JSOU

Strategic Culture and Strategic Studies:

An Alternative Framework for Assessing al-Qaeda and the Global Jihad Movement

JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIVERSITY

Joint Special Operations University

7701 Tampa Point Boulevard

MacDill AFB FL 33621

https://jsou.socom.mil

Richard H. Shultz
JSOU Report 12-4
May 2012

Joint Special Operations University and the Strategic Studies Department

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) provides its publications to contribute toward expanding the body of knowledge about joint special operations. JSOU publications advance the insights and recommendations of national security professionals and the Special Operations Forces (SOF) students and leaders for consideration by the SOF community and defense leadership

JSOU is the educational component of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The JSOU mission is to educate SOF executive, senior, and intermediate leaders and selected other national and international security decision makers, both military and civilian, through teaching, outreach, and research in the science and art of joint special operations. JSOU provides education to the men and women of SOF and to those who enable the SOF mission in a joint and interagency environment.

JSOU conducts research through its Strategic Studies Department where effort centers upon the USSOCOM and United States SOF missions:

USSOCOM mission. Provide fully capable Special Operations Forces to defend the United States and its interests. Synchronize planning of global operations against terrorist networks.

USSOF mission. USSOF conduct special operations to prepare the operational environment, prevent crisis, and respond with speed, precision, and lethality to achieve tactical through strategic effect.

The Strategic Studies Department also organizes and conducts strategic symposia, interagency curricula, international curricula, regional and cultural education senior level courses, and senior level professional military education.

This publication is available on the JSOU public web page located at https://jsou.socom.mil.

On the cover: A Yemeni man stands next to an image of the late head of al-Qaeda Osama bin Laden on a street in the southeast town of Rada, Yemen, 21 January 2002. Photo used by permission of Newscom.

JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS

JSOU

UNIVERSITY

Strategic Culture and Strategic Studies: An Alternative Framework for Assessing al-Qaeda and the Global Jihad Movement

Richard H. Shultz

This monograph and other JSOU publications can be found at https://jsou.socom. mil. Click on Publications. Comments about this publication are invited and should be forwarded to Director, Strategic Studies Department, Joint Special Operations University, 7701 Tampa Point Blvd., MacDill AFB FL 33621.

****

The JSOU Strategic Studies Department is currently accepting written works relevant to special operations for potential publication. For more information please contact the JSOU Research Director at jsou_research@socom.mil. Thank you for your interest in the JSOU Press.

****

This work was cleared for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Recent Publications of the JSOU Press

Understanding the Form, Function, and Logic of Clandestine Insurgent and Terrorist Networks: The First Step in Effective Counternetwork Operations, April 2012, Derek Jones

"We Will Find a Way": Understanding the Legacy of Canadian Special Operations Forces, February 2012, Bernd Horn

WHAM: Winning Hearts and Minds in Afghanistan and Elsewhere, February 2012, Thomas H. Henriksen

Cultural and Linguistic Skills Acquisition for Special Forces: Necessity, Acceleration, and Potential Alternatives, November 2011, Russell D. Howard

Oman: The Present in the Context of a Fractured Past, August 2011, Roby Barrett

2011 JSOU and NDIA SO/LIC Division Essays, July 2011

USSOCOM Research Topics 2012

Yemen: A Different Political Paradigm in Context, May 2011, Roby Barrett

Special Operations Forces Interagency Counterterrorism Reference Manual, Second Edition, April 2011

The Challenge of Nonterritorial and Virtual Conflicts: Rethinking Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism, March 2011, Stephen Sloan

Cross-Cultural Competence and Small Groups: Why SOF are the way SOF are, March 2011, Jessica Glicken Turnley

Innovate or Die: Innovation and Technology for Special Operations, December 2010, Robert G. Spulak, Jr.

Terrorist-Insurgent Thinking and Joint Special Operational Planning Doctrine and Procedures, September 2010, Laure Paquette

Convergence: Special Operations Forces and Civilian Law Enforcement, July 2010, John B. Alexander

Hezbollah: Social Services as a Source of Power, June 2010, James B. Love

Contents

Foreword

More than a decade after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States by al-Qaeda and a year after the death of Osama bin Laden, Dr. Richard Shultz offers an innovative analysis of that organization's strategic culture. His analysis upends the conventional wisdom that only nation-states can have a strategic culture, an internal process through which issues of strategic significance and intent are discussed, debated, refined, and executed.

In many ways the U.S. national security establishment was unprepared for this attack and the global conflict that followed. Despite the end of the Cold War the United States remained militarily postured primarily to engage with other nation-states. Al-Qaeda as a non-state actor with global reach posed a decidedly new challenge. In this monograph Dr. Shultz advances our understanding of this non-traditional adversary through an analysis of the shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior that comprise the al-Qaeda strategic culture. Through a strategic culture framework he identifies and assesses the factors and developments that have shaped al-Qaeda's evolution and behavior over nearly two decades.

The resurgence of Salafi Islam in the early 20th century is at the core of al-Qaeda's identity and forms the basis for its vision and a justification for the group's self-declared role. Though many Muslims who adhere to the Salifi interpretation are peaceful, al-Qaeda established a transnational armed movement that ultimately sought to foster regime change locally in apostate Muslim states and serve as the vanguard of a larger global religious, political, and social movement.

Dr. Shultz traces the internal debates and strategic-level decision making amongst al-Qaeda factions following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the subsequent strategic reassessment as the *mujahidin* were sent to other geographical areas to pursue operations against both a 'near' and 'far' enemy. Here al-Qaeda often exploited ungoverned territory to establish new bases and remain out of reach of security forces. An examination of al-Qaeda's discourse over core strategic subjects of doctrine, strategy, operational art, and related issues offers valuable insights into the behavior of al-Qaeda and its affiliated movements.

In pursuit of its goals al-Qaeda drew on a wide range of operational art, both kinetic and non-kinetic. Leveraging new Internet technologies, al-Qaeda developed a strong information operations capability. This capability was used not only to publicize their cause and create empathy for their goals throughout the Muslim world but to inspire and recruit others to take up arms against their local leadership, lending support to al-Qaeda's global campaign. At the same time al-Qaeda utilized relatively low technology kinetic means, improvised explosive devices to great effect in Iraq, and disseminated how-to manuals on the Internet for others to use in the global campaign.

Though the threat from al-Qaeda may now be diminished, the tactics and techniques utilized by this non-traditional adversary are likely to be emulated by other irregular threats in years to come. An understanding of how such organizations "think" and "plan" at the strategic level is necessary in order to be better prepared for future threats. Dr. Shultz's research is a unique contribution to our understanding of al-Qaeda as a complex actor guided by its own strategic culture.

<div align="right">

Kenneth H. Poole, Ed.D.
Director, JSOU Strategic Studies Department

</div>

About the Author

Dr. Richard H. Shultz, Jr., is a professor of international politics at the Fletcher School, Tufts University, where he teaches graduate-level courses in various aspects of international security affairs, internal/transnational conflict and war studies, and intelligence and armed groups. He is also the director of the Fletcher School's International Security Studies Program. The program is dedicated to graduate-level teaching and research on a broad range of conflict, defense, and strategic issues.

In Washington he has served as director of research at the National Strategy Information Center (NSIC) where in 2010 he completed with NSIC President Roy Godson a major study focused on *Adapting America's Security Paradigm and Security Agenda* for 21st century security challenges. He also recently completed with the assistance of the U.S. Marine Corps a book-length study analyzing one of what he believes is illustrative of the types of conflicts that will characterize the 21st century security environment—the U.S. Marine Corps' 2004-2008 campaign in Al Anbar Province in Iraq. To complete the research he had access to the records and Iraq oral history collection at the U.S. Marine Corps History Division. The manuscript will be published by the Naval Institute Press in 2013.

He has held three chairs: the Olin Distinguished Professorship of National Security Studies at the U.S. Military Academy, Secretary of the Navy Senior Research Fellow at the U.S. Naval War College, and Brigadier General H. L. Oppenheimer Chair of War-fighting Strategy, U.S. Marine Corps.

Since the mid-1980s he has served as a security consultant to various U.S. government departments and agencies concerned with national security affairs. Currently he is a consultant to the U.S. Marine Corps.

His most recent book is *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat* (Columbia University Press, 2006; 2009 Paperback Edition) and he co-authored a recent monograph *Armed Groups and Irregular Warfare: Adapting Professional Military Education* (Washington,

DC: National Strategy Information Center, 2009). Among his other books is *The Secret War Against Hanoi: Kennedy's and Johnson's Use of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999; 2000 Paperback Edition). His recent articles include "A QDR for all Seasons," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (September 2010) and "The Sources of Instability in the Twenty-First Century Weak States, Armed Groups, and Irregular Conflict," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* (Summer 2011).

1. Introduction[1]

> A paradigm shift in war has undoubtedly occurred: from armies
> with comparable forces doing battle to a strategic confrontation
> between [states and] a range of combatants … using different
> types of weapons, often improvised. — General Rupert Smith,
> Former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe

In modern nation-states the security establishment, and most notably the
military services, engages in an ongoing professional discourse over core
subjects concerned with the causes and conduct of armed conflict; the threat,
use, and management of military power; strategy and operations; and closely
related issues. Conceptually, these subjects fall within the boundaries of
strategic analysis and strategic studies, but they also include topics more
commonly identified with military science and its focus on operational
and tactical matters.[2] The discourse over these core subjects takes place in
various forums within professional military and security institutions and
in their publications.

The strategic culture of a state's security community—its "shared beliefs,
assumptions, and modes of behavior [for] … determining appropriate ends
and means for achieving security objectives"—will shape the ways in which
the security establishment discusses and acts upon these strategic and oper-
ational core subjects.[3] The strategic culture sets the boundaries within which
a security community views the world and conducts its missions. The pro-
fessional discourse over doctrine, strategy, operational art, and related core
subjects is framed by the security community's strategic culture.

Understanding the strategic culture and strategic discourse of adver-
sarial states and their professional security forces is crucial. A grasp of each
provides important lenses through which to assess the challenges posed by
state antagonists and, based on that knowledge, helps security specialists
to develop policy and strategy to defend against those threats. Throughout
the Cold War and into its aftermath only nation-states were believed to have
strategic cultures. And only their professional military and security services
were thought to engage in a professional discourse over the core subjects
subsumed under the discipline of strategic studies.

Even after the end of the Cold War the constructs of strategic culture and
strategic studies continued to be seen as having no utility for understanding

non-state actors, specifically armed groups such as al-Qaeda. They were not employed as diagnostic tools for assessing the challenges posed by insurgents, terrorists, or other types of armed groups. That the leaders (and rank-and-file members) of armed groups could adhere to a shared body of beliefs and values and incorporate these into a vision and strategic culture was inconceivable to security specialists. They also failed to consider the possibility that an armed non-state group could engage in a strategic studies discourse over core subjects that mirrored those of a state's professional security services. Armed groups were thought to possess neither the sophistication nor the organizational capacity to carry out such activities.

The use of a strategic culture framework was deemed an inappropriate tool for security analysts because they viewed armed groups as fundamentally different from states and their professional security forces. Strategic cultures have traditionally been the domain of professionally organized state security communities, not of amorphous insurgents, terrorist groups, or other armed factions. Likewise, the fact that armed groups are quintessential clandestine organizations obscured the possibility that they could establish the necessary forums through which to carry out a discourse over core strategic studies subjects. Given the operational requirements of maintaining a complex, secret apparatus, it has been inconceivable for security specialists to recognize that armed groups could obtain this capacity.

However, as General Rupert Smith states in his influential book, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, a paradigm shift in the causes and conduct of conflict and war has taken place. For the past two decades, predominant and persistent security challenges have arisen from armed groups using irregular tactics and methods, and sometimes aided by authoritarian regimes, to which General Smith alludes. These developments provide opportunities for armed groups such as al-Qaeda to enhance their capabilities to more effectively pursue their objectives from the local to the global level, often causing major geopolitical damage.

In light of these changes, this study challenges the conventional thinking that only nation-states can possess strategic cultures and only their professional security services can establish forums through which the core issues of strategic studies are discussed, debated, and refined. Beginning in the late 1980s, and particularly since the Cold War's end, several new enablers and power enhancers became available to armed groups. And those groups that marshaled these capabilities could develop sophisticated organizations with

which to strategically challenge even major states, and some did so across the globe. Thus, the armed groups that U.S. Special Operations Forces fight today, thanks to these power enhancers, have important differences from the insurgents the United States confronted in Vietnam in the 1960s and in Central America in the 1980s.

This has been especially true of the armed group that emerged as al-Qaeda in the late 1980s, morphed into al-Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM) in the 1990s, and in the aftermath of 9/11, transformed further into the global Salafi jihadi movement of today. Over the last 20 years these ever-adapting, underground organizations have illustrated, perhaps more than any of their contemporary counterparts, that such 21st century armed groups no longer play ancillary roles in world politics.

To more fully understand and analyze al-Qaeda's evolution into the global Salafi jihad movement and the security challenges it has and will continue to pose for the United States, we utilize the analytic constructs of strategic culture and strategic studies. Each provides a diagnostic lens through which to (1) identify and assess the factors and developments that have shaped this non-state actor's evolution and behavior, and (2) gain insights into al-Qaeda and the Salafi jihadi movement's possible future behavior and patterns of action by examining its discourse over the core strategic subjects of doctrine, strategy, operational art, and related issues.

The study is divided into two parts. Part One describes and appraises al-Qaeda and its transformation through the analytic construct of strategic culture. This construct provides a systematic framework for more fully describing, delineating, and assessing the evolution of al-Qaeda and the global jihadi movement's vision, strategy, and operational principles. As we shall see, the platforms of globalization and information age technologies have, in part, facilitated its organizational evolution. These new digital information tools, together with other global developments discussed later in the study, have been key to enhancing al-Qaeda's capabilities and power projection capacity.

Additionally, these new information age technologies have enabled the various members of al-Qaeda's global jihadi movement to conduct an ongoing strategic studies discourse that, to a meaningful degree, is quite similar conceptually to that engaged in by the military and security communities of modern nation-states. Part Two identifies the core subjects of jihadi strategic studies, highlights their current discussions and debates, and fleshes out

the implications of this discourse for U.S. security and counterterrorism strategists in general, and for U.S. Special Operations Forces in particular.

Definition of Terms

Before assessing al-Qaeda's evolution and its implications for U.S. security, we first define *strategic culture* and *strategic studies* and explain how we employ these constructs as diagnostic tools in this study.

Strategic Culture

The analytic construct of strategic culture emerged during the Cold War to assist analysts in assessing the differences in how the United States and Soviet Union approached nuclear strategy and arms control negotiations. Analysts employing it found that both superpowers had developed a distinct way of thinking about these strategic matters, and that this strategic culture construct provided insight into why and how this came about.

Jack Snyder was among the first to use the strategic culture construct, which he defined as "the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national security community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other." These ideas, beliefs, historical legacies, and attitudes about military power and the use of force, he found, were socialized into that security community over time and "achieve[d] a state of semi-permanence."[4]

Colin Gray, a second early proponent of the diagnostic merit of strategic culture, added that strategic culture "suggests, perhaps insists, that different security communities think and behave … differently about strategic matters. Those differences stem from … distinctive histories and geographies."[5] Gray was particularly concerned about the relationship between national style as reflected in strategic culture and policy choices. Strategic culture provides the setting within which strategy and policy are considered, and serves as a determinant of the choices made. In other words, strategic culture functions on two levels: "First, it can be the prime mover of thought, judgment, policy, and all that follows … Second, it must always be present as an actual, or potential, influence on decisions and behavior."[6]

For Snyder and Gray, ideational and normative elements of strategic culture are key factors underlying the motivations of states and their leaders. They are seen as shaping the strategists' perceptions of contexts and

conditions. Security analysts during and following the Cold War identified a broader array of sources of strategic culture. Darryl Howlett, in a 2005 study, noted that the "most frequently cited sources of strategic culture are: geography, climate and resources; history and experience; political structure; the nature of organizations involved in defense; myths and symbols; key texts that inform actors of appropriate strategic action; and transnational norms, generational change and the role of technology."[7]

As post-Cold War security analysts turned their attention back to cultural factors, several re-examined the importance of strategic culture as a determinant of policy choices, including "decisions to go to war, preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare, and levels of wartime casualties that would be acceptable."[8] But determining the explanatory power of strategic culture as an independent variable influencing policy choices proved to be challenging.[9]

Nevertheless, specialists generally agreed that states' national security communities adhered to a common body of beliefs and values that constituted their strategic culture. Those ideas, beliefs, historical legacies and attitudes shaped their views about security matters. However, for specific policy decisions, a leader's behavior often was influenced by a wide range of factors including strategic culture. Thus, while strategic culture is not the sole determinant of states' behavior, it shapes the context in which leaders consider and make security-related decisions.[10]

Strategic culture tends to remain rigid even as the security environment undergoes systemic change. This results in an actor's reliance on preferred means and traditional methods even when they are ill-suited for a new or changing context. It is generally believed that change in a state's strategic culture comes only as a result of "dramatic events or traumatic experiences" that "discredit thoroughly core beliefs and values."[11]

For the purposes of this study, Roy Godson and Richard Shultz's delineation of the construct of strategic culture is employed: "Strategic culture is a state or non-state actor's shared beliefs and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and narratives, which shape ends and means for achieving national security objectives. These beliefs and modes of behavior give strategic culture its core characteristics and constitute the framework through which capabilities are organized and employed."[12]

In the graphic below, this delineation of the strategic culture construct is broken down into the following three component parts so it can be more

effectively applied as an analytic tool for assessing both state and non-state actors.[13] The first component of the graphic—common experiences, historical narrative, and shared beliefs—focuses on the characteristics of history, perception of others, and identity. These shared experiences and perceptions shape the world view of a security community and its beliefs and ways of thinking and acting. The second component of the Godson-Shultz delineation focuses on how state actors perceive threats and challenges to their shared beliefs and values. How serious are those threats to core beliefs and values? Are they existential? How are adversaries assessed? How seriously do those adversaries accelerate the state or non-state actors' security dilemma? How best can these challenges be addressed so as to reduce the threat? Finally, the third element, shaped by the first two, consists of the ends and means that state actors identify and marshal to protect the strategic culture's beliefs and values and to achieve security objectives.

Strategic Culture — Component Parts

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Common Experiences, Historical     │
│     Narrative and Shared Beliefs     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ⬇
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Threats and Challenges to Shared  │
│      Beliefs and Modes of Behavior   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ⬇
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Ends and Means for Protecting Core │
│    Beliefs and Values and Achieving  │
│           Security Objectives        │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```
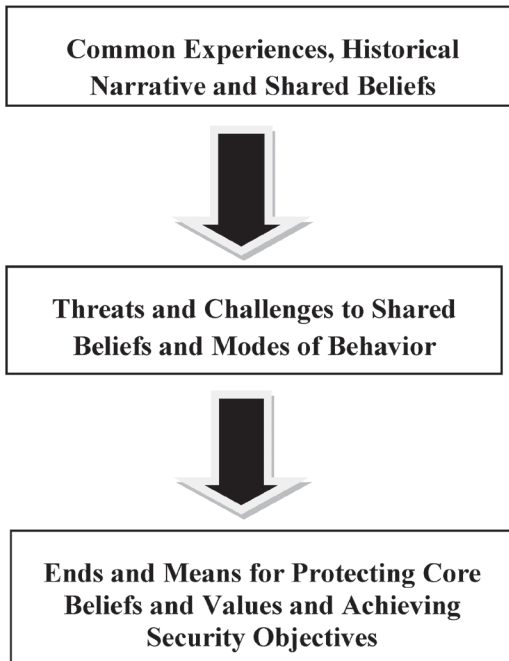
These three components form the framework that we utilize to examine the origins and development of al-Qaeda's strategic culture in the 1980s, its

evolution into AQAM in the 1990s, and then, in the aftermath of 9/11, its further transformation into the strategic culture of the global jihad movement of today.

Strategic Studies

While a coherent body of literature has explored strategic culture, the same is not true for strategic studies. There is no consensus as to what constitutes the discipline of strategic studies and its core subjects. The professional discipline of strategic studies in the United States, particularly within the official military community, focuses on a range of subjects broadly concerned with the causes and conduct of conflict and war; the threat, use, and management of military force; strategy and operations; and related issues. In the United States, a dialogue on these core subjects occurs in various forums, particularly within the armed forces. For example, these core subjects are central to the curriculum of Professional Military Education (PME) schools such as the Naval War College and National Defense University. For a career U.S. military officer, PME is a continuous process. It is through participation in PME programs that future leaders of American military services gain a deeper understanding of these subjects. This discourse likewise takes place in professional military journals and related publications produced by the armed services.

The origins of strategic studies can be traced to World War II and the onset of the Cold War. The overarching goal of strategic studies, at its inception, explains Richard Betts, was to "address the essential Clausewitzian problem: how to make force a rational instrument of policy … how to integrate politics and war."[14] As a result, strategic studies quickly came to focus on the use of military power as a key instrument of statecraft employed to achieve the goals and objectives of the state. In terms of specific issues, the focus through its formative years revolved around nuclear weapons and strategy.

Bernard Brodie, considered by many to be one of the founders of strategic studies in the late 1940s, envisioned it as a practical and instrumental field identifying and examining solutions to the management of violence and the conduct of war. According to John Baylis, in Brodie's 1949 essay "Strategy as Science," Brodie had hoped for an "approach to the study of strategy similar to the one adopted by economics." It would be "more rigorous"

and systematic "compared to the rather superficial approach to security problems adopted by the military, who were preoccupied with tactics and technology."[15] However, by the 1960s, Brodie concluded that relying on "economic models and theories" had been taken too far, as the Vietnam War unhappily illustrated, and that a "leavening of the scientism by better comparative analysis" was needed if strategic studies was to be relevant in the real world of international politics. In his classic book, *War and Politics*, Brodie asserted that the field should concentrate on pragmatic matters and practical activities. It is a "how to do it" discipline that centers on the role of force and military strategy. This requires drawing less on economic models and paying more attention to the disciplines of history and philosophy.[16]

In sum, strategic studies emerged as a practical field situated between military science and security studies, and part of the broader disciplines of international relations and political science. This is captured in following illustration below:[17]

Disciplinary Relationships

Political Science

International Relations

Security Studies

Strategic Studies

Military Science

To clarify what strategic studies constitutes, Betts focused on the three inner dimensions as illustrated: "At the core is *military science* (how technology, organization, and tactics combine to win battles); the outermost inclusive ring is *security studies* (everything concerning the safety of a polity); and in the middle lies *strategic studies* (how political ends and military means interact under social, economic, and other constraints)." These

distinctions, Betts continued, "illustrate why strategic studies should be the most important" of the three subject areas. It is "broader in scope than strictly military problems, but more focused than security studies, which is potentially boundless."[18]

While the above discussion anchors strategic studies between military science and security studies, the question remains as to what constitutes the key subjects that comprise its core focus. No checklist or agreed upon categorization has been formally designated. However, one can be deduced through a review of the curriculum of PME schools and the regular subjects covered in professional military journals and publications of the armed services. As a practical field, the issues illuminated in strategic studies changed both during and in the aftermath of the Cold War as the security environment changed. Nevertheless, the following six generalized topics have remained at the core of both PME curriculum and the subjects covered in professional military and security publications:

- *Nature of the International Security Environment* – Major threats and challenges emanating from the conflict environment.
- *Doctrine and Principles* – How military, diplomatic, economic, informational, and other instruments of power are shaped to support national objectives.
- *Military Strategy and the Use of Force* – The plan for effectively employing or threatening to employ coercive power.
- *Operational Art and Operational Level of War* – The employment of resources and capabilities to perform missions, activities, and tasks that link strategy and tactics. Operational art manages all the combat and related support activities in a given theater of military operations toward achieving strategic objectives.
- *Tactical Innovation and Training* – New methods or means (including weapons) employed to perform and achieve missions, functions, and tasks.
- *Organization and Force Structure Requirements* – Ways in which forces are organized, trained, readied, and sustained to achieve their goals.

Each of the six topics is examined to determine whether, and the degree to which, an al-Qaeda strategic studies discourse exists and is conceptually

comparable to discourse that takes place within the security institutions of modern states. The focal question is: To what extent does evidence show that these six topics comprise the discourse that is taking place on jihadi websites and through other Internet vehicles?

2. Al-Qaeda's Strategic Culture

An examination through the strategic culture lens of al-Qaeda and the global jihad movement that it spawned reveals how this transnational armed group has developed and transformed over time by employing its historical and ideational narrative. The latter consists of those beliefs, values, and myths that bind a group or movement together through a set of communicated symbols and provides a motive and framework for action. The ideational element of its narrative serves at least three purposes by: 1) defining the problem to be addressed; 2) proposes the resolution to it; and 3) specifies and legitimizes the means to be used to achieve that end state.

In the 1990s al-Qaeda established a vision and worldview that identified near and far enemies and shaped its ends and means for defending and advancing its global goals. Al-Qaeda at its inception designated itself as "The Solid Base" or vanguard of the global Salafi jihad movement.[19] At that time and in subsequent years it identified its ideational foundations for its strategic culture. Recall that a state or non-state actor's strategic culture is based on shared beliefs and modes of behavior (an ideational foundation) derived from common experiences and narratives.

As we shall see, that ideational foundation has been instrumental in establishing the contours of al-Qaeda's strategic culture. A decade after 9/11, despite the setbacks al-Qaeda has experienced, that foundation remains firm. As Bill Braniff and Assaf Moghadam explain, "that movement's overarching narrative continues to attract followers from a multitude of countries. All the while, the interplay of al-Qaeda core with its affiliated groups, associated groups, and inspired adherents provides an increasing number of pathways to violence."[20]

Al-Qaeda's Ideational and Historical Foundation

Al-Qaeda's vision, as expressed through its various communication channels, is based on an ideational and historical foundation rooted in the early 20th century Salafi Islamic revival.[21] Out of this emerged a transnational armed group that came to define itself as the vanguard of a larger global religious, political, and social movement. A comprehensive delineation of those roots and how al-Qaeda's vision and ideology developed since the 1950s is beyond the scope of this study. Here we present an overview of

key events and developments that shaped the first element of al-Qaeda's strategic culture.

The term *Salafi* describes the most doctrinaire form of Islamic thought.[22] The Salafi movement consists of Sunni Muslims drawn mainly from the Hanbali theological school. Of the four Sunni theological schools the Hanbali is considered the most stringent in terms of its fundamentalist approach to the practice of Islam. In a nutshell, Salafis draw their understanding of Islam from a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunna (the path followed by the Prophet).[23] They want to recreate the religious, social, and political order that the Prophet Mohammad established during Islam's early days. Salafis reject all subsequent Islamic re-interpretations of the Qur'an, extrapolation, and innovations as heresy or *jahiliyya* (moral ignorance). The essence of Salafism is summarized by Quintan Wiktorowicz as follows: "Salafis argue that Muslims must strictly follow the Qur'an and hold fast to the purity of the Prophet Muhammad's model."[24]

Those involved in the Salafi revival argued that the Muslim community, the ummah, had fallen prey to deviations from original Islamic practices and were living in a state of moral ignorance. To be saved from this civilization crisis, it was necessary to reeducate the ummah. The Salafi revival sought to re-embed true Islam in the hearts of Muslims to liberate them from human rulers and their false laws, values, and traditions.

Like other major religions, Islam has several sects. The Salafi movement consists of Sunni Muslims drawn mainly (but not exclusively) from the Hanbali school, and the Wahhabi element of this school. Of the four Sunni theological schools—Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafii, the Hanbali—the Hanbali are considered the most stringent in terms of their conservative approach to the practice of Islam. The Salafi movement is comprised of many of the most puritanical groups in the Muslim world. The different segments of the movement are united by the central element of the Salafi creed, *tawhid or the unity of God*, along with key concepts that Salafis consider necessary to be accepted as a "true Muslim."

To safeguard *tawhid*, Salafis believe in strictly following the rules and guidance found in the Qur'an and the Sunna. They seek to return Islam to its roots by imitating the life and times of the Prophet and that of the first three generations of Muslims—the companions or Sahabah of the Prophet, their immediate followers, the Tabi'in, and the Tabi'in's followers. The essence of Salafism is summarized by Quintan Wiktorowicz:

To protect *tawhid*, Salafis argue that Muslims must strictly follow the Qur'an and hold fast to the purity of the Prophet Muhammad's model. The latter source of religious guidance plays a particularly central role in the Salafi creed. As the Muslim exemplar, he embodied the perfection of *tawhid* in action and must be emulated in every detail. Salafis also follow the guidance of the Prophet's companions (the *salaf*), because they learned about Islam directly from the messenger of God and are thus best able to provide an accurate portrayal of the prophetic model (the term "Salafi" signifies followers of the prophetic model as understood by the companions).[25]

The Salafi approach rejects all subsequent Islamic reinterpretations, extrapolation, and innovations that transpired since the time of the Prophet.

The Salafi revival spawned political parties, the most important being the Muslim Brotherhood founded in Egypt in 1928. Its leaders were deeply disturbed by the influence of Western ideas and institutions in Egypt (and elsewhere in the Muslim world), the concomitant rise of secularism, the breakdown of traditional values, and the decline of Islam as the foundation of political and social behavior. They advocated for the creation of a Muslim state in Egypt based on Salifi precepts. The Brotherhood served as a vanguard party for bringing that about. By the late 1930s Brotherhood elements began advocating for armed struggle, or *jihad*, as the means for realizing their vision.[26]

It is important to note that many Salafists who adhere to this strict interpretation of Islam are peaceful. While they believe that a strict interpretation of the Qur'an and imitation of the behavior of the Prophet should underlie the social order, they do not call for armed struggle against those who do not accept their beliefs. Rather, they believe that the best way of returning to this golden past is through propagation of the faith and religious education, not violence. These Salafi groups believe God's word should be spread by *da'wa*, non-violent proselytizing. But others advocate for violence and the use of force as the means to achieve the Salafi vision.

Following WWII the Egyptian Brotherhood backed the Free Officers Movement that overthrew the monarchy in 1952, expecting them to form an Islamic state based on the Brotherhood's interpretation of Islam. When Nasser did not do so, the Brotherhood labeled him an apostate and called

for jihad against the Egyptian government. In 1954 following an attempt to kill the Egyptian leader, a wave of political repression ensued with the imprisonment and torture of many Brotherhood members.

That repression, in conjunction with domestic policies that were seen as the antithesis of true Islam, led to the charge of *jahiliyya* by members of the Brotherhood who called for jihad against the Egyptian government. Egypt's leaders were considered apostates because they were ruling by principles not based on Sharia. It should be noted that various Salafi factions have disagreed as to whether they can declare incumbent Muslim rulers apostates (a process known as *takfir*). According to Wiktorowicz, debate over this issue represents one of the "most prominent sources of fissure within the Salafi community and exemplifies the impact of contextual interpretation on factionalization. Although the factions share a set of criteria for declaring someone an apostate, rooted in the Salafi creed, they differ over whether these criteria have actually been met with regards to rulers in the Muslim world."[27]

A key figure making these charges against Nasser's government was Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian intellectual, writer, poet, and leader of the Brotherhood.[28] His writings have shaped the vision and ideational base of today's Salafi jihad movement, and its subsequent strategic culture. Among his prominent political writings is a long commentary on the Qur'an, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, and a more action-oriented manifesto for jihad, *Milestones*. These works, based on his interpretation of the Qur'an and Islamic history, included an assessment of Egypt's social and political ills, and an evaluation of the 'polluting' impact of Western decadence, materialism, and secularism on the culture.

Qutb also called for the overthrow of secular Muslim governments through insurrection to achieve radical change of the entire social and political system. Qutb's understanding of Islam was inextricably linked to his political and social perceptions and prescriptions. Islam embodied a complete social system, he argued, and therefore it should form the foundation for all governments. He based these requirements on the Qur'an, in particular his interpretation of its insights on morality, justice, and governance.

Qutb believed that Islam was in decline, and that society was devolving into a state of ignorance comparable to that of pre-Islamic Arabia. He asserted that the Islamic world had been infected by Western ideas and practices that were absconding with God's power and putting it into human

hands. In Qutb's view, post-colonial apostate Muslim regimes were ignoring Islamic law and values by leaving their populations in a state of debased ignorance. These regimes were, in Qutb's view, non-Islamic and therefore illegitimate. Muslims living in them were obligated by the Qur'an to reject their political authority and to carry out violent jihad to overthrow them and bring true Islam to reign. Qutb coupled a Salafi interpretation of the Qur'an with a radical and violent political ideology for armed revolution.[29]

We can see in Qutb's thought how Salafi jihadists differ from the larger Salafi community. Unlike the latter, Qutb and the Salafi jihadists who followed in his footsteps elevated the use of force—jihad or holy war—to such heights that it was equated to the five pillars of Islam. Once a regime was characterized as *takfir* and its leaders labeled infidels (*kufi*), then armed violence was a legitimate way of obliterating it.

Qutb cast the crisis in Egypt and other Muslim states within the context of a global ideological confrontation with the non-Muslim world, in particular, Western civilization. The West

> *He painted an extremely dehumanizing picture of the West: soulless, greedy, arrogant, barbarous, immoral, God-less, and depraved.*

was pushing the Muslim world into *jahiliyya*. He painted an extremely dehumanizing picture of the West: soulless, greedy, arrogant, barbarous, immoral, God-less, and depraved. Thus, he reasoned, the infusion of Western values and culture had to be reversed. Qutb saw this confrontation as a cosmic struggle, a Manichaean battle between two independent realms, good and evil. The Egyptian government at the time saw Qutb and his followers as violent extremists. And as noted above, many were imprisoned, including Qutb, who was executed in 1964.

Qutb provided the foundation for a transnational ideology to mobilize the ummah for jihad against both near enemies, including the Egyptian regime and enemies afar in the global fight against the West. He saw the two as inextricably connected. To carry out this struggle Qutb proposed the creation of a Muslim vanguard organization in *Milestones*. Qutb envisioned the Muslim vanguard organization as an elite group of educated, enlightened, and motivated individuals who would lead the masses "on the path, marching through the vast ocean of *Jahiliyya* which has encompassed the entire world." This call to Islamic militancy and armed revolutionary

struggle was seen as the primary means for seizing political power from the state.[30]

Qutb's worldview would come to be championed almost *verbatim et literatim* in the writings and manifestos of those who produced al-Qaeda's vision and subsequent ideational foundation following the Soviet-Afghan war of the 1980s. This may not have happened if not for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' invasion of Afghanistan, which helped al-Qaeda organize and unify jihadi fighters, and thus served as the key precipitant of the spread of Qutb's world view. It was the starting point from which a core leadership would emerge and form al-Qaeda al Sulba or "The Solid Base," which became the vanguard for the larger transnational Salafi jihad movement.

During the Soviet-Afghan war a key figure, the leader who laid down important pillars for al-Qaeda's subsequent ideational foundation and strategic culture was Abdullah Yusuf Azzam. Born in 1941 on the West Bank of the Jordan River, then administered by the British Mandate, he attended Damascus University and earned a degree in Sharia law in 1966. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and Israel's military occupation of the West Bank, Azzam joined the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and engaged in guerrilla warfare operations against Israel. However, he soon became disillusioned with the Palestinians leading the armed resistance based on ideological differences. Azzam opted out and continued his Islamic studies at Cairo's Al Azhar University where he earned a Ph.D. in Islamic jurisprudence in 1973. During this time, he met many Muslim Brotherhood followers of Qutb, including Ayman al Zawahiri. Azzam adopted Qutb's ideas, including the belief in an inevitable global clash between the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds. He then moved to Saudi Arabia and a faculty position at King Abdul Aziz University, where he met and befriended Osama bin Laden, a student. Azzam saw the Soviet invasion as a *kufar* or infidel aggression against Dar al-Islam—the house of Islam—and issued a call for all Muslims to fight in the holy war to expel the invaders.[31] Subsequently, he published *Join the Caravan*, which became the inspiration for thousands of Muslims to fight in Afghanistan.[32]

Azzam's charisma drew many young Muslims to the fight. His goal was to awaken the ummah to its duty in Afghanistan. He played a key role in establishing networks for financing, recruiting, and training radical Muslims to fight in the jihad in Afghanistan. According to Olivier Roy, Azzam saw Afghanistan as more than the defense of the ummah. Its role

was also to serve "as a training ground to breed the vanguard that would spark an overall resistance against the encroachment of the infidels on the Ummah… Jihad in Afghanistan was aimed at setting up the vanguard of the Ummah." [33] Roy further notes that tens of thousands of militants traveled to Afghanistan through Islamic networks for training and to fight in the jihad. They responded to the call and passed through the paramilitary training infrastructure established by Azzam, and later by bin Laden. According to Marc Sageman, they came "from all over: core Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt; Magreb Arab countries like Algeria and Morocco; Southeast Asia countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia; and the Muslim immigrant [or diaspora] communities of the United States and Europe."[34]

Those who went to fight in Afghanistan established bonds of solidarity that outlived the conflict. They became an international brigade for carrying out global jihad, as it was envisioned by Qutb and Azzam and later by bin Laden and his followers. Sageman writes that this "global Salafi Jihad evolved through a process of radicalization consisting of gradual self-selection… and recognition of the single common target of the Jihad."[35] Roy adds that "the volunteers in Afghanistan experienced a concrete internationalization based on personal contacts, the brotherhood of comrades in arms, friendships and affinities," and they established "a new community and brotherhood with which to identify."[36]

In sum, within the context of the war in Afghanistan, the ideational foundation for the strategic culture of al-Qaeda and the subsequent global jihadi movement was established. This first element of that strategic culture was al-Qaeda's view of a dangerous and depraved social and political order that required global jihad. It also proposed an idealized system to replace that depraved one and identified steps to bring it to fruition. Thus, al-Qaeda emerged as the self-designated leadership of that global Salafi jihad movement whose goal was to fundamentally change the political and social order by fostering regime change locally in apostate Muslim states and a systemic global transformation. Al-Qaeda envisioned a return to an idealized past, the golden age of Islam. As the vanguard of a millenarian movement, al-Qaeda came to see the world through apocalyptic or Manichaean lenses and called for a holy war between the forces of good and evil.[37]

Threats and Challenges to Al-Qaeda's Vision and Beliefs

The second component of strategic culture, as described above, concentrates on how threats and challenges to shared beliefs and a vision of a state or non-state actor's ideational base are perceived. How serious are they? Are they existential? How are adversaries assessed? To what extent do those adversaries accelerate or fuel the security dilemma?

Al-Qaeda's vision and the ideational foundation it spawned became the lens through which its goals were established and enemies were perceived. The designation of those enemies and identification of the challenges they posed took place in the decade following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. During that period al-Qaeda carried out a strategic assessment to establish its goals and identify its enemies, near and far. Where next should they carry out armed struggle as part of their global jihad? Where was the next area of operations and the next enemy of Islam? These were the core questions of this strategic assessment.

One faction that had helped oust the Soviet Union proposed employing the same fighting methods in other parts of Dar al-Islam occupied by infidels. Those places included Kashmir, Somalia, and Bosnia. Afghan war veterans sought to do so in the 1990s; some went to fight in Bosnia, others found their way to Kashmir.[38] This was the course of action proposed by Azzam before he was assassinated in November 1989.

A second faction called for Muslims to return to their homelands to help overthrow what came to be called "near enemies," the repressive, corrupt, secular, Western-influenced Muslim regimes that they perceived as impeding the creation of true Islamic communities. These jihadi nationalists' aim was to restore "true" Islam across Muslim nations. This created tensions within the budding al-Qaeda community because it involved fighting and killing other Muslims.

Among Arab Afghan war veterans it was particularly championed by the Egyptian contingent of al-Qaeda, who in the 1990s, attempted to overthrow the Mubarak regime in Egypt through a campaign of terror. To do so, they targeted police and government officials, as well as civilians to include tourists. With respect to government targets they aimed high. For example, in 1990 they attempted unsuccessfully to kill Abdel-Halim Moussa, the Egyptian Interior Minister. But they did murder Rifaat el-Mahgoub, who was serving as speaker of the parliament. In 1995 they sought to assassinate

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak while he was in Ethiopia for a meeting of the Organization of African Unity. This also failed. But they were successful in 1995 in bombing the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad. The attack resulted in 16 deaths and another 60 wounded.

The goal in carrying out assaults on tourists was to undermine the Egyptian economy which was and remains very dependent on tourism for revenues. These attacks included the 1997 Luxor massacre in which 62 individuals were brutally murdered. Finally, they also carried out frequent ambushes against rank-and-file members of the police, killing and wounding many. These attacks went on through the 1990s. However, the Islamist extremists were no match for the Egyptian forces that killed or arrested so many of them that the jihad camp eventually split under the pressure. The leadership of one faction, the Egyptian Islamic Group, eventually initiated a unilateral ceasefire. In March 2002, members of the groups' leadership from prison in Egypt declared the use of violence wrong and repudiated its future use. The leadership of the other faction, the Egyptian Islamic jihad, fled the country and joined up with al-Qaeda in the latter 1990s in Afghanistan. In 2001, under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahri they officially merged with al-Qaeda and several of its key members became part of AQ's ruling council.[39]

The Algerian contingent likewise returned home and initiated bloody warfare against the Algerian regime. The violence carried out by the Egyptians paled in comparison with that employed by their counterparts in Algeria, the Armed Islamic Group and its successor, the Salafist Group for Dawah and Combat. It ended up costing between 150,000 and 200,000 lives. During the fight, which ended in 2002, Algeria experienced large massacres of intense viciousness. Entire villages or neighborhoods were targeted without regard for who died. The Islamist guerrillas killed hundreds of civilians at a time. But as in Egypt the Algerian security forces likewise contained the threat through a brutal counterterrorism campaign.[40]

As this strategic reassessment unfolded, al-Qaeda's leadership gained sanctuary in Sudan in 1991. From there it operated as a transnational jihadi organization, forging linkages with like-minded groups in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Morocco, Somalia, and Eritrea, among other Muslim-majority and -minority nations. Several of these jihadi factions were fighting protracted insurgencies. While in Sudan, al-Qaeda backed and supported them with training, arms, and

funding. To do so, it established weapons caches and training camps where the guerrilla and irregular warfare methods were taught. Al-Qaeda also maintained its training camps in Afghanistan for the same purpose. Sudanese intelligence officers aided al-Qaeda by providing false passports and documents. At the time, the operational role of al-Qaeda was principally to provide support through funds, training, and weapons for national-level attacks by allied jihadist groups.[41]

As al-Qaeda's presence in Sudan grew, its leaders continued to strategize about which enemies should be targeted and defeated. Those deliberations initially revolved around "near enemies," Muslim territory occupied by "infidel" Muslim forces and apostate Muslim governments.

But then a third target, the "far enemy," entered their discourse. If the ultimate objective was to be realized—international system trans-

> *"The main danger for the worldwide Islamist movement was the United States, which was seen as moving in on Muslim lands such as the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa. It was the 'head of the snake' that had to be killed …"*

formation and reestablishment of the caliphate (the historic community of Islam)—then the main impediment to that aspiration had to be overcome.[42] According to Sageman, those who championed this position argued that "the main danger for the worldwide Islamist movement was the United States, which was seen as moving in on Muslim lands such as the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa. It was the 'head of the snake' that had to be killed … [T]he priority had to be … the far enemy."[43] By the mid-1990s bin Laden and his top collaborators, including Ayman al-Zawahiri, adopted this view. But to accomplish it al-Qaeda had to establish and staff organizations that could employ an array of techniques to fight a "long jihad." In 1996 they returned to Afghanistan and allied with the Taliban to do so.

Afghanistan provided an ideal base—an ever expanding infrastructure and a safe haven for al-Qaeda, far from American political influence and military power. Following the Soviet withdrawal the United States rather abruptly dropped its interest in Afghanistan and for all intent and purposes left. This created a vacuum that first opened the door to the Taliban who, in turn, opened the door to al-Qaeda. According to the *9/11 Commission Report*, "The Taliban seemed to open the door to all who wanted to come to Afghanistan to train in the [al-Qaeda] camps. The alliance with the Taliban

provided al-Qaeda a sanctuary in which to instruct and indoctrinate new fighters and terrorists, import weapons, forge ties with other jihad groups and leaders [globally], and plot and staff terrorist schemes."[44] Between 1996 and the 9/11 attacks, al-Qaeda was busy establishing its foundation for a global jihad. Their expanding infrastructure in Afghanistan allowed al-Qaeda to undertake several activities to this end.

First, during this period bin Laden stressed that part of al-Qaeda's ideational and doctrinal structure should focus on the Salafi jihad movement's global mission. He did so by concentrating on the United States—the far enemy—and the dangers America posed for the very survival of the Muslim world. This can be seen in many statements he issued.

Second, important organizational developments took place during the late 1990s as well. Al-Qaeda grew in size and complexity, due in part to the fact it could select from a large pool of many thousands of radical Islamists that flowed through its training camps. It screened and evaluated training program candidates for membership in its core organization. These individuals came from national level groups that al-Qaeda established linkages with during this period. Rohan Gunaratna in 2001 was first to identify these linkages in a comprehensive way. Among those he included were ones from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinian territories, Algeria, Libya, Eritrea, Somalia, Bosnia, Chechnya, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia. He also noted that radical Islamist cells were active in Western countries as well.[45]

Finally, from its Afghanistan sanctuary, al-Qaeda established itself as the vanguard for the global Salafi jihad movement. It did so during the 1996 to 2001 period through the network of linkages established with the score of other radical Islamist groups identified by Gunaratna, many of whom were employing unconventional and asymmetric violence against their home governments.

In sum, by the mid-1990s al-Qaeda had set its goals to foster regime change locally and system transformation globally to achieve its vision. To accomplish these objectives both *near* and *far* enemies had to be defeated in what was framed as a millenarian or apocalyptic struggle. In doing so, al-Qaeda satisfied the requirements of the second component of strategic culture—setting the ends and means for achieving goals—as outlined above and detailed below.

Ends and Means

The final element of strategic culture, which is shaped by the first two elements discussed above, consists of the ends and means for advancing beliefs and values and achieving goals and objectives. Of course, ends and means are subject to the exigencies of the conflict environment in which a state or non-state armed group is situated at a given point in time. This was true for AQAM following 9/11.[46] The conflict environment changed dramatically as the United States went to war in 2001 in Afghanistan against al-Qaeda. To meet these new challenges and to advance its vision in the aftermath of the U.S.-Afghanistan war, named Operation Enduring Freedom, al-Qaeda and local movements that identified with it employed a wide array of means to advance their goals. Here we discuss the three of these means.

Because al-Qaeda believes it is engaged in a global millenarian clash with the United States and more broadly the West, in which ideas are critical, it has utilized both kinetic and non-kinetic instruments. In its fight with the far enemy, al-Qaeda has placed significant emphasis on the use of communication and information operations. According to Zawahiri, "More than half this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media … we are in a media battle, in a race for the hearts and minds of our *ummah* [community of Muslim believers]."[47]

Consequently, al-Qaeda draws on information instruments (as in the first instance), to transmit its ideology and vision to the target audience of Muslims across the globe. In doing so, it has sought to disseminate a series of ideational messages that describe, in global and local terms, the social and political conditions requiring drastic action. Al-Qaeda's ideology presents a comprehensive critique of the existing local and global social and political milieu, seeking to instill in the Muslim community a powerful sense of moral outrage and commitment to jihad.

AQAM's information operations support the twin goals of fostering the overthrow of local apostate Muslim states and transforming the international socio-political system. To do so, al-Qaeda, in a manner not unlike revolutionary movements of the Cold War era, seeks to inspire, recruit, and mobilize individuals to take up arms and help achieve these objectives.

However, the means they employ to appeal to young men across the Muslim world include, most importantly, the Internet.[48] Since 9/11 al-Qaeda's use of the World Wide Web in several languages, innumerable blogs and

bulletin boards, and other Internet tools has burgeoned. Collectively, these tools provide al-Qaeda with the capacity to circumvent both the mainstream global media, which is dominated by Western media outlets, as well as the media in Muslim countries that are largely controlled by authoritarian governments.

Of course, al-Qaeda also seeks to exploit some global media outlets, most importantly Arab television and satellite channels. For Muslims in the Arab world and elsewhere satellite channels such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya are often the first way in which they encounter some of the issues and themes found on the websites of al-Qaeda and associated jihad groups. It may well be that Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya, among other Arab media outlets, unintentionally promote individuals to explore the Internet for further information.

Through the Internet, al-Qaeda can communicate directly with like-minded individuals and groups in various regions of the world. At al-Qaeda and Associated Movements websites these individuals can obtain not just inspiration but also operational knowledge and skills to execute violent strikes locally, on an independent basis. No radical movement had this global reach capacity in the past.

A second means employed by AQAM since 9/11 has been the exploitation of ungoverned territory to establish new bases. Within weak and failing states, governments often cannot exercise control over all their territories, particularly sparsely populated areas in rough terrains. This effectively lawless space, in turn, is increasingly being exploited by insurgent armed groups. In the decade following 9/11, al-Qaeda has established important operations and training bases in the largely ungoverned tribal areas along the mountainous Afghan-Pakistan border.

By 2007 it was clear to American security analysts that al-Qaeda was exploiting this new sanctuary to foster its regional and global activities. According to American officials, there was "mounting evidence that Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, had been steadily building a [training and] operations hub in the mountainous Pakistani tribal area of North Waziristan … Intelligence showed that the compounds functioned under a loose command structure and were operated by groups of Arab, Pakistani and Afghan militants."[49]

The Afghan-Pakistan border is not the only ungoverned territory that al-Qaeda and its regional affiliates have sought to exploit. In both the Sahel

region of North Central Africa and in Somalia, ungoverned, lawless territory is being exploited by Salafi jihad groups that identify with al-Qaeda. This is also true in Yemen where al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula exploits ungoverned space.

Finally, since 9/11 AQAM have employed a wide range of kinetic often innovative means to achieve its objectives. For example, in Iraq, it adapted various violent means to attack U.S. and coalition forces such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and then posted how-to manuals to build and plant IEDs on jihadi websites for the whole world to see. Iraqi insurgents found ways to counter U.S. measures to degrade IED effectiveness, such as publishing special reports and handbooks with detailed diagrams and other technical depictions on how to dismantle IEDs.

Findings and Implications

This assessment has demonstrated that strategic culture can be employed as a diagnostic tool for assessing how a non-state armed group—al-Qaeda—adopted specific operational codes based on an ideational and historical foundation that evolved over decades. As al-Qaeda took shape it generated doctrines in which goals were established and enemies identified. The designation of those enemies and the perceptions of the challenges they posed took place over a period of years following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. During that time al-Qaeda carried out a strategic assessment to establish goals, identify enemies, and set the conditions for the long jihad, a global millenarian clash with the United States.

An analysis of al-Qaeda and its evolution through the lens of strategic culture provides a deeper understanding of its behavior then, today, and for the years ahead, than by attributing it to violent extremism. In doing so, we can see how the Muslim Brotherhood was influenced by the 20th century Salafist revival and consequently adopted its principals for its jihad movement. This took shape in Afghanistan in the 1980s and then evolved into its present form. While AQAM emerged as a transnational movement, Islam serves as a powerful unifier, and the critical element of identity, of past and present jihadist ideology. Members of AQAM view their global community as a nation that is larger than any states from which those associated groups derive.

Strategic culture helps us understand al-Qaeda's past, and provides a more well-rounded explanation of its actions, from 9/11 to the present. Its strategic culture identifies an ideational milieu that makes critical assumptions about the beliefs and values of the religious community, the nature of the enemies that threaten those beliefs and values, and the role of jihad in defending and expanding them. The implications of these developments are significant for the 21st century security environment. They suggest that we should not assume that the serious blows that al-Qaeda has suffered since 9/11—the loss of bin Laden and several other key operational leaders along with its Afghan base, and serious setbacks for its affiliates outside of Pakistan and Afghanistan, including the defeat of al-Qaeda in Iraq—means that al-Qaeda is facing demise. Rather, what a strategic culture assessment of al-Qaeda (from its emergence in the late 1980s up to 9/11 and its aftermath when it transformed into the global Salafi jihadi movement, to the death of bin Laden in 2011) tells us is that AQAM has staying power, as it has the capabilities, networks, and the will not to be easily deterred. While its setbacks are significant, when viewed through the lens of strategic culture they do not indicate that they are fatal for al-Qaeda, its affiliated organizations or global followers. Rather, as Braniff and Moghadam conclude:

> Al-Qaeda continues to enable the violence of others, orient that violence towards the United States and its allies in a distributed game of attrition warfare, and foster a dichotomous 'us versus them' narrative … The organization has adapted to changing environmental pressures at the strategic, ideological, and structural levels, and the aggregation of these adaptations has fundamentally changed the nature of the jihadist threat to the West … This multifaceted global jihad will, however, continue to attempt greater numbers of attacks in more locations, from a more diverse cadre of individuals spanning a wider ideological spectrum.[50]

To gain a deeper understanding of these changes and their implications, we now examine the core subjects of jihadi strategic studies, which are shaped by its strategic culture. We highlight the discussions and debates that have been taking place within AQAM on these core topics since 9/11. By doing so, we gain insight into new avenues for al-Qaeda's violent adaptation on the strategic, operational, and tactical level.

3. Strategic Studies, al-Qaeda and the Global Jihadi Movement

Previously we noted that in the 1990s al-Qaeda morphed into al-Qaeda and Associated Movements and following 9/11 grew into the wider global jihadi movement. Organizationally, the movement came to consist of four elements: (1) a core al-Qaeda leadership based in Pakistan, (2) several associated branches such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and (3) like-minded groups in a number of countries, and (4) worldwide jihadi participants, supporters, and sympathizers. What ties these different elements together is the Internet, although analysts disagree over the extent to which they are linked.

The Internet has provided a transformational capability to the global jihadi movement. As Hanna Rogan explains, the Internet "facilitates ideological cohesion and network-building within a geographically scattered movement, and all levels of the jihadist network are present on the Internet … [And while] jihadist websites differ enormously … many sites are interrelated in the sense that they frequently redistribute and circulate the same material … Concerning the functions of the jihadist Internet, it fulfills different objectives, most importantly of a communicative character."[51] This is accomplished via publication of extensive jihadist information, news, and ideological material using text and audio-visual media.[52]

In the post-9/11 period, a small number of Western specialists began to discover among these diverse jihadi publications a sub-category that they characterized as conforming to topics in Western strategic studies. The first to do so was Brynjar Lia, a leading analyst of militant Islamism, and Thomas Hegghammer, a specialist on terrorism and violent Islamism, both with the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment's Transnational Radical Islamism Project. Their study, published in 2004, assessed an al-Qaeda document, *Jihadi Iraq*, that focused on how to use force to split the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq. The first step carried out was the terrorist strikes on Madrid's passenger trains, which were intended to compel Spain to withdraw from the coalition, according to *Jihadi Iraq's* author. Lia and Hegghammer contend that this "text, which is secular in style, analytical in its approach, and pragmatic in its conclusions, displays a level of political awareness that breaks with most preconceptions about religious fundamentalist thought."[53] The detailed political and military strategy proposed

in *Jihadi Iraq* illustrated what one would find in discussions of intelligence officers, defense analysts, and military strategists of modern states. According to the authors the "strategic analysis found in *Jihadi Iraq*, which draws on Western sources, identifies and analyzes weaknesses of *both* parties, considers the political, economic, and cultural factors in the military conflict, and recommends realistic strategies."[54] Given AQAM's burgeoning use of the Internet, Lia and Hegghammer proposed that *Jihadi Iraq* was part of a "growing online literature" that should be characterized as "jihadi strategic studies."[55]

Two years later Hegghammer advanced this proposition by asserting that within AQAM's expanding use of the Internet was increasing attention not only to the question of *why to fight jihad* but also to *how to fight jihad*, producing materials that are "strikingly similar to Western strategic studies." To illustrate this development Hegghammer profiled the work of "three pioneering figures" in the jihadi discourse over how to conduct the global fight.[56]

These initial studies led other analysts to consider whether the jihadi discourse on the Internet addressed additional topics that could likewise be grouped within the six core subjects of strategic studies. In doing so, Mark Stout found that the "written works of an intellectually vigorous group of thinkers within AQAM show that strategic thought grounded in mainstream global thought on revolutionary warfare exists within this community."[57] Based on an in-depth review of jihadi discourse on terrorist training, Lia discovered considerable differences between leading jihadi theorists "over issues such as how training should be defined, its ultimate purpose, and where and how to prepare jihadi fighters." But leading jihadi theorists agreed that warriors should be those "whose primary strength lies in their spiritual determination, their patience, and willingness to employ savagery against the enemy."[58] Another investigator, Dima Adamsky, noted that while the jihadi online strategic discourse included no formal use of the concept "operational art," that its literature is "replete with discussions related to it."[59]

While these specialists opened the door to the possibility of "jihadi strategic studies," no attempt has been undertaken to determine the breadth of this strategic discourse or to what extent it ranges across the core subjects of the strategic studies discipline. The remainder of this study addresses these issues. To do so, two categories of source materials are drawn upon. The first

consists of studies and reports produced by several well-respected research projects and programs that base their assessments on either captured jihadi documents or jihadi materials found on the Internet. These studies and reports provide considerable additional documentation similar to that found by Lia and Hegghammer, Stout, and Adamsky, highlighted above.

The first category of source materials comes from three selected research projects: (1) The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, a leading institution devoted to the study of AQAM, employing a range of primary source materials including captured documents to assess jihadi doctrine, strategy, and structure, (2) The Norwegian Defence Research Establishment's Transnational Radical Islam Project, which conducts in-depth analysis of contemporary jihadi movements, (3) The Terrorist Perspectives Project of the Institute for Defense Analysis. These studies include the strategic and operational perspectives of AQAM's intellectual leadership.[60]

The second category of source material notable comes from primary jihadi materials collected directly from the Internet, and translated and evaluated by the Search for International Terrorist Entities (SITE) Intelligence Group. A private, for-profit organization, SITE Intelligence Group maintains an extensive database of primary materials that include original and translated transcripts of AQAM and other jihadi leaders' speeches, video, and audio messages; translations of AQAM books, magazines, and training manuals; and translations of discussions of potential targets, methods of attack, and other issues discussed in their chat rooms. Many SITE Intelligence Group products fall within the boundaries of jihadi strategic studies (including doctrine, strategy, and leading strategists), various training manuals and videos, tactics, and weapons.

Taken together these two categories of documents are scrutinized to determine whether al-Qaeda and the global jihadi movement conduct a strategic discourse comparable to that which takes place within the security institutions of modern states. In other words, do items contained in these two categories coincide with the six generalized topics that constitute the core subjects found in both the PME curriculum and military publications of modern nation-states?

The Nature of the International Security Environment

Strategic analysis by Western military and civilian agencies begins with an assessment of the security landscape they currently confront or believe they

will face in the near term. As an example, consider the U.S. Defense Department's 2010 report *Quadrennial Defense Review,* which begins with such an assessment: "The United States faces a series of

> *"The United States faces a series of challenges … in a complex and uncertain security landscape in which the pace of change continues to accelerate."*

challenges … in a complex and uncertain security landscape in which the pace of change continues to accelerate."[61] It then highlights both those challenges, which are an outgrowth of nearly 10 years of irregular warfare, and possible new challenges.

Consider another example. In the aftermath of the Cold War, U.S. strategic specialists faced a new context in which they sought to determine the terrain of the future security landscape as the international order experienced a period of great change. Will the years ahead be marked by fluidity, uncertainty, and a variety of forms of instability or the opposite? Will new challenges emanate from this security landscape? These are the kinds of questions they addressed.

There is evidence that members of AQAM's intellectual leadership have likewise addressed the same kinds of questions as part of their strategic discourse. As noted earlier, this first took place following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in the late 1980s. While the war had ended, AQAM viewed its outcome not as an end in itself but as part of a longer conflict. Abdallah Azzam, who helped lay the foundation for what would become the global jihadi movement, frequently commented that he "saw the Afghan jihad as the beginning of the fight."[62]

Azzam asserted it would be a long fight, as was reflected in the discussions that took place among the international jihadi fighters that, as Olivier Roy describes, "went to Afghanistan through Islamic networks for training and jihad."[63] Having forced the Soviet withdrawal they debated not whether the fight would continue but where it would next take place. That was the strategic landscape as they saw it.

That interchange, as noted above, amounted to a strategic assessment intended to identify the next area of operations. Azzam pushed for a solidification of the Afghan al-Qaeda base from which to liberate other parts of Dar al-Islam occupied by infidels. Others taking part in this discussion said the next fight should be against dictatorial and corrupt Arab governments

that violated Islamic principles. Recall that these states came to be called the "near enemies." This debate continued into the 1990s among al-Qaeda leaders and the organization's strategic thinkers revolving around their "near and far enemies." By late 1994 al-Qaeda leaders moved the "far enemy" to the forefront. Those in al-Qaeda asserted that the United States posed the greatest danger, as they saw it as moving in on Muslim lands. It was, as Sageman noted above, the "head of the snake" that had to be killed. Consequently, the core leaders of AQAM had come to define the security landscape as one marked by a long global clash with the United States.[64]

Following 9/11, AQAM's leading strategic thinkers' assessment of its security environment remained consistent with this earlier one. Consider Abu Bakr Naji, whose book, *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Ummah Will Pass*, was disseminated across the Internet in 2005. While little is known of his background, Naji's book and contributions to al-Qaeda's online magazine, *Sawt al-Jihad*, catapulted Naji into the ranks of important jihadi strategic thinkers. In the first part of book, Naji appraises the post-WWII and post-9/11 security environment. He describes how the two superpowers were able to dominate the global order "through their centralized power." The meaning of "centralized power" here is the extensive military power that extends from the center and reaches the utmost extremity of these lands. "Submission, in its primary, simplest form," Naji explained, "means that those lands owe the center loyalty, submission to its judgment, and responsibility for its interests." In the Middle East, Naji explained, they used proxy regimes to indirectly "rule the Islamic world." [65]

However, citing Paul Kennedy's analysis of the rise and fall of great powers, Naji describes how the USSR overextended itself in Afghanistan and how that was a key contributor to its downfall.[66] "This is exactly what happened to the Communist superpower when it was put in a military confrontation with a power weaker than itself by several degrees … The weaker power succeeded in exhausting it militarily." Moreover, Naji continues, the invasion of Afghanistan revived the "dogma of jihad in the hearts of the Muslim masses" drawing fighters from "unknown lands, like Chechnya and Tajikistan."[67]

The jihadi movement's strategic lesson from the Afghan-Soviet war in the post-9/11 era, explained Naji, is to "draw the U.S. into direct confrontation in locations that are remote from its borders." In doing so, the United

States, like its former Soviet adversary, "will come to be overextended the longer it stays engaged in such far off fights."[68]

In these excerpts from *The Management of Savagery* we see that a jihadi strategic thinker assessed the international security environment similarly to the way Western strategic analysts approach such issues. Naji is not alone. Consider Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, who like Naji, wrote widely on various jihadi strategic issues in the immediate years following 9/11, particularly in the Strategic Studies section of the magazine *Majallat al-Ansar*. Al-Qurashi described the security landscape as global confrontation between al-Qaeda and the United States. He also wrote several pieces on irregular warfare in which he draws on the analyses of Western military specialists.[69]

Finally, in the aftermath of 9/11 perhaps the leading jihadi strategic thinker to emerge was Abu Musab al-Suri. A Syrian by birth, he is considered a sophisticated strategist by Western specialists. Lia, of the Transnational Radical Islam Project in Norway and biographer of al-Suri, characterizes him as "probably the world's foremost 'jihadi theoretician,' a description bestowed on him by numerous participants in jihad web forums who frequently cite his works … al-Suri has first and foremost earned great respect as a strategic thinker."[70]

Before publishing his most important treatise in 2004, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, al-Suri had a great deal of experience in the fight dating back to the armed uprising in the early 1980s against the Syrian regime of Hafez Assad. That revolt had a disastrous outcome, and he fled to Europe. In the latter 1980s, al-Suri joined the international jihadists fighting the USSR in Afghanistan where he befriended Abdallah Azzam and became a military trainer for Arab fighters in Azzam's organization. He also took part in combat against Soviet forces. Following Moscow's withdrawal, al-Suri stayed on in Afghanistan until the early 1990s and then returned to Europe where he remained until 1997.

During this period al-Suri began to lecture and write on strategic matters. He recounts that "at the Al Nour Media Center … among the most important lectures [he] delivered in the summer of 1991 was one entitled 'The Balance of Power in the New World Order.'"[71] In this early piece, like other al-Qaeda strategic thinkers who took part in the strategic assessment following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, al-Suri assessed "Muslim's present condition." He asserted that conflict would continue in the form of a bi-polar struggle pitting the United States, Israel, and secular

governments in Muslim states against armed jihad organizations and their leaders.[72] He followed this up two years later with "A Call for the Sake of Establishing the Global Islamic Resistance." The study flowed directly from his assessment of the future strategic landscape following the Soviet exit from Afghanistan; al-Suri further elaborated on his analysis of the balance of power and the sources of continued conflict.[73]

Finally, in *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, al-Suri provides his most thorough assessment of the Cold War, post-Cold War, and post-9/11 international security landscape and the sources of conflict. Part I of the 1600 page book elaborates on his 1991 lecture noted above. This is particularly true in chapter four where he focuses on the roots of the continuing conflict between Muslims and the West, which he characterizes as a series of 20th and 21st century cultural conflicts. In subsequent chapters he chronicles each of these, concentrating on those following the Cold War.[74] In doing so, as Lia notes, al-Suri "never shied from criticizing jihadi leaders" whose policies he felt were ill-considered. "Sharply analytical and rational in approach, he … castigates the jihad movement for living in the past and misjudging the challenges of the post-Cold War and post-9/11 eras."[75]

What this discussion illustrates is that like their counterparts in modern nation-states, armed non-state groups can, and in the case of AQAM and the global jihadi movement, do, take part in a strategic discourse that begins with an assessment of the international security landscape. Key strategic thinkers like Naji, al-Qurashi, and al-Suri provide analytic assessments of the conflict environment that the jihadi movement currently confronts and the extent to which they believe it will continue to challenge them in the near term.

Doctrine and Principles

Doctrine, in the context of strategic studies, is concerned with deliberations over how the military and other instruments of power are organized and utilized to support national objectives. Doctrine includes the principles by which military and other instruments of power foster a nation's objectives. It is not uncommon to find grand strategy used interchangeably with the national security doctrine of the state. British historian B. H. Liddell Hart explained that the role of grand strategy is to "coordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, toward the attainment of political

objectives." [76] In the United States, this approach can be found in the president's annual National Security Strategy report. Doctrine, grand strategy, and national security strategy receive considerable attention in American professional military publications and those of other major powers.

Analysts at the programs and projects selected for this study found that a part of the strategic studies discourse of al-Qaeda and the global jihadi movement has been concerned with issues similar in content to those of their state counterparts' examination of doctrine and grand strategy. For example, consider studies completed by the Terrorist Perspectives Project of the Institute for Defense Analysis. Mark Stout, one of the project's investigators, highlights in a piece titled "In Search of Salafi Jihadist Strategic Thought," how the "written works of an intellectually vigorous group of thinkers within AQA [al-Qaeda and its affiliates] show that strategic thought … exists within this community" and that "there are important thinkers in AQA, including some who … clearly qualify as [grand] strategists." [77]

Having examined the works of a number of these individuals, Stout concludes that they "approach the challenges they face with an instrumental, strategic mindset," much like that taken by their state counterparts. For example, they "write, often critically, about what they have observed and offer suggestions for improvement." In doing so, "these writings add to the body of [strategic] *jihadist* literature circulating in cyberspace and … are influencing the thinking of present day and future *jihadist* leaders." [78] In sum, Stout found within the jihadist community a "small number of very intelligent people who think strategically and who are actively searching for solutions" to AQA's strategic and operational challenges.

The Terrorist Perspectives Project has produced several volumes that provide substantial insight into AQA's strategic thinking and analysis in the decade since 9/11. This includes an assessment of the works of Abu Musab al-Suri, and most importantly his *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, along with a volume containing the strategic and operational views of other AQA strategic thinkers.[79] These works provide a compendium of AQA's most important doctrinal specialists.

The Norwegian Defence Ministry's project has produced several studies, also based on primary sources, which likewise provide a rich analysis of jihadi strategic doctrine and thought. Among the members of that research group, Lia, in particular, concentrates on the doctrinal aspects of jihadi strategic studies. His biography of the key al-Qaeda strategist Abu

Musab al-Suri is a prime example of the seminal research and analysis conducted by the project. As already noted, al-Suri, a central figure in the post-9/11 jihadi strategic dialogue, helped shape their global strategy in a series of writings and videos, most importantly his influential *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*. In this work (two key chapters of which Lia translated for his biography), al-Suri outlines his theory for a grassroots global jihadi movement comprised of self-radicalized individuals (through online jihadi literature), not formally part of al-Qaeda or under its hierarchical control, and who maintain only passive connections to it. Lia carefully analyzes al-Suri's unique jihad theory, which appears to have inspired the operations of several successful, autonomous cells beginning with the terror attack in Madrid in 2004. Recall that the Madrid attack was executed by individuals without direct connections to al-Qaeda but who sought to further the global jihad movement's goals. Communiqués by the Madrid terrorists threatening violence were signed "Supporters of al-Qaeda in Europe."

In addition to the al-Suri biography, Lia has produced several other reports and book chapters that assess differences among jihadi strategists and doctrinarians, comparing themes found in the texts of different jihadi writers.[80]

The Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point has devoted attention to the analysis of a range of primary materials on jihadi doctrine. These include a three-part assessment of the books of Abdullah Azzam who, as noted earlier, is considered the founder of al-Qaeda and a key strategist who helped lay the foundation for today's global jihadi movement. According to Youssef Aboul-Enein, the author of the CTC study, "Azzam is as significant strategically to al-Qaeda and its affiliates as Carl von Clausewitz is to the study of conventional war."[81] In his examination of three of Azzam's books, Aboul-Enein provides insightful commentary on the "strategic, operational, and tactical" foundation Azzam laid down in these and other works for al-Qaeda, Hamas, and various other Islamist militant groups.[82]

In addition to the assessment of Azzam, other primary source-based reports published by the CTC provide insights into how jihadi thinkers have considered issues of doctrine and grand strategy. These include profiles of key AQAM members such as Abu'l-Walid al-Masri. A veteran al-Qaeda thinker and strategist, from 1996 to 2001 al-Masri also was a close associate of the Taliban leader Mullah Omar. As the CTC profile of Abu'l-Walid notes, during this period he wore several hats, including foreign correspondent

for Al-Jazeera, a member of Mullah Omar's inner circle, and an al-Qaeda trainer and strategist. The profile's author identifies several of Abu'l-Walid's publications that provide insight into the discussions and disagreements within al-Qaeda at that time over issues relating to doctrine and grand strategy.[83] Yet another CTC study that provides insight into key individuals inside AQAM and addresses doctrine and grand strategy issues is the *Militant Ideology Atlas*, which identifies a number of the most influential thinkers in the jihadi movement and their works.[84]

Finally, captured documents and other materials collected directly from the Internet and translated by SITE Intelligence Group offer a window into the current jihadi discourse on doctrine and grand strategy. Through analyses of these materials key issues of agreement and discord in al-Qaeda's ongoing strategic discussions can be identified. For example, in the initial period following the U.S. invasion of Iraq the Strategic Studies section of *Majallat al-Ansar* contained proposals by different strategic thinkers about how to proceed with the jihad there. This included an assessment of what the United States hoped to achieve and how the jihad movement could undermine American objectives.[85]

A second issue that received considerable attention at that time was how to drive up the economic costs of the war for the United States. Several jihadi strategists identify the U.S. economy as its center of gravity, employing Clausewitz's concept.[86]

While *Majallat al-Ansar* no longer exists, other publications have replaced it online and provide a window into current jihadi deliberations over a range of strategic studies topics including doctrine and grand strategy. A recent example, *Inspire*, is an English language online magazine reportedly produced by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). *Inspire* has several purposes including to provide information to potential jihadists in the United States and Great Britain who may aspire to be the next Major Hassan, the Fort Hood assassin. An examination of *Inspire's* various issues reveals that its topics include military theory and strategy. Other publications in Arabic such as *Sada al-Malahim (Echo of the Epics)* and *Sada al-Jihad (Echo of Jihad)* likewise devote attention to these issues.[87]

Military Strategy and the Use of Force

Among the central issues covered in professional journals of modern states' armed services are military strategy and the use of force. Planning how to employ coercive power in an effective and rational manner lies at the core of strategic studies discourse.

Since the late 1990s several jihadi thinkers/practitioners have realized both the need to develop rational strategies for employing coercive force, and the costs of failing to do so. They approach the development of strategy in their writings in a sec-

> *...several jihadi thinkers/practitioners have realized both the need to develop rational strategies for employing coercive force, and the costs of failing to do so.*

ular tone that sets religion aside (but does not take it off the table), and concentrates on practical matters associated with military strategy. These jihadi strategists draw on the works of several classical writers found on the syllabi at Western PME institutions, according to the Terrorist Perspectives Project of the Institute for Defense Analysis. In their volume *Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements* the authors note how the influence of Clausewitz is "suffusing jihadist writings."[88] Among the strategists they identify as utilizing concepts drawn from Clausewitz and other classic theorists is Abu-Ubayd al-Qurashi. Recall that in the years immediately following 9/11 his articles appeared regularly in the online magazine *Majallat al-Ansar*. Al-Qurashi warned that a gap exists "in the Islamic library when it comes to … the strategic branch of military education" and that this gap needs to be addressed because of its negative impact on "the new mujahidin." To fill the void, he recommended studying "[o]ne of the older theorists who influenced the art of war …Carl von Clausewitz." To that end, al-Qurashi recommends adopting some of Clausewitz's key insights and concepts to include the "center of gravity." He discusses how Clausewitz defined it, how AQAM should utilize it in fighting its enemies, and the challenges the United States has faced in trying to understand AQAM's center of gravity.[89]

Al-Qurashi explains that the reason for the Americans' quandary relates to the challenges posed by the clandestine nature of AQAM. In a related article in *Majallat al-Ansar* titled "America's Eyes," al-Qurashi elaborates: "From an organizational point of view, the *mujahidin* are different from

other enemies of the United States in that their organization is a complicated web-like structure" rather than the "official pyramid-shaped hierarchy" of a state.[90]

In addition to Clausewitz, al-Qurashi drew on other classics to frame his analysis of how to fight America and its allies including The Art of War by Sun Tzu, as well as other ancient Chinese strategists. He notes that while these "books teach the art of war as practiced by the ancient Chinese… [they] are not outdated, despite the advances in war technology and the radical changes in the methods of war." Writing in 2002, he argued that strategies proposed in those ancient texts were successfully employed "by the Vietnamese resistance fighters" against both the French and the United States, and they likewise had been used by the *mujahidin* in operations in Afghanistan following 9/11. Those operations "demonstrate our brothers' absorption of lessons that are more than 2,000 years old and the fact that they [also] benefited from the experiences of others east and west."[91]

Al-Qurashi is one of several al-Qaeda thinkers/practitioners who sought to study and adapt the professional literature on strategy to address the challenges facing al-Qaeda and the global jihadi movement. According to the Terrorist Perspectives Project, of particular interest to al-Qurashi and his colleagues are works concerning irregular and asymmetric warfare. Of course, this makes sense given that those aspects relate directly to the global jihadi movement's operations.[92]

Among those al-Qaeda thinkers/practitioners who have sought to do so, none stands out more vividly than Abd al-Aziz Al-Muqrin. Before writing on strategy, Al-Muqrin, who was born in Saudi Arabia, fought against the Soviet army in Afghanistan, and later fought with and served as a trainer for the Muslim forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the late 1990s he traveled to Somalia and did the same against Ethiopian forces in the Ogaden. There he was captured and extradited to Saudi Araba where he spent two years in prison.

Upon his release, Al-Muqrin returned to Afghanistan and became associated with bin Laden. In 2002, at the encouragement of the al-Qaeda chieftain he returned to Saudi Arabia to establish AQAP. It was at that time that he began writing on strategy for AQAP's online military journal, *Mu'askar Al-Battar*. Al-Muqrin's focus was on insurgency and guerrilla warfare.

Norman Cigar, a specialist on the military aspects of radical Islamic movements at Marine Corps University, has translated Al-Muqrin's book, *A*

Practical Course for Guerrilla War, and published it together with an insightful analysis of each of Muqrin's chapters. What Cigar found in that text was an "overall doctrinal architecture… a capstone document" that served as an introduction to a rich body of books, articles, and video presentations produced by other thinkers and practitioners. Compiled and published on the Internet by AQAP's military committee, those works expanded on what Al-Muqrin introduced earlier in *A Practical Course for Guerrilla War*.[93] Cigar explained that the military committee was "committed to making tools available for professional military education." They did so through "classroom instruction and field training in Saudi Arabia," as well as through "distance education, relying on the Internet as a vehicle to disseminate its instruction." All of these efforts sought to fill what AQAP saw as a "void in military knowledge" that prevented "Muslim youth … from preparing to fight."[94] Al-Muqrin's primer should be understood within this context.

A reading of *A Practical Course for Guerrilla War*, as well as of Al-Muqrin's articles in *Mu'askar Al-Battar*, shows that he was a systematic thinker, well informed by the professional literature on strategy, and on the subset of irregular and asymmetric warfare. This is evidenced in how he organized his text. He divides war into a taxonomy "based on military and human factors," including (1) conventional war, (2) total war, (3) cold war, and (4) unconventional or guerrilla war, which is his main concern.[95]

Cigar notes that Al-Muqrin draws heavily on past specialists in insurgency and guerrilla warfare, most notably Mao Zedong. For example, he adopts Mao's three phases of protracted guerrilla warfare for "our jihad in the Arabian Peninsula." Like Mao, Al-Muqrin "underscores that the people are a crucial factor … for both the government and the insurgents to succeed." He tells his readers that they "must pay attention to the people by understanding their grievances and that they will have to live among the people in order to gain their acceptance."[96] While this is right out of Mao's text, Cigar notes that Al-Muqrin's primer "represents an original synthesis, innovating primarily by casting the theory of insurgency within an Islamic framework," adopting Islamic terminology, and "using culturally accepted formats."[97]

Al-Muqrin is one of several jihadi thinkers/practitioners to draw on and adapt the professional literature on insurgency and guerrilla warfare to address issues of unconventional military strategy and the use of force for the jihadi movement. The Terrorist Perspectives Project analysts identify the

works of several of these thinkers/practitioners.[98] Likewise, in his analysis of Al-Muquin's text, Cigar also cites the works of other AQAP members who wrote on these issues for *Mu'askar Al-Battar*, including Yusuf Al-Ayyiri, who specialized in guerrilla operations in urban terrain.[99]

As noted above, the jihadi thinkers/practitioners concerned with developing rational strategies for the conduct of war also assessed past cases where jihads failed, in order to determine what went wrong and to learn from this. For example, al-Suri, in *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, examines "the most important jihadist experiences that occurred in the second half of this past century." He provides insightful analysis of many failures in thinking and methods.[100] Similar assessments of failures can be found in the previously discussed Strategic Studies section of *Majallat al-Ansar*, and in *Mu'askar Al-Battar*.

Finally, these jihadi thinkers/practitioners of strategy also provide assessments of the military methods employed by jihadi elements in recent conflicts. For example, in the aftermath of the U.S. regime change in Iraq, the unconventional jihadist fight there drew considerable attention. Three examples are noted. In the summer of 2003, Yusuf Ayiri, in "The Future of Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula after the Fall of Baghdad," proposed that in Iraq and elsewhere armed jihad must take place within the context of mobilizing the ummah for those campaigns. He then sets out how that should take place.[101]

One year later, in 2004, the Media Commission for the Victory of the Iraqi People posted a booklet on the Mujahidin Services Center website entitled "Jihad in Iraq: Hopes and Dangers." Dedicated to Yusuf al-Ayiri, who had been killed, the article highlighted the jihadist strategy that was currently being carried out in Iraq, including operational methods employed against the United States, Great Britain, Spain, and Poland. The authors noted that the key to success is fighting an unconventional war against the much more powerful conventional armies of these nations. "We are not exaggerating," they stated, "if we say that the guerrilla warfare [being waged] in Iraq is a good sign of tremendous achievement [that is] reminiscent of the Vietnam War." Later in the text they note how the *mujahidin* have been able to do so against the technologically more powerful coalition forces.[102]

Finally, in September 2006, the Madad al-Suyuf website posted links to an essay by the Egyptian jihadist Muhammad Khalil al-Hakaymah titled "Toward a New Strategy in Resisting the Occupier." Following this,

al-Hakaymah (Abu Jihad al-Masri) emerged as one of al-Qaeda's leading strategist since Abu Musab al-Suri, who was captured in Pakistan in November 2005. His essay offers a basic strategy for the jihadi movement, including guidance on tactics and targeting, and warnings against methods that could undermine popular support for the *mujahidin* in Iraq. The latter counsels against using excessive violence that causes civilian casualties. Al-Hakaymah explains that the essay aims to provide a "sketch" of a new strategy for defeating the United States that will serve as "a military guide to every field commander."[103]

In sum, what the above corroborates is that, first, within al-Qaeda and Associated Movements in the second half of the 1990s and then, in the aftermath of 9/11, within the Salafi jihadi movement, a group of thinkers/ practitioners engaged in an ongoing dialogue over strategy and the use of force. Additionally, they argued that this dialogue was essential to avoid the great costs incurred in the past of failing to do so. Secular in approach, they sought to adapt the professional literature on unconventional strategy to address the challenges facing the jihadi movement. This included the classics, and more importantly, literature focused on modern irregular and asymmetric warfare.

Those cited here constitute a snapshot of jihadi strategic studies related to military strategy and the use of force. More can be found in jihadi online publications, several of which are available in the SITE Intelligence Group's database, including translations of AQAM journals and how-to manuals. Above, *Majallat al-Ansar* was identified as the first jihadi publication to discuss military strategy and the use of force. Today, several other publications do so, including *Sada al-Malahim (Echo of the Epics)* and *Sada al-Jihad (Echo of Jihad)*, and the media centers that produce them. Translations of each are available through the SITE Intelligence Group. The following two examples from recent issues of each publication relate to the topics covered in this section.

In a 2011 issue of *Sada al-Malahim*, and other publications posted by the Al-Fajr Media Center, discuss the Arab spring uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, and the strategies utilized by those movements. While they do not contrast these cases with the violent strategies at the center of the AQAM use of force, discussion of nonviolent civil resistance movements and their achievements demonstrate frankness not normally associated with highly ideological groups.[104]

Another issue of *Sada al-Malahim* contained an assessment of the failed 2010 Christmas day suicide bomb attack by Omar Farouk Abdulmutallab on a Detroit-bound flight from Amsterdam. The article argues that despite the operation's failure, it was nonetheless effective because of the economic, psychological, and security aftershocks to the United States. The author urges others to follow this example and embrace individual jihad, arguing that an action by a lone individual is "more difficult to detect, faster to execute, and easier in penetrating the enemy."[105]

The SITE Intelligence Group also provides coverage of jihadi publications focused on Afghanistan. These include the Afghan Taliban's monthly magazine, *al-Samoud*, and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan's *Vanguards of Khorasan*. They also contain articles by jihadi thinkers/practitioners on strategy as it relates to the Afghan fight.

Operational Art and the Operational Level of War

Modern military theory, rooted in Clausewitz, divides warfare into three levels—strategic, operational, and tactical. However, in Western strategic studies, formal attention to the operational level is a relatively recent development compared to the strategic and tactical. Following World War II, the Soviet military surpassed other nations in formulating the principles of operational art. The roots of their thinking lies in the 1917 to 1936 period, where "the leadership of the Red Army laid the foundation for the development of Soviet operational art, the theory of deep operations, and the mechanization of the Red Army."[106]

Following WWII several senior Soviet military officers refined these concepts as they related to maneuver warfare.[107] Attention to the operational level within U.S. military circles began to mature only in the 1980s, as can be seen in American military journal articles.[108] Moreover, the operational level of war was embedded in the 1982 Army Field Manual, *Operations*, which approached the planning and conduct of war based on a thorough understanding of the interrelationships among all three levels.[109]

The operational level has been defined in various ways. The Department of Defense describes it as "[t]he level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to achieve strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas."[110] A campaign employs military force and related supporting activities in a series of integrated

operations to accomplish specific objectives in a given space and time period. Supporting activities include intelligence, as well as political and economic operations. Activities at the operational level "link strategy and tactics," the latter of which involve specific actions for prosecuting operations.[111]

Of the six core topics of professional strategic studies, operational art and the operational level of war have received the least attention by al-Qaeda and the global jihadi movement. For example, a review of studies by West Point's CTC, the Norwegian Defence Ministry's project, and the Institute for Defense Analysis Terrorist Perspective Project yields little evidence to suggest that jihadi security specialists have paid much attention to the operational level of war. However, this appears to be changing according to Dima Adamsky, an analyst at the Dado Center for Interdisciplinary Military Studies of the Israeli Defense Force. He has recently found a small number of "jihadi defense intellectuals" producing texts for "the global movement," which introduces "principles of operational art that inform [the] planning and execution of operations." Adamsky explains that these theorists are bringing in "operational art as a separate body of professional knowledge" to "coordinate the decentralized *jihadi* movement in a way consistent with the leadership's strategic vision."[112]

Given the setbacks that AQAM has suffered in the past decade, the formation of common operational principals, writes Adamsky, makes strategic sense for the now decentralized movement. "Shared notions of operational behavior and principles of war can elevate the utility of the *jihadi* force application. It will substitute command and control, which rests on structured bureaucracy, with a coherent doctrinal program."[113]

Best exemplifying attention to operational art as it relates to today's decentralized jihadi movement is the previously discussed text by AQAM strategic thinker, Abu Musab al-Suri. However, in the earlier work of Abu Bakr al-Naji, *The Management of Savagery*, attention is focused on the operational level of war.[114] Al-Naji provided guidelines for a jihadi campaign to draw the United States into a series of national-level conflicts of attrition. His strategic objective was aimed to bog the United States down militarily and economically in irregular wars. Through a series of regional setbacks, he proposed that AQAM could reduce U.S. presence in the Muslim world and create further opportunities for the jihadi movement. This protracted campaign would expose weaknesses in the U.S. capacity to defeat committed jihadi groups, thus setting the stage for establishing an Islamic state.[115]

What al-Naji proposed—sustained campaigns of major operations conducted within national-level areas to achieve strategic objectives—failed to reach fruition in the aftermath of 9/11. For example, he hoped that the United States would follow in the Soviet footsteps into Afghanistan in 2001, but that did not happen at that time as the Taliban regime was quickly toppled and sent running into Pakistan. However, one could argue that later on—beginning in 2004-2005—this began to take place. But early on it did not look that way. Likewise, al-Naji's enthusiasm for an American defeat in Iraq proved premature.

These failures led al-Suri in *The Global Islamic Resistance Call* to conclude that such efforts misjudged the U.S. challenges posed to the jihadi movement following 9/11. In the period preceding it, the al-Naji approach, which al-Suri terms "the school of open fronts and overt confrontation," had produced successes in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya through the use of "semi-regular guerrilla warfare."[116] However, due to the United States' use of "stunning technological superiority," this "theory of resistance" declined in the post-September 2001 world.[117]

In its place al-Suri proposed creating a leaderless resistance of "individual jihad and small cell terrorism."[118] His text focuses on how to establish a decentralized self-organizing and self-sustaining global jihad movement. In his review of al-Suri's *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, Adamsky explains how he introduced "the notion of operational art into *jihadi* military theory and demonstrated its practical application."[119]

Indeed, al-Suri formulates a decentralized form of operations for the jihadi movement based on his understanding of the post-9/11 transformation of the fight with the United States. In doing so, he "outlines how to operate and organize the fighting force … to assure that principles of war and methods of engagement are in accord with operational realit[y]… that calls for the independent formation and activation of [global] resistance units without any command and control links to the center. A decentralized method facilitates coexistence of strategic homogeneity and operational diversity."[120]

To summarize, al-Suri and al-Naji, prominent jihadi strategic thinkers, propose methods for conducting and managing sustained campaigns and operations to achieve strategic objectives within specific operational areas. In doing so they suggest methods consistent with the Western military concepts of operational art and operational level of war. However, it

is unclear how influential either has been, given the diffuse nature of the jihadi movement. Nevertheless, both thinkers advanced the development of jihadi strategic studies by introducing the principles of operational art as a separate body of professional knowledge and methodology for coordinating the jihadi movement's global activities in support of strategic objectives.

Tactical Innovation and Training

Military tactics involve specific armed force actions aimed to achieve success in support of specific operations. In professional military publications the discussion of tactics involves examination of a wide array of topics concerned with various tactical innovations including weaponry as well as training and preparation.

In the aftermath of 9/11, these topics received considerable attention on the websites and in the security studies publications of al-Qaeda and the Salafi jihadi movement. Evidence of this is in the large volume of translated jihadi tactical manuals, handbooks, videos, and related materials from the Internet and other sources, which can be found in the SITE Intelligence Group's databases.

How al-Qaeda and the jihadi movement discuss tactical innovations and training in their security discourse has also been assessed in studies and reports produced by the research projects and programs selected for this study. In this section, we focus on a series of studies generated by analysts at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment's project, beginning with Lia's "Doctrine for Jihadi Terrorist Training." This examines selected writings of leading jihadi theorists to determine how the topics of jihad training and preparation have been defined and their specific purposes. Discussion includes where training should "take place, how it should be organized, and … the role of training in overall jihadi strategy?"[121]

To answer these questions Lia appraised the texts of Abdallah Azzam (discussed earlier), Sayyid Imam al-Sharif, leader of the Egyptian Islamic jihad in the late 1980s, Abu Bakr Naji, and Abu Musab al-Suri (discussed earlier). He found that each of these four key figures considered training an integral part of jihadi preparation. However, there was no consensus among them as to how training "should be defined, its ultimate purpose, and, not least, where to prepare jihadi fighters."[122] This is not surprising given the 20-year time period that their works spanned. What these differences

suggest, Lia deduced, is that "al-Qaida, and the global jihadi movement are actively adapting their training concepts and doctrines to the changing [conflict] environment facing them."[123]

While Lia concentrated on broad training doctrine, other researchers from his institute drew primarily from jihadi sources to assess a range of narrower issues on training and tactical instruction. For example, Anne Stenersen documented how AQAM utilized the Internet to do so in two principle ways. First, a wide array of "instruction manuals and [instructional] videos on technical and tactical subjects, such as explosives making, guerrilla warfare, hostage taking and operational and field security" are appraised.[124] This included, since 9/11, the use of advances in software to produce a large number of high quality training films.[125]

Second, in addition to serving as a resource bank, Stenersen found that the World Wide Web also provides an "interactive environment where people can discuss training-related issues, exchange personal experiences, and communicate with online trainers who can explain and clarify problematic subjects."[126] A case in point is *al-Firdaws*, one of a number of Internet discussion forums devoted to al-Qaeda and jihadi security issues. An examination of topics addressing "equipment and preparation" between 2005 and 2006 revealed that "explosives and conventional weapons" represented 65 percent of the forum's interchange. Subjects receiving 5-9 percent attention include field skills, security, organization, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons.[127] While these discussion forums have proved vulnerable to Western counterintelligence, Stenersen found that those operating them have developed countermeasures to protect the identities of those engaged in online deliberations.

Finally, Petter Nesser discloses how in the aftermath of 9/11 "second generation jihadi terrorists" in Europe sought "alternative ways to obtain necessary training after al-Qaeda camps were destroyed [in Afghanistan]." To do so they turned, in part, to the security-related publications and video products of AQAM that addressed "technical, physical, and psychological capabilities needed to conduct terrorist operations." These included the use of Internet communication and training manuals, videos, and explosives recipes that could be downloaded during operational planning.[128] This was combined, when possible, with attempts by second-generation jihadis in Europe to interact "face-to-face with organized mujahidin," and to travel to

camps in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and elsewhere "to obtain real-life training and develop necessary skills."[129]

To document these developments Nesser described the training of second-generation European jihadis through four case studies. In each instance he underscored how they sought "to learn basic military skills, how to assemble and set off bombs, and terrorism tactics such as reconnaissance, counter-intelligence, and so forth."[130] While those involved in each case were willing to take the risk of traveling to overseas combat zones to learn first-hand from experienced fighters, they made use of that part of jihadi security studies concerned with tactics and training.

The cases investigated by Nesser, which covered the years 2001 to 2005, revealed important limitations in terms of the capacity of second-generation jihadis to use the Internet as a core mechanism for training. He concluded that as technological advances continue to develop, European jihadis will have access to new means to "overcome the problem of 'self-training' through the use of the Internet, and fulfill training 'on the spot' inside Europe." If that transpires, "then it will become harder to detect" second-generation jihadis who will then be more likely to succeed.[131]

Jihadi Internet forums contain an array of materials on various aspects of training, including how to prepare for the fight in different geographical environments including urban terrain. In 2005 a lengthy guide for fighting in cities was posted on an al-Qaeda affiliated forum with extensive military and security details. Under "Training Course for Urban Warfare," was information on the preparation, conduct, and execution of attacks within "built-up areas." The author placed particular emphasis on how to organize and effectively use forces trained for combat in the urban environment.[132]

Given that al-Qaeda and its affiliates are engaged in a protracted global fight, it makes sense that they have devoted considerable attention to tactical innovations in their security-related periodicals and discussion forums, including attention to methods for conducting attacks with various weapons. Of these topics, none has received more discussion than how to employ and adapt improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Early examples focused on the basics—how to construct the charge, the distance that the IED should be placed from the target, and the amount of explosives to be used against different targets. However, within a short period of time this instruction broadened to address ways in which the U.S. military sought to address IEDs and the counter-measures that the *mujahidin* could take. For example,

in 2006 the U.S. Army deployed the Joint IED Neutralizer to reduce IED threats. No sooner did that take place than pieces began to appear on jihadi websites describing the specifications of the Neutralizer, where it was less reinforced, and methods to defeat it.[133] In 2007 the Al-Furqan Foundation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) issued a video, "The Hunters of Minesweepers," in which a jihadi field commander provides information on minesweepers that the U.S. military in Iraq uses against road IEDs. He describes how *mujahidin* knowledge, strategy, and tactics have evolved to damage or destroy minesweepers, thus providing ways to undercut the U.S. IED countermeasures.[134]

...mujahidin knowledge, strategy, and tactics have evolved to damage or destroy minesweepers, thus providing ways to undercut the U.S. IED countermeasures.

Since 2007 many interviews with al-Qaeda and jihadi field commanders on how they employed IEDs and other weapons in Iraq and Afghanistan have been collected in the SITE Intelligence Group's databases. For example, in September 2010 a jihadi operator who had previously posted video tutorials on how to build mobile phone detonators, added one on the use of pressure plate improvised explosive devices. It was first posted on the Ansar al-Mujahidin forum on 5 September 2010, and then two days later, it appeared on the Shumukh al-Islam forum website.[135]

In January 2011 the ISI released two videos focusing on the manufacture and use of various types of IEDs. The second, titled "Devices That Are the Most Effective," is a documentary on the use of various kinds of IEDs as a relatively cheap and effective weapon against enemy forces, and highlights advancements that the ISI has made in their development. The video concludes with a discussion between the narrator and an unidentified ISI commander, and comments by a fighter who planted IEDs beneath enemy vehicles, along with comments on U.S. reactions and countermeasures. Various clips analyzing actual operations are also included.[136]

While several other examples of methods and means for conducting attacks with various weapons can be cited from jihadi websites and security-related publications to illustrate this category of their strategic studies discourse, a powerful example highlighted here is the role of snipers. It is not surprising that a rich discussion of the topic has taken place given that in

the modern history of insurgency, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare, snipers have played a prominent role.

Jihadi discussion of sniper methods begin with the basics. For example, in August 2007 in a jihadi Internet forum, a *mujahidin* member of the Islamic Army in Iraq posted on camouflage dress and weapons concealment methods. To do so he used Western military sources as well as *mujahidin* experiences in Algeria and Afghanistan to highlight practical ways for snipers to blend into their surroundings to avoid detection.[137]

Moving beyond the basics, in 2007, the Islamic Army in Iraq posted a three-part video titled "The Baghdad Sniper." In addition to a website, a blog was posted on this video as well. Both the videos and website materials had either subtitles or audio translations in eight languages.[138] Earlier in 2006 a password-protected jihadi forum, Mohajroon, likewise posted multi-media materials for a sniper training course.[139] Finally, jihadi security-related periodicals and website forums draw on the "best practices" of sniper methods. For example, the password-protected forum, al-Boraq, in October 2007 published an Arabic-subtitled version of the well-known training video "The Ultimate Sniper," which was then distributed to several jihadist Internet forums. The production is a straightforward dubbing of John Plaster's video by the same name. A former highly accomplished Special Forces operator with vast experience in Vietnam, Plaster offers in-depth instruction in sniping methods. In addition to the video, al-Boraq posted an electronic version of his 580-page book (but it was not translated into Arabic). The forum directed members to Plaster's website to access useful discussions about different sniper methods.[140]

Organization and Force Structure Requirements

The final core subject addressed in the professional literature of modern armed services focuses on how combat forces are organized, supported, and sustained. These issues are likewise discussed on jihadi websites and forums dealing with security issues.

Since 9/11 the issue of al-Qaeda's organizational structure and its impact on its access of Afghanistan as a home base and sanctuary, along with its failure in Iraq has also been of keen interest to Western specialists. These developments have led some like Marc Sageman to argue that while the old centralized al-Qaeda remains a possible threat from its Pakistan sanctuary,

much more worrisome are the new jihadis that have emerged as a decentralized network of global jihadi fighters radicalized by their engagement with the Internet's virtual jihadi training. In *Leaderless Jihad*, Sageman asserts that "the present threat has evolved from a structured group of al-Qaeda masterminds, controlling vast resources and issuing commands, to a multitude of informal local groups" like those who carried out the 2004 Madrid attacks and 2007 London subway bombings.[141]

Not surprisingly, scholars disagree over this proposition. Most notably, Bruce Hoffman published a major critique of Sageman's thesis in *Foreign Affairs* challenging the assertion that al-Qaeda no longer exists as a viable centralized organization but rather as a decentralized social network.[142] This has, in turn, generated further debate and disagreements. Regardless of who is closer to the truth, the Sageman proposition reflects the organizational blueprint that al-Qaeda strategic thinker Abu Musab al-Suri put forward in his *Global Islamic Resistance Call.* Al-Suri proposed that in the aftermath of 9/11 and with al-Qaeda's core leadership isolated in Pakistan, a new decentralized organizational structure was needed to replace the old centralized one if the fight was to continue. The old hierarchical system, dependent on traditional methods of leadership and command and control, would not survive on a post-9/11 battlefield, that is, if the United States and its allies were actively engaged. Al-Suri highlighted al-Qaeda's loss of Afghanistan within a few months as illustrative. AQAM had to evolve and transform, he asserted, into loosely associated groups, cells, and individuals capable of independent operations. Al-Suri sought to provide an overall design for organizing a decentralized and leaderless international jihadi fighting force. He conceptualized the organizational vision for it, stressed the importance of ideological commitment to a millenarian or apocalyptic struggle, and proposed specific methods for creating self-organized, self-sustained fighting units.

Al-Suri's organizational design generated much discussion among members of the jihadi strategic discourse. While different in substance from that of modern military establishments, this exchange reflects the organization building, operating, and sustaining topics considered in the professional 21st century security publications.

The impact of al-Suri's proposal is reflected by how frequently his works are excerpted in jihadi security-related publications and discussed in their online forums. For example, AQAP's June 2010 issue of *Inspire* contained

extracts from al-Suri's writings on how to organize for the global fight;[143] soon after his video lectures on how to conduct the fight were posted on various jihadi Internet sites. For example, Elif Media, a Turkish jihadi forum, issued a Turkish version of one of al-Suri's lectures in February 2010.[144]

In other instances the focus is on where and how to put into practice al-Suri's self-organizing concepts. For example, in a 2007 discussion on an al-Qaeda-affiliated forum, al-Ekhlaas, participants explored why jihadi attacks were not taking place in Kuwait. While all agreed on the legitimacy of jihad being directed against Kuwait, several noted that Muslims there were currently lacking in capability. To remedy that shortcoming one forum participant suggested that they adopt the concepts proposed in the *Global Islamic Resistance Call* by Sheikh Abu Musab al-Suri. "In it you will find what you are looking for," the forum member suggested. Specifically, it was recommended that local clandestine cells be established to "start doing small things which do not leave traces behind … such as sniping operations and bombings."[145] In 2008 a posting on the same forum announced the establishment of the "Al-Ekhlaas Brigade" modeled on al-Suri's organizational concepts. "The idea behind the Al-Ekhlaas Brigade was to bring members of a virtual community into real cells, launching attacks independently while coordinating and receiving instruction via the Internet."[146]

In February 2007 the Keepers of the Promise website posted an article from al-Qaeda in the Land of Al-Kinanah (Egypt) titled "How to Perform Jihad Alone: Preparation and Training." The second in a series, it explains that in the aftermath of 9/11 the security conditions changed and consequently jihadi training must now concentrate on "basic weapons used in guerrilla warfare" and training and that attacks should "take place in homes." Much of the advice in the article reflects the arguments of al-Suri.[147]

But not all agreed with this localized, self-starting approach. For example, an article on a jihadi website in July 2008 called for Egyptians to train in Sudan, then to either return to Egypt or to deploy to other jihad fronts such as Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan. The author explains that Sudan is a good place for training Egyptian jihadis since "its domestic situation allows for that," he voices confidence about his "concept."[148] This disagreement withstanding, what distinguishes the discussion of al-Suri's proposals on how to organize for global jihadi combat with how Western professional military forums treat this topic is the lack of meaningful criticism or challenges to his arguments.

In the American military discourse this core topic includes a focus not only on the organization of combat forces but also on military units that provide support for them. This is also true for the jihadi strategic studies discourse. Here we will focus on one crucial support element, intelligence, a topic that has received considerable attention in jihadi forums concerned with strategic issues, as several Western specialists have noted.

For example, William Rosenau asserts a "near universal agreement among practitioners that insurgent success requires effective intelligence." He finds that the emergence of "dedicated intelligence organs" by an armed group signals that it "has advanced along the evolutionary path. At their most robust and formidable, these intelligence structures are part of … a parallel underground structure that challenges the state's Weberian monopoly on the use of force. Groups as diverse as the PIRA, al-Qaeda in Iraq, and the Palestine Liberation Organization established … robust intelligence structures at their centers."[149]

Gaetano Ilardi likewise found a deep-seated commitment to nurturing both operational intelligence and counterintelligence (CI) capabilities in al-Qaeda's manuals and security-related publications. In terms of the former, he notes that this can be observed in how "Al Qaeda's collection and use of detailed intelligence [analysis] reveals a capacity to calculate the consequences of alternative courses of action, thereby helping to dispel notions of an irrationality or fanaticism in which decision making is somehow removed from reality." Moreover, Ilardi found that in crafting the operations of its fighting units AQAM makes extensive use of intelligence collection as a "routine and integral part of … planning and decision-making." As with the security forces of the modern state, Ilardi concludes that operational intelligence collection and analysis is a key support element in determining an operation's "success and failure." [150]

With respect to CI, Ilardi likewise observes that al-Qaeda and its affiliates have adopted a "methodical approach to counterintelligence," as seen in a number of its "operational manuals."[151] Indeed, Ilardi highlights how counterintelligence is, for al-Qaeda, "the foundation upon which all other matters and activities rest." Consequently, in its "web-based forums" AQAM "propagates new counterintelligence methods in response to the latest counterterrorist tactics employed by the world's security services."[152]

The importance of intelligence and counterintelligence can be seen in articles published in the "Security and Intelligence Column" of AQAP's

online military journal, *Mu'askar Al-Battar*. For example, in a piece titled "Security and Intelligence" the author describes the "types and purposes" of intelligence, detailing its "various divisions and applications."[153] In other issues of *Mu'askar Al-Battar* one finds discussions of a wide range of intelligence and counterintelligence issues, including how to secure communications and transportation resources, and the use of codes.[154] Also found in the "Security and Intelligence Column" is information on operational intelligence techniques such as cover, elements of surveillance, and conditions for safe houses.[155]

Finally, deliberation about intelligence also includes examination of the structure and practices of the U.S. intelligence community. Of these studies, the most comprehensive is that of Muhammad Khalil al-Hakaymah. An early member of the Egyptian Islamic Group (al-Gamaa al-Islamiya), al-Hakaymah, joined the fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the late 1980s. Following 9/11 he returned to the Afghan-Pakistan region. In August 2006 he swore allegiance to al-Qaeda on behalf of al-Gamaa al-Islamiya,[156] following which he emerged as an important al-Qaeda figure in the Afghan-Pakistan region. In this capacity he has made important contributions to the jihadi strategic discourse both on intelligence and how to organize for the global fight.

With respect to U.S. intelligence, al-Hakaymah in 2006 produced a wide-ranging paper examining the structure and practices of U.S. intelligence, *The Myth of Delusion: Exposing American Intelligence*.[157] Brian Fishman of West Point's CTC saw it as "an exhaustively researched dissertation on the structure, practices, and weaknesses of the U.S. intelligence community." Al-Hakaymah's study is "a prime example of jihadi open source intelligence gathering" and use of American sources to identify U.S. intelligence weaknesses.[158]

Al-Hakaymah's strategic objective in this study is to demonstrate to jihadis engaged in the global fight that U.S. intelligence in general, and the CIA in particular, is not omnipotent. For example, he notes that al-Qaeda "sources inside Pakistan's intelligence services alerted bin Laden to the 1998 cruise missile attack on his training camps in Afghanistan."[159] He pays particular attention to how in the past the CIA has been penetrated by other intelligence services, both those of enemies (the former Soviet Union's KGB) and friends (Israel's Mossad).

This is interesting in light of al-Qaeda's use of a double agent to penetrate and carry out a suicide attack against a CIA unit located at Forward Operating Base Chapman near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border on 30 December 2009. Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi, a Jordanian doctor known for supporting violent Islamist causes, was arrested by the Jordan's General Intelligence Directorate (GID) a year earlier. During that time Jordanian intelligence believed they had transformed al-Balawi into a double agent and they sent him to Pakistan to infiltrate radical groups. He managed through information he provided to become a trusted agent of the GID and then the CIA who was believed to have access to senior al-Qaeda leaders. Consequently, he was permitted to enter the base without being searched. This allowed al-Balawi to kill seven CIA officers, as well as his Jordanian handler, and the Afghan security director of the base.

The attack demonstrated that al-Balawi's true handlers, whether al-Qaeda or the Taliban, were capable of running a sophisticated double agent operation against a high value U.S. target, in this case the CIA cell at Forward Operating Base Chapman. In other words, he was dangled in front of the CIA and Jordanians from the beginning, and his handlers provided him with information that established his *bona fides* with both the GID and CIA.[160]

While *The Myth of Delusion* provides an excellent example of how jihadi strategic analysts seek to understand how the U.S. security community is organized, Fishman finds that al-Hakaymah's assessment has key shortcomings: "Despite this scholarly approach, al-Hakaymah often misstates facts and his subsequent analysis is frequently faulty. He seems unable to distinguish between credible and bogus sources."[161] Despite these shortcomings, *The Myth of Delusion* constitutes a serious attempt to provide the jihadi movement with a strategic assessment of the structure, practices and vulnerabilities of U.S. intelligence.[162]

4. Strategic Implications: "Not Like Yesterday's Irregular Warfare"

This study began with a quote by General Rupert Smith asserting that a paradigm shift has taken place with respect to the conduct of modern war. A former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, he had trained to fight "interstate industrialized warfare" against Warsaw Pact armies. But in the Cold War's aftermath, the general faced conflicts that diverged considerably from this standard, in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Then, in retirement, he witnessed the 9/11 attacks, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and al-Qaeda's transnational evolution. As a result he concluded that war today no longer reflects the dominant 20th century conventional paradigm.

An examination of the patterns of conflict and war over the last two decades provides plenty of evidence to support Smith's proposition. War has evolved significantly beyond conventional fights between the armies of nation-states. An examination of the trends since the end of the Cold War provides ample empirical confirmation of a prevalent and enduring pattern of irregular conflict.

For example, the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO), in association with the University of Uppsala Data Conflict Program in Sweden, records global armed conflicts annually, dividing them into four categories: interstate, intrastate, extra-state, and internationalized internal conflict. Their database illustrates the rise in the number of conflicts fought between states and armed groups. According to PRIO, in the 1950s these represented between a third and half of all conflicts. But by the 1990s they accounted for nearly all armed conflict. And this trend has continued since 9/11.[163]

Key actors in these irregular struggles are armed groups, not just nations. In the last two decades, according to several research organizations, armed groups have multiplied in number, and for some their capacity to conduct irregular warfare has likewise undergone a transformation.[164] Armed groups can now acquire capabilities to execute violent strikes that have a strategic impact on major, powerful states, not just weak ones. Plus, they can extend the battlefield across the globe to do so.[165]

Armed groups are capable of this today because several new capabilities or power enhancers became available beginning in the later 1980s,

and especially since the end of the Cold War. Groups that can exploit globalization, information age technologies, and related developments to marshal these capabilities can now develop sophisticated organizations with enhanced power projection capacity. In other words, armed groups today have access to capabilities that were not available to their Cold War counterparts.

Al-Qaeda and the transnational jihadi movement it has fostered is a premier example of this transformation in armed group power. Over the last 20 years they illustrated, perhaps more than any of their contemporaries, that 21st century armed groups have access to the means, if they can attain them, to fight irregular wars in ways that are "not like yesterday's." To more fully understand why this has been the case this study utilized two analytic tools—strategic culture and strategic studies—that, in the past, have been employed almost exclusively to assess the challenges posed by nation-state antagonists.

Through these two constructs, al-Qaeda's evolution into a transnational jihadi movement that believes it is fighting an apocalyptic global war can be more clearly traced, and the complex security challenges it will continue to pose in the years ahead can be better discerned. These constructs provide diagnostic tools or lenses through which we can (1) identify and assess developments that have shaped this non-state actor's evolution and behavior, and (2) gain insights into its future behavior and patterns of action. We can do this by examining the movement's discourse over the core strategic subjects of doctrine, strategy, and the use of force, operational art, and related issues of tactics, training, and organization.

An assessment of al-Qaeda's evolution over two decades through the lens of strategic culture reveals, first, how its deeply ensconced ideational and historical foundations have shaped a resilient warfighting narrative. That narrative depicts a global millenarian or apocalyptic struggle, a long and protracted jihad. This worldview, which can be traced to Sayyid Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood of the 1950s, calls for a global struggle with the United States and its allies including apostate Muslim governments. And despite major setbacks since 9/11 al-Qaeda's *us versus them* narrative continues to remain resilient and attract followers from a multitude of countries who, in several instances, recruit themselves to the fight. Consequently, in terms of countering al-Qaeda and its associated groups, the U.S. killing of

bin Laden and a number of senior al-Qaeda leaders is important, but will not be sufficient in and of itself to stop AQAM.

The interplay of al-Qaeda central with its affiliated groups, associated movements, and inspired adherents provides an increasing number of national and transnational pathways for participating in the global jihad movement. Assessing that interplay through the lens of strategic culture reveals a transnational jihadi movement with deep roots and staying power, an organization that has proven capable of adapting and transforming to a changing context over the two decades following 9/11. This can be seen in how al-Qaeda and the jihadi movement that it inspired has approached the issue of ends and means for advancing beliefs and values and achieving objectives. To meet new challenges in the aftermath of Operation Enduring Freedom, al-Qaeda and local movements identified with it employed a wide array of new means, three of which were highlighted in the first part of this study, which focused on al-Qaeda's strategic culture.

In sum, an assessment of al-Qaeda's strategic culture provides a deeper understanding of its evolution into a transnational movement, and helps to better discern its vision, worldview, strategies, and operating principles. Globalization and modern information technologies have facilitated al-Qaeda's evolution. These new tools have also enhanced the capabilities and resilience of AQAM by enabling it to adapt to the ever-changing pressures of war, and through the aggregation of those adaptations, to continue to wage protracted warfare.

The construct of strategic studies has likewise been helpful in gaining insight into the new options for violent adaptation that AQAM has been discussing and utilizing since 9/11. In doing so, the debates that AQAM has engaged in over these core strategic topics, and their consequences for waging their global jihad have been examined here. This review has revealed how at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels al-Qaeda and its associates have engaged in a rich, sophisticated, and innovative dialogue that is directly relevant to how they carry out global jihad. As Hegghammer noted, materials of this kind are "strikingly similar to Western strategic studies."

Moreover, what the publications and forums that constitute jihadi strategic studies illustrate is that the United States faces not only a powerful non-state adversary with staying power, but also one that consists of numerous strategic thinkers deeply engaged in a complex professional dialogue over how to evolve at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels so as to

continue to carry out the long jihad against a far more powerful enemy who has escalated the fight over the last 10 years. Within the jihadi movement a number of thoughtful and intellectually nimble individuals are thinking strategically and searching for solutions to these combat challenges.

This is illustrated most vividly in that part of jihadi strategic studies concerned with military strategy and the use of force. Planning how to adapt and employ coercive power in an effective manner lies at the core of AQAM's strategic studies discourse. Several jihadi thinkers/practitioners have concentrated on both the need to develop rational strategies for the jihad with the United States, and on the costs of failing to do so. They approach these matters in a secular tone that concentrates on practical issues associated with the development of warfighting strategy. They need to be taken seriously and studied.

Planning how to adapt and employ coercive power in an effective manner lies at the core of AQAM's strategic studies discourse.

These thinkers/practitioners have sought to study and adapt the professional literature on strategy to the challenges facing al-Qaeda and the global jihadi movement. In doing so, they have concentrated on Western security specialists concerned with irregular and asymmetric warfare. These aspects of modern military thought have direct relevance to the global jihadi movement today. A review of these works reveals they are systematic thinkers, well read in the professional literature on military strategy in general, and on ways to adapt the subset of insurgency and guerrilla warfare tactics to the global fight against the United States and its allies, in particular. This includes how to employ these irregular approaches in urban areas.

In sum, we have found that the jihadi strategic studies discourse seriously examines issues related to military strategy and the use of force. These jihadi movement thinkers stress the importance of adapting the professional military literature on irregular and asymmetric warfare to new challenges as they arise. Furthermore, they recognize the great costs incurred in the past of not doing so. The materials cited here constitute a snapshot of what exists in jihadi strategic studies.

A similar professional discussion is taking place in jihadi strategic studies over doctrine, operational art, and the related issues of tactics, training, and organization. What this illustrates, as noted earlier, is that al-Qaeda and the transnational jihadi movement constitutes not only a deeply committed

adversary with staying power but also an adaptable enemy who is intensely engaged in a rational and sophisticated strategic discourse to identify and develop new avenues for violent adaptation at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of the global jihad.

The implications of these developments could not be more clear for those in the U.S. military and civilian security services engaged in this struggle, and, most importantly, for Special Operations Forces (SOF) who are at the forward edge of the battle. This fight is not nearly over.

Al-Qaeda with its regional affiliated groups, associated groups, and inspired adherents illustrates, perhaps better than any of its armed group counterparts, a capacity to conduct irregular war that has been transformational. Over the last 20 years they have taken advantage of the new capabilities afforded to them by globalization, information age technologies, and related developments, as well as adapted existing means, to establish a sophisticated network with enhanced power projection capacity. Through the establishment of a robust strategic studies discourse they have sought to develop new and creative ways to modify and re-tool their capabilities to carry out what they consider a protracted global war.

Therefore, it is essential that U.S. Special Operations Forces and their counterparts in other services and agencies study and assess this enemy on its own terms. This means SOF must: (1) Understand AQAM's strategic culture and its impact on its capabilities, resiliency, adaptability, and capacity to stay at war, and (2) Recognize that this is a "learning" enemy who is deeply engaged in an ongoing strategic studies dialogue to discover new strategic, operational and tactical solutions for the warfighting challenges it faces today and will face in the future. The products of that discourse, which are readily available, should be studied, for they provide an important lens through which to assess the challenges al-Qaeda and the jihadi movement will pose in the coming years. Given that AQAM is a learning and adapting enemy, as demonstrated here, then U.S. Special Operations Forces have no alternative but to assess their strategic studies discourse and to likewise learn and adapt.

To do so, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) should establish within its own intelligence division an *e-section* that has the analytic capacity to carry out, on an ongoing basis, the kind of assessment outlined in this study. But it must go well beyond the approach taken here, which only scratches the surface. The *e-section* would not only analyze what is

found in the discourse that is taking place on jihadi websites and through various Internet vehicles but how it is being adopted and adapted by al-Qaeda, its local affiliated and associated groups, and inspired individuals at the operational and tactical levels of the fight across the globe. Based on that knowledge, SOF would then develop the operational and tactical means to parry and degrade these threats when it faces them. To do so, forward deployed SOF engaged in these local conflicts should have their own e-capability tied back to USSOCOM's intelligence division. By doing so, they can draw on that *e-section* expertise to help meet the challenges forward deployed SOF units and their host nation counterparts are facing and will continue to face.

Finally, these developments have implications for 21st century instability and irregular conflicts that go beyond al-Qaeda and the transnational jihadi movement. Other armed groups operating in different contexts will also learn from jihadi strategic studies to enhance their warfighting capacity. And as they draw on and learn from AQAM's strategic discourse, as well as from the experiences of other armed groups, they will be able to enhance their capacity and escalate their local and/or regional fights.

While this study has focused on how al-Qaeda and the transnational jihadi movement utilize modern communications, they are not the only non-state armed group to do so. Although there may be no other example of an armed group conducting a strategic studies discourse at the level described here, that does not mean that there are no other avenues for the many armed groups that now exist to pursue learning and adaption by studying their counterparts.

Irregular conflict during the first quarter of the 21st century will largely result from the growing number of weak and failing states. These conditions afford opportunities for armed groups to exploit. In more than a few cases, the security predicaments that these weak states face will also affect the local and regional interests of the United States.[166] Consequently, what this implies for SOF is that it will likely become engaged in a range of deployments from small-scale advisory missions to those requiring limited U.S. presence to assist the security forces of weak states to address these challenges. In each of these scenarios various kinds of armed groups will be engaged in irregular fights that will be "unlike yesterday's."

Enabled by ever-evolving modern technology, which enhances both communications capabilities and war machinery, along with the economic,

social, and political changes ushered in by globalization, non-state armed groups will continue to flourish. As was noted earlier, according to several research organizations,[167] armed groups have over the last 20 years multiplied in number, and for some their capacity to conduct irregular warfare has likewise undergone a transformation. Armed groups are now able to get hold of the means to carry out violent attacks that have a strategic impact on major states, not just weak ones, extending the battlefield regionally and beyond.

As a result, U.S. Special Operations Forces will likewise continue to be challenged by the dynamic irregular conflicts that non-state armed groups will wage, and must be cognizant of the fact that these groups can and will learn, adapt, and transform in the midst of the fight. This means that the SOF community must develop knowledge and understanding of the different contexts in which they will find themselves in the years ahead engaged in *small-scale advisory limited U.S. presence* missions. Consequently, within the SOF school houses to include the Joint Special Operations University and John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School the capacity must be expanded to carry out systematic and interdisciplinary studies and assessments of both today's and tomorrow's irregular warfare and of the non-state armed groups executing it. SOF school houses must develop the institutional capacity—in tandem—to carry out the systematic study of irregular warfare and armed groups through an array of learning mechanisms and vehicles to support SOF in the many engagements that lie on the operational horizon. ⬆

Endnotes

1. In conducting this study I owe a great deal of intellectual debt to Dr. Roy Godson, president of the National Strategy Information Center. At NSIC, under his intellectual guidance, I took part in a two-year project that focused on *Adapting America's Security Paradigm and Security Agenda* for 21st century security challenges. It is available at www.strategycenter.org. As part of that study Dr. Godson proposed that armed groups could also possess strategic cultures and we studied several as part of that project. That is where the idea for this study, which combines with the concept of strategic studies that of strategic studies has its origins.

2. See Thomas Mahnken, "The Future of Strategic Studies," *Journal of Strategic Studies* (No. 1, 2003); Richard Betts, "Should Strategic Studies Survive," *World Politics* No. 1, 1997); and Bernard Loo, "The Future of Strategic Studies," www.mindef.gov.sg/8arfmeet/papers/singaporeBernardLoo_paper.pdf.

3. Jeannie L. Johnson and Jeffrey A. Larsen, "Comparative Strategic Culture Syllabus," p. 3. This syllabus, part of a DTRA project completed in 2006, contains numerous research articles on the theoretical and conceptual aspects of strategic culture, as well as several case studies.

4. Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Options* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1977), pp. 6-9.

5. Colin Gray, "National Style in Strategy, *International Security* (Fall 1981); "Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture," paper prepared for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office's Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum (2006), p. 8.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

7. Darryl Howlett, "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature," *Strategic Insights*, Vol. IV, Issue 10 (October 2005). www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2005/Oct/howlettOct05.html.

8. Stephen Rosen, *Societies and Military Power: India and Its Armies* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 8-9.

9. See Michael C. Desch's assessment of this topic's literature at the end of the 1990s: "Culture Clashes," *International Security* (Summer 1998).

10. Gray concludes: "Culture yields … the truths … that we know should guide our decisions and actions. In practice, we will often ignore those truths and behave expediently." Nevertheless, "strategic culture is likely to educate us with quite powerful preferences." See "Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture," paper prepared for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office's Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum (2006), p. 12.

11. Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review* (No. 3, 2003), p. 11.

12.   See Roy Godson and Richard H. Shultz, Jr.'s, *Adapting America's Security Paradigm and Security Agenda* (Washington, DC: National Strategy Information Center, 2010), p. 35. This report is based on extensive research and analysis that benefited from the assistance of a working group of leading security practitioners from democracies around the world. Those individuals shared their firsthand experiences and insights about the contemporary conflict environment — all having held senior-level positions in their nation's military, diplomatic, or intelligence services. They also reviewed and helped refine the report's major findings and recommendations. The report is available at www.strategycenter.org/files/adapting_the_paradigm.pdf.

13.   This graphic is an adaptation of one developed by David Knoll to analyze the strategic culture of the Pakistan Army. See David Knoll, "The Pakistani Army's 2003–2008 Incursions into North and South Waziristan: A Strategic Culture Approach," unpublished Master's Thesis, Fletcher School, Tufts University (2011), pp. 20-21.

14.   Betts, "Should Strategic Studies Survive," p. 8.

15.   John Baylis, "The Continuing Relevance of Strategic Studies in the Post-Cold War Era," *Defense Studies*, Volume 1, Number 2, Summer 2001 , p. 4.

16.   Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (London: Castle, 1973), p. 452.

17.   John Baylis, James Wirtz, and Colin Gray, *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 13.

18.   Betts, "Should Strategic Studies Survive," p. 9.

19.   The term *The Solid Base* was coined by Abdullah Yusuf Azzam (aka Sheikh Azzam) in the 1980s; he emerged as the inspirational ideologist and central figure in the initial steps in the development of the international Islamist resistance in Afghanistan. After relocating to Pakistan in 1980 he established Maktab al-Khadamat (Services Office) to organize a support infrastructure in Peshawar to house those who came to be known as "Afghan Arabs" — Jihad volunteers from around the Muslim world. The infrastructure established by Azzam included camps for training in guerrilla and paramilitary tactics to prepare international recruits to fight on an unconventional and asymmetric battlefield. For Azzam and his followers, the eventual victory in Afghanistan over the USSR was not the end but the beginning. A 1987 journal article by Azzam made this clear. In "Al-Qaeda al-Sulbah" or "The Solid Base," he envisioned a Muslim vanguard organization that would overthrow apostate regimes in the Middle East and establish Islamic rule.

20.   Bill Braniff and Assaf Moghadam, "Towards Global Jihadism: Al-Qaeda's Strategic, Ideological and Structural Adaptations since 9/11," Perspectives on Terrorism (Issue 2, 2011), pp. 37-38.

21.   John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); *The Oxford History of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: Random House, 2000); *Muhammad: A*

Biography of the Prophet (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam: Religion, History, and Civilization* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

22. The four Sunni theological schools include the Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafii, and the Hanbali variations.

23. The Sunna consists of the deeds, sayings and actions of Muhammad during the 23 years of his ministry, as recalled by those who knew him.

24. Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (May-June 2006), p. 209.

25. Ibid.

26. There was disagreement over the use of force within the Brotherhood. Some of its leaders publicly remained committed to a nonviolent approach. However, party elements, particularly younger members, pushed hard for the establishment of a clandestine armed wing that could employ sabotage, assassination, and other irregular warfare tactics in the name of the Brotherhood's cause. Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Brotherhood, eventually agreed. The Brotherhood continued to grow rapidly in the 1940s reaching an estimated one million members. After WWII it played an important part in the national movement, aligning itself with secular groups and factions. Its clandestine units carried out terrorist attacks. The organization became increasingly popular and was seen as a serious threat by Egyptian ruling elites. As a result, al-Banna was assassinated in 1949.

27. Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," p. 228. Also see Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

28. Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Paul Berman, "The Philosopher of Islamic Terror," *New York Times Magazine*, (March 23, 2003); Berman, *Terror and Liberalism*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003); Barry Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

29. Qutb's call for the overthrow of anti-Islamic Muslim governments through insurrection was the prelude for radical change of the entire social and political system. Thus, Qutb's understanding of Islam was inextricably linked to his political and social prescriptions. Islam was a complete social system and therefore it set the requirements for government in the form of an Islamic theocracy. He deduced these requirements from his reading of the Qur'an, including its insight into morality, justice, and governance.

30. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (Damascus, Syria: Dar al llm), Introduction. This is available online in a PDF file at http://majalla.org/books/2005/qutb-nilestone.pdf.

31. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, "Defence of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation After Iman." www.religioscope.com/ info/doc/Jihad/ azzam_defence_1_table. htm.

32. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, *Join the Caravan*, (London: Azzam Publications, 2001).

33. Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: the Search for a New Ummah*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 296-97.

34. Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 36.

35. Ibid.

36. Roy, *Globalized Islam*, p. 300.

37. Millenarian movements are often led by religious, social, and political groups that envision a major transformation of society and a return to an idealized past. Such movements typically claim that the current regime and its rulers are hopelessly corrupted, unjust, and otherwise irredeemable. Moreover, such movement adherents often believe in a supernatural power and predetermined victory through the intervention of God or other metaphysical forces. See Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages, revised and expanded (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Steven O'Leary, Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric (1994); Jon R. Stone (ed.), *Expecting Armageddon* (London: Routledge, 2000); and Catherine Wessinger (ed.), *Millennialism, Persecution, and Violence: Historical Cases* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

38. Initially they were welcomed by local Muslims. However, the attempt to instill their Salafi creed in Bosnia and their use of excessive violence was rejected by Evan Kohlmann, *Al-Qaeda's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (New York: BerBerg, 2004).

39. See Fawaz Greges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Tamara Orr, *Egyptian Islamic Jihad* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2003); Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

40. Luis Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War 1990-1998* (London: Hurst, 1998); Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield: Algeria 1988-2002, Studies in a Broken Polity* (London: Verso, 2003); and Martin Stone, *The Agony of Algeria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

41. See *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), pp. 57-63.

42. The Caliphate, the original community of Islam, expanded beyond the Arabian Peninsula following the death of the prophet Mohammed (632 AD) and in the 7th century came to encompass both Iran and Egypt; by the 8th century it encompassed North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), India, and Indonesia.

43. Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 44. The al-Qaeda leadership saw U.S. involvement in

Somalia as an extension of its presence in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states that grew out of the 1991 war to expel Iraq from Kuwait. They believed that Washington was following an imperial policy of taking over parts of the Muslim world.

44. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), p. 66.

45. Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: A Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

46. The term *al-Qaeda and its associated movements* or AQAM was first used by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in its 2006 Posture Statement. AQAM is described as a global network and movement based on an extremist ideology. AQAM is said to be ideologically driven and to have established both a physical and virtual presence. AQAM is geographically based across the CENTCOM area, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, since 9/11, AQAM has also sought to take advantage of ungoverned space inside weak or failing states to establish new safe havens and training bases. Al-Qaeda and groups ideologically aligned with it are fighting locally, as the 2006 Posture statement underscores. To varying degrees, radical Islamist and Salafi jihadist groups employ guerrilla and irregular warfare tactics including terrorism against local regimes in CENT-COM regions, which are characterized as apostates. Al-Qaeda is active in several of these local conflicts. See Statement of General John Abizaid, *2006 Posture of United States Central Command* (March 14, 2006), p. 8.

47. Cited in Mark Stout, et al., *The Terrorism Perspectives Project: Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008), p. 167.

48. In 2004, Gabriel Weimann provided the following insights into how non-state armed groups were expanding their use of the Internet: "In 1998, around half of the thirty organizations designated [by the U.S.] as Foreign Terrorist Organizations … maintained Websites; by 2000, virtually all terrorist groups had established their presence on the Internet. Our scan of the Internet in 2003-2004 revealed hundreds of websites serving terrorists and their supporters." He adds: "Terrorism on the Internet … is a very dynamic phenomenon: Websites suddenly emerge, frequently modify their formats, and then swiftly disappear — or seem to disappear by changing their online address but retain much the same content." See Gabriel Weimann, *How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Special Report 116, 2004), p. 2.

49. "Al Qaeda Chiefs Are Seen to Regain Power," *The New York Times* (February 19, 2007), p. 1.

50. Braniff and Moghadam, "Towards Global Jihadism: Al-Qaeda's Strategic, Ideological and Structural Adaptations since 9/11," p. 46.

51. Hanna Rogan, "Jihadism Online: A Study of How al-Qaeda and Radical Islamist Groups Use the Internet for Terrorist Purposes," prepared under the auspices of Transnational Radical Islamism Project, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FF/RAPPORT, March 2006), p. 8.

52.   Ibid., p. 32.

53.   Brynjar Lia and Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihadi Strategic Studies: The Alleged Al Qaida Policy Study Preceding the Madrid Bombings," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (Sept.-Oct. 2004), p. 355.

54.   Ibid., p. 371.

55.   Ibid.

56.   Thomas Hegghammer, "Strategic Studies in Jihadist Literature," Presentation to the Middle East Institute, Washington, DC (May 17, 2006).

57.   Mark Stout, "In Search of Salafi Jihadist Strategic Thought: Mining the Words of the Terrorists," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (October 2009), p. 876.

58.   Brynjar Lia, "Doctrines for Jihadi Terrorist Training," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Issue 4, 2008), p. 518.

59.   Dima Adamsky, "Jihadi Operational Art: The Coming Wave of Jihadi Strategic Studies," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (January 2010), p. 1.

60.   It should be noted that other projects and programs could have been consulted but were not due to time constraints. These include the Israeli International Institute for Counterterrorism, and in particular those of its Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group, and the Washington, D.C.-based Jamestown Foundation's Global Terrorism Analysis Project.

61.   *2010 Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, February 2010), p. 5.

62.   Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Millelli, ed., *Al Qaeda in its Own Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 101.

63.   Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: the Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 297.

64.   Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Millelli, ed., *Al Qaeda in its Own Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), Part I.

65.   Abu Bakr Naji, translated by William McCants, *The Management of Savagery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, 2006), p. 17.

66.   The Paul Kennedy book that Naji is referencing is *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

67.   Abu Bakr Naji, translated by William McCants *The Management of Savagery*, pp. 19-20.

68.   Ibid., pp. 23-25.

69.   Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, "Al-Qa'ida and the Art of War," *Al-Ansar* (2002), pp. 11-15 "The Fourth Generation of Wars," *Al-Ansar* (2002), pp. 15-21. "The Illusions of America," *Al-Ansar* (2002), pp. 9-14. "Strategic Equations," *Al-Ansar* (2002), pp. 10-16.

70.   Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of al Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 8.

71. Jim Lacey of the of the Terrorist Perspectives Project at the Institute for Defense Analysis translated al-Suri's *The Global Islamic Resistance Call* as of the project and along with commentary published it under the title *A Terrorists Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008), p. 17.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., pp. 18-20.

74. Ibid., chaps. 4-6.

75. Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of al Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri*, p. 3.

76. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (London: Farber and Farber, 1967), p. 320.

77. Mark Stout, in an article titled "In Search of Salafi *Jihadist* Strategic Thought: Mining the Words of the Terrorists," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (No. 1, 2009), pp. 876, 879.

78. Ibid., p. 879.

79. Jim Lacey, *Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2008) and Mark Stout, et al., *Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2008).

80. See Brynjar Lia, "Jihadi Strategists and Doctrinarians," in Assaf Moghadam and Brian Fishman, ed., *Self-Inflicted Wounds: Debate and Divisions within Al-Qaeda and Its Periphery* (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center, 2011), Ch. 5; "Global Jihadi Strategic Theory," presentation at the seminar, "Irregular Warfare in Modern Times: Nasty, Brutish, But Not Short," United States Naval War College Conference Sponsored by The Center for Naval Warfare Studies (September 15-16, 2009)," a paper presented at the Annual International Studies Association Convention in New York, 14-18 February 2009.

81. Youssef Aboul-Enein, "The Late Sheikh Abdullah Azzam's Books, Part I: Strategic Leverage of the Soviet-Afghan War to Understand Perpetual Jihad, "(West Point: United States Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center, 2008) *Militant Ideology Atlas*, p. 2. www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Azzam_part_1.pdf.

82. Ibid., p. 8.

83. "Profile of Abu'l-Walid al-Masri," (West Point: United States Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center), www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Abul-Walid.pdf.

84. William McCants and Jarred Brachman, *Militant Ideology Atlas*," (West Point: United States Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center, 2006). www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Atlas-ResearchCompendium1.pdf.

85. See, for example, Yusuf Bin Salih al-Ayiri, "Future of Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula after the Fall of Baghdad," (2003); and Anonymous, "Jihad in Iraq: Hopes and Dangers." Accessable at http://sites.google.com/site/jihadismstudiesnet/jihadism-studies-at-ffi/strategies.

86.   For a discussion of this, see Mark Stout, et al., *Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements*, Chap. 4.

87.   Both translations of *Sada al-Malahim* (Echo of the Epics) and *Sada al-Jihad* (Echo of Jihad), as well as other similar online magazines are available through the SITE Intelligence Group at www.siteintelgroup.com.

88.   Stout, et al., *Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements*, p. 129.

89.   Abu-Ubayd al-Qurashi, "A Lesson in War," (2002).

90.   Abu-Ubayd al-Qurashi, "America's Eyes," (2002).

91.   Abu-Ubayd al-Qurashi, "Al-Qaeda and the Art of War," (2002).

92.   Stout, et al., *Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements*, Chap. 5.

93.   Norman Cigar, *Al-Qa-ida's Doctrine for Insurgency: Abd Al-Aziz Al-Muqrin's Practical Course for Guerrilla War* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2009), p. 13.

94.   Ibid., p. 52.

95.   Ibid., pp. 90-92.

96.   Ibid., p. 27.

97.   Ibid., p. 35.

98.   Stout, et al., *Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements*, Chap. 5.

99.   Cigar, *Al-Qa-ida's Doctrine for Insurgency: Abd Al-Aziz Al-Muqrin's Practical Course for Guerrilla War*, pp. 12-13.

100. Lacey, *Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, Chaps. 6-7. Also see Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of al Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri*.

101. Yusuf Ayiri, "The Future of Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula after the Fall of Baghdad," (2003).

102. Media Commission for the Victory of the Iraqi People, "Jihad in Iraq: Hopes and Dangers," (2004), pp. 11, 23.

103. Muhammad Khalil al-Hakaymah, "Toward a New Strategy in Resisting the Occupier," (2006), p. 2.

104. This can be seen in the following articles posted at the website of the Al-Fajr Media Center, the media arm of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: "AQIM Urges Tunisian Muslims to Continue Popular Uprising" (Jan. 28, 2011) and "Jihadists React to Egyptian Uprising Against Mubarak" (Jan. 31, 2011). Accessed at the website of the SITE Intelligence Group.

105. "Invasion of Omar al-Farouk: Details and Results," *Sada al-Malahim* (Feb. 14, 2010). Accessed at the website of the SITE Intelligence Group.

106. Jacob Kipp, "The Origins of Soviet Operational Art, 1917–1936," Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips, editors, *Historical Perspectives on the Operational Art* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, U.S. Army, 2005), p. 213.

107. For an excellent collection of their writings on the subject, see *The Soviet Art of War: Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics*, edited by Harriet Fast Scott and William Scott (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1982). See especially Parts III-V.

108. For example, see L. D. Holder, "A New Day for Operational Art," *Army* (March 1985), pp. 22–32; Wallace P. Franz, "Maneuver: The Dynamic Element of Combat," *Military Review* (May 1983), pp. 2–12; Edward N. Luttwak, "The Operational Level of War," *International Security* (Winter 1980–1981), pp. 61–79; William S. Lind, "The Operational Art," *Marine Corps Gazette* (April 1988), pp. 45–47.

109. Army FM 100-5, *Operations* (August 1982). Also see Clayton R. Newell, "The Levels of War," *Army* (June, 1988), pp. 26–29; and Wallace P. Franz, "Maneuver: The Dynamic Element of Combat," *Military Review* (May, 1983), pp. 2–12.

110. *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (November, 2010), p. 269. Accessed at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf.

111. Ibid.

112. Adamsky, "Jihadi Operational Art: The Coming Wave of Jihadi Strategic Studies," p. 13.

113. Ibid., p. 5.

114. Abu Bakr Naji, translated by William McCants, *The Management of Savagery*.

115. For a synopsis of al-Naji's operational level thinking, see Jarret Brachman and William McCants, *Stealing Al-Qa'ida's Playbook*," (West Point: United States Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center, 2005).

116. Lia, Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of al Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, p. 350.

117. Ibid., p. 363.

118. Ibid., p. 351.

119. Adamsky, "Jihadi Operational Art: The Coming Wave of Jihadi Strategic Studies," p. 8.

120. Ibid., p. 9.

121. Brynjar Lia, "Doctrine for Jihadi Terrorist Training," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Oct.-Dec. 2008), p. 518.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid., p. 537.

124. Anne Stenersen, "The Internet: A Virtual Training Camp," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Apr.-Jun. 2008), p. 215.

125. The SITE Intelligence Group contains an extensive number of these training videos.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid., p. 229.

128. Petter Nesser, "How Did Europe's Global Jihadis Obtain Training for Their Militant Cause?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Apr.-Jun. 2008), p. 235.

129. Ibid., p. 248.

130. Ibid., p. 249.

131. Ibid., p. 250.

132. "Training Course for Urban Warfare" (June 24, 2005), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi training manuals.

133. "Strategies to Circumvent the Joint IED Neutralizer" (March 1, 2006), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi use of IEDs.

134. "The Hunters of Minesweepers" (March 7, 2007), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi use of IEDs.

135. "Jihadist Gives 3D Model Video of Pressure Plate IED" (September 8, 2010), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi use of IEDs.

136. "ISI Video Demonstrates Manufacture and Use of Explosives" (January 21, 2011), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi use of IEDs.

137. "Suggestions for Camouflage to Be Used by the Islamic State of Iraq" (August 21, 2011), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi use of snipers.

138. "Baghdad Sniper" (December 19, 2011), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi use of snipers.

139. "Sniper Training Course" (November 16, 2006), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi use of snipers.

140. "Al-Boraq Media Presents Arabic-Subtitled Copy of The Ultimate Sniper Video" (October 16, 2007), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi use of snipers.

141. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. vii.

142. Bruce Hoffman, "The Myth of Grass-Roots Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2008).

143. "Complete Version Released of AQAP's "Inspire" Magazine" (July 11, 2010), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on leading jihadi individuals.

144. "Elif Media Provides Suri Lecture on Jihad" (February 2, 2010), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on leading jihadi individuals.

145. "Jihadist Forum Member Questions Lack of Jihadi Operations in Kuwait" (October 19, 2007), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on jihadi chatter.

146. "Jihadist Announces Formation of "Al-Ekhlaas Brigades" within the Brigades of the Global Islamic Resistance Front" (March 2008), accessed from the SITE Intelligence Group database on Jihadi chatter.

147. "Al-Qa'ida in Egypt Article Explains 'How to Perform Jihad Alone'" (2007), p. 1.

148. "Jihadist Forum Member Urges 'Young Egyptians' To Train for Jihad in Sudan" (2008), p. 1.

149. William Rosenau, "Understanding Insurgent Intelligence Operations," *Marine Corps University Journal* (Spring 2011), pp. 12-13.

150. Gaetano Ilardi, "Al-Qaeda's Operational Intelligence-A Key Prerequisite to Action," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (2008), p. 1072.

151. Gaetano Ilardi, "Al-Qaeda's Counterintelligence Doctrine," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* (No. 2, 2009), p. 247.

152. Ibid., pp. 249-250.

153. "Al-Qaeda's Sayf Al-Adl Defines Intelligence," (2004), p. 1.

154. "Al-Qaeda's Sayf Al-Adl on Defensive Security," (2004); "Al-Qaeda's Sayf Al-Adl Outlines Secure Communications Procedures," (2004); and "Al-Qae-da's Sayf Al-Adl Explains Types, Usage of Cipher Language," (2004); *Mu'askar Al-Battar.*

155. "Al-Qaeda's Sayf Al-Adl Defines Effective Cover," (2004); "Al-Qaeda's Sayf Al-Adl Discusses elements of Surveillance," (2004); and "Al-Qaeda's Sayf Al-Adl on Effective Conditions for a Safe House," (2004); *Mu'askar Al-Battar.*

156. Al-Hakaymah's authority to make such a commitment was later disputed by other members of al-Gamaa al-Islamiya, who backed the group's formal renouncement of violence in 1997.

157. A translated copy can be found at "Egyptian Jihadist Al-Hakaymah's Book on US Intelligence," (2006).

158. Brian Fishman, "Al Qa'ida's Spymaster Analyzes the U.S. Intelligence Community," (West Point: United States Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center, November 2006), pp. 1-2. www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/aqs-spymaster-analyzes-us-intel.pdf.

159. Ibid., p. 3.

160. Peter Finn and Joby Warrick, "In Afghanistan Attack, CIA fell Victim to Series of Miscalculations about Informant," *Washington Post* (January 16, 2010); Zeeshan Haider, "CIA Bomber video calls for Attacks on U.S.," *Reuters* (January 10, 2010); Siobhan Gorman, Anand Gopal and Yochi J. Dreazen, "CIA Blast Blamed On Double Agent," *Wall Street Journal* (January 5, 2010); and Warrick, *The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA* (New York: Random House, 2011).

161. Ibid., p. 2.

162. In addition to his assessment of U.S. intelligence, al-Hakaymah has also produced other important studies on strategy including one that is consistent with that of al-Suri's individual jihad. These include ones titled "Toward a New Strategy" and "How to Fighting Alone." In the case of the latter he focuses "*on explaining ways to kill with "simple tools," and the manufacture of simple poisons and explosives." See* "Translation of Egyptian jihadist Al-Hakaymah's Essay 'Toward a New Strategy,'" (2006) and "Translation of Al-Hakaymah's Book 'How to Fight Alone,'" (2006).

163. Uppsala Conflict Data Program http://www.prio.no/cwp/ArmedConflict/ and http://www.pcr.uu.se. Also see Mikael Eriksson, Peter Wallensteen, and Margareta Sollenberg, "Armed Conflict, 1989–2002," *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 5 (2003): 593–607. These changes in the frequency and conduct of conflict have been documented by other research organizations to include the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Its Armed Conflict Database provides information on armed conflicts worldwide. Of the conflicts that IISS has followed since the early 1990s, nearly all involve insurgent, militia, terrorist, and criminal armed groups fighting against states. For each conflict, IISS identifies the parties fighting, current status, the number of fatalities, costs, and the weapons used. It also provides an annual update of the year's trends and incidents. See http://acd.iiss.org/armedconflict/MainPages/dsp_WorldMap.asp.

164. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) also traces the growth of "Selected Non-State Armed Groups," providing detailed data and links for more than 270 insurgent, militia, and terrorist organizations. Criminal groups and gangs are excluded from this database, and hence, the full extent of the proliferation of armed groups is not captured. See http://acd.iiss.org/armedconflict/MainPages/dsp_WorldMap.asp. Other date bases have been compiled by Jane's Information Group/Sentinel Security Assessments www.janes.com, Global Security www.globalsecurity.org, and the Federation of American Scientists' Intelligence Resource Program www.fas.org/irp. The latter tracks over 500 armed groups to include international criminal organizations. Also see Stephen E. Atkins, *Encyclopedia of Modern Worldwide Extremists and Extremist Groups* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004). In this volume 290 alphabetically organized armed groups are identified and the details of their violent history, activities, and beliefs highlighted.

165. Richard Shultz, Roy Godson, Querine Hanlon, and Samantha Ravich, "The Sources of Instability in the Twenty-First Century: Weak States, Armed Groups, and Irregular Conflict," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* (Summer 2011), pp. 73-94.

166. This argument was made by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in "A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2009) and in his "Landon Lecture," Kansas State University, November 26, 2007. http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199.

167. See footnote 164.