



## Strategy for Addressing the Threat Posed by Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda

*Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network pose one of the greatest threats to the United States. More than two years after President Bush said he would find bin Laden -- "dead or alive" -- the United States continues to hunt for Osama bin Laden and many of the other leaders of Al Qaeda. As a result of the Bush Administration's inadequate and misguided efforts, bin Laden and Al Qaeda continue to pose a great threat to the U.S., our friends and allies, and various other states. Wes Clark proposes a three-pronged strategy to refocus our energies on hunting down bin Laden and destroying the Al Qaeda network.*

### **(1) Press Saudi Arabia to work with U.S. forces to create a joint U.S.-Saudi commando force.**

- This joint U.S.-Saudi commando force would work the Afghan-Pakistani border where bin Laden is thought to be hiding.
- The Saudi regime is as responsible as anyone for the rise of Al Qaeda. With the bombings in Saudi Arabia over the last months, the Saudis have seen first-hand the destructive forces of the Al Qaeda network.
- With Saudi help, Pakistani authorities and Islamic leaders in the territories would be encouraged to strengthen efforts to find bin Laden.
- This is not without precedent; the Saudis provided substantial forces to the coalition that ejected Saddam Hussein from Kuwait over a decade ago.

### **(2) Use our assets wisely.**

Wes Clark believes that too many of our intelligence specialists, linguists, and special operation personnel are investing too much time and energy in Iraq in a fruitless search for weapons of mass destruction – a task that could better be handled by international weapons inspectors.

- These inspectors are ready, willing, and able to perform this mission.
- By doing so, we could refocus American specialists on the destruction of Al Qaeda wherever the Al Qaeda leadership and its forces may be located.
- This is a clear case where getting help from the international community to share the burden in Iraq will free up crucial resources to allow us to better fight the most significant threat to our homeland.

### **3) Repair relationships with our allies and friends.**

With his unilateral march into Iraq, President Bush has scorned many of our key allies, preventing the necessary cooperation to destroy Al Qaeda.

- Repairing these rifts would allow new possibilities for the United States to call on our allies to help us with this task.
- Improved cooperation will lead to:
  - improved efforts to cut off funding for the Al Qaeda network;
  - increased burden-sharing in Iraq;
  - invigorated efforts to locate and destroy the leadership of Al Qaeda;
  - increased security of Afghanistan's borders;
  - strengthened democratic institutions in the Middle East; & stronger efforts to secularize Afghanistan and help create democratic institution's there.



## The Bush Administration's Inadequate Record

In the hunt for bin Laden and Al Qaeda, the Bush Administration has left a string of failures in its wake:

- Failure to capture bin Laden at Tora Bora. The Bush Administration's failure to commit US ground troops early in the December 2001 offensive in Tora Bora, Afghanistan, permitted the escape of many Al Qaeda militants, most likely including bin Laden and his top-ranking associates. The Bush Administration should have used every available resource to capture or kill terrorists who were targeting Americans at home and abroad.
- Failure to maintain adequate international intelligence sharing and law enforcement relationships. The Bush Administration's unilateral approach to national security issues has alienated key sources of international support for the fight against terrorism. Specifically, the Bush Administration's bullying approach has inhibited efforts to develop accurate intelligence regarding terrorist activities and bring terrorists to justice. For example, it is reported that Syria provided extensive information to the CIA and the FBI regarding Al Qaeda operations and personnel prior to the war in Iraq. During the Bush Administration's unilateral march to war, this flow of valuable intelligence dried up.
- Failure to use international legal resources. By shunning the United Nations and ignoring international law, the Bush Administration squandered an opportunity to gain legal sanction and credibility for its pursuit of terrorists. After the September 11 attacks, the Administration should have sought the establishment of an International Criminal Tribunal on International Terrorism that would develop an agreed legal definition of terrorism and obtain indictments of terrorists like bin Laden.
- Failure to stop terrorism financing. A recently-released report published by nonpartisan congressional investigators highlights significant shortfalls in U.S. efforts to stem the flow of funds to terrorist and criminal groups. The report points out that the Bush Administration has failed to strengthen our anti-money laundering programs, identify clear priorities, and establish accountability mechanisms to assess our progress. We must correct these unfortunate flaws in this critical component of our counter-terrorism efforts if we are halt to capture bin Laden and the rest of the Al Qaeda leadership.
- Failure to stop terror indoctrination in radical Islamic schools. The Bush Administration has not done enough to stop the indoctrination of young people in radical Islamic schools in Pakistan and elsewhere. These schools, which preach an anti-American ideology, are educating the next generation of terrorists. Not only should we work with foreign governments to end support for this type of indoctrination, but we should also promote the creation of alternative educational institutions that would advance the values of liberty and democracy cherished by so many people around the world.