

Background

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Terrorists in Their Own Words

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Islamist terrorists have long been at war with the United States and frequently have proclaimed their determination to win the war. In fact, they see their enemies' unwillingness to acknowledge this war as an act of cowardice. If their enemies refuse to wear the mantle of warrior, terrorists assume that they are weak, lacking in honor, and spiritually inferior—and the notion that their enemy is vulnerable emboldens them. Failing to acknowledge that we are at war only encourages the enemy to be more warlike.

Conclusive proof that terrorists are at war with us requires little more than reading their own words. A compilation drawn from translations of a number of authoritative sources illustrates the nature of the challenge that America and its allies face and what needs to be done to combat it.

Declaration of War

Osama bin Laden declared war on America in 1996, but before September 11, 2001, few paid more than episodic attention to the one-sided war that al-Qaeda waged against American targets. Over the past five years, others have echoed his call, as these quotes demonstrate. Together they reflect clear and consistent themes.

- **These pronouncements clearly advocate terrorism**, the intentional murder of innocents for political purposes. They advocate an agenda that is illegitimate under any recognized legal or moral authority.

Talking Points

- Osama bin Laden declared war on America in 1996, but before September 11, 2001, few paid more than episodic attention to the one-sided war that al-Qaeda waged against America.
- The first step in winning the war on terrorism is understanding the terrorists' goals, strategy, and conception of that war.
- Islamist terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda advocate a totalitarian ideology that is cloaked in religious terminology.
- Iraq is the most critical front in al-Qaeda's terrorist war effort, as repeatedly stated by bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, his chief lieutenant. Even al-Qaeda's commander in Afghanistan recognizes that Iraq is the "focal point" of the global conflict.
- Those who refuse to recognize the reality of the war against Islamist terrorism not only put their own security at risk, but also undermine the security of our allies.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:
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- **These terrorists use religious terminology to legitimize their inexcusable acts.** Terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda advocate a totalitarian Islamic ideology that manipulates religious words and ideas but does not accurately represent traditional Islam. Many Islamist terrorists have never received a legitimate religious education.
 - **Iraq is the most critical front in al-Qaeda's terrorist war effort,** as repeatedly stated by bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, his chief lieutenant. Even Abu al-Layth al-Libi, al-Qaeda's commander in Afghanistan, recognizes that Iraq is the "focal point" of the global conflict.
 - **Although Osama bin Laden and others of his ilk seek to provoke a clash of civilizations, they also promote a clash within Islamic civilization.** Al-Qaeda has killed many thousands more Muslims than non-Muslims and more Iraqis than Americans. Muslims have a major stake in defeating al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups because they are among the terrorists' chief victims and pay a heavy price when forced to live under terrorist regimes.
 - **Terrorists do not speak with one voice.** Various terrorist networks pose different kinds of local, regional, and global threats. For instance, while al-Qaeda is the most well known of the terrorist groups, many different terrorist networks are at work around the world. These include Hezbollah, which has killed hundreds of Americans and struck in Europe and Latin America as well as in the Middle East, and terrorist groups in Africa, Asia, and the Indian subcontinent, which have carried out attacks in India and Pakistan. While they do not represent a single cohesive enemy, they all pose distinct threats and are a grave danger to Americans and U.S. interests around the world.
- Nothing demonstrates these truths more than the terrorists' own words. The first step in winning a war is understanding the enemy's goals, strategy, and conception of that war. This collection of quotations is meant to clarify what the United States and its allies are fighting, using the actual words of terrorist leaders and their affiliates.

Their Words

Sheikh Hussein bin Mahmoud, senior al-Qaeda leader, April 17, 2007:

May Allah send the [Muslim] nation someone who will kill them even more [savagely], strike terror in their [souls], tear their hearts out...cut their heads off, tear them limb from limb and shed their blood in rivers.¹

Adam Gadhan, a.k.a. Azzam the American, American spokesman for al-Qaeda, May 29, 2007:

[Y]ou and your people will...experience things, which will make you forget all about the horrors of September 11, Afghanistan and Iraq, and Virginia Tech. And let us be clear: A pullout from Iraq alone, in the absence of compliance with the remainder of our legitimate demands, will get you nowhere, and will not save you from our strikes. So stop wasting your time and trying to save face with these futile farcical maneuvers on Capital Hill and start making some serious moves.²

Muhammad Nimr Al-Zaghmout, head of the Islamic Palestinian Council in Lebanon, May 15, 2007:

Our number one enemy is Satan, and then comes the greatest *taghout* idol, in the form of Bush, Blair, and the Zionist Crusaders. These have become the mentors of our Arab leaders....

1. Sheikh Hussein bin Mahmoud, "Let Them Find Ruthlessness in You," *Sada Al-Jihad*, April–May 2007, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1635, June 27, 2007, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP163507> (July 23, 2007).
2. Adam Gadhan, video address, May 29, 2007, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1602, May 31, 2007, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP160207> (July 23, 2007).

The Koran says: “Make ready for them what strength you can....” But we say to Allah: We don’t want to, because we’re afraid that they will call us terrorists. If killing the Zionist Jews, the Americans, the English, and the French in Palestine, in Iraq, and in Afghanistan is considered terrorism—I am the number one terrorist.³

Mullah Dadullah, high-ranking Taliban leader, May 14, 2007:

We will be executing attacks in Britain and the U.S. to demonstrate our sincerity and make them understand how hard it is to endure under a foreign occupation.⁴

Abu al-Layth al-Libi, leader of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, April 28, 2007:

Immediately after the collapse [of the Taliban], gloomy events hindered the people and prevented the movement of the mujahideen.... Everyone was shocked and overwhelmed waiting to see what the West, which was coming with its military machine, would do.... [T]oday we are experiencing mountains of realistic and true hopes [in Afghanistan], while our enemy is experiencing mountains of weakness, fear and apprehension.... [We will] finish off the remnants of the enemy’s force and completely crush it.... [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi] took the jihad from the edges of the place of the real conflict to the focal point of the conflict, which is Iraq.⁵

Mullah Dadullah, March 2, 2007:

Next spring, we will bring shameful defeat upon the Jews and the Christians. The cries you are now hearing from them once a day—you will hear them 20 times a day. The number of countries abandoning America will be doubled, and countries will refrain from helping or allying with the U.S. America will remain alone. We pray to Allah that America will remain without an ally.⁶

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, al-Qaeda head of the Islamic State of Iraq, February 2, 2007:

We are not afraid of your coalitions.... We have drunk blood [in the past], and we find no [blood] sweeter than that of the Byzantines [i.e., Christians].... Roast their flesh with car bombs, cut off their supply lines with [explosive] charges and tear out their hearts with sniper fire. Know that offense is the best [form of] defense, and be careful not to lay down your weapons before the war is over.... We are not fighting out of nationalism, but with the aim of making Allah’s word supreme.⁷

Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda deputy leader, December 22, 2006:

The first is that you [Democrats] are not the ones who won the midterm election, nor are the Republicans the ones who lost. Rather the Mujahideen—the Muslim Ummah’s vanguard in Afghanistan and Iraq—are the ones who won, and the American forces and their Crusader allies are the ones who lost.⁸

3. Muhammad Nimr Al-Zaghmout, interview, Al-Kawthar TV, May 15, 2007, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1601, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP160107> (July 23, 2007).
4. Mullah Dadullah, videotape interview, in Brian Ross and Christopher Isham, “Dead Taliban Leader Was Training U.S. Recruits,” ABC News *The Blotter*, May 14, 2007, at http://blogs.abcnews.com/theblotter/2007/05/dead_taliban_le.html (July 26, 2007).
5. Abu al-Layth al-Libi, interview, al-Sahab Productions, April 28, 2007, trans. in Jamestown Foundation, “Briefs,” *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 4, Issue 12 (May 1, 2007), at <http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373359> (July 23, 2007).
6. Mullah Dadallah, interview, Al-Jazeera TV, March 2, 2007, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1511, March 21, 2007, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP151107> (July 23, 2007).
7. Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi, “Victory from Allah, Victory Is Near,” audio recording, Al-Furqan, February 2, 2007, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1454, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP145407> (July 23, 2007).

Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, October 10, 2006:

We haven't had enough of your [American] blood yet....

We call on the lame duck (Bush) not to hurry up in escaping the same way the defense minister did....

Remain steadfast in the battlefield you coward [President George W. Bush]....

We will not rest from our Jihad until we are under the olive trees of Rumieh and we have blown up the filthiest house—which is called the White House.⁹

Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, September 28, 2006:

The American military bases, with their large areas, are an ideal environment for trying out your [Muslim scientists' and experts'] non-conventional bombs: the biological [bombs] and the so-called “dirty” bombs.¹⁰

Shehzad Tanweer, one of the London bombers, July 8, 2006 (the first anniversary of the London bombings):

We are 100% committed to the cause of Islam. We love death the way you love life. I tell all you British citizens to stop your support to your lying British government, and to the so-called “war on terror,” and ask yourselves, why would thousands of men be willing to give their lives for the cause of Muslims?¹¹

Mohsen Rezai, Iranian Expediency Council Secretary, June 8, 2006:

America seems so big, but in fact is like a paper tiger—even the slightest tremor could easily make it crumple and disappear. That's why America's strength depends upon maintaining its hegemony.¹²

Osama bin Laden, leader of al-Qaeda, April 23, 2006:

The West created the United Nations to defend their unjust doctrine. America and Europe considers the Jihadi groups in Palestine, Chechnia, Iraq and Afghanistan as Terrorists, so how can we dialogue with them without the use of weapons. And the leaders of our region considers America and Europe as friends and allies, and consider the Jihadi groups against the Crusaders Terrorist groups, so how can we have an understanding with them, without weapons? The UN is an infidel organization, and whomever accepts its ruling is also an infidel. It is a tool to execute the Crusader and Zionist decisions against Muslims.¹³

Sheikh Dr. Nasser Al-'Omar, Saudi Islamist cleric, April 19, 2006:

America is now disappearing from the hearts, within America itself and elsewhere, whereas Islam is growing even within America, my brothers. Islam is making steady progress in America. 25,000

8. Ayman al-Zawahiri, quoted in Brian Ross and Hoda Osman, “Al Qaeda Sends a Message to Democrats,” ABC News *The Blotter*, December 22, 2006, at http://blogs.abcnews.com/theblotter/2006/12/al_qaeda_sends_.html (July 23, 2007).

9. Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, audio tape, quoted in Breaking News (Ireland), “Al-Qaida: We'll Blow Up the White House,” Ireland On-Line, November 10, 2006, at <http://breakingnews.iol.ie/news/?c=ireland&jp=cwideygbjql> (July 26, 2007).

10. Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir, audio recording, September 28, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1309, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP130906> (July 23, 2007).

11. Shehzad Tanweer, in “The Final Message of the Knights of the London Raid,” film, July 8, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1201, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP120106> (July 23, 2007).

12. Mohsen Rezai, interview, Iranian Channel 2, June 8, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1189, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP118906> (July 23, 2007).

13. Osama bin Laden, audiotape, Al-Jazeera, April 23, 2006, trans. in Walid Phares, “Bin Laden's ‘State of Jihad’ Speech,” Counterterrorism Blog, April 24, 2006, at http://counterterrorismblog.org/2006/04/bin_ladens_state_of_jihad_spec.php (July 23, 2007).

people have converted to Islam every year since 9/11, and an even larger figure was mentioned in *The New York Times*.¹⁴

Ahmad Husseini Al-Baghdadi, Iraqi Ayatollah, April 14, 2006:

But the *mujahid* Iraqi people of the resistance has shattered the American plan, not only in the region but throughout the world....

... [T]he coming year will witness the defeat of the Americans, their lackeys, and those who rolled in on the American tanks.¹⁵

Mullah Krekar, Iraqi Ansar Al-Islam commander, March 13, 2006:

On one side stands the Western way of thinking. This is a way of thinking that has taken its materialism, egoism and savagery from the ancient Greeks and Romans....

The spread of democracy is just an excuse. The same with the hunt for Osama bin—it's just an excuse. It is Islam that the West can't stand.¹⁶

Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi, head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research and president of the International Association of Muslim Scholars, February 25, 2006:

We do not disassociate Islam from the war. On the contrary, disassociating Islam from the war is the reason for our defeat. We are fighting in the name of Islam....

They fight us with Judaism, so we should fight them with Islam. They fight us with the Torah, so we should fight them with the Koran. If they say "the Temple," we should say "the Al-Aqsa Mosque." If they say: "We glorify the Sabbath," we should say: "We glorify the Friday." This is how it should be. Religion must lead the war. This is the only way we can win.¹⁷

Abu Mu'awiya Al-Shimali, Saudi suicide bomber in Iraq, February 13, 2006:

America, the only thing that awaits you here is this. TNT in my bag, and a bottle next to me....

... Oh Bush, you despicable son of a despicable man, you will be humiliated. We destroyed the [WTC] tower, and we will make you bow your head.¹⁸

Khaled Mash'al, Hamas leader, February 3, 2006:

Before Israel dies, it must be humiliated and degraded. Allah willing, before they die, they will experience humiliation and degradation every day. America will be of no avail to them. Their generals will be of no avail to them. The last of their generals has been forgotten. Allah has made him disappear. He's over. Gone is that Sharon behind whose back they would hide and find shelter, and with whom they would feel relatively secure. Today they have frail leaders, who don't even know where our Lord placed them. Allah willing, we will make them lose their eyesight, we will make them lose their brains.¹⁹

14. Nasser Al-'Omar, lecture, Al-Jazeera TV, April 19, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1154, May 4, 2006, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP115406> (July 23, 2007).
15. Ahmad Husseini Al-Baghdadi, Arabic News Broadcast TV, April 14, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1166, May 18, 2006, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP116606> (July 23, 2007).
16. Mullah Krekar, *Dagbladet*, March 13, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1134, May 4, 2006, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP113406> (July 26, 2007).
17. Yousef Al-Qaradhawi, Qatar TV on February 25, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1102, February 28, 2006, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP110206> (July 23, 2007).
18. Abu Mu'awiya Al-Shimali, www.alsaha.com, February 13, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1095, February 16, 2006, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP109506> (July 23, 2007).

Ayman al-Zawahiri, January 30, 2006:

Bush and his gang are shedding your blood, and wasting your money in failed adventures. They are involving you in a conflict with the Muslims, which you cannot win, in order to increase their wealth. They are drawing up a future for you which is painted with the color of blood, the smoke of bombings, and the darkness of fear. The *mujahid* lion of Islam, Sheik Osama bin Laden, has offered you an honorable way out of the crisis you are in. But your leaders—because of their desire to accumulate wealth—insist upon casting you into perdition and causing your deaths, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even, Allah willing, within your own home.²⁰

Osama bin Laden, January 19, 2006:

Praise be to God, our conditions are always improving and becoming better, while your conditions are to the contrary of this...

Days and nights will not go by until we take revenge as we did on 11 September, God willing, and until your minds are exhausted and your lives become miserable and things turn [for the worse], which you detest.

... You have occupied our land, defiled our honour, violated our dignity, shed our blood, ransacked our money, demolished our houses, rendered us homeless, and tampered with our security. We will treat you in the same way.

... Refraining from performing jihad, which is sanctioned by our religion, is an appalling sin. The best way of death for us is under the shadows of swords.

Do not be deluded by your power and modern weapons. Although they win some battles, they lose the war...

I swear not to die but a free man even if I taste the bitterness of death. I fear to be humiliated or betrayed.²¹

Ayman al-Zawahiri, September 19, 2005:

Reform can only take place through Jihad for the sake of Allah, and any call for reform that is not through Jihad is doomed to death and failure. We must understand the nature of the battle and conflict. Our enemies will not grant us our rights without Jihad.²²

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, September 14, 2005:

Have you not heard that many of your chaste and pure sisters from among the Sunnis of Tel'afar had their honor desecrated, their chastity slaughtered, and their wombs filled with the sperm of the Crusaders and of their brothers, the hate-filled Rafidites? Where is your religion? Moreover, where is your sense of honor, your zeal, and your manliness?²³

19. Khaled Mash'al, address, Al-Jazeera TV on February 3, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1087, February 7, 2006, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP108706> (July 23, 2007).

20. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, videotape, Al-Jazeera TV, January 30, 2006, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1082, February 1, 2006, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP108206> (July 23, 2007).

21. Osama bin Laden, Al-Jazeera, trans. in "Bin Laden Tape," BBC News, January 19, 2006, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/middle_east/4628932.stm (July 23, 2007).

22. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Al-Jazeera TV, September 19, 2005, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 989, September 20, 2005, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP98905> (July 23, 2007). In this video, Al-Zawahiri claimed responsibility for the London bombings.

Ayman al-Zawahiri, September 1, 2005:

We have warned time and again, and we warn once again, that anyone who participated in the aggression against Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine—we will repay him in kind. Just as they have made rivers of blood flow in our countries, we will blow up volcanoes of rage, with Allah's help, in their countries. The lands and interests of the countries that participated in the aggression against Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan are targets for us, and whoever wants to be safe stay away from them. The one who warns bears no guilt.²⁴

Ayman al-Zawahiri, August 4, 2005:

Our message is clear—what you saw in New York and Washington (in 2001) and what you are seeing in Afghanistan and Iraq, all these are nothing compared to what you will see next....

If you continue your politics against Muslims, you will see, God willing, such horror that you will forget the horrors of Vietnam.²⁵

Ayman al-Zawahiri, July 9, 2005:

If our intended goal in this age is the establishment of a caliphate in the manner of the Prophet and if we expect to establish its state predominantly—according to how it appears to us—in the heart of the Islamic world, then your efforts and sacrifices—God permitting—are a large step directly towards that goal.

So we must think for a long time about our next steps and how we want to attain it, and it is my humble opinion that the Jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals.

The first stage: Expel the Americans from Iraq.

The second stage: Establish an Islamic authority or emirate, then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate—over as much territory as you can to spread its power in Iraq, i.e., in Sunni areas, is in order to fill the void stemming from the departure of the Americans, immediately upon their exit and before un-Islamic forces attempt to fill this void, whether those whom the Americans will leave behind them, or those among the un-Islamic forces who will try to jump at taking power.

There is no doubt that this emirate will enter into a fierce struggle with the foreign infidel forces, and those supporting them among the local forces, to put it in a state of constant preoccupation with defending itself, to make it impossible for it to establish a stable state which could proclaim a caliphate, and to keep the Jihadist groups in a constant state of war, until these forces find a chance to annihilate them.

The third stage: Extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq.

The fourth stage: It may coincide with what came before: the clash with Israel, because Israel was established only to challenge any new Islamic entity.²⁶

23. Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, audio file, Jihad Media Battalion (al-Qaeda) Web site, at www.k-j-i.tk, September 14, 2005, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 987, September 16, 2005, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP98705> (July 23, 2007).

24. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Al-Jazeera TV, September 1, 2005, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 979, September 2, 2005, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP97905> (July 23, 2007).

25. Ayman al-Zawahiri, video, Al-Jazeera TV, August 4, 2005, trans. in "Al Qaeda Threatens More UK, U.S., Attacks," CNN, August 4, 2005, at www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/08/04/zawahiri.london/index.html (July 23, 2007).

26. Ayman al-Zawahiri, letter to Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, July 9, 2005, trans. in Global Security, "Letter from al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi," at www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/report/2005/zawahiri-zarqawi-letter_9jul2005.htm (July 23, 2007).

Ayman al-Zawahiri, July 9, 2005:

However, despite all of this, I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma. And that however far our capabilities reach, they will never be equal to one thousandth of the capabilities of the kingdom of Satan that is waging war on us. And we can kill the captives by bullet. That would achieve that which is sought after without exposing ourselves to the questions and answering to doubts. We don't need this.²⁷

Ayman al-Zawahiri, June 17, 2005:

Reform and expelling the invaders from the lands of Islam will only be accomplished by fighting for the sake of Allah....

...I call upon them in the name of Allah not to abandon their *Jihad*, not to throw down their weapons, not to believe the counsel of the collaborators, not to forget the lessons of history, not to trust the secularists who have sold Palestine cheaply, and not to be drawn into the secular game of elections in accordance with a secular constitution.²⁸

Osama bin Laden, December 28, 2004:

I now address my speech to the whole of the Islamic nation: Listen and understand. The issue is big and the misfortune is momentous. The most important and serious issue today for the whole world is this Third World War, which the Crusader-Zionist coalition began against the Islamic nation. It is raging in the land of the two rivers [Iraq]. The world's millstone and pillar is in Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate.²⁹

Nasser Nassef, former cellmate of Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, November 28, 2004:

America bears within the roots of its own destruction, because of its war against Allah and because of its corrupt policies. I am absolutely certain that the day the dollar collapse, I mean the collapse of the bills, the stocks, and the bonds, like has happened to the airlines, oil and communications companies, the American will discover he has a pile of papers.... This Great Satan occupies the world through.... Here is a slogan I'd like the whole nation to repeat tonight: "America is [as weak as] a spider web, and the White House is the weakest house."³⁰

Osama bin Laden, November 1, 2004:

Your security is not in the hands of Kerry or Bush or Al-Qa'ida. Your security is in your own hands, and any U.S. state that does not toy with our security automatically guarantees its own security.³¹

Sheikh Adnan Ahmad Siyami, radical Wahhabi cleric, September 26, 2002:

There can be neither an agreement nor a meeting point between the people of Islam and the Jewish and Christian People of the Book.³²

27. *Ibid.*

28. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, videotape, Al-Jazeera TV, June 17, 2005, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 925, June 19, 2005, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP92505> (July 23, 2007).

29. Osama bin Laden, audio message, December 28, 2004, trans. in The White House, "Setting the Record Straight: Iraq Is the Central Front of Al Qaeda's Global Campaign," May 3, 2007, at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070503-6.html (July 23, 2007).

30. Nasser Nassef, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *TV Monitor Project* Clip No. 391, November 28, 2004, at <http://www.memritv.org/Transcript.asp?PI=391> (July 23, 2007).

31. Osama bin Laden, videotape, Al-Jazeera, October 29, 2004, trans. in Yigal Carmon, "Osama Bin Laden Tape Threatens U.S. States," Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Alert* No. 14, November 1, 2004, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SA1404> (July 23, 2007).

Sheikh Muhammad Saleh al-Munajjid, radical Wahhabi cleric, September 26, 2002:

Muslims must... educate their children to Jihad. This is the greatest benefit of the situation: educating the children to Jihad and to hatred of the Jews, and Christians, and the infidels; educating the children to Jihad and to revival of the embers of Jihad in their souls.³³

Suleiman Abu Gheith, al-Qaeda spokesman, June 12, 2002:

What happened to America is something natural, an expected event for a country that uses terror, arrogant policy, and suppression against the nations and the people....

...America must prepare itself; it must go on maximum alert... because, Allah willing, the blow will come from where they least expect it....

... We have the right to kill 4 million Americans—2 million of them children—and to exile twice as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands. Furthermore, it is our right to fight them with chemical and biological weapons, so as to afflict them with the fatal maladies that have afflicted the Muslims because of the [Americans'] chemical and biological weapons.³⁴

Al-Qaeda training manual:

The confrontation that Islam calls for with these godless and apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates, Platonic ideals nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and machine gun.³⁵

Fighting and Winning the Long War

Ignoring, minimizing, or explaining away the terrorists' explicit threats would be a grave mistake. Al-Qaeda remains determined and capable of launching terrorist attacks against the United States, which it perceives to be the chief obstacle to its visionary plans for building a global Islamic state, a new caliphate.

A disparate network of Islamic revolutionary groups are loosely affiliated with al-Qaeda and share its long-term goals and the broad outlines of its ideology while focusing their efforts on attacking secular and moderate governments in the Muslim world, American and Western targets of opportunity, and moderate Muslim leaders in their respective fields of operations. Although they

cooperate with the al-Qaeda core group, support some of its operations, and receive al-Qaeda support for some of their operations, the affiliate groups function independently and generally concentrate on local or regional jihads rather than on waging war on a global basis.

The war against the al-Qaeda terrorist network will be a protracted struggle. There is no silver bullet, nor a single target that the U.S. could hit, that would win the war in one stroke. Even if Osama bin Laden is captured or killed tomorrow, Muslim extremists will continue to attack the United States for decades to come. "Bin Ladenism" has become a threat that will outlast bin Laden. While capturing or killing him is important, decisively discrediting his ideas—his ideology—is more important.

32. Adnan Ahmad Siyami, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute, "Friday Sermons in Saudi Mosques: Review and Analysis," *Special Report* No. 10, September 26, 2002, at <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sr&ID=SR01002> (July 23, 2007).

33. Muhammad Saleh al-Munajjid, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute, "Friday Sermons in Saudi Mosques."

34. Suleiman Abu Gheith, "In the Shadow of the Lances," Center for Islamic Research and Studies, trans. in Middle East Media Research Institute *Special Dispatch Series* No. 388, June 12, 2002, at <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?ID=SP38802> (July 23, 2007).

35. "The Al Qaeda Manual," p. 8, at www.usdoj.gov/ag/manualpart1_1.pdf (July 23, 2007).

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

Richard Weaver wrote that “Ideas have consequences.”³⁶ Osama bin Laden’s ideas will continue to inflict a lethal toll long after he has been captured or killed. Al-Qaeda’s totalitarian Islamic ideology, which it cloaks in religious symbols, will remain a seductive intoxicant for radical Muslims for decades, if not centuries, to come. The war of ideas is just as important as the war on the battlefield if al-Qaeda and other radical Islamic groups are to be decisively defeated.

The Way Forward

There are no neutrals in this war. Neutrality was never an option. The enemy decided that. Al-Qaeda is at war with everyone and anyone who does not share its revolutionary dream of a totalitarian empire. Those that refuse to recognize the reality of

the war against terrorism not only put their own security at risk, but also undermine the security of our allies, especially mainstream Muslims who have the most to lose, as seen in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and elsewhere.

Abandoning Muslim allies against Islamist terrorists would be a grave error. Ultimately, the security of Americans depends on bolstering the security of Muslims against the menace of Islamist totalitarian movements. Such unified action requires consensus—a common view of the nature of the threat and the war and a common vision of how to respond. Listening to the terrorists’ own words and taking them seriously is the first step in winning the long war.

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36. See Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).