The Evolving Al-Qaeda Threat

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Al-Qaeda is a transnational Sunni Islamist terrorist network operating in over 60 countries around the world. At the center of the web is the core group, which I will refer to as Al-Qaeda Central (AQC), a disciplined, highly professional cadre of committed revolutionaries, which now probably consists of fewer than 1,000 dedicated members, and perhaps fewer than 500. Although it has become the most hunted terrorist group in world history since its September 11, 2001, attacks and has been severely degraded by substantial losses, it remains a resilient and potent threat to the United States.

AQC remains determined and capable of launching spectacular megaterrorist attacks against the United States, which it perceives to be the chief obstacle to its visionary plans to build a global Islamic state, a new caliphate. A disparate network of Islamic revolutionary groups are loosely affiliated with AQC and share its long-term goals and the broad outlines of its ideology, while focusing their efforts on attacking secular and moderate governments in the Muslim world, American and Western targets of opportunity, and moderate Muslim leaders in their respective fields of operations. Although they cooperate with AQC, support some of its operations, and receive AQC support for some of their operations, the affiliate groups function independently and generally concentrate on local or regional jihads, rather than waging war on a global basis.

A third tier of terrorist threats comes from loose collections of Islamic radicals who organize them-

Talking Points

- Terrorism is only a part of Osama bin Laden's revolutionary strategy for imposing his harsh Islamic ideology on the Muslim world. A wide variety of radical Islamic groups have copied al-Qaeda's terrorist tactics and share its radical Islamist ideology, which means that "bin Ladenism" will outlast bin Laden.

- To defeat al-Qaeda, the U.S. and its allies must not only destroy its leadership, but also destroy its ability to recruit replacements by discrediting its violent ideology. The United States must put as much effort into the ideological struggle as it did during the Cold War.

- To discredit bin Laden's ideology, Muslims must be convinced that his revolutionary program is unrealistic, imposes intolerable costs on Muslims, and that there is a better way to organize their lives, support their families, and practice authentic Islam. These arguments must come from Muslim political, religious, educational, and intellectual leaders.

selves for ad hoc attacks, sometimes with support from AQC, but often inspired by al-Qaeda's example. These terrorist groups, such as the group that bombed the World Trade Center in February 1993 and the group that bombed the London Underground in July 2005, contain self-selected individuals with little or no terrorist training who may not belong to a formal organization and who coalesce for a limited campaign or even a single operation. Although their amateur status may limit their effectiveness, it can make them much harder to detect and counteract.

I will focus my remarks on Al-Qaeda Central, rather than its affiliates or loosely organized Islamic militants inspired by its actions.

Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants operate as an umbrella group to recruit, train, finance, and logistically support a diverse network of Islamic extremists united by a fanatic ideology that is cloaked in religious zealotry. While the foot soldiers are relatively easy to replace, the top leadership, drawn from a tight circle of "Afghan Arabs" who fought in Afghanistan against the Soviets in the 1980s, will be much harder to reconstitute because personal trust based on shared experience is so vital to its operations.

Now that they have been forced out of their Afghan caves and shorn of most of their Taliban allies, they are increasingly vulnerable to betrayal. The more bodyguards they retain for personal security, the more risk they take of detection or treachery. Communications and movement undoubtedly have become more difficult. The 2004 arrest of al-Qaeda communications coordinator Mohamed Naim Noor Khan in Pakistan has further degraded bin Laden's ability to safely communicate with his far-flung organization.

Although bin Laden is the front man, he is more important as a spokesman and revolutionary icon than as the operational commander. One of the code names that he selected for himself was "The Contractor," which suggests how he sees his own role. He delegates responsibilities to his followers, sometimes financing operations that are planned and conducted by semi-autonomous mid-level leaders within his decentralized organization.

The chief operational brains behind al-Qaeda is believed to be Egyptian militant Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Egypt's Al Jihad terrorist group which has merged with al-Qaeda. Egyptian militants, who acquired considerable terrorist experience in their long struggle with the secular regime in Cairo, provide much of Al-Qaeda Central's top operational leadership.

Al-Qaeda recruits members through a progressive screening process. It is believed to have recruiters that travel to or are embedded in radical mosques, where they identify and befriend promising candidates. Often the candidates are selected to travel to foreign countries such as Pakistan or Yemen for religious education. Once there, they are isolated from former friends and family and offered more rigorous training for jihad. Al-Qaeda also recruits promising prospects from radical Islamic insurgent groups that it supports around the world. Iraq recently has become an epicenter for attracting, organizing, and training a new generation of battle-hardened revolutionary terrorists.

In recent years al-Qaeda and its affiliates have made increasing use of women as suicide bombers. Chechen groups have been most active in this regard, using "black widows" (some of whom claim to be the wives or relatives of insurgents killed in action) to attack Russian targets in Chechnya and elsewhere. Al-Qaeda's organization in Iraq has used women suicide bombers in at least three attacks inside Iraq, including one mounted by a Belgian woman who converted to radical Islam. It also used an Iraqi woman in the November 9, 2005, suicide bomb attacks on three hotels in Amman, Jordan. Al-Qaeda affiliates also have used women in suicide attacks in Egypt and Uzbekistan. AQC probably will use women more extensively in the future due to their greater ability to slip through security perimeters and the heightened shock value which would amplify the publicity garnered by such attacks.

The War Against Al-Qaeda

The first post–9/11 campaign, the intervention in Afghanistan, was a major military success, although bin Laden and his top lieutenants managed to slip away. From a standing start, with no

pre-existing military plans, the United States deployed considerable air power, special forces units, and a small ground force more than 7,000 miles away in one of the most inhospitable regions of the world. These forces, augmented by up to 20,000 troops from the Afghan opposition Northern Alliance, swiftly defeated the Taliban, routed al-Qaeda, and captured Kabul on November 13, 2001—before the World Trade Center had stopped smoldering. But the extensive reliance on Afghan allies, which enabled the rapid defeat of the Taliban, was a two-edged sword. Afghan commanders who were asked to block bin Laden's escape routes from his mountaintop cave complex at Tora Bora apparently allowed him to escape.

Bin Laden undoubtedly sought to provoke an American invasion of Afghanistan that would allow him to reassume his 1980s role as a glamorous resistance leader and galvanize support from the Muslim world. But bin Laden underestimated the United States, which did not fight wars the same ponderous way that his Soviet foes did. Moreover, bin Laden overestimated his own support in Afghanistan and elsewhere. After chafing under the harsh rule of the Taliban, whose radical Islamic ideology clashed with the tolerant traditional Islam of the Afghan countryside, many Afghans chose to fight against bin Laden and his Taliban allies.

In addition to the forces deployed to Afghanistan, the United States and its allies have waged a grinding war of attrition against al-Qaeda elsewhere in the world. More than three-quarters of al-Qaeda's known pre–9/11 leaders have been captured or killed. These include: Mohammed Atef, al-Qaeda's senior field commander, killed in a bombing raid in Afghanistan; Abu Zubaida, Atef's replacement as field commander, captured in Pakistan; Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, mastermind of the September 11 attacks, captured in Pakistan; Ramzi Binalshibh, a coordinator of the September 11 attacks, captured in Pakistan; Hambali, a top strategist for al-Qaeda's affiliated group, Jemaah Islamiah, captured in Thailand; and Hamzah al-Rabbiyah al-Masri, a key operational leader killed in Pakistan. More than 4,000 suspected al-Qaeda members have been arrested worldwide since September 11, 2001. Al-Qaeda cells have been uncov-

ered, dismantled, and disrupted in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. More than $140 million of its assets have been blocked in over 1,400 bank accounts worldwide.

Al-Qaeda remains a potent threat to the United States, its allies, and a wide variety of other states. But al-Qaeda's leaders increasingly must focus on their own personal security and have less time for plotting mass murder. It is more difficult for bin Laden and his lieutenants to recruit new members, train them, communicate with them, or carry out new operations. The isolation of al-Qaeda's top leaders, believed to be hidden along the Pakistan–Afghanistan border, has reduced their ability to supervise the network's activities in other regions. They often must resort to unsecure low-tech communications such as letters carried by couriers. A letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's second in command, to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda's operations in Iraq, was intercepted last year. Zawahiri chastised Zarqawi in that letter, dated in July 2005, for unleashing indiscriminate violence on Iraqi civilians, whose political support would be important for turning Iraq into a radical Islamic state.

Despite their tactical differences, al-Qaeda's leaders share the same long-term goal: the creation of a single, unified Muslim state governed by a harsh brand of Sharia (Islamic law). To recreate a version of the caliphate and build a radical Islamic empire, bin Laden and his associates seek to play the role of a vanguard party that will serve as a catalyst to inspire other Muslims to join in building their new utopia. Just as fascist and communist revolutionaries were willing to kill tens of millions of people to impose their utopian schemes in the 20th century, al-Qaeda's leaders are willing to spill the blood of millions to create their own radical vision of an Islamic empire in the 21st century.

Defeating Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda is an amorphous network whose center of gravity, which must be destroyed if it is to be defeated, is its leadership structure in the short run and its ideology in the long run.

Capturing or killing AQC leaders is more of an intelligence problem than a purely military one.

Neutralizing the top leaders would not end the threat posed by al-Qaeda's network of quasi-independent cells, but over time it would diminish the scale of the threat, hinder their ability to coordinate operations, restrict their financing, and set back the recruitment, training, and deployment of new terrorist operatives. Capturing or killing bin Laden could demoralize his followers and deprive the organization of its charismatic recruiter, fundraiser, and financial backer. Without its top leaders, the network could fracture into independent franchises that would each pose less of a threat to the United States and its allies than al-Qaeda's present threat, which remains substantial.

The war against al-Qaeda will be a protracted struggle. There is no silver bullet, nor a single target that the U.S. could hit to win the war in one stroke. Even if Osama bin Laden is captured or killed tomorrow, Muslim extremists will continue to attack the United States for decades to come. "Bin Ladenism" has become a threat that will outlast bin Laden. It is important that he be caught or killed, but it is even more important that his ideas, his ideology, be decisively discredited.

Bin Laden is not just a terrorist, but an Islamic revolutionary. There is a method in his madness. He seeks not only to kill Americans, but ultimately to overthrow every government in the Muslim world, with the possible exception of the radical regime in Sudan, which once gave him sanctuary. His ideological fantasy is to unify the entire Muslim world in one state, ruled under his harsh and radical brand of Islam.

Four Crucial Fronts in the War Against Al-Qaeda

Although al-Qaeda is believed to operate in over 60 countries around the world, it must be defeated on four crucial fronts if it is to be decisively destroyed: Pakistan/Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Europe.

Pakistan/Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda emerged as an organization during the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan and was based there after the Taliban movement seized power in 1996. The defeat and ouster of the Taliban in 2001 led many al-Qaeda members to flee to neighboring Pakistan, where they have been hidden and assisted by Pakistani sympathizers who seek to build radical Islamic states in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Pakistan is an extremely important front because it is one of the largest, most powerful Muslim countries and already possesses nuclear weapons. The coming to power of an extremist Islamist government possibly could lead to the transfer of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction to al-Qaeda or other terrorists favored by that regime.

Under the Musharraf government, Pakistan has cracked down on al-Qaeda, but not on the Taliban or on Pakistani Islamic extremist movements. The United States and its allies should boost aid to the Musharraf government and press it to clamp down on radical Pakistani Islamic organizations that continue to support insurgents in neighboring Kashmir and Afghanistan. Islamabad also needs help in reforming the network of radical Islamic madrassas (religious schools) that support the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other extremist organizations and reducing drug smuggling and other illicit means that terrorist groups use to raise funds.

Afghanistan also needs greater economic assistance to rebuild its shattered economy, help in building effective and lawful army and police forces, and help in formulating a comprehensive program to eradicate a flourishing trade in opium and heroin by giving farmers alternative means of making a living and cracking down on the drug traffickers and middle men who pocket most of the profit.

Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is an important front in the struggle because Saudis have provided leadership, financing, and ideological indoctrination to al-Qaeda members. Moreover, Saudi Arabia is the strategic storehouse of roughly one-quarter of the world's proven oil reserves. If the Saudi royal family were overthrown by a regime sympathetic to al-Qaeda, the future economic security of all oil-importing countries would be put at risk. If al-Qaeda gained control of Saudi oil wealth, or the two holy places (Mecca and Medina), it would be in a much better position to boost its jihad.

The Saudi ruling dynasty has made a Faustian bargain with the Wahhabi religious establishment in which it lavishly funds Wahhabi efforts to spread

their fundamentalist brand of Islam in exchange for the Wahhabis turning a blind eye to the corruption and un-Islamic behavior of many members of the royal family. The Saudi government initially was happy to deflect bin Laden to attacks on American, rather than Saudi targets. But after al-Qaeda's May 2003 bombings inside Saudi Arabia, the Saudis cracked down on al-Qaeda supporters and undertook limited reforms in religious charities that had been funding bin Laden.

Saudi Arabia should be pressed to intensively root out radicals within Islamic charities, as well as the educational system, which continues to produce intolerant Islamists prone to violence. Riyadh should also be encouraged to gradually open up its political system to encourage the participation of a broader segment of the Saudi population. Over time, this will lead to greater internal pressures for using Saudi oil wealth to create jobs and wealth inside the country rather than subsidizing the export of a radical Islamic ideology that threatens the survival of the kingdom.

Iraq. Iraq is a critical front in the war against al-Qaeda because it has become a rallying point, a major propaganda issue, a staging area, and a potentially fertile recruiting ground for al-Qaeda. The United States and its allies cannot allow Zarqawi's al-Qaeda thugs to establish a permanent base in Iraq, which would become a strategic springboard for al-Qaeda to penetrate the heart of the Arab world, threaten moderate Arab regimes, and disrupt Persian Gulf oil exports.

In an audiotape released on December 27, 2004, bin Laden named Abu Musab Zarqawi as his deputy in charge of al-Qaeda operations in Iraq. Zarqawi, a Jordanian of Palestinian descent, met bin Laden during the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, but had retained his independence, in part because he believed bin Laden was too soft. Although they shared the same long-term goal of building a global Muslim state under a new caliphate, Zarqawi held a fierce hostility to Shiite Muslims, whom he regarded as heretics who should be converted or slaughtered, while bin Laden was willing to paper over sectarian differences until the "far enemy," the United States, was defeated.

As a former prison enforcer, Zarqawi also displayed a ruthless streak that shocked even some of bin Laden's supporters. He deployed truck bombs against Shiite mosques and religious ceremonies in Iraq in an attempt to provoke a civil war that would make Iraq ungovernable. Zarqawi also has made extensive use of videotaped beheadings of hostages in Iraq, which became a kind of popular jihadist pornography on extremist Islamic Web sites.

As Zarqawi became increasingly visible due to his highly publicized atrocities, and while al-Qaeda's leaders hunkered down in the Pakistan/ Afghanistan/Kashmir region, there was a real danger that al-Qaeda would be eclipsed by Zarqawi's Tawhid (Monotheism) group. Bin Laden essentially decided to anoint Zarqawi as his deputy in Iraq, despite their ideological differences, in order to extend the al-Qaeda "brand" to the Iraqi front, which had become an increasingly important theater in the global terrorist war.

Although absorbing Zarqawi's predominantly Jordanian, Palestinian, and Syrian supporters gave al-Qaeda a stronger presence in Iraq and in Europe, where Zarqawi had developed an independent network, it led to ideological tensions within al-Qaeda. In July 2005, bin Laden's chief lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri sent a letter to Zarqawi, subsequently intercepted, that urged Zarqawi to avoid making the same mistake that the Taliban had made in Afghanistan—ignoring the importance of popular support.

But Zarqawi apparently has spurned this advice and continued to massacre Iraqi civilians indiscriminately, which has led to a backlash by Sunni Arabs who form the backbone of the Iraqi insurgency. Zarqawi's al-Qaeda has clashed violently with other insurgent groups who believe his nihilistic terrorism is undermining the insurgency. On November 9, 2005, Zarqawi's group launched suicide bombings at three hotels in Amman, Jordan, slaughtering scores of Jordanian and Palestinian civilians, including some attending a wedding party. The subsequent backlash against al-Qaeda in Jordan has been accompanied by criticism of al-Qaeda's tactics by many Muslims, even some radical Islamists who share its long-term goals.

The United States and the Iraqi government should exploit the Sunni Arab backlash against al-Qaeda's indiscriminate violence by coaxing Sunni Arab nationalists into a broad national government and isolating al-Qaeda and other extremist Islamic groups. This would help take the steam out of the insurgency and help the new Iraqi government to build up the country's security services.

Now that Iraq has become, by al-Qaeda's own reckoning, a crucial front in the global war to build a radical Islamic empire, the collapse of Iraq's new democratic government would be a huge victory for al-Qaeda. Any "exit strategy" for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq that is perceived by Muslims as a victory for al-Qaeda would boost the group's ability to recruit new members far beyond the current rate.

The European Front. The United States and many European countries have developed different perceptions of the threat posed by al-Qaeda. While the United States considers itself to be at war, many Europeans continue to view the threat as a law enforcement problem. The United States itself took this approach before 9/11. Indeed, al-Qaeda's first attack on the World Trade Center, a truck bombing in 1993 that killed six people and injured over 1,000, was treated as an isolated criminal incident. Al-Qaeda's local allies were arrested and brought to justice, but Ramzi Yousef, the ringleader dispatched from Al-Qaeda Central, escaped to plot more attacks until he was captured in Pakistan in 1995. Once the 1993 World Trade Center bombers were convicted of their crimes and put in jail, the American law enforcement authorities went back to sleep, unaware that American intelligence agencies were uncovering mounting evidence of al-Qaeda's threat to U.S. national security.

Europeans now have a greater sense of urgency about combating terrorism after the Madrid and London bombings. Europe's growing population of alienated Muslim immigrants forms an important reservoir of potential recruits for al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. Britain has reversed its long-standing policy of granting sanctuary to radical Islamic ideologues, which allowed them to use mosques in "Londonistan" to poison the minds of Muslims born in Britain. The London and Madrid bombings also demonstrated the need to combat al-Qaeda's ideology, not just its organized killers, because both terrorist attacks appear to have been carried out by local members of the Muslim immigrant community who were inspired by, but not formally affiliated with, al-Qaeda.

But Europe remains an important front for al-Qaeda, which essentially used one of its cells based in Hamburg, Germany, augmented by thugs dispatched from the Middle East, to launch the 9/11 attacks. Some of al-Qaeda's most dangerous members are believed to be European Muslims, who tend to be better educated, more capable, more mobile, and better able to blend into Western societies than those who grew up in the Middle East or South Asia. Abu Musab Zarqawi's predominantly Palestinian/Jordanian terrorist network, which merged with al-Qaeda in 2004, is reported to have relatively strong support from European Islamic radicals, and poses a growing threat not only to Europe, but to the United States and the Middle East.

The Growing Threat of WMD Terrorism

Al-Qaeda has long sought nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to inflict extensive casualties. Although bombs and other conventional weapons attacks are more likely, especially by al-Qaeda affiliate groups and terrorists inspired by bin Laden, AQC has demonstrated a long-time interest in obtaining and using WMD as a terrorist tactic. Bin Laden declared that acquiring weapons of mass destruction was a "religious duty" in a December 1998 interview with *Time* Magazine. Bin Laden asked for and received a May 2003 fatwa (religious edict) from Shaykh Nasir bin Hamid al-Fahd entitled "A Treatise on the Legal Status of Using Weapons of Mass Destruction Against Infidels" that condoned the use of WMD.

Building, deploying, and using WMD are difficult and dangerous tasks. But al-Qaeda is known to have investigated ways to obtain and use such weapons. It conducted poison gas experiments on dogs in Afghanistan. Abu Musab Zarqawi is known to have a special interest in chemical and biological weapons, which he experimented with at his training camp in western Afghanistan. The governments

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of Britain, France, and Jordan have foiled plots by AQC or its affiliates to use chemical weapons.

Al-Qaeda has made repeated attempts to buy nuclear material, including weapons-grade uranium. It reportedly paid $1.5 million for a container that it believed contained weapons-grade uranium from South Africa, which turned out to be radioactive material that perhaps was collected from an X-ray machine. Al-Qaeda also reportedly paid the Islamic Army of Uzbekistan for uranium that was not enriched enough for a bomb. In August 2001, Osama bin Laden met with two Pakistani nuclear scientists, Sultan Bashir-ud-Din Mehmood and Abdul Majid, and discussed plans to mine uranium in Afghanistan and the technology needed to enrich it.

Given the major difficulties involved in building, stealing, or buying a nuclear weapon, al-Qaeda is much more likely to build and use a radiological weapon or a "dirty bomb" that disperses radioactive material in a conventional blast. Abu Zubaida, a high-ranking operational coordinator captured in 2002, told interrogators that al Qaeda knew where to get radioactive material and how to build "dirty bombs."

The United States and its allies must work relentlessly to keep WMD out of the hands of al-Qaeda and other groups by cracking down on the smuggling of weapons and dual-use technologies; conducting sting operations to remove buyers and sellers from circulation; and helping various governments (particularly those in the former Soviet bloc and Pakistan) to bolster security around nuclear, chemical, and biological facilities.

The coalition also must keep dangerous technologies and weaponry out of the hands of states that might transfer weapons of mass destruction to terrorist surrogates. Iran, by virtue of its strong links to Hezbollah and other terrorist groups, and continued cooperation with al-Qaeda, is a major source of concern. Iran currently provides sanctuary to an estimated 150 members of al-Qaeda, including three of Osama bin Laden's sons, two of his wives, and Saif al-Adel, the chief of al-Qaeda's "military committee" and a key operational planner.

Although the Iranians claim that these al-Qaeda members are under arrest (as did the Taliban on many occasions before September 11), the al-Qaeda cadres appear to enjoy considerable freedom, according to a recent article in the German press. According to U.S. sources, the May 12, 2003, bombings in Saudi Arabia were carried out after a phone call that originated in Iran. Tehran appears to be running major risks in cooperating with al-Qaeda, which could lead to a confrontation with the United States.

Syria also possesses chemical weapons, although its nuclear program is far more rudimentary. North Korea, which has sold its missile technology far and wide, is a particular risk for transferring nuclear and other technologies. The Bush Administration's Proliferation Security Initiative is a good start, but the Administration will need to build on it to develop creative new methods for reducing the risks of rogue states transferring WMD technologies to terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda.

Deterrence and Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda's core group is disciplined, relentless, and fanatical and probably cannot be deterred to any significant degree. They undoubtedly will continue to launch their attacks until they are killed, captured, and decisively defeated. Bin Laden's top lieutenants are cold and rational plotters who will persevere in their efforts despite long periods of adverse conditions because of their strong belief in their eventual triumph. The lust for "martyrdom" that permeates the middle and lower levels of al-Qaeda make those terrorists difficult to deter. Individual suicide bombers, once clasped tightly in al-Qaeda's embrace and brainwashed by a tight circle of zealous associates, are unlikely to be deterred from carrying out their lethal plots.

It is easier to discourage potential recruits from joining al-Qaeda than to stop them from attacking once they have been indoctrinated and prepared for what they are persuaded is religious martyrdom. To deter someone from joining, it would be helpful to convince them beforehand that al-Qaeda is fighting a losing battle, that it hurts the Muslim community by its ruthless tactics, and that its long-term goals are unrealistic and even run counter to

the interests of most Muslims. The United States can influence perceptions of al-Qaeda's prospects for success by relentlessly hunting down its members and bringing them to justice. But it must rely on Muslim political and religious leaders to drive home the other points. Close cooperation with the intelligence and law enforcement agencies of Muslim governments also can help discourage potential recruits from joining by underscoring that they will face counteraction not just from the United States, but from many other governments.

Visible progress in defeating al-Qaeda's forces in Iraq, especially if Sunni nationalist insurgent groups can be turned against al-Qaeda, would go far to deterring young Muslim militants from joining al-Qaeda. Fewer people would want to die in a losing jihad than in one that appears to be on track to victory. As bin Laden himself noted in a candid videotape captured in Afghanistan in late 2001, "When people see a strong horse and a weak horse, by nature they will like the strong horse."

The sooner the war in Iraq is turned over to the Iraqi government, the better for the broader war on terrorism. The stream of non-Iraqi recruits attracted to Iraq would diminish over time if potential recruits realized that their primary opponent there is not an army of infidels, but a democratic Iraqi government supported by the majority of Iraq's Sunni Arabs.

Another important goal is to deter states from assisting al-Qaeda. The Bush Doctrine, enunciated in the President's September 20, 2001, speech before Congress, warned that "any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime." This tough stance led Pakistan to break with al-Qaeda and Afghanistan's Taliban regime, which it previously had cooperated with against India.

The United States also accrued considerable deterrent credibility by subsequent military campaigns that successfully overthrew regimes that harbored terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq. The demonstration effect of these military campaigns influenced Libya to surrender its WMD and disavow terrorism. And Iran suddenly became very cooperative in freezing its uranium enrichment

program in 2003. But the strength of deterrence against Iran apparently has been undermined by the growing Iranian perception that the United States is bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Finally, the U.S. and its allies can deter al-Qaeda terrorists by refusing to give in to their demands. Making concessions under the threat of terrorist attacks only rewards and emboldens terrorists and encourages future attacks. In the long run, suicide bombers will claim fewer victims if the targeted countries stand firm and refuse to appease them.

The Evolving U.S. War Against Terrorism

The American vision of the global struggle against terrorism has evolved significantly in the more than four years since the September 11, 2001, attacks. Although the Bush Administration defined its post–9/11 policy as a "war against terrorism," this really has been a misnomer. While it has been a useful paradigm for preparing the public for a grueling long-term struggle and for galvanizing sluggish bureaucracies, the Administration has not followed through on its own rhetoric. It has gone to war against al-Qaeda and its Taliban allies, but not against other terrorist groups. The Bush Administration subsequently refined the definition of the enemy to be terrorist groups with "a global reach." But the Administration did not follow through on this definition either. It has not moved against Hezbollah, often called the "A-team of terrorism," which has spread its tentacles from Lebanon to include segments of the Lebanese Shiite diaspora around the world.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. government focused on Osama bin Laden as a terrorist criminal rather than as a revolutionary leader. But it has listened to critics who argued that terrorism is a tactic used by enemies, not an enemy that can be defeated. The Bush Administration, after initially over-personalizing the threat posed by bin Laden, has developed a more refined definition of the enemy and more nuanced counter-terrorism strategy for defeating the threat. In a widely overlooked October 6, 2005, speech at the National Endowment for Democracy that was originally scheduled for the fourth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks but postponed due to the Hurri-

cane Katrina emergency, President Bush redefined the enemy.

By identifying the enemy specifically as Islamic radicalism, rather than the more generic "terrorism," Bush's speech was a step forward in the evolving U.S. approach to defeating al-Qaeda. The change signifies a recognition that terrorism is only a part of bin Laden's revolutionary strategy for imposing his harsh Islamic ideology on the Muslim world, and that "bin Ladenism" will outlast bin Laden. A wide variety of radical Islamic groups have copied al-Qaeda's terrorist tactics and share its revolutionary ideology. To defeat al-Qaeda, the U.S. and its allies must not only destroy its leadership, but also destroy its ability to recruit replacements by discrediting its violent ideology.

Bush also restated his five-point strategy for defeating Islamic terrorists: prevent attacks before they occur; deny terrorists weapons of mass destruction; deny terrorists sanctuary; prevent terrorists from gaining control of any nation; and promote democratic reform, respect for human rights, and enforcement of the rule of law in the Middle East to undermine the ability of terrorists to recruit new followers.

President Bush's October 6 speech was important proof that his Administration recognizes the importance of the global war of ideas as well as the war against terrorists in Iraq and other battlefields. The President set crucial long-term goals and outlined a broad strategy for defeating Islamic radicalism. Now the U.S. government must follow through with effective operational plans to build a stable democracy in Iraq; encourage democratic, economic, and educational reforms in the Middle East; and work with a broad coalition of allies in the Muslim world and elsewhere to discredit and defeat the lethal ideology of radical Islam.

The War of Ideas

Richard Weaver wrote that "Ideas have consequences." Bin Laden's ideas will continue to inflict a lethal toll long after he has been captured or killed. His totalitarian Islamic ideology, which he cloaks in religious symbols, will remain a seductive intoxicant for radical Muslims for decades, if not centuries to come. The war of ideas is just as important as

the war on the battlefield if al-Qaeda is to be decisively defeated.

Al-Qaeda has developed elaborate ideological constructs that manipulate Islamic religious teachings to justify the mass murder of innocent people, which is prohibited by the Koran and rejected by mainstream Muslim religious leaders. The United States must fight these barbaric ideas in order to prevent barbaric acts. A crucial long-term goal is to discredit and delegitimize the ideology that terrorists promulgate to their supporters to justify mass murder.

To discredit bin Laden's ideology, Muslims must be convinced that his revolutionary program is unrealistic, imposes intolerable costs on Muslims, and that there is a better way to organize their lives, support their families, and practice authentic Islam. These arguments must come from Muslim political, religious, educational, and intellectual leaders, but non-Muslims should take an active interest in helping them to formulate, publicize, and mobilize support for their ideas.

To drain away their pool of potential recruits, governments must work with Muslim religious and political leaders to expose the al-Qaeda terrorist network as a death cult that purposefully distorts Islamic religious teachings to advance a revolutionary agenda. To inoculate young Muslims against the toxic ideological virus spread by extremists, Muslim religious leaders need to take the lead in denouncing the extremists as blasphemers who promote an "unholy war."

Moderate Muslims have a vital stake in defeating bin Laden's revolutionary challenge as they have the most to lose. If bin Laden or one of his supporters did succeed in seizing power somewhere, Muslim citizens would be forced to submit to a harsh brand of Islamic law and Taliban-like repression by a totalitarian Islamic dictatorship. Muslim documentary film-makers should be encouraged to educate the Muslim world about the terrible brutality, atrocities, and misery inflicted on Afghans by the Taliban and the role that bin Laden and al-Qaeda played in propping up that repressive regime.

In addition to discrediting al-Qaeda's ends, an effort should be made to discredit its favorite tactic: suicide bombing. Most Muslims are conserva-

tive and family-oriented. They do not want to see their children transformed into human bombs by a suicidal Islamic death cult. They might want to know why bin Laden has not strapped bombs to his own sons but feels free to brainwash theirs to do his bidding.

The United States and its allies should promote democratic and free-market economic reforms to empower Muslims politically and economically and to undercut the seductive appeal of radical Islam. It should take every opportunity to contrast this positive vision for Muslims with the violent program of al-Qaeda and similar organizations that offer only endless death and destruction.

Every effort should be made to publicize al-Qaeda's crimes, particularly those against Muslims; publicize the confessions of al-Qaeda defectors; and expose the efforts of al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and other terrorist groups in smuggling illegal drugs such as opium and heroin, to which a huge and growing number of Muslim Pakistanis, Iranians, Arabs, and Turks have become addicted, in addition to millions of non-Muslims.

The United States must put as much effort into the ideological struggle as it did during the Cold War. So far the Bush Administration has not done a very good job on this. The United States should be driving home the point that bin Laden and his ilk represent just as much a threat to the Muslim world as to the West. We must relentlessly remind Muslims that bin Laden has killed more Muslims than non-Muslims, more Afghans than Americans. To destroy his "Robin Hood" image among young Muslim men, we should be publicizing his war crimes in Afghanistan, where bin Laden's "International Islamic Brigade" massacred Afghan Shiites, who were considered to be heretics. The ultimate goal of this campaign should be to stigmatize terrorism and make it as repugnant as slavery or piracy.

Redefining the enemy as Islamic radicalism, an ideology masking itself as a religion, instead of terrorism, has several important advantages. It puts the focus on battling a radical totalitarian ideology, not just its terrorist manifestations. It would also underscore the fact that this is a war of ideas, not just a war on the battlefield. And it puts a premium on the key role to be played by moderate Muslims, who also have a vital stake in the outcome of this struggle.

To win this conflict, ultimately we must convince Muslims, through reasoning or through the use of force, that totalitarian Islamic ideas have bad consequences. By fighting bin Laden, not just as a terrorist, but as a radical Islamic ideologue, the United States can help Muslims see his terrorist campaign for what it is: a ruthless effort to impose a totalitarian dictatorship masked in religious symbols.

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