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Al Qaeda and Fourth Generation Warfare as its Strategy

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ABSTRACT (MAXIMUM 200 WORDS) Usama bin Laden and Al Qaeda have been waging war against the United States and the West for years. Al Qaeda is characterized as a terrorist organization, based upon the early tactics it used, primarily bombings against U.S. interests overseas. However, since the U.S. led invasion of Afghanistan to oust the Taliban government and evict Al Qaeda, there has been more attention given to Al Qaeda and its adoption of a strategy against the U.S. and West. A senior member of Al Qaeda has professed that they have adopted Fourth Generation Warfare and are using its theory as a model for their global insurgency. This paper seeks to identify whether Al Qaeda is actually following the elements of Fourth Generation Warfare and what the U.S. might do to counter Al Qaeda's strategy.					
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## *Preface*

I joined the United States Marines in 1986 as a Reserve Artilleryman and began attending college at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, but the college life was not for me and my formal education ended in three months. When I initially enlisted in the Marine Corps, it was to do the things Marines do, such as deploy to foreign lands, defend our great nation, and experience life outside the United States. I have done these things and so much more. Whether as an Infantryman, a Marine Security Guard, or Counterintelligence Specialist, I have lived the grand life of a Marine involved in supporting and defending the Constitution. During my time as a Marine I was introduced to terrorism and have been on both sides of the weapon, whether a target of the New People's Army in the Philippines or chasing Islamic terrorists throughout the world, I have come to know and appreciate terrorism for what it is.

In my attempts to understand terrorism, however, I have come to accept there are similarities associated with the different types of organizations who use this tactic as a means to their ends. When I was introduced to the concept of Fourth Generation Warfare it was if a light went off when the concept was explained to me. It was as if all the tactics and procedures of every successful terrorist group had been codified and written on paper. But, as I began to delve into this subject the strands that held the concept together began unravelling for me and led me to question the theory of "generations of warfare." Whether one believes in the concept of generations of warfare or another explanation for a terrorist strategy is not necessarily important. What is important is that security professionals involved in combating terrorism understand the enemy, whomever it may be, and can adapt to counter the strategy that adversary uses.

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor at Marine Corps Intelligence Activity for allowing me the opportunity to attend the Marine Corps Command and Staff College. Without her confidence in my ability, I would not have been afforded the opportunity to attend. I would like to acknowledge the sound advice and guidance I have received from Lieutenant Colonel Pete Yeager throughout this process. I would like to thank T. X. Hammes, Frank G. Hoffman, and Wiley "Bob" Howard for introducing me to fourth generation war theory and showing me its pitfalls and utility. Special thanks go out to Professor Erin Simpson for making some semblance of sense out of it all and providing me with specific guidance on how to pull all of this together.

## INTRODUCTION

*"O, American people, your government is leading you to a new losing war. U.S. people, your government was defeated in Vietnam and fled scared from Lebanon. It fled from Somalia and received a slap in Aden." Ayman I-Zawahiri, interview on al-Jazeera, October 2001.*

Usama bin Laden has been at war ideologically with the United States since before 1993. His organization Al Qaeda, or "The Base," has conducted acts of terrorism against the United States, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Western society for more than ten years. For many Americans the term Al Qaeda and the name bin Laden were just news snippets or were found only in a crawler at the bottom of a television news channel's primary reporting. While the U.S. has been dealing with threats and attacks from bin Laden and Al Qaeda for many years, most people in Western societies did not learn of either entity until September 11, 2001 when Al Qaeda conducted one of the most extravagant and shocking attacks against the U.S.

While the incident involving two aircraft hitting the Twin Towers of The World Trade Center was seen as a horrible attack against the United States and produced an inordinate loss of life, the short-term goal of the attack may not have been merely to cause mass casualties,<sup>1</sup> but to inflict long term financial damage to the U.S. and Western financial institutions, thus bringing down the Western way of life and finally striking a damaging blow against the society that bin Laden and Al Qaeda despise.<sup>2</sup> One of Clausewitz' theories regarding war seems to imply that, primarily, sovereign nations wage war and then only against other sovereign nations. "War is not an independent phenomenon, but a continuation of politics by different means."<sup>3</sup> Al Qaeda is fundamentally waging a war against the government of the United States. But, is it possible for a non-nation, without an apparent political system, to wage war against a nation, which has a

political apparatus? The theory of fourth generation of warfare allows non-nation states forces, which are characterized as network centric, asymmetric, and ideologically motivated a framework to reduce the antagonist nation state's will to resist the group's demands.<sup>4</sup> A question that must be answered is whether Al Qaeda has consciously adopted Fourth Generation Warfare as a strategy or if it is merely adapting to its changing environment. This paper will attempt to determine if Al Qaeda has adopted Fourth Generation Warfare as its method of engagement or if the concept simply validates the *modus operandi* of Al Qaeda, or other terrorist groups.

On January 28, 2002 Abu-Abayd Al Qurashi, spokesman for Al Qaeda, published an article on the Al-Ansar web page<sup>5</sup>, Al Qaeda's official web page at the time. This article was in response to an allegation by a Muslim cleric that Al Qaeda and its global jihad against the United States and the West could not succeed, because the United States and its allies had too great of a technological advantage over the Islamists. Al Qurashi countered the cleric by describing images of the successful Palestinians throwing stones against the Israeli Defense Force, insinuating that the Palestinians were able to confound the militarily more powerful Israelis with their social movement. Al Qurashi went further and cited William S. Lind, Colonel Keith Nightengale, Captain John F. Schmitt, Colonel Joseph W. Sutton, and Lieutenant Colonel Gary I. Wilson who wrote an article on Fourth Generation Warfare in 1989 for *The Marine Corps Gazette*.<sup>6</sup> Al Qurashi goes on in his article to identify that Fourth Generation Warfare suited an organization like Al Qaeda and that they had already adopted Fourth Generation Warfare as their doctrine.<sup>7</sup>

## WHAT IS FOURTH GENERATION WARFARE?

"In Afghanistan, the Mujahideen triumphed over the world's second most qualitative power at that time... Similarly, a single Somali tribe humiliated America and compelled it to remove its forces from Somalia. A short time later, the Chechen Mujahideen humiliated and defeated the Russian bear. After that, the Lebanese resistance [Hezbollah] expelled the Zionist army from southern Lebanon." Abu Abeid Al-Qurashi, Middle East Media Research Institute, February, 2002.

### The Generations Progress

To determine whether Al Qaeda has adopted Fourth Generation Warfare, the term must be defined and the concept of generations of warfare must be explained. The concept of generations of warfare came to light primarily in 1989 as a result of an article published in the *The Marine Corps Gazette* magazine where the authors codified the concept that warfare could be divided into generations.<sup>8</sup> These phases or generations were based upon a progression of tactics and technologies used in warfare, beginning generally in the Seventeenth Century and are somewhat associated with the results from the Treaty of Westphalia whereby only the nations of Europe were recognized as an entity authorized to conduct war against another nation. It was no longer acceptable for bands of bandits to wage war; only established nations waged war, and then only against each other.

With these concepts in mind, the three subsequent generations of warfare were presented. First Generation Warfare begins with the introduction of smooth-bore firearms and large-scale linear movements that stressed mass against other linear units. Second Generation Warfare was characterized by more mechanical firearms such as machineguns and breech-loaded artillery. While maneuver generally was still linear, artillery became the decisive weapon to augment maneuver. Third Generation Warfare capitalized on both the increasing technology of warfare and the increasing use of ideas in warfare. The German military capitalized on both elements in their blitzkrieg warfare by using radio technology and swift operational movements, showing that maneuver had become as important as the technology in warfare. At this point in the

conception of generations of warfare, maneuver was identified as the deciding factor in modern warfare and advances in technology were used to enhance or support the maneuver portion of warfare. Through the progression from First Generation to Third Generation Warfare, the central elements were orders, decentralization, maneuver, and strategic centers of gravity.

Fourth Generation Warfare, however, is characterized by a widespread and undefined battlefield, much different from the battlefields of World War II or even Vietnam. The battlefield in the fourth generation is characterized as non-linear with little regard for military targets. Furthermore, the entity that conducts Fourth Generation Warfare no longer finds itself restricted to such targets, but looks to target those strategic centers of gravity, particularly popular support for warfare and the enemy's culture.<sup>9</sup> By using technology, whether improvised explosive devices or web logs, an enemy that uses fourth generation warfare employs a new method of maneuver to achieve an old world result. By moving around the fourth generation battlefield using multimedia technology and attacking ideological as well as physical targets, the result is the moral and physical defeat of its enemy. "Terrorism is very much a matter of maneuver; the terrorist's firepower is small and where and when he applies it is critical."<sup>10</sup>

Since terrorists historically have less tactical firepower than the conventional forces they are fighting, they must use information to enhance any action they take, whether lethal or non-lethal. While the attack against the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 was devastating itself, the fact that it was broadcast hours after it occurred only increased the impact it had on the U.S. people and the U.S. government. Additionally, the media coverage was broadcast on network television on a Sunday afternoon, when many Americans were sitting in front of their television watching football. By anticipating the media coverage and its wide dissemination, the attack was effective not only in the physical sense, but in the psychological sense as well.<sup>11</sup> Today, Al Qaeda has the

ability to conduct sensational attacks against symbolic targets and have the incident published to the Internet within a matter of hours after the incident occurs. Such is the method of maneuver within the confines of the Fourth Generation Warfare battlefield and this concept was identified long before Al Qaeda adopted the practice.

### **What it Would Look Like**

The character of Fourth Generation Warfare indicates that it is very nebulous and amoebic, and it is quite unlike any historical battlefield where battle lines may have been drawn. Additionally, there are certain elements that would be present in the strategy of any entity to determine if it were practicing Fourth Generation Warfare. The elements of Fourth Generation Warfare that might be present are effective use of the media, decentralized command and control, the use of transnational networks, preying upon the opponent's patience, and a final conventional campaign to secure victory.<sup>12</sup> With the absence of these elements, it would be difficult to determine if such any entity, a nation state or non-nation state such as Al Qaeda, were actually conforming to the tenets of the Fourth Generation theory.

One of the elements that would be found in Fourth Generation Warfare is the use of the media. In keeping with the characteristic that the battlefield will be non-linear, this element must be utilized to affect the political and psychological will of the adversary. The media must be used to further the organization's political or organizational goals while denigrating the purpose and actions of its adversary. A prime example of the use of media involves the first Intifada movement in Israel and how they were able to show the plight of the Palestinian people living in Israel while showing how oppressive the Israeli soldiers were to civilians. This use of media was a method used to undermine the legitimacy of the Israeli government and rally people to support the Palestinians and their cause.

Another key element necessary for Fourth Generation Warfare is decentralized authority. While many industrialized nation-states with a modern military may have a single person in charge of the overall effort, this is not always necessary. For non-state actors, this will almost certainly be the rule, as they may not have one location from where they can operate safely. If decentralized authority is used by an entity, there must be unity of effort and unity of ideology. There perhaps will be a single leader or group of leaders who direct the organization and provide general guidance to the organization. Decentralized leadership must profess to its subordinate elements the intent of the organization as well as the themes that must be used to achieve the common goal or goals. Subordinate elements would be allowed to conduct localized planning and initiate operations on their own accord, just as long as those operations were in keeping with the overall theme and goal of the organization.

An additional element of Fourth Generation Warfare that would be expected is the use of transnational networks. In order to maximize on the efficiency of subordinate elements and offer them flexibility, it will become incumbent to utilize the power of local assets in support of the overall intent of the organization. By using such transnational networks, it is easier to draw personnel for different activities, especially when those activities occur in multiple regions of the world. Furthermore, it may be easier to obtain logistical support from such networks, since they will be able to call upon the resources of more people and organizations in many different areas as opposed to being hobbled by a single-point supply system. Transnational networks would facilitate the movement of people and material, as well as money, from one point of the non-linear battlefield to another, thereby giving more flexibility to obtain the right materials without causing undue strain on any one source of that support.

There likely would be small and large scale attacks, but the likely "military" strategy would be to prey on the patience of the opponent. This method would be very akin to attrition warfare and would be designed to wear down the opponent with minor engagements and attacks instead of attacking such targets that may present themselves as vital to a nation's interest. While attacking a nation's vital interest may bring about a swift victory, it certainly depends on how critical that interest is and the resolve of the people attacked. The Japanese certainly believed their attack on Pearl Harbor would weaken both U.S. resolve to get involved in a war and that the damage done to the Pacific Fleet would be enough to convince the United States that war with Japan was not physically possible. In using this element of Fourth generation Warfare, an antagonist would focus their efforts against multiple important assets, hoping, instead, that their opponent would lose their resolve and acquiesce to demands, but not enamored by attacks seen to threaten their virtual existence.

A final key element of Fourth Generation Warfare that would be present is an ultimate conventional military campaign directed at an opponent. Nation states with standing armies would find this much easier than terrorist or perhaps insurgent groups, but Mao Tse Tung indicates that the third phase of insurgency is a conventional engagement or campaign to solidify military success and therefore political success.<sup>13</sup> This theory was exemplified in Vietnam when the United States began reducing its military support for the Government of South Vietnam (GVN). Without U.S. support, the GVN and its military was unable to counter the conventional military attacks conducted by the North Vietnamese Army. The conditions for a conventional attack had been set by the Viet Cong, an insurgent group, operating in South Vietnam. While the insurgents had become more and more effective as the U.S. support waned, Ho Chi Minh could not achieve true political dominance without overthrowing the GVN militarily.

Again, to identify whether Al Qaeda were executing Fourth Generation Warfare, they would have to meet some of the criteria described above, namely:

- Use of media
- Decentralized command and control
- Transnational networks
- Prey on the enemy's patience
- Culminate with conventional warfare.

To determine the degree to which Al Qaeda, or any other entity, is implementing Fourth Generation Warfare, one will have to look at the strategic actions being used and compare them with the elements of Fourth Generation Warfare. Once elements have been determined to exist, one will then have to look at the frequency or degree to which each element is being used.

### **AL QAEDA AND ITS GROWTH FROM AN IDEOLOGY**

"We can conclude that America is a superpower, with enormous military strength and vast economic power, but that all this is built on foundations of straw. So it is possible to target those foundations and focus on their weakest points which, even if you strike only one-tenth of them, then the whole edifice will totter and sway, and relinquish its unjust leadership of the world." Usama bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, November 2005.

Many dissident groups have used terrorism as a means to achieve their political goals. While groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine or Red Army Faction resorted to terrorism to destroy Israel or install a Marxist-Leninist government respectively, their movements were generally local. Each of the aforementioned groups received training and assistance from likeminded organizations, but the majority of their operations were conducted relatively "close to home" and against their primary antagonist. Al Qaeda started as an ideology focused on a specific region to an beacon of support for oppressed Islamic fighters in a world-

wide insurgent movement, conducting activities all over the world and incorporating likeminded entities.

Al Qaeda often boasts that it began its conflict against the West, namely the Soviet Union, when they invaded Afghanistan in 1979. In the early 1980s, Usama bin Laden left his native Saudi Arabia and began fighting as a mujahidin against the Soviets in support of the Afghan fighters. By the mid-1980s, bin Laden had become one of the major financiers of the mujahidin and began recruiting heavily from mosques in various Arab countries. Once the Soviets had been expelled from Afghanistan, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia and started a charity designed to assist wounded mujahidin from Afghanistan. Bin Laden operated in Saudi Arabia until he was expelled for making statements against the ruling family.<sup>14</sup> Bin Laden's aggravation stemmed from the United States led coalition that liberated Kuwait and invaded Iraq, but he was most upset that the United States had stationed troops in Saudi Arabia after Desert Shield and Desert Storm. While the Saudi government tolerated his anti-US and often anti-Saudi rhetoric, they eventually came to fear bin Laden's growing disdain for the royal family and the Saudi government finally exiled bin Laden from Saudi Arabia.

After his expulsion from his homeland, he moved to Khartoum, Sudan, an Islamic land of relative lawlessness with a government that would allow him to operate his charity and espouse the anti-Saudi and anti-Western rhetoric which was becoming more and more profound and alarming. As bin Laden continued to speak out against the West, his movement grew and gained popularity. While he started out as a "terrorist entrepreneur," he eventually saw the utility of organizing like-minded organizations and founded The International Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders.<sup>15</sup> This new super-terrorist group included known groups such as Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Egyptian al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya, and others.

In 1994, bin Laden was expelled by the Sudanese government and went back to Afghanistan as “a guest” of the sympathetic Taliban government. As bin Laden’s terrorist organization grew in size, its nature evolved into a loose knit conglomeration of cells or subunits that could operate independently from each other as well as away from its core leadership, namely Usama bin Laden. The organization now known as Al Qaeda, which began as a nodal, decentralized organization, capable of conducting multiple coordinated operations in multiple locations, epitomizes the theory of Fourth Generation Warfare.<sup>16</sup> Today, Al Qaeda has grown from an Arab centric Islamist organization to a truly world-wide organization that encompasses many Islamist groups, to include supporters in North Africa, East Africa, and various parts of Asia.<sup>17</sup>

The ultimate goal of Al Qaeda has changed over the past years as it matured as both a movement and a terrorist organization. Bin Laden’s original desire was the removal of infidel personnel from the Islamic holy lands and the dismissal of the ruling Saudi family for embracing and supporting what he believed to be the evil Western nations, particularly the United States and its ally, Israel.<sup>18</sup> Now Al Qaeda’s acknowledged end state is a global Islamic nation reminiscent of the ancient Islamic Renaissance.<sup>19</sup>

In 1998, bin Laden issued a *fatwa* that required all Muslims to wage holy war or *jihad* against the citizenry of the United States, both abroad and within the United States, and to continue this war against Jews and those from the State of Israel. Bin Laden went further to say that those Muslims who do not heed the call of this *jihad* are not true Muslims and should be killed as apostates or non-believers. Even though he issued this *fatwa* without the blessing or support from the Grand Imam in Saudi Arabia, bin Laden was able to begin mobilizing numerous Islamic people around the world. Usama bin Laden had demonstrated his ability to motivate Islamic people all over the world to conduct jihad against the perceived enemies of Al Qaeda and the

entire Islamic world. Al Qaeda became the military, ideological, and civil organization that supported this *fatwa* and the ensuing *jihad* against the West and Israel.

Al Qaeda has been in existence, by its own account, for twenty-seven years fighting against Western invaders who have come into Islamic lands for profit or gain. Regardless of reality, Al Qaeda's perception is such that they appear to believe sincerely that their struggle is for the good of the Islamic nation. Al Qaeda's fight has spanned a generation's worth of time, a myriad of geographic regions, and a broad scope of activities. Unfortunately, it does not appear that Al Qaeda has been adversely affected by the amount of time they have spent fighting and they do not project the intent to cease hostilities in the near future.

### **AL QAEDA'S PLAYBOOK**

"If you started suicide attacks you will see the fear of Americans all over the world." Al Qaeda communiqué, CNN, December 2003.

When Abu Ubeid Al Qurashi, self-appointed Al Qaeda propagandist, published one of the first identified "doctrinal" publications for Al Qaeda for an on-line magazine, Qurashi indicates that Al Qaeda had actually adopted Fourth Generation Warfare as its own form of struggle, a sort of combat strategy, against the United States and other Western nations. Qurashi writes in his communiqué that the Islamic nation had already used the tenets of Fourth Generation Warfare and had been successful in defeating nation states that were considered more powerful than themselves. Qurashi specifically cites the mujahidin success over the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Chechnya and success over the United States in Somalia, and even concludes victory against Israel in southern Lebanon. For each of these victories, Qurashi credits Al Qaeda's use of the principles of Fourth Generation Warfare. In particular, Qurashi goes on to tout the primitive mujahidin's lack of sophisticated technology and their adoption of the

philosophy associated with Fourth generation warfare. Qurashi mentions that the mujahidin hid among the people of the land and alluded that they were able to use the local culture to escape detection and, ultimately, defeat at the hands of their militarily superior foe.

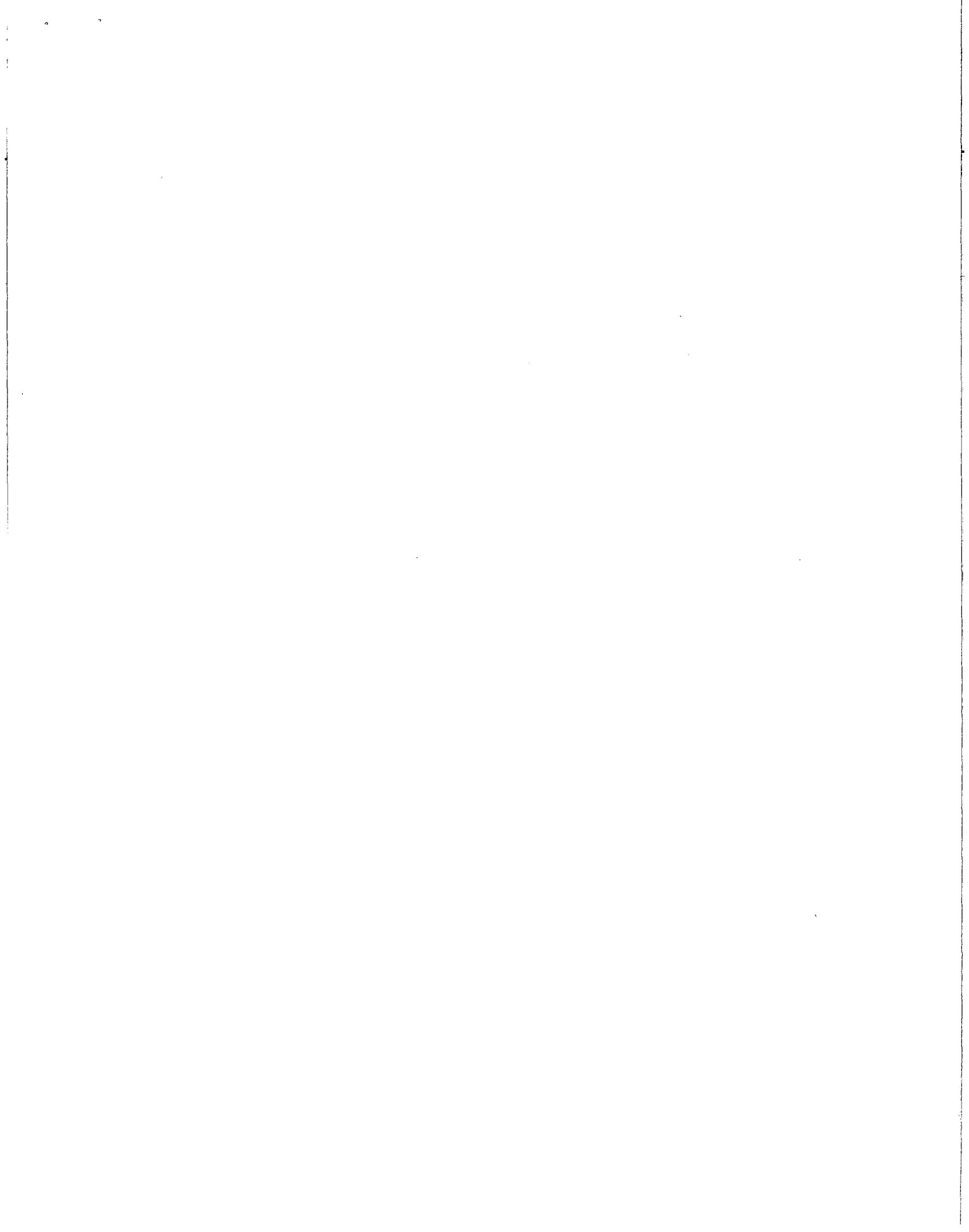
The Qurashi article continues to show that Al Qaeda understands Fourth Generation Warfare by mentioning the effects of its attacks on September 11, 2001 against the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Qurashi states that the attacks affected not the American military, but the people of its nation who would support it and depend upon it for safety. Qurashi identifies the fact that the concept of being able to feel the ravages of war on the shores of the United States was a burden that most Americans would not be able to endure. Whether the burden caused by the attacks on September 11 was too much for the nation to endure has yet to be determined, but Al Qaeda believed that the destruction of the World Trade Center would topple the U.S. government financially. Certainly the United States citizenry is becoming tired of the nation's War on Terrorism, both in the financial as well as human cost to the nation. Ultimately, Qurashi points to the near true statement that this was the first time that the United States had felt the effects of war since The Civil War. In Qurashi's opinion, Al Qaeda attacked the psyche of the American people by striking them where they felt the most safe and secure. In a physical sense of the attack, it stands up to the elements of Fourth Generation warfare by not necessarily attacking a target of military value, but attacking a target that either represented the financial backbone of the country or a symbol, whose undoing would trigger a reaction commensurate with the Stock Market Crash of 1929.<sup>20</sup>

Militarily, Al Qaeda has demonstrated that they can conduct asymmetric attacks against U.S. targets that are normally associated as targets of terrorism. Such targets include various U.S. embassies, military housing complexes, a warship, and two attacks against The World Trade

Center. While many believe that Al Qaeda was instrumental in the death of 18 U.S. Army personnel in Mogadishu, it is unlikely Al Qaeda operatives were directly involved in direct combat with U.S. forces that early in their history.<sup>21</sup> It is more likely that some Somalis who reacted to the raid force may have received training from Al Qaeda advisors who happened to be in Somalia at the time.<sup>22</sup>

But, not all of Al Qaeda's attacks have been against military targets. Al Qaeda realizes the usefulness of conducting attacks against the society of the United States, as epitomized by their attempted attacks against the millennium celebration in Seattle or against the tourism industry that caters primarily to U.S. and Western expatriates.<sup>23</sup> With regard to targeting financial markets, Al Qaeda continues to look towards the oil industry as its most viable strategic target. In October 2002, Al Qaeda attacked a merchant oil tanker off the coast of Yemen. By doing this attack, particularly so soon after the attack against the *USS Cole*, Al Qaeda proved to the world that their ships are not completely safe anywhere in the region and that they can affect oil prices globally by attacking various parts of the oil industry.<sup>24</sup>

Al Qaeda's attacks have been conducted against targets of both national and world importance, from a nation's embassy to the world's financial markets. While a country's embassy, such as that of the U.S. in Kenya or Tanzania or Israel in Argentina, is an important asset, it is not such of vital interest that such an attack in and of itself would result in retaliation where all facets of military power were unleashed upon an antagonist. Al Qaeda's attacks against the United States have been numerous and widespread, but they have resulted in retaliation from the U.S. government commensurate to the damage done initially. It was not until Al Qaeda's actions on September 11, 2001, causing severe physical and emotional damage



to a nation and some part of the global community, that the United States began taking critical action against bin Laden and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

### **THE MATURATION OF AL QAEDA**

*"If the U.S. still thinks and brags that it still has this kind of power even after all these successive defeats in Vietnam, Beirut, Aden, and Somalia, then let them go back to those who are awaiting its return." Usama bin Laden, CNN, March, 1997.*

Al Qaeda as a concept has been around at least since 1993 when elements of Somali Islamists conducted attacks against both U.S interests and Christian icons in Somalia.<sup>25</sup> Since then the U.S. government took notice of Usama bin Laden as a serious terrorist, but did not look at Al Qaeda as a global movement and certainly did not see it as a powerful non-state actor. Usama bin Laden was a known entity from the late 1980s when he was supported by the U.S government in his struggle against the Soviets in Afghanistan. During this conflict the mujahidin fighting under bin Laden's support and guidance were able to use hit-and-run tactics and asymmetric methods of warfare to defeat the Soviets and convince them that Afghanistan was not worth the price in men, materiel, and money. With a significant amount of support from the U.S. and a whole lot of ingenuity on behalf of the mujahidin, this small, untrained band of fighters was able to defeat one of the world's superpowers.

While Al Qaeda was more of an idea and not yet an organization, this event, as noted by Qurashi, has become one of the pillars on which Al Qaeda's philosophy of Fourth Generation Warfare was built, even though bin Laden and some of his cadre may not have recognized it until after 1994. However, by the time U.S. military personnel left Somalia, bin Laden and Al Qaeda began to realize that their form of struggle was beginning to conform to the tenets of Fourth Generation Warfare. In Somalia bin Laden and his loose band of supporters provided money and

weapons to Islamist fighting against U.S. forces and, whether involved or not, used the “Blackhawk Down” scenario to illustrate their combat prowess and resolve and denigrate the U.S. forces. It was at this time that they themselves began to believe their activities were in accordance with Fourth Generation Warfare.<sup>26</sup>

But, Al Qaeda’s activities did not stop with the Soviet Afghanistan experience or the U.S. Somalia incident. After Somalia, Al Qaeda continued its campaign against the U.S. by attacking the World Trade Center in 1993 through one of its affiliates in the United States. While this attack did not result in Al Qaeda’s ultimate goal, it still represented their desire and ability to conduct attacks against non-military targets. This attack was unique because it was conducted outside the Middle East where a deeper support base is normally found and it was directed against a target that exemplified the perceived wealth and financial power of the world’s surviving superpower. Unfortunately for Al Qaeda (but fortunately for the United States), their attack on U.S. soil made it much more difficult for them to continue operations from within the U.S. As a result of law enforcement and domestic counterterrorism activities, Al Qaeda refocused its efforts against U.S. interests and assets outside U.S. boundaries. While Al Qaeda was forced to refocus its operations against U.S. interests outside the U.S., it never gave up its desire to bring down its nemesis, its reason for being and began to assert its influence in other parts of the world where the U.S. had national interests..

To Al Qaeda, the U.S. represented everything that was wrong in the world, particularly the Islamic world they desired to create. Al Qaeda’s philosophy has changed from one where the infidels are removed from Islam’s most holy places to a philosophy that creates a global Islamic nation, albeit one more esoteric than other nations with established political borders. In its beginning, Al Qaeda had a desire to remove American and Western influences from the

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, particularly removing U.S. military forces from the Arabian Peninsula. The U.S. had built up military forces in Saudi Arabia prior to the liberation of Kuwait in 1990 with a promise that these troops would not remain once their mission had been completed. However, U.S. military personnel remained in Saudi Arabia for more than ten years, remaining until well into the current conflict, Operation Iraqi Freedom. When the King of Saudi Arabia refused bin Laden's demands to remove foreign, non-Muslims from the Islamic holy lands on the peninsula, Al Qaeda began targeting the leadership of Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden and Al Qaeda essentially declared war on the Saudi Royal Family and declared them apostates governing the holy Islamic lands and demanded that the al Saud family be replaced by a more devout Islamic ruling body that embraced Islamic teaching and practiced Shari'a law more in accordance with Al Qaeda's philosophy. In the late 1990s, Al Qaeda's strategic goal of removing the infidels from the Arabian Peninsula changed with its desire to establish a global Islamic nation, or umma. No longer content with removing infidels or apostates from one small geographic area on the globe, Al Qaeda saw the utility of creating a global movement towards a more Islamic state, even if it was more a state of being than a political state. There were two steps needed for Al Qaeda to create their umma; one step was to unify the Islamic societies around the physical world and the second step was to remove all resistance to their nation, namely any non-Muslims.<sup>27</sup> Usama bin Laden not only took on the yoke of delivering the Islamic holy lands from the Crusaders and apostate Muslims under the control of the Saudi government, but promised to unite the world's Muslim community into one nation, if not geographically then philosophically.

## THE NEW ISLAMIC NATION

*"We believe that America is much weaker than Russia, and we have learned from our brothers who fought in the jihad in Somalia of the incredible weakness and cowardice of the American soldier. Not even eighty of them had been killed and they fled in total darkness in the middle of the night, unable to see a thing." Usama bin Laden, Messages to the World, 2005.*

Al Qaeda's desire to establish a new Islamic nation is a relatively new phenomenon among Arab terrorist groups<sup>28</sup>. At no other time in recorded history has a movement such as Al Qaeda worked so hard to bring global constituents together under one singular idea. Their idea is to unite the Islamic nation under one ideology and to bring about another Golden Age of Islam and return Muslims to a place of world-wide power within the global community<sup>29</sup>. Al Qaeda desires to exemplify Islam around the world and convey its own interpretation upon the Muslims of the world, thereby establishing both a physical and metaphysical nation that spans the globe, both actually and ideologically. While Al Qaeda lacks a proper political boundary and real estate to call its own and establish a true nation state, it maintains the ability to function as a non-state actor and continues to affect and influence the world, especially the Islamic world. Al Qaeda continues to recruit Islamic people and Islamist groups to continue its global growth and global reach. Al Qaeda has embraced the technology of the West, something Islam has been hesitant to do in the past, and is using mass-media to publish its message as well as conduct its operations. The advent of the Internet and Al Qaeda's capacity to use it has made their message much more available to the general Islamic public at large than it ever could have been before. While Al Qaeda has been reluctant to use the Internet to electronically move large sums of money from one organization to another, it still uses the Internet to conduct some of its financial transactions. Al Qaeda and much of the Arab world use hawalas, or informal credit holding institutions, to convey money from one place to another.<sup>30</sup> By combining a new world technology allowing

worldwide movement with an old world concept of banking, Al Qaeda is able to take advantage of a Fourth Generation Warfare concept of using information and global maneuver.

To further its message of jihad and struggle against the U.S. and other Western nations, Al Qaeda has embraced all forms of media, but has been especially successful with the use of television and the Internet.<sup>31</sup> Whether by design or by circumstance, Al Qaeda has been served well by the Arab television news service Al Jazeera. For many years, Al Jazeera was the mainstream news organization that provided news and information to those of the Islamic community by those who reportedly understood life from the Muslim perspective. Recognizing its importance in getting out a global message, Al Qaeda used Al Jazeera almost exclusively to air its *fatwas* and other messages of hate against the West and U.S. Furthermore, Al Jazeera was happy to publish Al Qaeda's message in exchange for the increase in viewers and subscriptions it received as a result of being the sole network authorized to air first-run messages from Al Qaeda.

Recognizing the power of the Internet, Al Qaeda has developed its own media corporation as well as its own Internet publishing site.<sup>32</sup> Today, every authentic communiqué from any prominent Al Qaeda official is developed and then published by Al Qaeda itself. It now has full control over what their message is, how it is interpreted, if at all, and how it is disseminated. Al Qaeda has the ability of publishing their messages via digital video (on the web and on television), via web logs (blogs), or via textual websites that are known within the Islamic community to belong to or be run by Al Qaeda.

With Al Qaeda's ability to publish its message and reach Muslims all over the Earth in near-real time has come another ability to gain increasing popular support for their goal. While a poster, a book, or a town crier is effective in getting a message across to the people, the ability to provide a video clip of a call to arms to millions of Islamists all over the world is powerful

beyond belief. Al Qaeda continues to publish the ideology of an umma and the power the Islamic nation has over the West through sheer numbers. In this way, Al Qaeda is able to publish its message to the world at an alarming rate, recruit new members into the fight against the West, and incorporate new affiliates into "The Base". It is their enlistment or annexation of other Islamist groups on a global scale that contributes significantly to Al Qaeda's lethality and global reach. As a form of maneuver, Al Qaeda has mastered the use of global communications to move about the battlefield its sub-elements and incorporate other groups to do its bidding in different geographical or regional areas.<sup>33</sup> While bin Laden and his primary staff are sitting in a cave somewhere in Afghanistan, his lieutenants have freedom of movement in the Maghreb, Southeast Asia, or in Europe. Al Qaeda knows that using dispersion and diversity is one of the best forms of global maneuver warfare and the most effective way they can prosecute their war against the U.S. and its Western allies.

With Al Qaeda's maturation and its design for a new Islamic nation, Al Qaeda has taken on two other elements associated with Fourth Generation Warfare. These elements are the use of transnational networks and the use of media to further their cause. Al Qaeda has annexed other like-minded Islamist groups in various other parts of the world and is incorporating them into their strategic plan and allowing them to generate their own operations against the common enemy. With the incorporation of these "Al Qaeda affiliates", "big Al Qaeda" is able to capitalize on a broader recruitment base where the people can be used in local operations or in either Afghanistan or Iraq. Furthermore, these transnational networks make it easier for Al Qaeda to raise money in support of their activities, move that money to where it is needed most, and to generate other material support from the local population.

## AL QAEDA GOES TO WAR

"As I said, our boys were shocked by the low morale of the American soldier and they realized that the American soldier was just a paper tiger."  
Usama bin Laden, *Frontline*, May, 1998.

Al Qaeda claims to have begun its struggle against the societies of the West with its resistance to Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and continues this struggle to this day. While it may be a bit premature to include mujahidin activities in Afghanistan as part of the true Al Qaeda movement, it is important to include that period of time, especially when Al Qaeda routinely includes this victory as part of its legacy. Al Qaeda continues to wage its war against the West in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, the South East Asia, and East Africa, but these are not the only places where Al Qaeda has fighters. As a result of its excellent media campaign, Al Qaeda has fighters and support personnel all over the world, from Latin America to Central Asia to the most modern cities of Europe. Al Qaeda has been able to develop such a widespread area of operation by publishing its message to those who have a similar ideology or goal.<sup>34</sup> Al Qaeda has become the light to follow for many despondent Islamic peoples around the world, and these downhearted people are not just those with little money or no real future for their lives. Many of the people involved in Al Qaeda's movement are well educated people who are productive members of their society or neighborhood.<sup>35</sup>

When Al Qaeda was established, it was centered on Usama bin Laden in particular and was considered a small, nearly insignificant terrorist organization, much like many of the other Islamic terrorist organizations that it resembled. However, Al Qaeda had two things at its disposal that many other small organizations did not have and that was an extremely charismatic leader and access to large amounts of money.<sup>36</sup> With both of these elements, Al Qaeda was able to grow from an Afghan mujahidin support organization into a conglomeration of like-minded

Islamist groups. Once bin Laden's Al Qaeda became capable, it began its physical and metaphysical wars against its enemies, particularly the United States and its Western allies. Al Qaeda began its war with physical attacks against what it believed were legitimate targets representative of the United States and the ruling family of Saudi Arabia. Some of these targets were military, some were representative of the United States, and some were unprotected. While some of the targets may not have appeared legitimate in the eyes of many politicians and military personnel alike, in the eyes of one who subscribes to the tenets of Fourth Generation Warfare, all of these targets were legitimate and served as a means to an end. That end is the removal of the infidels from the Arabian Peninsula and the establishment of a global Islamic state.<sup>37</sup>

So, what has Al Qaeda done to take its fight against the United States and the West? The answer begins with Al Qaeda's perception of its global struggle starting in Afghanistan during the early 1980s against the Soviet Army. The Soviets represented one of the most powerful armies in the world and with a little help from the other superpower, the Afghan Jihadists were eventually able to defeat and humiliate the Soviets. In many of the Al Qaeda speeches, they cite the defeat of the Soviets and how such a small, untrained, and underequipped band of fighters could muster the desire and ability to defeat such a militarily inferior opponent. In identifying their success against the Soviets, Al Qaeda identifies the fact that the invaders were immoral and as a result, lacked the political and social will to completely commit to the task of annexing Afghanistan. Al Qaeda quickly identified that the Soviets lost in Afghanistan not from a lack of manpower or firepower, but as a result of a lack of willpower. Congruently, Al Qaeda touted their willpower and resolve in defeating the other superpower, namely the United States, in Somalia. Al Qaeda literature cites specifically the incident that has become known as "Blackhawk Down" where U.S. forces were inserted in downtown Mogadishu to seize a Somali

warlord wanted by U.S. authorities. During the action on that day, a U.S. Blackhawk helicopter was shot down and the Special Operations force sent in to seize the Somali national was reportedly attacked over a period of eighteen hours by approximately 10,000 Somalis.<sup>38</sup> Al Qaeda used the resultant pullout from Somalia and the Blackhawk Down incident to exemplify the ability of a few lightly armed, but resolute, Islamic fighters to expel the world's remaining superpower. These two examples are some of the most powerful messages espoused by Al Qaeda and are perhaps two of the most important and powerful messages that Al Qaeda publishes in its recruitment pitches. But, Al Qaeda's military achievements, whether actual or perceived, do not stop in 1994. It wasn't until soon after the U.S. departed Somalia that Al Qaeda reared its ugly head and bin Laden began issuing his *fatwa* against the United States, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the West (including Israel). While the "Blind Sheik", Omar Abdel-Rahman, was ultimately identified as the main conspirator in the first World Trade Center bombing, it was ultimately the work of Al Qaeda exercising and experimenting with its global reach.<sup>39</sup> The fact that the World Trade Center was not brought down to the ground was lost on many U.S. terrorism officials, but its societal and operational successes were not completely lost on Al Qaeda and bin Laden. While this event was a tactical failure, it led to the belief that the U.S. could be engaged militarily, not only in a conventional manner, but more importantly in a more uncomfortable and unconventional manner. It was this thought process that led Al Qaeda to conduct their ultimate attack to date against the U.S. on September, 11 2001. However, prior to 9/11, Al Qaeda had conducted other sensational attacks against U.S. assets or interests, albeit outside the physical United States. One of the most prolific attacks conducted by Al Qaeda against the U.S. was the Khobar Towers bombing in 1996. This attack was a direct attempt to convince both the U.S. and Saudi governments that the U.S presence was neither wanted nor

tolerable on the Arabian Peninsula. While this attack resulted in a moderate number of American dead, it produced a large number of people injured. Khobar Towers was considered to be a fairly secure facility, with external security provided by the Saudi Arabian National Guard and U.S. Security Police. The fact that Al Qaeda was able to conduct such an attack on such a scale identified to their leadership that such attacks were not only possible, but were likely to be successful, if even in the short term concept.<sup>40</sup> But truck bombs were not new to the conduct of terrorism, especially in the Middle East. Hezbollah had conducted a large-scale truck bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983, resulting in the death of 241 U.S. military personnel. In 1998, Al Qaeda simultaneously attacked the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam with vehicle borne improvised explosive devices. These explosive-laden vehicles were brought either within or in close proximity of their intended targets, but as such delivery means became more common, defensive measures placed buildings further away from a useable street.<sup>41</sup> While the vehicle used against the Marines in Beirut was laden with high explosives, the large truck used against the Air Force in Saudi Arabia was an ammonium-nitrate fuel oil mixture that had the resultant explosion equivalent to 5,000 pounds of conventional explosives. Again, though, using explosives in vehicles used against buildings is not a new concept in the conduct of terrorism, especially when dealing with Islamic terrorists.<sup>42</sup> Where Al Qaeda began to use its imagination was its attack on October 12, 2000 off the coast of Yemen against the USS Cole. Al Qaeda operatives, piloting what appeared to be a Zodiac rubber raft, rapidly approached the warship in a manner consistent with many of the other small craft operating in the Gulf of Aden outside the port. What the captain and crew did not know is that their force protection measure of anchoring out from the pier was not enough for them to be completely safe. The terrorists had filled the small craft with high explosives and, without warning, pulled

up alongside the Cole and detonated their explosives against the hull, killing 17 and injuring hundreds. It was at this point that many policymakers and terrorism experts began to sit up and take notice of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda began to appear in many different parts of the world, conducting fund-raising activities, civil affairs activities, and publishing their public affairs message of hope and support for the downtrodden Islamic community, promising a return to the day when Islamic nation ruled the world.

Al Qaeda has shown the world on more than one occasion that it can conduct acts of terrorism in an attempt to influence world and national politics, particularly the politics of the United States and other allied Western societies. However, it has yet to present itself as capable of conducting a conventional campaign against another modern military. Al Qaeda continues to look for weapons of mass destruction and a means to deliver them, but to date has not been able to capitalize on this desire. While Al Qaeda has demonstrated its ability to mobilize large numbers of "troops", obtain large amounts of military materiel, and conduct difficult hit-and-run activities, they have the desire but do not appear to have the means to establish, equip, and maintain a standing military, certainly one capable of providing the final blow in support of its other actions in order to finally affect its adversary's political or societal will. However, establishing such a conventional army may be in keeping with bin Laden's design or personal philosophy of mujahedeen warfare.<sup>43</sup>

## IT IS WHAT IT IS, BUT WHAT IS IT?

"I repeat what I mentioned previously: the backing of the Jihad in Afghanistan and Iraq today is to back *the most important battlefields* in which the *Crusade against Islam and Muslims* is in progress. And the defeat of the *Crusaders* there – soon, Allah permitting – will have a far-reaching effect on the future of the Muslim Ummah, Allah willing. Ayman al-Zawahiri, as Sahab Media, December, 2006.

So, the question remains whether Al Qaeda is utilizing Fourth Generation Warfare as a global strategy or is it doing something else as yet undefined? Without any definitive checklist against which to grade Al Qaeda's historical actions, there may be no way to specifically identify that Al Qaeda has adopted the theory of Fourth Generation Warfare, other than their own admission. However, with the elements of Fourth Generation Warfare presented here as a guide, it gives one a place from which to start. The question at this point becomes how many of these elements must be present before one can say with any certainty that Al Qaeda is in fact adhering to the theory of Fourth Generation Warfare? One could rationalize that if two or more of the elements are present, such as deduce that Fourth Generation Warfare is being employed or if a major contributor to Fourth Generation Warfare is being utilized, perhaps then the actions of an entity could be characterized as Fourth Generation Warfare. For Al Qaeda, they exhibit several of the characteristics associated with the elements of Fourth Generation Warfare, as laid out herein.

Al Qaeda makes excellent use of the media to publish its message, further its cause, and call willing Muslims to join their struggle. Al Qaeda actually has their own media element, As Sahab, that is responsible for producing video and audio messages destined for current or potential *jihadis*, publishing official communiqués specially created for the national leadership of its named enemies, and a venue for *jihadis* and other Muslims to share information and exchange ideas. Al Qaeda's influence truly is global as a result of their embrace of the World Wide Web, their use of electronic communications, and even sympathetic television and radio companies

that gladly publish Al Qaeda's message. This element of Fourth Generation Warfare is present in all that Al Qaeda does both operationally and administratively.

Through its use of media methods, Al Qaeda is able to execute its battle plans using a form of decentralized command and control or authority. While it is certain that Usama bin Laden is the lead figure in the organization, his philosophy of command and commander's intent have been published for all his subordinate commanders to follow. Local leadership in Al Qaeda regional elements, such as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) or Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, know and understand the types of operations they should undertake and they are empowered to execute them as long as they conform to bin Laden's guidance for his global jihad. But, bin Laden's supreme authority can still be seen when he or his designee issues an admonition to those who are not following his intent, as indicated by the communiqué to AQI for their indiscriminate killing of "innocent Muslims." Decentralized leadership is present and essential to how Al Qaeda operates and lends itself to their flexibility, effectiveness, and lethality all over the globe.

Because of its decentralized authority, Al Qaeda is able to enlist the assistance of a wide variety of supporters using a wide variety of networks. When foreign fighters were needed in either Afghanistan or Iraq, local organizers outside the Middle East and within were able to influence local Muslims, sympathetic to Al Qaeda, to join in their fight. Foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan have come from as far as the United States and Africa to as close as Jordan and Syria. There have even been foreign fighters from Central and South East Asia. The same networks that mobilize personnel from different parts of the world are also responsible for generating funds for Al Qaeda as well as moving those funds to the point where they are needed most at any given time. These networks also obtain the service of specialists who have unique skills, such as bomb making or chemists, and assist them in moving from one location to another

so they may provide their services. Such services may be in the form of training *jihadis* in one area how to devise an explosive device or they may assist in the construction themselves. It is certain to say that elements of Al Qaeda are located throughout the world and can call upon many different assets for various reasons.

With the exception of its actions on September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda has attacked targets around the world that are of interest to the U.S. and other allied nations, but has refrained from attacking such interests that were vital to national survival. When Al Qaeda conducted the 9/11 attacks, one could interpret that the targets and intended targets were selected because of their apparent importance to the U.S. government, its military, and its economy. However, prior to the 9/11 attacks, Al Qaeda had selected targets that were of interest to the U.S. government, but not seen as vital to its survival. Embassies have long been the targets of terrorist attack and some in government may have come to accept this as unfortunate, but an acceptable risk that they attempt to negate or mitigate. When Al Qaeda has attacked a U.S. interest, it has been met with a commensurate retaliatory strike, usually in the form of cruise missiles or a limited bombing campaign against a known or suspected Al Qaeda facility. It wasn't until the 9/11 attacks that the U.S. decided to take measures against Al Qaeda that involved a significant military engagement, particularly in Afghanistan and, perhaps, Iraq. Until 9/11, Al Qaeda had preyed on the patience of the American people and its government; however, since 9/11, Al Qaeda appears to have shifted back to its version of attrition warfare by attacking targets of interest that may not appear as vital to national survival. They continue to test the will of the people.

Just as Al Qaeda will test the will of its opponents in the coming years, so has it done in the past. Al Qaeda appears to be patient and willing to expend massive amounts of money, material, and manpower to achieve its total victory and establish the new Islamic *umma*. Al Qaeda's

struggle is a long-term endeavor and has been going on for some time, admittedly since the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Al Qaeda appears willing to continue its struggle until their ultimate strategic goal is achieved or they are completely obliterated. It is unclear what their resolve is if Usama bin Laden were to be neutralized, but there may be another key leader poised to take his place, should anything happen to him. It is likely that any new leader of Al Qaeda would continue the struggle as it has presented itself for nearly 20 years.

Finally, while Al Qaeda has been able to increase the lethality of its unconventional attacks against its foes, it does not appear capable, even if willing, to develop and maintain a conventional military capability to mount a final military victory. Without a safe haven, its own country, perhaps, Al Qaeda may not be able to adopt Mao's philosophy that insurgent warfare leads to conventional war and total domination over one's enemy. While Al Qaeda has the wherewithal to obtain weapons and personnel, it does not appear to have the desire to establish a standing army.

With the elements presented in this paper, Al Qaeda exhibits all but one in its actions and may one day complete all of the elements. While it may be difficult to identify how many of the elements must be present to determine if an entity is using Fourth Generation Warfare, it is evident here that Al Qaeda is doing so. By their own admission, they have adopted the tenets of Fourth Generation Warfare, as exemplified by the statements made by al Qurashi. Furthermore, their evident use of nearly all the elements listed herein certainly lead one to believe that Al Qaeda has adopted Fourth Generation Warfare as their strategy. Finally, it is unlikely that Al Qaeda will adopt another form of definable warfare in the future, as Fourth Generation Warfare seems to suit them well.

## HOW TO COUNTER AL QAEDA

“When you give religiously inspired zealots weapons of mass destruction and you promise them that if they kill innocent people they will go to heaven, imagine what the consequences are.”—Alan M. Dershowitz

It may be said that the best way to counter an insurgency, one must identify the major or the minor causative factors that led to the insurgency and counter those factors. Only by removing the causative factors and addressing the grievances of those who have risen up against law and order can one truly stop an insurrection. If one simply applies military power, force against force, it may quell the violence for a while, but so long as one person is alive who is sympathetic to the cause, that cause may never die out completely. Eventually the insurgency will rear itself up out of its ashes and become a problem once again. So, what should the U.S. government do against Al Qaeda to thwart its global Islamist insurgency and bring peace back to the world? It must counter Al Qaeda's ability to use the elements of Fourth Generation Warfare by neutralizing each element, thereby negating the flexibility and independence of the theory.

Al Qaeda enjoys an effective media campaign and appears to have mastered political and psychological manipulation of the downtrodden Muslim at the hands of the West. They are quick to point out U.S. mistakes in our own strategy and they capitalize on tactical mistakes by publishing them on their websites and allowing media coverage of such failures. Information is power to the people and one step the U.S. government must take against Al Qaeda is an aggressive Information Operations campaign. The U.S. government must work first, to ensure such failures do not occur and, if they do occur, the U.S. government must be quick in sending a message that such mistakes will not be tolerated and attempt to publish a message of reconciliation and understanding. This message, however, should not detract from any lethal action that may be ongoing. The U.S. power and resolve must never in question and that message must prevail in any media campaign used to counter that of Al Qaeda. The U.S.

government must work to show the Islamic world all the good it has done in the world, especially the Islamic world. It must publish this information in the same circles where jihadists lurk on the World Wide Web. While it is good to post articles about how the U.S. government is helping people in Bangladesh or in Djibouti on embassy web pages, the target audience is perhaps lost or never engaged on its own battlefield. Jihad-related blogs and chat groups must be exploited and the true message of Al Qaeda must be disclosed. Finally, the U.S. government must mount a counter-media campaign that identifies to the Islamic world, through established and trusted sources, that the message Al Qaeda espouses is false, show how it is false, and then identify to the Islamic community worldwide the dangers of following the rhetoric of Al Qaeda, showing its faults and its fallacies.

Along with information operations, the U.S. government must work harder to identify the leadership structure of Al Qaeda and begin to attack its transnational networks. To counter these two elements of Fourth Generation Warfare, the U.S. government will have to reinvigorate its intelligence collection and analysis capabilities. While technical collection assets and efforts are useful, their exclusive use has been less than satisfactory. The U.S. must invigorate its human intelligence collection capabilities through direct or indirect influence. It will be difficult at the least to find a person who is willing or capable to infiltrate Al Qaeda or one of its affiliates, due to their robust counterintelligence policies. Al Qaeda has an extensive validation process for many of its new recruits, especially those who would have access to high level information and not just a newly minted foot soldier. While Al Qaeda defectors do exist, they are too far and few between to be relied upon for useful information and they may be unwilling to continue operating, clandestinely, in an organization with such a robust screening program. For good HUMINT, the U.S. may have to enter into alliances of opportunity and benefit that may last only

the short term. Such enterprises may require a liaison program with another unsavory actor, but one that is more desirable than dealing with Al Qaeda's threat. Finally, the U.S. government may have to enter into liaisons with other unsavory elements, such as international organized crime, to get the information needed to identify and neutralize the transnational networks used by Al Qaeda in its Fourth Generation Warfare model. In the end, however, good analysis of the threats posed by Al Qaeda coupled with effective law enforcement, both domestically and abroad, will work to negate the effectiveness of Al Qaeda's leadership and networks.

Finally, the U.S. government must begin using lethal elements of Fourth Generation Warfare to its own advantage. Early uses of Special Operations Forces (SOF) appeared to have a large level of success against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan and continue to have some level of success in the Philippines and East Africa. Unfortunately, SOF elements are small in number and there certainly is not enough of them to address all the problems presented by Al Qaeda and its global presence and influence. The U.S. government, though the U.S. military, must develop a SOF-like capability using general purpose forces who are specially trained for decentralized operations, much like Al Qaeda under that element of Fourth Generation Warfare. The U.S. Marine Corps has been wrestling with the concept of Distributed Operations (DO), which appear to lend themselves to just the type of lethal warfare needed against the threat of Al Qaeda. While SOF elements may be used against much stronger or seasoned Al Qaeda targets, DO elements could be used to prosecute more common Al Qaeda targets. While softer elements of national power may be useful, military power has always been an essential tool in countering insurgencies.

Only by using the elements of Fourth Generation Warfare against an organization employing Fourth Generation Warfare as a strategy can one be successful. It is the epitome of fighting fire

with fire. It will be impossible to give in to the demands of Usama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, furthermore none of its senior leadership seem open to any negotiation of a compromise. If the causative factors for bin Laden's insurgency cannot be addressed, the only answer to counter Al Qaeda's Fourth Generation Warfare is Fourth Generation Warfare. However, Al Qaeda has consistently changed its strategy and adapted to its enemy and the battlefield upon which it fights. Al Qaeda has shown that it is an organization that learns and can change to meet new challenges. It is likely that Al Qaeda will change its strategy once it discovers that the strategy is no longer effective. As Al Qaeda adapts to its environment, so must the U.S. government and its allies in the fight against Al Qaeda's strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Instructor Notes, Undated.

<sup>2</sup> Richard A. Clarke, Strategy for Eliminating the Threat from Jihadist Networks of al Qida: Status and Prospects (presented to the U.S. National Security Council, January 25, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Howard, Michael and Paret, Peter, eds. On War. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Defense and the National Interest, "On War #90, The Sling and the Stone", [http://www.d-n-i.net/lind/lind\\_11\\_05\\_04.htm](http://www.d-n-i.net/lind/lind_11_05_04.htm). Thomas X. Hammes wrote in his book, *The Sling and the Stone* that those who use Fourth Generation Warfare will not fight just a conventional military battle, but will use the political, economic, and social arenas to ultimately win their battle with the nation state.

<sup>5</sup> Al Qaeda used the web page [www.ansar.org](http://www.ansar.org) to publish many of its communiqués and post its video and audio recordings. Al Qaeda stopped using this web page when it developed its own media branch and began maintaining its own web page.

<sup>6</sup> Lind, William S. et al. The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation, *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 1989, 22-26.

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service Serial GMP20020223000086, February 24, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Lind, 22-26.

<sup>9</sup> Lind, 22-26.

<sup>10</sup> Lind, 24-25.

<sup>11</sup> United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Instructor Notes, Undated.

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- <sup>12</sup> Hammes, Thomas X., *The Sling and the Stone* (St Paul: Zenith Press: 2004), 207-215.
- <sup>13</sup> Zedong, Mao, translated by Griffith, Samuel B., *On Guerilla Warfare*, (1937), 21-22.
- <sup>14</sup> Bodansky, Yossef, *Bin Laden The Man Who Declared War on America* (Rocklin: Prima Publishing, 1999), 31.
- <sup>15</sup> Infoplease, "Al Qaeda Osama bin Laden's Network of Terror," <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/al-qaeda-terrorism.html>.
- <sup>16</sup> Lind, 24.
- <sup>17</sup> Clark, Tab A to Strategy for Eliminating the Threat from Jihadist Networks of Al Qida: Status and Prospects (presented to the U.S. National Security Council, January 25, 2001).
- <sup>18</sup> Borgna Bruna et al., *Al Qaeda, Usama bin Laden's Network of Terror* in the Infoplease database, <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/al-qaeda-terrorism.html>.
- <sup>19</sup> Kraemer, Joel L. "*Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*", (E. J. Brill: New York, 1992), 1 & 148
- <sup>20</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service Serial GMP20020223000086, February 24, 2002.
- <sup>21</sup> This assertion is one by the author who spent considerable time in Mogadishu during the time this incident occurred. This opinion is based upon multiple interviews with various Somalis who either witnessed the incident or had second hand information of the incident.
- <sup>22</sup> In October 1993, Task Force Ranger conducted a raid against elements of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) who were meeting at the Olympic Hotel in Mogadishu. The raid's purpose was to capture high-level personnel from the SNA and bring them in for questioning and to reduce the SNA's ability to conduct offensive action against U.N, U.S. and rival clan forces. The raid wound up going badly and the raid force and supporting elements came up against more than 3,000 Somalis who came to the aid of their clansmen in the vicinity of the Olympic Hotel. While there were indications that an unidentifiable entity from Saudi Arabia was alleged to be supplying an Islamic terrorist organization with funds, weapons, and materiel, there was no definitive information that Al Qaeda as we know it today was actively involved in combat against the raid force. It is the author's opinion, after having spent more than five months speaking to various Somalis who knew of the circumstances surrounding the raid and the Islamic terrorist group, Al Itihaad Al Islamia, that Usama bin Laden was likely the foreign support originating from Saudi Arabia, but that Al Qaeda operatives were not directly engaged with U.S. forces associated with the raid on the Olympic Hotel or subsequent actions against U.S. or U.N forces.
- <sup>23</sup> Borgna Bruna et al., *Al Qaeda, Usama bin Laden's Network of Terror* in the Infoplease database, <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/al-qaeda-terrorism.html>.
- <sup>24</sup> Aimee Ibrahim and Ben Venzke, *The Al Qaeda Threat: An Analytical Guide to Al Qaeda's Tactics and Targets*, (Alexandria: Tempest Pub, 2003)
- <sup>25</sup> Tactical Human Intelligence (HUMINT) reporting in Mogadishu, Somalia in early 1994 indicate that the Islamic group Al-Itihaad Al-Islamia (AIAI) had been involved in the fighting associated with the "Black Hawk Down" incident. Additionally tactical HUMINT reporting indicated that AIAI was responsible for a series of bombings against Catholic churches, built by the Italians, were being bombed by AIA as well. More tactical HUMINT

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reporting indicated that AIAI was receiving weapons, support, and training from Saudi Arabia. While this was discounted at the time as unlikely, it is logical that the support from Saudi Arabia was actually from Usama bin Laden, who was, "from Saudi."

<sup>26</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service Serial GMP20020223000086, February 24, 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Clark, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Crenshaw, Martha, ed. *Terrorism in Context* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 516-517. According to the account of Frantz Fanon's theory of the psychological and political nature of violence, the nationalistic movements of the Arabs against Israel exemplify the use of violent acts against others as therapeutic. By using violence and death as an expression of freedom and power, the target audience is changed from the oppressor and directed against the oppressed. This new target audience is then empowered and the use of violence is justified. Most of the major Arab terrorist groups have a single goal in mind. Almost to a group, each group desires the destruction of Israel, the eradication of the Jewish nationality or faith, and the return of "occupied lands" to re-form the nation of Palestine. Some of the most adamant Arab groups have not necessarily desired the creation of a global Islamic nation and some, such as the popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, have adopted a Marxist-Leninist ideology.

<sup>29</sup> Kean, Thomas H. et al, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 47-49.

<sup>30</sup> Hersi, Abdourahim M. Interview by author. Djibouti, Djibouti, 2004. Hawalas have been used in trade in the Middle East for years. They are prominent in East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and as far east as Pakistan. When a person needs to transfer wealth from one place to another, they visit a local hawala, provide the proprietor with something of value, such as camels or cash, and that proprietor contact another hawala operator in the area where the funds are needed. Hawalas are essentially an ancient method of credit between like institutions and their records are still kept to ledger entries made in pencil.

<sup>31</sup> U.S Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2005* (2006), 17.

<sup>32</sup> Jackson, Brian A. "Technology Acquisition by Terrorist Groups," in *America Confronts Terrorism*, ed. John Prados (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 216-236.

<sup>33</sup> Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 138.

<sup>34</sup> Sageman, 123.

<sup>35</sup> Hogue, James F. and Rose, Gideon, ed. *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 131-133. Al Qaeda raises money in four primary ways. These primary methods of raising money are criminal activity, legitimate businesses, donations from rich Muslims, and through charitable and nongovernmental organizations. Many of the nongovernmental charities are Islam based and can be contributed to via the Internet, thereby offering the donor relative anonymity.

<sup>36</sup> Bodansky, 42-45.

<sup>37</sup> Bodansky, 30-32.

<sup>38</sup> White, Jonathan R. *Terrorism, an Introduction*. (Belmont: Wadsworth Group, 2002), 165.

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<sup>39</sup> White, 165.

<sup>40</sup> A common short term goal of terrorists is to cause casualties. This short term goal is usually desired in conjunction with others simply to achieve a more strategic long term goal. This ideology is in keeping with established DoD antiterrorism philosophy and education.

<sup>41</sup> Sabal, Dennis F. Interview by author. The vehicle used against the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya actually made partial entry into the underground parking lot before it detonated. The size of the explosives, the physical layout of the surrounding buildings, and the location of the detonation were the main factors leading to the significant physical damage caused to the Chancery. The vehicle used against the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, while laden with a large amount of explosives, was not as successful in causing physical damage because it was unable to gain entry into the embassy compound. Additionally, the Dar es Salaam Chancery previously had been occupied by the Israeli diplomatic mission and had better-than-normal construction standards and the device was further away from the chancery building.

<sup>42</sup> Kean, Thomas H. et al, 60. Usama bin laden reportedly showed great interest in learning how to use truck bombs. He would use such a delivery means against the U.S. Air Force housing complex, Khobar Towers, in June 1996.

<sup>43</sup> Naji. Abu Bakr, Translated by William McCants. *The Management of Savagery*. [www.wcfia.harvard.edu/olin/images/Management%20of%20Savagery%20-%2005-23-2006.pdf](http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/olin/images/Management%20of%20Savagery%20-%2005-23-2006.pdf). Accessed April 2, 2008.