism is characterized by its definition of jihad as an obligatory individual struggle representing the only means of establishing true Islam. Because “even the slightest influence [of *jahiliyya*] is enough to defile the pure and clear stream of Islam,” the necessity of waging jihad emerges as if it were a sixth pillar of Islam (Qutb 208). Though it is traditionally even extremely difficult for an Islamic scholar to issue a *fatwa* declaring jihad, bin Laden has not been deterred from attempting to pass off jihad against Americans and Jews as a fundamental responsibility of true believers. He erroneously claims, “Jihad continues to be a commandment incumbent personally upon every Muslim.” Sadly, his voice rings loudly in the Middle East. Reuven Paz, in his “Islamists and Anti-Americanism” confirms the distressing reality that “Many in the Islamic world now view concepts synonymous

in Western political culture with terrorism and political violence to be Islamic religious duties.” Also, while the traditional view of jihad distinguishes between “greater jihad,” the internal struggle to remain faithful, and “lesser jihad,” referring to holy war, Islamic fundamentalists of recent decades have re-prioritized the two (P. Williams 129).

Overall, the fundamentalist concept of jihad against Islam’s enemies boils down to very simple Manichaeism. Since radicals represent Islam as the true guiding light and *jahiliyya* as a state of darkness, it follows in their minds that the two cannot possibly reign simultaneously (Qutb 228). According to Qutb, “Mutual intermixing and intermingling of Truth and Falsehood and their co-existence is impossible. Either the command of Allah will prevail or that of *jahiliyya*. Either the divine code will operate or the desire of self will rule” (228). How ironic that a movement based on the unification of Muslims translates into a dualism driven by fierce hatred vis-à-vis the rest of the world. The underlying simplicity of all of Qutb’s ideas could not be more obvious than when he closes his book with the emotionally charged phrase, “These fabricators and deceiving people are liars” (276).

The nature of bin Laden’s ideals clearly resembles an outgrowth of Islamic fundamentalist thought that has been stirring the Middle East for many years. Obsessed with combating the perceived “enemies” of Islam—whether secularism, nationalism, or even Judaism—al-Qaeda derives its strength from its ability to combine the interests and hatreds of nationally-based terror cells with larger visions of Muslim reunification. Yet, for all bin Laden’s rhetoric of unity, he himself refuses to accept all of the teachings of his own religion. In 1999, *Newsweek* quoted bin Laden saying, “The terrorism we practice is of the commendable kind for it is directed at the tyrants and aggressors and the enemies of Allah” (P. Williams 18). At the same time, he has forgotten the Qur’an’s explicit charge that civilians be protected at all times (Bergen 20). While he makes use of the *Shahadah* as a dramatic introduction and conclusion to his public statements, his own terror network is based on participants pledging their allegiance not to Allah, but to bin Laden himself. Considering that the oath to bin Laden, known as *b’ayat*, is accompanied by a ceremony of fasting and self-beating, it may be argued that al-Qaeda operatives’ loyalty to bin Laden approaches a form of worship in and of itself (P. Williams 2).

Evidently, bin Laden is not overly conscious about re-inventing Islam when it is convenient or viewing himself as a “kind of modern Muhammad” (Kahati and Y. Fighe). Far more than a cultural conflict, the ideas espoused by bin Laden have been broadcasted throughout the Middle East for decades, a menacing signal of a violent storm yet to arrive. Only too late did the Western world begin to tune in and listen.

IV. TRACKING THE APPEAL OF ISLAMISM

“One of the greatest virtues in Islam is jihad for the sake of God. Ramadan is the month of jihad and battles and most Muslim battles took place during the blessed month. This is your season, o people of jihad. Jihad during the fasting month of Ramadan has a great taste—for what better way to break your fast than to kill infidels and relish the sound of the weeping of the despicable tyrants and infidels.” –al-Jihad, an al-Qaeda Web magazine in Saudi Arabia (In Their Own Words)

In a 2002 public opinion poll, a stunning majority of Middle Eastern Muslims indicated their belief that the September 11th terrorist attacks were carried out by the Mossad or the CIA (Gunaratna 69). Information from the United States concerning the identity of the hijackers was deemed unreliable and “public opinion in Arab countries was generally skeptical” that Osama bin Laden “could have been capable of masterminding such an elaborate, well-timed, and well-synchronized attack from his hideout in the mountains of Afghanistan” (al-Sayyid 5). Instead, it seemed more plausible that the intelligence services of the United States and Israel, which radicals label ‘enemies’ of the Islamic world, perpetrated the attacks in an effort to “drive a wedge between the Arabs and Muslims and Western people” (al-Sayyid 5). Evidence that the hijackers were all Arab Muslims and the circulation of two bin Laden video tapes, claiming responsibility for and praising the 9/11 attacks, were not sufficiently persuasive to alter these “initial positions” (al-Sayyid 10).

At the same time, US media and academics were quick to pose the question, “Why do they hate us?” in an attempt to make sense of the devastation left behind by the attacks. Some who investigated this question made the broad assumption that the attacks should be understood as a response to US actions, even suggesting that the relationship between US foreign policy and Islamic radicalism may be one of causation, rather than correlation. While these scholars and journalists unanimously decried 9/11 as an unreasonably violent reaction, their thirst to understand this alleged causation lends some legitimacy to the hatred that served as the impetus for the attacks. This perspective is flawed in its inability to analyze al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization whose goals have evolved over the course of a roughly twenty-year history. It also overlooks the fact and that al-Qaeda’s ideology combines discourses from various periods in radical Islamic thought. By hastily attributing the group’s actions to external issues—the idea that al-Qaeda is

simply seeking a bloody redress of grievances against the Western world—the position neglects factors internal to the Middle East that allow bin Laden’s violent message to hold sway in the region.

Instead of attempting to show *why* the United States, along with Israel, Jews, and Western European dubbed “Crusader” nations, has provoked al-Qaeda’s wrath, it is perhaps of greater worth to understand *how* al-Qaeda attracts followers to perform its fatal work. This question of the influence of al-Qaeda’s rhetoric among certain Muslims was aptly expressed by the 9/11 Commission when it inquired, “How did bin Laden—with his call for the indiscriminate killing of Americans—win thousands of followers and some degree of approval from millions more?” (48). It is the goal of this chapter to shed some light on this question. The issue of al-Qaeda recruitment and training, however, will be treated in-depth in chapter five.

On April 1, 2004, Ambassador J. Cofer Black testified before the House International Relations Committee in an attempt to assess the threat al-Qaeda poses to the United States (Testimony by Ambassador J. Cofer Black). His nearly ten-page testimony offers the perspective that al-Qaeda’s clearly stated motives have resonated strongly among certain Middle Eastern Muslims, despite setbacks incurred to the organization by the United States invasion of Afghanistan (Testimony by Ambassador J. Cofer Black). Emphasizing the organization’s determination, Black argues that al-Qaeda continues to display its “willingness to kill and maim large numbers of innocent civilians around the world, regardless of faith, nationality, race, class and creed” and that al-Qaeda should still be considered a “potent force, despite the continuing efforts of the community of civilized nations to remove this evil from the world.” His testimony also demonstrates that the group possesses an ideological stronghold among radical Islamists. According to Black, al-Qaeda has managed to influence “a number of largely Sunni Islamic extremist groups” which “are moving to pick up al-Qaeda’s standard and attempting to pursue global jihad against the United States and our allies” (Testimony by Ambassador J. Cofer Black). While the United States urges other Western nations to participate in the War on Terror, al-Qaeda has developed a campaign to spread its lethal ideology to areas beyond the Middle Eastern countries that have historically provided bin Laden with his key operatives.

Political and social conditions in the Islamic world, and the Middle East in particular, emerge as an essential factor in the spread of extremism. One article on the mobilization of Islamic terrorists identifies “the absence in much of the Muslim world of democratic, accountable governments, and, indirectly related to this, disputes over contested territory” as a key factor of the appeal of Islamism (Barsalou). Information contained in the 2002 United Nations Arab Human Development Report, a document extremely relevant to the cultivation of recruits for the 9/11 mission, confirms this position. Though the report acknowledges that Middle Eastern countries have made “significant strides in more than one area of human development in the last three decades,” its presents a bleak portrait of living conditions that validate the article’s link between disillusionment and extremism (vii).

Assuming that freedom is a necessary ingredient for human development, the report emphasizes that freedom deficits in Arab states have contributed to the region’s political stagnation. In a section entitled, “Aspirations for Freedom and Democracy Remain Unfulfilled,” the authors explain, “there is a substantial lag between Arab countries and other regions in terms of participatory governance” (21). While forces of democratization have been an influential factor in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and other developing regions, they have “barely reached the Arab States” (Arab Human Development Report 21). An absence of checks and balances, excessively powerful executive branches of government, and “obsolete norms of legitimacy” create a situation where freedoms of expression and participation are habitually neglected (Arab Human Development Report 2). Arab governments also appear guilty of regularly denying basic human rights that their own constitutions, in principle, protect (Arab Human Development Report 2).

While citizens of certain countries, such as Kuwait and Qatar, may elect representatives to their national assemblies, “mass mobilization-type regimes still exist in a number of Arab countries, freedom of association is restricted in other cases, levels of political participation are uneven, and the transfer of power through the ballot box is not a common phenomenon in the Arab world” (Arab Human Development Report 108). As a result, the report shows that most Arabs are consistently alienated from political processes. Their lack of confidence in their

governments is “reflected in low turnout rates during national and local elections,” indicating that when permitted to exercise political rights, most citizens view the practice as futile (Arab Human Development Report 109). Of particular interest is the fact that “voting rates in elections have been under 50 percent” in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon—three countries generally recognized for their “competitive legislative elections” (Arab Human Development Report 109).

Limits on political participation are exacerbated by conflicts in the Arab world. The UN Arab Human Development Report of 2002 identifies conflict as a primary characteristic influencing living conditions in the Middle East, arguing that the repercussions of violence emanate not only in the political realm, but also in the areas of economic and social well being. Specifically, “political upheavals, military conflicts” as well as “sanctions and embargoes” linked to such conflicts have had the continuous effect of “causing declines in productivity and disrupting markets” (Arab Human Development Report 21). As a result, “all affected countries have emerged with compounded socio-political problems that have retarded progressive moves towards liberalization and democratization” (Arab Human Development Report 21). As examples, the report shows that Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, and Sudan are all areas which have experienced the double-edged sword of conflict: political volatility accompanied by severe economic repercussions in the form of high unemployment, hyperinflation, the fleeing of foreign capital necessary for investment, and the destruction of infrastructure (Arab Human Development Report 97).

The political and economic ills of the Middle East make the region fertile ground for the cultivation of extremism, with al-Qaeda emerging as only one breed among a variety of radical groups that garner extensive support in the Arab world. While it is acknowledged that, “individuals join extremist groups for a number of reasons,” there nevertheless exists a common denominator among the Middle East’s radicals (Barsalou). According to one scholar’s analysis, Islamist groups recruit those who, “regardless of their social class or economic background, feel they have been humiliated and treated as ‘second class’ by government authorities and others” (Barsalou). Many of those who join extremist organizations believe that their anger will be quenched in advancing radical agendas which “promote specific political goals” as well as other

“financial, spiritual, and emotional incentives” (Barsalou). Whereas “the conflicts within Islam and within Muslim societies can be exaggerated in the minds of Muslims,” particularly those who “live as minorities in Western countries...[that] can feel as if they have no home,” al-Qaeda provides a form of escape, “an idealized, imaginary world where their conflicts are solved” (P. Williams 112).

In *The Age of Terror: America and The World After September 11*, former US diplomat Charles Hill presents a similar argument that failings in Middle Eastern political institutions have contributed to the rise of Islamic extremism. His analysis of Arab political systems concludes with his belief, “Every regime of the Arab-Islamic world has proved a failure. Not one has proved able to provide its people with realistic hope for a free and prosperous future” (qtd. in Bergen 235). He also suggests that “The regimes have found no way to respond to their people’s frustration other than a combination of internal oppression and propaganda to generate rage against external enemies” (qtd. in Bergen 235). As a result, “Religious inflamed terrorists take root in such soil. Their threats to the regimes extort facilities and subsidies that increase their strength and influence. The result is a downward spiral of failure, fear and hatred” (qtd. in Bergen 235).

Like the Arab Human Development Report, which shows that Middle Eastern countries present a paradox between enormous wealth and widespread poverty, Peter Bergen’s work rails against the “distortions of the body economic” of the Middle East as a contributing factor to the growth of Islamic extremism (235). Bergen argues that “closed markets” and “an over-reliance on oil revenues” have generated severely slumped economies in the Middle East, conditions which perpetuate a sense of “limited...opportunities and effective disenfranchisement” among the Arab world’s disproportionately large young male population (Bergen 235). According to Bergen’s calculations, “if you subtract oil revenues from the GDP of the six countries that make up the Persian Gulf states, their total output is equal to that of Finland” (235). Similarly, when the researches of the UN Arab Human Development Report polled Arabs between 15 and 20 years of age, young males indicated that opportunities for employment constituted their overriding concern (30). Also, an overwhelming 51 percent of the youths polled “expressed a desire to emigrate to

other countries, clearly indicating their dissatisfaction with current conditions and future prospects in their home countries” (30). The *9/11 Commission Report* likewise acknowledges, “the repression and isolation of women in many Muslim countries have not only seriously limited individual opportunity but also crippled overall economic productivity” in the Arab world (53).

In the face of economic hardship, Bergen argues that Islamism is appealing on multiple levels. He writes, “It [Islamism] is a political doctrine which emerges naturally from the cultural fabric of Muslim countries; its slogan ‘Islam is the solution’ proposes a simple fix to all of society’s problems, and it appears to promise a brighter future than the mirages of pan-Arab nationalism and socialism, which were the orthodoxies of the Middle East in past decades” (235). In the introduction to his *Inside al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, Rohan Gunaratna also calls for Arab governments to bear the responsibility of the rise of al-Qaeda, not only for their authoritarian practices but also for their maintenance of damaging economic policies (xlv). He argues that “the failure of Arab leaders to invest in their citizens, despite receiving the financial benefits of the oil boom, has increased the ideological appeal of terrorist groups. The Arab regimes share the blame for their failure to build modern education systems, create new jobs, and improve the quality of life for their people” (xlv).

Gunaratna’s comment speaks directly to a common tactic of Middle Eastern governments to shrug responsibility for the political, economic, and social dilemmas that plague their populations. Peter Bergen describes this situation as the “conspiracy culture of the Middle East” which seeks to identify only external factors as the causes of problems in the Arab world (234). Arab governments, as well as bin Laden, have been successful in demonstrating that “the myriad of problems of their home countries were somehow all the fault of the United States, rather than the incompetence and corruption of their various governments, most of which are authoritarian kleptocracies” (Bergen 234). Thus, the Middle East becomes a region where the message of anti-Americanism is able to thrive or as Gunaratna describes it, where “during the last decade, Islamism has been moving from the margins to the center stage” (316).

Finally, the *9/11 Commission Report* argues that Arab education systems, as well as the teachings of radical clerics in some of the most important mosques play an important role in

radicalizing certain Muslims. The report suggests that education in the Arab world has failed to include any kind of intercultural or interfaith elements in its curricula: “Millions, pursuing secular as well as religious studies, were products of educational systems that generally devoted little if any attention to the rest of the world’s thought, history and culture” (54). Even more alarming is that Islamism—a politically ideology that is inspired but not justified by the tenets of Islam—has infiltrated key mosques, with the potential of contaminating the worship of moderate Muslims. For example, one of Sheikh Abdel Rahman al-Sudeis’ Ramadan sermons, delivered at the Great Mosque of Mecca, presents political ideas extremely similar to the content of bin Laden’s public statements. The theme of the sermon centers on the “state terrorism of international Zionism” and asks listeners, “Are we incapable of finding just solutions to stop the flow of Muslim blood, to revive the Islamic nations’ security, greatness and prestige?” (Gunaratna 316). Gunaratna argues that at this moment, when al-Sudeis spoke these words in the most important mosque of the Islamic world, “Islam’s holiest place, where spirituality and charity are promoted, had been converted into a political platform. The pilgrims who usually depart for their homes refreshed with feelings of peace and solace returned disturbed and agitated, and hence vulnerable to the propaganda of al-Qaeda and its associate groups” (316). Evidence that radical ideas can penetrate Arab schools and mosques make it less surprising that, in a recent Saudi intelligence report, 95 percent of educated Saudis aged twenty-five to forty-one claimed they “supported bin Laden’s cause” (Corbin 258).

While Arab living conditions provide ground for extremism, such that one might be attracted to join Yemen’s al-Jihad Group, Palestinian territories’ Hamas or the multi-national al-Qaeda for many of the same reasons, what accounts for al-Qaeda’s significant growth since the Cold War years? One reason hinges on the role of Osama bin Laden and his ability to attract diverse individuals to support his cause. As chapter two demonstrates, his very persona is enshrouded legend, a quality that intensifies fear among Westerners and earns the devotion of his supporters. Peter Bergen does not hesitate to acknowledge that it is “bin Laden’s ability to attract recruits,” particularly those invested in al-Qaeda to the extent of being “willing to martyr themselves,” “that is the priceless commodity in his holy war” (107). Likewise, Gunaratna

estimates that “in the spectrum of contemporary terrorist leaders, Osama bin Laden has no equal” (71).

Like the historical underpinnings of his notorious terrorist organization, the cultivation of Osama’s nearly legendary reputation among his supporters began with his participation in the Afghan jihad. It was not long before he earned a position of esteem among the thousands of Muslim volunteers. In a January 14, 2001 *New York Times* article, Algerian scholar and Afghan jihad veteran Abdullah Anas recounted to Stephen Engelberg his recollections of a young Osama bin Laden: “He was one of the guys who came to the jihad in Afghanistan. But, unlike the others, what he had was a lot of money. He’s not very sophisticated politically and organizationally. But he’s an activist with a great imagination. He ate very little. He slept very little. Very generous. He’d give you his clothes” (P. Williams 76). His mentor, Abdullah Azzam, was likewise impressed with bin Laden’s willingness to share his wealth and indulge in the experience of the common man. When bin Laden would sleep on the floor alongside Azzam and other fighters, Azzam would point out to others, “You see, this man has everything in his own country. You see, he lives with all the poor people in this room” (P. Williams 76).

Since the collapse of the USSR, bin Laden has capitalized on his own mythic reputation and on a theme concerning Islam’s grandeur that appeals to Muslims globally. Through use of hyperbole, bin Laden’s statements are moving to Muslims who perceive them as reminiscent of “Islam’s past greatness” (9/11 Commission 48). His message makes him synonymous with some kind of hope, for he “promises to restore pride to people who consider themselves the victims of successive foreign masters” from the legacy of European colonialism to United States hegemony today (9/11 Commission 48). His own identity is also steeped in the glory of Islam’s past. Institute of Counter-Terrorism researcher Yoram Schweitzer argues that bin Laden, a “cherished figure” in Muslim communities of the Third World, is “seen as the new Salaah e-Din, both infamous and feared in many countries” (Threat or Myth).

Dr. Yoram Kahati and Yoni Fighel carry the metaphor even farther to suggest that Laden portrays himself as Muhammad’s divine successor. It is clear that bin Laden views his struggle as a cosmic war between the forces of good and evil (Juergensmeyer). However, in their article,

“Osama bin Laden as the New Prophet of Islam,” Kahati and Y. Figchel analyze a July 2003 bin Laden audiotope to determine that bin Laden believes he is someone “who has not only the authority but the duty to update the dogmatic principles of Islamic religious law.” As such, bin Laden may be viewed by his followers not only as a modern-day prophet, but also as a man to be worshipped, ironically both strictly forbidden in Islam. In the thirty-minute tape that serves as the basis for Kahati and Y. Figchel’s scholarship, bin Laden urges believers to “adopt what he calls Islam’s original message, updated in line with his own interpretation.” Perhaps most shocking is that bin Laden’s taped message introduces “five new pillars of religious law” that are “new and unprecedented additions to Islam’s original message” (Kahati and Y. Figchel). To inspire listeners with the necessity of waging jihad, bin Laden argues that the pillars of “the group, listening, obedience, emigration, and jihad” are as important as the Muslim practices of belief in Allah, ritual prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage (Kahati and Y. Figchel).

Bin Laden’s message is also empowered by perceptions of the terrorist leader in underdeveloped Muslim countries as “the supreme symbol of resistance to US imperialism” (9/11 Commission 71). In fact, the pattern has been such that the bolder bin Laden’s exploits against the US, the greater popularity he enjoys abroad. A turning point in the cultivation of his reputation came after the downing of two US Blackhawks in Mogadishu and the subsequent withdrawal of US forces from Somalia in 1993 (P. Williams 137). In a clever public relations move, bin Laden quickly likened this incident to the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, allowing al-Qaeda to appear triumphant in one more step toward the ultimate defeat of the United States. He argued, “We predict a black day for America and the end of the United States as United States, and will be separate states. And will retreat from our land and collect the bodies of its sons back to America” (P. Williams 137).

Bin Laden’s popularity was likewise rewarded when the US launched a military campaign against al-Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant in Khartoum following the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania (Bergen 126). When it was later uncovered that al-Shifa had not been involved in the production of chemical weapons, the humiliation of the United States “turned bin Laden from a marginal figure in the Muslim world into a global celebrity” (Gunaratna 128). Within weeks of

the attack, hasty biographies of bin Laden turned bestsellers in Islamabad and Osama became a household name. Maulana Sami al-Huq, a cleric who runs a prestigious Pakistani madrassa, told Bergen that bin Laden is above all, “a symbol for the whole Islamic world. Against all those outside powers who were trying to crush Muslims. He is the courageous one who raised his voice against them. He’s a hero to us, but it is America that first made him a hero” (Gunaratna 129). Osama’s reputation received a similar boost after 9/11, when Muslims named their sons after him and he was regarded as a champion among Muslims all over the world. From the Middle East to corners of Southeast Asia, “Osama memorabilia—cassettes, CDs and DVDs of his speeches, to posters, T-shirts, pens and sweets bearing his imprint and booklets and magazine articles about him—have proliferated” (Gunaratna 69-70). In a twist of irony, some of these sympathizers who praise bin Laden’s defiance to US hegemony could one day be targeted by his own violence. Schweitzer notes that al-Qaeda “advocates continual and indiscriminate violence against all Kafirs (heretics) all over the world regardless of their sex, age or religion. They prefer to target Jews and Christians, but will also target ‘moderate’ Muslims.”

The issue of bin Laden’s popularity naturally begs the question of whether the global terrorist movement known as al-Qaeda will be able to endure beyond his lifetime. As Gunaratna explains, “Osama has always been well aware that because of the high-risk nature of his life he will one day be captured or killed” (71). But when his death arrives, the question of the day will be, “Was the man the movement or has the movement gone beyond the individual?” (Gunaratna 71). There appear to be two conditions that may tip the scales in bin Laden’s favor: (1) the diverse nature of al-Qaeda supporters and (2) his effective propaganda machine.

Scholars generally agree that where bin Laden exceeds other terrorist leaders is in his ability to build an organization that transcends ethnic and sectarian identity. While researching al-Qaeda in Great Britain, Peter Bergen attended a Walthamstow conference on “Osama bin Laden and Terrorism” in April 2000 and received a first-hand glimpse of the diverse Muslims that al-Qaeda has the capability to unite (211). As he passed under a sign reading JIHAD AGAINST THE PIRATE STATE OF ISRAEL, he scoped the audience that had attended the meeting:

The meeting was in a nondescript community hall, inside which a group of men

were prostrating themselves in prayer. The hardcore went for a military-chic look. Some wore kaffiyehs and combat jackets; others the woolen cap that marked them as veterans, would-be or otherwise, of the Afghan holy war. A few sported the photographer's vest that network correspondents affect when they want to signal that they're in a war zone. But most of the audience was dressed in the unremarkable fashion of students, cabbies, and small-business owners. I counted about 250 men and, somewhat surprisingly, more than a hundred women, a few completely covered but most wearing simply head scarves. It was a polyglot crowd of Arabs, Africans, and Asians. (Bergen 211)

While other radical groups devise an agenda narrowed on specific conflicts, "Osama's aim is to mobilize Muslims worldwide and turn them against the West" (Gunaratna 68). As a result, al-Qaeda's appeal has the effect of "blurring ... the political and the religious differences in Islam" (Gunaratna 68). Specifically, bin Laden has widened his base of support by taking up broad struggles: opposition to the West as well as the use of hatred-filled rhetoric against Israelis and Jews (P. Williams 46). This strategy seems to have developed in the mid-1990s, when bin Laden "convinced al-Zawahiri of the need to change al-Qaeda's strategy" from the lambasting of Arab regimes (particularly Saudi Arabia and Egypt) that fail to adhere to strict Islamic principles and that cooperate with the West to "that of attacking US and Israeli targets" (Gunaratna 51). As the Israeli-Palestinian struggle has been a rallying point for Muslims across the globe, this new focus significantly expanded al-Qaeda's scope of terrorist activities and its base of support. Bin Laden's broader emphasis on the struggle of Muslims worldwide appeals to militants engaging in various regional struggles and provides them with a global purpose that goes beyond their local concerns. Gunaratna emphasizes that bin Laden is unique in this aspect, for he is "the only leader to have built a truly multinational terrorist group that can strike anywhere in the world" (71).

Perhaps the most compelling argument as to why al-Qaeda has the potential to endure even when its leader fades from the scene hinges on the organization's effective public relations work through various forms of media. Though Gunaratna does not emphasize this point, it should be noted that Osama bin Laden is unique as a terrorist leader that developed effective forms of

recruiting and spreading his message across the globe. The use of public relations tactics is an element of al-Qaeda's operation firmly entrenched in its history, as the practice started when Maktab al-Khadimat published recruiting materials on the progress of the Afghan war in order to beckon Muslim volunteers to join the fight. Some of the materials included *Jihad* magazine and the book *The Love and Hour of the Martyrs* (Bergen 110). Perhaps inspired by the circulation of the fiery audiotapes of his mentor Abdullah Azzam, Osama learned early the value of stirring propaganda (Bergen 110). After the Afghan Arab victory at Jaji, "Arab journalists based in Peshawar wrote daily dispatches about bin Laden's battlefield exploits that were widely published in the Middle East and brought a flood of new recruits to the Afghan jihad" (Bergen 60).

Since the Soviet-Afghan jihad, bin Laden's message has reached Muslims in the Western world largely through the collaboration of his friend Khaled al-Fawwaz, a portly civil engineer from Saudi Arabia (Corbin 56). Described by journalists as the "gateway to the leader of al-Qaeda," al-Fawwaz located to London in 1994, eager to benefit from England's relaxed laws toward refugees and political dissidents that earned the nation's capital the epithet, "Londonistan" (Corbin 56-7). In the same year, he established the Advice and Reformation Committee (ARC), a group that formally stands to oppose the oppressive Saudi regime but also served as bin Laden's propaganda hub in the West (Gunaratna 156). Al-Fawwaz has repeatedly claimed, "I don't work for Osama, we are friends" (Bergen 92). US investigators, however, point to an ARC document, signed by Osama bin Laden, which resolves to "(1) establish an office in London; (2) to appoint Mr. Khalid A. al-Fawwaz director of this office" as evidence of al-Fawwaz's allegiance to the al-Qaeda leader (Gunaratna 155). Located in an office on Beethoven Street, West Kilburn, London, ARC headquarters were "equipped with state-of-the-art communications enabling him [al-Fawwaz] to talk directly to Osama" (Gunaratna 155).

Whichever the case, it is clear that al-Fawwaz has played an indispensable role in disseminating bin Laden's message to sympathizers and potential recruits in the Western hemisphere. Describing bin Laden as "humble, charming, intelligent, a really significant wealthy chap for Islamic causes who gave up everything to go and fight in Afghanistan," al-Fawwaz publicized bin Laden's commentary on the Saudi regime in order to strengthen the ARC as a

reform group (Bergen 3). Though al-Fawwaz has held back from endorsing bin Laden's policies of indiscriminate killing, texts of his own statements are a mirror image of the discourses he disseminates from the al-Qaeda leader (Corbin 57). Al-Fawwaz's own position has been the following: "We believe in the *umma*, one great nation and religion only. Non-Muslims are not allowed to stay in the Arabian peninsula. Even civilians are not allowed to stay. If there is a military presence it is completely unacceptable" (Corbin 57). Al-Fawwaz has been instrumental in publicizing bin Laden's rhetoric in a number of key media sources, particularly the influential London-based Arabic newspaper *al-Quds al-Arabi* (Gunaratna 156). The *9/11 Commission Report* indicates that the newspaper printed bin Laden's fatwas of February 23, 1998 and May 7, 1998. Some charge that in addition to disseminating propaganda, al-Fawwaz managed bin Laden's British and other foreign back accounts (Gunaratna 83).

Though al-Fawwaz was arrested in September 1998, bin Laden's media operations were held intact by two other outlets—al-Jazeera and a media arm in the East (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 163). Al-Jazeera was established in 1996 as an independent Arabic news source in Qatar and has since been an important broadcast source of bin Laden's ideas throughout the Middle East (Corbin 92). Since 1999, al-Jazeera has issued detailed biographies of bin Laden and has invited him for interviews to discuss "his childhood and his life in exile...his political and religious views—and his desire to obtain a nuclear weapon" (Corbin 92). Al-Jazeera also offered its viewers a "talk show, celebrity-style television interview" of bin Laden at a time when he "was becoming a hero in the Middle East" and "people were hungry to know more about the ascetic and distant figure" (Corbin 92). In addition, bin Laden's propaganda machine was held together by Abu Musab, an Arab nicknamed "Reuter" who, in Hayatabad, Afghanistan, published a number of periodicals to support bin Laden's cause, including the daily newspaper *Nashrat al-Akhar* and weekly updates on al-Qaeda's jihad (Gunaratna 112).

A particularly influential weapon in al-Qaeda's public relations arsenal has been that of cyberspace—the use of the information superhighway to spread its ideas, attract supporters and above all, imbue young Muslims with a radical interpretation of Islamic concepts. While the internet has been a powerful tool in spreading information on various conflicts—Timothy Thomas,

author of “The Danger of ‘Cyberplanning’,” notes that the Internet “has provided a virtual battlefield for peacetime hostilities between Taiwan and China, Israel and Palestine, Pakistan and India, and China and the United States”—it has proven instrumental in touting bin Laden’s ideals and allowing for anonymous communication between al-Qaeda operatives. Yoni Fighel and Moshe Marzouk argue in their article, “al-Qaida on the Internet,” that by posting information about its own attacks and issuing “repeated calls to its followers to attack American targets,” al-Qaeda can use the web to “manipulate world perception of its own power.” This aspect is itself a double-edged sword: al-Qaeda Internet propaganda attracts new recruits by glorifying bin Laden and his movement while also injecting fear into its enemies. As Y. Fighel and Marzouk put it, Internet propaganda serves as “psychological warfare in which the group [al-Qaeda] manipulates and distorts facts to enhance its image.”

Texts on Islamist websites are often extremely emotional, appealing to feelings of anger and alienation that may be experienced by young Muslims in the Middle East or the West. One popular site, Arabforum.net, is notorious for urging Muslims “to betray their countries for the sake of Jihad” (Y. Fighel and Marzouk). Y. Fighel and Marzouk describe the site as “popular among followers of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network,” noting that it is “particularly designed to appeal to young Moslems around the world.” The website calls specifically for Muslims “working in air and sea headquarters, airports and harbors, serving the USA and their allies...to rise and act to save the Moslem *umma*” by sabotaging targets that may assist the US led war in Iraq (Y. Fighel and Marzouk). Though research on Islamist websites is difficult because many have been shut down after 9/11, they are generally similar in content. Visitors can view videotapes from Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, quotes from radical religious discourses, *fatwas*, news on alleged al-Qaeda operations, and articles on jihad (Bergen 40).

Thomas notes that some prominent websites like mwhoob.net and aljihad.online “have political-religious songs, with pictures of persecuted Muslims, to denounce US policy and Arab leaders, notably Saud.” Azzam.com, a London based website, “details the lives of holy warriors martyred in conflicts around the world, sells videotapes of those wars, carries interviews with jihadist leaders, and sells books by the leading ideologues of jihad” (Bergen 40). As the general

aim of such websites is to attract new recruits, many also allow visitors to view al-Qaeda produced recruitment films in DVD format, material which is “easy to copy by computer and [make] available in several chatrooms” (Bergen 40). A recent article posted by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) acknowledges that one Islamist website, alhesbah.com, offers “an online opportunity...to Muslims to sign b’ayah,” the oath of loyalty to bin Laden that is a ritual among those who join al-Qaeda (Now Online: Swear Loyalty). In addition to pledging to bin Laden, those who choose to affirm their loyalty through the click of a mouse may also sign b’ayat to al-Zawahiri, Mullah Muhammad Omar of the Taliban or Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi (Now Online: Swear Loyalty). The text of the oath provided by the MEMRI article is located in the appendix.

The use of the Internet by al-Qaeda members and supporters offers several advantages in bolstering the organization’s impact. As Michael Whine explains in his article on cyberspace, “The arrival of the Internet has provided the first forum in history for...the disaffected to gather in one place to exchange views and reinforce prejudices.” The gathering of disillusioned or angry Muslims serves no exception: “The Islamist diaspora, now spread worldwide, seeks a return to divine-ruled states (or even one transnational state) in which all Muslims will live under the norms and laws of the Saudi Arabian peninsula in the first and second centuries of the Common Era. These types of organizations make them ideal users of networks and proponents of netwar.” Since the internet allows for anonymity and free expression, the Internet “can serve as a terrorist’s TV or radio station, or his international newspaper or journal...chat rooms, websites and bulletin boards are largely uncontrolled, with few filters in place” (Whine). Those posting radical messages can also rely on Internet technology to target specific users through the use of particular servers and language settings (Whine). Finally, Thomas points out that al-Qaeda has established websites of “Islamic humanitarian ‘charities’ to raise money for jihad against the perceived enemies of Islam,” many of which may not initially appear conspicuous to casual visitors.

Cyberspace is a powerful psychological tool which, highlighting the glory of bin Laden’s personality and his desire to mobilize young Muslims, can “help bridge the gap from the isolated potential *mujahed* to the global jihad” (Sageman 163). Marc Sageman informs his readers that while the Internet “does not provide a means to contact the jihad directly,” Islamist websites still

allow “an interested person...[to] find out the address of mosques and some organizations that might eventually make such links to the jihad” (163). In addition, Sageman remarks that cyberspace has “dramatically affected the global jihad by making possible a new type of relationship between an individual and a virtual community” (163). For instance, Islamist websites can aid in the cultivation of sentiments of loyalty and belonging and can appeal to young Muslims by offering a community that is “egalitarian, full of opportunity, unified in an Islam purged of national peculiarities, and devoid of corruption, exploitation and persecution” (161). As users become more and more attracted to radical websites and their associated chatrooms, their Internet use “appeals to and fosters disembeddedness,” making them more prone to adopting bin Laden’s radical ideology (161).

Ironically, Western media and mainstream websites have, in a sense, served to bolster the same al-Qaeda message that resonates through Islamist websites, videotapes, and newspapers. Often, a bin Laden-released video or audio tape receives amplified attention from broadcast journalists. Terrorist attacks are also presented in a particularly fearsome and gruesome light, such that “the media hype has played into al-Qaeda’s strategy of psychological warfare” (Y. Figchel, *Falling into the Al-Qaida Trap*). Since one of the goals of al-Qaeda operations, in addition to killing ‘infidels,’ is to spread fear and panic among those who survive, the hype issued by Western media allows al-Qaeda to succeed without incurring the difficulties, costs, and risks of launching actual attacks. As Y. Figchel notes, “The slightest rumor of an ‘imminent’ al-Qaeda operation is trumpeted from every street corner, spreading anxiety among a civilian population that is unsure of what, if anything, they are supposed to do to defend themselves” (*Falling into the Al-Qaida Trap*). Boaz Ganor actually extends this argument, claiming, “Terrorists could attain their aims without carrying out a single attack; the desired panic could be produced by the continuous broadcast of threats and declarations—by radio and TV interviews, videos and all the familiar methods of psychological warfare.” Websites, Islamist or otherwise, are many times the agents of inaccurate information (or in the case of Islamist websites, disinformation), making it difficult for authorities to assess threats and increasing the sense of randomness that al-Qaeda’s global attacks seem to suggest (Ganor). As Ganor argues, the multitude of terror threats, which seem to surface

without pattern, rhyme or reason, create the perception that al-Qaeda can attack anywhere at anytime. This terrifying slant on al-Qaeda's alleged capabilities make the organization more menacing to its victims and more appealing to potential recruits.

Of course, al-Qaeda's extensive use of technology begs the question of whether the organization is as much a product of global forces as it is a form of resistance to them. Though the *9/11 Commission Report* deems al-Qaeda a group that "appeals to people disoriented by cyclonic change as they confront modernity and globalization," Islamism is, by virtue of its goal to transform the international political landscape, an important element of global change in the modern world (48). As Iftikhar Malik, author of *Islam and Modernity* points out, Islamism and Western modernity are both "transformative and promise better futures," despite the fact that "political Islam largely receives inspiration from the past and wants to recreate it" (14). Perhaps, bin Laden and his followers see no contradiction in utilizing the products of Western modernity, so long as these devices advance their call for a return to pure Islamic worship. Or, al-Qaeda's reliance on modern technology and its involvement in the political arena may simply be as selective as its reading of the Qur'an.

V. SEEKING A PATH TO PARADISE

“Jihad, bullets and martyrdom operations are the only way to destroy the degradation and disbelief which have spread in the Muslims lands.” –from an al-Qaeda recruitment video discovered in London (Gunaratna 72)

Who joins the jihad? As we have seen, al-Qaeda is distinct in its effort to create a message with universal appeal for Muslims and, aided by modern technology, is able to attract a wide range of followers hailing from Western Europe, the Arab world, the Caucasus, Southeast Asia and other regions. Peter Bergen quite aptly captured al-Qaeda’s eclecticism when he described its members as a “rainbow coalition” representative of Islam’s remarkable diversity (32). In 2004, Marc Sageman made a substantial contribution to the academic study of these diverse al-Qaeda jihadists with his *Understanding Terror Networks*, a body of scholarship that provides up to date information while simultaneously deconstructing numerous misconceptions that have infiltrated the conventional wisdom on al-Qaeda. A psychiatrist and former CIA officer, Sageman created his book through a careful analysis of the profiles of some 172 terrorists, offering keen insight on the “alienated young men who become transformed into fanatics yearning for martyrdom and eager to kill” (Sageman vii).

Sageman’s study is a significant stepping-stone to understanding some of the less well-researched areas on al-Qaeda, including demographic information on its members. In terms of geographical distribution, Sageman shows that al-Qaeda members can be grouped according to their role in the organization and their ethnic origins. As such, the organization’s “Central Staff,” which Sageman identifies as the group responsible for developing operation strategies and tactics, training potential members, as well as handling finances and other logistical challenges, consists largely of Egyptians, Saudis, Kuwaitis, Jordanians, Iraqis, Libyans, and Lebanese (70-1). An important link between these members, usually considered the core part of the organization’s leadership and infrastructure, is that an extremely high proportion of them are veterans of the Afghan jihad (Sageman 71). This pattern provides empirical data on the importance of the Soviet-Afghan War as a critical point in the development of the global jihad movement (71). Apart from members of the “Central Staff,” Sageman categorizes the bulk of al-Qaeda terrorists in three

groups: (1) “Core Arabs” (2) “Maghreb Arabs” and (3) “Southeast Asians.” The Core Arabs represent Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Kuwait, England, Pakistan and Syria and formed thirty-eight percent of his sample (Sageman 71-2). Arabs from the Maghreb included second-generation Frenchmen, Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians, which comprised thirty-one percent of the sample (Sageman 71). Finally, the Southeast Asians, representing roughly twelve percent of the sample, consisted mostly of Indonesians, as well as some Malaysians, Singaporeans, and Filipinos (Sageman 72).

Sageman’s information emphasizes the heavy influence of Egyptians in the al-Qaeda organization as members of both the Central Staff and Core Arab cluster. While al-Qaeda may be commonly associated with Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan, Egyptians provide critical membership at the same time that ideologies of radical Egyptians have historically shaped the goals of al-Qaeda. Sageman acknowledges this point, arguing that “Egyptian militants brought their Qutbian ideology with them and expanded it” in the context of al-Qaeda and that “the roots” of the jihad, therefore, “are Egyptian” (72). He also highlights the conspicuous absence of certain nationalities among al-Qaeda’s operatives, such as the Afghans who, despite the long-term al-Qaeda presence within their borders, have not been sufficiently influenced to join the jihad in large numbers (Sageman 72). Turks, citizens of the only secular Muslim state, are also severely underrepresented in Sageman’s data (73). Finally, it is valuable to emphasize that England and France are represented among al-Qaeda’s ranks (Sageman 72). This information indicates that some proportion of Muslim immigrants to Western Europe have maintained strong connections to the Middle East over the duration of a generation or two. Rather than successfully integrating in their host societies, a significant number of these Muslims have been vulnerable to ideologies of the Arab world.

Sageman’s analysis reveals other information often overlooked by researchers. While many make the broad assumption that the typical terrorist is an unmarried male, Sageman notes a “high rate of marriage” among the terrorists he studied and argues that this pattern is “consistent with the tenets of...Islam, which encourages its faithful to marry and have children” (79). However, he also adds that “the nature of the marriages varied immensely,” including some wives

who “helped their husbands in their mission” and others who were “segregated...and often kept in the dark about her husband’s activities” (79). Also contrary to the conventional wisdom, Sageman points out that at least in the case of the global jihad, statistical evidence refutes the notion that terrorism is “fueled by poverty” or that it is “the weapon of choice of the dispossessed and powerless” (73). Instead, his samples show that the bulk of the jihadists, namely those forming the Central Staff and Core Arabs, “came principally from the upper and middle classes” (73). The profiles he analyzed indicate that “overall, about three-fourths” of the jihadists “were solidly upper or middle class” (74). As might be expected from the social status of these terrorists, al-Qaeda members have also been “fairly well-educated” (Sageman 75). In fact, Sageman points out that the “Core Arabs were so well-off that their families sent them to study abroad, where their radicalization began” (97). He also explains, “Over sixty percent [of his sample] have had at least some college education, which makes them, as a group, more educated than the average person worldwide” (Sageman 75). Of those who have attained positions of importance in al-Qaeda’s leadership, “eighty-eight percent had finished college and twenty percent had doctorate degrees” (Sageman 75).

Sageman’s discussion of the social status and education levels of al-Qaeda’s operatives has several resounding implications. While participation in the terrorist organization appears an unduly violent response to international affairs and issues affecting the Islamic world, the data suggests that these individuals, who are products of middle and upper class social standings and who have had reasonable educational experiences, are embracing jihad as a balanced and calculated choice. Terrorism, on the part of those who hold professional degrees, cannot be understood as a last-resort tactic or a desperate measure on the part of desperate individuals. Instead, the education levels of many of these terrorists makes them better equipped than most people in the Islamic world or elsewhere to comprehend world events and how to impact them. Those with university experience are most likely trained in several languages and critical thinking. Many have studied in the West, indicating that they have had early exposure to Western thought, social norms and political systems (Sageman 75). Information on these terrorists, who Sageman describes as worldly individuals with “cosmopolitan” experiences, “undermines the argument that

ignorance of and lack of contact with the West was a precondition for terrorism” (76). In fact, he very clearly remarks, “Their world experience contrasts sharply with that of most Western students, who are not familiar at all with the Middle East and could be more aptly charged with ethnocentrism” (76).

Though it would appear that these al-Qaeda operatives possess the skills necessary to relate to foreign cultures, they have, of their own volition, adopted the ideology of jihad as the defining principle of their actions. They have not been brainwashed to take up terrorist ambitions, even though the Western public generally assumes that “a singularly unappealing ideology would never attract anyone in his right mind, and only some form of coercion could explain its adoption” (Sageman 124). Yet, Sageman emphasizes that “from a scientific perspective, five decades of research have failed to provide any empirical support” for the general thesis on brainwashing as a key aspect of recruitment for al-Qaeda and like-minded Islamist terrorist organizations (124). The idea that joining the jihad is neither an act of desperation nor an irrational decision is corroborated by Sageman’s intensive study of the psychological condition of *mujahideen* for whom he had access to significant biographical information, legal testimonies, and journalistic studies (Sageman 81). As a psychiatrist, Sageman sympathizes with the idea that “the mental illness thesis provides a quick and comforting explanation for terrorism” (81). However, he argues that his “data confirms the absence of major mental disorders among the terrorists in the entire sample” (81). To further insist on this point, he reminds the reader that his findings are “consistent with three decades of research that has been unable to detect any significant pattern of mental illness in terrorists” (Sageman 83).

In anticipation of a possible rebuttal to his conclusions, Sageman also addresses the possibility of personality abnormalities among terrorists, specifically pathological or antisocial disorders. Yet, the hypothesis that al-Qaeda terrorists are sociopaths or psychopaths is also unsupported by the available research (81). Sageman points out that such disorders would actually make individuals less apt to participate in as al-Qaeda because they “might become *individual* terrorists,” but “they would not do well in a terrorist *organization*” (81). He continues, “Because of their personalities, they would not get along with others or fit well in an organization...they

lack dedication, perseverance and ability to sacrifice for the cause, as most spectacularly required in martyrdom...They are least likely to join any organization that makes great demands on them and would be weeded out early if they attempted to join” (Sageman 81). In his analysis of terrorist personalities, Sageman similarly notes that there is no significant evidence of pathological narcissism or paranoia among the *mujahideen*. While the tendency is strong to consider terrorists, particularly those who take on suicide missions, irrational individuals, Sageman’s analysis is fundamental in pointing out the flaws of such an approach. His work reminds scholars and investigators that al-Qaeda’s breed of terrorism is one that results from the rational decisions of its participants and that fanaticism is not to be confused with mental disorders. As Clark McCauley, co-director of the Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict, puts it, “They [the terrorists] are not crazy. Few can be diagnosed with any disorder found in the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. If only those with some kind of psychopathology could be terrorists, the problem of terrorism would be trivial” (qtd. in P. Williams 143).

While it may not be possible to pinpoint mental disorders or a particular psychological makeup that characterize al-Qaeda terrorists, a general study of the organization’s history and ideology does suggest that two factors in particular act as common denominators among its participants. The first is the influence of sentiments of displacement among the broader society. We have already noted that the idea of separation or alienation is grounded in al-Qaeda’s ideology, in which the Qutbian dichotomies between the abode of peace (*dar al-Islam*) and the abode of war (*dar al-harb*) and between Islam and *jahiliyya* are firmly established. In following Qutb’s belief that “mutual intermixing and intermingling of Truth and Falsehood and their co-existence is impossible,” al-Qaeda members are, in a sense, engaged in a struggle to renounce everything they deem *jahili* (228). By condemning the West as degenerate and Arab regimes as unfaithfully cooperative with Western *jahili* governments, the jihadists insist on removing themselves from both societies. A mixing of both the *islami* and *jahili* is unacceptable. Gunaratna explains that, in the face of *jahili* challenges to Islam, al-Qaeda terrorists feel obliged to pursue jihad in order to purify their societies (112). They are compelled to “remove oppression and injustice; establish

justice, well-being and prosperity; and to eliminate barriers to the spread of truth” (Gunaratna 112).

However, feelings of displacement, which are particularly important in a potential *mujahid's* decision to join the jihad, may develop before the individual's exposure to radical Islamist ideology. In a study of the childhoods of sixty-nine al-Qaeda members, Sageman noted that most were described by family members, neighbors, or classmates as “shy,” “introverted,” “serious,” “quiet,” “bright,” “excellent student,” and “loner” (85). Though some were described with such adjectives as “pleasant,” “easy-going,” and “happy,” Sageman does mention that “the loners” constituted the majority (85). As noted in chapter two, even Osama bin Laden is described as having been withdrawn from the more carefree lifestyles of his siblings and alienated from his father during his younger days (Burke).

The psychological effects of such sentiments can be aggravated when potential *mujahideen* study in the West, experiencing life as a religious minority in countries where immigrants from the Islamic world are not always readily accepted. Shireen T. Hunter explains in her introduction to *Islam, Europe's Second Religion* that the increasing visibility of Muslim immigrants has sparked strong prejudices in certain European countries where “the emergence of Islamist movements with anti-Western undertones,” in particular, has “resurrected old fears and negative images of Islam, which were only barely forgotten” (xv). Negative perceptions of Islam are augmented by the strong relationships Muslim communities in Europe may have with their countries of origins, a condition that leads indigenous Europeans to call “into question the Muslims' loyalty to their country of residence” (xv). Iftikhar Malik explains that in reality, most Muslims residing in the West are neither truly attached to their countries of origin nor integrated in their host societies; they are instead experiencing an identity crisis. “Economically as well as psychologically, Muslims are still gravely disadvantaged and the hierarchical relationship is further marred by subtle reservations emanating from both arrogance and discretion, still pervasive across certain powerful establishments,” he writes (122). Specifically, he notes that that the “Muslim Diaspora in France, like its counterpart in Britain, is still diverse and disorganized” (Malik 122). Disorganization among the European Muslim community makes it still more

difficult for individuals to find a balance between their Islamic identity and their European lifestyles. Political complications, such as the French headscarf issue, or more recently, the Danish cartoon issue, are “defining moment[s]” for many Muslims, “confirming them as perpetual outsiders...and pushing them towards a more radical Islam that is less accommodating with life in the late twentieth century” (Malik 130).

Malik’s arguments lend support to Sageman’s conclusion that for a large group of *mujahideen*, “conversions to the global jihad took place in the West, mostly in France, Germany, and England” (Sageman 93). Specifically, out of a group of 165 *mujahideen* that Sageman studied, “115 (70 percent) joined the jihad in a country where they had not grown up. They were expatriates—students, workers, refugees, fighters (in the jihad against the Soviets)—away from home and family. Another 14 were second generation in France, Britain, and the United States, where they might have felt a strong pull for the country of their parents and not been completely embedded in the host society” (Sageman 92). In Sageman’s estimation, many of the Core Arabs living as minorities in the West were “alienated, underemployed, and perhaps discriminated against, and therefore in a situation of relative deprivation” and vulnerability to the ideologies of jihad (97).

The second factor connecting al-Qaeda terrorists is that, ironically, most of them have not been thoroughly trained in Islam. In a second sample of 155 jihadists, Sageman noted that most were not devout since their early years. He explains, “There was a definite shift in degree of devotion to Islam in adulthood by the *mujahedin*, preceding their recruitment into the jihad” (Sageman 93). This data also indicates that the members are neither brainwashed after they join the movement nor the products of extremist upbringings. While some *mujahideen* may very well be religious since their childhoods, Sageman notes that of the 155 he studied, “all but one were considerably more devout right before joining the jihad than they had been as children” (93).

Reuven Paz, who has examined Islamist documents as well as the “Last Night” instructional letter that was found in Muhammad Atta’s luggage after 9/11, asserts that such writings reflect a poor understanding of Quranic concepts (Programmed Terrorists). With regard to Atta’s letter, he notes, “The language...is common to Islamists who have no formal Islamic

education, but only particular knowledge of the interpretations of radical Islam typical to these groups” (Programmed Terrorists). In fact, Paz observed that the letter’s rhetoric was extremely similar to jihad instruction manuals that have been found in various locations, including the United States and the United Kingdom (Programmed Terrorists). Paz argues that it is somewhat logical that such documents should be found among Muslim Diaspora communities of the West, where “as a consequence of social pressures, the Islamists tend to adopt causes whose emphasis is on social or political confrontation, but whose religious underpinnings and norms are marginal” (Programmed Terrorists). Paz’s analysis of the Islamic elements of Atta’s letter is insightful and worth quoting at some length:

...the Islamists are attracted by the more radical interpretation of Jihad as ordered by the Prophet—something that is well-illustrated in the hijackers’ letter. What’s more, the letter not only contains mistakes in Arabic, but the author also fails to use the phrase “may Allah pray upon him” [Allahu yarhamuhu], following the name of the Prophet, a practice followed automatically by more scholarly writers of Islamic texts. In all the recitations of Quranic verses in the text, the phrase “the Almighty is right” (“Saddaqa Allah al-‘Azim”), so typical of real Islamic writings, is entirely missing (Programmed Terrorists).

Paz also points to one other sentence in the letter that demonstrates the writer’s (and presumably its audience’s) lack of legitimate training in Islam (Programmed Terrorists). The line reads, “Mention God many times and be learned that the best of mentioning God is reciting or reading the Holy Qur’an, and this is what the scholars have agreed upon unanimously as much as I know” (Programmed Terrorists). Paz argues that the phrase “as much as I know,” is an admission on the part of the author that he lacks the expertise to truly assert the positions of recognized *‘ulema*, or Islamic scholars (Programmed Terrorists).

How then, does one understand the religious overtones that serve as strong motivators for al-Qaeda operatives? One way to make sense of this” phenomenon is to consider al-Qaeda a movement of religious revival. The *mujahideen* are inspired by the idea of a return to purity,

which, in the social context, constitutes a return to a pristine state of Mohammad-era Islamic society. Consistent with al-Zawahiri's writings, these jihadists believe they must "establish an Islamist state in the Muslim heartland, from which to launch [their] battle to restore the Caliphate based on the traditions of the prophet" (Sageman 21). This idea is also reflected in Atta's "Last Night" letter, in which a main theme is that a "direct line connects them [the hijackers] to the companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet in the 7th century" (Programmed Terrorists).

The *mujahideen* are equally concerned with a sense of spiritual revival in their personal lives, hence Sageman's data indicating that nearly all of the terrorists he studied attempted to return to the fold of Islam around the time of their recruitment. An instructive example of this phenomenon is provided by 1993 World Trade Center bomber, Mahmoud Abouhalima. While he is now distressed that Arab governments are not "really Muslim" and that they apply " 'watered down' Islamic law," Abouhalima, himself, strayed far from the Islamic lifestyle in his earlier years (Juergensmeyer 66). At the age of 21, he migrated to Germany, where he experienced the alienation that often typifies the life of Muslims in the West (66). He claims that he lived a "life of corruption—girls, drugs, you name it" (Juergensmeyer 66). As Juergensmeyer explains, "He went through the outward signs of Islamic reverence—daily prayers, fasting during the month of Ramadan—but he had left the real Islam behind. After a while, he 'got bored' with his wayward existence, began reading the Qur'an again, and returned to a committed religious life" (66). For Abouhalima, as for many displaced Muslims, religion became both an escape from decadence and an identity that allowed him to cope with his new surroundings. As Abouhalima himself explained, "Islam is a mercy" that liberated him from moral depravity and social disaffection (Juergensmeyer 66). After finding his spiritual revival in radical Islam, Abouhalima was prepared to join the Afghan jihad and later share his extremist attitudes with other frequenters of the al-Khifah center in New York (Juergensmeyer 66).

Because alienation and spiritual revival are both associated with the decision to join the jihad, the concept of martyrdom becomes an extremely important and appealing ideology for al-Qaeda recruits. Above all, it offers them an overwhelming sense of importance. Peter Bergen provides a simple definition of martyrdom: "A Muslim killed in the course of jihad is a *shaheed*, a

martyr who is guaranteed entry to Paradise. According to some traditions, the martyrs are attended by seventy virgins who will cater to their every desire” (12). *Shaheed* comes from the Arabic root *shaa-hada*, which indicates testimony or witnessing an action or event. The first pillar of Islam, requiring believers to proclaim their belief in one God and in Muhammad as His prophet is similarly termed *shahada* because it allows others to witness their devotion (Egger 81). Embodied in this linguistic term is the sense that the self-proclaimed martyrs of Islam are trying to prove themselves to others. By taking on a martyrdom mission, the terrorist attempts to demonstrate the strength of his faith to himself, to others, and to Allah.

Though suicide is strictly forbidden in Islam, Paz points out that an extremely important theme in al-Qaeda texts is the encouragement of a “deliberate embrace of death, forgetting entirely the things of this world” (Programmed Terrorists). He explains that the “acceptance of death in the fighter” is a manner to “prove the cowardice of their enemies, who prefer the present world to the world to come, or who become agents of the devil because ‘they admire the civilization of the West and drink their love and their worship with cold water’” (Programmed Terrorists). The letter left behind by Atta again emerges as extremely useful in understanding al-Qaeda’s rhetoric on martyrdom. The document, which begins with a series of sixteen instructions for preparing for the mission, emphasizes a rejection of this life for the purpose of welcoming the hereafter. Among other things, the hijackers are instructed to “renew [their] covenant with God” through recitation of the *shahada*, “cleanse [their] heart and purify it and forget everything involving this secular life,” as well as to “shave and wash” (P. Williams 152-4). In addition, the instruction set emphasizes the ultimate rewards for martyrs: “Think about what God has promised the good believers and martyrs. Remind yourself to listen and obey that night because you will be exposed to crucial situations (100 percent)...Let your chest be open because it’s only moments before you begin a happy life and eternal bliss with the Prophet and the veracious and martyrs and the righteous and these are the best companions” (P. Williams 152-3). By offering displaced, alienated Muslims an escape from this world, as well as the promise of paradise in the next, martyrdom is presented as a way to triumph over the difficulties of life. Martyrdom is also a merciful ideology—martyrs are forgiven of all of their prior sins. Some of the 9/11 hijackers did

not fail to exploit their one-way ticket to heaven. Miller, Stone, and Mitchell note, “One member of the Newark team passed part of his last afternoon at a go-go bar that featured ‘Jersey style table dancing.’ That night, one or more of the hijackers in al-Shehhi’s crew phoned Boston-area escort services seeking a prostitute to have sex with four men” (309).

Martyrdom is also appealing to jihadists because it provides them with an inflated sense of self-worth. Juergensmeyer explains that martyrdom involves the *mujahid* in an all-important struggle, stating, “I think the concept of sacrifice makes sense only within the context of cosmic war” (173). He believes that the terrorists view themselves as “soldiers in a great war who diligently and reverently [give] up their lives for the sake of their community and their religion” (Juergensmeyer 174). Paz validates Juergensmeyer’s position by arguing that the 9/11 hijackers, as expressed in the “Last Night” letter, believed they were headed for a “cosmic destiny” (Programmed Terrorists). He notes that nowhere in the letter is the United States ever mentioned, rather the author “was trying to portray the enemy, or the people about to be attacked as an amorphous, faceless evil—as if they were not human beings but the representatives of the kingdom of evil. The language is vague, as if the hijackers were facing an historic moment of cosmic struggle between Good and Evil against a monster with no clear human face” (Programmed Terrorists). As Islam is a religion that greatly values the good of the community over the interests of the individual, martyrdom then, also allows the terrorist to convince himself of his heroism—he believes that others will admire him once he has completed his mission. This view was echoed in a letter that 9/11 hijacker and pilot, the Lebanese Ziad Jarrah, wrote to his girlfriend the night before his mission (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 308). In it he claims, “I did what I had to do, and you should be very proud of that...It is a great honor and you will see the result, everyone will be celebrating” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 308).

While the ideology of martyrdom provides *mujahideen* with a sense of heroism and grand importance, they are also enticed by sexual rewards that await them upon completion of their suicide missions. In the “Last Night” letter, the appeal of sexual satisfaction in the next world is explicit and alluring: “Know that the gardens of Paradise are waiting for you in all their beauty and the women of Paradise are waiting, calling, ‘Come hither, friend of God.’ They have dressed

in their most beautiful clothing” (Corbin 244). In other sections of the letter, the beautiful women of paradise are described as “black-eyed virgins” and martyrdom is likened to marriage (Programmed Terrorists). An article written by Saudi researcher and journalist Sa’ad al-Sowayan argues that the many religious cassettes disseminated in Saudi Arabia show how “spiritual martyrdom is reduced to jihad for lust” (Reformist Saudi Author). He writes that one jihad cassette “describes the path that must be followed in order to win martyrdom and deserve the *Hoor al-Een*, fair females with wide, lovely eyes. It reduces the lofty objective of spiritual martyrdom to mere lust and a selfish search for sexual pleasure, regardless of what martyrdom can achieve for the public interest for upholding Allah’s word” (Reformist Saudi Author). The author further asserts that this phenomenon is a result of the Arab “cultural system,” in which the society is suffering from “sexual phobia” (Reformist Saudi Author). “Before the Arabs solve their problems with their governments or before their governments solve their problems with terrorism, they must first solve their problem with the other sex,” al-Sowayan argues (Reformist Saudi Author).

Interestingly, Muhammad Atta exhibited many traits that uphold al-Sowayan’s charges of sexual phobia in the Arab world. Jane Corbin, who studied Atta’s childhood and adult life extensively, claims that his behavior was characterized by “obsessive fears about women and sexual purity” and that this “common theme in the Islamic world” is one which “has left its imprint deep in the testaments left by young male suicide bombers” (128). In Atta’s will, he provides explicit instructions that would prevent contact between women and his dead body (Corbin 129). He wrote, “I don’t want women to come to my house, to apologize for my death...I don’t want any women to go to my grave at all during my funeral, or any occasion thereafter” (Corbin 129). He also provides the strict instruction that “The person who will wash my body near my genitals must wear gloves on his hand, so he won’t touch my genitals” (Corbin 129). If the “Last Night” letter were indeed written by Atta as investigators allege, it is interesting to note that he, too, was profoundly affected by the promise of seventy virgins in paradise (Programmed Terrorists). Perhaps for Atta, access to the virgins constitutes the only pure form of male-female contact. His obsession with purity in this life may have made him more vulnerable to promises of sexual rewards in the next. As Corbin puts it, Atta was “certainly repressed and confused,” an

example of how Middle Eastern culture is preoccupied with a “tension...between libido and repression, the obsession that exists with sex and the need to control it” (129). She points out that in this world, women are seen as a threat because sexuality has the power to take a hold over “male supremacy” (Corbin 129). However, sexual pleasure in the afterlife is a gift to the martyr that serves only to delight him for his devotion and heroism.

Contrary to common perceptions on the matter, joining the jihad is neither a simple nor readily accessible option for prospective *mujahideen*. While an individual may feel strongly drawn to al-Qaeda’s ideology, becoming an actual operative of the group does not involve merely finding the appropriate Islamist website or making oneself available to al-Qaeda “recruiters.” In fact, there is evidence that certain individuals may be strongly motivated to join the jihad but will not have the appropriate connections to do so. The reason for this paradox is that, as Sageman’s research points out, al-Qaeda does not engage in “top-down recruiting” (107). Instead, history has shown that al-Qaeda membership is usually the result of a process of affiliation. Just as the earliest members of al-Qaeda forged a relationship through their participation in the Afghan jihad, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing conspirators were almost all attendees of Brooklyn’s al-Khifah Center and its radical al-Farouq mosque (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 49). Similarly, the Hamburg cell responsible for 9/11 provides a more recent example of how affiliation is the key aspect of al-Qaeda involvement.

In the case of the 9/11 hijackers, the men formed relationships through participation in a study group at al-Quds mosque in Hamburg (Sageman 104). At some point, these men, who were all enrolled in university programs, began to meet frequently in the apartment of Mounir Motassadeq (Sageman 104). Over time, Motassadeq’s residence “became the center where militant Muslim students congregated on campus, eating meals together from the common kitchen, and discussing religion and politics in the living room” (Sageman 104). Though the group first consisted of Motassadeq, his Moroccan friend Abdelghani Mzoudi, and Mohammad Atta, they also befriended Ramzi bin al-Shibh, Ziad Jarrah, Marwan al-Shehhi, and Said Bahaji, each of whom took to praying at al-Quds mosque between 1996 and 1998 (Sageman 104-05). In November 1998, Atta, bin al-Shibh, and Bahaji moved in together in an apartment on

Marienstrasse that they named Beyt al-Ansar, the same name that Osama bin Laden had used for his “House of Supporters” guest house in Peshawar during the Afghan jihad (Sageman 105). Though their landlord, Herr Albrecht commented, “all the paperwork, their visas, and student credentials were in order,” some neighbors noticed some distinct behavior on the part of the apartment’s residents (Corbin 147). Corbin reports, “Neighbors noticed plenty of comings and goings; the group of men, glimpsed through an open door, seemed to be reading from the Qur’an...[from] her window...a woman noticed that they had pinned what looked like diagrams and drawings to the wall” (147). Investigators have determined that the key link to the al-Qaeda organization in this case was provided by Ramzi bin al-Shibh, who is “believed to have been an important al-Qaeda operative before he turned up in Germany in 1995, seeking political asylum” (Corbin 148). There were other influential men that visited the apartment on 54 Marienstrasse, including Muhammad Haidar Zammer, who at the time was under German surveillance for his terrorist connections (Corbin 152). According to Corbin, “The Germans were aware that Zammer had been to Afghanistan by personal invitation of Osama bin Laden in 1996 and they were listening every time he picked up the phone to talk to like minded comrades in Europe” (152). However, none of this information allowed German authorities to recognize Atta and his comrades “for what they were—terrorists in the making” (Corbin 152).

The case of the Hamburg cell highlights the importance of affiliation through a house of worship. Most had established connections to one another and al-Qaeda operatives at al-Quds mosque, even though not all were naturally religious; some, such as the Lebanese Jarrah, often deemed a playboy, were quite the opposite (Corbin 138). Yet, as German prosecutor Kay Nehm explained, “All the members of this cell shared the same religious convictions...a feeling of being out of place in unfamiliar cultural surroundings that they weren’t used to. At the center of this stood a hatred of world Jewry and the United States” (Sageman 108). The mosque itself served “many functions in the transformation of young alienated Muslims into global Salafi *mujahideen*” (Sageman 114). While Sageman points out that mosques are not places where brainwashing techniques provide recruits to the jihad, they do offer ways to establish the types of affiliations that can lead to connections with al-Qaeda operatives. He notes, “A mosque was an ideal place to

meet familiar people, namely fellow Muslims...Friendship groups formed around the mosques...and the mosques are where the intensification of religious sentiment takes place, transforming potential mujahideen into dedicated fanatics” (Sageman 114-15). The Hamburg case also shows that the future-9/11 hijackers became involved in al-Qaeda collectively, as a group of friends, rather than as individuals. In many other instances, joining the jihad has been a group phenomenon. This pattern is comprehensible, as dedication to the group encourages a unified course of action among its participants. It also promotes the development of a strong group identity centered on the common features of its members. In the case of al-Qaeda terrorists, this common feature is usually religious identity, no matter how religious, or non-religious, these individuals may have been prior to their affiliation with one another (Sageman 110).

While al-Qaeda has not contributed a program of formalized recruitment to the global jihad movement, it has developed an organized terrorist training program considered a crucial element of the organizations ability to operate. On August 17, 2001, Peter Bergen wrote a letter to *New York Times* reporter John Burns, detailing the threatening glimpse of footage he had seen of an al-Qaeda training camp in a bin Laden propaganda video. He wrote:

The Saudi exile [bin Laden] says the solution to these problems is that Muslims should travel to Afghanistan, and receive training about how to do jihad. The tape then shows hundreds of bin Laden’s masked followers training at his al-Farouq camp in eastern Afghanistan, holding up black flags and chanting in Arabic, “fight evil.” Bin Laden’s fighters shoot off anti-aircraft guns and RPGs, hold up their Korans and their Kalashnikovs, run across obstacle courses, dive into pools of water, blow up buildings and shoot at images of President Clinton. Bin Laden himself looses off some rounds from an automatic rifle. Chillingly, the tape also shows dozens of young boys, most of whom appear to be around ten, dressed in military camouflage uniforms, chanting for jihad...” (37).

By 1997, the CIA was aware that bin Laden had at least six bases of training camps in the Khost area of eastern Afghanistan, the region that had served as the birthplace of al-Qaeda during

the jihad against the Soviets (Bergen 123). These training bases included al-Badr 1, al-Badr 2, al-Farouq, Khalid bin Walid, Abu Jindal, and Salman Farsi (Bergen 123). According to Gunaratna, al-Qaeda's "stringent emphasis on training" is one of the key reasons why the organization has had success in "conducting well-coordinated guerrilla and terrorist attacks" (93).

The training camps have offered instruction in a variety of tactics. It is perhaps useful to think of the camps as part of a terrorist "academy" where one may specialize in a number of areas. The three main curricula are basic training, which involves guerrilla tactics and Islamic law; advanced training to learn about "explosives, assassination techniques, and heavy weapons;" and finally specialized training to become skilled in "surveillance and countersurveillance, forging and adapting identity documents, and conducting a maritime or vehicle-borne suicide attack" (Gunaratna 95). Some sources indicate that the camps have conducted their courses in groups of 50 to 100 recruits, offering innovative instruction in "[how to] sabotage power plants and military installations, assault buildings...[use] poisons and lethal gases" (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 261). The camps have also provided a series of refresher courses for those who had already completed a regimen of jihad training (Gunaratna 93).

Throughout most of the 1990s, the camps were organized and managed by Abu Zubaydah, a Saudi national who was born in Gaza in 1971 (Gunaratna 133). As Miller indicates, "Though many trainees would hear directly from bin Laden during their weeks or months in the camps, Zubaydah became the most important person in their lives from the moment they met him. His entry interviews determined the type of training a recruit would receive. His exit interviews charged each 'brother' with a mission" (260). Zubaydah was also responsible for arranging the travel expenses for recruits coming to the camps and keeping careful records on each recruit, detailing his origin, capabilities, and performance at the camps (Gunaratna 133). Though Zubaydah was captured in a raid by CIA, FBI, ISI and Pakistani police in March 2002, he has long been considered a top member of the al-Qaeda infrastructure (Gunaratna 132). Following the US invasion of Afghanistan, the organization "increasingly depended on him for organizational and infrastructural management" (Gunaratna 132).

Most information about al-Qaeda training camps has come from captured terrorists, though the series of jihad manuals that have been produced by al-Qaeda also provide insight on the tactics al-Qaeda operatives are required to learn. Important manuals produced by al-Qaeda include the 7,000-page *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad*, which contains over twelve volumes (Gunaratna 93). Gunaratna notes that its early volumes, which cover “tactics, security and intelligence, handguns, first aid, explosives, grenades and mines, tanks, manufacturing, topography and land surveys, and weapons,” were written from 1989 on, as a way to allow Afghan jihad veterans to share their “unprecedented knowledge and experience of guerrilla warfare” with “future generations” (93). The Encyclopedia was allegedly “compiled, written, translated and edited” by the Egyptian and Saudi members of al-Qaeda’s leadership (Gunaratna 94). In addition to specifying possible targets, including the Eiffel Tower and Statue of Liberty, the multi-volume work discusses creative ways to booby-trap household objects and includes a CD-ROM on biological and chemical warfare (Gunaratna 94-5).

The US Department of Justice has recently released excerpts from another training manual, which was discovered by police in the home of an al-Qaeda member in Manchester, England (Training Manual). The text, entitled, *Declaration of Jihad Against the Country’s Tyrants, Military Series*, is a guide to terrorist techniques interspersed with prayers and Qur’anic phrases (Training Manual). It indicates that al-Qaeda considers itself a “military organization,” and as such requires its “soldiers” to be skilled in seven key areas: “forged documents and counterfeit currency, apartments and hiding places, communication means, transportation means, information, arms and ammunition, transport” (Training Manual 13). It states that the principal mission of the organization is the “overthrow of the godless regimes and their replacement with an Islamic regime” (Training Manual 13). However, soldiers are also entrusted with other missions, including “gathering information about the enemy, the land, the installations and the neighbors; kidnapping enemy personnel as well as foreign tourists; freeing the brothers who are captured by the enemy; spreading rumors and writing statements that instigate people against the enemy; blasting and destroying the places of amusement, immorality, and sin...blasting and destroying the embassies and attacking vital economic center; blasting and destroying bridges leading into and

out of the cities” (Training Manual 13). As the above passage indicates, al-Qaeda is fixated on its broad goal of reestablishing Islamic rule. In the meantime, however, the group seeks to attack enemy states by destroying their infrastructure and the morale of their people. Interestingly, the document’s tone tries to boost the reader’s sense of importance, convincing him that he is a soldier for God who needs to be prepared for battle with armies of the enemy. This rhetoric may divert the reader’s attention from the fact that nearly all al-Qaeda missions target civilians.

In another part of the document, the fourteen “necessary qualifications” for al-Qaeda operatives are listed (Training Manual 16). As might be expected, the first qualification is that the member be a Muslim. This passage claims that the organization is following a strategy of the Israeli Army, which “requires that a fighter be of the Jewish religion” (Training Manual 16). While this information is erroneous—the Israeli Defense Forces do consist of minorities of Druze Arabs, Circassians, Christian Arabs and some Bedouin—it is noteworthy that al-Qaeda seeks to consciously emulate the tactics of one of its sworn enemies (Minority Communities). In addition to the aforementioned religious requirement, the operative must also display strong “commitment to the organization’s ideology,” be physically and mentally mature, as well as ready to make sacrifices (Training Manual 16). The operative’s key skills are his discipline and obedience, his ability to conceal information, his patience, and his “calm personality.” Here, “calm personality” appears to be a euphemism for ruthless, for it is a “calm personality” that will allow the *mujahid* to “endure psychological traumas such as those involving bloodshed, murder, arrest, imprisonment, reverse psychological traumas” (Training Manual 17-18). Finally, the recruit must be truthful to other operatives, deceptive toward others, and possess a sharpened ability to “observe and analyze” (Training Manual 20). It is here where the manual makes a second reference to the Israeli Security Forces, this time to the Mossad (Training Manual 20). The passage relates an incident when, by keen observation and insight, an Israeli Mossad officer was able to apprehend a group of Palestinians who wanted to attack an El Al plane that “was going to Rome with Golda Meir—Allah’s curse upon her” (Training Manual 20). These references, while intended to strengthen al-Qaeda’s own tactics, betray the fears of al-Qaeda members that may be defeated by the highly trained Israeli Security Forces or other militaries operating under similar tactics.

Al-Qaeda's training tactics, as expressed in their manuals and practiced in their camps, are known to have had profound psychological effects on its trainees. Sageman notes that lifestyles in the camps, with its emphasis on "equality" and "fraternity" are designed to "strengthen their [the *mujahideen*] dedication to the jihad" (163). He indicates that the trainees "live in a communal setting, where their normal life responsibilities are suspended and mutual care is encouraged. The camps re-create the ideals of the mythical *umma* and give concrete life to the virtual community hinted at on the Internet. The camps generate an esprit de corps for this ideal *umma*, for which the graduate *mujahid* might be willing to sacrifice himself" (Sageman 163). There is evidence that some "tens of thousands of young and zealous Muslims" have undergone physical, mental and psychological training at bin Laden's camps (Gunaratna 95). While only several thousand of the elite performers were invited to officially join the al-Qaeda organization, records of numerous others have remained in al-Qaeda's files, so that, if need be, they may be called upon for an appropriate mission at an appropriate time (Gunaratna 96).

Joining and training for the jihad is a lengthy process that provides a participant with a strong sense of purpose. The *mujahid* feels that he has taken on a secret mission of resounding importance. His actions not only determine the ultimate value of his life in this world, but also secure his eternal well-being and assure him a place in paradise. The process allows him to form a brotherhood with like-minded young men, who may have struggled to find a unique identity while immersed in foreign societies. It does not matter that his involvement in terror attacks, though taken on in the name of Islam, may make living conditions more distressful for Muslims living as minorities in the West. If only for a short while, becoming a *mujahid* makes him feel complete.

VI. AL-QAEDA: ORGANIZATION OR NETWORK?

“Success or failure depends not on bin Laden; success or failure depends upon routing out terrorism where it may exist all around the world. He’s just one person, a part of a network. And we’re slowly, but surely, with determined fashion, routing that network out and bringing it to justice.”

-President George W. Bush, October 11, 2001 (qtd. in P. Williams 185)

As previous chapters have demonstrated, understanding al-Qaeda’s formation, evolution, and ideology is far from a black and white affair. Researchers must constantly sift through available information on terrorism to determine the legitimacy of their sources and analyze apparent discrepancies. It is also a concern that information on al-Qaeda is perpetually out of date: even sources that once offered an accurate analysis of al-Qaeda at the time when they were written will almost inevitably fail to keep pace with the rapidly changing terrorist group. One of the fuzziest topics among the “gray-area” research on al-Qaeda deals with the group’s structure. Al-Qaeda has been understood, at different time periods and by different authors, as an amorphous network, a coalition of terror groups, an association, an organization, an umbrella group, and even a terrorist corporation. Rohan Gunaratna, in commenting that al-Qaeda is “neither a single group nor a coalition of groups,” reminds his readers of the difficulties in attempting to use a single label to describe al-Qaeda’s configuration (72). In light of these debates, it is useful to take a closer look at two of the dominant perspectives on this topic: (1) Gunaratna’s description of al-Qaeda as a group based on both vertical and horizontal organization and (2) Sageman’s emphasis on al-Qaeda as a “social network” (Gunaratna 76; Sageman 137).

In his *Inside al-Qaeda*, Gunaratna claims that al-Qaeda is “characterized by...a novel structure” and a “robust capacity for regeneration” (72). According to his analysis, the terror group is best understood as an association relying on vertical and horizontal command structures, offering it the advantages of both a top-down hierarchy and a cellular structure (73). Gunaratna begins by reminding his readers that the current state of al-Qaeda’s infrastructure is an outgrowth of the conditions of its formation (72). Because “al-Qaeda’s antecedents lie in Islamist movements opposed to the harsh regimes of the Middle East, especially those of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria,” the group very quickly learned to develop a flexible structure that would be

“very hard to detect and combat” (72-3). Gunaratna argues that al-Qaeda was restructured in 1998 so that it could include both a “pyramidal structure to facilitate strategic and tactical direction” as well as “a global terrorist network” (76).

The “pyramidal structure” identified by Gunaratna forms the vertical body of al-Qaeda; it may be regarded as the organization’s central command. It is comprised of Osama bin-Laden, officially the “emir-general” of the group, who sits at the head of the pyramid. Directly beneath him is the *shura majlis*, the “consultative council,” which consists of the organization’s most loyal members, most of whom formed relationships with bin Laden during the Afghan jihad (Gunaratna 76). Gunaratna notes that these individuals were “among the first to join” al-Qaeda and suggests that some can be considered co-founders (76). Paul Williams, who also emphasizes the importance of the *shura majlis*, provides some information on its members. Relying heavily on the testimony of al-Qaeda defector Jamal Ahmed al-Fadl, he notes that Egyptian physician Ayman al-Zawahiri is a key player in this body (P. Williams 3). He argues that al-Zawahiri, who is featured on some of al-Qaeda’s most recent videotapes and who is usually considered bin Laden’s chief advisor, may even be regarded as a middleman between bin Laden and the *shura majlis*. Other members of the *shura majlis* have included Muhammad Atef (killed in Afghanistan in November 2001), an Egyptian who was very close to bin Laden and helped plan the embassy bombings; Abu Muhammad el-Masry (wanted), an Egyptian explosives specialist; Anas al Liby (wanted), the “surveillance expert” who authored several jihad manuals; Saif al-Adel (wanted), former member of Egypt’s Islamic Jihad suspected of organizing the 1993 attack on US soldiers in Somalia; Abu Ubaidah al-Banshiri (killed in a ferry accident on Lake Victoria in May 1996), a former Egyptian police officer who managed al-Qaeda’s military affairs; and Mamdouh Mahmud Salim (arrested in Germany in September 1998), an Iraqi who generated links between al-Qaeda and Iraqi and Lebanese terrorist groups (P. Williams 3-5).

Gunaratna further develops his argument on al-Qaeda’s vertical command structure by indicating that it is completed by “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” (77). An appointed “emir” and “deputy emir” head each committee as well as “form

compartmentalized working groups for special assignments” (Gunaratna 77). There is some evidence that members of the committees may overlap or alternate between committees (Gunaratna 77). Gunaratna emphasizes the role of the military committee, which he argues is responsible for “training, procuring, transporting and launching military operations as well as developing tactics and acquiring and manufacturing special weapons” (77). Members of this committee also communicate with operatives involved in al-Qaeda’s horizontal entity, the global network of cells that will be described shortly (Gunaratna 77). Unfortunately, Gunaratna does not provide a detailed description of the other committees. However, P. Williams, who also embraces this vision of a pyramidal leadership structure, again provides some more information. P. Williams asserts that the Islamic study committee “makes rulings on religious law” and trains recruits on their interpretation of Islamic texts (7). Members of the religious committee are not full-fledged Islamic scholars, rather, individuals who interpret Islamic texts in a manner consistent with al-Qaeda’s ideology (P. Williams 7). In this sense, the committee may be seen as a tool for indoctrination and the continued strengthening of the group’s principal line of thought. As for the financial committee, Williams pinpoints its role in managing many of bin Laden’s corporate enterprises in Sudan, while otherwise handling the group’s revenues and costs (7). Finally, the media committee is responsible for publicizing the group’s ideology and publishing the newspaper, *Nashrat al-Akhbar* (P. Williams 5).

Gunaratna identifies al-Qaeda’s global network of terrorist cells as the horizontal component of the organization’s structure (73). He states that while the central command forms a “core base” in Afghanistan, the horizontal entity includes crucial “satellite terrorist cells worldwide, a conglomerate of Islamist political parties and other largely independent terrorist groups that it [the central command] draws on for offensive actions and other responsibilities” (Gunaratna 73). Cell leaders and even leaders of other terrorist groups, at times, “serve as an integral part of al-Qaeda high command,” thereby suggesting a strong connection between decision-making at the vertical and horizontal levels (Gunaratna 73). It is the horizontal network, however, that allows for both “mobility” and “regeneration” by providing “leadership, recruitment, training and logistics” to al-Qaeda (Gunaratna 73). However, Gunaratna points out

that the leadership role of bin Laden should be emphasized in both the vertical and horizontal contexts of al-Qaeda's organization (76). He argues, "al-Qaeda's structure enables it to wield direct and indirect control over a potent, far-flung force...Osama indoctrinates, trains and controls a core inner group as well as inspires and supports peripheral cadres. In addition to exploiting al-Qaeda's relations with Islamist groups, parties and regimes, Osama also seeks to influence their thinking and behavior" (76). While also cooperating with independent terrorist organizations, the al-Qaeda leadership maintains some degree of contact with the members of various cells (Gunaratna 80). Gunaratna points specifically to an al-Qaeda document that was discovered in Afghanistan, which shows that "every al-Qaeda member periodically submits to the leadership his preferred course of action, or career move" (80).

Gunaratna's work demonstrates the transnational nature of al-Qaeda's horizontal network by documenting the numerous locations where its terrorist cells, both of the "support" and "operational" varieties, have been identified (76). His research very clearly shows how al-Qaeda is, as Paul J. Smith puts it, "the worst that globalization has to offer." Among countries where al-Qaeda operatives have been "detected and neutralized," Gunaratna calls attention to Italy, Germany, Britain, Canada, the US, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Yemen, and Albania (77). He notes that other states, such as Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Jordan, Algeria, Libya, and Pakistan have made arrests of al-Qaeda operatives within their borders (Gunaratna 77). Still others, including Somalia, Sudan, and Indonesia, are known to have al-Qaeda affiliates within their borders but have "failed to act" (Gunaratna 77).

Gunaratna's scholarship is significant in its ability to organize information concerning bin Laden and his close associates as well as the transnational and flexible nature of the al-Qaeda structure. As *Inside al-Qaeda* was published in 2002, he is careful to note that, "As a fluid and dynamic, goal-oriented rather than rule-oriented organization, al-Qaeda is always liable to change in structure, according to circumstances" (78). However, his work is subject to the criticism that, in attempting to highlight the extent of the al-Qaeda threat and to organize his research, he runs the risk of overstating the importance of al-Qaeda's central command, the "vertical" component of the organization. In particular, his model suggests that the military committee is absolutely crucial to

the success of al-Qaeda's attacks by deeming them responsible for "gathering intelligence via surveillance or reconnaissance of intended targets and rehearsing attacks and mission training" (77). It may be true that the military committee engaged in each of these activities at various times. For instance, it is commonly held that the al-Qaeda leadership core had an especially heavy hand in the planning and execution of the 1998 embassy bombings (P. Williams 4). Yet, Gunaratna's failure to specify how the military committee's role may have differed from one attack to another suggests that this collection of core leaders has remained influential in determining the actions taken by al-Qaeda's numerous cells.

It is especially curious that Gunaratna emphasizes the role of al-Qaeda's centralized leadership in a work that was published following the October 2001 United States invasion of Afghanistan. He does accept that the US military operation caused al-Qaeda to lose its main base of operations and several of its well-organized training camps (Gunaratna 73). He further suggests that since that time, the horizontal network of terror cells has been influential in handling "leadership, recruitment, training and logistics...allowing the organization to function largely undisturbed" (73). However, contrary to some other researchers, he does not believe that the role of bin Laden and his core associates has significantly diminished (Gunaratna 78). Rather than viewing the horizontal component of the organization as more important than the centralized, pyramidal command following the October 2001 invasion, he simply suggests that bin Laden has been more discreet in carrying on his activities (Gunaratna 78). He explains, "Although Osama has felt the need to expand his operations, security threats to it curbed many of its overt activities, and he and al-Qaeda became increasingly clandestine, choosing to operate through front, cover and sympathetic organizations" (78). Furthermore, he asserts that the centralized structure is, more or less, still intact through his statement that al-Qaeda's "structure has evolved considerably since the East Africa bombings, but that of the *shura majlis* and the four committees persists" (Gunaratna 78). As such, a paradox emerges among Gunaratna's research. On one hand, he suggests that al-Qaeda "is structured in such a way that it can operate without a centralized command. Its regional bureaus function as the nodal points of its horizontal network outside Afghanistan and liaise with associate groups and al-Qaeda cells" (Gunaratna 13). At the same

time, he places a high importance on the disruption of the core command structure as a high-priority counter-terrorism strategy (Gunaratna 18). For instance, he argues, “the most effective state response would be to target al-Qaeda’s leadership, cripple its command and control, and disrupt its current and future support bases” (18). It is possible that, in trying to emphasize the aspects of al-Qaeda’s structure that make the organization particularly resilient, Gunaratna has overestimated some of the roles of both its vertical and horizontal entities.

Marc Sageman provides a similar, yet more convincing depiction of al-Qaeda’s organizational structure by emphasizing the group’s decentralized component. While he acknowledges that al-Qaeda’s “Central Staff” has played a significant role in planning and carrying out its early attacks, he suggests that the organization’s cells are currently of greater importance than the centralized command (Sageman 42). He writes, “In the early days, they [Central Staff] appeared to do multiple tasks: raising funds through bin Laden’s enterprises in the Sudan, setting up logistic support cells in Nairobi for potential operations in East Africa, and casing potential targets...This Central Staff cluster was involved in hands-on operations at the time, which indicates that the organization was very fluid, without rigid organizational roles. As al-Qaeda grew in importance, the Central Staff cluster would never again be involved in the day-to-day operations in the field” (Sageman 42-3). With this assertion, Sageman makes the important chronological distinctions absent from Gunaratna’s analysis. For Sageman, understanding the global jihad today involves recognizing that al-Qaeda “is not a specific organization, but a social movement consisting of a set of more or less formal organizations” (137).

Sageman’s argument portrays al-Qaeda as a social network thriving on connections between cells, or nodes, located in various regions (137). As he puts it, “Participants in the global jihad are not atomized individuals but actors linked to each other through a complex of direct or mediated exchanges” (Sageman 137). There are many different kinds of nodes, some of which are better connected than others (Sageman 137). Sageman calls the very well connected nodes “hubs” and claims that they are “important components of a terrorist network” (137). Looking specifically at al-Qaeda, he notes that the Central Staff, Core Arab, Maghreb Arab, and Southeast Asian groups are each “large clusters built around hubs” (Sageman 137). So, while the Central

Staff and Osama bin Laden may not be directly involved in the daily operation of al-Qaeda's activities, they are tightly connected to the nodes of the other three main clusters that comprise the network. In addition to the interplay between nodes, hubs, and clusters, the terror network is sustained by individuals acting as "lieutenants in the field" and "operational field commanders" (Sageman 138). "Lieutenants" are connected to members of a node while also communicating with members of the Central Staff (Sageman 138). "Operational field commanders," on the other hand, serve as cell leaders; they are "in charge of specific operations" (Sageman 138). In the case of the Hamburg cell that carried out the 9/11 attacks, Ramzi bin al-Shibh connected Atta and his comrades to al-Qaeda by performing the role of the "field lieutenant" (Sageman 138). Atta, who led and organized his cell, is an example of an "operational field commander" (Sageman 138).

In his analysis of al-Qaeda's complex structure, Sageman determines that the terror group "has a very fuzzy boundary" because of its network structure and transnational character (151). In addition, he shows that the network system forms a "dynamic social movement that forms and breaks bonds to various...terrorist groups" (Sageman 151). Through a system of social connections, al-Qaeda is therefore able to receive "financial support, logistical support, or common planning for operations" from terrorist organizations recognized as having independent configurations, such as EIJ or Jema'ah Islamiyah (Sageman 151). Also involved in al-Qaeda's fluid network are those who offer support to nodes and clusters through charities and other fund-raising activities (Sageman 152). Sageman notes that these relationships are "ambiguous," mostly because donors may not be entirely sure that their contributions are indeed supporting terrorism (152). Still, if such organizations are deliberately aiding the terror network, they may be considered as components of the web of jihad. Since Sageman demonstrates that recruitment to al-Qaeda is not a top-down process but rather one of association, he pinpoints that cliques are important in maintaining the cell membership (Sageman 153). He notes, "Cliques play a crucial role in transforming potential contributors into full-fledged mujahedin" because "cliques of friends may respond to various systematic sociopolitical appeals, according to world events occurring at the time and in the vicinity" (153). Furthermore, cliques create social cohesion and a group

identity among its members, both of which serve to strengthen individuals' commitments to al-Qaeda's ideology once they have become linked to field lieutenant (Sageman 153).

If Sageman's depiction of the terrorist network and how it functions is indeed accurate to al-Qaeda's current procedures, it presents a unique challenge to US military and law enforcement. Firstly, the nodes are extremely mobile and have an "ability to spontaneously grow and self-organize" (Sageman 141). Whereas Gunaratna emphasizes the importance of launching attacks against al-Qaeda's central command, Sageman believes that the terror network would be more or less resilient to such a strategy. He argues, "Unlike a hierarchical network that can be eliminated through decapitation of its leadership, a small-world network resists fragmentation because of its inter-connectivity" (Sageman 140). Therefore, he suggests that the weak point of this system is that it is "vulnerable to targeted attack against its hubs. If enough hubs are destroyed, the network breaks down into isolated, noncommunicating islands of nodes" (Sageman 140). In the case that this should happen, the threat would come from attacks by individuals, rather than operations performed by groups (Sageman 141). Since hubs of the terror network are connected by their communications, Sageman argues that the terror fighting strategy should be focused on "tracing messages through good police work," a technique that he believes "has already shown considerable success" (141).

Sageman's analysis is particularly useful in providing detailed information on how the network has maintained clandestine connections and changed shape since the US invasion of Afghanistan. He shows that while the Central Staff's base of operations was destroyed, the military initiative did not target the disruption of any significant number of terrorist hubs. It is therefore hardly surprising for Sageman that the years following the invasion have been accompanied by numerous al-Qaeda attacks against soft-targets (141). Though these smaller operations may not be, on terrorist standards, of the same exceptional character as the 9/11 strikes, they do serve to further al-Qaeda's ideology and are within the capabilities of terrorist hubs. It is precisely for this reason that Sageman predicts, "Future terrorist operations are most likely to come from the Core Arab cluster...or from spontaneous local Maghreb Arab clusters under less direct control by the Central Staff but still under its inspiration" (141). In the fight against terror

networks, Sageman reminds authorities that “the jihad is resilient to random arrests” and that an effective strategy could only be one of “attacks against the large hubs...undertaken simultaneously to break up the network” (141).

Peter Bergen, who does not treat al-Qaeda’s structure in depth but makes a series of loose metaphors to bin Laden’s managerial skills by referring to al-Qaeda as a corporation, or “Holy War, Inc.,” ultimately bolsters Sageman’s conclusions (241). While he believes that the death or capture of bin Laden would make the terrorist leader a martyr among his supporters, characteristics of the transnational network indicate that “in the short-term al-Qaeda is far from out of business” (Bergen 41). He emphasizes al-Qaeda’s global reach, stating that “several thousand al-Qaeda members are scattered in sixty countries around the globe, and US intelligence officials believe that Holy War, Inc. will probably devolve into local ‘franchises’” (Bergen 241). Bergen’s concept of “franchises,” decentralized groups working toward a common goal, conform very well to Sageman’s description of hubs and nodes that can regenerate and reorganize to prevent the disruption of their activities. Sageman, like Bergen, points to bin Laden’s decision not to form a hierarchical structure for al-Qaeda as one of the key reasons for the terror network’s resilience (Bergen 172). He argues that al-Qaeda’s strength is derived from bin Laden’s willingness to allow the “network to evolve spontaneously and naturally, and not interfere too much with its evolution, except to guide it through incentives because of his control of resources” (Bergen 172). While leaders of other terror groups “thrive on power and control of their organizations,” Osama is “publicly self-effacing and seems content to relinquish control of an organization (which would have implied a more hierarchical structure) for the sake of efficacy” (Bergen 173).

Is it possible to defeat an amorphous terror network whose affiliates can be found in every corner of the world? Naturally, it is this question that drives the discourse on al-Qaeda by framing the concerns of politicians and individual citizens alike. When 9/11 deconstructed the myth that US political institutions, along with America’s oceanic borders, provide necessary security for its citizens, the US government inaugurated a stormy debate on national security policy while terms like “homeland defense” became frequent buzzwords in political statements. The recent events

that accompanied Hurricane Katrina created new vigor in this discussion by highlighting the inefficiencies and disorganization of the Department of Homeland Security. As one researcher put it, “We have learned that four years after September 11, and two and a half years after the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the federal government [has] yet to devise an executable plan for responding to a catastrophic event in New Orleans—or I imagine, in any city in the United States” (Posner 24).

There are also pressing concerns as to whether the strategies adopted as part of the US War on Terror will be effective in combating al-Qaeda, whose transnational network of cells make it an unfamiliar enemy for the United States. In his article, “Transnational Terrorism and the al-Qaeda Model: Confronting New Realities,” Paul J. Smith pinpoints several of the complications posed by al-Qaeda’s unique structure. He writes, “Al-Qaeda’s multi-cellular international structure provided an ironic backdrop to President George Bush’s proclamation that the United States would find terrorists wherever they were located and would consider attacking any nation that harbored terrorists. The uncomfortable reality is that many states—including those allied with the United States—harbored al-Qaeda cells, but did nothing to neutralize them, either because they did not know of their presence (or the precise danger they posed) or were unwilling for political or security reasons, to disrupt their operations” (Smith).

Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the question of whether the United States has adopted the right approach in fighting al-Qaeda in his introduction to *Fighting Terrorism*. Here he counters Smith’s argument by arguing that states which knowingly permit terrorist groups to operate within their borders should be considered players within the broader “terror network” (Netanyahu xiv). He argues, “There *is* no international terrorism without the support of sovereign states. International terrorism simply cannot be sustained for long without the regimes that aid and abet it. Terrorists are not suspended in midair. They train, arm, and indoctrinate their killers from within safe havens on territory provided by terrorist states” (Netanyahu xiii). While Netanyahu does not discount the fact that al-Qaeda’s network structure makes it considerably more difficult to combat than a single, hierarchical organization, he does assert that the network grows stronger by relying on the states that have harbored them (Netanyahu xiii). Even Smith concedes that

historically, “Al-Qaeda has flourished in an environment of weak or quasi-states that are undergoing disruptive political or social change.” The support that al-Qaeda received from the Sudan and Taliban-controlled Afghanistan during its formative years were crucial to its development into the global “Hydra-headed monster” that it is has become today (Bergen 241).

States that have unwittingly allowed al-Qaeda cells to operate without disruption must enable their security officials to more easily discern and thoroughly understand the tactics that have characterized al-Qaeda’s mission preparations in the past. One of the main problems in countering the al-Qaeda threat is simply that the terrorists “had a head start of ten years” (Gunaratna xlii). For instance, Gunaratna reminds us in his preface to the third edition of *Inside al-Qaeda* that “the US intelligence community did not even know the correct name of Osama bin Laden’s group until one month after it destroyed US diplomatic targets in East Africa in August 1998 (xlii). In addition, German authorities admitted post 9/11 that their “lack of aggressive intervention” in disrupting the activities of the Hamburg cell “probably contributed to the 11 September tragedy” (Smith). Yet, Sageman argues that investigators can learn from these mistakes of the past. According to his analysis, al-Qaeda repeatedly employs tactics that prove effective. Law enforcement authorities can therefore undergo training to understand how to observe such activities and act quickly on their perceptions. For instance, Sageman’s research shows that jihadists, despite their commitment to a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, will typically shave their beards and dress in Western clothing while preparing an operation in order to easily blend in among a Western public or avoid questioning in airports (177). Security forces should be one step ahead, knowing that any “sudden change” in an individual’s behavior to adopt a Western lifestyle or modes of dress “should immediately be investigated” (Sageman 177). Sageman also calls attention to the fact that al-Qaeda operatives have relied on the tactic of claiming that their passports have been lost or stolen in order to receive new ones and conceal travel to places like Afghanistan or Pakistan (177). Requests for new passports, should therefore, alert authorities as possibly suspicious behavior (Sageman 177).

Training authorities to become more sensitive to certain behavioral patterns and indications of possible terrorist activity does not mean that all Muslims or Middle Easterners are to

be considered suspicious. Such profiling ignores the fact that jihadists constitute a very small minority among the world's billions of Muslims. Further, such an approach would ultimately prove counterproductive. Sageman's study very clearly showed that al-Qaeda's network has included members of various ethnicities and even some converts from other religions. Richard Reid, the would-be "shoe bomber" is a notable example. As an English citizen of Caribbean descent whose father converted to Islam while serving a prison term, Reid could be considered a most unlikely al-Qaeda operative (Elliot). If investigators were to focus on a particular ethnicity or appearance, they would run the risk of failing to scrutinize al-Qaeda operatives who do not match the stereotypical, and as Sageman shows, often erroneous, characteristics of a jihadist.

The idea that Islamist terrorists are greatly outnumbered by peaceful Muslims reminds us of another important aspect of fighting al-Qaeda. Despite Samuel Huntington's claims in his *Clash of Civilizations* that wars of ideology are as much a part of the past as the Cold War, the crux of al-Qaeda's strength and staying power is its radical ideology. While its operatives have hailed from various locations and have joined the global movement for a variety of reasons, it is al-Qaeda's ideology that serves as the glue between them, fusing them to the goals set out by inspirational leaders like bin Laden. Gunaratna urges that counter-terrorism policy must target al-Qaeda on "all fronts," which includes launching an opposition to al-Qaeda's "propaganda war" (xliii). Al-Qaeda is not simply a network of operatives but also "a state of mind" that may very well have the capability to endure even beyond the fall of its most highly publicized leaders (Gunaratna xliv). Gunaratna attributes the continuing "robust Islamist milieu" since 9/11 to the absence of any "serious international effort...to counter its ideology" (xlii). He warns it is of the essence to stress that "al-Qaeda is not Koranic but heretical" and that ideological warfare must be "packed in the counterterrorism toolbox" (Gunaratna xlii). Failing to engage the ideological front of al-Qaeda's battles will only allow the group's radical thought to uphold and attract new recruits even while the US launches attacks on al-Qaeda's military and financial capabilities (Gunaratna xlii).

While it may not be possible to fully eradicate al-Qaeda's operatives or the force of its ideology, the network can be severely weakened by effective counter-terrorism strategy. The fight

against al-Qaeda will take time. It should not be perceived as the priority of one administration or a particular political party. Al-Qaeda's lethal attacks have demonstrated that the network is expanding at a disturbing rate and that it is committed to a long-term investment in jihad. Bergen argues that "one of al-Qaeda's defining characteristics is *patience*," pointing out that the plans for the 1998 embassy bombings, the bombing of the U.S.S. *Cole* in Yemen, and the 9/11 attacks were each prepared and refined over the course of many years (242). He notes that it is possible that "another catastrophic anti-American attack was in the pipeline before 9/11 and may only surface a year or two from now" (Bergen 242). The threat posed by al-Qaeda is considerable; we must be prepared to counter this peril over the long haul. Furthermore, American scholars must engage in a critical assessment of al-Qaeda's history and US foreign policy regarding the Middle East. This thesis has demonstrated that US policymakers and intelligence officials had missed certain critical opportunities to weaken the al-Qaeda network in years past. Students, the future of US government, should likewise be encouraged to partake in Middle Eastern studies programs developing in universities across the country. It is only in studying the past that we may reframe our perspectives on the impact of Islamism and tear down attitudes of blindness and naiveté that characterized pre-9/11 perceptions.

Relatively early in al-Qaeda's history, the Central Staff leadership created the World Islamic Front in order to introduce other prominent terrorist organizations to its ideology and therefore expand its terror network. Bin Laden and others realized that the defeat of a determined enemy requires cooperation among those engaged in the struggle. Four years after 9/11, it appears that the international intelligence community has not fully learned this lesson (Gunaratna xli). While international security measures to counter al-Qaeda are evolving, there remains a greater need for cooperation and intelligence sharing, even among the various agencies engaged in counter-terrorism procedures within the United States. Al-Qaeda has evolved into a truly global network; a global response will be required to combat it.

Neil Herman, the FBI's chief of domestic terrorism throughout the 1990s, once remarked, "Terrorism is cyclical. Left alone, it always comes back, usually in a bolder and more lethal way

than before” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 332). Al-Qaeda has demonstrated the accuracy of his assessment. September 11 should have taught us that we waited too long to develop a strategy and commitment to combating transnational terror. Only time will tell if we have truly learned this lesson.

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**APPENDIX A
GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS**

Alim (pl. ulema)- A recognized Islamic scholar

B'ayah (pl. b'ayat)- An oath of allegiance

Bayan- A declaration or public statement

Dar al-Harb- Abode of war

Dar al-Islam- Abode of Islam; abode of peace

Emir- Literally, prince; can also mean leader or commander

Fatwa- Proclamation of Islamic doctrine by an alim. Though al-Qaeda leaders lack the authority to issue a fatwa, they consider their statements religious edicts.

Hajj- The required pilgrimage to Mecca; the fifth pillar of Islam.

Hijra- Migration; specifically the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622.

Jahiliyya- Term referring to the barbarity or ignorance of mankind in the pre-Islamic era

Jihad- Struggling or striving. In the context of radical Islam, a jihad is a holy war.

Khalifa- A caliph, a political figure designated as the guardian of the Muslim community and a successor of the Prophet Muhammad's political leadership.

Kufr- non-believing; derivative of kafar, meaning infidel or non-believer

Madrassa- A religious school

Mujahid (pl. mujahideen)- One engaging in jihad. In the extremist context, a holy warrior.

Shahadah- Proclamation of a Muslim's faith; the first pillar of Islam

Shaheed- A martyr or witness

Shari'a- Body of Islamic law

Shi'a- Minority denomination that recognizes Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, as his true successor.

Sufism- Movement of Islamic mysticism deemed impure by fundamentalists

Sunni- The main denomination of Islam. Their worship emphasizes the customs of the Prophet Muhammad (sunnah), his words and deeds (hadith), and the Qur'an.

Taliban- literally, students. Ruling coalition of Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.

Tawhid- Term referring to the unity and oneness of Allah

Ummah- The international Muslim community

Wahhabism- Austere form of Sunni Islam common in the Arabian Peninsula

APPENDIX B

OSAMA BIN LADEN: “DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST THE AMERICANS OCCUPYING THE LAND OF THE TWO HOLY PLACES”

Bin Laden, Usama bin Mohammad. “Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places.” 23 August 1996. [PBS: Frontline](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html). 1 April 2006. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html

Praise be to Allah, we seek His help and ask for his pardon. we take refuge in Allah from our wrongs and bad deeds. Who ever been guided by Allah will not be misled, and who ever has been misled, he will never be guided. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah-no associates with Him- and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.

{O you who believe! be careful of -your duty to- Allah with the proper care which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslim} (Imraan; 3:102), {O people be careful of -your duty to- your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same -kind- and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of -your duty to- Allah , by whom you demand one of another -your rights-, and (be careful) to the ties of kinship; surely Allah ever watches over you} (An-Nisa; 4:1), {O you who believe! be careful- of your duty- to Allah and speak the right word; He will put your deeds into a right state for you, and forgive you your faults; and who ever obeys Allah and his Apostle, he indeed achieve a mighty success} (Al-Ahzab; 33:70-71).

Praise be to Allah, reporting the saying of the prophet Shu'aib: {I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able, and with non but Allah is the direction of my affair to the right and successful path; on him do I rely and to him do I turn} (Hud; 11:88).

Praise be to Allah, saying: {You are the best of the nations raised up for -the benefit of- men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah} (Aal-Imraan; 3:110). Allah's blessing and salutations on His slave and messenger who said: (The people are close to an all encompassing punishment from Allah if they see the oppressor and fail to restrain him.)

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

The people of Islam awakened and realised that they are the main target for the aggression of the Zionist-Crusaders alliance. All false claims and propaganda about "Human Rights" were hammered down and exposed by the massacres that took place against the Muslims in every part of the world.

The latest and the greatest of these aggressions, incurred by the Muslims since the death of the Prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) is the occupation of the land of the two Holy Places -the foundation of the house of Islam, the place of the revelation, the source of the message and the place of the noble Ka'ba, the Qiblah of all Muslims- by the armies of the

American Crusaders and their allies. (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah").

Under the present circumstances, and under the banner of the blessed awakening which is sweeping the world in general and the Islamic world in particular, I meet with you today. And after a long absence, imposed on the scholars (Ulama) and callers (Da'ees) of Islam by the iniquitous crusaders movement under the leadership of the USA; who fears that they, the scholars and callers of Islam, will instigate the Ummah of Islam against its' enemies as their ancestor scholars-may Allah be pleased with them- like Ibn Taymiyyah and Al'iz Ibn Abdes-Salaam did. And therefore the Zionist-Crusader alliance resorted to killing and arresting the truthful Ulama and the working Da'ees (We are not praising or sanctifying them; Allah sanctify whom He pleased). They killed the Mujahid Sheikh Abdullah Azzaam, and they arrested the Mujahid Sheikh Ahmad Yaseen and the Mujahid Sheikh Omar Abdur Rahman (in America).

By orders from the USA they also arrested a large number of scholars, Da'ees and young people - in the land of the two Holy Places- among them the prominent Sheikh Salman Al-Oud'a and Sheikh Safar Al-Hawali and their brothers; (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah"). We, myself and my group, have suffered some of this injustice ourselves; we have been prevented from addressing the Muslims. We have been pursued in Pakistan, Sudan and Afghanistan, hence this long absence on my part. But by the Grace of Allah, a safe base is now available in the high Hindukush mountains in Khurasan ; where--by the Grace of Allah-the largest infidel military force of the world was destroyed. And the myth of the super power was withered in front of the Mujahideen cries of Allahu Akbar (God is greater). Today we work from the same mountains to lift the iniquity that had been imposed on the Ummah by the Zionist-Crusader alliance, particularly after they have occupied the blessed land around Jerusalem, route of the journey of the Prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) and the land of the two Holy Places. We ask Allah to bestow us with victory, He is our Patron and He is the Most Capable.

From here, today we begin the work, talking and discussing the ways of correcting what had happened to the Islamic world in general, and the Land of the two Holy Places in particular. We wish to study the means that we could follow to return the situation to its' normal path. And to return to the people their own rights, particularly after the large damages and the great aggression on the life and the religion of the people. An injustice that had affected every section and group of the people; the civilians, military and security men, government officials and merchants, the young and the old people as well as schools and university students. Hundred of thousands of the unemployed graduates, who became the widest section of the society, were also affected.

Injustice had affected the people of the industry and agriculture. It affected the people of the rural and urban areas. And almost every body complain about something. The situation at the land of the two Holy places became like a huge volcano at the verge of eruption that would destroy the Kufur and the corruption and its' sources. The explosion at Riyadh and Al-Khobar is a warning of this volcanic eruption emerging as a result of the sever oppression, suffering, excessive iniquity, humiliation and poverty.

People are fully concerned about their every day livings; every body talks about the deterioration of the economy, inflation, ever increasing debts and jails full of prisoners. Government employees with limited income talk about debts of ten thousands and hundred thousands of Saudi Riyals . They complain that the value of the Riyal is greatly and continuously deteriorating among most of the main currencies. Great merchants and contractors speak about hundreds and thousands of million Riyals owed to them by the government. More than three hundred forty billions of Riyal owed by the government to the people in addition to the daily accumulated interest, let alone the foreign debt. People wonder whether we are the largest oil exporting country?! They even believe that this situation is a curse put on them by Allah for not objecting to the oppressive and illegitimate behaviour and measures of the ruling regime: Ignoring the divine Shari'ah law;

depriving people of their legitimate rights; allowing the American to occupy the land of the two Holy Places; imprisonment, unjustly, of the sincere scholars. The honourable Ulama and scholars as well as merchants, economists and eminent people of the country were all alerted by this disastrous situation.

Quick efforts were made by each group to contain and to correct the situation. All agreed that the country is heading toward a great catastrophe, the depth of which is not known except by Allah. One big merchant commented : " the king is leading the state into 'sixty-six' folded disaster", (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah"). Numerous princes share with the people their feelings, privately expressing their concerns and objecting to the corruption, repression and the intimidation taking place in the country. But the competition between influential princes for personal gains and interest had destroyed the country. Through its course of actions the regime has torn off its legitimacy:

(1) Suspension of the Islamic Shari'ah law and exchanging it with man made civil law. The regime entered into a bloody confrontation with the truthful Ulama and the righteous youths (we sanctify nobody; Allah sanctify Whom He pleaseth).

(2) The inability of the regime to protect the country, and allowing the enemy of the Ummah - the American crusader forces- to occupy the land for the longest of years. The crusader forces became the main cause of our disastrous condition, particularly in the economical aspect of it due to the unjustified heavy spending on these forces. As a result of the policy imposed on the country, especially in the field of oil industry where production is restricted or expanded and prices are fixed to suit the American economy ignoring the economy of the country. Expensive deals were imposed on the country to purchase arms. People asking what is the justification for the very existence of the regime then?

Quick efforts were made by individuals and by different groups of the society to contain the situation and to prevent the danger. They advised the government both privately and openly; they send letters and poems, reports after reports, reminders after reminders, they explored every avenue and enlist every influential man in their movement of reform and correction. They wrote with style of passion, diplomacy and wisdom asking for corrective measures and repentance from the "great wrong doings and corruption " that had engulfed even the basic principles of the religion and the legitimate rights of the people.

But -to our deepest regret- the regime refused to listen to the people accusing them of being ridiculous and imbecile. The matter got worse as previous wrong doings were followed by mischief's of greater magnitudes. All of this taking place in the land of the two Holy Places! It is no longer possible to be quiet. It is not acceptable to give a blind eye to this matter.

As the extent of these infringements reached the highest of levels and turned into demolishing forces threatening the very existence of the Islamic principles, a group of scholars-who can take no more- supported by hundreds of retired officials, merchants, prominent and educated people wrote to the King asking for implementation of the corrective measures. In 1411 A.H. (May 1991), at the time of the gulf war, a letter, the famous letter of Shawwaal, with over four hundred signatures was send to the king demanding the lift of oppression and the implementation of corrective actions. The king humiliated those people and choose to ignore the content of their letter; and the very bad situation of the country became even worse.

People, however, tried again and send more letters and petitions. One particular report, the glorious Memorandum Of Advice, was handed over to the king on Muharram, 1413 A.H (July 1992), which tackled the problem pointed out the illness and prescribed the medicine in an original, righteous and scientific style. It described the gaps and the shortcoming in the philosophy

of the regime and suggested the required course of action and remedy. The report gave a description of:

- (1) The intimidation and harassment suffered by the leaders of the society, the scholars, heads of tribes, merchants, academic teachers and other eminent individuals;
- (2) The situation of the law within the country and the arbitrary declaration of what is Halal and Haram (lawful and unlawful) regardless of the Shari'ah as instituted by Allah;
- (3) The state of the press and the media which became a tool of truth-hiding and misinformation; the media carried out the plan of the enemy of idolising cult of certain personalities and spreading scandals among the believers to repel the people away from their religion, as Allah, the Exalted said: { surely- as for- those who love that scandal should circulate between the believers, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and in the here after } (An-Noor, 24:19).
- (4) Abuse and confiscation of human rights;
- (5) The financial and the economical situation of the country and the frightening future in the view of the enormous amount of debts and interest owed by the government; this is at the time when the wealth of the Ummah being wasted to satisfy personal desires of certain individuals!! while imposing more custom duties and taxes on the nation. (the prophet said about the woman who committed adultery: "She repented in such a way sufficient to bring forgiveness to a custom collector!!"),.
- (6) The miserable situation of the social services and infra-structure especially the water service and supply , the basic requirement of life.,
- (7) The state of the ill-trained and ill-prepared army and the impotence of its commander in chief despite the incredible amount of money that has been spent on the army. The gulf war clearly exposed the situation.,
- (8) Shari'a law was suspended and man made law was used instead.,
- (9) And as far as the foreign policy is concerned the report exposed not only how this policy has disregarded the Islamic issues and ignored the Muslims, but also how help and support were provided to the enemy against the Muslims; the cases of Gaza-Ariha and the communist in the south of Yemen are still fresh in the memory, and more can be said.

As stated by the people of knowledge, it is not a secret that to use man made law instead of the Shari'a and to support the infidels against the Muslims is one of the ten "voiders" that would strip a person from his Islamic status (turn a Muslim into a Mushrik, non believer status). The All Mighty said: {and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are the unbelievers} (Al-Ma'ida; 5:44), and {but no! by your Lord! they do not believe (in reality) until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find the slightest misgiving in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with entire submission} (An-Nissa; 4:65).

In spite of the fact that the report was written with soft words and very diplomatic style, reminding of Allah, giving truthful sincere advice, and despite of the importance of advice in Islam - being absolutely essential for those in charge of the people- and the large number who signed this document as well as their supporters, all of that was not an intercession for the Memorandum . Its' content was rejected and those who signed it and their sympathisers were ridiculed, prevented from travel, punished and even jailed.

Therefore it is very clear that the advocates of correction and reform movement were very keen on using peaceful means in order to protect the unity of the country and to prevent blood shed. Why is it then the regime closed all peaceful routes and pushed the people toward armed actions?!! which is the only choice left for them to implement righteousness and justice. To whose benefit does prince Sultan and prince Nayeff push the country into a civil war that will destroy everything? and why consulting those who ignites internal feuds, playing the people against each other and instigate the policemen, the sons of the nation, to abort the reform movement. While leaving in peace and security such traitors who implement the policy of the enemy in order to bleed the financial and the human resources of the Ummah, and leaving the main enemy in the area-the American Zionist alliance enjoy peace and security?!

The advisor (Zaki Badr, the Egyptian ex-minister of the interior) to prince Nayeff -minister of interior- was not acceptable even to his own country; he was sacked from his position there due to the filthy attitude and the aggression he exercised on his own people, yet he was warmly welcomed by prince Nayeff to assist in sins and aggressions. He unjustly filled the prisons with the best sons of this Ummah and caused miseries to their mothers. Does the regime want to play the civilians against their military personnel and vice versa, like what had happened in some of the neighbouring countries?!! No doubts this is the policy of the American-Israeli alliance as they are the first to benefit from this situation.

But with the grace of Allah, the majority of the nation, both civilians and military individuals are aware of the wicked plan. They refused to be played against each others and to be used by the regime as a tool to carry out the policy of the American-Israeli alliance through their agent in our country: the Saudi regime.

Therefore every one agreed that the situation can not be rectified (the shadow cannot be straighten when its' source, the rod, is not straight either) unless the root of the problem is tackled. Hence it is essential to hit the main enemy who divided the Ummah into small and little countries and pushed it, for the last few decades, into a state of confusion. The Zionist-Crusader alliance moves quickly to contain and abort any "corrective movement" appearing in the Islamic countries. Different means and methods are used to achieve their target; on occasion the "movement" is dragged into an armed struggle at a predetermined unfavourable time and place. Sometime officials from the Ministry of Interior, who are also graduates of the colleges of the Shari'ah, are leashed out to mislead and confuse the nation and the Ummah (by wrong Fatwas) and to circulate false information about the movement. At other occasions some righteous people were tricked into a war of words against the Ulama and the leaders of the movement, wasting the energy of the nation in discussing minor issues and ignoring the main one that is the unification of the people under the divine law of Allah.

In the shadow of these discussions and arguments truthfulness is covered by the falsehood, and personal feuds and partisanship created among the people increasing the division and the weakness of the Ummah; priorities of the Islamic work are lost while the blasphemy and polytheism continue its grip and control over the Ummah. We should be alert to these atrocious plans carried out by the Ministry of Interior. The right answer is to follow what have been decided by the people of knowledge, as was said by Ibn Taymiyyah (Allah's mercy upon him): "people of Islam should join forces and support each other to get rid of the main "Kufr" who is controlling the countries of the Islamic world, even to bear the lesser damage to get rid of the major one, that is the great Kufr".

If there are more than one duty to be carried out, then the most important one should receive priority. Clearly after Belief (Imaan) there is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the holy land. No other priority, except Belief, could be considered before it; the people of knowledge, Ibn Taymiyyah, stated: "to fight in defence of religion and Belief is a collective duty; there is no other duty after Belief than fighting the enemy who is corrupting the life and the religion. There is no preconditions for this duty and the enemy should be fought with

one best abilities. (ref: supplement of Fatawa). If it is not possible to push back the enemy except by the collective movement of the Muslim people, then there is a duty on the Muslims to ignore the minor differences among themselves; the ill effect of ignoring these differences, at a given period of time, is much less than the ill effect of the occupation of the Muslims' land by the main Kufr. Ibn Taymiyyah had explained this issue and emphasised the importance of dealing with the major threat on the expense of the minor one. He described the situation of the Muslims and the Mujahideen and stated that even the military personnel who are not practising Islam are not exempted from the duty of Jihad against the enemy.

Ibn Taymiyyah , after mentioning the Moguls (Tatar) and their behaviour in changing the law of Allah, stated that: the ultimate aim of pleasing Allah, raising His word, instituting His religion and obeying His messenger (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) is to fight the enemy, in every aspects and in a complete manner; if the danger to the religion from not fighting is greater than that of fighting, then it is a duty to fight them even if the intention of some of the fighter is not pure i.e . fighting for the sake of leadership (personal gain) or if they do not observe some of the rules and commandments of Islam. To repel the greatest of the two dangers on the expense of the lesser one is an Islamic principle which should be observed. It was the tradition of the people of the Sunnah (Ahlul-Sunnah) to join and invade- fight- with the righteous and non righteous men. Allah may support this religion by righteous and non righteous people as told by the prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM). If it is not possible to fight except with the help of non righteous military personnel and commanders, then there are two possibilities: either fighting will be ignored and the others, who are the great danger to this life and religion, will take control; or to fight with the help of non righteous rulers and therefore repelling the greatest of the two dangers and implementing most, though not all, of the Islamic laws. The latter option is the right duty to be carried out in these circumstances and in many other similar situation. In fact many of the fights and conquests that took place after the time of Rashidoon, the guided Imams, were of this type. (majmoo' al Fatawa, 26/506).

No one, not even a blind or a deaf person , can deny the presence of the widely spread mischief's or the prevalence of the great sins that had reached the grievous iniquity of polytheism and to share with Allah in His sole right of sovereignty and making of the law. The All Mighty stated: {And when Luqman said to his son while he admonish him: O my son! do not associate ought with Allah; most surely polytheism is a grievous iniquity} (Luqman; 31:13). Man fabricated laws were put forward permitting what has been forbidden by Allah such as usury (Riba) and other matters. Banks dealing in usury are competing, for lands, with the two Holy Places and declaring war against Allah by disobeying His order {Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury} (Baqarah; 2:275). All this taking place at the vicinity of the Holy Mosque in the Holy Land! Allah (SWT) stated in His Holy Book a unique promise (that had not been promised to any other sinner) to the Muslims who deals in usury: {O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah and relinquish what remains (due) from usury, if you are believers * But if you do (it) not, then be appraised of WAR from Allah and His Apostle} (Baqarah; 2:278-279). This is for the "Muslim" who deals in usury (believing that it is a sin), what is it then to the person who make himself a partner and equal to Allah, legalising (usury and other sins) what has been forbidden by Allah. Despite of all of the above we see the government misled and dragged some of the righteous Ulamah and Da'ees away from the issue of objecting to the greatest of sins and Kufr. (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah").

Under such circumstances, to push the enemy-the greatest Kufr- out of the country is a prime duty. No other duty after Belief is more important than the duty of had . Utmost effort should be made to prepare and instigate the Ummah against the enemy, the American-Israeli alliance- occupying the country of the two Holy Places and the route of the Apostle (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) to the Furthest Mosque (Al-Aqsa Mosque). Also to remind the Muslims not to be engaged in an internal war among themselves, as that will have grieve consequences namely:

1-consumption of the Muslims human resources as most casualties and fatalities will be among the Muslims people.

2-Exhaustion of the economic and financial resources.

3-Destruction of the country infrastructures

4-Dissociation of the society

5-Destruction of the oil industries. The presence of the USA Crusader military forces on land, sea and air of the states of the Islamic Gulf is the greatest danger threatening the largest oil reserve in the world. The existence of these forces in the area will provoke the people of the country and induces aggression on their religion, feelings and prides and push them to take up armed struggle against the invaders occupying the land; therefore spread of the fighting in the region will expose the oil wealth to the danger of being burned up. The economic interests of the States of the Gulf and the land of the two Holy Places will be damaged and even a greater damage will be caused to the economy of the world. I would like here to alert my brothers, the Mujahideen, the sons of the nation, to protect this (oil) wealth and not to include it in the battle as it is a great Islamic wealth and a large economical power essential for the soon to be established Islamic state, by Allah's Permission and Grace. We also warn the aggressors, the USA, against burning this Islamic wealth (a crime which they may commit in order to prevent it, at the end of the war, from falling in the hands of its legitimate owners and to cause economic damages to the competitors of the USA in Europe or the Far East, particularly Japan which is the major consumer of the oil of the region).

6-Division of the land of the two Holy Places, and annexing of the northerly part of it by Israel. Dividing the land of the two Holy Places is an essential demand of the Zionist-Crusader alliance. The existence of such a large country with its huge resources under the leadership of the forthcoming Islamic State, by Allah's Grace, represent a serious danger to the very existence of the Zionist state in Palestine. The Noble Ka'ba, -the Qiblah of all Muslims- makes the land of the two Holy Places a symbol for the unity of the Islamic world. Moreover, the presence of the world largest oil reserve makes the land of the two Holy Places an important economical power in the Islamic world. The sons of the two Holy Places are directly related to the life style (Seerah) of their forefathers, the companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They consider the Seerah of their forefathers as a source and an example for re-establishing the greatness of this Ummah and to raise the word of Allah again. Furthermore the presence of a population of fighters in the south of Yemen, fighting in the cause of Allah, is a strategic threat to the Zionist-Crusader alliance in the area. The Prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) said: (around twelve thousands will emerge from Aden/Abian helping -the cause of- Allah and His messenger, they are the best, in the time, between me and them) narrated by Ahmad with a correct trustworthy reference.

7-An internal war is a great mistake, no matter what reasons are there for it. the presence of the occupier-the USA- forces will control the outcome of the battle for the benefit of the international Kufr.

I address now my brothers of the security and military forces and the national guards may Allah preserve you hoard for Islam and the Muslims people:

O you protectors of unity and guardians of Faith; O you descendent of the ancestors who carried the light (torch) of guidance and spread it all over the world. O you grandsons of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqaas , Almothanna Ibn Haritha Ash-Shaybani , Alga'ga' Ibn Amroo Al-Tameemi and those pious companions who fought Jihad alongside them; you competed to join the army and the guard forces with the intention to carry out Jihad in the cause of Allah -raising His word- and to defend the faith of Islam and the land of the two Holy Places against the invaders and the occupying

forces. That is the ultimate level of believing in this religion "Deen". But the regime had reversed these principles and their understanding, humiliating the Ummah and disobeying Allah. Half a century ago the rulers promised the Ummah to regain the first Qiblah, but fifty years later new generation arrived and the promises have been changed; Al-Aqsa Mosque handed over to the Zionists and the wounds of the Ummah still bleeding there. At the time when the Ummah has not regained the first Qiblah and the rout of the journey of the Prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him), and despite of all of the above, the Saudi regime had stunt the Ummah in the remaining sanctities, the Holy city of Makka and the mosque of the Prophet (Al-Masjid An-Nabawy), by calling the Christians army to defend the regime. The crusaders were permitted to be in the land of the two Holy Places. Not surprisingly though, the King himself wore the cross on his chest. The country was widely opened from the north-to- the south and from east-to-the west for the crusaders. The land was filled with the military bases of the USA and the allies. The regime became unable to keep control without the help of these bases. You know more than any body else about the size, intention and the danger of the presence of the USA military bases in the area. The regime betrayed the Ummah and joined the Kufr, assisting and helping them against the Muslims. It is well known that this is one of the ten "voiders" of Islam, deeds of de-Islamisation. By opening the Arab peninsula to the crusaders the regime disobeyed and acted against what has been enjoined by the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him), while he was at the bed of his death: (Expel the polytheists out of the Arab Peninsula); (narrated by Al-Bukhari) and: (If I survive, Allah willing, I'll expel the Jews and the Christians out of the Arab Peninsula); saheeh Aljame' As-Sagheer.

It is out of date and no longer acceptable to claim that the presence of the crusaders is necessity and only a temporary measures to protect the land of the two Holy Places. Especially when the civil and the military infrastructures of Iraq were savagely destroyed showing the depth of the Zionist-Crusaders hatred to the Muslims and their children, and the rejection of the idea of replacing the crusaders forces by an Islamic force composed of the sons of the country and other Muslim people. moreover the foundations of the claim and the claim it self were demolished and wiped out by the sequence of speeches given by the leaders of the Kuffar in America. The latest of these speeches was the one given by William Perry, the Defense Secretary, after the explosion in Al-Khobar saying that: the presence of the American solders there is to protect the interest of the USA. The imprisoned Sheikh Safar Al-Hawali, may Allah hasten his release, wrote a book of seventy pages; in it he presented evidence and proof that the presence of the Americans in the Arab Peninsula is a pre-planned military occupation. The regime want to deceive the Muslim people in the same manner when the Palestinian fighters, Mujahideen, were deceived causing the loss of Al-Aqsa Mosque. In 1304 A.H (1936 AD) the awakened Muslims nation of Palestine started their great struggle, Jihad, against the British occupying forces. Britain was impotent to stop the Mujahideen and their Jihad, but their devil inspired that there is no way to stop the armed struggle in Palestine unless through their agent King Abdul Azeez, who managed to deceives the Mujahideen. King Abdul Azeez carried out his duty to his British masters. He sent his two sons to meet the Mujahideen leaders and to inform them that King Abdul Azeez would guarantee the promises made by the British government in leaving the area and responding positively to the demands of the Mujahideen if the latter stop their Jihad. And so King Abdul Azeez caused the loss of the first Qiblah of the Muslims people. The King joined the crusaders against the Muslims and instead of supporting the Mujahideen in the cause of Allah, to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque, he disappointed and humiliated them.

Today, his son, king Fahd, trying to deceive the Muslims for the second time so as to loose what is left of the sanctities. When the Islamic world resented the arrival of the crusader forces to the land of the two Holy Places, the king told lies to the Ulahah (who issued Fatwas about the arrival of the Americans) and to the gathering of the Islamic leaders at the conference of Rabitah which was held in the Holy City of Makka. The King said that: "the issue is simple, the American and the alliance forces will leave the area in few months". Today it is seven years since their arrival and the regime is not able to move them out of the country. The regime made no confession about its inability and carried on lying to the people claiming that the American will leave. But never-never

again ; a believer will not be bitten twice from the same hole or snake! Happy is the one who takes note of the sad experience of the others!!

Instead of motivating the army, the guards, and the security men to oppose the occupiers, the regime used these men to protect the invaders, and further deepening the humiliation and the betrayal. (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah"). To those little group of men within the army, police and security forces, who have been tricked and pressured by the regime to attack the Muslims and spill their blood, we would like to remind them of the narration: (I promise war against those who take my friends as their enemy) narrated by Al--Bukhari. And his saying (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) saying of: (In the day of judgement a man comes holding another and complaining being slain by him. Allah, blessed be His Names, asks: Why did you slay him?! The accused replies: I did so that all exaltation may be Yours. Allah, blessed be His Names, says: All exaltation is indeed mine! Another man comes holding a fourth with a similar complaint. Allah, blessed be His Names, asks: Why did you kill him?! The accused replies: I did so that exaltation may be for Mr. X! Allah, blessed be His Names, says: exaltation is mine, not for Mr. X, carry all the slain man's sins (and proceed to the Hell fire)!). In another wording of An-Nasa'i: "The accused says: for strengthening the rule or kingdom of Mr. X"

Today your brothers and sons, the sons of the two Holy Places, have started their Jihad in the cause of Allah, to expel the occupying enemy from of the country of the two Holy places. And there is no doubt you would like to carry out this mission too, in order to re-establish the greatness of this Ummah and to liberate its' occupied sanctities. Nevertheless, it must be obvious to you that, due to the imbalance of power between our armed forces and the enemy forces, a suitable means of fighting must be adopted i.e using fast moving light forces that work under complete secrecy. In other word to initiate a guerrilla warfare, were the sons of the nation, and not the military forces, take part in it. And as you know, it is wise, in the present circumstances, for the armed military forces not to be engaged in a conventional fighting with the forces of the crusader enemy (the exceptions are the bold and the forceful operations carried out by the members of the armed forces individually, that is without the movement of the formal forces in its conventional shape and hence the responses will not be directed, strongly, against the army) unless a big advantage is likely to be achieved; and great losses induced on the enemy side (that would shaken and destroy its foundations and infrastructures) that will help to expel the defeated enemy from the country.

The Mujahideen, your brothers and sons, requesting that you support them in every possible way by supplying them with the necessary information, materials and arms. Security men are especially asked to cover up for the Mujahideen and to assist them as much as possible against the occupying enemy; and to spread rumours, fear and discouragement among the members of the enemy forces.

We bring to your attention that the regime, in order to create a friction and feud between the Mujahideen and yourselves, might resort to take a deliberate action against personnel of the security, guards and military forces and blame the Mujahideen for these actions. The regime should not be allowed to have such opportunity.

The regime is fully responsible for what had been incurred by the country and the nation; however the occupying American enemy is the principle and the main cause of the situation . Therefore efforts should be concentrated on destroying, fighting and killing the enemy until, by the Grace of Allah, it is completely defeated. The time will come -by the Permission of Allah- when you'll perform your decisive role so that the word of Allah will be supreme and the word of the infidels (Kaferoon) will be the inferior. You will hit with iron fist against the aggressors. You'll re-establish the normal course and give the people their rights and carry out your truly Islamic duty. Allah willing, I'll have a separate talk about these issues.

My Muslim Brothers (particularly those of the Arab Peninsula): The money you pay to buy American goods will be transformed into bullets and used against our brothers in Palestine and tomorrow (future) against our sons in the land of the two Holy places. By buying these goods we are strengthening their economy while our dispossession and poverty increases.

Muslims Brothers of land of the two Holy Places:

It is incredible that our country is the world largest buyer of arms from the USA and the area biggest commercial partners of the Americans who are assisting their Zionist brothers in occupying Palestine and in evicting and killing the Muslims there, by providing arms, men and financial supports.

To deny these occupiers from the enormous revenues of their trading with our country is a very important help for our Jihad against them. To express our anger and hate to them is a very important moral gesture. By doing so we would have taken part in (the process of) cleansing our sanctities from the crusaders and the Zionists and forcing them, by the Permission of Allah, to leave disappointed and defeated.

We expect the woman of the land of the two Holy Places and other countries to carry out their role in boycotting the American goods.

If economical boycotting is intertwined with the military operations of the Mujahideen, then defeating the enemy will be even nearer, by the Permission of Allah. However if Muslims don't co-operate and support their Mujahideen brothers then, in effect, they are supplying the army of the enemy with financial help and extending the war and increasing the suffering of the Muslims.

The security and the intelligence services of the entire world can not force a single citizen to buy the goods of his/her enemy. Economical boycotting of the American goods is a very effective weapon of hitting and weakening the enemy, and it is not under the control of the security forces of the regime.

Before closing my talk, I have a very important message to the youths of Islam, men of the brilliant future of the Ummah of Muhammad (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM). Our talk with the youths about their duty in this difficult period in the history of our Ummah. A period in which the youths and no one else came forward to carry out the variable and different duties. While some of the well known individuals had hesitated in their duty of defending Islam and saving themselves and their wealth from the injustice, aggression and terror -exercised by the government- the youths (may Allah protect them) were forthcoming and raised the banner of Jihad against the American-Zionist alliance occupying the sanctities of Islam. Others who have been tricked into loving this materialistic world, and those who have been terrorised by the government choose to give legitimacy to the greatest betrayal, the occupation of the land of the two Holy Places (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah"). We are not surprised from the action of our youths. The youths were the companions of Muhammad (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him), and was it not the youths themselves who killed Aba-Jahl, the Pharaoh of this Ummah? Our youths are the best descendent of the best ancestors.

Abdul-Rahman Ibn Awf -may Allah be pleased with him- said: (I was at Badr where I noticed two youths one to my right and the other to my left. One of them asked me quietly (so not to be heard by the other) : O uncle point out Aba-Jahl to me. What do you want him for? , said Abdul Rahman. The boy answered: I have been informed that he- Aba-Jahl- abused the Messenger of Allah (), I swear by Allah, who have my soul in His hand, that if I see Aba-Jahl I'll not let my shadow departs his shadow till one of us is dead. I was astonished, said Abdul Rahman; then the other youth said the same thing as the first one. Subsequently I saw Aba-Jahl among the people; I

said to the boys do you see? this is the man you are asking me about. The two youths hit Aba-Jahl with their swords till he was dead. Allah is the greatest, Praise be to Him: Two youths of young age but with great perseverance, enthusiasm, courage and pride for the religion of Allah's, each one of them asking about the most important act of killing that should be induced on the enemy. That is the killing of the pharaoh of this Ummah - Aba Jahl-, the leader of the unbelievers (Mushrikeen) at the battle of Badr. The role of Abdul Rahman Ibn Awf , may Allah be pleased with him, was to direct the two youths toward Aba-Jahl. That was the perseverance and the enthusiasm of the youths of that time and that was the perseverance and the enthusiasm of their fathers. It is this role that is now required from the people who have the expertise and knowledge in fighting the enemy. They should guide their brothers and sons in this matter; once that has been done, then our youths will repeat what their forefathers had said before: "I swear by Allah if I see him I'll not let my shadow to departs from his shadow till one of us is dead".

And the story of Abdur-Rahman Ibn Awf about Ummayyah Ibn Khalaf shows the extent of Bilal's (may Allah be pleased with him) persistence in killing the head of the Kufr: "the head of Kufr is Ummayyah Ibn Khalaf.... I shall live not if he survives" said Bilal.

Few days ago the news agencies had reported that the Defence Secretary of the Crusading Americans had said that "the explosion at Riyadh and Al-Khobar had taught him one lesson: that is not to withdraw when attacked by coward terrorists".

We say to the Defence Secretary that his talk can induce a grieving mother to laughter! and shows the fears that had enshrined you all. Where was this false courage of yours when the explosion in Beirut took place on 1983 AD (1403 A.H). You were turned into scattered pits and pieces at that time; 241 mainly marines solders were killed. And where was this courage of yours when two explosions made you to leave Aden in lees than twenty four hours!

But your most disgraceful case was in Somalia; where- after vigorous propaganda about the power of the USA and its post cold war leadership of the new world order- you moved tens of thousands of international force, including twenty eight thousands American solders into Somalia. However, when tens of your solders were killed in minor battles and one American Pilot was dragged in the streets of Mogadishu you left the area carrying disappointment, humiliation, defeat and your dead with you. Clinton appeared in front of the whole world threatening and promising revenge , but these threats were merely a preparation for withdrawal. You have been disgraced by Allah and you withdrew; the extent of your impotence and weaknesses became very clear. It was a pleasure for the "heart" of every Muslim and a remedy to the "chests" of believing nations to see you defeated in the three Islamic cities of Beirut , Aden and Mogadishu.

I say to Secretary of Defence: The sons of the land of the two Holy Places had come out to fight against the Russian in Afghanistan, the Serb in Bosnia-Herzegovina and today they are fighting in Chechenia and -by the Permission of Allah- they have been made victorious over your partner, the Russians. By the command of Allah, they are also fighting in Tajakistan.

I say: Since the sons of the land of the two Holy Places feel and strongly believe that fighting (Jihad) against the Kuffar in every part of the world, is absolutely essential; then they would be even more enthusiastic, more powerful and larger in number upon fighting on their own land- the place of their births- defending the greatest of their sanctities, the noble Ka'ba (the Qiblah of all Muslims). They know that the Muslims of the world will assist and help them to victory. To liberate their sanctities is the greatest of issues concerning all Muslims; It is the duty of every Muslims in this world.

I say to you William (Defence Secretary) that: These youths love death as you loves life. They inherit dignity, pride, courage, generosity, truthfulness and sacrifice from father to father. They are most delivering and steadfast at war. They inherit these values from their ancestors (even from the

time of the Jaheliyyah, before Islam). These values were approved and completed by the arriving Islam as stated by the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him): "I have been sent to perfecting the good values". (Saheeh Al-Jame' As-Sagheer).

When the pagan King Amroo Ibn Hind tried to humiliate the pagan Amroo Ibn Kulthoom, the latter cut the head of the King with his sword rejecting aggression, humiliation and indignation.

If the king oppresses the people excessively, we reject submitting to humiliation.

By which legitimacy (or command) O Amroo bin Hind you want us to be degraded?!

By which legitimacy (or command) O Amroo bin Hind you listen to our foes and disrespect us?!

Our toughness has, O Amroo, tired the enemies before you, never giving in!

Our youths believe in paradise after death. They believe that taking part in fighting will not bring their day nearer; and staying behind will not postpone their day either. Exalted be to Allah who said: {And a soul will not die but with the permission of Allah, the term is fixed} (Aal Imraan; 3:145). Our youths believe in the saying of the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him): "O boy, I teach a few words; guard (guard the cause of, keep the commandments of) Allah, then He guards you, guard (the cause of) Allah, then He will be with you; if you ask (for your need) ask Allah, if you seek assistance, seek Allah's; and know definitely that if the Whole World gathered to (bestow) profit on you they will not profit you except with what was determined for you by Allah, and if they gathered to harm you they will not harm you except with what has been determined for you by Allah; Pen lifted, papers dried, it is fixed nothing in these truths can be changed" Saheeh Al-Jame' As-Sagheer. Our youths took note of the meaning of the poetic verse:

"If death is a predetermined must, then it is a shame to die cowardly."

and the other poet saying:

"Who do not die by the sword will die by other reason; many causes are there but one death".

These youths believe in what has been told by Allah and His messenger (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) about the greatness of the reward for the Mujahideen and Martyrs; Allah, the most exalted said: {and -so far- those who are slain in the way of Allah, He will by no means allow their deeds to perish. He will guide them and improve their condition. and cause them to enter the garden -paradise- which He has made known to them}. (Muhammad; 47:4-6). Allah the Exalted also said: {and do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead; nay -they are- alive, but you do not perceive} (Bagarah; 2:154). His messenger (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) said: "for those who strive in His cause Allah prepared hundred degrees (levels) in paradise; in-between two degrees as the in-between heaven and earth". Saheeh Al-Jame' As-Sagheer. He (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) also said: "the best of the martyrs are those who do NOT turn their faces away from the battle till they are killed. They are in the high level of Jannah (paradise). Their Lord laughs to them (in pleasure) and when your Lord laughs to a slave of His, He will not hold him to an account". narrated by Ahmad with correct and trustworthy reference. And : "a martyr will not feel the pain of death except like how you feel when you are pinched". Saheeh Al-Jame' As-Sagheer. He also said: "a martyr privileges are guaranteed by Allah; forgiveness with the first gush of his blood, he will be shown his seat in paradise, he will be decorated with the jewels of belief (Imaan), married off to the beautiful ones, protected from the test in the grave, assured security in the day of judgement, crowned with the crown of dignity, a ruby of which is better than this whole world (Duniah) and its' entire content, wedded to seventy two of the pure Houries (beautiful ones of Paradise) and his intercession on the behalf of seventy of his relatives will be accepted". Narrated by Ahmad and At-Tirmithi (with the correct and trustworthy reference).

Those youths know that their rewards in fighting you, the USA, is double than their rewards in fighting some one else not from the people of the book. They have no intention except to enter paradise by killing you. An infidel, and enemy of God like you, cannot be in the same hell with his righteous executioner.

Our youths chanting and reciting the word of Allah, the most exalted: {fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and heal the heart of a believing people} (At-Taubah; 9:14) and the words of the prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM): "I swear by Him, who has my soul in His hand, that no man get killed fighting them today, patiently attacking and not retreating, surely Allah will let him into paradise". And his (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) saying to them: "get up to a paradise as wide as heaven and earth".

The youths also reciting the All Mighty words of: "so when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite the necks..." (Muhammad; 47:19). Those youths will not ask you (William Perry) for explanations, they will tell you singing there is nothing between us need to be explained, there is only killing and neck smiting.

And they will say to you what their grand father, Haroon Ar-Rasheed, Ameer-ul-Mu'meneen, replied to your grandfather, Nagfoor, the Byzantine emperor, when he threatened the Muslims: "from Haroon Ar-Rasheed, Ameer-ul-Mu'meneen, to Nagfoor, the dog of the Romans; the answer is what you will see not what you hear". Haroon El-Rasheed led the armies of Islam to the battle and handed Nagfoor a devastating defeat.

The youths you called cowards are competing among themselves for fighting and killing you. reciting what one of them said:

The crusader army became dust when we detonated al-Khobar.

With courageous youth of Islam fearing no danger.

If (they are) threatened: The tyrants will kill you, they reply my death is a victory.

I did not betray that king, he did betray our Qiblah.

And he permitted in the holy country the most filthy sort of humans.

I have made an oath by Allah, the Great, to fight who ever rejected the faith.

For more than a decade, they carried arms on their shoulders in Afghanistan and they have made vows to Allah that as long as they are alive, they will continue to carry arms against you until you are -Allah willing- expelled, defeated and humiliated, they will carry on as long as they live saying:

O William, tomorrow you will know which young man is confronting your misguided brethren!

A youth fighting in smile, returning with the spear coloured red.

May Allah keep me close to knights, humans in peace, demons in war.

Lions in Jungle but their teeth are spears and Indian swords.

The horses witness that I push them hard forward in the fire of battle.

The dust of the battle bears witnesses for me, so also the fighting itself, the pens and the books!

So to abuse the grandsons of the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by calling them cowards and challenging them by refusing to leave the land of the two Holy Places shows the insanity and the imbalance you are suffering from. Its appropriate "remedy," however, is in the hands of the youths of Islam, as the poet said:

I am willing to sacrifice self and wealth for knights who never disappointed me.

Knights who are never fed up or deterred by death, even if the mill of war turns.

In the heat of battle they do not care, and cure the insanity of the enemy by their 'insane' courage.

Terrorising you, while you are carrying arms on our land, is a legitimate and morally demanded duty. It is a legitimate right well known to all humans and other creatures. Your example and our example is like a snake which entered into a house of a man and got killed by him. The coward is the one who lets you walk, while carrying arms, freely on his land and provides you with peace and security.

Those youths are different from your soldiers. Your problem will be how to convince your troops to fight, while our problem will be how to restrain our youths to wait for their turn in fighting and in operations. These youths are commendation and praiseworthy.

They stood up tall to defend the religion; at the time when the government misled the prominent scholars and tricked them into issuing Fatwas (that have no basis neither in the book of Allah, nor in the Sunnah of His prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him)) of opening the land of the two Holy Places for the Christians armies and handing the Al-Aqsa Mosque to the Zionists. Twisting the meanings of the holy text will not change this fact at all. They deserve the praise of the poet:

I rejected all the critics, who chose the wrong way;
 I rejected those who enjoy fireplaces in clubs discussing eternally;
 I rejected those, who inspite being lost, think they are at the goal;
 I respect those who carried on not asking or bothering about the difficulties;
 Never letting up from their goals, inspite all hardships of the road;
 Whose blood is the oil for the flame guiding in the darkness of confusion;
 I feel still the pain of (the loss) Al-Quds in my internal organs;
 That loss is like a burning fire in my intestines;
 I did not betray my covenant with God, when even states did betray it! As their grandfather Assim Bin Thabit said rejecting a surrender offer of the pagans:

What for an excuse I had to surrender, while I am still able, having arrows and my bow having a tough string?!

Death is truth and ultimate destiny, and life will end any way. If I do not fight you, then my mother must be insane!

The youths hold you responsible for all of the killings and evictions of the Muslims and the violation of the sanctities, carried out by your Zionist brothers in Lebanon; you openly supplied them with arms and finance. More than 600,000 Iraqi children have died due to lack of food and medicine and as a result of the unjustifiable aggression (sanction) imposed on Iraq and its nation. The children of Iraq are our children. You, the USA, together with the Saudi regime are responsible for the shedding of the blood of these innocent children. Due to all of that, what ever treaty you have with our country is now null and void.

The treaty of Hudaibiyyah was cancelled by the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) once Quraysh had assisted Bani Bakr against Khusa'ah, the allies of the prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him). The prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) fought Quraysh and concurred Makka. He (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) considered the treaty with Bani Qainuqa' void because one of their Jews publicly hurt one Muslim woman, one single woman, at the market. Let alone then, the killing you caused to hundred of thousands Muslims and occupying their sanctities. It is now clear that those who claim that the blood of the American solders (the enemy occupying the land of the Muslims) should be protected are merely repeating what is imposed on them by the regime; fearing the aggression and interested in saving themselves. It is a duty now on every tribe in the Arab Peninsula to fight, Jihad, in the cause of Allah and to cleanse the land from those occupiers. Allah knows that their blood is permitted (to be spilled) and their wealth is a booty; their wealth is a booty to those who kill them. The most Exalted said in the verse of As-Sayef, The Sword: "so when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters where ever you find them, and

take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush" (At-Tauba; 9:5). Our youths knew that the humiliation suffered by the Muslims as a result of the occupation of their sanctities can not be kicked and removed except by explosions and Jihad. As the poet said:

The walls of oppression and humiliation cannot be demolished except in a rain of bullets.

The freeman does not surrender leadership to infidels and sinners.

Without shedding blood no degradation and branding can be removed from the forehead.

I remind the youths of the Islamic world, who fought in Afghanistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina with their wealth, pens, tongues and themselves that the battle had not finished yet. I remind them about the talk between Jibreel (Gabriel) and the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on both of them) after the battle of Ahzab when the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) returned to Medina and before putting his sword aside; when Jibreel (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) descend saying: "are you putting your sword aside? by Allah the angels haven't dropped their arms yet; march with your companions to Bani Quraydah, I am (going) ahead of you to throw fears in their hearts and to shake their fortresses on them". Jibreel marched with the angels (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on them all), followed by the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) marching with the immigrants, Muhajeroon, and supporters, Ansar. (narrated by Al-Bukhary).

These youths know that: if one is not to be killed one will die (any way) and the most honourable death is to be killed in the way of Allah. They are even more determined after the martyrdom of the four heroes who bombed the Americans in Riyadh. Those youths who raised high the head of the Ummah and humiliated the Americans-the occupier- by their operation in Riyadh. They remember the poetry of Ja'far, the second commander in the battle of Mu'tah, in which three thousand Muslims faced over a hundred thousand Romans:

How good is the Paradise and its nearness, good with cool drink
But the Romans are promised punishment (in Hell), if I meet them.

I will fight them.

And the poetry of Abdullah Bin Rawaha, the third commander in the battle of Mu'tah, after the martyrdom of Ja'far, when he felt some hesitation:

O my soul if you do not get killed, you are going to die, anyway.

This is death pool in front of you!

You are getting what you have wished for (martyrdom) before, and you follow the example of the two previous commanders you are rightly guided!

As for our daughters, wives, sisters and mothers they should take prime example from the prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) pious female companions, may Allah be pleased with them; they should adopt the life style (Seerah) of the female companions of courage, sacrifice and generosity in the cause of the supremacy of Allah's religion.

They should remember the courage and the personality of Fatima, daughter of Khatab, when she accepted Islam and stood up in front of her brother, Omar Ibn Al-Khatab and challenged him (before he became a Muslim) saying: "O Omar , what will you do if the truth is not in your religion?!" And to remember the stand of Asma', daughter of Abu Bakr, on the day of Hijra, when

she attended the Messenger and his companion in the cave and split her belt in two pieces for them. And to remember the stand of Naseeba Bent Ka'b striving to defend the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) on the day of Uhud, in which she suffered twelve injuries, one of which was so deep leaving a deep lifelong scar! They should remember the generosity of the early woman of Islam who raised finance for the Muslims army by selling their jewelery.

Our women had set a tremendous example of generosity in the cause of Allah; they motivated and encouraged their sons, brothers and husbands to fight- in the cause of Allah- in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechenia and in other countries. We ask Allah to accept from them these deeds, and may He help their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons. May Allah strengthen the belief - Imaan - of our women in the way of generosity and sacrifice for the supremacy of the word of Allah. Our women weep not, except over men who fight in the cause of Allah; our women instigate their brothers to fight in the cause of Allah.

Our women bemoan only fighters in the cause of Allah, as said:
Do not moan on any one except a lion in the woods, courageous in the burning wars.
Let me die dignified in wars, honourable death is better than my current life.

Our women encourage Jihad saying:
Prepare yourself like a struggler, the matter is bigger than words!
Are you going to leave us else for the wolves of Kufr eating our wings?!
The wolves of Kufr are mobilising all evil persons from every where!
Where are the freemen defending free women by the arms?!
Death is better than life in humiliation! Some scandals and shames will never be otherwise eradicated.

My Muslim Brothers of The World:
Your brothers in Palestine and in the land of the two Holy Places are calling upon your help and asking you to take part in fighting against the enemy --your enemy and their enemy-- the Americans and the Israelis. they are asking you to do whatever you can, with one own means and ability, to expel the enemy, humiliated and defeated, out of the sanctities of Islam. Exalted be to Allah said in His book: { and if they ask your support, because they are oppressed in their faith, then support them! } (Anfaal; 8:72)

O you horses (soldiers) of Allah ride and march on. This is the time of hardship so be tough. And know that your gathering and co-operation in order to liberate the sanctities of Islam is the right step toward unifying the word of the Ummah under the banner of "No God but Allah").

From our place we raise our palms humbly to Allah asking Him to bestow on us His guide in every aspects of this issue.

Our Lord, we ask you to secure the release of the truthful scholars, Ulama, of Islam and pious youths of the Ummah from their imprisonment. O Allah, strengthen them and help their families.

Our Lord, the people of the cross had come with their horses (soldiers) and occupied the land of the two Holy places. And the Zionist Jews fiddling as they wish with the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the route of the ascendance of the messenger of Allah (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM). Our Lord, shatter their gathering, divide them among themselves, shaken the earth under their feet and give us control over them; Our Lord, we take refuge in you from their deeds and take you as a shield between us and them

Our Lord, show us a black day in them!

Our Lord, show us the wonderment of your ability in them!

Our Lord, You are the Revealer of the book, Director of the clouds, You defeated the allies (Ahzab); defeat them and make us victorious over them.

Our Lord, You are the one who help us and You are the one who assist us, with Your Power we move and by Your Power we fight. On You we rely and You are our cause.

Our Lord, those youths got together to make Your religion victorious and raise Your banner. Our Lord, send them Your help and strengthen their hearts.

Our Lord, make the youths of Islam steadfast and descend patience on them and guide their shots!

Our Lord, unify the Muslims and bestow love among their hearts!

O Lord pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm and assist us against the unbelieving people!

Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord, do not impose upon us that which we have no strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us, Thou art our patron, so help us against the unbelieving people.

Our Lord, guide this Ummah, and make the right conditions (by which) the people of your obedience will be in dignity and the people of disobedience in humiliation, and by which the good deeds are enjoined and the bad deeds are forebode.

Our Lord, bless Muhammad, Your slave and messenger, his family and descendants, and companions and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.

And our last supplication is: All praise is due to Allah .

APPENDIX C

ONLINE OATH OF LOYALTY TO AL-QAEDA

"Now Online: Swear Loyalty to al-Qaeda Leaders." The Middle East Media Research Institute.
18 November 2005. 15 March 2006.
<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP102705>

"I invite you to the first day of the month of the great swearing of an oath of loyalty to the commander of the Muslim armies, Sheikh Osama bin Laden, and to the commanders of the global jihad: Sheikh Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Emir of the Believers Mullah Muhammad Omar, and Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, and to all the jihad fighters.

"Oh God, you need this oath of loyalty, the oath of death for Allah that will terrorize the infidels and earn the jihad fighters in particular, and the Muslims in general, reward in the world to come...

"Moreover, for this oath of loyalty to death it is not necessary for you to die now - but in the near future, the very near future, Allah willing, we must all join this blessed convoy, particularly since we have sworn an oath of loyalty.

"This [signing of this] oath of loyalty will continue for one month, and will be posted in all the forums so that the number of oath-takers will be [as] great [as possible], and so that Osama bin Laden will have an army in Afghanistan, an army in Iraq, and a massive army in the waiting list on the Internet pages.

"This is the Internet that Allah operates in the service of jihad and of the mujahedoun, and that has become [a tool in service of] your interest - such that half the mujahedoun's battle is waged on the pages of the Internet, which is the only outlet for passing announcements to the mujahedoun.

"Anyone who has already sworn an oath of loyalty is asked not to do so again, because at the end of the month there will be a count of all those who took the oath..."

"We swear loyalty to Sheikh Osama bin Laden, may Allah preserve him, and to the commanders of the global jihad, Sheikh Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Emir of the Believers Mullah Muhammad Omar, and Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, and all the Jihad fighters. [This is] an oath of death for Allah.

"Signed: _____"

APPENDIX D
“LAST NIGHT” LETTER OF THE 9/11 HIJACKERS

“Last Words of a Terrorist.” The Observer. 30 September 2001. 10 January 2006.
<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,560773,00.html>

THE LAST NIGHT

1) Making an oath to die and renew your intentions.

Shave excess hair from the body and wear cologne.

Shower

2) Make sure you know all aspects of the plan well, and expect the response, or a reaction, from the enemy.

3) Read al-Tawba and Anfal [traditional war chapters from the Qur'an] and reflect on their meanings and remember all of the things God has promised for the martyrs.

4) Remind your soul to listen and obey [all divine orders] and remember that you will face decisive situations that might prevent you from 100 per cent obedience, so tame your soul, purify it, convince it, make it understand, and incite it. God said: 'Obey God and His Messenger, and do not fight amongst yourselves or else you will fail. And be patient, for God is with the patient.'

5) Pray during the night and be persistent in asking God to give you victory, control and conquest, and that He may make your task easier and not expose us.

6) Remember God frequently, and the best way to do it is to read the Holy Qur'an, according to all scholars, as far as I know. It is enough for us that it [the Qur'an] are the words of the Creator of the Earth and the plants, the One that you will meet [on the Day of Judgment].

7) Purify your soul from all unclean things. Completely forget something called 'this world' [or 'this life']. The time for play is over and the serious time is upon us. How much time have we wasted in our lives? Shouldn't we take advantage of these last hours to offer good deeds and obedience?

8) You should feel complete tranquility, because the time between you and your marriage [in heaven] is very short. Afterwards begins the happy life, where God is satisfied with you, and eternal bliss 'in the company of the prophets, the companions, the martyrs and the good people, who are all good company'. Ask God for his mercy and be optimistic, because [the Prophet], peace be upon him, used to prefer optimism in all his affairs.

9) Keep in mind that, if you fall into hardship, how will you act and how will you remain steadfast and remember that you will return to God and remember that anything that happens to you could never be avoided, and what did not happen to you could never have happened to you. This test from Almighty God is to raise your level [levels of heaven] and erase your sins. And be sure that it is a matter of moments, which will then pass, God willing, so blessed are those who win the great reward of God. Almighty God said: 'Did you think you could go to heaven before God knows whom amongst you have fought for Him and are patient?'

10) Remember the words of Almighty God: 'You were looking to the battle before you engaged in it, and now you see it with your own two eyes.' Remember: 'How many small groups beat big groups by the will of God.' And His words: 'If God gives you victory, no one can beat you. And if He betrays you, who can give you victory without Him? So the faithful put their trust in God.'

11) Remind yourself of the supplications and of your brethren and ponder their meanings. (The morning and evening supplications, and the supplications of [entering] a town, and the [unclear] supplications, and the supplications said before meeting the enemy).

12) Bless your body with some verses of the Qur'an [done by reading verses into one's hands and then rubbing the hands over whatever is to be blessed], the luggage, clothes, the knife, your personal effects, your ID, passport, and all your papers.

13) Check your weapon before you leave and long before you leave. (You must make your knife sharp and must not discomfort your animal during the slaughter).

14) Tighten your clothes [a reference to making sure his clothes will cover his private parts at all times], since this is the way of the pious generations after the Prophet. They would tighten their clothes before battle. Tighten your shoes well, wear socks so that your feet will be solidly in your shoes. All of these are worldly things [that humans can do to control their fate, although God decrees what will work and what won't] and the rest is left to God, the best One to depend on.

15) Pray the morning prayer in a group and ponder the great rewards of that prayer. Make supplications afterwards, and do not leave your apartment unless you have performed ablution before leaving, because the angels will ask for your forgiveness as long as you are in a state of ablution, and will pray for you. This saying of the Prophet was mentioned by An-Nawawi in his book, *The Best of Supplications*. Read the words of God: 'Did you think that We created you for no reason...' from the Al-Mu'minin Chapter.

THE SECOND STEP

When the taxi takes you to (M) [this initial could stand for matar, airport in Arabic] remember God constantly while in the car. (Remember the supplication for entering a car, for entering a town, the supplication of place and other supplications).

When you have reached (M) and have left the taxi, say a supplication of place ['Oh Lord, I ask you for the best of this place, and ask you to protect me from its evils'], and everywhere you go say that prayer and smile and be calm, for God is with the believers. And the angels protect you without you feeling anything. Say this supplication: 'God is more dear than all of His creation.' And say: 'Oh Lord, protect me from them as You wish.' And say: 'Oh Lord, take your anger out on [the enemy] and we ask You to protect us from their evils.' And say: 'Oh Lord, block their vision from in front of them, so that they may not see.' And say: 'God is all we need, He is the best to rely upon.' Remember God's words: 'Those to whom the people said, "The people have gathered to get you, so fear them," but that only increased their faith and they said, God is all we need, He is the best to rely upon.' After you say that, you will find [unclear] as God promised this to his servants who say this supplication:

1) They will come back [from battle] with God's blessings

2) They were not harmed

3) And God was satisfied with them.

God says: 'They came back with God's blessings, were not harmed, and God was satisfied with them, and God is ever-blessing.'

All of their equipment and gates and technology will not prevent, nor harm, except by God's will. The believers do not fear such things. The only ones that fear it are the allies of Satan, who are the brothers of the devil. They have become their allies, God save us, for fear is a great form of worship, and the only one worthy of it is God. He is the only one who deserves it. He said in the verses: 'This is only the Devil scaring his allies' who are fascinated with Western civilisation, and have drunk the love [of the West] like they drink water [unclear] and have become afraid of their weak equipment, 'so fear them not, and fear Me, if you are believers.'

Fear is a great worship. The allies of God do not offer such worship except for the one God, who controls everything. [unclear] with total certainty that God will weaken the schemes of non-believers. God said: 'God will weaken the schemes of the non-believers.'

You must remember your brothers with all respect. No one should notice that you are making the supplication, 'There is no God but God,' because if you say it 1,000 times no one will be able to tell whether you are quiet or remember God. And among its miracles is what the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: 'Whoever says, "There is no God but God," with all his heart, goes to heaven.' The prophet, peace be upon him, said: 'If you put all the worlds and universes on one side of the balance, and "No God but God" on the other, "No God but God" will weigh more heavily.' You can repeat these words confidently, and this is just one of the strengths of these words. Whoever thinks deeply about these words will find that they have no dots [in the Arabic letter] and this is just one of its greatnesses, for words that have dots in them carry less weight than those that do not. And it is enough that these are the words of monotheism, which will make you steadfast in battle [unclear] as the prophet, peace be upon him, and his companions, and those who came after them, God willing, until the Day of Judgment.

Do not seem confused or show signs of nervous tension. Be happy, optimistic, calm because you are heading for a deed that God loves and will accept. It will be the day, God willing, you spend with the women of paradise.

[poetry] Smile in the face of hardship young man/For you are heading toward eternal paradise

You must remember to make supplications wherever you go, and anytime you do anything, and God is with his faithful servants, He will protect them and make their tasks easier, and give them success and control, and victory, and everything...

THE THIRD PHASE

When you ride the (T) [probably for tayyara, aeroplane in Arabic], before your foot steps in it, and before you enter it, you make a prayer and supplications. Remember that this is a battle for the sake of God. As the prophet, peace be upon him, said, 'An action for the sake of God is better than all of what is in this world.' When you step inside the (T), and sit in your seat, begin with the known supplications that we have mentioned before. Be busy with the constant remembrance of God. God said: 'Oh ye faithful, when you find the enemy be steadfast, and remember God constantly so that you may be successful.' When the (T) moves, even slightly, toward (Q) [unknown reference], say the supplication of travel. Because you are traveling to Almighty God, so be attentive on this trip.

Then [unclear] it takes off. This is the moment that both groups come together. So remember God, as He said in His book: 'Oh Lord, pour your patience upon us and make our feet steadfast and give us victory over the infidels.' And His words: 'And the only thing they said Lord, forgive our sins and excesses and make our feet steadfast and give us victory over the infidels.' And His prophet

said: 'Oh Lord, You have revealed the book, You move the clouds, You gave us victory over the enemy, conquer them and give us victory over them.' Give us victory and make the ground shake under their feet. Pray for yourself and all your brothers that they may be victorious and hit their targets and ask God to grant you martyrdom facing the enemy, not running away from it, and for Him to grant you patience and the feeling that anything that happens to you is for Him.

Then every one of you should prepare to carry out his role in a way that would satisfy God. You should clench your teeth, as the pious early generations did.

When the confrontation begins, strike like champions who do not want to go back to this world. Shout, 'Allahu Akbar,' because this strikes fear in the hearts of the non-believers. God said: 'Strike above the neck, and strike at all of their extremities.' Know that the gardens of paradise are waiting for you in all their beauty, and the women of paradise are waiting, calling out, 'Come hither, friend of God.' They have dressed in their most beautiful clothing.

If God decrees that any of you are to slaughter, dedicate the slaughter to your fathers and [unclear], because you have obligations toward them. Do not disagree, and obey. If you slaughter, do not cause the discomfort of those you are killing, because this is one of the practices of the prophet, peace be upon him. On one condition: that you do not become distracted by [unclear] and neglect what is greater, paying attention to the enemy. That would be treason, and would do more damage than good. If this happens, the deed at hand is more important than doing that, because the deed is an obligation, and [the other thing] is optional. And an obligation has priority over an option.

Do not seek revenge for yourself. Strike for God's sake. One time Ali bin Abi Talib [a companion and close relative of the prophet Muhammad], fought with a non-believer. The non-believer spit on Ali, may God bless him. Ali [unclear] his sword, but did not strike him. When the battle was over, the companions of the prophet asked him why he had not smitten the non-believer. He said, 'After he spat at me, I was afraid I would be striking at him in revenge for myself, so I lifted my sword.' After he renewed his intentions, he went back and killed the man. This means that before you do anything, make sure your soul is prepared to do everything for God only.

Then implement the way of the prophet in taking prisoners. Take prisoners and kill them. As Almighty God said: 'No prophet should have prisoners until he has soaked the land with blood. You want the bounties of this world [in exchange for prisoners] and God wants the other world [for you], and God is all-powerful, all-wise.'

If everything goes well, every one of you should pat the other on the shoulder in confidence that (M) and (T) number (K). Remind your brothers that this act is for Almighty God. Do not confuse your brothers or distract them. He should give them glad tidings and make them calm, and remind them [of God] and encourage them. How beautiful it is for one to read God's words, such as: 'And those who prefer the afterlife over this world should fight for the sake of God.' And His words: 'Do not suppose that those who are killed for the sake of God are dead; they are alive...' And others. Or they should sing songs to boost their morale, as the pious first generations did in the throes of battle, to bring calm, tranquillity and joy to the hearts of his brothers.

Do not forget to take a bounty, even if it is a glass of water to quench your thirst or that of your brothers, if possible. When the hour of reality approaches, the zero hour, [unclear] and wholeheartedly welcome death for the sake of God. Always be remembering God. Either end your life while praying, seconds before the target, or make your last words: 'There is no God but God, Muhammad is His messenger'.

Afterwards, we will all meet in the highest heaven, God willing.

If you see the enemy as strong, remember the groups [that had formed a coalition to fight the prophet Muhammad]. They were 10,000. Remember how God gave victory to his faithful servants. He said: 'When the faithful saw the groups, they said, this is what God and the prophet promised, they said the truth. It only increased their faith.'

And may the peace of God be upon the prophet.

ABSTRACT

Understanding al-Qaeda: History, Ideology, and Infrastructure is a critical analysis of the formation and evolution of the global terrorist organization commonly referred to as al-Qaeda. The work provides a foundation for understanding al-Qaeda's operations and organizational strategies by detailing its historical origins, ideological framework, and infrastructural installations.

The thesis is divided into three segments, each containing two chapters. The first segment is devoted to a discussion of al-Qaeda's historical formation. The initial chapter relies on the investigation of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the hunt for terrorist Ramzi Yousef as a point of departure in understanding al-Qaeda. This chapter sheds light on missed opportunities to weaken the terrorist network and reveals that the 1993 bombers were connected to one another through their embrace of radical Sunni Islam and violent political objectives. The next chapter traces the major events in the life of Osama bin Laden, explaining the connection between the Soviet-Afghan War and the rise of al-Qaeda, as well as illustrating how al-Qaeda has evolved since its beginnings as *Maktab al-Khadimat*, the "Services Office."

The second segment represents an analytical reflection on al-Qaeda's ideology. Its first chapter explains the discourses of al-Qaeda's key ideologues, analyzes cornerstone al-Qaeda statements, and depicts how bin Laden's ideology fits into the larger spectrum of Islamic radicalism. "Tracking the Appeal of Islamism" examines how al-Qaeda's ideology has resonated in the Middle East, addressing such issues as political and economic instability in the Arab world, the popularity of bin Laden as a symbol of resistance, and al-Qaeda's exploitation of media and Internet resources.

The final segment of the thesis discusses al-Qaeda's infrastructure, thereby providing a glimpse of what goes on "inside al-Qaeda." Its first chapter focuses on the recruitment and training of jihadists, answering the question, "Who joins the jihad and why?" The concluding chapter of the thesis tackles the debate on al-Qaeda's structure, arguing that the terror group should be understood as a social network, rather than as an organization. This final chapter also provides commentary on counter-terrorism techniques, demonstrating the importance of cooperation within the international intelligence community and the need for policymakers to engage in a critical assessment of al-Qaeda's history and US foreign policy.

The sources cited in the thesis are relevant to today's discussion of al-Qaeda; most have been published or updated after September 11, 2001. Please note that Arabic names and terms have been transliterated in a manner that preserves accuracy as much as possible. A glossary is provided in the appendix to clarify the usage of these terms.

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