

THE THIRD WAY NATIONAL SECURITY PROJECT



**Beyond Bush: A New Strategy of Constriction
to Defeat Al Qaeda and its Allies**

A Third Way Report

by

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Introduction and Summary

Five years after President George Bush declared that America would act decisively to “rid the world of evil,” terrorism continues to pose an urgent threat to our national security. In fact, an overwhelming majority of national security experts believe that the United States is actually losing the “war on terror.”¹

The Bush Administration’s assertion—that the absence of attacks means the threat is receding—exemplifies their basic misunderstanding of the nature of the threat. Indeed, on President Bush’s watch, terrorist groups have become more diverse, dispersed, ideologically driven, and possibly more deadly than they have ever been before. Our enemies are not defeated; they are gathering strength.²

There is also little question that the President’s most significant national security operation—the invasion and occupation of Iraq—actually compromised America’s ability to fight terrorism. This signal failure, however, goes beyond the diversion of military and intelligence assets or the strategic and tactical failures of execution during the occupation. Indeed, the invasion of Iraq itself was evidence that President Bush’s war on terror is flawed at the most fundamental, conceptual level. ***By fighting the first war of the 21st century—the “war on terror”—with a 20th century mindset, President Bush has actually increased the danger that terrorism poses for all Americans.***

This paper argues for a new strategy for defeating this threat. That new strategy must start with a clear understanding of the danger we face: the US is not at war with *terror itself* or even a monolithic, Soviet Union-type enemy. Rather, the US is at war with the *al Qaeda movement*: the ideologically driven, stateless collection of radical Islamist terrorists and allied groups who have attacked US interests, territory and allies multiple times in the last 14 years. Al Qaeda and its worldwide affiliates have waged a new type of warfare: a global insurgency that mixes high-tech and low-tech tactics with a dispersed fighting force. The main al Qaeda organization itself encourages free-lance terrorism by its ideological comrades and supporters; has direct relationships with some groups and only loose relationships with others; and has encouraged and shown the way for other radicals to create similar organizations that share the same goals.³

The United States and the world certainly face other terrorism challenges. There are five nations on the State Department’s list of state sponsors of terrorism,⁴ and 42 groups are officially designated as terrorist organizations.⁵ Many of these states and groups pose serious and direct challenges to the security of the United States, but that does not mean that we are at war with them. The question of how to deal with Iran,

for example, is complicated and fundamentally different from how to deal with Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers, even though both use terrorism as a tactic to advance their interests. Al Qaeda, however, clearly remains the principal terrorism threat to US interests and US territory right now. And this is an enemy we can defeat, if we use the right tools and weapons.

As Part One of this report examines, however, defeating this threat will not be easy. The danger we face is real and growing: the al Qaeda of 2006 is not the al Qaeda of 2001. Today, the war with al Qaeda has shifted into a multi-faceted fight with a loose movement—which includes independent, highly localized franchises.⁶

In Part Two, we examine why the threat is increasing and point to the three fundamental conceptual failures of the Bush Administration that led to this state of affairs. In short, the President applied a 20th century framework—one steeped in visions of falling dominoes, state-on-state warfare and a binary worldview—to a 21st century problem.

In Part Three, we offer a new strategy for how to prevail against al Qaeda: *a strategy of constriction*. No strategy can prevent all terrorist attacks for all time, but with a strategy of constriction, the US can choke off the al Qaeda movement's ability to pose a serious threat. The constriction strategy would aim to systematically kill and starve all of the supply lines that keep al Qaeda alive and growing, including its physical and financial resources, propaganda, people and targets. In some cases, constriction requires military operations; in many cases, it requires a range of other tools and weapons. In all cases, constriction is a long-term policy: it will take constant pressure over time to squeeze the vitality out of these networks and build up credible alternatives. Part Three offers broad recommendations for making constriction work, and a forthcoming Third Way report will offer specific policy options, culled from the best recent thinking on al Qaeda and terrorism by a range of experts.

Part One - A Growing Threat: Al Qaeda and its Allies on the Move

The idea that Americans are safe from al Qaeda because the group has not struck inside the United States since 9-11 is one of the Bush Administration's dangerous, short-sighted and questionable notions about terrorism. Experience alone suggests otherwise: eight years passed between al Qaeda's first attempt to destroy the World Trade Center in 1993 and their attack in 2001. Indeed, a more thorough examination of the facts suggests that the threat not only remains—it is growing.

Since 9-11, when this "war on terror" began, the United States has won some battles with al Qaeda, most notably in our initial rout of the Taliban in Afghanistan and in shutting down global financing of terrorist operations. And yet by the most important measures, today America is losing ground:

- There are more al Qaeda members today than there were in 2001;⁷
- The number of al Qaeda-related terrorist attacks worldwide has increased;⁸
- Al Qaeda's leadership is still at large and steadily publishing propaganda;
- Al Qaeda forces and allied Taliban fighters are making a comeback in Eastern and Southern Afghanistan and in Western Pakistan;
- US military forces are stretched to the breaking point;⁹ and
- Global anti-American sentiment is dramatically higher, especially in the Islamic world.¹⁰

The fact that we have not had an attack in five years does not mean al Qaeda is defeated or even contained. In fact, in many ways, the al Qaeda of 2006 is a more dangerous foe than the one that struck America in September 2001.¹¹

Throughout the late 1990s and until 2001, al Qaeda had a formal hierarchical structure, operated on an annual budget of thirty million dollars and relied on a force of ten to twenty thousand fighters trained in its extensive network of Afghan camps.¹² American-led operations have seriously damaged this "al Qaeda Central" structure and reduced the group's ability to conduct operations¹³ (though bin Laden himself remains at large and the Taliban is resurging in Afghanistan). Indeed, there is evidence that al Qaeda Central is recovering its ability to orchestrate terrorist operations.¹⁴

"I don't know how much better you can do than no attacks for the last five years."

**Vice President Dick Cheney,
Meet the Press,
September 10, 2006**

Al Qaeda has also adapted. The group now leads a far larger and looser global movement, mostly through propaganda and messaging. Osama bin Laden has become the ideological figurehead for a conglomerate of foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan, geographically disparate groups and self-starting franchises.¹⁵ Some work directly with the al Qaeda leadership; some act entirely alone.

Al Qaeda itself has established a series of ultimate goals: winning the centuries old struggle between Islam and “World Infidelity;” toppling “apostate” regimes in the Islamic world; and purifying the practice of Islam itself in the process.¹⁶ The United States is a number one enemy in this worldview, but the goal is also to control Saudi Arabia, provoke the fall of other governments in the region and establish a regional Muslim state or “caliphate.”

Many of al Qaeda’s affiliates, however, have goals of their own, which are generally both religious and nationalist. These groups have grown significantly in size, capability and popular support in the years since September 11th. Such nationalist-Islamist groups tend to focus on local grievances or ambitions. While that may include territorial ambitions (in Pakistan, for example), local goals are often distinct from any broader goals of transforming the international order or restoring a caliphate.¹⁷ As part of settling those local scores, they affiliate with al Qaeda and may target the US, often as a “far enemy” that supports the “near enemy.”¹⁸

At the next level down are the “self-starting franchise” groups, which are even more localized and often much closer to home for Americans and other westerners.¹⁹ These small, increasingly young²⁰ “do-it-yourself” terrorists may pledge allegiance to al Qaeda or its goals, but they do not necessarily have direct or sustained contact with al Qaeda leaders. These groups can be very dangerous, they have low profiles, and they are very difficult to detect, in part because they need so few resources. Perpetrators of the 2004 train bombings in Madrid, mostly longtime residents of that city, used proceeds from the sale of drugs and bootlegged CDs to mount an attack that killed almost 200 people and wounded more than 1,700. The 2006 London subway attack that killed 52 people, carried out mostly by native-born Englishmen with some al Qaeda contacts, cost about \$2,000.²¹

North America is hardly immune. Plotters have been arrested in the United States and Canada.²² In December 2006, for example the FBI arrested an individual who planned to blow up a shopping mall in Illinois.²³

While al Qaeda’s core structure undoubtedly flourished under state sponsorship (in Afghanistan and, before that, in Sudan), the al Qaeda high command and their Taliban allies have managed to regroup without a state sponsor. Clearly, they have benefited from assistance from local leaders in Western Pakistan, who have created de facto safe havens for the organization.²⁴ Al Qaeda’s affiliate terror groups and bands of individuals, by contrast, require no official sponsorship at all—they need only access

to international commerce and communications, and in some cases, to criminal networks.²⁵

Modern information technologies are a key tool in the operations of self-starter terrorist groups—especially the Internet. In 1998, there were only 12 known terrorist websites; today, there are more than 4,800.²⁶ These sites provide inspiration—and also instruction. Guidelines for building the explosives used in the Madrid and London bombings, for example, can be found online.²⁷ The would-be Illinois bomber learned about the principles of “jihad” from a website.²⁸

Indeed, one of the truly troubling developments in recent years is the increase in links between these al Qaeda-affiliated groups. Their ability to share resources and knowledge and possibly coordinate operations is a serious and growing threat, certainly for countries where the groups reside and for US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Recent reports indicate that North African insurgent groups have joined forces, mounting recent attacks in Algiers and Tunis and exporting suicide bombers to Iraq.²⁹ But the rising strength of connections among these groups is also likely to increase the chances that they will attack the United States.³⁰

Finally, US interests at home and abroad face a real threat from the insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan: an obvious one against US troops stationed there now, and a more latent one that will emerge when the current conflicts are over. The combatants in Iraq are developing tactics and leadership skills that will be highly transferable. In Afghanistan, for example, roadside bombs and suicide attacks are on the rise, but were a rare occurrence before 2003.³¹ Nations such as Saudi Arabia also have expressed concern about the destabilizing effect these fighters will have when they return to their home nations.³² As Lawrence Wright points out in *The Looming Tower*, these countries had serious problems with their nationals returning from the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan.³³

Across the board, the al Qaeda network continues to actively target the United States and its interests.³⁴ The worst-case scenario for an attack on the United States is unconventional weapons in the hands of al Qaeda or its followers, and nuclear weapons in particular. Osama bin Laden and his affiliates have sought nuclear and other unconventional weapons in the past.³⁵ The obstacles to obtaining and detonating a nuclear weapon make such an attack difficult to execute, though certainly possible.³⁶ Indeed, nuclear weapons expert Graham Allison has predicted that such an attack “is more likely than not in the next decade.”³⁷ “Dirty bombs,” or conventional explosives laced with radioactive material, are the most likely weapon for terrorist use,³⁸ given the relative ease of obtaining and deploying the materials involved, and the US remains highly vulnerable to this kind of radiological attack.³⁹

While mass casualties traditionally have been a key tenet of al Qaeda’s strategy, the group and its affiliates may be expanding their focus to economic damage—“Weapons of Mass Disruption,” perhaps. Osama bin Laden allegedly relished the

repercussions of 9-11, pointing out that the attacks cost al Qaeda \$500,000 and inflicted \$500 billion in damage on the American economy.⁴⁰ Al Qaeda affiliates increasingly appear to be targeting transportation, oil, and tourism infrastructures with the hope of causing devastating economic damage.⁴¹ The global oil market is a particular area of vulnerability, which bin Laden explicitly instructed his followers to target in a 2004 audio recording. Terrorists already have followed suit, attacking the oil infrastructure in Iraq and Saudi Arabia.⁴² Most recently, in December 2006, the Department of Homeland Security warned American businesses that an Islamist website was calling on its followers to attack US financial websites.⁴³

Al Qaeda and its loose affiliates are America's central enemy today and most urgent threat. With its combination of high-tech and low-tech warfare and decentralized power structure, al Qaeda is a Hydra-headed beast that, like its mythical counterpart, seems to grow in size and power as we fight it—whenever one of its heads is cut off, two more grow in its place. This is fundamentally different than the enemies America faced in the 20th century. And it is the Bush Administration's failure to come to grips with the difference between our 20th and 21st century enemies that, combined with crippling incompetence and stubborn ideological rigidity, that has compromised their efforts to defeat al Qaeda.

Part Two - The President's Three Mistakes: Looking Backwards to Fight Terrorism

Al Qaeda and its allies are a growing threat to the United States today because the Bush Administration is using 20th century means and strategies to defeat a 21st century foe. This has led to the three major conceptual errors:

- **The Domino Theory of Counterterrorism.** Like the domino theory of the last century, in which states would fall one-by-one to communism, the Bush doctrine predicts that newly established democracies will pressure and ultimately topple dictatorships and theocracies, which will create new democracies country-by-country. In the case of Iraq, America attempted to impose democracy by force from the outside. The first domino has failed to fall, however, and there are no other dominoes lined up and ready to topple. In fact, the effort to impose democracy by force has led to failed states in Iraq and increasingly in Afghanistan—and failed states are the climate in which al Qaeda thrives. Iraq and Afghanistan are now the incubators for the next generation of extremists. The dominos, if anything, are toppling in reverse.
- **Fighting State-on-State Warfare instead of a Global Counterinsurgency.** President Bush has likened al Qaeda to the totalitarian threats of the 20th century—Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Al Qaeda, though just as evil, is not a state or even a monolithic power, has no mechanized fighting force and has pioneered the use of 21st century technology to wage asymmetric war on the United States and our allies. By relying heavily on 20th century military means rather than the full range of America's 21st century strengths in order to fight terrorism, the Bush Administration has actually helped raise al Qaeda's profile. Al Qaeda is attracting new recruits faster than we can arrest or kill them.

“The Bush Team’s commitment to a worldview focused on states, which scants the danger of independent terrorist groups, and its determination to rely on military force in the fight against terror, have wrought lasting damage to America’s strategic position.”

**Daniel Benjamin
and Steve Simon⁴⁴**

- **Binary Balance of Power.** With “us or them” rhetoric that harkens back to the two-sided struggles of the 20th century, President Bush demanded that the world take sides: you are with America and you do it our way or you are with the terrorists. The Administration then further defined our side as the side of democratic governments, and the other side as “tyranny.”⁴⁵ By unconditionally dividing the world into two opposing forces, the Bush Administration trapped itself in a box: this uncompromising position made it harder to enlist the help of partners and allies, which is essential to stopping the global growth of al Qaeda.

Mistake #1: The Domino Theory of Counterterrorism

When asked in a 1954 press conference about the strategic importance of Indochina, President Dwight Eisenhower spoke about the region’s natural resources, its large population, and then a broader concern he called the “falling domino principle” of advancing communism:

“You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.”⁴⁶

The Bush Administration simply applied a version of this quintessential Cold War theory to its counterterrorism strategy, arguing that converting Iraq to democracy by force would flip the first domino, making the entire Middle East democratic and, ipso facto, eliminating terrorism. “A liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region, by bringing hope and progress into the lives of millions,” the President told the American Enterprise Institute on February 26, 2003.⁴⁷ In August of 2002, Vice President Cheney said that:

“Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region. When the gravest of threats are eliminated, the freedom-loving peoples of the region will have a chance to promote the values that can bring lasting peace... Extremists in the region would have to rethink their strategy of Jihad. Moderates throughout the region would take heart. And our ability to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process would be enhanced...”⁴⁸

There are two fatal flaws with this new domino theory. First, the Administration has failed to knock over the first domino. Democracy is shaky, at best, in Iraq and is now an endangered species in Afghanistan. Indeed, it is by no means clear that democracy can be spread by external forces in the first place. Possibly the only clear example of a democracy created by force, where there was no real existing tradition of democracy, is Japan after World War II. There are reasons to believe that the success of democracy in Japan is not a model that can be easily replicated, including that the transformation

was preceded by the total defeat, ruin and unconditional surrender of Japan, which was the aggressor in a long war. Moreover, this was a long-term investment, which started with the six-year rule of an American military governor and continues today—Japan is still under the American security umbrella, with US forces stationed in Japan and under the protection of the US nuclear umbrella.⁴⁹

Whether or not the Japan model is replicable, democracy is clearly not taking hold in Iraq and Afghanistan today. Iraq had seen years of war and economic sanctions before the American invasion, but it is now clear that Iraqis have not welcomed occupation and forced transformation. The elected Green-Zone government in Baghdad today is widely considered ineffective and unrepresentative.⁵⁰ War-shattered Afghanistan may have welcomed American help initially, but the Bush Administration's failure to invest the necessary resources has led to fleeting gains. Today, Afghanistan is sliding back toward chaos.⁵¹

The second major flaw in the new domino theory is the contention that once one domino falls, others will fall in sequence. There is no reason to believe that a successful democracy in Iraq would cause an outbreak of democracy across the region—or that democracy would stop terrorism in the region, for that matter. According to expert Anthony Cordesman, natural cleavages in Middle Eastern societies do not favor the formation of political parties, with the exception of Islamist groups that cross tribal, class and geographic variations.⁵² As scholar Gregory Gause has observed, given public opinion in the Arab world, democratic elections in the region are more likely to empower anti-American Islamic radicals than to eliminate them.⁵³ Indeed, some of the recent electoral successes in the region have gone to Hamas and Hizballah, extremist Islamic nationalist groups.

The consequences of this bankrupt domino theory are that Iraq and Afghanistan are swiftly becoming failed states. Indeed, the annual Failed States Index, published by the Fund for Peace and *Foreign Policy Magazine*, has listed both in the top 10.⁵⁴ Failed states are the climate in which the al Qaeda movement flourishes, as is clear in the escalation of attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mistake #2: Conducting State-on-State Warfare Rather Than a Global Counterinsurgency

President Bush's second 20th century notion was that America could fight the war on terror the same way we fought major wars in the last 100 years: we would send American troops "over there" to fight other militaries, and "they won't come back till it's over, over there," in the words of the World War I anthem.

Indeed, the President has said that "the war we fight today is more than a military conflict: it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century," comparing the battle explicitly to "Fascists, to Nazis, to Communists and other totalitarians of the 20th

century.”⁵⁵ He has also noted that “by fighting the terrorists in distant lands, you are making sure your fellow citizens do not face them here at home.”⁵⁶

These statements offer a stark reminder that George Bush is still fighting the last war—and even the war before that. Our new enemy is not a state with an ideology but a 21st century movement, with no fixed location, no mechanized military force and few obvious supply lines. Instead, the al Qaeda movement has leveraged globalized, largely ungoverned flows of information, money, weapons and people to fight an unprecedented, free-ranging war that takes full advantage of modern technologies.⁵⁷ With known cells in at least 60 different nations, including the United States,⁵⁸ there is no state to contain and defeat. The threat is everywhere and the group’s singular measure of its own success is not state domination; it is destruction.⁵⁹

The war with al Qaeda is best understood as a worldwide counterinsurgency⁶⁰—the first counterinsurgency of the age of information and globalization.⁶¹ That means the Bush strategy, which is based on conventional and complete destruction of a specific target,⁶² is not only wrong, it is self-defeating. The more military firepower the President trains on the task of destroying al Qaeda, the more the movement grows.

The recently revised Army-Marine Corps Field Manual on counterinsurgency notes that “the more force you use, the less effective you are;”⁶⁴ essentially, the Field Manual is guiding soldiers to stay away from operations that involve indiscriminate use of heavy weapons, particularly in urban areas. Terrorist groups, such as the al Qaeda movement, have learned to adopt insurgent tactics. They thrive on such conflict: they melt away from massed firepower and attack “soft” unguarded targets or make hit and run attacks. Furthermore, overwhelming force not only may raise the profile of an insurgent or terrorist group as an adversary, it may raise the level of popular sympathy in their community. It is that reputation-building and local support that sustain any insurgency movement. In a 21st century context, the “local” community is global. The al Qaeda movement may get recruits, shelter and other resources from local populations, but the main supply lines are the Internet and other global telecommunications, illicit transnational activities such as narcotics trafficking, and the ease of international travel and financial transactions.

The practical consequences of using conventional warfare against this unconventional threat have become increasingly obvious. As former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld famously mused in a leaked, classified memo in October

“If bin Laden didn’t have access to global media, satellite communications, and the Internet, he’d just be a cranky guy in a cave.”

David Kilcullen, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, US Department of State⁶³

2003: “Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?” The answer to his question is clearly no: al Qaeda itself has more than doubled in size since 9-11, despite “shock and awe” and five years of sustained American operations. The number of worldwide attacks has risen.⁶⁵ Rumsfeld went on to note that the US is putting relatively little effort into a long-range, integrated strategy. More than three years later, there still is no effective long-range, integrated strategy.

That is not to suggest that a global counterinsurgency campaign does not require certain kinds of military capabilities and responses—it does. But conventional military firepower alone is insufficient, as demonstrated in the US failure to capture bin Laden and his top leadership, by the reemergence of the Taliban and by the chaos in Iraq.

“The struggle is religious and ideological, not military or driven by secular values. It is a struggle for the future of Islam, and is not generic, global or focused on political or economic systems.”

**Anthony Cordesman,
Center for Strategic and
International Studies**⁶⁹

Indeed, the invasion of Iraq is the signal failure of the Bush counterterrorism strategy and the clearest evidence that the President and his top advisors are unable to grasp the 21st century reality. As early as September 17, 2001, Administration officials were referring to the invasion of Iraq as “phase two” of the response to 9-11,⁶⁶ even though they were told repeatedly that there were no clear links between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. President Bush said in October of 2002 that “some have argued that confronting the threat from Iraq could detract from the war on terror. To the contrary: confronting the threat posed by Iraq is crucial to winning the war on terror... Terror cells and outlaw

regimes building weapons of mass destruction are different faces of the same evil.”⁶⁷ In September of 2003, the President called Iraq “the central front” in the war on terror⁶⁸ as the justification for a policy of regime change.

The irony is that Iraq under Saddam Hussein was not the same evil as al Qaeda and it certainly was not a central front in the war on terror, but it is now, and with grave consequences. Before 9-11, there were no operational links between al Qaeda and Iraq.⁷⁰ Today, al Qaeda not only has a growing, highly destabilizing presence in Iraq, which will produce a new cadre of trained operatives, it is also using American military operations there as a global propaganda tool.⁷¹ Finally, the American military, diplomatic and intelligence forces are stretched to the breaking point in Iraq,⁷² diverting their attention from the fight with al Qaeda.

The invasion of Iraq was, in fact, a significant victory for Osama bin Laden: an explicit goal of his 9-11 operation was to draw the United States into a costly war in the Middle East. His intent was to damage US morale and economic might, but also to unite world Muslim opinion.⁷³ President Bush aided in that quest by attempting to defeat a 21st century enemy by sending American tanks across the desert, a quintessentially 20th century “way of war.”⁷⁴ In his 2007 State of the Union, President Bush warned that leaving Iraq would “embolden our enemies.” It may be the case that staying in Iraq is what has really emboldened them.

Mistake #3: Binary Balance of Power

President Bush’s third 20th century notion was that of a two-power world. He believed that the United States must align the globe the way we did during the Cold War and force other countries to take sides. Indeed, Bush offered an even more extreme choice than America did during the Cold War: there would be no room for a Non-Alignment Movement, as there was in the Cold War. Any nation that did not side with the United States would be considered an enemy.

Indeed, on September 20, 2001, President Bush issued a warning to the world: “either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.”⁷⁵ The starkness of the statement belied the outpouring of international support and cooperation that followed the attacks and put the world on notice that the United States would dictate the terms of the war on terror.

Of course the US should always reserve the right to act unilaterally to protect itself, but the practical effect of this stark binary thinking was a turn toward unilateralism. In his first seven months in office, President Bush had already shown a preference for this style of global leadership: he had withdrawn from the Kyoto Protocol, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the International Criminal Court, with little international consultation. He had also rolled back longtime US involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

In the National Security Strategy of 2002 and the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism of 2003, the Bush Administration declared that the US “will not hesitate to act alone, to exercise our right to self-defense, including acting preemptively against terrorists to prevent them from doing harm to our people and our country.” Then, in his remarks to the UN General Assembly in September 2002, President Bush called on the UN to disarm Iraq, but soon after noted that the US would do so in any case. “The United States, along with a growing coalition of nations,” he said, “is resolved to take whatever action is necessary to defend ourselves and disarm the Iraqi regime.”⁷⁶

This 20th century, binary thinking and unilateral actions are exactly the wrong approach to use against al Qaeda. The United States simply does not have enough people and money to find and eliminate al Qaeda cells all over the world, let alone permission to enter sovereign states in order to do so. Moreover, the United States

absolutely requires partners all over the world in order to counter and kill al Qaeda’s ideology.

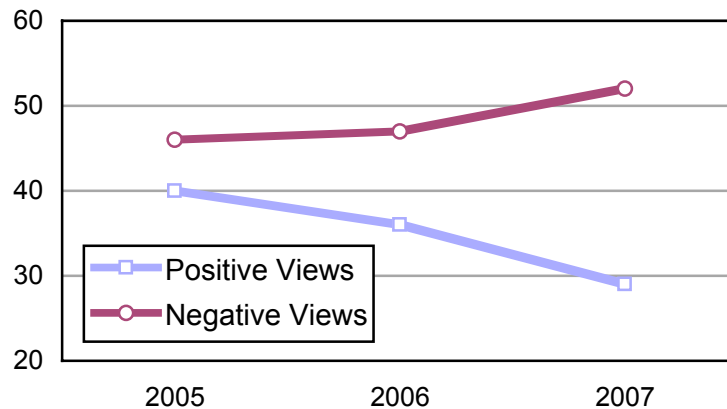
A global counterinsurgency campaign against al Qaeda will only succeed with extensive and sustained global cooperation, which the Administration has compromised with its rhetoric and the reality of its largely unilateral operations in Iraq. The Administration has made the struggle with al Qaeda America’s war, but it can only succeed if it is everyone’s war.⁷⁷

There is another important consequence of Bush’s binary, American-centric approach. Information operations, from covert psychological operations to public diplomacy, are essential parts of any successful counterinsurgency campaign, especially in the 21st century context. By describing the war effort in such Manichean terms as “good vs. evil,” Bush actually has deepened the mutual distrust and alienation between America and the Islamic world.⁷⁸ A perception that the Bush Administration is compromising American values and contravening international law in the conduct of the war—by permitting interrogation techniques considered torture under international law, for example⁷⁹—has also damaged the US ability to wage what Bush has referred to as “a war of ideas.” The good reputation of the United States in the international community is a hard asset the Administration has wasted in the war with al Qaeda—which has, in turn, helped al Qaeda recruit more followers.

“Perceptions of US unilateralism have triggered an informal countercoalition of necessity among those countries that oppose the coalition of the willing... Many in this countercoalition are not on the side of the jihadists.”

Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, former Prime Minister of Singapore⁷⁸

Views of US Influence in the World: Average of 18 Countries



Source: BBC World Service Poll, conducted with GlobeScan and the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, January 2007.

Part Three - Looking Ahead: A 21st Century Strategy of Constriction

As covered in Part I, the battle with al Qaeda is an entirely new, 21st century American experience of war—a global counterinsurgency, fought against an ideology-based confederacy of groups and individuals. To wage this 21st century fight, the United States must have a strategy designed to defeat al Qaeda’s signature strengths: its dispersion, high-tech planning (with low-tech execution) and basis in a core set of principles and ideals that are easily adapted by local groups in other regions. That means shaking off the Bush confusion, as detailed in Part II—it was the last century, not this one, in which we took the fight directly to foreign battlefields or built bulwarks against the encroachment of enemy armies. Today, the United States must throw a global noose around the al Qaeda movement, and slowly, systematically pull it tight. ***In short, we need a strategy of constriction, to pressure al Qaeda’s supply lines, from foot soldiers to high-finance, and eliminate its ability to wage war.*** To carry out this 21st century, global counterinsurgency strategy will require significant policy shifts, relating to the structure of our civilian and military forces, the relationship with our allies and alliances and the war of ideas.

The Goals of the Constriction Strategy

While it might be optimal to squeeze each of al Qaeda’s supply lines until they are completely shut, that is simply not possible. Rather, the central goals of constriction are to apply enough pressure, constantly and over time, to destroy the movement’s ability to function effectively. This pressure must be applied to an array of targets, many of which have been identified by government, academics, independent organizations and experts in the five years since 9-11. We refer to those targets as the “three Ps”: physical resources, propaganda and people.

First, we must put real pressure on their ***physical resources***. We must find new ways to squeeze their supplies of money (from local and international donors), weapons (especially nuclear, chemical and biological weapons), safe havens (in places like Western Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and in the virtual “cybercaliphate”⁸⁰) and the ability to control or destabilize a state. Al Qaeda’s physical resources also include targets, so a key part of constriction, involves cutting off their access to US domestic infrastructure and eliminating their ability to travel freely.

Second, we must pressure the supply line of al Qaeda’s ideas. We must attack their weapon of ***propaganda***, which they spread by computer, audio and video tape,

mobile phone and at community gathering points, such as certain mosques and religious schools.

Third, we must pressure al Qaeda's most important supply line, which is **people**. The movement is sustained by its leaders, but also by its followers—the actual foot soldiers who commit terrorist operations and the sympathizers who fund or otherwise support the movement. Constriction of people means military operations to target leadership, but also a comprehensive range of economic, educational, information and other efforts to deny al Qaeda new followers.

Making the Constriction Strategy Work

In August, 2006, British authorities foiled an al Qaeda plot to use liquid explosives to destroy American airliners. The United States subsequently banned passengers from carrying bottled water and baby formula onto commercial flights.⁸¹ Too often, the Bush strategy for fighting al Qaeda has unfolded in this way—a series of isolated, unsustainable efforts in reaction to events.⁸² Constriction takes the opposite approach: it is a proactive, systematic and coordinated squeezing of al Qaeda's physical resources, propaganda and people. The noose is steadily pulled tighter.

In order for constriction to succeed, however, the United States must take three significant actions to change its approach to the battle with al Qaeda:

- **Remodel Our Civilian and Military Forces.** Our diplomats and other civil servants, intelligence officers, first responders and uniformed military should be recast to form an integrated force that can constrict al Qaeda's supply lines of ideas, weapons, safe havens and access to travel.
- **Rebuild Strong Anti-Terror Alliances.** We should leverage the unity of international purpose when it comes to fighting al Qaeda. We should restore relations with our friends and partners in the world to help us constrict al Qaeda supply lines of money, leaders and targets.
- **Restructure US Political Warfare Capacities.** Through the power of our ideas and our people, we should constrict al Qaeda's intellectual currency in the world, and accordingly, its access to recruits and resources. The United States also must persuade others that the fight against al Qaeda is their own.

These three areas constitute the focus for building a new policy of constriction. Strategic gains in each will be crucial to cutting off al Qaeda's supply lines. The recommendations below are by no means comprehensive; law enforcement, for example, plays an essential role in the constriction strategy, and there are undoubtedly good policy changes to be made to the Department of Justice. Rather, we believe these are the areas in most urgent need of reform and immediate action by policymakers if we are to begin implementing a national strategy of constriction. In a

companion paper, Third Way will release a menu of policy options that offer detailed changes that could be made in support of these recommendations.

Remodeling Our Civilian and Military Forces

Today, the US Government is largely configured the same way it was in the 20th century. In terms of our security, that means we are structured for a conventional battle against a central enemy that no longer exists, at a time when we urgently need to engage in an unconventional battle against a decentralized foe. The main critical success factor for constricting is the ability of the frontline civilian and military

“I think our structures for 21st century security challenges need to adapt to this type of an enemy. The 21st century really requires that we figure out how to get economic, diplomatic, political and military elements of power synchronized and coordinated against specific problems wherever they exist.”

**General John P. Abizaid,
Commander, Central Command⁸⁵**

agencies in the war with al Qaeda to work together, both in terms of sharing information and cooperating in operations. Right now, however, integration is more a matter of personality than strategy,⁸³ when it happens at all.

Moreover, today’s war requires that the United States government be capable of outpacing the enemy in adapting to changing circumstances on the ground.⁸⁵ According to Rand Corporation expert Bruce Hoffman, “the effectiveness of US strategy will be based on our capacity to think like a networked enemy.”⁸⁶ To date, the Bush Administration’s neglect,

coupled with the occasional top-down and a la carte fixes—such as creating major new bureaucracies for homeland security and intelligence or standing up a task force to deal with terrorist financing—have not only failed to introduce this more nimble networked government, they have arguably made the government slower and more reactive.⁸⁷

Sweeping change across the government may be necessary over the long term, but is probably not feasible in the near term. Fortunately, there are incremental changes that can be made today to allow a policy of constricting to succeed. In order for the frontline agencies⁸⁸ to collaborate better and respond to change more effectively, each must have a fully-functioning hub capable of taking part in a network of planning and executing the global counterinsurgency strategy. Each hub should be coordinating activities within its home institution, as well as between government agencies. It is critical that these policy hubs be centers of excellence—this should be

the element of our government that is able to adapt and move quickly, with sufficient human and financial resources to affect the operations of the rest of the US Government.

The National Security Council: Empower the Central Hub

The National Security Council was founded in 1947 specifically to coordinate national policy among the different Federal agencies. That function is especially important today: the NSC has an indispensable role to play in coordinating a government-wide counterterrorism strategy. For the NSC to succeed, however, the President must articulate a coherent counterterrorism strategy – one that is based on actions that can actually be carried out, rather than abstractions and ideology. In turn, the National Security Council staff must do a better job of ensuring that national strategy is executed – that means coming up with interagency campaign plans, not just lists of tasks. The new National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) should be a critical partner for the NSC.

Recommendation:

Strengthen the NSC office for counterterrorism and charge that office not only with advising the President on national strategy, but also with orchestrating the implementation of that strategy.

The Intelligence Community: Strengthen the NCTC and the NID

In August 2006, British authorities, working with Pakistani officials, were able to foil a planned attack on American airliners. As terrorism expert Juliette Kayyem has pointed out, the main reason British officials succeeded in disrupting the plot was “very good human intelligence: a person’s infiltrating the terrorist cell, convincing the plotters that he was part of their plan, and then turning on them when they started to get serious.” Airport security was largely irrelevant and electronic surveillance was of secondary importance.⁸⁹

Intelligence, and human intelligence in particular, will continue to be the number one weapon in the constriction arsenal, whether it is used to close financial spigots, cut off planned attacks, screen high-risk cargo at ports or squeeze al Qaeda’s informational supply lines by disrupting internet operations. But to stay ahead of al Qaeda networks, the intelligence community must be able to share information and coordinate operations. The hubs for coordinated action are already in place in the intelligence community: the central players are—or should be—the National Counterterrorism Center and the National Intelligence Directorate. But neither organization currently has enough money, people or authority to successfully orchestrate constriction activities.

Recommendation:

Strengthen the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) and the National Intelligence Directorate (NID), so that they can cultivate appropriate intelligence assets and coordinate community activities and improve domestic intelligence collection.

The State Department: Reorganize to Take on Constriction

In January 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced a major change to State Department operations, which she called “transformational diplomacy.” The goal, she explained, is “to work with our many partners around the world, to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.”⁹⁰

But Secretary Rice’s attempt to reform the State Department is likely to fail, both because she has the wrong vision and because she is not going far enough. First, the Secretary reshaped the bureaucracy around her goal of global democracy promotion. While democracy promotion is an important mission for the Department of State, it should be an element of a coherent foreign policy in general and of the US counterterrorism strategy specifically, not a substitute for policy and strategy. This is a dramatic failure of vision, given that the State Department should have a lead role in coordinating terrorism constriction activities. With the State Department short of personnel and the right mix of skills, the Department of Defense has taken the lead, with questionable results and long-term costs to civilian control of foreign policy and warfighting competencies.⁹¹

Second, the Secretary’s bureaucratic box-shifting did not rid the department of its highly dysfunctional structure or its lack of resources. Responsibility for constriction operations at State is fractured, redundant and starved of personnel and funding.⁹² This must change—State has one of the most important roles to play in constriction operations, particularly those aimed at al Qaeda’s supply of resources, intellectual capital and even followers.

“The current 12:1 ratio of military spending to spending on the diplomatic and civilian foreign aid agencies risks further encroachment of the military, by default, into areas where civilian leadership is more appropriate because it does not create resistance overseas and is more experienced.”

A Report to Members of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate⁹⁴

Recommendation:

Institute broad reforms at the State Department and dramatically increase funding for the Department. Reforms should pay special attention to increasing the profile of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, as well as restructuring all of the parts of the department responsible for constriction operations, particularly those that deal with foreign aid and security assistance.

The Defense Department: Reshape the Force to Fight a Global Counterinsurgency

The Bush Administration has relied heavily—some would say exclusively—on the US armed forces and defense professionals to carry out the war on terrorism. In some cases, that has meant using conventional forces for inappropriate missions—tank battalions and armor officers, for example, for what basically amounts to nation-building in Iraq.⁹⁴ A recent investigative report conducted by the Republican staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee found that the Bush Administration’s preference for military missions has compromised lines of authority in US embassies and may be undermining both the Secretary of State’s role as principal foreign policy advisor and the Secretary of Defense’s focus on warfighting.⁹⁵

There’s also a prevailing perception in the Special Operations Forces community that civilian and military leadership have prioritized direct action over their “softer” missions, such as training foreign militaries.⁹⁶ That is consistent with President Bush’s emphasis on conventional military missions, but inconsistent with a coherent and winning constriction strategy, which relies on the military not only to pressure al Qaeda’s leadership and safe havens, but also to squeeze their access to targets, their flow of weapons and other resources.

“If we spend the rest of our lives ‘capturing and killing’ terrorists at the expense of those Special Forces missions that are more important—gaining access to the local population, training indigenous forces, providing expertise and expanding capacity—we’re doomed to failure.”

LTC Mark Haselton, USA (ret)⁹⁸

Recommendation:

Reshape the American military so it has the personnel, the training, the doctrine and the strategy to prevail in a 21st century fight. This will involve improving the ability of the Special Operations Command to act as a hub for constriction activities and creating a new hub for the force’s stabilization and reconstruction missions.

The Department of Homeland Security: Overhaul a Broken Agency

More than five years after the September 11th terrorist attacks, the Administration has made the homeland only marginally safer from terrorist attacks. The Department of Homeland Security itself should be a hub for the US government's efforts to constrict al Qaeda's access to US domestic targets, but the agency is little more than a shell for 22 different offices that do not form any kind of cohesive whole. The Bush Administration has not given the Department the attention, resources and bipartisan cooperation with Congress that DHS needs in order to be effective.⁹⁸

Recommendation:

The Administration should work with Congress to reauthorize the Department of Homeland Security, with significant organizational fixes and reallocation of resources.

Rebuilding Strong Anti-Terror Alliances

All nations with a vested interest in the rule of law have an interest in constriction, as they all are on the target list for al Qaeda. As terrorism expert Peter Bergen has pointed out, al Qaeda's leaders have "constantly expanded their list of enemies...It's very hard to think of a category of person, institution, or government that al Qaeda does not oppose."⁹⁹ The world has a stake in this struggle, and America's allies need to do more to share the burden of fighting a common enemy.

Indeed, the United States can only win the war on al Qaeda with the help of allies and partners. Given the geographic dispersion of al Qaeda, their transnational operations, and the scale of the problem, we need allies both in combined operations with our intelligence, civilian, and military forces, and to operate independently within their own borders. We simply cannot constrict al Qaeda's access to

resources—money, weapons and safe havens—or the flow of their propaganda without working cooperatively with others. Moreover, we need to use the full range of US engagement with the world, from law enforcement to military training to human

“You have to internationalize the problem. You have to attack it diplomatically, geo-strategically. You just can’t apply a microscope on a particular problem in downtown Baghdad and a particular problem in downtown Kabul and say that somehow or another, if you throw enough military forces at it, that you are going to solve the broader issues in the region of extremism.”

**General John P Abizaid,
Commander of Central Command¹⁰¹**

rights and immigration reforms, to help strengthen other states against the onslaught of al Qaeda and its affiliates.

Recommendation:

Build and restore constriction capabilities in key partners and allies. This will mean reversing the damage done by the Bush unilateral approach and emphasizing cooperation with military allies and other partners. This emphasis should be both a matter of policy and of how we communicate that policy (i.e., public diplomacy).

Restructuring US Political Warfare Capacities

The United States cannot wholly kill the ideology of al Qaeda—radical, political Islam will always have its followers. The United States can, however, constrict the ability of al Qaeda to reach and appeal to new followers, minimizing the threat this ideology poses to all Americans today. The best way to do that is to squeeze the flow of ideas and information and cut leaders off from potential supporters and foot soldiers. That requires a comprehensive strategy for countering radical Islamic ideology, something the Bush Administration has yet to adopt.¹⁰¹

Constricting al Qaeda's intellectual currency requires military and law enforcement operations (to shut down Internet sites or capture leadership, for example), but it also requires promoting the image of the United States and our allies and discrediting al Qaeda, including by dividing, coercing and courting its current or potential adherents.¹⁰² This type of political warfare, which involves covert and overt means,¹⁰³ is not wholly unique to the 21st century battlefield—the United States had great success with similar tactics during the Cold War.

What is new, however, is the decentralization of political warfare. Public diplomacy is no longer something just for the politicians, the generals or even the military's psychological operations unit. For the constriction of ideas to succeed, every element of national power, especially the diplomat or soldier in the field, needs to think of his or her actions as part of a political battle.¹⁰⁵ That requires, at the very least, different training and indoctrination for all US military and civilian forces.

In this context, it is not enough to do no harm. As former State Department official Robert Gallucci has noted, "good policy will indeed be weakened if it is poorly communicated; but lousy policy will not improve simply because it is communicated well."¹⁰⁶

In order to constrict the ideas and propaganda of al Qaeda, the US needs to offer an alternative. That means a long-term, sustainable effort to reach out through economic, political and security assistance and support those who share our values, especially in the Arab world.¹⁰⁷ The 9-11 Commission report noted that "a comprehensive US strategy to counter terrorism should include economic policies

that encourage development, more open societies and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and to enhance the prospects for their children's future."¹⁰⁸ Such efforts are especially important in the Islamic world, given the three crippling deficits the Arab Human Development Report describes: "the freedom deficit, the women's empowerment deficit, and the human capabilities/knowledge deficit relative to income."¹⁰⁹ But *forcing* change on the Middle East from the outside obviously cannot work, with Iraq as a case in point, and elections are no panacea, as the electoral victories of Hamas and Hizballah clearly show. Indeed, the Arab Human Development report also identifies US policy in the region as a major impediment to the region's ability to advance.

Moreover, al Qaeda franchise groups have proven especially deadly within western, Democratic nations. A constriction strategy needs to tap into indigenous sentiment in Muslim populations, which is entirely possible. Majorities in Islamic nations believe democracy can take root in their nations.¹¹¹

“Given pervasive media presence, the demeanor of a single soldier or official instantaneously communicates more about the state of a campaign than any public information operation.”

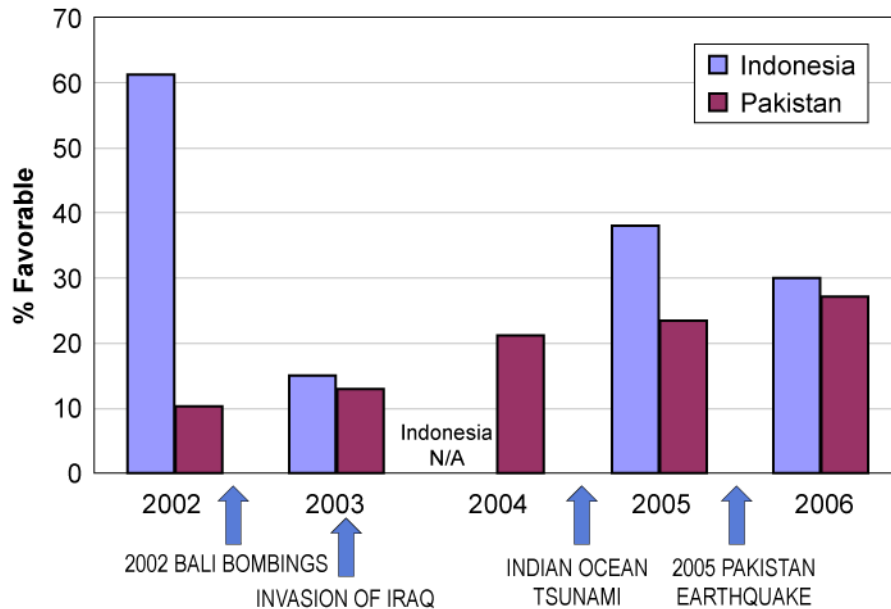
David Kilcullen, Office of Coordinator for Counterterrorism, US Department of State¹¹¹

Recommendation:

Clarify the US mission. In order to sustain the support of the American public and the cooperation of partners and allies around the world, the United States needs to be absolutely clear about what the nation seeks to accomplish. It is time to put aside the Bush rhetoric of "ending tyranny in our world"¹¹² and "the decisive ideological struggle of our time"¹¹³ and clarify that America seeks to defeat the al Qaeda movement, and that all nations and organizations are welcome to join the fight. Specifically, America seeks to eliminate the threat al Qaeda's terrorist operations and intellectual virulence present to the American people and people all over the world.

As part of that, we recommend creating the bureaucratic mechanisms necessary to elevate public diplomacy to a higher level of priority, at the White House, State Department and throughout the federal government and develop the policies to constrict al Qaeda's appeal by raising our nation's stature in the Islamic world.

Favorable Opinion of US



Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project¹¹⁴

Finally, the United States must show a commitment to good policy in the Islamic world, particularly in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesia. That will involve smart choices in discrete areas—the United States Government, for example, should state unequivocally that the US seeks no permanent presence in Iraq. We also should commit sufficient military and reconstruction resources to Afghanistan, champion the cause of Arab-Israeli peace and increase aid and involvement in Pakistan and Indonesia.¹¹⁵ But we also need to rethink the overall strategy of engagement with the Middle East with the goal of constricting al Qaeda’s intellectual currency.

“The 21st century diplomat must be a public affairs and public diplomacy diplomat.”

Independent Task Force Report on State Department Reform¹¹⁷

Conclusion

In the first decade of the 21st century, the United States is facing numerous challenges to the security of the nation. Some of these challenges are familiar in their contours. Will China, for example, become a peer great power—and an enemy? Some of those challenges pose extremely grave threats to the nation—will rogue nations or terrorist groups obtain nuclear weapons? Other challenges are wholly unfamiliar. Environmental threats such as global warming or health threats such as pandemic flu have not been traditionally viewed as security threats, but are increasingly seen in that light. Looking forward at the coming decades, it is very difficult to predict the future security environment for the United States.

In that context, fighting global terrorism is one challenge among many the nation must address. Our struggle with al Qaeda, however, is unique in its urgency: this is a group that has attacked the United States and our interests multiple times and has made it clear it will attack again—and it is growing in strength and lethality. Today, the United States must place high priority on organizing the government and the American people to defeat this threat.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's failures in fighting the "war on terror" are legion. Indeed, it is the Administration's underlying attachment to 20th century ways of doing business that has actually increased the threat al Qaeda poses to the United States. Until the Administration adopts a 21st century counterinsurgency strategy that relies on partners, effective government agencies and the power of ideas, America will continue to be at risk.

The world should be with us in this fight—unity of purpose should be one of America's greatest comparative advantages in the struggle with al Qaeda. There is no room in al Qaeda's ideology of destruction for states (other than client states like the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan), international groups or indeed the vast majority of citizens of the world; all have a vested interest in the rule of law and some kind of order. The Bush Administration has not only failed to capitalize on the global unity of purpose, it has compromised this essential strength with its unilateral, divisive approach.

What we need now is a comprehensive, shared approach to a common threat. The United States must have a clear-eyed understanding that winning the battle against al Qaeda now means doing much more than killing Osama bin Laden. There is no bunker to capture, no flagpole on which to run up the Stars and Stripes and no statute to topple in the "war on terror." Indeed, the first step in forging a new strategy is ridding

ourselves of this antiquated, 20th century concept of the nature of our enemy and of the war we are in.

Hercules, who battled the mythical Hydra, used every ounce of his strength, all of his wits and each of his weapons, but he ultimately needed the help of his nephew Iolaus to slay the beast. Likewise, we must learn to use all of the resources at our disposal and help from our allies if we are to constrict—and ultimately kill—the beast that is al Qaeda.

Endnotes

¹ Center for American Progress and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Terrorism Index*, published in *Foreign Policy Magazine*, July/August 2006.

² Bruce Hoffman, "Islam and the West: Searching for Common Ground," Testimony presented to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 18, 2006. Mark Mazzetti and David Rohde, "Terror Officials See Qaeda Chiefs Gaining Power," *The New York Times*, February 18, 2007.

³ Some individuals and clusters who are called "al Qaeda" have a more direct relationship with Osama bin Laden and the rest of the high command than do others. Some groups have even adopted different names (like "The Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades"). But all of these associates and affiliates are linked in some way to bin Laden's organization, so Third Way believes "al Qaeda" is the appropriate name to put on our enemy.

⁴ Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan and Syria (<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/c14151.htm>).

⁵ State Department Fact Sheet, October 11, 2005 (<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/37191.htm>).

⁶ Bruce Hoffman, "Islam and the West: Searching for Common Ground," RAND Corporation, July 2006.

⁷ Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, <http://tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=6>

⁸ US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism and Patterns of Global Terrorism 2005, released April 28, 2006.

⁹ Statement by General Peter J. Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the US Army, Before the US Commission on National Guard and Reserves, December 15, 2006.

¹⁰ Pew Global Attitudes Project, "The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other," June 22, 2006.

¹¹ The Intelligence Community itself refutes President Bush's claims: the classified National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on "Trends in Global Terrorism," partially released to the public in April 2006, concludes that "al Qaeda will continue to pose the greatest threat to the homeland and US interests abroad by a single terrorist organization."

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¹³ RAND Terror expert Bruce Hoffman argues that al Qaeda's weakening has been exaggerated. He argues that senior-level AQ managers, operating in or around the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, continue to exert actual coordination of attacks, and would be the only ones trusted with high value, "spectacular" attacks—in other words, the central planning level of al Qaeda still exists, but with somewhat different personnel.

¹⁴ See Peter Bergen, "The Return of Al Qaeda: Where You Bin?" *The New Republic*, Issue 4,802, Vol. 236, January 29, 2007. Mark Mazzetti and David Rohde, "Terror Officials See Qaeda Chiefs Gaining Power," *The New York Times*, February 18, 2007.

¹⁵ There is some debate about the level of influence retained by the al Qaeda high command. A November 2006 study by the US Military Academy has concluded that the ideological power of top leaders such as bin Laden and Zawahiri is fading—that they are "losing sway" to the scholarly work of Saudi and Jordanian clerics. The study concluded that the death of bin Laden would not represent a serious ideological setback for al Qaeda. Bruce Hoffman disagrees (add detail or a quote) (in "Qaeda Leaders Losing Sway over Militants, Study Finds", by Mark Mazzetti, *The New York Times*, November 15, 2006).

¹⁶ Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack: The Failure of the War on Terror and a Strategy for Getting it Right*, Times Books, New York, 2005.

¹⁷ Richard Clarke, "Defeating the Jihadists," Century Foundation. P. 4.

¹⁸ See Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: al Qaeda and the Road to 9-11*, Knopf, New York, August 2006.

¹⁹ Research by terror experts Marc Sageman and Robert Leiken has found that more than eighty percent of known jihadists took up their cause while living in diaspora communities. Scott Atran, "The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism," *The Washington Quarterly*, 2006 Spring.

²⁰ Stephen Fidler, "Al-Qaeda yields to the elusive cells of the chatroom," September 10, 2006.

²¹ Tariq Panya, "Analysts say London Bombings Inexpensive," *ABC News*, January 3, 2006. <http://abcnews.go.com/International/Terrorism/wireStory?id=1466463>

²² "Al Qaeda Attracts 'best and brightest' Muslims, says terror scholar," *Homeland Defense Watch*, July 18, 2005. (quoting Marc Sageman).

²³ Mike Robinson, "Feds: Man Planned to Blow up Illinois Mall," *Associated Press*, December 8, 2006.

²⁴ Mark Mazzetti and David Rohde, "Terror Officials See Al Qaeda Chiefs Regaining Power," *The New York Times*, February 19, 2007.

²⁵ 2005 Country Reports on Terrorism, p. 11.

²⁶ Gabriel Weimann, as quoted in Dan Benjamin and Julie Smith, "Currents and Crosscurrents of Radical Islamism," CSIS, p17.

²⁷ Ibid. 5.

²⁸ Mike Robinson, "Feds: Man Planned to Blow up Illinois Mall," *Associated Press*, December 8, 2006.

²⁹ Craig Whitlock, "Terrorist Networks Lure Young Moroccans to War in Far-Off Iraq," *The Washington Post*, February 20, 2007.

³⁰ Ibid. p.4 Also, CRS Report for Congress, "Trends in Terrorism," p. 12 ("The Rise in Influence of Radical Islamist Political parties). See also the recent declassified NIE on "Global Terrorism", which states that "Other affiliated Sunni extremist organizations, such as Jemaah Islamiya, Ansar al Sunna, and several North African groups, unless countered, are likely to expand their reach and become more capable of multiple and/or mass-casualty attacks outside their traditional areas of operation."

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³² David Ignatius, "Lessons from the Saudis," *The Washington Post*, November 22, 2006, p. A21.

³³ Wright notes that many of these fighters "became a stateless, vagrant mob of religious mercenaries...The cinders of the Afghan conflagration were drifting across the globe, and soon much of the Muslim world would be in flame." *Wright, The Looming Tower*, p.163.

³⁴ "Declassified Key Judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate on Global Terrorism," *The New York Times*, September 27, 2006.

³⁵ Peter Chalk et al, *Beyond al Qaeda: The Global Jihadist Movement (Part I)*, Rand Corporation, 2006, pp. 44-47.

³⁶ Charles Ferguson, "Preventing Catastrophic Nuclear Terrorism," Council on Foreign Relations, March 11, 2006. A terrorist would have to buy, steal or build a nuclear weapon, all of which are extremely difficult. Even after a stolen or purchased weapon is obtained, most nuclear weapons require secret codes to be entered before they can be detonated. Nonetheless, there is evidence that Russia

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³⁷ Graham Allison, "The Ongoing Failure of Imagination," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September/October 2006, pp. 36-41.

³⁸ CFR Backgrounder, "Dirty Bombs," October 19, 2006 (http://www.cfr.org/publication/9548/dirty_bombs.html)

³⁹ On two separate occasions, an undercover team from ABC news was able to send significant quantities of uranium from suspicious ports into the United States; both times, Customs and Border Patrol screened the containers and failed to detect the radiation. Ervin, 119.

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⁵⁰ Anthony Shadid, "This is Baghdad: What could be Worse?" *The Washington Post*, October 29, 2006, p. B1.

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⁶⁰ Bruce Hoffman, "Islam and the West: Searching for Common Ground," Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 18, 2006.

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