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To cite this article: Richard Shultz & Andreas Vogt (2003) It's war! fighting post-11 september global terrorism through a doctrine of preemption, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 15:1, 1-30, DOI: [10.1080/09546550312331292947](https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550312331292947)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546550312331292947>



Published online: 04 Jun 2010.



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It's War! Fighting Post-11 September Global Terrorism through a Doctrine of Preemption

RICHARD H. SHULTZ and ANDREAS VOGT

Following the 11 September terrorist attack a number of media revelations asserted that it could have been prevented if only the intelligence community (IC) had acted on information in its possession regarding the impending attack. This article explains why and how the intelligence agencies failed on 11 September, and assesses the need for and viability of preemptive military options for striking first to combat terrorism. First, it describes how the IC doggedly refused to regard terrorism as war through the 1990s. Second, the authors explain that an alternative perspective challenged this orthodoxy in the early 1990s, arguing that war was changing and entering its fourth generation. Third, based on new information about Al-Qaeda, the article addresses how Al-Qaeda organized for war and how it carried it out by delineating Al-Qaeda's organizational structure, ideology, linkages with other terrorist groups and supporting states, use of sanctuary, and financial base, and then detailing its targeting, weapons and war-fighting strategy. This assessment reveals how intimately the Al-Qaeda network bears an unmistakable resemblance to fourth-generation asymmetrical warfare and not to the 1990s profile of the IC. Finally, the authors demonstrate that President Bush has grasped fourth generation warfare by advocating preemptive first strikes against terrorists in his new national security strategy.

Introduction

Now that the Senate and House committees' bipartisan panel has concluded its investigation of the 11 September surprise attack, the performance of the intelligence community (IC) has moved to center stage. The panel sought to ascertain what the IC knew about the hijackers before 11 September, and what it did with that information.

In the weeks preceding the opening session, a number of media revelations pointed to the failure of both the FBI and CIA to 'put two and two together'. First came the accounts in May 2002 that the Bureau ignored a 5 July 2001 memo written by a Phoenix field agent warning that several Islamic radicals he had under surveillance were enrolled in aeronautical school and could be seeking to infiltrate our civil aviation system. For two weeks a relentless media wondered why the FBI had failed to act on this warning.

Then in early June, the spotlight refocused on the CIA. *Newsweek* led the charge. Its 4 June 2002 cover story read: 'The 9/11 Terrorists the CIA Should Have Caught'. Allegedly, the CIA possessed information about two of the hijackers dating back to an Al-Qaeda meeting in Malaysia in January 2000. Here are the particulars:

A few days after the Kuala Lumpur meeting... the CIA tracked one of the terrorists, Nawaf Alhazmi, as he flew from the meeting to Los Angeles. Agents discovered that another of the men, Khalid Almihdhar, had already obtained a multiple-entry visa that allowed him to enter and leave the United States as he pleased... [D]uring the year and nine months after the CIA identified them as terrorists, Alhazmi and Almihdhar lived openly in the United States, using their real names, obtaining driver's licenses, opening bank accounts and enrolling in flight schools – until the morning of September 11, when they walked aboard American Airlines Flight 77 and crashed it into the Pentagon.¹

Astonishingly, says *Newsweek*, the CIA sat on these intelligence nuggets and 'did not notify the FBI, which could have covertly tracked them to find out their mission'.²

While it is imperative to discover whether a handful of intelligence nuggets could have prevented 11 September, we do not believe what occurred that day can be explained simply by missed warnings. The real intelligence failure has to do with how the IC, and the Clinton administration it served, did not understand and incorrectly assessed the transformation that terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda were undergoing in the 1990s.

Indeed, significant differences can be seen between how the IC viewed this transformation before 11 September and what we now know about Al-Qaeda, its alliances with other terrorist groups and linkages with states that support it. These dissimilarities point to an astonishing failure of intelligence analysis. In two critical ways the IC did not abide by the counsel of the ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu. Recall what he advised. First, study war: 'War is a matter of vital importance to the state... It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied'. Second, 'Know the enemy'.

Moreover, as we will contend later, the lessons from 11 September necessitated a fundamental reevaluation and overhaul of US policy for facing up to and combating terrorism. This is exactly what the White House has done through the molding of a new national security doctrine that adds preemptive military options to the president's quiver. The new Bush doctrine radically changes a US government mindset and two-decade old

defensive counterterrorism policy from conceding the initiative to the terrorists to seizing the initiative by striking first through offensive military operations. It was long overdue.

Turning a Blind Eye: Assessing Terrorism in the 1990s

Each year since the early 1980s the intelligence community has produced classified estimates of trends and developments in international terrorism. A declassified summary of these analytic products *Patterns in Global Terrorism* is released annually by the US State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. It is an instructive source for deducing how the IC assessed the evolution of the terrorist threat through the 1990s. Other open source materials can likewise help us assemble an informed impression of the IC's pre-11 September perspective on terrorism. These include IC testimony at congressional hearings, studies and reports by contractors that support the IC like Rand and publications by serving intelligence officers such as the former deputy chief of CIA's Counterterrorism Center, Paul Pillar.³ These sources tell us a great deal about how the intelligence community evaluated international terrorism as the 1990s drew to a close. Here are its principal deductions.

First, terrorism was not war. According to Pillar, terrorism 'is not accurately represented by the metaphor of war. Unlike most wars, it has neither a fixed enemy nor the prospect of coming to closure, be it through a win or some other denouement'.⁴ Even after Osama Bin Laden (OBL) issued a declaration of war against America in 1998 when he called on his followers 'to abide by Allah's order by killing Americans... anywhere, anytime, and wherever possible', the US continued to abstain from regarding terrorism as war.

If terrorism was not war, then what was it? The US Government defined it as a crime. And those who carried out such attacks – not the leaders who gave the orders to do so nor states who provided sanctuary and succor – were to be brought before American courts through extradition, rendition or arrest. The US established specific laws for prosecution and made 'bring terrorists to justice for their crimes' the keystone of its policy for combating terrorism.

In terms of trends, the IC reported that terrorist incidents were down – though increasingly lethal and indiscriminate – and that the US was the primary target. These developments were attributed to the growing number of radical religious groups – primarily militant Islamists – that wanted to kill as many Americans as possible. Such movements believed they were carrying out divine mandates that justified deadly and wholesale carnage.

The IC also detected changes in how terrorist organizations were

structured. In the 1980s they were organized hierarchically with a clear command and control structure.

Those who belonged to these groups were also considered professionals with well-defined political objectives. In the 1990s the IC noted that new terrorist organizations were emerging that were less cohesive, more diffuse, amorphous and populated by amateurs. While fanatically motivated because of their religious and millenarian aims, the rank-in-file were the antithesis of 1980s skilled practitioner. Those who carried out the 1993 World Trade Center (WTC) bombing were illustrative. For the IC this was the gang that couldn't shoot straight.

Organizational devolution, in turn, negated the likelihood of an international terrorist network. Also working against global linkages and cooperative arrangements were political, philosophical and spiritual differences among groups and states. Pillar put it this way:

The fault lines are numerous. Ethnic, national, and socioeconomic differences have impeded efforts at unity, as have differing security perspectives. Sectarian differences are also significant – particularly, but not solely, the split between Sunni and Shia... The great ethnic, religious, and national divisions of the Muslim world are turning out to be stronger than all the calls to Islamic solidarity.⁵

Declining state support for terrorist groups likewise undercut the prospects for an international terrorist network. By the end of the 1990s seven states – Cuba, Libya, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Sudan and Syria – remained on the IC's state sponsorship list, but their involvement was said to be shrinking because these states had other more vital interests at stake. While Afghanistan was not officially listed as a state sponsor, late 1990s editions of *Patterns in Global Terrorism* expressed concern over the sanctuary that the Taliban provided to Al-Qaeda (to be discussed in more detail below).

Finally, the IC did not discern the growing importance of non-state supporters, a phenomenon of the 1990s. New players included religious leaders and their organizations, charities and other NGOs and wealthy individuals.

As the 1990s drew to a close, this was the US government's appraisal of the challenge of terrorism. To be sure, individual members held different views. Still, terrorism was seen as a secondary national security challenge – not a clear and present danger – even after the deadly 1998 East Africa embassy bombings. It still was not war, although the Clinton administration became somewhat more willing to go beyond the law enforcement approach and use limited cruise missile strikes against targets in Afghanistan and Sudan.

A New Form of Warfare

By the time the *USS Cole* was bombed Washington finally knew it was in a deadly struggle with Al-Qaeda, but it still shunned a military campaign to destroy it and the states that gave it help. In the words of Pillar, such an effort would be hopeless – ‘If there is a ‘war’ against terrorism, it is a war that cannot be won... terrorism cannot be defeated – only reduced, attenuated, and to some degree controlled’.⁶

Beyond the refusal of the US intelligence community, and for that matter the military establishment, to classify terrorism as warfare because it was not a serious enough danger, other reasons also contributed to this reluctance. Most important, terrorism was not war because it did not resemble modern war as the spooks and soldiers had known it, studied it and practiced it. Therefore, *ipso facto*, it could not be war.

In the early 1990s an alternative perspective challenged this orthodoxy, arguing that war was undergoing big changes – transformation – and entering its fourth generation. The first generation – classical nation-state war – had been perfected by Napoleon. This was followed by industrial-age wars of attrition based on massive firepower. It reached its apogee in World War I. Maneuver warfare, introduced by the Germans in World War II and refined by the US in the 1980s, marked the third generation.

Among the first to propose that a new form of war was emerging was Martin van Creveld in his 1991 book, *The Transformation of War*. Although considered a master military historian and author of two widely read earlier books – *Supplying War* and *Command in War* – most American strategic analysts and military professionals considered his new work too far out. The following forecast was flatly rejected as the musings of an eccentric intellectual:

The modern paradigm for warfare, in which nation-states wage war for reasons of state, using formal militaries...[is] being eclipsed by a post-modern approach... As war between states exits through one side of history’s revolving door, low intensity conflict among different organizations will enter through the other... National sovereignties are being undermined by organizations [non-state actors] that refuse to recognize the states monopoly over armed violence.⁷

In 1991 the US had just pulled off one of the most spectacular conventional land battles in modern military history. In 100 hours it rolled around and over an Iraqi army that many expected to put up a serious fight. In the afterglow of that feat, van Creveld’s assertion that third-generation conventional maneuver warfare was in the final stages of abolishing itself required too great a leap of faith for most specialists to take seriously. A review of *The*

Transformation of War, prepared for the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, charged that van Creveld was not 'a balanced strategic thinker', had 'scant evidence for his view' and made 'numerous unsubstantiated assertions'.

Those few who embraced van Creveld's line of reasoning sought to understand how non-state actors, most importantly terrorist organizations, who were in the midst of their own transformation, were adapting to globalization, network-based organization and information age technologies. How would these developments affect the terrorist's capacity to execute unconventional attacks – asymmetrical operations in the lexicon of the Pentagon – on the nation-states they targeted? How would terrorist groups cooperate among themselves and with state sponsors in order to operate and fight globally?

During the latter 1990s a picture began to emerge. Its architects included Charles Dunlap, an Air Force colonel who in 1996 published a highly provocative essay, 'How We Lost the High-Tech War of 2007: A Warning from the Future'.⁸ It is a tale of how radical Islamic terrorists go to war with and defeat the US using inconceivably barbaric and gruesome terrorist tactics. Few took Dunlap seriously.

Then there was Ralph Peters, yet another outspoken and controversial colonel. His 1990s essays in *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* contended that future enemies would include tyrants, warlords, chieftains, ayatollahs, demagogues, gangsters, drug lords and other thugs who would wage ferocious non-American-style warfare. No one in the Army had much time for Peter's grim and unlikely suppositions. In 1998 he retired but continued to write and speak.⁹

Another outspoken proponent of fourth-generation warfare in the 1990s was Franklin 'Chuck' Spinney, an analyst in the Pentagon's Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation. His website is a one-stop shop. Spinney is a brusque critic of the American military establishment he serves. He has charged that the Pentagon has lagged woefully behind the curve in developing the right military response for fourth-generation warriors who have and will continue to target the US. Heavy firepower, attrition tactics and long-range high-altitude bombers are not the answers, he further asserted.¹⁰

As the 1990s came to an end, the precepts that these eclectic oddball strategists believed terrorist groups would adopt as a part of what van Creveld had first called a 'post-modern transformation of war' were as follows:

- Warfare will be highly irregular, unconventional and decentralized in approach.
- Asymmetrical operations will be employed to bypass the superior military power of nation-states to attack and exploit political, economic,

population and symbolic targets. In doing so, terrorists groups backed by states will seek to demoralize the psyche of both government and its populace.

- Both the organization and operations of fourth-generation warriors will be masked by deception, denial, stealth and related techniques of intelligence tradecraft. They will wear no uniforms and will infiltrate and blend into the populations of the nation-states they seek to attack.
- Terrorist organizations and operations will be profoundly affected by information-age technologies. The development of network-based terrorist organizations connected transnationally through cell phones, fax machines, e-mail, web sites and the Internet will provide these non-state actors with global reach.
- Modern communications and transportation technologies will have a profound impact on this new battlefield. Not only will there be no fronts but the old distinctions between civilian and military targets will become irrelevant.
- Laws and conventions of war that apply to nation-states will not constrain terrorists and their state sponsors as they seek new and innovative means, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD), to attack civilians and nonmilitary targets to inflict terrible carnage.
- Fourth-generation warriors, frequently in the name of religiously based ideologies, will be remorseless enemies for the states they challenge. Their operations will be marked by unlimited violence unencumbered by compassion.
- Countering terrorists and other violent non-state actors will be difficult for the armies of post-modern states. Terrorist organizations will have few, if any, targets that are vulnerable to modern conventional weapons systems. However, these conventional means are relevant against the state sponsors of terrorism.

Prior to the attack of 11 September, the notion that a new kind of war based on these emerging principles would have a dramatic impact on how, when and where terrorists were able to strike, and that those attacks could take place against targets in the great cities of America, was considered nothing more than the unfounded reflections of a handful of strategic iconoclasts. The official US government perspective on the evolution of terrorism in the 1990s was far from simpatico with these propositions.

What We Now Know: Al-Qaeda Prepares for War

Since the attacks of 11 September we have learned a great deal about Al-Qaeda. That information is utilized here to address two fundamental

questions – how is Al-Qaeda organized for war and how does it carry it out? More specifically, we will scrutinize a vast amount of open source materials to: one, delineate Al-Qaeda's organizational structure, ideology, linkages with other terrorist groups and supporting states, Afghanistan sanctuary and financial base; and two, detail its targeting, weapons and war-fighting strategy.

This assessment reveals how intimately the Al-Qaeda network bears an unmistakable resemblance to the template of fourth-generation warfare and *not* to the 1990s profile of the intelligence community. Furthermore, it pinpoints the truest cause of the intelligence failure that took place on 11 September and the appropriateness of a new national security doctrine for fighting the war on terrorism.

The Al-Qaeda Organization

Al-Qaeda, as a terrorist group, is a child of 1990s globalization. As with international businesses, globalization had a transforming impact on how Al-Qaeda organized itself. Unlike hierarchically structured terrorist groups of the 1980s, Osama Bin Laden established a networked organization of small dispersed units that can deploy nimbly, anywhere, anytime. It is characterized by doctrine, configuration, strategy and technology in sync with the information age.

During the 1990s, Al-Qaeda created an elaborate set of connections with several like-minded terrorist groups and terrorist-sponsoring states by, among other things, establishing cells across the globe in as many as 60 countries. Before deconstructing the structural make-up of Bin Laden's handiwork, it is essential to consider his message and how it has been exploited to assemble a multinational alliance among several extremist groups that may operate in their originating state as well as transnationally.

A Broad Politico-Religious Appeal

Al-Qaeda owes its global infrastructure to its broad appeal. Contrary to intelligence assessments of the 1990s that asserted its followers were exclusively Middle Eastern, Arabic and Sunni, post-11 September evidence reveals otherwise. Its attraction is much wider, cutting across and linking groups that intelligence professionals like Pillar believed were so different that it 'impeded efforts at unity'. Recall his claim: 'The great ethnic, religious, and national divisions of the Muslim world are turning out to be stronger than all the calls to Islamic solidarity'.

Al-Qaeda's wide-ranging politico-religious viewpoint attracted both militant Middle Eastern Islamic-oriented groups as well as broader pan-Islamic elements.¹¹ Al-Qaeda exploits conditions that breed extremism. These include, most importantly, failing states characterized by excessive

political and economic stagnation, rampant corruption and brutal repression.

These developments are present in several regimes, to include Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia, and each has experienced the rise of extremist Islamic groups who employ terrorist tactics. Al-Qaeda calls for the use of force to overthrow these failed governments and to drive out Western influence. It is with terrorist organizations and individuals from these places that Bin Laden has forged his most important alliances.

OBL also exploited other internal conflicts to recruit associates. These include arrangements with groups fighting regimes that are charged with repressing Muslim minorities (for example, Bosnia, Kosovo, and India), as well as with movements fighting to establish independent states (for example, Palestinians and Chechens). Finally, Al-Qaeda exploits the US military presence and foreign policy initiatives in the Middle East, its relations with several of the failed Arab states just identified and its commitment to Israel.

These ideological themes can be found in UBL communiqués and declarations. Illustrative are the *fatwas* – religious declaratory writings – he has issued. Take for example his 1996, ‘Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places’. The themes noted above saturate that diatribe. The same is true of his 1998 announcement of the formation of the ‘World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders’.¹²

Since 11 September there have been numerous reports that demonstrate how OBL’s message resonates with a wide range of ethnic, religious and national groups throughout the Muslim world. Al-Qaeda uses them in the hope of fostering nothing short of an international Islamic jihad.

A Globally Networked Organization

In a 1997 interview Bin Laden described Al-Qaeda as ‘a product of globalization and a response to it’.¹³ Certainly, it could not have operated in the 1980s as it did in the 1990s. Information-age technologies and cyber networks allowed Al-Qaeda to recruit, communicate, establish cells and operatives and attack targets globally.

Networked organizations share several basic features. First, communication and coordination within them are not formally specified but emerge and change according to the task at hand. Relationships are informal and marked by varying degrees of intensity according to the needs of the organization. Second, linkages to individuals and groups outside the main organization usually complement the internal network. Third, internal and external ties are facilitated by shared norms and values. Thus internal self-managing teams plan and execute operations, while external linkages with

a complex association of contributing groups provide a constellation of support activities.¹⁴

Al-Qaeda, which emerged in 1988 and expanded through the 1990s, adopted these features. Its basic internal network is organized vertically with Bin Laden, the emir-general, at the top, followed by other Al-Qaeda leaders.¹⁵ Horizontally, it is allied with numerous other terrorist groups.

Below Bin Laden is the *shura majlis* or the consultative council. Four committees report to it. A military committee recruits fighters, runs training camps and launches terrorist operations. It also oversees other clandestine functions including a special office for procuring, forging or altering identity documents such as passports and visas. A finance committee accrues the resources necessary to sustain Al-Qaeda. Justifying its actions by issuing rulings on shari'a law is the responsibility of the religious/legal committee. Finally, the media committee disseminates information in support of Al-Qaeda's political and military activities.

The Al-Qaeda leadership oversees a loosely tied network of cells that cannot be easily traced back to it. Each operates autonomously with its members not knowing the identity of other cells. Thus, if one cell is compromised it will not betray others. The pattern that has emerged is of a web of cells around the world that provide the intelligence and manpower to execute terrorist attacks against the US and other targets.

Due to its broad politico-religious dogma, Al-Qaeda has the capacity to infiltrate and operate out of Muslim communities that exist across the globe. It has established clandestine cells from New Zealand to India to the United States. In the Middle East, it receives the support of Islamic philanthropists and foundations to underwrite its organizational expansion.

Compartmentalization, secrecy and deception differentiate Al-Qaeda from other globally networked organizations. These tools of intelligence tradecraft are drawn on to secure its network at all levels, including cyberspace. Al-Qaeda training manuals stress the importance of deception and denial methods. Ahmed Ressam, the Al-Qaeda operative who failed to bomb Los Angeles International Airport at the end of 1999, highlighted at his trial the extent to which these methods were stressed during training sessions at camps in Afghanistan.¹⁶ It is unknown how Al-Qaeda became so adept at these professional spy procedures. Perhaps a state's intelligence service provided the instruction? If so, the likely suspects would include Iraq (which learned it from the KGB or Iran).

To prepare the groundwork for the 1998 East Africa embassy bombings, several Al-Qaeda operatives were deployed as sleeper agents. For several years they burrowed into Kenyan and Tanzanian society. In August 1998 they struck. Western intelligence agencies now know there are other sleeper cells in Europe and North America waiting to be activated.¹⁷

The Mohammad Atta cells that carried out the attacks on the WTC and Pentagon are illustrative of how Al-Qaeda operates. Through public data, Valdis Krebs has mapped a portion of that network centered on the 19 dead hijackers. His diagram discloses how compartmentalized and dispersed hijackers on the same team were from each other.

Cell members were connected through the judicious use of transitory shortcuts in the network. Meetings were held to link up distant parts of the Atta cells to coordinate tasks and report progress. After coordination was accomplished, the cross-ties went dormant until the need for their synchronization arose again.¹⁸

The hijack cells were integrated and synchronized for the operation by the Egyptian-born Atta. He came to Al-Qaeda through Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the group led by Ayman al-Zawahri, Bin Laden's top lieutenant. Additionally, Khaled al-Midhar and Nawaq al-Hamzi, two other hijackers, were filmed at a January 2000 meeting in Kuala Lumpur with known Al-Qaeda operatives. Finally, several of the hijackers were trained at Al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan.¹⁹

Within a week of the attacks, US authorities concluded that the planning of the operation began as early as 1999, when some of the suspected 19 hijackers began to take flight training lessons in the US.²⁰ Furthermore, the 11 September hijackers did not work alone. Other Al-Qaeda members and affiliates provided needed skills and knowledge, and also served as conduits for transferring money.

The 11 September hijackers were also linked to an underground network of Islamic militants in Europe that had grown over several years around Al-Qaeda.²¹ Starting in 2000, European intelligence agencies began uncovering Al-Qaeda cells in Germany, Italy, France, the UK and Spain who were planning attacks on American targets. This was learned as a result of the arrest by UAE police of Djamel Beghal, a French-Algerian Islamist, transiting through Dubai to France. While in French custody, Beghal confessed that he had received instructions from Bin Laden's chief of operations, Abu Zubayda, to bomb US targets in Europe.

Training Camps and Sanctuary in Afghanistan

Landlocked Afghanistan provided Al-Qaeda with a unique political, security and geographic shield. In return, Al-Qaeda forces fought alongside the Taliban, providing it with an important military capability, while Bin Laden provided Taliban leaders with millions of dollars.

Hundreds of documents found in Afghanistan reveal an Al-Qaeda presence of several thousand. It established offices, communications facilities, guesthouses, training centers and barracks. Training manuals, students' notebooks, ledgers, military records, communications and code

books and IBM desktop computers shed considerable light on Al-Qaeda's methods, preoccupations and ambitions. Extensive interviews with Kabul residents present a picture of Al-Qaeda as a law unto itself.

At the same time, the evidence demonstrates that there was constant liaison between Al-Qaeda and the Taliban Ministries of Defense, Interior and Suppression of Vice and Propagation of Virtue. 'US intelligence estimates suggest that between 1996 and 2001 some US \$100 million was given to the Taliban, effectively ensuring Al-Qaeda's organizational autonomy within Afghanistan and considerable influence within key ministries'.²²

Al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan played a vital role in the organization. There were many of them dispersed in the rugged Afghan terrain. The Meivand camp in the Rod Para Mountains is illustrative. Before it was destroyed, it could support the training of up to 700 fighters at any given time. Above ground, the camp consisted of more than 50 buildings, including a hospital. Below ground a large cave complex, equipped with running water and electricity, was used for storage, housing and security.²³

This Al-Qaeda infrastructure also served the organization's global ambitions by drawing tens of thousands of radical Islamic militants to Afghanistan. While in the camps these individuals were assessed, recruited and deployed for global operations. Others were assigned to the Al-Qaeda-led Arab and international brigades that fought alongside Taliban forces against the Northern Alliance. Exactly how many foreign Islamic militants received training in Al-Qaeda's camps in Afghanistan since the 1980s is still unclear. Estimates range between 50,000 and as many as 100,000 from dozens of countries.

Documents unearthed early January 2002 in the rubble of the Meivand camp portray an efficient operation that boasted to new terrorist recruits of its involvement in the 11 September attacks. One of the instructors spoke about the planning of that attack, claiming that the airplanes that crashed in New York and Washington were part of a larger plan to hijack 25 airliners around the world.²⁴

Linkages with other Terrorist Organizations

Al-Qaeda has established both formal and informal affiliations – or linkages – with several Middle Eastern and Asian radical Islamist groups that employ terrorism against their own governments. For example, many of its members were drawn from two Egyptian organizations – the Islamic Group and Islamic Jihad. Two Algerian factions, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), likewise have strong ties with Al-Qaeda. In Yemen, where his family originated, Bin Laden has formed bonds with Jaish Aden Abin al Islami. Finally, Al-Qaeda

has allied a horde of smaller radical Islamist entities in northern Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco and elsewhere.²⁵

In Asia, Al-Qaeda affiliates include groups in Indonesia, three Islamist factions fighting in Kashmir and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines. In terms of Indonesia, recall the nightclub bombing in Bali that killed about 190 people in October 2002. With respect to the latter, evidence presented at the trial of terrorists involved in the first World Trade Center (1993) bombing show that these ties go back to the early 1990s.²⁶

The federal trial in New York of those accused of plotting the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania also has presented evidence of how Al-Qaeda established linkages with several of the radical Islamists groups just identified, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria. Court documents also describe the intimate relationship between Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.²⁷

Perhaps the most interesting and controversial arrangement established by OBL was the one with Hizballah and its Iran patron. Recall that during the latter 1990s the US intelligence community assumed that Sunni and Shia groups could never cooperate because of their sharply divergent interpretations of Islam. We now know that this supposition was flawed.

In 1995 and again in 1996, Al-Qaeda operatives are reported to have contacted Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) proposing to join forces against America.²⁸ 'In June 1996, MOIS hosted a meeting of terrorist leaders in Tehran. Among those present were Imad Mugniyah, Hizballah's master terrorist planner whose operations against the US go back to the 1983 bombing of the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, and senior aides to Bin Laden. Subsequently, high-ranking Al-Qaeda officials met with Mugniyah on several occasions'.²⁹

During the trial of Al-Qaeda operatives, it was reported that a representative of Bin Laden met with an official of the Iranian government prior to the bombings of the US embassies in East Africa in order to establish an anti-US alliance.³⁰ Ali Mohamed, who was convicted of conspiracy in those bombings, testified: 'I arranged security for a meeting in the Sudan between Mughniyah, Hizballah's chief, and Bin Laden... Hizballah provided explosives training for Al-Qaeda and al-Jihad', he added.³¹

According to the Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet, 'Iran continues to provide support – including arms transfers – to Palestinian rejectionist groups and Hizballah. Tehran has also failed to move decisively against Al-Qaeda members who have relocated to Iran from Afghanistan'. Contradicting the intelligence community mantra of the 1990s – Sunni and Shia groups never cooperate – Tenet added: 'while Al-Qaeda represents a broad-based Sunni worldwide extremist network, it would be a mistake to

dismiss possible connections to either other groups or state sponsors – either Sunni or Shia. There is a convergence of common interest in hurting the US, its allies, and interests that make traditional thinking in this regard unacceptable'.³²

Evidently, collaboration against hated enemies takes precedence over denominational differences, as exemplified by the Al-Qaeda-Hizballah-Iran axis. Finally, related to the matter of Sunni-Shia solidarity is the widely reported linkage between Shia Iran and Hizballah and Sunni Palestinian groups to include Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as the secular Palestinian Authority.³³

State Support

Recall that during the 1990s the US intelligence community reported that state support for terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda, was on the wane. This contention can be found in issue after issue of *Patterns of Global Terrorism* released by the State Department. As seen above, Afghanistan clearly contradicted that deduction. Al-Qaeda had unprecedented and increasing access and support from the Taliban regime.

It likewise had a close association with Sudan, particularly in the first half of the 1990s, establishing a working relationship with the government in Khartoum. However, unlike the Taliban, intense diplomatic efforts on the part of the US pressured the Sudanese to compel Bin Laden to move his organization to Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the connection between Khartoum and Bin Laden remained active up to 11 September.

Al-Qaeda also maintained liaison with elements in the government of Yemen, as well as among different tribes, through the 1990s. And it was there that one of Al-Qaeda's most spectacular operations, the suicide attack on the *USS Cole*, took place in 2000.

In Pakistan, Al-Qaeda had strong ties with the notorious Inter-Service Intelligence Agency (ISI) since the 1980s. These linkages go back to the Soviet-Afghan War in which ISI was intimately involved with Mujaheddin factions and the non-Afghan Islamic militants. In the 1990s an ISI-Al-Qaeda-Taliban axis emerged that is believed to still exist even after *Operation Enduring Freedom* started.³⁴

There was also, as was previously noted, a connection between Al-Qaeda and the regime in Iran. The extent of that linkage remains murky, especially in the aftermath of the 11 September attacks. Finally, there has been considerable speculation about ties between Al-Qaeda and Iraq. This issue has received a great deal of scrutiny by the Bush Administration since 11 September. Here is what we know.

Attention first focused on a April 2000 meeting in Prague between Mohammad Atta and Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim Samir al Ani, a senior Iraqi

intelligence operative under cover as a diplomat. The Czech government, which apparently videotaped the meeting, provided evidence to Washington confirming this fact and has never wavered on the matter.³⁵ However, what was discussed, if Prague knows, has not been revealed publicly.

This was followed by the revelations of various Iraqi defectors such as Sabah Khodada, a former army officer who served at a terrorist training camp run by the Mukhabarat, Saddam's intelligence service. According to Khodada, foreign personnel were trained in 'assassinations, kidnapping, hijacking of airplanes, hijacking of buses, hijacking of trains and other kinds of operations related to terrorism'. He also noted that the camp included a Boeing 707. Aspiring hijackers were 'trained on how to get weapons inside the plane', and how to adapt to 'situations where security will not allow you to get weapons into the plane'.³⁶

Next came the disclosure in *The New Yorker* (March 2002) about Ansar al-Islam, a radical Islamist group in Kurdish northern Iraq who has connections both to Al-Qaeda and Iraq's Mukhabarat.³⁷

Finally, the civil/class action lawsuit filed on behalf of those seeking damages arising out of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks contains further details of Iraq-Al-Qaeda collaboration. It dates that linkage 'to the early 1990s' when, following 'the Gulf War, Iraqi agents traveled to the Sudan' to meet with Bin Laden operatives. Over the next five years, 'from 1991 to 1996', this led to 'extensive interaction between Al-Qaeda and Iraqi's intelligence officers'. Then, in 1998, 'two of Bin Laden's senior military commanders met in Baghdad with Qusay Hussein, chief of Iraqi intelligence and son of Saddam'. That meeting further cemented the relationship with 'Iraq reportedly agreeing to supply Al-Qaeda with training, intelligence, weapons, and other support'.³⁸

The Money Trail

Bin Laden set up an elaborate financial network to ensure the financial well-being of Al-Qaeda and to support its operational and logistical requirements. Through this OBL has invested in the future. For example, he has established an unknown number of 'sleeper' cells awaiting orders to launch future attacks.³⁹

The financial arm of Al-Qaeda appears to operate like a foundation. It has 'high-ranking members selecting suitable applicants, such as a newly-established Al-Qaeda cell or a like-minded radical Islamist group, and providing financial assistance for terrorist activities'.⁴⁰

However, tracking the money is easier said than done. According to recent reports, Al-Qaeda's financial network experienced a 'paradigm shift' well before 11 September. Evidently, knowledgeable of the vulnerability of

its European bank accounts, Al-Qaeda shifted its money into commodities more difficult to trace – gold, diamonds, tanzanite and sapphires.⁴¹

In addition to Bin Laden's personal fortune, Al-Qaeda has turned to both legal and illegal activities to raise funds to underwrite its activities during the last decade.⁴² The former includes small business ventures, such as farms and fisheries, as well as larger construction, electronic appliances and investment firms.

For example, Darkazanli, a Hamburg-based Import-Export Company, was the first private business to have its assets frozen due to suspected links with the 11 September attacks. An executive order published in September 2001 describes it as a 'front group' for Al-Qaeda and its CEO, Syrian-born Mamoun Darkazanli, one of Bin Laden's main financial lieutenants.⁴³ As Steven Emerson, an internationally recognized expert on terrorism and the militant Islamic infrastructure in the US, states: 'Darkazanli offers a strategic paradigm for the manner in which a small, legitimate business with convenient European locations and inconspicuous business transactions, can be misused to launder money, purchase sensitive technical equipment, and facilitate the establishment – both in Europe and elsewhere – of business "front" groups for Al-Qaeda'.⁴⁴ Also worth noticing is the fact that the company's specialty in electronics was an ideal cover for procuring technical equipment for Al-Qaeda.

Other Al-Qaeda front companies started to emerge in the early 1990s. These included a Khartoum-based holding company, as well as construction, agriculture, investment, leather and transportation companies. These business ventures transferred funds to Al-Qaeda operatives that carried out the East Africa US embassy bombings.⁴⁵

Funding – both wittingly and unwittingly – also comes from dozens of Islamic charities and mosques. A case in point is the Afghanistan-based Al-Wafa Humanitarian Organization. It is believed to have purchased equipment and weapons for Al-Qaeda. In 1999 the United Nations, under Resolution 1267, authorized the publication of a list of 'persons and entities connected with Usama Bin Laden'. Al-Wafa was one of three charities included. The other two were the Al Rashid Trust and Makhtab Al-Khidamat/Al Kifah.⁴⁶

Another charity that has come under scrutiny is the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). It purportedly provided funds to Al-Qaeda's affiliate in the Philippines, Abu Sayyaf.⁴⁷ Established in 1978, the IIRO is headquartered in Saudi Arabia, and has branches around the world. Canada's Security and Intelligence Service found that an IIRO official working there was assisting Al-Qaeda and UBL.⁴⁸

Islamic charities linked to Bin Laden are also located in the US. Take the Chicago-based Benevolence International Foundation (BIF). The US

recently released evidence revealing that its Syrian-born executive-director, Enaam M. Arnaout, is a close associate and fundraiser for Bin Laden. Those ties stretch back more than a decade and include assistance to Al-Qaeda operatives who were attempting to acquire chemical and nuclear weapons. The evidence is based on documents seized in the group's offices in Chicago and Bosnia and on a series of witnesses, including former Al-Qaeda members currently in US custody.⁴⁹

Drug money also found its way into Al-Qaeda coffers through the distribution of opium. Along with the Taliban, it produced thousands of tons of opium during the latter 1990s in a majority of the 31 Afghan provinces. It was then smuggled through neighboring Central Asian states.⁵⁰

Al-Qaeda also received cash from the well heeled. Western intelligence agencies believe Arab businessmen paid Bin Laden extortion money to avoid attacks on their interests throughout the Middle East.⁵¹ Other wealthy individuals in various states such as Saudi Arabia gave willingly because they felt affinity and solidarity with the cause of OBL. These donors are believed to give millions of dollars every year.⁵²

Finally, Al-Qaeda appears to have laundered its legal and illegal funds through long-established centers in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and elsewhere. Global financial centers, including Frankfurt, London and New York, have frozen more than \$100 million in assets tied to Al-Qaeda, and investigations are currently under way in Malta, Italy, Panama, Singapore, South Africa and elsewhere to determine whether Al-Qaeda laundered illicit capital through their financial institutions.⁵³

Al-Qaeda Targeting, Weapons, and Strategy

Since 11 September we have learned a great deal about how Al-Qaeda plans and executes terrorist actions. This information has brought out in the open the organization's operational features and shed light on its intentions.

Selecting Targets

In 1999 the Jordanian police arrested Khalil Deek in connection with a plot to bomb Amman's main airport on the eve of the millennium. In his possession they discovered a remarkable document that subsequently came to be referred to by Western intelligence agencies as the *Encyclopedia of Jihad*.⁵⁴ Consisting of eleven volumes and approximately 7000 pages, it is considered a key manual for instructing Al-Qaeda operatives.

The manual paid particularly close attention to the selection of targets to assail and obliterate. They were categorized as follows. First, there were *symbolic targets* such as the Statue of Liberty in New York or the Eiffel Tower in Paris. In this case, the objective was not to kill large numbers, but

to deliver a devastating psychological blow by demolishing a cultural icon. Next were *infrastructure targets*, including nuclear power stations, skyscrapers, ports and train stations. While also having symbolic meaning, their destruction was intended to kill as many as possible. Finally, there were *human targets* – places where large numbers of people congregate or influential public figures. In either case, the objective was to kill the unsuspecting and innocent.

In selecting targets Al-Qaeda surfed the Internet collecting vital information posted on US government websites. For example, on the hard drive of one of its computers found in Afghanistan there were stored terrorism vulnerability studies produced by the *US General Accounting Office*. These provided a rich menu of poorly secured targets. It is evident from this and other examples that Al-Qaeda was well aware of how official reports and assessments could be of great assistance in planning attacks on the United States. There is also evidence that it compiled information on US nuclear power plants. All of these facts and figures were only a click away on the World Wide Web.

The debriefing of Abu Zubaydah provided additional confirmation that Al-Qaeda targeters were concentrating on bringing its war inside the borders of the United States. CIA Director Tenet said the same thing to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in February: ‘We know that terrorists have considered attacks in the US against high-profile government or private facilities, famous landmarks and US infrastructure nodes such as airports, bridges, harbors, and dams. Al-Qaeda also planned to strike against US interests in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia’. He added that diplomatic and military facilities ‘are high-risk targets’.⁵⁵

Weapons

Al-Qaeda weaponry range from standard issue small arms used by terrorists for decades, to plans for either acquiring or producing weapons of mass destruction. This was spelled out in the *Encyclopedia of Jihad*. It offered guidance on how to rig up a door lock to explode when the handle is turned, how to inject frozen food with biochemical agents to create mass panic, as well as how to bring down a plane with a missile. The latter drew on years of guerrilla fighting against the Soviets in the 1980s.

Among the most chilling pages of the manual were those that dealt with bioterrorism; spelling out how to disperse lethal organisms and poisons ranging from botulism and viral infections to ricin and anthrax. It also called for maximizing public panic by poisoning medicine, hence jeopardizing treatment of affected individuals.

Another chapter of the *Encyclopedia of Jihad* concentrated on booby-trap techniques. For example, one section illustrated how to turn cameras

into a bomb. Ahmed Shah Masood, the leader of the Northern Alliance, the resistance organization fighting the Taliban, was assassinated in this way two days before the 11 September attacks. In addition to analyzing how C4 and Semtex explosives can be utilized, the encyclopedia contains instructions on the ingredients needed to make bombs from innocuous substances bought in places like supermarkets and hardware stores.⁵⁶

Since the Cold War ended the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors has received considerable attention. During a few distressing weeks last fall US officials believed that this worst-case scenario was about to come true. In October 2001 intelligence warned that terrorists had obtained a 10-kiloton nuclear weapon from the Russian arsenal and planned to detonate it in New York City. The warning turned out to be a false alarm but was believable because of the fact that since the mid-1990s nuclear weapons proliferation experts have suspected that several portable nuclear devices might be missing from the Russian stockpile.⁵⁷

Following the 11 September attacks Taliban and Al-Qaeda access to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and expertise also became a major worry. Intense media speculation ensued regarding the likelihood that Pakistani nuclear experts were assisting Al-Qaeda or, worse, that Pakistan's existing nuclear arsenal might fall into their hands.⁵⁸

Documents found in Afghanistan make clear that Bin Laden has made frequent attempts to buy nuclear weapons, as well as the means to produce chemical and biological ones. But, thus far, US forces in Afghanistan have uncovered none. What they did find were several primitive labs and a plethora of blueprints. Still, the extent of Al-Qaeda's WMD efforts remains a mystery. Until they are discovered, WMD will loom large as a potential threat of catastrophic magnitude.

Information Technology

Networked organizations cannot function without information-age technology. At the center of Al-Qaeda's transformation into a post-modern terrorist organization was the Internet and global cellular communications. These cutting edge tools linked its globally deployed cells, nodes and constituent groups. Through cyberspace Bin Laden and his lieutenants planned, coordinated and executed operations.

By using the Internet, Al-Qaeda was able to accelerate mobilization and amplify communication between members. As a result, the organization's flexibility was enhanced as tactics could be adjusted more routinely. Moreover, individuals or groups with common goals or agendas were able to form subgroups or cells, meet at a target location, conduct terrorist operations and then promptly terminate their relationships and re-deploy. The Al-Qaeda network's *modus operandi* functioned through websites, e-

mail, and cellular communications. A window into this system was opened with the December 1999 arrest of fifteen terrorists in Jordan who intended to carry out attacks against US and Israeli targets during the millennium celebrations. Found in their 'safe house' – in addition to bomb-making materials, automatic weapons and radio-controlled detonators – were computers, zip disks and cell phones. From the hard drives of those laptops intelligence analysts extracted information about the intended operations, as well as files on bomb making and terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.⁵⁹

Bin Laden's operatives used CD-ROM disks to store and disseminate information on recruiting, bomb making, weapons and other operational particulars. The *Encyclopedia of Jihad* found in Jordan was on a CD-ROM. This was once considered the extent of Al-Qaeda's operational knowledge. However, a new volume discovered in Afghanistan, also on a CD-ROM, contained more precise formulas for chemical and biological weapons that can be made from ingredients readily available to the public. In a chapter called the 'Science of Explosives' chemical formulas for biological weapons are laid out step-by-step.

Egyptian computer experts directed Al-Qaeda's communications system. They established a network that utilized email, the web and electronic bulletin boards to maximize information exchange between members. However, heading that effort was a Libyan, Abu Anas al-Liby. A member of Al-Qaeda for over a decade, his technical know-how meant that he quickly became Bin Laden's computer expert. He also played a key role in planning the bombing of the embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, traveling to Kenya to take surveillance pictures.

According to reporters who visited Bin Laden's headquarters in the mountains of Afghanistan he 'uses satellite phone terminals to coordinate the activities of the group's dispersed operatives and has even devised countermeasures to ensure his safety while using such communication systems'.⁶⁰ And even though the overthrow of the Taliban forced him to flee his once secure sanctuary, recent reports reveal he is still attempting to use the Internet. Signs of Al-Qaeda efforts to communicate and re-group online have also been detected.

Warfighting Strategy and Operations

The *Encyclopedia of Jihad* as well as other training documents found in Afghanistan point to the fact that Al-Qaeda has given considerable attention to the issues of warfighting strategy and operations. Several volumes in the *Encyclopedia* focused on these topics. They covered the principles of war including battle organization, reconnaissance, infiltration and ambushes. Examples of these operations are drawn from the Afghan War against the Soviets. Other topics included: how to spy; military intelligence;

communications; secret observation; sabotage; and assassination. Al-Qaeda also studied the strategy and operational approaches of the United States. Found in Afghan safe houses were copies of various US military manuals and documents.⁶¹

In terms of doctrine, Al-Qaeda has grasped the principles of fourth-generation warfare. It takes a nonlinear approach to the battle space, and plans asymmetrical and unconventional attacks by dispersed small units. The war being waged by Al-Qaeda began with attempts to kill American troops in Yemen in 1992. This was followed by periodic major operations in 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998 and 2000. Since, there have been a number of other attacks in different locations – including the attack on the French tanker in the Persian Gulf, the killing of a USAID official in Jordan and a US Marine Corp soldier in Kuwait and the nightclub bombing in Bali. Other operations have been prevented by good intelligence.

Bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network seem ‘to have developed a swarm-like doctrine that features a campaign of episodic attacks by various nodes of his network – at locations sprawled across global time and space where he has advantages for seizing the initiative, stealthily’.⁶² Through this strategy they have successfully conducted fourth-generation warfare against America.

It’s War

On 11 September 2001, America suffered its second Pearl Harbor. But the attack that day was an even greater strategic surprise than the one on 7 December 1941. The strikes against the World Trade Center and Pentagon were, quite literally, bolts out of the blue. The US intelligence community was fully caught off guard.

Without a doubt, 11 September was a colossal intelligence failure. However, the reasons for that debacle cannot be attributed just to a handful of what appear, with hindsight, to have been missed warnings. For example, much has been made of two messages intercepted by the National Security Agency on 10 September but not translated until 12 September. ‘The match is about to begin’, said one, while the other declared, ‘Tomorrow is zero hour’. What match? Zero hour for what and where? These telephone comments are too cryptic to be actionable intelligence.

Nor can 11 September be attributed to a failure to take threat scenarios spun out in government reports seriously. Much has also been made of a 1999 Congressional Research Service forecast that ‘Suicide bomber(s) belonging to Al-Qaeda’s Martyrdom Battalion could crash-land an aircraft packed with high explosives into the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency, or the White House’. But the authors also speculated that the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam could 'become angered by President Clinton' and 'react by dispatching a Tamil "belt-bomb girl" to detonate a powerful Semtex bomb after approaching the President in a crowd with a garland of flowers'.⁶³

These missed signals, correct or not, are emblematic of a deeper impediment. The real intelligence failure on 11 September has to do with a near decade-long reluctance by the intelligence community to come to terms with the fact that international terrorists – most importantly Al-Qaeda – were undergoing a systematic transformation in terms of how they organize, deploy and fight.

Al-Qaeda grasped the implications and opportunities globalization offered. However, to benefit from it necessitated the creation of a network-based terrorist organization that exploited the tools of the information age. And to secure its new global apparatus, Al-Qaeda employed the principles and methods of deception and denial typically found in intelligence tradecraft. In effect, OBL inspired a 'revolution in terrorist affairs'.

With this apparatus Al-Qaeda was ready for war. Beginning in 1996 it issued edicts to that effect. Its intentions were made crystal clear on 22 February 1998 when Bin Laden endorsed a *fatwah* imploring his minions to 'kill Americans – including civilians – anywhere in the world'. Major terrorist operations followed and plenty of Americans fell.

But the US intelligence community did not grasp the implications of Al-Qaeda's declarations and operations. It was in a war it did not understand, or failed to recognize was even taking place. The same was true of the Clinton administration. Of course, there were exceptions like Richard Clark, the head of the National Security Council's Counterterrorism Strategy Group. He advocated a much more aggressive policy, to include the use of military force, against Al-Qaeda. But the Pentagon and State Department wanted nothing to do with such risky military options and fought bureaucratically to block them.

Even as Al-Qaeda upped the ante through bombings in East Africa, these actions were still not considered acts of war by the US military services and intelligence agencies. International terrorism was a law enforcement matter; a crime to be solved and prosecuted. So ensconced was this mind-set that not even secret presidential instructions to use lethal means to kill Bin Laden and his top Al-Qaeda lieutenants could foster new courses of action. The bureaucracy would not budge.

Certainly, operations were discussed *ad nauseam* and plans to attack frequently drawn up. But in the end, with the exception of the ineffectual 20 August 1998 cruise missile strikes against Afghanistan and Sudan, lethal measures were always nixed in the interagency process. Political, legal and operational arguments advanced by the Pentagon, State Department and

CIA always persuaded risk adverse senior decision-makers, including the president, not to act forcefully.

Why? The answer has to do with the perceptions and impressions or, more accurately, misperceptions and mistaken impressions that shaped and influenced policy choices. Over the 1990s these fostered the conviction that terrorism was neither a Level 1 national security challenge nor a form of warfare. In fact, those who saw it as such were demeaned as naive and extreme. There was no political will to use force aggressively and offensively because such actions were deemed unnecessary. The end result was 11 September.

The Bush Doctrine: Going on the Offensive

Since 11 September President Bush has chartered a new course for combating terrorism. To begin with, in all of his major speeches, he labeled the attacks on the WTC and Pentagon 'an act of war' and told the American people 'our nation is at war'. Moreover, that war 'must and will be waged on our watch'.

In his remarks to the 2002 graduating class at West Point, the president explained that the 11 September horror is illustrative of a 'new kind of war fought by a new kind of enemy'.⁶⁴ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has sounded the same warning in numerous public addresses and comments beginning in late September when he observed, 'this war will be a war like none other our nation has faced... Our opponent is a global network of terrorist organizations and their state sponsors... Even the vocabulary of this war will be different'.⁶⁵

Bush and Rumsfeld grasped fourth-generation warfare. The following observations are elucidated in speech after speech. The enemy is a non-state actor – terrorist group – whose capacity to operate has been greatly enhanced by globalization, organizational networking and information-based technology. They are aided and abetted by states and also receive assistance from public and private organizations and individuals. Sanctuary provided by states allows terrorists like Al-Qaeda to secure their organizational and operational capabilities. They employ stealth and deception to attack in unconventional and asymmetrical ways. Operations are directed against political, cultural and population targets with the goal of killing as many as possible.

Not everyone in the Bush administration sees it this way, a fact that was apparent in the internal debate over whether and how to fight in Afghanistan. It was likewise reflected in the initial limited and cautious approach devised by the senior military leadership and endorsed by the State Department. By late October the ineffectiveness of that strategy was apparent, as the Taliban

and Al-Qaeda dug in for the long haul. It took Rumsfeld and the civilian leadership in the Pentagon to devise a winning formula, and for the president to put it in motion. It paid off. In December the Taliban fell and Al-Qaeda was on the run. Victory came by going on the offensive.

As one Taliban stronghold after another collapsed Washington fell into another internal debate: this time over phase two of the war on terrorism. On the table was Iraq. A long time supporter of terrorism, it also is maniacal in its efforts to build nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Several officials in the Bush administration fear that Saddam Hussein not only wants these mass destruction weapons for himself, but would also supply them to terrorists to use against the US, his archenemy. Other appointees saw it differently.

Essentially, two camps fought it out. One, headed by Secretary of State Colin Powell and his senior associates argued for a revised version of the Clinton policy of containment, this time through smart sanctions. Most of the economic controls would be lifted to help the Iraqi people, while Saddam's military would be kept in check. To work, serious diplomatic efforts were needed to shut down illegal trade that passed through Jordan, Turkey, Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council states. And WMD inspections had to be resuscitated.

In the Pentagon, much to the chagrin of the senior military chiefs who sided with Powell, Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, wanted Saddam removed from power – regime change – through the use of military force. Vice President Cheney concurred. Containment was a nonstarter. It had not worked for Clinton and would not work for Bush. Moreover, the danger and unpredictability of a nuclear-armed Saddam was just too terrible a peril to allow to come to fruition.

By February the interagency clash was over. The policy course for the second phase of the war was regime change. However, no sooner had this debate ended before yet another interagency squabble started over how to implement regime change.

These interagency mêlées exposed the need for an overarching strategic design – a *Bush doctrine* – for planning and executing the war on terrorism. Throughout the Cold War presidents attached their names to major foreign policy and national security initiatives. While there were differences among them, all of these doctrines were aligned with a security framework anchored by the defensive concepts of deterrence and containment.

President Bush laid the foundation for a new national security doctrine in his West Point speech, one that included offensive measures. To fight the war on terrorism, he declared, the defensive constructs of deterrence and containment, while still necessary, were by no means sufficient for the new form of warfare confronting the United States:

[N]ew threats also require new thinking. Deterrence – the promise of massive retaliation against nations – means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systemically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long.⁶⁶

Through this speech to the Cadets at West Point the President started a transformation of America's national security paradigm. Eventually, in September 2002, he revealed the US' new National Security Strategy. The introduction by President Bush summarizes the intent of the new strategy:

The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed. We will build defenses against ballistic missiles and other means of delivery. We will cooperate with other nations to deny, contain, and curtail our enemies' efforts to acquire dangerous technologies. And, as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies' plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.⁶⁷

More specifically, the new strategy correctly points out that,

[t]raditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness. The overlap between states that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMD compels us to action... Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using [only] conventional means... To forestall or prevent... hostile acts by adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.⁶⁸

In light of the victory in Afghanistan and the fact that the ways of waging war had dramatically changed, adding preemption to America's quiver makes strategic sense. Global terrorist networks and tyrannical regimes that support them cannot be relied upon to follow the same calculus that deterred or contained past adversaries. The 'new war' demanded new means for fighting it. By declaring that 'the war on terrorism will not be won on the defensive', the president reinterprets the meaning of self-defense. He rejects armed attack as the basis or requirement for using force. Out of necessity, force must be used to preempt terrorists and those states that harbor and provide them with the means of war and terror.

Morally, the conception of self-defense to include the use of preemptive offensive operations – or defensive intervention – is anchored in the *just war doctrine*. That doctrine places great importance on the state as the natural institution essential for man's security and development. So strong is the presumption in favor of self-defense that the *just war doctrine* does not confine itself exclusively to defensive measures and the legacy of the non-intervention rule grounded in the peace of Westphalia. Offensive operations are permitted to protect vital rights and interests unjustly threatened; not only injured by other states, but also by non-state actors such as terrorist groups.

Preemption and defensive intervention radically changes a US government mindset and a two-decade old counterterrorism policy from conceding the initiative to seizing it through the use of offensive military options. In doing so, the president has triggered an intense debate inside the US government and among national security specialists. Many find the very notion of preemption profoundly troubling, even as Al-Qaeda and its state supporters plot new ways to attack America.

'Striking first' likewise worries American opinion leaders. Witness the apprehension expressed by the editorial staff of *The New York Times*. 'We are uncomfortable with the idea of Mr. Bush's giving himself carte blanche to make any military intervention he thinks necessary'.⁶⁹

However, it also is the case that Bin Laden has gone into hiding and Saddam sleeps in different locations each night because they both feel the same uneasiness, distress and fear that cause angst for Washington bureaucrats and media glitterati. The implementation of the Bush doctrine not only turns Bin Laden's and Saddam's trepidations into reality, but, more importantly, should put the US on a course to win the war on terrorism by ridding the world of Al-Qaeda, the Iraqi regime and others who remain a part of this network of terror.

NOTES

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14. Michele Zanini and Sean J.A. Edwards, Chapter II: 'The Networking of Terror in the Information Age', p.31; available from <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1382/MR1382.ch2.pdf>; Internet; accessed 3 May 2002. This chapter draws on RAND research originally reported in Ian Lesser *et al.*, *Countering the New Terrorism* (RAND 1999).
15. Key figures include the Egyptian-born *Ayman al-Zawahiri*, the ideologist, and disciple of Palestinian scholar-guerrilla organizer Abdullah Azzam, who recruited thousands of Muslims to fight in Afghanistan. Zawahiri was founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which opposes the Egyptian Government through violent means. He helped forge the coalition of al-Jihad, Al-Qaeda, two Pakistani groups and another from Bangladesh in Feb. 1998 to wage war on the US *Mohammed Atef*, the military commander, was also born in Egypt. He headed Al-Qaeda's military committee and had primary responsibility for supervising training camps in Afghanistan and planning global operations. Among his first was attacks on US troops by providing training to Somali tribes fighting them in 1993. *Abu Zubaydah*, the operations chief, was born in Saudi Arabia. Following the East African embassy bombings he appears to have replaced Atef as the primary contact for recruits and as the organizer of overseas operations.
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 24. *Ibid.*
 25. J. T. Caruso, United States Senate, Statement for the Record of Acting Assistant Director Counter Terrorism Division Federal Bureau of Investigation before the Subcommittee on International Operations and Terrorism Committee on Foreign Relations, *Al-Qaeda International* (Washington, DC, 18 Dec. 2001); available from <http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress01/caruso121801.htm>; Internet; accessed 10 May 2002. See also Hirschhorn *et al.* (note 11).
 26. In the early 1990s, Ramzi Yousef was sent by bin Laden's officers to the Philippines to train Abu Sayyaf members. Yousef was convicted in Sept. in New York City of a conspiracy to blow up 12 American jumbo jets in one day and convicted in 1997 as the 'mastermind' of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. See Dale Watson (Chief International Terrorism Section, National Security Division Federal Bureau of Investigation), United States Senate, Statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, *Foreign Terrorists in America: Five Years after the World Trade Center* (Washington, DC, 24 Feb. 1998); available from http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/1998_hr/s980224w.htm; Internet; accessed 4 June 2002. See also Simon Reeve, *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press 1999) pp.72–85.
 27. See daily transcripts of the *USA v. Usama bin Laden et al* trial in the Southern District of New York.; available from <http://cryptome.org/usa-v-ubl.zip>; Internet; accessed 10 June 2002. See also EXECUTIVE ORDER 13129, *Subject: Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions With the Taliban* (Washington DC, Office of External Relations, 4 July 1999); available from <http://nodis.hq.nasa.gov/Library/Directives/NASA-WIDE/nasaeoas/eo13129.html>; Internet; accessed 10 June 2002.
 28. Yoni Figchel and Yael Shahar, 'The Al-Qaida–Hizballah Connection', *The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism*, 26 Feb. 2002; available from http://www.ict.org.il/inter_ter/orgdet.cfm?orgid=74; Internet; accessed 15 May 2002.
 29. *Sept. 11 Class Action, 2002*; available from http://www.Sept.11classaction.com/Havlish_Complaint.pdf; Internet; accessed 4 June 2002. According to FBI's Most Wanted Terrorist list, Mugnyiah is the alleged head of the security apparatus for the terrorist organization, Lebanese Hizballah. He is thought to be in Lebanon. The list is available from <http://www.fbi.gov/mostwant/terrorists/termugnyiah.htm>; Internet; accessed 4 June 2002.
 30. *USA v. Usama bin Laden et al* (note 27).
 31. See *United States of America v. Ali Mohamed*, United States District Court Southern District of New York, S (5) 98CR1023, 4 June 1999. See also *Sept. 11 Class Action, 2002* (note 29).
 32. See testimony by George J. Tenet (Director of Central Intelligence), Senate Armed Services Committee, *Worldwide Threat Converging Dangers in a Post 9/11 World* (Washington DC, 19 March 2002); available from http://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/senate_select_hearing_03192002.html; Internet; accessed 15 June 2002.
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- suspected pilot in the Sept. attacks on the United States, did meet an Iraqi diplomat in Prague. Mr. Gross says this information comes from intelligence services and he says he cannot comment further on the matter. Mr. Gross was reacting to claims in the latest issue of the US weekly *Newsweek*, which says Atta visited Prague but did not meet an Iraqi agent. See *Radio Prague – Print Version* (22 April 2002); available from <http://www.radio.cz/print/en/news/27440>; Internet; accessed 13 June 2002.
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