“TERRORIST TACTICS AROUND THE GLOBE

“A collusive dance of reciprocal suicide” is Albrecht’s (2001, p. 1) description of conventional terrorism, which conveys an image of the treachery and destruction involved. This chapter details present-day deadly tactics of terrorists, but many of the strategies are ages old. Despite the basic repetitive patterns in the terrorist dance macabre, a consensus exists among analysts that the face of terrorism is changing, as are its methods. A new breed of terrorists is said to be seeking out and using weapons of extreme deadliness that create ever greater numbers of victims spread over larger areas (Cilluffo & Tomarchio, 1998).

According to Bruce Hoffman (1999), terrorism is where politics and violence intersect in the hopes of producing power. Violence (or the threat of violence) is thus the essential tactic of terrorism. Terrorists strongly maintain that only through violence can their cause triumph and their long-term political aims be attained. A violent act may be designed to achieve attention, acknowledgment, or even sympathy and support for the terrorists’ cause. A goal of terrorist violence might also be to achieve recognition of their rights and of their organization. Their intention may even be to take complete control of the national government, their separate homeland, and/or their people by force (Hoffman, 1997).

All terrorists have one trait in common: They live in the future (Hoffman, 1998a). Every terrorist is driven by burning impatience coupled with an unswerving belief in the potency of violence. Terrorist attacks are generally as carefully planned as they are premeditated. A terrorist campaign must keep moving forward, no matter how slowly, or it will die (Hoffman, 1998a).

The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the U. S., known as the 9/11 Commission Report, provides a list of requirements needed to organize and conduct a complex international terrorist operation (Kean & Hamilton, 2004). For a successful attack, a terrorist organization needs able leaders, sufficient communications, a personnel system to recruit and train members, an intelligence effort to gather required information, the ability to move people, and the ability to raise and move the necessary money.
Some categories of terrorist groups have better chances of survival than others. Historically, religious movements have persisted for centuries, but in more modern times ethnonationalist/separatist terrorist groups typically have lasted longest and been the most successful (Hoffman, 1998a). As one example, armed Muslim separatist rebellions have persisted in Southeast Asia since the 1940s. Although the amount of violence they perpetrated has varied over time, the Muslim separatists have raised credible challenges to the authority of their central governments for more than half a century. For example, the Abu Sayyaf, which split from the Moro National Liberation Front in 1991, has its roots in colonial history in the southern Philippines. The Aceh rebellion in Indonesia is also based on long-standing demands for a distinct Islamic state (Tan, 2000).

**CHILDREN AT WAR**

Often forgotten in analyses of terrorist tactics is the most horrific element of terrorism. At the beginning of the 21st century, an estimated 300,000 children, some as young as 7 years old, are being used as combatants, sometimes after being kidnapped. They are exploited by both established governments and rebel movements in scores of armed conflicts around the world. Whether or not the conflicts are defined as terroristic, the children are trained in violent tactics (Hansen, 2001; Human Rights Watch, 2006).
Young combatants participate in all aspects of contemporary political strife. They wield AK-47s and M-16s on the front lines of combat, serve as human mine detectors, participate in suicide missions, carry supplies, and act as spies, messengers, or lookouts. Physically vulnerable and easily intimidated, children typically make obedient soldiers. In Sierra Leone, at present, children forced to take part in atrocities are often given drugs to overcome their fear or reluctance to fight. Most of the child soldiers have no voice, but Ishmael Baeh, who was a child in the army of Sierra Leone in 1994, is an exception. He was released from the army and rehabilitated

TABLE 4.1 Child Soldiers Fighting in Recent and Ongoing Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>(A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Bahrain</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<td>Burundi</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>(G, A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>(A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Democratic Republic of</td>
<td>(G, A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congo, Republic of</td>
<td>(A, possible G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>(G, A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>(G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>(G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>(A, possible G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iran, Islamic Republic of</td>
<td>(G, A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>(G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
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<td>Nepal</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupied Palestinian Territories</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>Paraguay</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>Rwanda</td>
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<td>Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>(G, A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania, United Republic of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>(G, A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>(G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>Zambia</td>
<td>(G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>(G)</td>
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</tbody>
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NOTE: A = Armed political groups; G = Government forces
by a UNICEF-supported organization and has become an articulate and outspoken opponent of children being used as soldiers (Swango, 2006).

Beah’s first battle took place when he was 13. He was indoctrinated with Rambo films and speeches about honor and soon learned the ideology of hate. His anger over the loss of his home, family, and friends to the rebels was maintained and fueled with intoxicants given him by the army: “We walked for long hours and stopped only to eat sardines and corned beef, sniff brown-brown (cocaine mixed with gunpowder) and take more white capsules. The combination of these drugs made us fierce. The idea of death didn’t cross my mind, and killing had become as easy as drinking water” (Beah, 2007, p. 3). Restoring Beah to civilian life was difficult. His squad was his family. He remembers, “I would stand holding my gun and feeling special because I was part of something that took me seriously and I was not running from anyone anymore (p. 4).” Now, Beah can look back on his life as a child soldier and realize, “My childhood had gone by without my knowing, and it seemed as if my heart had frozen” (p. 4).

In 2007, Caryl reports that children in Iraq who have lost parents and homes, and watched as their communities were torn apart, have come to believe in the principles of violence. Instead of being trained to rebuild their country they are being trained to use weapons of destruction.
Kids will set bombs for as little as $20, and sectarian warfare is creating the next generation of Jihadists. Caryl observes, “We’re far closer to the beginning of this cycle of violence than to its end” (p. 24).

Girls are also participants in terrorist acts, both willingly and unwillingly. Like boys, girls may play a part both in killing enemies and destroying infrastructure. In addition to combat duties, girls are subjected to sexual abuse and may be taken as “wives” by rebel leaders. Girl soldiers are exposed to depravity, drug use, physical deprivation, and psychological degradation (McKay, 2005).

Because of their immaturity and lack of experience, child soldiers suffer higher casualties than adults. Schooled only in war, even after a conflict is over, former child soldiers are often drawn into crime or become easy prey for future recruitment by terrorists (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

In India, the Inter-Parliamentary Union issued a statement following a conference on cross-border terrorism. The chairperson noted, “In their most impressionable age these terrorist groups are inculcating racial and sectarian hatred among children. Religious and cultural bigots are misleading future citizens of the world into cults of hatred and intolerance” (“Najma’s Call,” 2001, p. 1). According to Israelis, a sermon by Sheik Mohammed Ibrahim as-Madhi, broadcast on state-controlled TV in Palestine, admonished: “We must educate our children on the love of holy war for the sake of God and the love of fighting for the sake of God” (“Palestinian Women and Children,” 2001).

Many young children recruited by terrorists have parents who were terrorists. Some have grown up in terrorist camps and among a cult of extremists. Many of them are nobody’s children now. They may have seen their fathers or mothers brutally killed. Some may even have been born moments after their mothers had died, many more were delivered underground, and a few had their umbilical cords cut inside jail. Most of the children remember the gruesome scenes they experienced, but few know what their parents fought for or why they were gunned down. The widows and widowers of militants may be forced to abandon their children out of sheer desperation. These children commonly experience isolation and hopelessness. Efforts to restore the families of terrorists to the mainstream are rare (Pushkarna, 1998).

**FINANCING TERRORIST NETWORKS**

Terrorist groups raise money in four ways as reported by Stern (2003) in the article reprinted at the end of this chapter. Various criminal activities from smuggling to the sex trade provide funds. Businesses, including construction companies, banking and securities institutions, and other apparently legitimate enterprises, are also part of the terror financing network. Assistance from states or state agents has also supported terrorism. For example, Iran has provided Hizballah with hundreds of millions of dollars each year, which is why it has been said that Iran is the central banker of terror (Levey, 2006). Finally charitable donations from both legitimate and bogus social service groups are fundamental to the finances of terrorist organizations.

Two ancient Islamic traditions are basic to funding of extremist Muslim terrorists. The Arabic word for “charitable giving” is zakat, which is a pillar of the Islamic faith and is required of all observant Muslims. Zakat reflects the Islamic belief that civic and religious life are not separate; therefore, it includes not only humanitarian aid but also functions as a form of income tax, educational assistance, foreign policy, and political expression. Many terrorist financing organizations posing as charities have exploited this religious duty to convince Muslims to give money to causes from which they then embezzle the money (TerroristFinancing.com, 2006).

The second tradition is that of hawala (Arabic for “transfer” or “trust”), which is a centuries-old practice of transferring money across the country or around the globe through an intermediary (known as a Hawalar) without formal paperwork or costly money-changing services. Having no formal paper trail, this transferred money is very hard to trace. The system relies on trust rather than professional or legal institutions, which may make it possible for disloyal Hawalars to skim off funds, but is also immensely useful to terrorist networks (TerroristFinancing.com, 2006). Hawala
may be used not only for money transfers but also for money laundering. Yet, banning the networks of hawala would suppress a long-established Muslim tradition of alternative remittance.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the White House (2001) issued an Executive Order on Terrorist Financing, which called for additional legal tools to enable U.S. and foreign financial institutions to combat the financing of terrorism. In 2006, the guiding principle of the U.S. Treasury Department was to marshal policy, enforcement, regulatory, and intelligence functions to sever the lines of financial support to international terrorists and other threats to our national security. Combating terrorism had become a new role and a top priority for the Treasury Department (Levey, 2006). Yet, despite this focus at the highest levels of government, terrorist groups continue to find new and more lucrative money-making methods. Efforts to destroy terrorist funding networks have not had a significant impact on worldwide terrorist activity.

Money laundering is one example of a basic element of terrorist financing that has been difficult for officials to control. Policies and interagency cooperation used to combat money laundering by criminal syndicates may not be as effective when used against terrorist networks. In criminal activities the illegal activity begins the process, and the question is, "Where do assets come from?" (Lauber, 2004). For terrorists the illegal activity is located at the end of the process. In reverse money laundering the question becomes, "Where do assets go?"

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental body that was given the responsibility of examining international money laundering techniques and trends and recommending measures that still need to be taken to control them. In 1990 the FATF issued a comprehensive plan with 40 action recommendations to fight money laundering. In 2004 the FATF reiterated those suggestions and focused on a set of nine special recommendations on terrorist financing:

1. mutual support of UN resolutions and conventions
2. criminalizing the financing of terrorism
3. freezing and confiscating terrorist assets
4. encouraging reporting of suspicious transactions
5. providing mutual legal assistance, information exchange, and investigations
6. controlling informal systems of remittance
7. monitoring wire transfers and documenting the links in the payment chain
8. ensuring that nonprofit organizations are not misused
9. detecting cross-border transportation of currency and bearer-negotiable instruments

Any efforts directed at stopping funding for terrorist networks must be international. Yet at the same time policies must consider differences in practices and priorities among individual nations. Despite the long-term and increasing attention to this issue, the necessary political will to bring about the required legislative and regulatory reforms on the national and global level is lacking (FATF-GAFI, 2004).

**CONVENTIONAL TACTICS BECOMING MORE DEADLY**

Terrorist tactics have not grown increasingly complex, nor are terrorists’ weapons likely to be technologically more demanding today. Instead, conventional terrorist weapons have been used in successive incidents with increasing sophistication. Three events in the transnational terrorist campaign against the United States provide examples of the ways in which rising levels of lethality have been achieved without using more complex munitions. The most deadly terrorism has resulted from using conventional weapons with intense planning and some innovation.
The chain of events linking the United States directly with transnational terror began with the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, moved to the continent of Africa, and returned to the World Trade Center in 2001, with a vengeance. In 1993, the weapon was an explosive device of 1,200 pounds of combustible material left in a rented van in a basement parking garage. In that bombing, 6 people died and 1,042 were injured. Before that first World Trade Center bombing, most U.S. citizens considered international terrorism to be somebody else’s problem; they were reluctant to believe that New York had joined the roster of international cities where terrorism is expected (Greenberg, 1994; Kelly, 1998; Reeve, 1999).

The perpetrators of the 1993 bombing were captured, and the damage to New York from the incident was limited. However, although the plot may have been flawed technically, it was shrewd psychologically in making the point that the very heart of the U.S. economy, located in a major population center, was vulnerable to the crippling blows of a dedicated group of believers (Kelly, 1998). Islamic extremists were charged with the 1993 bombing, and the investigation uncovered their connections to Afghanistan and training in terrorist tactics. The terrorists were said to be furious over the U.S. support of Israel and the treatment of Palestinians. They were outraged by the presence of Western control in sacred Muslim sites in Saudi Arabia (Reeve, 1999).

After the attack, Ramsi Yousef, who was eventually charged as the leader of the operation, returned to his wife and children living in Pakistan just across the border from the Afghan town of Kandahar. Investigators believe he may have received support and funding from Osama bin Laden via his relatives and associates (Reeve, 1999). After his capture in Pakistan, Yousef was returned to the United States, where he was sentenced to 240 years in prison for the bombing (“World Trade Center Bombing,” 2001).

Five years later, terrorists demonstrated how this same tactic of truck bombing could be used with increasing deadliness. On the morning of August 7, 1998, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, an attack on the U.S. embassy killed 12 people and injured another 85. Most of the victims were Africans. The bomb vehicle was blocked by an embassy water truck at the closed embassy gates and did not succeed in penetrating the embassy’s outer perimeter. Five local guards in the vicinity of the bomb vehicle were killed (Accountability Board Report, Dar es Salaam, 1998).

At approximately the same time, on the same morning of August 7, 1998, terrorists driving another truck detonated a large bomb in the rear parking area of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi. A total of 213 people were killed. An estimated 4,000 in the vicinity of the embassy were injured by the blast (Accountability Board Report, Nairobi, 1998).

The incidents in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi gave notice that, although transnational terrorism would be an unparalleled threat to U.S. security in the 21st century, tactics would remain conventional. The embassy bombings also show the increased deadliness of the tactics, because suicide bombers proclaimed their message with their lives. The East African bombings occurred in a region of the world that had been considered outside the maelstrom of international terrorism. The embassies presented excellent targets both because security was lax and because they were centrally located. They were symbols of the vulnerability of U.S. power, even though most of the victims were not Americans (Simonsen & Spindlove, 2000).

The massive attacks involved ad hoc amalgamations of like-minded individuals who seemed to have been brought together for a specific mission (Hoffman, 1998b). Terrorist cells had been built carefully and patiently in Africa, and the simultaneous detonation of the bombs demonstrated a high level of operational skill (Harmon, 2000). Although no one took credit for or gave a reason for the violence, evidence shows that the embassy strikes were financed by Osama bin Laden as part of his worldwide declaration of war against the United States. The bombings were outgrowths of an ideology that encouraged violence as retribution for the desecration of Muslim holy places in Mecca and Medina, Saudi Arabia. The terrorists promised to pursue U.S. forces and strike at U.S. interests everywhere.

Immediately after the embassy bombings, security measures were strengthened at embassies and military facilities throughout the region and around the world. A reward of $2 million was offered for information about the East African bombings. However, increased security after these and further attacks did not prevent the attacks with airliners against the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, or numerous other terrorist incidents since 1998. Use of security technologies
can enable more “hardened targets,” but terrorists will seek out overlooked weaknesses. Even when terrorists have no specialized skills and few technical resources, their level of lethality may continue to escalate because conventional tactics remain a significant threat.

**LEADERLESS RESISTANCE**

Fundamentalist Islamic terrorists are not the only extremists who have threatened the United States. Serious threats have been made by self-styled defenders of righteousness from within as well. Transnational and homegrown terrorists have striking similarities. Both promote urban guerrilla warfare conducted by subversives who use the cellular model of organization. Both Islamic and homegrown ad hoc groups may be well funded and have support networks that provide them with freedom of movement and opportunities to attack U.S. interests on a global basis. These groups are more dangerous than traditional hierarchical organizations because they decentralize and compartmentalize their actions (DoCeuPinto, 1999). They advocate the use of the same violent methods and the same goal of destruction of the U.S. government. According to the public voice of neo-Nazis in the United States, William Pierce, “When people are pushed as far as they are willing to go and when they have nothing to lose, then they resort to terrorism. There will be more and more such people in the future” (Grigg, 1996, p. 5).

The tactic of leaderless resistance is commonly linked with Louis Beam in the late 20th century (Harmon, 2000), but this type of organization is identical to the methods used by the Committees of Correspondence during the U.S. Revolutionary War. Using this tactic, all individuals and groups operate independently of each other and do not report to a central headquarters or single leader for direction or instruction. According to Beam, this is not as impractical as it appears, because in any movement, all involved persons usually have the same general outlook, are acquainted with the same philosophy, and react to given situations in similar ways. Beam proposed, “America is quickly moving into a long dark night of police state tyranny . . . let the coming night be filled with a thousand points of resistance. Like the fog which forms when conditions are right and disappears when they are not, so must the resistance to tyranny be” (Beam, 1992, p. 6).

The bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City is almost a textbook case of what Beam termed leaderless resistance. To a lesser degree and on a smaller scale, factions within the direct action anti-abortion movement have systematically applied the doctrine for a number of years (Burghardt, 1995). The Aryan Republican Army, charged with 22 bank robberies in eight U.S. states, openly promoted leaderless resistance in a video. Members use the Bible to justify their actions. “Study your Scriptures,” they say. “Then you’ll understand why you have to go out and kill” (Pattillo, 1998).

Leaderless resistance is a tactic, not an ideology, and as such it can be applied by anyone opposing an overwhelming force. Leaderless resistance allowed the Unabomber to elude the FBI for 18 years. It is the tool of the disenfranchised, the poor, and the weak, who have neither the status, the power, nor the resources to confront those they wish to fight on even terms. Its greatest strength is that, although it is easy for the state to infiltrate a large, anonymous organization, it’s much harder to slip undercover agents into small cells where everybody knows everybody else (Kaplan, 1997).

**GUIDEBOOKS OF TERROR TACTICS**

Some people believed that Mao Zedong’s *Little Red Book* is the world’s most widely read manual on the strategy and tactics of terror. Carlos Marighella’s *Manual of the Urban Guerrilla* (1969/1985) and William Pierce’s *The Turner Diaries* (1996) are also well-known guidebooks for terrorists. Those interested in directions for staging a terrorist incident can find them in many
places. Not only can readers find philosophical and strategic directions but detailed plans and instructions are also published. Some guerrillas develop tactics from studying counterterrorist strategy manuals prepared by police or military forces to direct their own proactive strikes.

Technical details and up-to-date intelligence about strategic targets are also available in public policy manuals and on Internet sites (SANS Institute, 2001). The intelligence community is hard at work with researchers from other disciplines creating sophisticated detection programs capable of identifying incidents of online steganography. Derived from the Greek words meaning “covered writing,” steganography refers to hiding information or communications inside something so unremarkable that no one would suspect it is there. Steganography is a good way for terrorist cells to communicate. The sender can transmit a message without ever communicating directly with the receiver. It’s an old concept described by Herodotus, according to Greek history, a secret message was tattooed on the scalp of a slave. When his hair grew back, he was dispatched to the Greeks, who shaved the slave’s head and recovered the message (L. Hoffman, 2001).

Among Islamic extremists, the members of “God’s Brigade” are reported to have an 11-volume Arabic-language encyclopedia of Jihad that serves as a guidebook. It has 6,000 pages detailing practices of terror and urban-guerrilla warfare (Jacquard, 2001). Many other documents recovered in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban documented the tactics planned and carried out by warriors for Jihad. Guidebooks for terrorists were available in written, electronic, and video formats.

Following the September 11 bombings of the World Trade Center, three identical letters, handwritten in Arabic, surfaced. They linked 3 of the 19 hijackers who crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and who were forced into a crash landing in western Pennsylvania. According to Attorney General John Ashcroft, “It is a disturbing and shocking view into the mind set of these terrorists. The letter provides instructions to the terrorists to be carried out both prior to and during their terrorist attacks” (as quoted in Ross, 2001). It is illustrative that the instructions for this deadly incident were handwritten as letters, the most conventional of all forms of communication.

### The Basics

As fanatical or irrational as the terrorists of today may seem, their operations have remained remarkably conventional. Terrorists continue to rely on the same basic weapons that they have used successfully for more than a century (B. Hoffman, 2001). Terrorists of the 21st century adhere to the familiar and narrow tactical patterns because they have mastered them. Equally important, they are likely to believe that conventional tactics optimize their likelihood of success (B. Hoffman, 2001). The four basic tactics that singly or jointly make up most terrorist incidents continue to be (1) assassinations of public figures, murder of civilians, and genocide; (2) hijackings; (3) kidnapping, hostage taking, and barricade incidents; and (4) bombings and armed assaults.

Terrorists in the 21st century have demonstrated the ease with which modifications and combinations of basic tactics can be made across the technological spectrum. They have shown their willingness to adapt technology as opportunities present themselves (Hoffman, 1997). Death and destruction from multifarious attacks with conventional high explosives have been far higher than in cases involving unconventional weapons (B. Hoffman, 2001).

### Assassinations

Assassinations have always been a basic tactic of terrorists. One of the most noted examples was the death of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on November 4, 1995. Rabin had become noteworthy because of his involvement in peace negotiations with the Palestinians. His progress toward a settlement was celebrated by many, but it aroused the ire of extremists. Rabin was a target because he was perceived as a significant leader whose removal would change the course of global relations. Shortly before his murder, there were documented threats against Rabin's
life, and he was advised not to make public appearances. He refused to avoid crowds and was not willing to wear a bullet-proof vest to the peace rally in Malchei Yisrael square in Tel Aviv where he was shot.

His assassin, Yigal Amir, had been arrested twice before at demonstrations in opposition to Rabin's policies of negotiation. Amir was a 25-year-old Israeli student who belonged to a loosely organized group of dissidents opposed to making any concessions toward Palestine. He disguised himself as a driver and waited with other chauffeurs near Rabin's limo. His Beretta pistol was loaded with hollow-point bullets. Amir hit Rabin in the thorax and abdomen with two bullets, and Rabin was dead within hours. Amir was apprehended at the scene of the crime, arrested by security officers (Prasidia-Defence, 1996), and charged with conspiracy to kill the prime minister. A huge arms cache was found in his home (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1995).

Analysts debate the impact of Rabin’s death on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. For a time, some believed that his death blazed a path toward unity between the two nations. Critics asserted that his assassination was part of a larger plot and pointed out attempts to cover up complicity in the murder by the Israeli secret service (Shuman, 2001).

The amount of social change and upheaval that has resulted from assassinations is immeasurable. As a tactic of war, a single strategic fatality can have an impact that makes an assassination a compelling choice for a strike against an enemy.

The United States has witnessed many attempts and several successful assassinations of public figures by individuals considered to be mentally unstable, rather than terrorists. The prevailing explanations for their actions included personal conflicts and religious delusions. Despite conspiracy theories that question whether the assassins of political and public figures, including John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., really acted alone, links between assassins in the United States and recognized group interests remain in question. Members of one celebrated terrorist group, however, were convicted for carrying out a well-planned, although inept, assassination attempt on an American president.

Various factions of the Puerto Rican terrorist group known as the FALN (Fuerzas Armadas Liberación Nacional) were active in the United States for more than four decades (Tooley, 1999). In addition to pulling a high-profile armored car robbery, the group conducted bombings, assassinations, and even a rocket attack against FBI headquarters in San Juan (McLaughlin, 1999). Two Puerto Rican extremists attempted to assassinate President Harry Truman on November 1, 1950. One of the terrorists died in the attempt, along with a police officer, while Truman watched from an upstairs window. Two other security guards and the surviving assassin were wounded. He was later convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to die; however, his sentence was commuted by President Truman, without explanation, to life in prison. On December 10, 1979, President Jimmy Carter, also without explanation, commuted his sentence, and he was released at age 64. An estimated crowd of 5,000 supporters greeted him when he returned to San Juan, Puerto Rico, 29 years after the attempt, refusing to denounce the use of violence and vowing to continue his struggle for Puerto Rican independence (Poland, 1988, p. 183).

An alternative form of assassination is focused on unknown victims whose deaths are meant to harm a notorious or corporate target. Product tampering and poisoning are variations on the ancient tactic of assassination that may appeal to those whose adversary can be through a product (Dietz, 1988). Product tampering is included here as a conventional tactic because it is likely to be based on low-end technology and usually targets a limited number of victims.

Another variant on assassination is genocide. Extremists intent on removing all of their enemy, rather than a symbolic few, have resorted to mass murder. In the worst massacres, entire kinship groups and subcultures have been destroyed. In many of the cases of genocide and attempted genocide, the members of a targeted group were assassinated by state-sponsored terrorist organizations (Simonsen & Spindlove, 2000).

**Hijacking**

Hijacking gained increased attention in 2001, but it was a conventional terrorist weapon long before that. In a hijacking, a vehicle on the public thoroughfare is taken over and turned into a
terrorist weapon. Terrorists may target autos, buses, trains, ships, military vehicles, aircraft, or even spacecraft depending on their technical resources and development. Car theft at knife-point or gunpoint has become one of the most serious threats to motoring overseas. Statistics are lacking, but there are many reports that seizing vehicles is a common terrorist tactic (Bush Telegraph, 1997). There is no way to determine how many international hijackings of autos are politically motivated acts of terrorists or to separate them from acts of criminally motivated perpetrators.

One of the most dramatic hijackings in history occurred on October 7, 1985, when the Achille Lauro, a luxury cruise ship flying the Italian flag, was seized while sailing from Alexandria to Port Said, Egypt. The hijackers were members of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), who had boarded the ship in Genoa, posing as tourists. They held the ship’s crew and passengers hostage, and they threatened to kill the passengers unless Israel released 50 Palestinian prisoners. They also threatened to blow up the ship if a rescue mission was attempted. When their demands had not been met by the following afternoon, the hijackers shot Leon Klinghoffer, an American Jew who was partly paralyzed and in a wheelchair. They threw his body and wheelchair overboard (Halberstam, 1988). The perpetrators surrendered in exchange for a pledge of safe passage, but the Egyptian jet that was to fly the hijackers to freedom was intercepted by U.S. Navy F-14 fighters. The terrorists were forced to land in Sicily and were taken into the custody of Italian authorities. At least two of the most notorious of the convicted terrorists escaped from Italian jurisdiction. In 2000, the mastermind of the Achille Lauro hijacking, Mohammed Zaidan, better known as Abu Abbas, was a public figure in Palestine, a notorious supporter of the peace process, and a close associate of Yasser Arafat who was then chairman of the PLO (Goldenberg, 2000; Simonsen & Spindlove, 2000). More than 15 years after the hijacking he was living comfortably under Saddam Hussein’s protection in Baghdad in 2003.
when he was captured and taken into U.S. custody. Abu Abbas died of unspecified natural causes in 2004 after being in detention for 11 months in Iraq (Mannes, 2004). Terrorism at sea is a menace that has been traditionally overlooked, yet which could be the world’s next great threat (Stankiewicz, 2005). Criminals and terrorists can commandeer lucrative cargoes and also hijack lethal shipments of chemicals, gas, arms, and specialized dual equipment, which may be converted from a legitimate or corporate use to use as a weapon. Another nightmare scenario would be the hijacking and sinking of one or more ships in one of the world’s most important shipping lanes or checkpoints. The 5,000,000-ton vessels that traverse the world’s waterways carry a crew of about 30 and have no armed guards. A scuttled supertanker in the midst of maritime traffic could create major economic disruption (TerroristFinancing.com, 2006).

Kidnapping and Hostage Taking

Kidnapping and hostage taking involve seizing, detaining, or threatening to kill, injure, or continue to detain someone. The victim is held to compel a third party to act or abstain from acting as a condition for the release of the seized person (Simonsen & Spindlove, 2000, p. 24). The tactic of seizing captives has been used to terrorists’ advantage and disadvantage throughout the ages. Although kidnapping and hostage taking share common elements, it is possible to distinguish between them. Kidnappers confine their victims in secret locations and make ransom demands, threatening to kill the victim if these demands are not met. Hostage takers openly confront the police or military, in known locations, with the objective often being to make demands with full media coverage (Poland, 1988). Wilson analyzed the demands made by hostage takers in 100 incidents and found that four primary demands occurred with the greatest frequency: the release of a specific prisoner or a general group of unnamed prisoners, travel, publicity, and money (2000, p. 417).

Hostage taking has a long relationship with rebellion and warfare. A well-publicized incident that involved barricading and hostage taking began on December 17, 1996, and ended when Peruvian armed forces stormed the residence of the Japanese ambassador in Lima on April 22, 1997. An armed group of approximately 20 members of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) held 400 people hostage, including a government minister, several ambassadors, and members of the Peruvian congress. The guerrillas, disguised as waiters and carrying champagne and canapes, sneaked into a celebration on the birthday of Japan’s emperor. The terrorists demanded the release of their leaders and some 300 other members of their group who were in state custody. Their long-term goal entailed reconstructing Peru’s economic model to benefit the masses. To ensure their escape, they also asked for transport of the rebel commandos to a jungle location, with a number of dignitaries as hostages. The siege of the Japanese embassy lasted for 126 days. Some of the hostages were released in the early hours of the takeover, and some reportedly were sent out of the embassy because of health problems. Others were traded for concessions during the negotiations. Seventy-two hostages were held through the entire 18-week siege. When Peruvian counterterrorist forces stormed the embassy, at least 14 of the terrorists were alive. Reports followed of extra-judicial executions of the MRTA rebels after they had been captured. All the terrorists were reportedly shot in the head by the Peruvian military (Derechos Human Rights, 1997). A hostage and two Peruvian soldiers also lost their lives. This attack led to the defeat of the MRTA as an organization. The absorbing novel, Bel Canto, by Ann Patchett (2002) parallels this long-term hostage taking incident from the fictionalized point of view of those who were held captive and those who held them.

In general, hostage taking is costly, with little positive return for terrorists. On the other hand, kidnapping victims for ransom has provided significant financial resources to perpetrators. Groups, such as the ELN in Columbia and the Abu Sayyaf Group in the southern Philippines, periodically kidnap foreign employees of large corporations and hold them for huge ransom payments (Federation of American Scientists, 1998). Although kidnapping may be undertaken more from economic expediency than as a strategy for political advance, targets are often among...
those considered enemies to the terrorists. The kidnapping of important business people, corporate executives, and members of their families has provided terrorist groups with a lucrative, low-risk source of revenue for a very long time (Poland, 1988).

U.S. citizens may be favorite targets of kidnappers because it is not U.S. government policy to intercede. Terrorists as well as professional kidnappers also may believe that many U.S. firms carry vast sums in kidnapping and ransom insurance protection (Clancy, 2001). In the late 1990s, Latin America was the region where kidnapping was most prevalent and where ransom demands were highest. More incidents took place in Colombia than in any other country (Shepherd, 1997), but kidnapping is also a threat outside Latin America. The BBC reported in 1999 that kidnapping was “almost a national sport among terrorists in Yemen” (Fryer, 1999).

Bombing

Bombing is another essential tactic for terrorists. With the increase in information about different types of explosives, the types of bombs available continue to proliferate. Explosives are considered in this section as conventional tools of warfare. Yet, bombs are also unconventional weapons as technology and innovation combine to create explosive weapons of mass destruction.

The history of terrorist bombing begins with dynamite, black powder, and Molotov cocktails and carries on with Semtec and daisy cutters. The real hazard of conventional explosives persists despite concerns about the threat of nuclear bombs. The objectives of bombing remain essentially the same regardless of the technology employed: to blow up a notable target and gain attention for a cause, slow down the opposition, get rid of political adversaries, and destroy property. Some bombings intend to achieve all these goals, whereas others are meant simply to gain attention.

Between 1998 and July 2006 there were at least 74 separate terrorist attacks on railways worldwide, including heavy rail, metro subway systems, and light rail systems. There were even more credible threats against trains and rail infrastructure (Hinds, 2006). Railway systems offer easy access and escape if necessary. There is anonymity in a collection of strangers; being in a confined environment makes a maximum impact possible. Railway systems pass through some of the most densely populated urban landscapes in the world, which provide even greater potential for death and destruction (Hinds, 2006).

Car bombs have also been widely used by terrorists, such as the Real Irish Republican Army. Dingley (2001) documents the car bombing in Omaugh, Northern Ireland, of 1998 that killed 29 people and injured more than 200 others. It is noteworthy that in spite of intensive planning, this car bomb was parked in a market district, rather than in front of the courthouse as intended. The plan had been to call in a warning to clear the area, and the goal was destruction of property, rather than the loss of life. Instead, courthouse evacuees were led into the market street precisely where the car bomb was parked. The horrific results led to a change in the public image of the Real IRA and a concentration of anti-terrorist forces against them (Dingley, 2001). The bombing of Omaugh demonstrates both the lethality and unpredictability of bombing as a strategy of conflict.

Bombing remains the most commonly used tactic in the terrorist arsenal. With more than a century of deployment, with countless examples of death and destruction, with numerous types and combinations of explosives, terrorists continue to use bombing more than any other action.

Suicide Terrorism

The suicide bombings at the embassies in Tanzania and Kenya brought U.S. attention to a terrorist tactic that other nations had learned to fear long ago. The suicide bombing of the USS Cole in October of 2000 was another in the series of incidents directed against the United States (Daly, 2001). On September 11, 2001, the use of suicide bombs became an even more
suicide bombing has become a serious tactical concern in transnational terror. One explanation of the notable increase in the resort to martyrdom in different conflicts is based on the internationalization of terrorist groups, including increased interpersonal contact among members. A perception of similarity of causes is likely to lead to sharing and modeling strategies across groups (Zedalis, 2004, p. 11). Reporting on the First International Conference on Countering Suicide Terrorism, held in Israel in 2000, Gunaratna provided background information on the tactic of suicide bombing and documented that suicide attacks by terrorists were known as early as the 1st century (Gunaratna, 2000). There are similarities among diverse instances of public-spirited suicide in which the perpetrators intend to take numbers of other victims with them in death. Some examples include the Islamic martyrs of yesterday and today, the Anarchists, the Japanese kamikaze of World War II, and the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka (Ferrero, 2006).

Suicide terrorism is virtually always a response to foreign occupation, but only some occupations lead to this result. Pape (2005) notes that a conflict across a religious divide increases fears that the enemy will transform the occupied society; demonization and killing of enemy civilians are thus made easier. Using religious ideology, suicide—rather than a taboo—is seen as a form of martyrdom (2005, p. 22). In most religious traditions, martyrdom is regarded not only as a testimony to the degree of one's commitment but also as a performance of a religious act, specifically an act of self-sacrifice (Juergensmeyer, 2003, p. 170). However, suicide bombing has its roots in secular ideologies as well.

Charu Lata Joshi’s article about Sri Lankan suicide bombers titled “Ultimate Sacrifice” (2000) describes the 17-year war for independence fought by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). That war created a pantheon of martyrs. Each one’s picture is framed, garlanded, and hung on the wall of his or her training camp to be revered by hundreds of other teenagers willing to sign their lives away for the cause. They will receive the title mahaveera (brave one), and their mothers will be called veeravati, or brave mother.

In rural areas of Sri Lanka, farming is no longer a reliable source of employment and income. For young Tamils who make it to secondary school, jobs are scarce and movement within the country is restricted. The lack of opportunity and work in an area that has exhibited no visible signs of development for a decade is often cited to explain wide support for the LTTE. The war that has consumed more than 70,000 lives and drained the economy of Sri Lanka continues to find human ammunition (Joshi, 2000).

An 18-year-old volunteer explained: “This is the most supreme sacrifice I can make. The only way we can get our homeland is through arms. That is the only way anybody will listen to us. Even if we die.” Another volunteer, age 19, asked “I lost two brothers in the war, why should I stay behind?” (Joshi, 2000, p. 3)

Nothing symbolizes the Tamil Tigers and their culture of death and martyrdom quite so succinctly as a small glass vial no longer than a cigarette worn with a little black string as a pendant. Rebels wear them when on duty, believing that death is better than capture. According to myth, a Tiger dies smiling. It is not called a “suicide” but “donating yourself to the cause.” Rebels are not buried in what most would call a cemetery but in what is called a sleeping arena. There are no bodies, only seeds, according to the myth. Once the dream of Tamil Eelam is achieved, the story goes, they will rise up as trees (Luthra, 2006).

There are two levels of analyzing suicide bombing—the individual bombers who blow themselves up and the organizations that send them. It is unlikely that suicide bombers share personality traits (Lester, Yang, & Lindsay, 2004). However, all analysts agree that suicide bombers are primarily young people (Zedaris, 2004). All of the bombers are first and foremost members of organizations that train them, select their targets, buy their explosives, issue orders, and try to convince the larger population that their cause is just (Bloom, 2005).

It is possible to see three different levels of logic operating when a suicide bombing takes place. On the wider level, it is important to consider suicide terror as a form of coercive power. What is the
situation in which this type of action appears to advance political goals? On a social level, terrorism has received mass support in some events. Why do suicide attacks receive collective support in some societies? On a personal level, suicide bombing appeals to altruistic motives and the desire for martyrdom. Why is there a ready supply of willing attackers in some places and times? (Pape, 2005).

Following the suicide attacks on the systems of mass transportation in London in 2005, Dalrymple (2005) expressed growing concerns about the recruitment of suicide bombers from among British Muslims. His analysis points out that the motivation for young Islamic men to join extremist groups in the United Kingdom exists on the three levels of logic: politics, mass society, and personal experiences. Recruitment of suicide terrorists was fueled, in his words by the hurtful experience of disdain or rejection from the surrounding society; the bitter disappointment of a frustrated materialism and a seemingly perpetual inferior status in the economic hierarchy; the extreme insufficiency and unattractiveness of modern popular culture that is without value; the readiness to hand of an ideological and religious solution that is flattering to self esteem and allegedly all-sufficient, . . . an oscillation between feelings of inferiority and superiority, between humiliation about that which is Western and that which is non-Western in the self; and the grotesque inflation of the importance of personal existential problems typical of modern individualism—all ensure fertile ground for the recruitment of further "martyrs" for years to come. (p. 3)

Female Suicide Bombers

Female suicide terrorists are said to be the ultimate asymmetrical weapon (Zedalis, 2004). There is often more shock value if the suicide bomber is a woman (p. 7). By both attracting attention and precipitating widespread fear, women provide a tactical advantage (Cunningham, 2002, p. 171). Using females also significantly increases the number of combatants available to a terrorist group.

The image of a female suicide bomber is different in different conflicts. The Chechen women bombers and those in Sri Lanka have been characterized as lacking alternatives, desperate, and devastated by war (Handwerk, 2004). In contrast the image of Palestinian female suicide bombers is that of educated and professional women, economically well off and adjusted within their families (Atran, 2004). There is not likely to be any one single overriding motivation for female suicide bombers, but rather a number of motivations working in concert. These motivations interact with emotional predispositions, creating an explosive mixture. A traumatic event can release all its destructive energy (Fighel, 2003).

In the words of Wafa al-Bas, one attempted suicide bomber, I love Allah, I love the land of Palestine and I am a member of Al-Aksa Brigades . . . my dream was to be a martyr. I believe in death. . . . Since I was a little girl I wanted to carry out an attack. (HonestReporting, 2005)

**Highlights of Reprinted Articles**


Written about the scene in Israel, where suicide terror attacks are an ongoing threat, the first article by Bruce Hoffman explores the topic of suicide terrorism in depth and from a pragmatic as well as strategic perspective. Hoffman has not only described the situation from the perspective of the Israeli authorities, but he has also related the situation in Israel to the international context in which suicide bombing has developed a logic all its own.

Following his analysis, Hoffman offers six precautions based on Israel’s experience. From the positive and negative experiences of other countries where suicide terrorist campaigns have been waged for decades can be derived sensible, effective, and valid policy responses to this deadly weapon of asymmetrical warfare. In addition these responses will increase the public’s
confidence that the threat of suicide terrorism will be substantially reduced. Yet, Hoffman ends this article with the warning: “There are thousands more young followers who look forward to death like Americans look forward to living.”


The tactics of al-Qaeda are covered in a way that is both careful and fascinating in the second article included with Chapter 4. Jessica Stern has studied al-Qaeda as “The Ultimate Organization,” which operates with many of the characteristics of other multinational enterprises. Stern has studied the networks that support al-Qaeda and their vast business holdings, detailed planning of operations, placement of sleeper cells, and acquisition of weapons.

Recruitment is one of the significant aspects of terrorist operations that is painstakingly covered in the article by Stern. The ability to attract loyal and willing cadres of followers is essential, and al-Qaeda has been honing this ability for decades. In addition, the mission of al-Qaeda is explained thoroughly in this article. Understanding the evolution and distortion of their mission is essential to confronting these adversaries or any other.

**Exploring Conventional Terrorist Tactics Further**

- The journals Terrorism and Political Violence and Studies in Conflict and Terrorism provide valuable research articles about assassination, hijacking, kidnapping, and bombing.
- The PBS series for Frontline, “The IRA & Sinn Fein,” is available on the Web. It includes interviews and historical and cultural information as well as maps and other links.
- The global intelligence organization Interpol presents information about terrorist tactics on the Internet.
- In Israel, a heavy police presence in occupied territories was described by Hoffman as the response to suicide terrorism that law enforcement agencies consider to be most effective. Compare this to the perspective explored in Jimmy Carter’s 2006 book, Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid.
- What are the common elements in suicide terror campaigns against Israel, Sri Lanka, and Russia?
- According to Stern what are the most useful and practical ways in which al-Qaeda acquires weapons?
- What could cause al-Qaeda’s mission to destroy the New World Order to lose its appeal to people made vulnerable by humiliation, human rights violations, poverty, confused identities, and poor governance?
- The 9/11 Commission Report, which is the final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the U. S., was published in 2004. It includes a detailed background description of al-Qaeda. It adds depth to some of the issues that are introduced in the chapter by Stern.

**Video Notes**

A documentary produced by a former CIA agent titled The Cult of the Suicide Bomber (Disinformation, 2005, 96 min.) untangles the history, background, and nations behind suicide bombing.

A fascinating drama about conventional terrorism enfolds in Four Days in September (Miramax, 1998, 110 min.). The film relates both the political and the personal demands inflicted when an ambassador is kidnapped by terrorists.

The television series, Sleeper Cell, which began airing on the Showtime Channel in 2006, is an intriguing look at a group of Jihadists who come from various parts of the world to Los Angeles to plot acts of destruction. The threat may be exaggerated in the series, but there are enough accurate details in the programs to make them interesting.

The award winning film, God Grew Tired of Us is scheduled for release in 2007 by New Market Films (89 min.). This true story of child soldiers in Sudan was originally released by Lost Boys Productions and also by National Geographic films.
The Logic of Suicide Terrorism

Bruce Hoffman

First you feel nervous about riding the bus. Then you wonder about going to a mall. Then you think twice about sitting for long at your favorite café. Then nowhere seems safe. Terrorist groups have a strategy—to shrink to nothing the areas in which people move freely—and suicide bombers, inexpensive and reliably lethal, are their latest weapons. Israel has learned to recognize and disrupt the steps on the path to suicide attacks. We must learn too.

Nearly everywhere in the world it is taken for granted that one can simply push open the door to a restaurant, café, or bar, sit down, and order a meal or a drink. In Israel the process of entering such a place is more complicated. One often encounters an armed guard who, in addition to asking prospective patrons whether they themselves are armed, may quickly pat them down, feeling for the telltale bulge of a belt or a vest containing explosives. Establishments that cannot afford a guard or are unwilling to pass on the cost of one to customers simply keep their doors locked, responding to knocks with a quick glance through the glass and an instant judgment as to whether this or that person can safely be admitted. What would have been unimaginable a year ago is now not only routine but reassuring. It has become the price of a redefined normality.

In the United States in the twenty months since 9/11 we, too, have had to become accustomed to an array of new, often previously inconceivable security measures—in airports and other transportation hubs, hotels and office buildings, sports stadiums and concert halls. Although some are more noticeable and perhaps more inconvenient than others, the fact remains that they have redefined our own sense of normality. They are accepted because we feel more vulnerable than before. With every new threat to international security we become more willing to live with stringent precautions and reflexive, almost unconscious wariness. With every new threat, that is, our everyday life becomes more like Israel’s.

The situation in Israel, where last year’s intensified suicide-bombing campaign changed the national mood and people’s personal politics, is not analogous to that in the United States today. But the organization and the operations of the suicide bombers are neither limited to Israel and its conflict with the Palestinians nor unique to its geostrategic position. The fundamental characteristics of suicide bombing, and its strong attraction for the terrorist organizations behind it, are universal: Suicide bombings are inexpensive and effective. They are less complicated and compromising than other kinds of terrorist operations. They guarantee media coverage. The suicide terrorist is the ultimate smart bomb. Perhaps most important, coldly efficient bombings tear at the fabric of trust that holds societies together. All these reasons doubtless account for the spread of suicide terrorism from the Middle East to Sri Lanka and Turkey, Argentina and Chechnya, Russia and Algeria—and to the United States.

To understand the power that suicide terrorism can have over a populace—and what a populace can do to counter it—one naturally goes to the society that has been most deeply affected. As a researcher who has studied the strategies of terrorism for more than twenty-five years,
I recently visited Israel to review the steps the military, the police, and the intelligence and security services have taken against a threat more pervasive and personal than ever before.

I was looking at x-rays with Dr. Shmuel Shapira in his office at Jerusalem’s Hadassah Hospital. “This is not a place to have a wrist-watch,” he said as he described the injuries of a young girl who’d been on her way to school one morning last November when a suicide terrorist detonated a bomb on her bus. Eleven of her fellow passengers were killed, and more than fifty others wounded. The blast was so powerful that the hands and case of the bomber’s wristwatch had turned into lethal projectiles, lodging in the girl’s neck and ripping a major artery. The presence of such foreign objects in the bodies of his patients no longer surprises Shapira. “We have cases with a nail in the neck, or nuts and bolts in the thigh... a ball bearing in the skull,” he said.

Such are the weapons of war in Israel today: nuts and bolts, screws and ball bearings, any metal shards or odd bits of broken machinery that can be packed together with homemade explosive and then strapped to the body of a terrorist dispatched to any place where people gather—bus, train, restaurant, café, supermarket, shopping mall, street corner, promenade. These attacks probably cost no more than $150 to mount, and they need no escape plan—often the most difficult aspect of a terrorist operation. And they are reliably deadly. According to data from the Rand Corporation’s chronology of international terrorism incidents, suicide attacks on average kill four times as many people as other terrorist acts. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that this means of terror has become increasingly popular. The tactic first emerged in Lebanon, in 1983; a decade later it came to Israel, and it has been a regular security problem ever since. Fully two thirds of all such incidents in Israel have occurred in the past two and a half years—that is, since the start of the second intifada, in September of 2000. Indeed, suicide bombers are responsible for almost half of the approximately 750 deaths in terrorist attacks since then.

Last December, I walked through Jerusalem with two police officers, one of them a senior operational commander, who were showing me the sites of suicide bombings in recent years. They described the first major suicide-terrorist attack in the city, which occurred in February of 1996, early on a Sunday morning—the beginning of the Israeli work week. The driver of the No. 18 Egged bus was hurrying across a busy intersection at Sarei Yisrael Street as a yellow light turned red. The bus was about halfway through when an explosion transformed it into an inferno of twisted metal, pulverized glass, and burning flesh. A traffic camera designed to catch drivers running stop lights captured the scene on film. Twenty-five people were killed, including two U.S. citizens, and eighty were wounded.

The early years of suicide terrorism were a simpler time, the officers explained. Suicide bombers were—at least in theory—easier to spot then. They tended to carry their bombs in nylon backpacks or duffel bags rather than in belts or vests concealed beneath their clothing, as they do now. They were also typically male, aged seventeen to twenty-three, and unmarried. Armed with these data, the authorities could simply deny work permits to Palestinians most likely to be suicide bombers, thus restricting their ability to cross the Green Line (Israel’s pre-1967 border) into Israel proper from the West Bank or the Gaza Strip.

Today, though, suicide bombers are middle-aged and young, married and unmarried, and some of them have children. Some of them, too, are women, and word has it that even children are being trained for martyrdom. “There is no clear profile anymore—not for terrorists and especially not for suicide bombers,” an exasperated senior officer in the Israel Defense Forces told me last year. Sometimes the bombers disguise themselves: male shaheed (Arabic for “martyrs”) have worn green IDF fatigues; have dressed as haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews), complete with yarmulkes and tzitzit, the fringes that devout Jews display as part of their everyday clothing; or have donned long-haired wigs in an effort to look like hip Israelis rather than threatening Arabs. A few women have tried to camouflage bombs by strapping them to their stomachs to fake pregnancy. And contrary to popular belief, the bombers are not drawn exclusively from the ranks of the poor but have included two sons of millionaires. (Most of the September 11 terrorists came from comfortable middle- to upper-middle-class families and were well educated.) The Israeli journalist Ronni Shaked, an expert on the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas,
who writes for Yedioth Ahronoth, an Israeli daily, has debunked the myth that it is only people with no means of improving their lot in life who turn to suicide terrorism. “All leaders of Hamas,” he told me, “are university graduates, some with master’s degrees. This is a movement not of poor, miserable people but of highly educated people who are using [the image of] poverty to make the movement more powerful.”

Buses remain among the bombers’ preferred targets. Winter and summer are the better seasons for bombing buses in Jerusalem, because the closed windows (for heat or air-conditioning) intensify the force of the blast, maximizing the bombs’ killing potential. As a hail of shrapnel pierces flesh and breaks bones, the shock wave tears lungs and crushes other internal organs. When the bus’s fuel tank explodes, a fireball causes burns, and smoke inhalation causes respiratory damage. All this is a significant return on a relatively modest investment. Two or three kilograms of explosive on a bus can kill as many people as twenty to thirty kilograms left on a street or in a mall or a restaurant. But as security on buses has improved, and passengers have become more alert, the bombers have been forced to seek other targets.

The terrorists are lethally flexible and inventive. A person wearing a bomb is far more dangerous and far more difficult to defend against than a timed device left to explode in a marketplace. This human weapons system can affect last-minute changes based on the ease of approach, the paucity or density of people, and the security measures in evidence. On a Thursday afternoon in March of last year a reportedly smiling, self-satisfied bomber strolled down King George Street, in the heart of Jerusalem, looking for just the right target. He found it in a crowd of shoppers gathered in front of the trendy Aroma Café, near the corner of Agrippas Street. In a fusillade of nails and other bits of metal two victims were killed and fifty-six wounded.

Similarly, in April of last year a female suicide bomber tried to enter the Mahane Yehuda open-air market—the fourth woman to make such an attempt in four months—but was deterred by a strong police presence. So she simply walked up to a bus stop packed with shoppers hurrying home before the Sabbath and detonated her explosives, killing six and wounding seventy-three.

Suicide bombing initially seemed the desperate act of lone individuals, but it is not undertaken alone. Invariably, a terrorist organization such as Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement), the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), or the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade has recruited the bomber, conducted reconnaissance, prepared the explosive device, and identified a target—explaining that if it turns out to be guarded or protected, any crowded place nearby will do. “We hardly ever find that the suicide bomber came by himself,” a police officer explained to me. “There is always a handler.” In fact, in some cases a handler has used a cell phone or other device to trigger the blast from a distance. A policeman told me, “There was one event where a suicide bomber had been told all he had to do was to carry the bomb and plant explosives in a certain place. But the bomb was remote-control detonated.”

The organizations behind the Palestinians’ suicide terrorism have numerous components. Quartermasters obtain the explosives and the other materials (nuts, bolts, nails, and the like) that are combined to make a bomb. Now that bomb-making methods have been so widely disseminated throughout the West Bank and Gaza, a merely competent technician, rather than the skilled engineer once required, can build a bomb.

Explosive material is packed into pockets sewn into a canvas or denim belt or vest and hooked up to a detonator—usually involving a simple hand-operated plunger.

Before the operation is to be launched, “minders” sequester the bomber in a safe house, isolating him or her from family and friends—from all contact with the outside world—during the final preparations for martyrdom. A film crew makes a martyrdom video, as much to help ensure that the bomber can’t back out as for propaganda and recruitment purposes. Reconnaissance teams have already either scouted the target or received detailed information about it, which they pass on to the bomber’s handlers. The job of the handlers, who are highly skilled at avoiding Israeli army checkpoints or police patrols, is to deliver the bomber as close to the target as possible.

I talked to a senior police-operations commander in his office at the Russian Compound, the nerve center of law enforcement for Jerusalem since the time when first the Turks and then the British ruled this part of the world. It was easy to imagine, amid the graceful arches and the
traditional Jerusalem stone, an era when Jerusalem's law-enforcement officers wore tarbooshes and pressed blue tunics with Sam Browne belts rather than the bland polyester uniforms and blue baseball-style caps of today. Although policing this multi-faith, historically beleaguered city has doubtless always involved difficult challenges, none can compare with the current situation. “This year there were very many events,” my host explained, using the bland generic noun that signifies terrorist attacks or attempted attacks. “In previous years we considered ten events as normal; now we are already at forty-three.” He sighed. There were still three weeks to go before the end of the year. Nineteen of these events had been suicide bombings. In the calculus of terrorism, it doesn’t get much better. “How easy it has become for a person to wake up in the morning and go off and commit suicide,” he observed. Once there were only “bags on buses, not vests or belts” to contend with, the policeman said. “Everything is open now. The purpose is to prove that the police can do whatever they want but it won’t help.”

This, of course, is the age-old strategy of terrorists everywhere—to undermine public confidence in the ability of the authorities to protect and defend citizens, thereby creating a climate of fear and intimidation amenable to terrorist exploitation. In Jerusalem, and in Israel as a whole, this strategy has not succeeded. But it has fundamentally changed daily behavior patterns—the first step toward crushing morale and breaking the will to resist.

The terrorists appear to be deliberately homing in on the few remaining places where Israelis thought they could socialize in peace. An unprecedented string of attacks in the first four months of last year illustrated this careful strategy, beginning at bus stops and malls and moving into more private realms, such as corner supermarkets and local coffee bars. In March, for example, no one paid much attention to a young man dressed like an ultra-Orthodox Jew who was standing near some parked cars as guests left a bar mitzvah celebration at a social hall in the ultra-Orthodox Jerusalem neighborhood of Be’er Yisrael. Then he blew himself up, killing nine people, eight of them children, and wounding fifty-nine. The tight-knit religious community had felt that it was protected by God, pointing to the miraculous lack of injury a year before when a booby-trapped car blew up in front of the same hall. Using a strategy al Qaeda has made familiar, the terrorists revisited the site.

Less than a month after the Be’er Yisrael attack the suicide bombers and their leaders drove home the point that Israelis cannot feel safe anywhere by going to the one large Israeli city that had felt immune from the suspicion and antipathy prevalent elsewhere—Haifa, with its successful mixture of Jews, Christian and Muslim Arabs, and followers of the Bahai faith. The University of Haifa has long had the highest proportion of Arab students of any Israeli university. The nearby Matza restaurant, owned by Jews but run by an Israeli Arab family from Galilee, seemed to embody the unusually cordial relations that exist among the city’s diverse communities. Matza was popular with Jews and Arabs alike, and the presence of its Arab staff and patrons provided a feeling of safety from attack. That feeling was shattered at two-thirty on a quiet Sunday afternoon, when a suicide bomber killed fifteen people and wounded nearly fifty.

As we had tea late one afternoon in the regal though almost preternaturally quiet surroundings of Jerusalem’s King David Hotel, Benny Morris, a professor of history at Ben Gurion University, explained, “The Palestinians say they have found a strategic weapon, and suicide bombing is it. This hotel is empty. The streets are empty. They have effectively terrorized Israeli society. My wife won’t use a bus anymore, only a taxi.” It is undeniable that daily life in Jerusalem, and throughout Israel, has changed as a result of last year’s wave of suicide bombings. Even the police have been affected. “I’m worried,” one officer told me in an aside—whether in confidence or in embarrassment, I couldn’t tell—as we walked past Zion Square, near where some bombs had exploded. “I tell you this as a police officer. I don’t come to Jerusalem with my children anymore. I’d give back the settlements. I’d give over my bank account to live in peace.”

By any measure 2002 was an astonishing year for Israel in terms of suicide bombings. An average of five attacks a month were made, nearly double the number during the first fifteen months of the second intifada—and that number was itself more than ten times the monthly average since 1993. Indeed, according to a database maintained by the National Security Studies Center, at Haifa University, there were nearly as many suicide attacks in Israel last year (fifty-nine) as there had been in the previous eight years combined (sixty-two). In Jerusalem alone there were nine suicide attacks during the first four months of 2002, killing thirty-three and
injuring 464. “It was horrendous,” a young professional woman living in the city told me. “No one went out for coffee. No one went out to restaurants. We went as a group of people to one another’s houses only.”

Again, terrorism is meant to produce psychological effects that reach far beyond the immediate victims of the attack. “The Scuds of Saddam [in 1991] never caused as much psychological damage as the suicide bombers have,” says Ami Pedahzur, a professor of political science at Haifa University and an expert on political extremism and violence who manages the National Security Studies Center’s terrorism database. As the French philosopher Gaston Bouthoul argued three decades ago in a theoretical treatise on the subject, the “anonymous, unidentifiable threat creates huge anxiety, and the terrorist tries to spread fear by contagion, to immobilise and subjugate those living under this threat.” This is precisely what the Palestinian terrorist groups are trying to achieve. “The Israelis . . . will fall to their knees,” Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, said in 2001. “You can sense the fear in Israel already; they are worried about where and when the next attacks will come. Ultimately, Hamas will win.” The strategy of suicide terrorists is to make people paranoid and xenophobic, fearful of venturing beyond their homes even to a convenience store. Terrorists hope to compel the enemy society’s acquiescence, if not outright surrender, to their demands. This is what al Qaeda hoped to achieve on 9/11 in one stunning blow—and what the Palestinians seek as well, on a more sustained, if piecemeal, basis.

After decades of struggle the Palestinians are convinced that they have finally discovered Israel’s Achilles’ heel. Ismail Haniya, another Hamas leader, was quoted in March of last year in The Washington Post as saying that Jews “love life more than any other people, and they prefer not to die.” In contrast, suicide terrorists are often said to have gone to their deaths smiling. An Israeli policeman told me, “A suicide bomber goes on a bus and finds himself face-to-face with victims and he smiles and he activates the bomb—but we learned that only by asking people afterwards who survived.” This is what is known in the Shia Islamic tradition as the bassamat al-farah, or “smile of joy”—prompted by one’s impending martyrdom. It is just as prevalent among Sunni terrorists. (Indeed, the last will and testament of Mohammed Atta, the ringleader of the September 11 hijackers, and his “primer” for martyrs, The Sky Smiles, My Young Son, clearly evidence a belief in the joy of death.)

This perceived weakness of an ostensibly powerful society has given rise to what is known in the Middle East as the “spider-web theory,” which originated within Hizbollah, the Lebanese Shia organization, following a struggle that ultimately compelled the Israel Defense Forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon in May of 2000. The term is said to have been coined by Hizbollah’s secretary general, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who described Israel as a still formidable military power whose civil society had become materialistic and lazy, its citizens self-satisfied, comfortable, and pampered to the point where they had gone soft. IDF Chief of Staff Moshe “Boogie” Ya’alon paraphrased Nasrallah for the Israeli public in an interview published in the newspaper Ha’aretz last August.

“The Israeli army is strong, Israel has technological superiority and is said to have strategic capabilities, but its citizens are unwilling any longer to sacrifice lives in order to defend their national interests and national goals. Therefore, Israel is a spider-web society: it looks strong from the outside, but touch it and it will fall apart.”

Al Qaeda, of course, has made a similar assessment of America’s vulnerability.

A society facing such a determined foe can respond. Israel, with its necessarily advanced military and intelligence capacities, was able in the first four months of last year to meet the most concerted effort to date by Palestinian terrorists to test the resolve of its government and the mettle of its citizens. Twelve Israelis were killed in terrorist attacks in January, twenty-six in February, 108 in March, and forty-one in April. The population of the United States is roughly forty-seven times that of Israel, meaning that the American equivalent of the March figure would have exceeded 5,000—another 9/11, but with more than 2,000 additional deaths. After April of 2002, however, a period of relative quiet settled over Israel. The number of suicide attacks, according to the National Security Studies Center, declined from sixteen in March to six in April, six in May, five in June, and six in July before falling still further to two in August and similarly small numbers for the remainder of the year. “We wouldn’t want it to be perceived [by the Israeli population] that we have no military answers,” a senior IDF planner told me. The military answer was Operation Defensive Shield, which began in March and involved both the IDF’s huge
The strategy—at least in the short run—is working. The dramatic decline in the number of suicide operations since last spring is proof enough. “Tactically, we are doing everything we can,” a senior officer involved in the framing of this policy told me, “and we have managed to prevent eighty percent of all attempts.” Another officer said, “We are now bringing the war to them. We do it so that we fight the war in their homes rather than in our homes. We try to make certain that we fight on their ground, where we can have the maximum advantage.” The goal of the IDF, though, is not simply to fight in a manner that plays to its strength; the goal is to actively shrink the time and space in which the suicide bombers and their operational commanders, logisticians, and handlers function—to stop them before they can cross the Green Line, by threatening their personal safety and putting them on the defensive.

Citizens in Israel, as in America, have a fundamental expectation that their government and its military and security forces will protect and defend them. Soldiers are expected to die, if necessary, in order to discharge this responsibility. As one senior IDF commander put it, “It is better for the IDF to bear the brunt of these attacks than Israeli civilians. The IDF is better prepared, protected, educated.” Thus security in Israel means to the IDF an almost indefinite deployment in the West Bank—a state of ongoing low-level war. For Palestinian civilians it means no respite from roadblocks and identity checks, cordon-and-search operations, lightning snatch-and-grabs, bombing raids, helicopter strikes, ground attacks, and other countermeasures that have turned densely populated civilian areas into war zones.

Many Israelis do not relish involvement in this protracted war of attrition, but even more of them accept that there is no alternative. “Israel’s ability to stand fast indefinitely is a tremendous advantage,” says Dan Schueftan, an Israeli strategist and military thinker who teaches at Haifa University, “since the suicide bombers believe that time is on their side. It imposes a strain on the population and military expectation that their government and its military and security forces will protect and defend them. Soldiers are expected to die, if necessary, in order to discharge this responsibility. As one senior IDF commander put it, “It is better for the IDF to bear the brunt of these attacks than Israeli civilians. The IDF is better prepared, protected, educated.” Thus security in Israel means to the IDF an almost indefinite deployment in the West Bank—a state of ongoing low-level war. For Palestinian civilians it means no respite from roadblocks and identity checks, cordon-and-search operations, lightning snatch-and-grabs, bombing raids, helicopter strikes, ground attacks, and other countermeasures that have turned densely populated civilian areas into war zones.

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have the power to hit us, to hurt us, once [the IDF] withdraws from Jenin and elsewhere on the West Bank.” Ami Pedahzur, of Haifa University, who is a leftist, agreed. He said, “There is widespread recognition in Israel that this is the only way to stop terrorism.” I later heard the same thing from a South African couple, relatively new immigrants to Israel who are active in a variety of human-rights endeavors. “Just the other day,” the husband told me, “even my wife said, ‘Thank God we have Sharon. Otherwise I wouldn’t feel safe going out.’”

Nevertheless, few Israelis believe that the current situation will lead to any improvement in Israeli-Palestinian relations over the long run. Dennis Zinn, the defense correspondent for Israel’s Channel 1, told me, “Yes, there is a drop-off [in suicide bombings]. When you have bombs coming down on your heads, you can’t carry out planning and suicide attacks. But that doesn’t take away their motivation. It only increases it.”

Given the relative ease and the strategic and tactical attraction of suicide bombing, it is perhaps no wonder that after a five-day visit to Israel last fall, Louis Anemone, the security chief of the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority, concluded that New Yorkers—and, by implication, other Americans—face the same threat. “This stuff is going to be imported over here,” he declared—a prediction that Vice President Dick Cheney and FBI Director Robert Mueller had already made. In March, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge also referred to the threat, saying in an interview with Fox News that we have to “prepare for the inevitability” of suicide bombings in the United States. Anemone even argued that “today’s terrorists appear to be using Israel as a testing ground to prepare for a sustained attack against the U.S.” In fact, Palestinians had tried a suicide attack in New York four years before 9/11; their plans to bomb a Brooklyn subway station were foiled only because an informant told the police. When they were arrested, the terrorists were probably less than a day away from attacking: according to law-enforcement authorities, five bombs had been primed. “I wouldn’t call them sophisticated,” Howard Safir, the commissioner of police at the time, commented, “but they certainly were very dangerous.” That suicide bombers don’t need to be sophisticated is precisely what makes them so dangerous. All that’s required is a willingness to kill and a willingness to die.

According to the Rand Corporation’s chronology of worldwide terrorism, which begins in 1968 (the year acknowledged as marking the advent of modern international terrorism, whereby terrorists attack other countries or foreign targets in their own country), nearly two thirds of the 144 suicide bombings recorded have occurred in the past two years. No society, least of all the United States, can regard itself as immune from this threat. Israeli Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu emphasized this point when he addressed the U.S. Congress nine days after 9/11. So did Dan Schueftan, the Israeli strategist, when I asked him if he thought suicide terrorism would come to America in a form similar to that seen in Israel this past year. He said, “It is an interesting comment that the terrorists make: we will finish defeating the Jews because they love life so much. Their goal is to bring misery and grief to people who have an arrogance of power. Who has this? The United States and Israel. Europe will suffer too. I don’t think that it will happen in the U.S. on the magnitude we have seen it here, but I have no doubt that it will occur. We had the same discussion back in 1968, when El Al aircraft were hijacked and people said this is your problem, not ours.”

The United States, of course, is not Israel. However much we may want to harden our hearts and our targets, the challenge goes far beyond fortifying a single national airline or corralling the enemy into a territory ringed by walls and barbed-wire fences that can be intensively monitored by our armed forces. But we can take precautions based on Israel’s experience, and be confident that we are substantially reducing the threat of suicide terrorism here.

The police, the military, and intelligence agencies can take steps that work from the outside in, beginning far in time and distance from a potential attack and ending at the moment and the site of an actual attack. Although the importance of these steps is widely recognized, they have been implemented only unevenly across the United States.

- Understand the terrorists’ operational environment. Know their modus operandi and targeting patterns. Suicide bombers are rarely lone outlaws; they are preceded by long logistical trails. Focus not just on suspected bombers but on the infrastructure required to launch and sustain suicide-bombing campaigns. This is the essential spadework. It will be for naught, however, if
concerted efforts are not made to circulate this information quickly and systematically among federal, state, and local authorities.

- Develop strong, confidence-building ties with the communities from which terrorists are most likely to come, and mount communications campaigns to eradicate support from these communities. The most effective and useful intelligence comes from places where terrorists conceal themselves and seek to establish and hide their infrastructure. Law-enforcement officers should actively encourage and cultivate cooperation in a nonthreatening way.

- Encourage businesses from which terrorists can obtain bomb-making components to alert authorities if they notice large purchases of, for example, ammonium nitrate fertilizer; pipes, batteries, and wires; or chemicals commonly used to fabricate explosives. Information about customers who simply inquire about any of these materials can also be extremely useful to the police.

- Force terrorists to pay more attention to their own organizational security than to planning and carrying out attacks. The greatest benefit is in disrupting pre-attack operations. Given the highly fluid, international threat the United States faces, counterterrorism units, dedicated to identifying and targeting the intelligence-gathering and reconnaissance activities of terrorist organizations, should be established here within existing law-enforcement agencies. These units should be especially aware of places where organizations frequently recruit new members and the bombers themselves, such as community centers, social clubs, schools, and religious institutions.

- Make sure ordinary materials don’t become shrapnel. Some steps to build up physical defenses were taken after 9/11—reinforcing park benches, erecting Jersey barriers around vulnerable buildings, and the like. More are needed, such as ensuring that windows on buses and subway cars are shatterproof, and that seats and other accoutrements are not easily dislodged or splintered. Israel has had to learn to examine every element of its public infrastructure. Israeli buses and bus shelters are austere for a reason.

- Teach law-enforcement personnel what to do at the moment of an attack or an attempt. Prevention comes first from the cop on the beat, who will be forced to make instant life-and-death decisions affecting those nearby. Rigorous training is needed for identifying a potential suicide bomber, confronting a suspect, and responding and securing the area around the attack site in the event of an explosion. Is the officer authorized to take action on sighting a suspected bomber, or must a supervisor or special unit be called first? Policies and procedures must be established. In the aftermath of a blast the police must determine whether emergency medical crews and firefighters may enter the site; concerns about a follow-up attack can dictate that first responders be held back until the area is secured. The ability to make such lightning determinations requires training—and, tragically, experience. We can learn from foreign countries with long experience of suicide bombings, such as Israel and Sri Lanka, and also from our own responses in the past to other types of terrorist attacks.

America’s enemies are marshaling their resources to continue the struggle that crystallized on 9/11. Exactly what shape that struggle will take remains to be seen. But a recruitment video reportedly circulated by al Qaeda as recently as spring of last year may provide some important clues. The seven-minute tape, seized from an al Qaeda member by U.S. authorities, extols the virtues of martyrdom and solicits recruits to Osama bin Laden’s cause. It depicts scenes of jihadists in combat, followed by the successive images of twenty-seven martyrs with their names, where they were from, and where they died. Twelve of the martyrs are featured in a concluding segment with voice-over that says, “They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah. And with regard to those left behind who have not yet joined them in their bliss, the martyrs glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they cause to grieve.” The video closes with a message of greeting from the Black Banner Center for Islamic Information.

The greatest military onslaught in history against a terrorist group crushed the infrastructure of al Qaeda in Afghanistan, depriving it of training camps, operational bases, and command-and-control headquarters; killing and wounding many of its leaders and fighters; and dispersing the survivors. Yet this group still actively seeks to rally its forces and attract recruits. Ayman Zawahiri, bin Laden’s chief lieutenant, laid out a list of terrorist principles in his book, Knights Under the Prophet's Banner (2001), prominent among them
the need for al Qaeda to “move the battle to the enemy’s ground to burn the hands of those who ignite fire in our countries.” He also mentioned “the need to concentrate on the method of martyrdom operations as the most successful way of inflicting damage against the opponent and the least costly to the mujahideen in terms of casualties.” That martyrdom is highlighted in the recruitment video strongly suggests that suicide attacks will continue to be a primary instrument in al Qaeda’s war against—and perhaps in—the United States. Suleiman Abu Gheith, al Qaeda’s chief spokesman, has said as much. In rhetoric disturbingly reminiscent of the way that Palestinian terrorists describe their inevitable triumph over Israel, Abu Gheith declared, “Those youths that destroyed Americans with their planes, they did a good deed. There are thousands more young followers who look forward to death like Americans look forward to living.”
One of the surprises of September 11 was that some of the suicide bombers had been living and studying in the West for years. We like to think that our way of life and the freedoms we enjoy are so attractive that anyone who lives among us will inevitably become pro-Western. The globalization of Al Qaeda—its recruitment of locals to participate in attacks—and its careful grooming of operatives, were discussed by the terrorists themselves in a New York City courtroom, where four of the 1998 African-embassy bombers were tried a year and a half before September 11. It is too bad that the terrorists’ revelations, including about the organization’s vast business holdings, its detailed planning of operations, its emplacement of sleepers, and its attempts to acquire weapons of mass destruction, didn’t receive more attention. If they had, perhaps we would not have been so astonished by Al Qaeda’s ability to operate inside America.

This chapter begins with a discussion of a terrorist who participated in the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August 1998. His story is important for two reasons. First, he was a sleeper. A “talent scout” noticed that he attended a radical mosque regularly, and that he was increasingly agitated about the plight of Muslims around the world. Told that he would have to be trained at a camp to earn the trust of his new Islamist friends, he spent his own money to travel to Afghanistan. The real purpose of his training was to assess his potential. He was found to be barely educated, with few skills. But he had something else critically important to Al Qaeda at the time: language skills and Tanzanian citizenship. This is exactly the kind of operative that Americans are beginning to fear—a confused young man who thinks he is helping Muslims by serving as a sleeper for a terrorist group, whose principal value to the terrorists is his country of residence. Now we fear that the terrorist sleepers may be our next-door neighbors.

The second reason this operative’s story is important is that he comes from Africa, an area of the world that may well become an enclave of Islamist extremism and anti-American sentiment in the future. Americans tend to fixate on enemies that can be fought with military might. We have a much harder time seeing failing states, where terrorists thrive, as a source of danger. We need to assess why bin Laden’s and other extremists ideas spread. And we need to look for clues globally, not just in the Middle East.

America has had the luxury of ignoring countries at far geographic remove throughout most of its history. This is no longer possible. Nor is it sufficient to concentrate exclusively on one or two villains in a given decade. We have to be alert to the possibility that the villain may be a seductive, hateful idea about Us versus Them, rather than an individual; and that the hateful idea may be taking hold—in seemingly obscure or remote locations. The growing availability of powerful weapons, porous borders, and the communications revolution make it possible for smaller and smaller groups to wreak havoc almost anywhere on the globe.

In the spring of 2000 two American defense attorneys contacted me to ask whether I would be willing to serve as an expert witness in the trial of Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, an Al Qaeda operative who was involved in the bombing of...
the U.S. embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August 1998. That attack, and the simultaneous bombing of the American embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, killed 224 people, most of them Africans, and injured thousands.

Mohamed had already admitted his guilt at the time his lawyers called me. He had told the FBI that he had rented the house where the bomb was built, bought the truck used to transport components, bought a grinder for grinding the explosive, and ground some of the TNT himself. After the bombing, he fled to South Africa with a new identity, a new passport, and $1,000 in cash, this last procured for him by Al Qaeda.

After a worldwide manhunt lasting longer than a year, South African authorities found Mohamed in Cape Town, working at an Indian fast-food restaurant called Burger World. The South African government extradited him to the United States. The U.S. government wanted him executed for his crimes. Mohamed’s lawyers wanted my help in arguing that his punishment should be to spend the rest of his life behind bars in a maximum-security federal prison, but that he should not be put to death.

Khalfan Khamis Mohamed was born in 1973 on the island of Pemba and grew up in the village of Kidimni on Zanzibar Island. His twin sister, Fatuma, was born in the evening, but he didn’t arrive until morning, giving his mother a lot of trouble, she recalls. But from that point on, she says, “He was just an ordinary child who went to school…. After school he performed the normal domestic chores and liked playing football, like all youth. He didn’t indulge in any antisocial behavior.”

The family was poor. They lived in a mud hut with a thatched roof. His father died when Mohamed was six or seven years old. People on Zanzibar don’t pay close attention to dates, and Mohamed’s mother doesn’t recall exactly when her husband died. After the death of his father, Mohamed helped his mother support the family by working on the farm, harvesting fruits that grow wild in the forest, and taking care of a neighboring farmer’s cows.

Mohamed comes from a very different sort of place than many of the terrorists—a place that, ironically, benefited from globalization long before the term become popular. Zanzibar consists of two islands: Zanzibar (known locally as Unguja) and Pemba. The islands are in the Indian Ocean, twenty-five miles off the coast of Tanzania, six degrees south of the equator. Clove, jackfruit, mango, and breadfruit grow in the valleys of Pemba Island. Coconut trees, brought by Indian traders centuries ago, now grow wild. Monkeys, civets, bushpigs, and mongooses thrive in the forests. Some one hundred species of birds live in Tanzania, and thirteen species of bats have been identified on Pemba. The islands are also famous for their butterflies and the great variety of game fish found in the waters between them. Fishing and agriculture are Zanzibar’s main industries.

Today, Pemba and Zanzibar are largely isolated from the rest of the world. Foreign visitors tend to be adventurers attracted by the lush, undisturbed reefs or the profusion of game fish found in Pemba Channel. Visitors describe an extraordinarily friendly people who seem utterly mesmerized by their foreign looks and ways. They write of the remarkable melee of cultures—African, Arab, Persian, and Indian—magnificent Arabic architecture, abundant fruits and fishes, but also poverty and squalor, with the scent of spices rising above the stench of sewage and rotting fish.

Although it is relatively isolated today, Zanzibar was once the trading center for all of Africa, with trade links to Arabia, China, India, Persia, and Southeast Asia. The nineteenth-century English explorer Richard Burton described Pemba as an “emerald isle” in a “sea of purest sapphire.” The scent of cloves, he said, was enticing even from the sea. The people were a mixed race who had retained, despite their conversion to Islam, the skills of divination and other “curious practices palpably derived from their wild ancestry.” The traditional dhow, a single-masted ship with a lateen sail, used by Arab merchants for two millennia to sail on the monsoon winds, is still in use today and is still built in the same way—with a hull of mangrove or teak, and ribs of acacia—with no nails.

A succession of invading powers left remnants of their cultures and languages. Shirazi Persians, who settled on the coast of East Africa in the tenth century, intermarried with the locals, giving rise to an Afro-Persian race. Omani Arabs, who settled on Zanzibar some six centuries later, have had the largest influence on the culture and language. The name Zanzibar is the Arabic expression for “land of blacks.” Kiswahili, Tanzania’s official language, contains a substantial fraction of Arabic, Farsi, and Hindi words, as well as some Portuguese and English ones.
Tanzania was formed as a sovereign state in 1964 through the union of Tanganyika, on the African mainland, and Zanzibar. Zanzibar and Pemba Islands have a separate government administration from the rest of Tanzania. Zanzibaris are seeking greater autonomy for their archipelago. They would like to reap more of the profits of the export of cloves, which the central government taxes heavily, and to control more of the tourist trade.

Tanzania's ruling party, and Tanganyika itself, are predominantly Christian. The ruling party refers to any threat to its rule as motivated by Islamism, which, ironically, may incite precisely the kind of extremism the ruling party fears. During the last decade, elections have been declared fraudulent by multiple international observers, and protests have been met with violence perpetrated by the police, who are predominantly Christian, against Zanzibaris, who are predominantly Muslim. To the extent that Islamism is indigenous in the region, it is found more on the mainland than on the islands, as well as in neighboring Kenya, although this could change. Zanzibaris are deeply disappointed that the United States did not protest Tanzania's tampering with the election results of 1995 and 2000 or the violence that ensued, although the government's crimes were published widely.4 Although the region is remarkably tolerant historically, stimulated by its long-time exposure to multiple cultures, anti-Western Islamist sentiment could easily take root here if democracy fails and state repression continues.5

Muslims represent 97 percent of the population of Zanzibar, most of them Sunni. Shia represent 12 percent of the population. As in Indonesia, Islam coexists with Zanzibar's traditional religions, including animism. Zanzibar is famous for its sorcerers, seers, and witch doctors. Spells often involve Arabic texts, and witches often dress in traditional Arab garb. Evelyn Waugh wrote that novices came to Pemba from as far away as Haiti to study magic and voodoo. A cult of witches “still flourishes below the surface,” he wrote, expressing his frustration that “everything is kept hidden from the Europeans.”6 Zanzibar is the home of a secret sect known as the Wachawi, who practice their arts even today. They are said to be able to take on the shapes of animals and birds. Haitian voodooists learned to animate corpses for labor in the fields by studying with the Wachawi, who reportedly developed the technique to escape their masters’ notice when they fled bondage. The Wachawi are said to be able to bring the recently deceased back to life, with personality and memory intact. Locals describe their neighbors returning from midnight meetings in the bush, pale and speechless, having seen their recently deceased loved ones restored to life. Early-twentieth-century visitors said that natives told them of powerful witch guilds, which required prospective members to offer up a near relation—a spouse or a child—to be eaten by other initiates.8

As a child, Mohamed attended a madrassah in the afternoons. The family described him as serious and quiet—more observant than his siblings, but also a better student. When he was in the middle of tenth grade, his older brother, Mohamed Khalfan Mohamed, asked Mohamed to come to live with him and his family in Dar es Salaam on the mainland to help out in the family dry-goods store. Mohamed intended to complete his schooling in Tanzania, but his time was taken up with his work at the shop and attending mosque. He had always been somewhat of a loner, his siblings recounted, but he became even more isolated after dropping out of high school, spending time only with his family and people he met at the mosque.9

The mosques in Dar es Salaam were more political than the one Mohamed attended in Zanzibar. There was a great deal of discussion about the plight of Muslims in Chechnya and especially in Bosnia. Worshipers were told that it was their duty to help fellow Muslims around the world in any way they could.10 One of Mohamed’s new friends was a man named Sulieman. Sulieman was from Zanzibar, but he worked on a fishing boat based in Mombasa, Kenya, owned by a man whom Mohamed knew only as “Mohamed the Fisherman.” Mohamed the Fisherman turned out to be Mohamed Sadiq Odeh, a Saudi of Palestinian origin who was a member of Al Qaeda. Odeh would play an important role in the embassy-bombing conspiracy.11

Sulieman introduced Mohamed to Fahid, who would also participate in the bombing, who visited Dar es Salaam only occasionally. Mohamed started spending much of his free time with Fahid and Fahid’s friends, who were very religious. Sometimes they met in Dar es Salaam, and some times in Mombasa, Kenya. Mohamed says that they mainly talked about how to help Muslims
around the world. Often, he said, they would
meet in cars.12

By 1994, Mohamed began to despair at his
own life, family members said. He spent more
and more time at the mosque. He was radical-
ized in that mosque, his sister-in-law recalled.

Mohamed told Fahid he wanted to go to
Bosnia to fight against the Serbs. Fahid told him
that you cannot become a soldier for Islam with-
out training. Fahid also told Mohamed that he
did not trust him, and that he could earn Fahid's
trust only if he went to Afghanistan to be
trained. Mohamed saved his earnings from the
dry-goods shop and in 1994 traveled with
Sulieman to Pakistan. Fahid had given them a
contact in Karachi, who arranged for their trip
to the camp. Fahid had been at the camp for
around a month when Mohamed and Sulieman
arrived. Mohamed told FBI investigators that the
camp was called Markaz Fath, and that it was
run by a Pakistani Jihadi group called Harkar-
ul-Ansar. He said his teacher was a Pakistani
named Abu Omar. Mohamed said that he met a
lot of people at the camp, one of whom was an
American known as Sulieman America. The
people he met were interested in helping
Muslims around the world, Mohamed said, and
in waging a Jihad against America and against
conservative Muslim states. He said he had never
heard the name Al Qaeda.13

During the first two months at the camp,
the group was trained to use light weapons
(handguns and rifles), launchers, and surface-to-
air missiles. Mohamed and his friends Sulieman
and Fahid were selected for advanced training,
which included learning how to manufacture explosives and how to join detonators and wires.
Mohamed was not trained in the use of chemical
weapons, although he said that other members of
his group were. Afternoons were taken up with
Islamic studies—including films of atrocities per-
petrated against Muslims in Chechnya and
Bosnia—and sports. Mohamed stayed at the
camp for nine or ten months, he says.14 At the end
of his training, Mohamed wanted to go to Bosnia,
but he was not selected. He was told to leave a
number in case he was needed at a later date.
Mohamed went back to Dar es Salaam, bitterly
disappointed that he had not been allowed to join
the fight against the Serbs.15

Mohamed continued to spend time with the
“brothers” he had met in the mosque or had got-
ten to know at the camp. He went to Somalia
twice in 1997—one to teach Somali fighters
what he had learned in Afghanistan, and once
for a meeting with the men who would ulti-
imately bomb the American embassy.16 Just
before his first trip to Somalia, Fahid introduced
him to a man named Hussein, who would later
lead the group that bombed the U.S. embassy
in Dar es Salaam. Fahid told Mohamed that
Hussein is our brother, that he is a good man
who had been trained to be a *mujaheed*. Odeh,
explaining how Mohamed fell under Hussein's
influence, described Hussein as “persuasive,
authoritarian,” and “a very strong leader, a man
of compelling personality.” Mohamed was
impressed by Hussein’s knowledge of Islam.
Some time after this meeting, Hussein moved to
Dar es Salaam with his family. They stayed with
Mohamed in a small flat.17

Three years after he returned from Afghanistan,
Hussein approached Mohamed to invite him to
participate in a “Jihad job.” Mohamed said that he
would like to participate, although he was not
informed about what the “Jihad job” would entail.
Eventually Hussein asked Mohamed to take cer-
tain actions. He instructed him to buy a truck,
which Mohamed did in his own name. He paid
for the truck, a white Suzuki, with cash that
Hussein gave him. Fahid accompanied him and
drove the truck because Mohamed did not know
how to drive. The group used the truck to trans-
port equipment needed for the bomb, including
cylinder tanks, detonators, fertilizer, and TNT.
Hussein also asked him to rent a house, large and
private enough to conceal the group’s activities.
Mohamed remembered Hussein telling him that
he wanted the house to be hidden from the street,
but that it should also be “nice.” Mohamed found
a house with a high wall, which he rented in his
own name. The owner insisted that Mohamed pay
a year’s rent in advance, which he did, with money
Hussein gave him.18

Mohamed, Hussein, and Hussein’s family
moved into the house in the Ilala district of Dar
es Salaam. Other team members came to the
house, but no one ever discussed his role in the
plot. Hussein instructed Mohamed to remain in
the house most of the time, so that if any neigh-
bors came by, there would be someone who could
speak to them in Swahili. Other team members
arrived soon before the bombing: an engineer
named Abdul Rahman, whom Mohamed
described as working with “all confidence”; and
“Ahmed the driver,” whom Mohamed thought
was Egyptian. Ahmed was the suicide bomber who would drive the truck into the embassy. Some five days before the attack, Hussein told Mohamed that the target of the bombing would be the American embassy. Mohamed helped load the tanks, boxes of TNT, and sandbags into the back of the truck. When the truck got stuck in the sand behind the house, Mohamed helped the driver dig it out.19

Hussein and the rest of the team left several days before the bombing. Most of them said they were going to Mombasa, without specifying their final destination. In fact, they had been instructed to return to Afghanistan before the bombing took place. Hussein asked Mohamed to remain in Dar es Salaam, to help the driver with any last-minute details, and to remove incriminating evidence from the house. Mohamed did as he was told, with one exception. He did not like the idea of throwing away the food grinder he had used to grind the TNT, since it was still usable. So he gave it to his sister Zuhura, asking her to clean it well and to pass it on to his mother.20

When he was captured by the FBI in October 1999, Mohamed told investigators he was not sorry that Tanzanians were killed, which he said was part of the business. He said he had bombed the embassy because it was his responsibility, according to his study of Islam. He said he thought the operation was successful because the bomb worked, it sent a message to America, and because it kept American officials busy investigating it. He also said that if he had not been caught, he would continue participating in the Jihad against America or possibly against Egypt, and that if the U.S. government were to release him from custody, he would bomb Americans again. He told his investigators that he thought about Jihad all the time. He told them he wants Americans to understand that he and his fellow warriors are not crazy, gun-wielding people, but are fighting for a cause.21

I travel to New York to watch Mohamed’s trial. Security is tight. The taxi drops me several blocks from the entrance to the courthouse because the street is blocked to traffic. You must pass through several layers of security before you get to the room where the trial is being held. There are metal detectors and guards on the first floor, and you have to show identification and sign outside the courtroom. A guard is suspicious about why I am here. I explain that I am a defense-team visitor, and an agent instructs me to sit in the third wooden bench on the right. I can see from the back of the room that the bench is already full. When she sees that I mean to sit there, a woman pulls a child onto her lap and slides closer in toward her neighbor on the hard wooden bench. This is Mohamed’s family, I realize. The women wear bright Zanzibar cottons. The boys and men wear prayer caps. The little boy immediately to my right is wearing pressed white cotton. He stares at me with velvety eyes, not at all shy, seemingly delighted with the opportunity to examine such a strange foreign creature, whom good fortune has brought conveniently near at hand. His mother is too distracted to notice his staring and he is free to inspect every inch of me, which he does with obvious pleasure. It is a hot day. I notice the smell of anxiety in my benchmates’ sweat, but also the pleasant scent of spices. I see Mohamed’s mother at the far end of the bench. She sits tall, with dignity, but she looks modest and kind. She appears surprisingly calm, at least for now. There are brothers, sisters, children, and spouses also sharing the bench, as well as the family with whom Mohamed lived when he fled to South Africa.

A social worker has been called up to the witness stand to provide Mohamed’s social history. She has traveled to Zanzibar twice and shows the court pictures of Mohamed’s school, the neighborhood where he grew up, and the take-out restaurant where Mohamed worked as chef in Cape Town. When she is done, various members of Mohamed’s family are called up to the stand. Each is asked what they remember about Mohamed. An older brother remembers him as good in school and good at soccer. Mohamed was kind and peaceable, he said, and would always try to break up fights. A younger sister recalls him helping her with her schoolwork. Another says that Mohamed played games with her children, his nieces and nephews. The mother of the family for whom he worked in Cape Town recalled how patient and kind Mohamed had been with her children and her elderly parents. He even taught her elderly mother to read the Koran. She said that she would gladly have given up her daughter in marriage to Mohamed. All but one of Mohamed’s family members said it was their first time traveling by airplane or traveling abroad.

The last witness was Mohamed’s mother, whose name is Hidaya Rubeya juma. There was a hush in the room as a large lady dressed in bright cottons and a turban took the stand. I saw
Mohamed looking down as his mother took her seat. It seemed to me that Mohamed had a harder time facing his mother than he did facing his victims or accusers. There was jolt of pain in the room, as though the air had been ionized with terror—his and ours. Not a fear of death, but the recognition of evil. The recognition that this person who had killed so many has a mother who loves him, despite his crimes, and that he is afraid to look her in the eye. That despite his evil actions, he is human, just like us. It is one thing to understand this intellectually. It is another to see a mother face her killer son, with his many victims looking on, seeing her fear, her agony, and her loss. The loss of her son—first to evil, and maybe to death.

Mohamed’s attorney, Mr. David Ruhnke, asked Mohamed’s mother, “After you leave and return to Africa next week, do you know whether you will ever see your son again?”

“I don’t even know,” she answered quietly.22

“Do you know what this is about, and that the people here have to decide whether your son is to be executed or put in prison for life? And I want to ask you a very difficult question, which is, if your son were executed, what would that do to you?”

“It will hurt me. He is my son.”23

Soon after this, the court was adjourned. Hidaya Rubeya Juma was the last witness to appear in the penalty phase of Mohamed’s trial. Closing arguments began at the next session.

In his closing arguments, the prosecutor, Mr. Fitzgerald, emphasized what he referred to as Mohamed’s two-sided personality. “I submit to sit before you and tell you that Khalfan Mohamed’s personal characteristics as an individual human being include the following: one, Khalfan Mohamed has exhibited responsible conduct in other areas of his life; two, Khalfan Mohamed has shown himself to be a person capable of kindness, friendship, and generosity; and three, Khalfan Mohamed lost his father at an early age and worked to help his family, which struggled financially after the death of the major breadwinner.” Mohamed can be very kind, Fitzgerald adds. “You want him to marry your daughter. You wouldn’t think he would hurt an ant. The next day he is in custody, saying ‘Yeah, I bombed people and I’ll do it again.’ That’s what he is. He’s got two faces. . . . He fooled his family. . . . He is capable of savagery.”24

Jury members concluded that, if executed, Mohamed would be seen as a martyr and that his death could be “exploited by others to justify future terrorist acts.” He received a life sentence without parole.

When authorities interrogated Mohamed Sadiq Odeh in Pakistan, where he had flown on the day of the bombing, he admitted that he was a member of Al Qaeda and gave his interrogators the names of some of the Al Qaeda members involved in the plots. He also referred to “two or three locals,” whose names he appeared not to know, who had been left behind in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi to finish the job. One of those expendable locals was Mohamed.

According to several Al Qaeda members who testified at the trial, Al Qaeda is highly “ tiered,” and for the most part, Africans were not admitted to the upper ranks. Mohamed was recruited as a sleeper because he had a passport, language skills, and would not stand out as a foreigner in Dar es Salaam. Odeh explained to the FBI that there are several types of Al Qaeda operatives: sophisticated operatives who are involved in intelligence collection, choosing targets, surveillance, and making the bombs. But another category of operatives includes “good Muslims” who “are not experts in anything that would have a long-term benefit to the rest of the group.”25 The main thing they have to offer is their knowledge of the local languages and customs.

These dispensable young men, recruited to act only in the implementation phase of an attack, are unlikely to join Al Qaeda in a formal sense. They are often identified in the mosque, Odeh said. Atrocities against Muslims—anywhere in the world—help to create a climate that is ripe for recruiting young men to become soldiers for Allah. It is not even necessary to mention the name Al Qaeda to recruit them, Odeh told Jerry Post, a psychiatrist who interviewed him.26 It is possible that many of the American, British, and Southeast Asian sleepers that law-enforcement authorities continue to discover all over the world were recruited to play a similar role. Like Mohamed, the group of Yemeni Americans taken into custody in September 2002 apparently went to Afghanistan for a relatively short course of training. In the camp, potential recruits’ skills and commitment can be closely observed so that trainers can funnel them into the appropriate tier of the organization. Because of Al Qaeda’s strict policy of sharing information only on a need-to-know basis, sleepers—who serve as a kind of reserve army in the targeted country—are unlikely to know precisely for what
they have been recruited until immediately before an attack.

Some of the most important revelations of the trial were contained in an Al Qaeda instruction manual called the “Declaration of Jihad against the Country’s Tyrants,” which was entered into evidence. The manual makes clear that intelligence and counterintelligence (avoiding detection by the enemy intelligence agencies) are a priority for Al Qaeda. It instructs sleepers in the art of disappearing in enemy territory by shaving their beards, avoiding typical Muslim dress or expressions, not chatting too much (especially with taxi drivers, who may work for the enemy government), and wearing cologne. Sleepers are urged to find residences in new apartment buildings, where neighbors are less likely to know one another. Found by the Manchester (England) Metropolitan Police during a search of an Al Qaeda member’s home, the manual was located in a computer file described as “the military series” and was subsequently translated into English. In the “first lesson,” the manual describes the “main mission for which the Military Organization is responsible” as “the overthrow of the godless regimes and their replacement with an Islamic regime.” The second lesson spells out the “necessary qualifications and characteristics” of the organization’s members, which include a commitment to Islam and to the organization’s ideology, maturity, sacrifice, listening and obedience, keeping secrets, health, patience, “tranquillity and unflappability,” intelligence and insights, caution and prudence, truthfulness and counsel, ability to observe and analyze, and the “ability to act.” Subsequent “lessons” teach the trainee how to forge documents, establish safe houses and hiding places, establish safe communications, procure weapons, and gather intelligence. A large number of training manuals have been discovered in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Witnesses at the trial explained the structure of the organization in some detail. Bin Laden was known as the “emir,” or leader. Directly under him was the Shura Council, which consisted of a dozen or so members. The Shura oversaw the committees. The Military Committee was responsible for training camps and for procurement of weapons. The Islamic Study Committee issued fatwas and other religious rulings. The Media Committee published the newspapers. The Travel Committee was responsible for the procurement of both tickets and false-identity papers and came under the purview of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee oversaw bin Laden’s businesses. Al Qaeda had extensive dealings with charitable organizations. First, it used them to provide cover and for money laundering. Second, money donated to charitable organizations to provide humanitarian relief often ended up in Al Qaeda’s coffers. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Al Qaeda provided an important social-welfare function. It was simultaneously a recipient of “charitable funds” and a provider of humanitarian relief, a kind of terrorist United Way.

In this sense, Al Qaeda is similar to Pakistani and Indonesian Jihadi groups. Al Qaeda has a clear hierarchy. There are commanders, managers, and cadres; and cadres consist of both skilled and unskilled labor. Foot soldiers are likely to be found in schools or mosques, and only the best and brightest make it to the top. Some midlevel operatives are paid enough inside the organization that they may find it difficult to leave, while for others—generally those who come from wealthier families—the spiritual and psychological attractions of Jihad are sufficient. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis, as in an intelligence agency.

Several Al Qaeda functions are worth discussing in somewhat more detail: planning operations, relations with states, recruitment, training, developing the mission, and weapons acquisition.

**Planning Operations**

Some Al Qaeda operations take years to plan and implement, and sometimes the group reattempts attacks that failed the first time around. The idea to attack the World Trade Center appears to have originated well before the 1993 attack. Ramzi Yousuf, who spent three years in a safe house provided by bin Laden prior to his arrest, made clear to the FBI that he intended to knock the two buildings down, but that lack of funds had prevented him from achieving his ambitious goals. He had also plotted, together with his right-hand man, Abdul Hakim Murad, as well as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, his uncle, to destroy eleven American airplanes midair, a plot that was successfully tested on a Philippine airliner in December 1994, killing one passenger.
and injuring at least six others. The plot became known as the Bojinka Plot, which is Serbo-Croat for “the explosion.” Numerous reports have emerged that Al Qaeda had considered using airplanes as weapons before, including the widely reported plot to attack the CIA headquarters. Bin Laden admitted on videotape that he had not expected the Trade Center buildings to collapse, but that he had rejoiced in the surprising effectiveness of the attack.

For some operations, leaders are involved in detailed planning. Ali Muhammad, an Egyptian-born naturalized U.S. citizen who admitted conducting photographic surveillance of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, told American investigators that bin Laden himself had looked at surveillance photographs and selected the spot where the suicide truck should explode in the 1998 attack. But not all plots receive this level of oversight. Members of Al Qaeda in Jordan, for instance, who were arrested while preparing for attacks to be carried out during the millennium, were providing for themselves, rather than receiving lavish sums. Ahmed Ressam testified that he had been given what amounted to seed money for his planned attack in Los Angeles during the millennium. During the trial of Mokhtar Haouari, a coconspirator in the “millennium plot,” Ressam testified that he had had to raise most of the funds on his own, which he did by making use of his long-standing expertise in credit-card, immigration, and welfare fraud; as well as other criminal activities such as theft and robbery.

The attack on the USS Cole was originally planned on another U.S. destroyer, The Sullivans. The suggested target date for the attack on The Sullivans had been January 3, 2000, at the height of Ramadan. This first attempt to sink a U.S. warship failed when the explosives-laden boat sank.

Al Qaeda is patient. A senior counterterrorism official of the FBI observes, “They plan their operations well in advance and have the patience to wait to conduct the attack at the right time. Prior to carrying out the operation, Al Qaeda conducts surveillance of the target, sometimes on multiple occasions, often using nationals of the target they are surveying to enter the location without suspicion. The results of the surveillance are forwarded to Al Qaeda HQ as elaborate ‘ops plans’ or ‘targeting packages’ prepared using photographs, CAD-CAM (computer-aided design/computer-aided mapping) software, and the operative’s notes.” This sophistication, coupled with a wealth of financial and material resources, allows bin Laden’s terrorist network to stage spectacular attacks.

Jihadi groups build up strong relationships with individual politicians, intelligence agencies, or various factions of divided governments. The Pakistani Jihadis were long sustained by Pakistan’s ISI and are still assisted by former ISI agents, who serve as trainers at terrorist-training camps. It is likely that some current ISI agents still support the Jihadi groups, even after President Musharraf’s post-September 11 promise to force pro-Jihadi elements out. Active-duty military personnel helped to train Laskar Jihad mujahideen in Indonesia and have had a long-standing relationship with the leader of Jamaah Islamiyah, now closely associated with Al Qaeda. Saddam Hussein offered cash payments to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers, and Saudi charities, purportedly unconnected to the government, do the same. Iran provides funding to a variety of Jihadi groups around the world including Sunni ones, as well as safe haven. Ali Mohamed, a witness for the U.S. government in the African-embassies bombing trial held in 2001, testified that Al Qaeda maintained close ties to Iranian security forces. The security forces provided Al Qaeda with bombs “disguised to look like rocks,” he said, and arranged for the group to receive training in explosives at Hezbollah-run camps in Lebanon.

But bin Laden went beyond cooperating with states and state agents. He made himself so indispensable to leaders willing to provide him sanctuary that the assets of the state became his to use. He built a major highway in Sudan. Bin Laden’s businesses became major employers of Sudanese citizens. For example, Al-Damazine Farms, which manufactured sesame oil and grew peanuts and corn, employed some four thousand people.

Bin Laden established a close personal relationship with Hassan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front in Sudan and a leading Islamist intellectual who was educated in the West. Al-Turabi was trying to establish an Islamic state in Sudan based on a strict interpretation of
Islamic law. Bin Laden also worked closely with Sudan’s intelligence agency and military. As a result of these relationships—and Sudan’s financial dependence on bin Laden—he was able to build training camps, establish safe houses, and plan terrorist operations from Sudanese territory. The National Islamic Front supplied bin Laden with communications equipment, radios, rifles, and fake passports for his personnel.

Bin Laden made important foreign contacts while living in Sudan. During an Islamic People’s Congress in Sudan in 1995, he met leaders of other radical Islamist groups, including Hamas and PIJ (Palestinian Islamic Jihad), as well as extremist organizations from Algeria, Pakistan, and Tunisia. Al Qaeda further extended its worldwide network of contacts through training, arms smuggling, or providing financial support to groups based in the Philippines, Jordan, Eritrea, Egypt, Yemen, and elsewhere.

After the U.S. government pressured Sudan to expel bin Laden in mid-May 1996, he moved his operation to Jalalabad, Afghanistan. He reportedly lost $300 million in investments that he was forced to leave behind. Despite these losses, soon after his arrival in Afghanistan, bin Laden began buying the services of the Taliban. He offered up members of his elite unit, the 055 Brigade, to assist the Taliban in its efforts to destroy the Northern Alliance.44 Over five years, he gave the Taliban regime some $100 million, according to U.S. officials.45 In return, he received the Taliban’s hospitality and loyalty. According to Mohammed Khaksar, who served as the Taliban’s chief of intelligence, then as deputy minister of the interior prior to his defection to the Northern Alliance in 2001, “Al Qaeda was very important for the Taliban because they had so much money.... They gave a lot of money. And the Taliban trusted them.”46

Does Al Qaeda need the services of a state to continue to function as it did prior to September 11? I think the answer is that it probably does. But there is no reason to think that Al Qaeda and the International Islamic Front (IIF)47 can’t change their way of functioning so that the services of a state are no longer as critical. The IIF is a learning organization. The movement is encouraging resisters, virtual networks, and lone-wolf avengers. The IIF is also increasingly relying on what I will call franchises—groups that have their own regional agendas, but are willing to contribute (including financially) to Al Qaeda’s global, anti-American project when invited; and groups or individuals who may not be formal members but were trained at Al Qaeda’s camps and are willing to work as freelancers.

WEAPONS ACQUISITION

Conventional

The Al Qaeda body responsible for the procurement of weapons is the Military Committee—one of four committees that are subordinate to the Shura Majlis, the consultative council of the network. Apart from being responsible for the development and acquisition of both conventional and unconventional weapons, the Military Committee is also in charge of recruitment and training, as well as the planning and execution phase of Al Qaeda’s military operations.48

Al Qaeda acquires weapons and explosives from a variety of sources, depending on the type of operation and its location. The 055 Brigade, for instance—Al Qaeda’s guerrilla organization that fought alongside the Taliban against the Northern Alliance—used weapons left behind by the Red Army. It also received weapons from the Taliban and the Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI.

During the 1990s, many of Al Qaeda’s procurement officers obtained weapons in Western countries. During bin Laden’s stay in Sudan, from 1991 to 1996, the establishment of businesses in the East African country provided much of the cover for the network’s procurement of weapons.49 Al Qaeda’s global reach has enabled it to establish a worldwide network of procurement officers. One of them, according to terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna, was bin Laden’s personal pilot, Essam al-Ridi, a U.S. citizen who obtained communication equipment from Japan; scuba gear and range finders from Britain; satellite phones from Germany; night-vision goggles, .50-caliber sniping rifles, and a T-389 plane from America.50 Al Qaeda has also procured weapons from Russian and Ukrainian organized criminal rings. Al Qaeda’s and the IIF’s links with organized criminal groups are likely to grow stronger in the aftermath of September 11, as many Western states are stepping up the pressure against Al Qaeda cells operating in some of these countries.
Unconventional Weapons

Bin Laden has repeatedly made clear his desire to acquire unconventional weapons. In January 1999 he told a reporter, “Acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty. If I have indeed acquired these weapons, then I thank God for enabling me to do so. And if I seek to acquire these weapons, I am carrying out a duty. It would be a sin for Muslims not to try to possess the weapons that would prevent the infidels from inflicting harm on Muslims.” After September 11, he pronounced that he already possessed chemical and nuclear weapons. Bin Laden’s deputy Ayman Zawahiri wrote in his memoirs that “the targets and the type of weapons must be selected carefully to cause damage to the enemy’s structure and deter it enough to make it stop its brutality,” probably in reference to unconventional weapons.

Chemical and Biological Weapons. Iraqi chemical-weapons experts shifted some of their operations to Sudan after the Gulf War, according to CIA assessments released to the press. Bin Laden moved to Sudan at about the same time. Beginning in 1995, the CIA began receiving reports that Sudanese leaders had approved bin Laden’s request to begin production of chemical weapons to use against U.S. troops stationed in Saudi Arabia. Khidhir Hamza, the director of the Iraqi nuclear weapons program from 1987 to 1990, claimed that bin Laden’s agents had contacted Iraq agents with the aim of purchasing weapons components from Iraq. Sad dam Hussein reportedly sent Ansar al-Islam, the terrorist group that attempted to assassinate the prime minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Barham Salih, to train in Al Qaeda camps.

Ahmed Ressam, one of the Al Qaeda operatives apprehended in the millennium plots, described crude chemical-weapons training at camps in Afghanistan, including experiments on animals. In December 2000, special units of the Italian and German police arrested several Al Qaeda agents based in Milan, Italy, and Frankfurt, Germany, who had plotted to bomb the European Parliament building in Strasbourg, France, using sarin, a nerve agent. Other evidence of the group’s interest in chemical and biological weapons includes a manual that provides instructions for using chemical weapons; a manual that provides recipes for producing chemical and biological agents from readily available ingredients; and intercepted phone conversations between Al Qaeda operatives who were discussing unconventional agents.

In August 2002, CNN bought a cache of Al Qaeda videotapes in Afghanistan that showed Al Qaeda’s gruesome chemical-weapons experiments, substantiating earlier reports about experiments on animals. On one of these videotapes, several men are seen rushing from an enclosed room, shouting at each other to hurry; they leave behind a dog. After the men leave, a white liquid on the floor forms a noxious gas. The dog is seen convulsing and eventually dies.

A large cache of documents and other materials was found during the raid that led to the capture of Al Qaeda’s operational planner, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, in March 2003. The seized documents revealed that Al Qaeda had acquired the necessary materials for producing botulinum and salmonella toxin and the chemical agent cyanide—and was close to developing a workable plan for producing anthrax, a far more lethal agent. Mohammed had been staying at the home of Abdul Quoddoos Khan, a member of Jamaat-i-Islami. Khan is reportedly a bacteriologist with access to production materials and facilities.

The greatest worry, however, is that the International Islamic Front, possibly working together with Hezbollah or other terrorist groups, will acquire assistance from persons who have access to a sophisticated biological-weapons program, possibly, but not necessarily, one that is state run.

Nuclear Weapons. The U.S. government has been concerned about Al Qaeda’s interest in acquiring nuclear weapons since the mid-1990s. In early February 2001, Jamal Ahmad al-Fadl admitted that one of bin Laden’s top lieutenants ordered him to try to buy uranium from a former Sudanese military officer named Salah Abdel Mobtuk. The uranium was offered for $1.5 million. Documents described the material as originating in South Africa. Al-Fadl received a $10,000 bonus for arranging the deal. He testified that he does not know the outcome.
U.S. government officials reportedly believe that Al Qaeda successfully purchased uranium from South Africa.\(^6\) Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, a senior deputy to bin Laden, was extradited from Germany to the United States in 1998. The U.S. government accuses Salim of attempting to obtain material that could be used to develop nuclear weapons.\(^6\)

Numerous reports have emerged that bin Laden has forged links with organized criminal groups based in the former Soviet Union, Central Asia, and the Caucasus in his attempts to acquire nuclear weapons.\(^6\) Russian authorities suspect the August 2002 murder of a nuclear chemist may have been linked to a clandestine effort to steal the country’s nuclear technology.\(^6\) They also report that they had observed terrorists staking out a secret nuclear-weapons storage facility on two occasions, and that they had thwarted an organized criminal group’s attempt to steal 18.5 kilograms of highly enriched uranium.\(^6\) This last claim is unusual and alarming, in part because of the quantity—enough to make several nuclear weapons—and in part because the material was actually weapons-usable. Most press reporting about nuclear thefts turn out, after investigation, to refer to caches of low-enriched uranium or radioactive but not nuclear-weapons-usable materials.

American officials are suspicious about the activities of two Pakistani nuclear scientists, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Abdul Majid, who reportedly met with bin Laden, Ayman Zawahiri, and two other Al Qaeda officials several times during August 2001. Pakistani officials insist that despite Mahmood’s experience in uranium enrichment and plutonium production, the two scientists had “neither the knowledge nor the experience to assist in the construction of any type of nuclear weapon.”\(^6\) The two scientists, who were eventually released, reported that during one meeting, Osama bin Laden declared he possessed “some type of radiological material” and was interested in learning how he could use it in a weapon.\(^6\)

If Al Qaeda builds a nuclear weapon or already has one, it is probably a relatively crude device. An extensive study conducted by the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington found “no credible evidence that either bin Laden or Al Qaeda possesses nuclear weapons or sufficient fissile material to make them,” but that if Al Qaeda obtained sufficient nuclear-weapons-usable material, it would be capable of building a crude nuclear explosive.\(^6\)

**Recruitment**

In the years following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Al Qaeda’s recruitment was conducted by the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK—Services office). Osama bin Laden and his spiritual mentor, the Palestinian head of the Muslim Brotherhood, Abdullah Azzam, established the MAK in 1984. The MAK recruited young Muslims to come to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet infidels. With branches in over thirty countries, including Europe and the United States, and a sizable budget, the MAK was responsible for propaganda, fund-raising, and coordinating recruitment. While bin Laden covered the costs for transporting the new recruits, the Afghan government provided the land, and training camps were soon established.\(^7\)

Most Al Qaeda operatives appear to have been recruited by Islamist organizations in their home countries. A Spanish investigation in November 2001, for example, concluded that a group known in Spain as Soldiers of Allah gradually assumed control over the Abu Bakr mosque in 1994. It had financial ties with Al Qaeda and regularly sent volunteers for training in Bosnia, Pakistan, and the Philippines.\(^7\) Surveillance of a key recruitment officer based in Italy, Abu Hamza, revealed a tightly linked network of Al Qaeda recruitment officers in Europe, which included Abu Hamza and Sami Ben Khemais in Italy, Tarek Maaroufi in Belgium, and Abu Dahdah in Spain.\(^7\) In Germany, in addition to recruitment through mainstream Islamic associations and charitable agencies, Al Qaeda recruiting officers used amateur videos of fighting in Chechnya to attract recruits.\(^7\) One two-hour-long recruiting video that was probably produced in the summer of 2001 showed a mock assassination of former president Clinton, along with footage of training bases in Afghanistan. Methodically, the film moves from picture frames of Palestinian children killed or wounded by Israeli soldiers and Muslim women being beaten, to pictures of “great Muslim victories” in Chechnya, Somalia, and against the USS Cole. The video concludes with a call for Muslims to embark on the hegira, or migration, to Afghanistan.\(^7\)
In Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia, seminaries are often fertile ground for recruitment. Many of them promote the excitement of joining the Jihad as much as they do the horror stories of atrocities against Muslims. In Malaysia, a school associated with Al Qaeda issued brochures exhorting young radicals to forgo Palestine for Afghanistan, where they were promised three thousand kilometers of open borders and the friendship of many like-minded colleagues, who had made Afghanistan the international center of Islamic militancy. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, the spiritual leader of Jamaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian terrorist group closely affiliated with Al Qaeda, championed bin Laden and exhorted students in Indonesia and Malaysia to carry on a “personal Jihad” following bin Laden’s lead.

The way Khalfan Khamis Mohamed was recruited is typical for foot soldiers. Recruiters locate raw talent in a seminary or a mosque. The raw talent is then sent to a camp, where it is assessed on various dimensions: commitment to Islam, psychological reliability, intelligence, and physical prowess. Identifying reliable recruits is considered the most difficult job. Among Al Qaeda’s most well-known and successful recruiters of elite operatives are Muhammad Atef, who was reportedly killed by U.S. bombs in November 2002, and Abu Zubaydah, a Palestinian born in Saudi Arabia, now in U.S. custody.

TRAINING

Osama bin Laden provided training camps and guesthouses in Afghanistan for the use of Al Qaeda and its affiliated groups beginning in 1989. Western intelligence agencies estimate that by September 11, 2001, between 70,000 and 110,000 radical Muslims had graduated from Al Qaeda training camps such as Khalden, Derunta, Khost, Siddiq, or Jihad Wal. Of those, only a few thousand graduates—who distinguished themselves spiritually, physically, or psychologically—were invited to join Al Qaeda. The difficulty of making the cut as a full-fledged recruit meant that Islamists from all over the world regarded joining Al Qaeda as the highest possible honor, Gunaratna explains.

The exact number of training camps in Afghanistan that are associated with Osama bin Laden is unknown, and estimates range from one dozen to over fifty such camps. In the mid-1990s, Al Qaeda shifted its headquarters to Khartoum and established or assisted in the establishment of an estimated twenty training camps in Sudan. Other training camps have been identified in lawless corners of Somalia, Yemen, Indonesia, Chechnya, and other countries. The camps serve a variety of purposes in addition to training members and reserves. They create social ties, so that operatives feel committed to the cause on both ideological and solidarity grounds. Specialists then funnel recruits into the right level of the organization and into the right job: public-relations officer, regional manager, trainer, sleeper, or other.

John Walker Lindh told investigators that the camp he attended near Kandahar offered both basic and advanced training. After the basic training course, trainees can select different tracks to follow, one involving battlefield training and the other “civilian warfare training.” The battlefield course includes “advanced topography, ambushes, tactics, battlefield formations, trench warfare . . . practicing assassinations with pistols and rifles, and shooting from motorcycles and cars.” The civilian warfare course includes “terrorism, forgery of passports and documents, poisons, mine explosions, and an intelligence course which teaches trainees how to avoid detection by police.” Most of the trainees were Saudi, he said. He also said that the leader of the camp approached all foreign trainees to recruit them for “foreign operations.” The foreign recruits were instructed not to discuss the conversation about foreign operations with their fellow trainees, and they were not given any details about what the foreign terrorist operations might entail. Trainees were also asked whether they were willing to work in their own country. Lindh said that the leader of the camp, Al Musri, interviewed him personally.

Tapes reportedly captured by the U.S. army in Afghanistan show Al Qaeda members training to carry out operations in the West. The tapes show a level of professionalism that suggests that Al Qaeda had received significant assistance from a professional military, according to an analyst who read the army’s assessment and viewed the tapes himself. On one tape, operatives are trained to carry out an ambush near a six-lane highway similar to those that are found in the United States and Europe. Hostage scenarios include raids of large buildings with
many occupants. Trainees playing the role of terrorists dictate commands to the hostages in English, and the trainees playing the hostages respond in English. Operatives are trained to determine whether soldiers or other armed personnel are among the hostages so that those with weapons can be segregated from the rest. The armed hostages are then executed in front of television cameras. Another scenario prepares operatives for assassinating dignitaries—possibly national leaders—on a golf course. It is clear from the tapes that Al Qaeda is training its operatives to maximize media coverage, according to the army's assessment.80

The most important aspect of training, however, is mental training and religious indoctrination. Religious indoctrination includes Islamic law and history and how to wage a holy war. The story that recruits must learn is about identity—it is about who we are as distinct from them, to whom Zawahiri, bin Laden's deputy, refers to as the “new Crusaders.”81

Most importantly, camps are used to inculcate “the story” into young men's heads. The story is about an evil enemy who, in the words of Zawahiri, is waging a “new Crusade” against the lands of Islam. This enemy must be fought militarily, Zawahiri explains, because that is the only language the West understands. The enemy is easily frightened by small groups of fighters, and trainees learn how to function in small cells.82

**The Mission of Terrorist Organizations: The Terrorist “Product”**

A professional terrorist chooses his mission carefully. He is able to read popular opinion and is likely to change his mission over time. Astute leaders may find new missions—or emphasize new aspects of the mission—when they realize they can no longer “sell” the old one to sponsors and potential recruits, either because the original mission was achieved or, more commonly, because the impossibility of achieving the mission has become obvious.

Terrorism grows out of seductive solutions to grievances. When revolutions succeed, which happens occasionally, the imperative to address the problems of the aggrieved group comes to be accepted by a wider population. But the techniques of terror—the deliberate murder of innocent civilians—are counter to every mainstream religious tradition. This is why the mission—the articulation of the grievance—is so important. It must be so compellingly described that recruits are willing to violate normal moral rules in its name.

The people on whose behalf the terrorists aim to fight must be portrayed as worthy of heroic acts of martyrdom. In his memoir, Zawahiri says that an alliance of Jihadi groups and “liberated states” is anxious to seek retribution for the blood of the martyrs, the grief of the mothers, the deprivation of the orphans, the suffering of the detainees, and the sores of the tortured people throughout the land of Islam. He says that this age is witnessing a new phenomenon of mujahideen youths who have abandoned their families, countries, wealth, studies, and jobs in search of Jihad arenas for the sake of God.83

The enemy must be portrayed as a monstrous threat, Zawahiri warns his followers that the new Crusaders respect no moral boundaries and understand only the language of violence. The enemy is characterized by “brutality, arrogance, and disregard for all taboos and customs.” He urges Jihadis to choose weapons and tactics capable of inflicting maximum casualties on the enemy at minimal cost to the mujahideen. He warns followers that the enemy makes use of a variety of tools and proxies, including the United Nations, friendly rulers of the Muslim peoples, multinational corporations, international communications and data exchange systems, international news agencies and satellite media channels. The enemy also uses international relief agencies as a cover for espionage, proselytizing, coup planning, and the transfer of weapons.84 John Walker Lindh told interrogators that he had decided to “join the fight of the Pakistani people in Kashmir” when he was in a madrassah in Pakistan, where he heard reports of “torture, rape, and massacre of the Pakistani people by India.” He said that he was overwhelmed by the “guilt of sitting idle while these atrocities were committed,” and he volunteered for training, first in Pakistan, then in Afghanistan, ultimately ending up fighting with the Taliban.85 A trainer for HUM who was interviewed for this book said that he decided to join the Jihad when he was in eleventh grade, after hearing about two Muslim women who were...
raped by Indian forces.66 Ironically, the enemy’s existence—and even his atrocities—help terrorist groups prove the importance of their mission. The Lashkar e Taiba public-affairs director told me he felt “happy” about the growth of the Hindu extremist group Bajrang Dal, the arch-nemesis of the Pakistani militant groups. It provides a raison d’etre for Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan, he said. “What is the logic for stopping the Jihadi groups’ activities if the Indian government supports groups like Bajrang Dal?” he asked.

Peter Verkhovensky, a character in Dostoyevsky’s 1871 novel The Demons, claims to be a socialist but is ultimately exposed as a cheat and a fraud. But the real villains in the novel are the bad ideas that seduced young men to join revolutionary movements. Leaders, who may have been true believers in their youth, cynically take advantage of their zealous recruits, manipulating them with an enticing mission, ultimately using these true believers as their weapons. Joseph Conrad described terrorists as “fools victimized by ideas they cannot possibly believe. . . . While they mouth slogans or even practice anarchist beliefs, their motives are the result of self-display, power plays, class confusion, acting out roles.”

Both Dostoyevsky and Conrad understood that the prospect of playing a seemingly heroic role can persuade young men to become ruthless killers in the service of bad ideas, but the bad ideas must be seductively packaged. Terrorist groups have to raise money by “selling” their mission to supporters—including donors, personnel (both managers and followers), and the broader public. Selecting and advertising a mission that will attract donations—of time, talent, money, and for suicide operations, lives—is thus critically important to the group’s survival.

Zawahiri observes that the New World Order is a source of humiliation for Muslims. It is better for the youth of Islam to carry arms and defend their religion with pride and dignity than to submit to this humiliation, he says.

Violence, in other words, restores the dignity of humiliated youth. This idea is similar to Franz Fanon’s notion that violence is a “cleansing force,” which frees the oppressed youth from his “inferiority complex,” “despair,” and “inaction,” making him fearless and restoring his self-respect.99 Fanon also warned of the dangers of globalization for the underdeveloped world, where youth, who are especially susceptible to the seductive pastimes offered by the West, comprise a large proportion of the population.99

Part of the mission of Jihad is thus to restore Muslims’ pride in the face of a humiliating New World Order. The purpose of violence, according to this way of thinking, is to restore dignity and to help ward off dangerous temptations. Its target audience is not necessarily the victims and their sympathizers, but the perpetrators and their sympathizers. Violence is a way to strengthen support for the organization and the movement it represents. It is a marketing device and a method for rousing the troops.

In this regard, Zawahiri is conforming also with the views of Sayyid Qutb, whom Zawahiri describes as “the most prominent theoretician of the fundamentalist movements” and Islam’s most influential contemporary “martyr.” Qutb’s outlook on the West changed dramatically after his first visit to America, where he was repulsed by Americans’ materialism, racism, promiscuity, and feminism. Americans behave like animals, he said. They justify their vulgarity under the banner of emancipation of women and “free mixing of the sexes.” They love freedom, but eschew responsibility for their families.92 He saw the West as the historical enemy of Islam, citing the Crusades, European colonialism, and the Cold War as evidence. Qutb emphasized the need to cleanse Islam from impurities resulting from its exposure to Western and capitalist influence.

Western values have infiltrated the Muslim elites, who rule according to corrupt Western principles. The enemy’s weapons are political, economic, and religio-cultural. They must be fought at every level, Qutb warned.92 The twin purposes of Jihad are to cleanse Islam of the impurifying influence of the West, and to fight the West using political, economic, and religio-cultural weapons—the same weapons the West allegedly uses against Islam.

Advertising the Mission

Like more traditional humanitarian relief organizations, terrorists have to advertise their mission to potential donors and volunteers, and they tend to use similar techniques. As we have seen, they hold auctions, fund-raising dinners, and press conferences. They put up posters and
put out newspapers. They cultivate journalists hoping for favorable press coverage. They openly solicit donations in houses of worship, at least where the state allows it. They send leaders on fund-raising missions abroad and arrange for private meetings between leaders and major donors. They make heavy use of the mail, the telephone, and the Internet, often providing their bank account numbers and the bank’s address. They demonstrate their effectiveness with sophisticated Web sites, often including photographs or streaming-video recordings of successful operations and of the atrocities perpetrated against the group they aim to help. All of these techniques are practiced by humanitarian organizations. Terrorist groups also advertise the kind of weapons that recruits will learn to use, in some cases including cyberwar. Person-to-person contacts, however, remain a critical component of fund-raising and recruitment drives.93

CHANGING THE MISSION

Astute terrorist leaders often realize that to attract additional funding, they may need to give up their original mission. The original mission of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, for example, was to turn Egypt into an Islamic state. By the late 1990s, the group had fallen on hard times. Sheik Omi Abdel Rahman was imprisoned in the United States for his involvement in a plot to bomb New York City landmarks in 1993. Other leaders had been killed or forced to move abroad. Zawahiri reportedly considered moving the group to Chechnya, but when he traveled there to check out the situation, he was arrested and imprisoned for traveling without an entry permit.94 After his release in May 1997, Zawahiri decided that it would be practical to shift his sights away from the “near enemy,” the secular rulers of Egypt, toward the “far enemy,” the West and the United States. Switching goals in this way would mean a large inflow of cash from bin Laden, which the group desperately needed. Islamists see Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, who is supported by the United States, as a traitor to Islam on numerous grounds. He has continued his (assassinated) predecessor’s controversial policy of appeasing Israel at the expense of the Palestinians. His administration is widely viewed as corrupt and repressive. He has expelled or imprisoned most members of the Islamic resistance to his rule. Egyptian human rights organizations estimate that some sixteen thousand people with suspected links to Islamic organizations remain jailed in Egypt.95

The alliance between Zawahiri and bin Laden was a “marriage of convenience,” according to Lawrence Wright. One of Zawahiri’s chief assistants testified in Cairo that Zawahiri had confided in him that “joining with bin Laden [was] the only solution to keeping the Jihad organization alive.”96 “These men were not mercenaries, they were highly motivated idealists, many of whom had turned their backs on middle-class careers. . . . They faced a difficult choice: whether to maintain their allegiance to a bootstrap organization that was always struggling financially or to join forces with a wealthy Saudi who had long-standing ties to the oil billionaires in the Persian Gulf,” Wright explains.

After Zawahiri shifted his focus away from Egypt, some of his followers left in protest, forming a splinter faction named Vanguards of Conquest (Tala’ al-Fateh), which was weakened as a result of the Egyptian government’s clampdown on Islamists. In return for bin Laden’s assistance, Zawahiri provided him some two hundred loyal, disciplined and well-trained followers, who became the core of Al Qaeda’s leadership. Zawahiri describes the new mission as a “global battle” against the “disbelievers,” who have “united against the mujahideen.” He adds, “The battle today cannot be fought on a regional level without taking into account the global hostility towards us.”97

Another example of a group that changed its mission over time to secure a more reliable source of funding is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Its original mission was to fight the post-Soviet ruler of Uzbekistan, Islam Katimov, whose authoritarian rule is characterized by corruption and repression.98 When Juma Namangani, leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, was forced underground, together with his followers, they eventually made their way to Afghanistan, where they made contacts with Al Qaeda. Abdujabar Abduvakhitov, an Uzbek scholar who has studied the group since its inception, explains that the group found that by adopting Islamist slogans it could “make more money and get weapons.”99 The IMU shifted its mission from fighting injustice in Uzbekistan to inciting
Islamic extremism and global Jihad, thereby gaining access to financial supporters in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran, Abduvakhitov explains. The group’s new literature promoted the Taliban’s agenda, reviling America and the West, but also music, cigarettes, sex, and drink. Its new slogans made the movement repulsive to its original supporters in Uzbekistan, however.99

When the IMU terrorists returned to Uzbekistan in 2000, they had medical kits, tactical radios, and night-vision goggles. “All of this speaks to better funding, it speaks to better contacts,” an unnamed intelligence officer told the New York Times. “They made an impression on bin Laden.”100

In the spring of 2001 the group entered into an agreement with Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, to delay its Central Asian campaign and to fight the Northern Alliance. Namangani became commander of the 055 Brigade, bin Laden’s group of foreign fighters. After September 11, Namangani found himself at war with America. He had alienated his original supporters in his country, and the financial backers he attracted with his turn toward Islamism were no longer able to fund him because they were dispersed and largely broke. He was killed during the war in Afghanistan in November 2001.101

Changing the mission can cause a variety of problems. Volunteers may be wedded to the original mission and may resent the need to kowtow to donors, rather than focusing on the needs of the beneficiaries, as happened with the part of Egyptian Islamic Jihad that refused to join forces with bin Laden. Managers are vulnerable to the charge of mission creep. From the viewpoint of the original stakeholders in the organization, there is a principal-agent problem if the group’s mission shifts. An important example of this is when a state (or agencies within in a divided state) fund insurgent groups in the belief that they will have total control over the groups’ activities. But if a group diversifies its revenue stream, the state may find itself losing control. This is the case with regard to the militant and sectarian groups in Pakistan, which were largely created by the ISI. Now that a significant fraction of these groups’ income comes from other entities, the groups are increasingly engaging in activities that are counter to the state’s interests. Similarly, Indonesian Jihadi groups that raise money from sources in the Gulf are slipping out of the control of their original backers in the Indonesian military. (In both these cases, it is important to point out again that the state is not a monolithic entity and that individual agents, or even agencies, may be acting in violation of state policy.)

Osama bin Laden himself has changed his mission over time. He inherited an organization devoted to fighting Soviet forces and turned that organization into a flexible group of ruthless warriors ready to fight on behalf of multiple causes. His first call to holy war, issued in 1992, urged believers to kill American soldiers in Saudi Arabia, the Horn of Africa, and Somalia. There was virtually no mention of Palestine. His second, in 1996, was a forty-page document listing atrocities and injustices committed against Muslims, mainly by Western powers. His third, in February 1998, for the first time urged followers deliberately to target American civilians, rather than soldiers. Although that fatwa mentioned the Palestinian struggle, it was only one of a litany of Muslim grievances. America’s “crimes” against Saudi Arabia (by stationing troops near Islam’s holiest sites), Iraq, and the other Islamic states of the region constituted a clear declaration of war by the Americans against God, his Prophet, and the Muslims . . . By God’s leave, we call on every Muslim who believes in God and hopes for reward to obey God’s command to kill the Americans and plunder their possessions wherever he finds them and wherever he can,” bin he wrote.102 On October 7, 2001, in a message released on Al Jazeera television immediately after U.S. forces began bombing in Afghanistan, bin Laden issued his fourth call for Jihad. This time he emphasized Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands and the suffering of Iraqi children under UN sanctions, concerns broadly shared in the Islamic world. While most Muslims reject bin Laden’s interpretation of their religion, he felt the moment was ripe to win many over to his anti-Western cause. Bin Laden was competing for the hearts and minds of ordinary Muslims. He said that the September 11 “events” had split the world into two “camps,” the Islamic world and “infidels”—and that the time had come for “every Muslim to defend his religion” (echoing President Bush’s argument that from now on “either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists”).103

Bin Laden’s aim was to turn America’s response to the September 11 attack into a war between Islam and the West. With this new
fatwa, bin Laden was striking at the “very core of the grievances that the common Arab man in the street has toward his respective government, especially in Saudi Arabia,” Nawaf Obaid, a Saudi analyst, explained.104 John Walker Lindh told U.S. investigators that Al Qaeda had come to believe that it was more effective to “attack the head of the snake” than to attack secular rulers in the Islamic world.

### EXPANDING THE NETWORK

Al Qaeda and the IIF are not only changing their mission over time in response to new situations and new needs, but also their organizational style. With its corporate headquarters in shatters, Al Qaeda and the alliance are now relying on an ever shifting network of sympathetic groups and individuals, including the Southwest Asian Jihadi groups that signed bin Laden’s February 1998 fatwa; franchise outfits in Southeast Asia; sleeper cells trained in Afghanistan and dispersed abroad; and freelancers such as Richard Reid, the convicted “shoe bomber,” who attempted to blow up a plane. Lone wolves are also beginning to take action on their own, without having been formally recruited or trained by Al Qaeda.

The Al Qaeda organization is learning that to evade law-enforcement detection in the West, it will need to adopt some of the qualities of the virtual network style. Coordination of major attacks in the post-September 11 world, in which law-enforcement and intelligence agencies have formed their own networks in response, will be difficult. Al Qaeda is adapting by communicating over the Internet and by issuing messages intended to frighten Americans and boost the morale of followers. The leadership of Al Qaeda appears to be functioning less as a group of commanders and more as inspirational leaders. A Web site that appeared after September 11 (but is no longer available) offered a special on-line training course that teaches the reader how to make time bombs and detonate enemy command centers. The site invited visitors to read a chapter on the production of explosives, saying, “We want deeds, not words. What counts is implementation.” Other sites made reference to the Encyclopedia of Jihad, which provides instructions for creating a “clandestine activity cell,” including intelligence, supply, planning and preparation, and implementation.105 In an article on the “culture of Jihad,” a Saudi Islamist urges bin Laden’s sympathizers to take action on their own. “I do not need to meet the Sheikh and ask his permission to carry out some operation, the same as I do not need permission to pray, or to think about killing the Jews and the Crusaders that gather on our lands.” He accuses the enemies of Islam of attempting to alter the Saudi education system to describe Jihad as a way of thinking rather than as mode of action. Nor does it make any difference whether bin Laden is alive or dead. “If Osama bin Laden is alive or God forbid he is killed, there are thousand Bin Ladens in this nation. We should not abandon our way, which the Sheikh has paved for you, regardless of the existence of the Sheikh or his absence.”106

An anonymous article in another Islamist forum, “The lovers of Jihad,” argues, “The Islamist view of the confrontation with the United States is settled. Furthermore, it is going to be the new ideology of the second generation of the Jihadi movements around the world. They do not need the existence of bin Laden, after he fulfilled his role in the call and agitation for this project.”107

As with any network, the challenge for the Al Qaeda network of groups is to balance the needs for resilience and for capacity. Resilience refers to the ability of a network to withstand the loss of a node or nodes. To maximize resilience, the network has to maximize redundancy. Functions are not centralized. (This decreases the efficiency of the organization, but terrorist networks are unlikely to optimize efficiency as they do not have to answer to shareholders and they tend to view the “muscle” as expendable.) Capacity—the ability to optimize the scale of the attack—requires coordination, which makes the group less resilient because communication is required. Effectiveness is a function of both capacity and resilience.

Network theorists suggest that a network of networks is a resilient organization. Within each cluster, every node is connected to every other node in what is known as an “all channel” network. But only certain members of the cluster communicate with other clusters, and the ties between clusters are weak, to minimize the risk of penetration.

The strength of ties is not static, however; it varies over time. Training together in camps establishes trust, the glue that holds a network
together. (Recall Fahid’s claim that he would not be able to trust Mohamed unless he trained in Afghanistan.) But task ties, the term network theorists use for relationships needed to accomplish particular tasks, are likely to be weak or even nonexistent until a leader brings a group together to carry out an operation.

In a law-enforcement-rich environment, the most effective terrorist organization probably consists of many clusters of varying size and complexity held together by trust and a shared mission rather than a hierarchical superstructure. Individual clusters may find their own funding through licit or illicit businesses, donations from wealthy industrialists, wealthy diasporas, or the relationships they develop with states or state agents. Individual groups may even compete for funds in what is known as a chaordic network. They may recruit and arm their groups separately. Innovation—such as attempts to acquire or use unconventional weapons—is promoted at all levels. Some of the clusters will remain dormant until a concrete operation is planned. Those that are active in failing states where the state either supports them or cannot fight them will be able to remain active full-time. The only thing the sub-networks must have in common is a shared mission and goals.

In this network of networks, leadership style will vary. Complex tasks require hierarchies—the commander cadre-type organization. For very small operations, of the kind that are carried out by the Army of God, little coordination or leadership is required: small cells or lone wolves inspired by the movement can act on their own. Individual operatives can have a powerful effect, as the sniper in suburban Washington in the fall of 2002 made clear. As more powerful weapons become available to smaller groups, virtual networks will become more dangerous.

The use of sleepers can make an organization significantly more resilient. Sleepers are informed of their tasks immediately before the operation. They are likely to be told only what they need to know: information is strictly compartmentalized.

Technology has greatly increased the capacity of networks. Networks can now be decentralized but also highly focused. Members can travel nearly anywhere and communicate with one another anywhere. Money is also easily shipped. This is especially true for organizations like Al Qaeda, which utilize informal financial transactions and convert their cash into gems or gold.

Since September 11 and the war in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and the IIF have been forming the kind of network of networks connected by weak ties that network theorists argue is the most effective style of organization, and making use of sleepers and freelancers, which increases the resilience of the alliance.

**Sources of Funds**

As is the case for many terrorist groups, Al Qaeda raises money in four ways: criminal activities, businesses, financial or in-kind assistance from states or state agents, and charitable donations.

**Businesses**

Al-Fadl testified that bin Laden set up a large number of companies in Sudan, including Wadi-al-Aqiq, a corporate shell that he referred to as the “mother” of all the other companies: Al Hijra Construction, a company that built roads and bridges; Taba Investment, Ltd., a currency trading group; Themar al-Mubaraka, an agriculture company; Quadarat, a transport company; Laden International, an import-export business. Al-Fadl said the group controlled the Islamic bank al-Shamal and held accounts at Barclays Bank in London as well as unnamed banks in Sudan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Cyprus, the United States, and Dubai. According to the U.S. indictment, “These companies were operated to provide income and to support Al Qaeda, and to provide cover for the procurement of explosives, weapons, and chemicals, and for the travel of Al Qaeda operatives.”

Like many terrorist groups, Al Qaeda is involved in both licit and illicit enterprises. Bin Laden attempted to develop a more potent strain of heroin to export to the United States and Western Europe, in retaliation for the 1998 air strikes in Sudan and Afghanistan. He provided protection to processing plants and transport for the Taliban’s drug businesses, which financed training camps and supported extremists in neighboring countries, according to the United Nations. Al Qaeda used informal financial transactions known as *hawala*, which are based largely on trust and extensive use of family or
regional connections, and a network of honey shops, to transfer funds around the world. It is now converting cash into diamonds and gold.

Charitable Donations

Charities, purportedly unaffiliated with the terrorist groups, seek funding for humanitarian relief operations, some of which is used for that purpose, and some of which is used to fund terrorist operations. Many Jihadi groups use charities for fund-raising abroad or as a front for terrorist activities. Al Qaeda members testified that they received ID cards issued by a humanitarian relief organization based in Nairobi called Mercy International Relief Agency. The organization was involved in humanitarian relief efforts, as its name suggests, but it also served as a front organization for operatives during the period they were planning the Africa embassy bombings.

By soliciting charitable donations abroad, groups draw attention to the cause among diaspora populations. The Gulf States, North America, the United Kingdom, and European countries are important sources of funding for terrorist groups. The U.S. government looked the other way when the IRA engaged in fund-raising dinners in the United States, but began to see the downside to such a policy when the groups being funded began killing American citizens.

But perhaps even more importantly, by soliciting money from the people, a terrorist organization (or terrorist-affiliated organization) can establish its bona fides as a group devoted to the interests of “the people.” While much of the group’s money may actually come from criminal activities, business operations, or government assistance, charitable donations are important as a “defining source of revenue,” a point made in regard to more traditional NGOs by Mark Moore, a specialist in non-profits at Harvard University. In my interviews, leaders tend to emphasize charitable donations as the most important source of revenue for their groups; while operatives, presumably less attuned to the public-relations implications of their words, admit that smuggling, government funding or large-scale donations by wealthy industrialists are the main sources of funding. Money flows into Jihadi groups through charities; but money also flows out to the needy. Sophisticated Jihadi organizations function very much like the United Way.

The New World Order and its instruments—Al Qaeda’s new foes—are attractive targets to a surprising array of groups. By emphasizing the New World Order as its enemy, Al Qaeda will be able to attract a variety of groups that oppose Western hegemony and international institutions.

White supremacists and Identity Christians are applauding Al Qaeda’s goals and actions and may eventually take action on the Al Qaeda network’s behalf as freelancers or lone-wolf avengers. A Swiss neo-Nazi named Huber, who is popular with both Aryan youth and radical Muslims, is calling for neo-Nazis and Islamists to join forces. Huber was on the board of directors of the Al-Taqwa Foundation, which the U.S. government says was a major donor to Al Qaeda. The late William Pierce, who wrote The Turner Diaries, the book that inspired the Oklahoma City bombing, applauded the September 11 bombers. Pierce’s organization, the Alliance Nahad, urged its followers to celebrate the one-year anniversary of September 11 by printing out and disseminating flyers from its Web site. One of the flyers included a photograph of bin Laden and the World Trade Center and the caption, “Let’s stop being human shields for Israel.” Matt Hale, leader of the World Church of the Creator, a white supremacist organization one of whose members killed a number of blacks and Jews, is disseminating a book that exposes the “sinister machinations” that led to September 11, including the involvement of Jews and Israelis, in particular, the Mossad.

Horst Mahler, a founder of the radical leftist German group the Red Army Faction, has moved from the extreme left to radical right. He too rejoiced at the news of the September 11 attacks, saying that they presage “the end of the American Century, the end of Global Capitalism, and thus the end of the secular Yahweh cult, of Mammonism.” He accuses the “one-World strategists” of trying to create a smoke screen to prevent ordinary people from understanding the real cause of September 11, which America brought on itself through its arrogance. “This is war,” he says, “with invisible fronts at present, and worldwide.” September 11 was just the first blow against the Globalists, whose true aim is to exterminate national cultures, he says. “It is not
a war of material powers,” he says. “It is a spiritual struggle the war of Western civilization, which is barbarism, against the cultures of the national peoples. . . . The oncoming crisis in the World Economy—independent of the air attacks of 11 September 2001—is now taking the enchantment from ‘The American Way of Life.’ The absolute merchandisability of human existence—long felt as a sickness—is lost, along with the loss of external objects, in which human beings seek recognition and validation—but cannot find them.”

The racist right is also applauding the efforts of other “antiglobalists” in addition to bin Laden. Louis Beam, author of a leaderless-resistance essay, is urging all antiglobalists, from all political persuasions, to join forces against the New World Order (NWO). He applauds the participants of the Battle of Seattle, who, he says, faced, “real invasion of black booted, black suited” thugs, while the racist right continued talking endlessly about the impending invasion of foreign troops in United Nations submarines.

“Mark my words,” Beam says, “this is but the first confrontation, there will be many more such confrontations as intelligent, caring people begin to face off the Waco thugs of the New World Order here in the United States. The New American Patriot will be neither left nor right, just a freeman fighting for liberty. New alliances will form between those who have in the past thought of themselves as ‘right-wingers,’ conservatives, and patriots with many people who have thought of themselves as ‘left-wingers,’ progressives, or just ‘liberal.’”

Perhaps the most articulate proponent of forming an anti-NWO coalition is Keith Preston, a self-described veteran of numerous libertarian, anarchist, leftist, labor, and patriot organizations and an active anarchist. He argues that the war between the “U.S. and the Muslim world” is one front in a larger war, “namely, the emerging global conflict between those interests wishing to subordinate the entire world to the so-called ‘New World Order’ of global governance by elite financial interests in the advanced countries on one side and all those various national, regional, ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic, and economic groups who wish to remain independent of such a global order.” He believes that the rapid drive to create this NWO must be reversed or it will likely produce a system of totalitarian oppression similar to that of the Nazi and Soviet regimes of the twentieth century only with infinitely greater amounts of economic, technological, and military resources. All forces throughout the world seeking to resist this development must join together, regardless of their other differences, and provide mutual support to one another in the common struggle. The current U.S.-led ‘coalition’ against so-called ‘terrorism’ is simply a cover for continuing the process of global consolidation of power and crushing all efforts at resistance. Islamic fundamentalists, he says, are fighting the same global interests seeking to impose “global government, international currency systems, firearms confiscation, international police forces, NAFTA, and other regressive economic policies on the American people.” He proposes joining forces even with Jewish fundamentalist sects, “such as the Neturei Karta, who have condemned Israeli imperialism and expansionism.” He urges the “bandits and anarchists” to join together with the “tribes, sects, warlords, and criminals” to assert themselves forcefully.

While the threat these groups pose is nowhere near as significant as that of current members of the Al Qaeda alliance, some of their members may decide to support Al Qaeda’s goals, as lone wolves or leaderless resisters, giving it a new source of Western recruits.

The tri-border area where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet is becoming the new Libya: The place where terrorists with widely disparate ideologies—the Marxist groups FARC and ELN, American white supremacists, Hamas, Hezbollah, and members of bin Laden’s International Islamic Front—meet to swap tradecraft. Authorities worry that the more sophisticated groups could make use of the Americans as participants in their plots, possibly to bring in materials.

Perhaps the best example of a freelancer—an individual trained by Al Qaeda who takes action largely on his own—is Richard Reid. In October 2002, Richard Reid pled guilty to the charge that he tried to blow up a plane with a bomb hidden in his shoe in December 2001. He also admitted that he was trained at an Al Qaeda camp and said that he was a member of Al Qaeda, a statement that some experts suspect is not literally true. Reid gave in to his interrogators almost immediately, suggesting that he had not undergone the kind of rigorous psychological training that is typical for Al Qaeda members. Magnus Ranstorp, a terrorism expert who has studied
the Islamist community in London, from which Reid was apparently recruited, argues that Reid is most likely a fringe amateur inspired by what he saw in Afghanistan and by the movement in general. Others point out that Reid was in contact with Al Qaeda members by e-mail.\textsuperscript{124}

**Jamaah Islamiyah—The Franchise**

The group known as Jamaah Islamiyah grew out of Islamic opposition to Soeharto’s regime. Its goal was to establish an Islamic community, *jamaah Islamiyah*, throughout Southeast Asia. Its spiritual leader, Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, founded and runs a pesantren (seminary) called Ngruki near Solo, Java, close to the pesantren we discussed in chapter 3. Ba’asyir and his closest followers fled to Malaysia in 1985 to escape Soeharto’s suppression of the group. Some members returned after Soeharto’s resignation in 1998, and some remained in Malaysia. Although some members of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) have clear links to Al Qaeda, JI is the violent wing of a broader movement that supports Ba’asyir. The movement, known as the Ngruki network, named after Ba’asyir’s school, includes a broad range of prominent individuals, some of whom are active in the Indonesian government. Many Indonesians are deeply concerned that the war on terrorism, and the U.S. push to arrest suspects without clear evidence, could radicalize the Muslim community.\textsuperscript{125}

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**The Post-Industrial-Age Terrorist Organization**

Mobilizing terrorist recruits and supporters requires an effective organization. Effectiveness requires resources, recruits, hierarchies, and logistics. It requires adopting the mission to appeal to the maximum number of recruits and financial backers.\textsuperscript{126} As we have seen, contestants often choose to call competition for natural resources or political power a religious conflict when they believe it will make their grievances more attractive to a broader set of potential fighters or financial backers. (Governments may do the same by labeling opposition groups religious extremists to win international support for crushing them.)

Money—used to buy goods and services—is a critical component of what distinguishes groups that are effective from those that disappear or fail to have an impact. The terrorists discussed in these pages raise money in a variety of ways. They run licit and illicit businesses. They auction off “relics.” They run their own informal banks, which take a “charitable donation” in lieu of interest. They solicit donations on the Internet, on the streets, and in houses of worship. They appeal to wealthy industrialists, sympathetic diasporas, and to governments or their agents. By functioning as a foundation that provides social services, the groups spread their ideas to donors as well as the recipients of their largesse. Recipients of charitable assistance may be more willing to donate their sons to the group’s cause.

But terrorist organizations need to balance the requirements for optimizing capacity with those of resilience. Resilience (the ability to withstand the loss of personnel) requires redundancy and minimal or impenetrable communication, making coordination difficult absent cutting-edge encryption technologies. The most resilient group discussed in this book is the save-the-babies group Army of God, a virtual network whose members meet only to discuss the mission, not concrete plans. The drawback from the terrorists’ perspective to this maximally resilient style organization is that it requires individuals or small groups to act on their own, making large-scale operations difficult.\textsuperscript{127}

The best way to balance these competing objectives is to form a network of networks, which includes hierarchical structures (commanders and cadres); leaderless resisters who are inspired through virtual contacts; and franchises, which may donate money in return for the privilege of participating.\textsuperscript{128} The networks are held together mainly by their common mission (although some may be pursuing multiple missions, including local agendas of little interest to the rest of the network). By expanding his mission statement, bin Laden was able to expand his network to include most of the Islamist groups. Groups that are not Islamist but oppose globalization may be willing to donate money or operatives to the anti-New World Order cause.

The Al Qaeda network of networks is at the cutting edge of organizations today. Law-enforcement authorities will continue to discover new cells or clusters, but they will not be able to shut down the movement until bin Laden, his successors, and his sympathizers’ call to destroy the New World Order loses its appeal among populations made vulnerable by perceived
humiliation and violations of human rights, perceived economic deprivation, confused identities, and poor governance.

There is a trade-off for policy makers between the need to destroy the adversary that is about to strike and the need to fight the movement over the long term. Our military action becomes the evidence our enemies need to prove the dangers of the New World Order they aim to fight. It creates a sense of urgency for the terrorists seeking to purify the world through murder.

It is part of the human condition to lack certainty about our identities; the desire to see ourselves in opposition to some Other is appealing to all of us. That is part—but only part—of what religion is all about. One of our goals must be to make the terrorists’ purification project seem less urgent: to demonstrate the humanity that binds us, rather than allow our adversaries to emphasize and exploit our differences to provide a seemingly clear (but false) identity, at the expense of peace.

NOTES


3. Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, 24. Lofchie explains the Persians mingled completely with the Africans and were no longer detectable as a separate group. Arabs, who arrived later, became the upper classes in Zanzibar, while immigrants from the Indian subcontinent were traders, and the Africans became the lowest class.


5. Arnold, telephone conversation. McKim, telephone conversation.


10. Ibid., 8324–25.

11. This material summarizes Federal Bureau of Investigation, FD-302a, of Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, 10/5–7/99 at Cape Town, South Africa. Marked “particularly sensitive.” This document was entered into evidence at Mohamed’s trial.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.


16. Ibid., 8329.

17. Ibid., 8328.

18. This material summarizes Federal Bureau of Investigation, FD-302a.


20. This material summarizes Federal Bureau of Investigation, FD-302a.

21. Ibid.


23. Ibid., 8431–32.

24. Ibid., (3 July 2001), 8740.


30. Copies of the more extensive *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad* were found from Al Qaeda members arrested in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The *Encyclopedia* covers tactics, security, intelligence, handguns, first aid, explosives, topography, land surveys and weapons, and has been compiled since Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. Originally designed as a record of the Afghan fighters’ knowledge and experience in guerrilla warfare, it gradually came to include terrorist tactics, as Al Qaeda developed into a terrorist organization. A work of several thousand pages written and translated over five years, the *Encyclopedia* also appeared in CD-ROM in 1996. For more information on the *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad*, see Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 70.

31. Well-known members of the Shura Council included Muhammed Atef, an Egyptian who served as military commander and was reportedly killed in Afghanistan in late 2001 and Ayman al-Zawahiri, a surgeon who runs the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, responsible for the 1981 assassination of President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt. For other members of the council, see testimony of Jamal Ahmad al-Fadl, Al Qaeda Terrorist, *Time*, 23 September 2002, 34.

32. Ibid., 204–214.


34. The explosion blew a hole in the fuselage, and only an extraordinary flight performance by the pilot enabled an emergency landing at Naha airport in Okinawa. Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 175.


41. See, for example, “Confessions of an Al-Qaeda Terrorist,” *Time*, 23 September 2002, 34.


43. See, for example, Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 80.


47. Osama bin Laden established the International Islamic Front in a statement calling for a Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders on 23 February 1998. Signatories other than Osama bin Laden were Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of Egypt’s Jihad group, Rifa’i Taha, head of Egypt’s Gama’s Al-Islamiya, Mir Hamza, secretary general of Pakistan’s Ulema Society, and Fazlul Rahman, head of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh. Other organizations whose membership in the IIF has been publicized include the Partisans Movement in Kashmir (Harkat ul-Ansar), Jihad Movement in Bangladesh, and the Afghan military wing of the “Advice and Reform” commission led by Osama bin Laden, last accessed 21 March 2003, http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/usaf/if.htm.


53. Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights under the Prophet’s Banner*, chap. 11. Excerpts of the book were translated by FBIS. See “Al-Sharq al-Awsat Publishes Extracts from Al-Jihad Leader Al-Zawahiri’s New


56. See, for example, Peter Finn, “Five Linked to Al Qaeda Face Trial in Germany; Prosecutors Focus on Alleged Bombing Plans," Washington Post, 15 April 2002, A13.


59. On 13 March 2001, Italian authorities bugged a conversation in which a Milan-based Al Qaeda cell led by a Tunisian, Essid Sami Ben Khomais, spoke of “an extremely efficient liquid that suffocates people” and that was to be “tried out” in France. The liquids, one cell member was overheard saying, could secretly be placed in tomato cans and would be dispersed when the cans were opened. See Peter Finn and Sarah Delaney, “Al Qaeda’s Tracks Deepen in Europe; Surveillance Reveals More Plots, Links,” Washington Post, 22 October 2001, Al. See also “Disturbing Scenes of Death Show Capability with Chemical Gas,” CNN.com, 19 August 2002, last accessed 8 October 2002, www.cnn.com/2002/US/ 08/19/terror.tape.chemical/index.html.


65. Joseph, “Chemical Labs Show Al Qaeda Still Active.”


68. Ibid.


76. The German Bundeskriminalamt, the Federal Criminal Agency, estimates the number of militant Islamic trainees at Al Qaeda training camps at 70,000. See “Bin Laden’s Martyrs for the Cause,” 17. The CIA estimates the number at 110,000. Quoted in Gunaratna, Inside Al Qaeda, 8. Of the 6–7 million Al Qaeda supporters, some 120,000 are willing to take up
77. Gunaratna, Inside Al Qaeda, 8.
87. Lashkar e Taiba public affairs officer, interview with the author, 3 August 2001. This interview was attended by a Pakistani journalist who writes under a pseudonym for tehelka.com, an electronic newspaper published in India. He wrote an article that highlighted this surprising admission.
89. Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 94.
90. Ibid., 195–97.
92. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
109. Virtual networks of leaderless resisters make sense for groups that will be satisfied with the kind of attacks that can be carried out by small groups or individuals acting on their own. The mission is openly communicated, but detailed plans are not discussed with the leadership of the movement or among groups. The need for secrecy and the need for inspirational leaders to be able to plausibly deny their knowledge of past or present plots distort the communication flow.
Terrorist Tactics Around the Globe


114. For more information on the remittance system of *hawala*, see the Web site of Interpol, last accessed 7 January 2003, www.interpol.int/Public/FinancialCrime/MoneyLaundering/hawala/default.asp#2.


120. See the Web site of the World Church of the Creator, last accessed 13 January 2003, www.creator.org/.

121. The article can be found in German at www.cleutches-reich.de, last accessed 17 March 2003.


125. In December 2001, Singapore authorities arrested fifteen Islamist militants who had plotted to bomb U.S. targets, including naval vessels in Singapore. The commander of the group was an Indonesian based in Malaysia named Ruduan Lamuddin (known as Hambali), whose Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew referred to as Bashir’s “right-hand man.” The same group was accused of planning to bomb U.S. embassies in Southeast Asia on the anniversary of September 11. Details of the plot, and the relationship of Jamaah Islamiyah to Al Qaeda, were revealed to U.S. investigators by Al Qaeda’s regional manager in Southeast Asia, Omar al Faruq.

Jamaah Islamiyah has been involved in a series of failed attempts to attack Western targets in Singapore, and information about its planned attacks led the United States to shut embassies in Southeast Asia on several occasions. The group has also attempted several times to assassinate Megawati. Singaporean investigators have learned about how JI functions from the operatives they took into custody in December 2001 and August 2002. Several JI members had been trained in Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. Others were trained in Mindanao by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. JI leaders were instructed by Al Qaeda to stay away from mainstream Muslim life in Singapore to avoid drawing attention to themselves. They were not active in *madrassah*.

126. A good example of a broad mission statement is the one that was used to mobilize participants in the Battle of Seattle. Groups opposed the World Trade Organization (WTO) for multiple reasons. American unions, supporters of Ralph Nader, and environmentalists were on the same side for completely different reasons. They demanded that WTO members adopt mandatory standards regarding pollution and protecting workers—in the case of the unions, because it would help them compete with their third-world rivals, and in the case of the environmentalists and “Naderites” because it would reduce worldwide emissions and promote workers’ health. Developing countries opposed the WTO because they feared it would impose precisely those standards, which would help rich companies in the West at the expense of the poor in the third world.

127. The Battle of Seattle is perhaps the best example of an operation that succeeded despite the inherent difficulties of surmounting this problem. Individuals came to Seattle for their own reasons.

128. Ronfeldt and Arquilla argue, in contrast, that swarming is the ideal approach for networked terrorist organizations. But I argue that the requirement for secrecy will make large-scale swarming difficult for terrorist organizations, absent impenetrable communication systems. For their argument, see David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, “Networks, Netwars, and the Fight for the Future,” last accessed 15 August 2002, www.firstmonday.dk/issues .issue6_10/ronfeldt/.