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Assessing the Fight Against al Qaeda.

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My written testimony will consider three related questions.

- 1. How is the hunt for Osama bin Laden and other senior al Qaeda leaders going?**
- 2. What is the status of al Qaeda the organization today, and the outlook for the organization over the next five years?**
- 3. What new policy responses might help the US government to defeat al Qaeda?**

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1. How is the hunt for Osama bin Laden and other senior al Qaeda leaders going?

The hunt is going poorly. It's now more than six years since the 9/11 attacks, yet al Qaeda's leader Osama bin Laden remains at large. Some reading this may think: But what's the proof that he is still alive? Plenty. Since 9/11 bin Laden has released a slew of video-and audiotapes many of which discuss current events. In two such tapes released in March 2008 bin Laden accused Pope Benedict XVI of aiding a "new Crusade" against Muslims and promised there would be a "severe" reaction for the 2006 Danish newspaper cartoons lampooning the Prophet Mohammad.¹ In the other tape he said the suffering of the Palestinians was amplified when Arab leaders supported an Israeli-Palestinian peace conference hosted by the US government in Annapolis, Maryland last November.²

Could these tapes be fakes? No. Not one of the dozens of tapes released by bin Laden since 9/11 has been a fake. Indeed the U.S. government has authenticated many of them using bin Laden's distinctive voiceprint.

Ok, but he isn't he ill? No evidence of that. Press reports that bin Laden has kidney disease³ were wrong judging by his appearance in videotapes released in the past few years where he shows no signs of illness.⁴ In fact, bin Laden looks much better today than he did in a videotape released following the battle of Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan in late 2001 where he narrowly escaped being killed in massive American bombing raids.⁵

So bin Laden may be alive and well, but isn't he irrelevant now? After all, he doesn't run his terrorist organization as he did before the fall of the Taliban. Unfortunately bin Laden remains all too relevant. Today he doesn't need to pick up a phone to order terror attacks as he did before 9/11--he just releases a tape to the Internet

giving him a world audience of millions. The most reliable guide to what al Qaeda and like-minded groups will do has long been what bin Laden says.⁶ In the past several months, for instance, al Qaeda's leader called for attacks against the Pakistani government. Last year saw the largest number of suicide attacks in Pakistani history, most directed at government targets.⁷ (In the section below is a more expanded discussion of the influence that bin Laden and his number two, Ayman al Zawahiri, continue to wield over al Qaeda and the wider global jihadist movement.)

Given bin Laden's continued importance to al Qaeda and the jihadist terrorist movement worldwide; what than is the American-led hunt for bin Laden turning up? Nothing. The US government hasn't had a solid lead on al Qaeda's leader since the battle of Tora Bora. And there may be no leads on bin Laden for years into the future as those in his immediate circle are not motivated by the tens of millions of dollars in cash awards that have been advertised for those who might drop a dime on him.⁸ And al Qaeda's leader hasn't used a cell or satellite phone for years knowing that they can be intercepted by American signals intelligence.⁹

Also it can be difficult to find any fugitive, even one who stands out as much as bin Laden. Think of Eric Rudolph, the object of one of the most intense manhunts in U.S. history, who remained on the run for five years after bombing Atlanta's Centennial Park during the 1996 Olympics. Now imagine the challenge of capturing bin Laden, who is likely in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) on Afghanistan's border -- an area of 30,000 dauntingly inhospitable square miles.

2. What is the status of al Qaeda the organization today and the outlook for the organization over the next five years?

Al Qaeda Today.

It's conventional wisdom that al Qaeda the organization has been largely destroyed and an ideological movement inspired by al Qaeda has replaced it, spawning a new generation of "homegrown" or "self-starting" terrorists that have implemented attacks such as the one in Madrid in 2004 that killed 191 people.¹⁰ Also in the "homegrown" category are the seven terrorist wannabes arrested in Miami in the summer of 2006, who allegedly plotted to blow up federal buildings in Florida.¹¹ They had embraced al Qaeda's doctrines of destruction, yet had no ties to the terrorist group itself.

The rapid spread of the al Qaeda ideological virus in the past several years should be cause for considerable concern, but it would be quite wrong to conclude that therefore the central al Qaeda organization is no longer a threat. Such a view underestimates the resiliency of al Qaeda, which is a criminal organization, animated by strong ideological/religious beliefs, which also draws strength from several local insurgencies such as those along the Afghan-Pakistan border, in Kashmir and in Iraq. Because of these ideological/religious beliefs and its ties to vibrant insurgencies, al Qaeda is able to withstand multiple blows to its leadership and infrastructure of the kind that would put an ordinary criminal organization, such as a Mafia crime family, out of business.

In fact, more than at any time since September 11, Osama bin Laden's deadly organization is back in business.

Evidence for the resiliency of the al Qaeda organization.

1. The London attacks of July 2005, and al Qaeda's alarming reach into the United Kingdom.

The London bombings on July 7, 2005 were a classic al Qaeda plot. A British government report published in 2006 explains that the ringleader, Mohammed Siddique Khan, visited Afghanistan in the late 1990s and Pakistan on two occasions in 2003 and 2004, spending a total of several months in the country.¹² The report goes on to note that Khan "had some contact with al Qaeda figures" in Pakistan, and is "believed to have had some relevant training in a remote part of Pakistan, close to the Afghan border" during his two-week visit in 2003. According to the report, Khan was also in "suspicious" contact with individuals in Pakistan in the four months immediately before he led the London attacks.

Further, Khan appeared on a videotape that aired on Al Jazeera two months after the attacks. On that tape Khan says "I'm going to talk to you in a language that you understand. Our words are dead until we give them life with our blood."¹³ He goes on to describe Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri as "today's heroes." Khan's statements were made on a videotape that bore the distinctive logo of *As Sahab*, "The Clouds," which is the television production arm of al Qaeda. Khan's appearance on the *As Sahab* videotape shows that he met up with members of al Qaeda's media team who are based on the Afghan-Pakistan border. In 2006 a similar videotape of another one of the London suicide bombers appeared also made by *As Sahab*, further evidence of al Qaeda's role in the bombings.¹⁴

The grim lesson of the London attack is that al Qaeda was able to conduct simultaneous bombings in a major European capital thousands of miles from its base on the Afghan-Pakistan border. While far from a 9/11-style attack, the London bombings showed the kind of planning and ability to hit targets far from its home base seen in pre-9/11 al Qaeda attacks such as the one mounted on the USS *Cole* in Yemen in 2000. Al Qaeda has therefore recovered sufficient strength that it can now undertake multiple, successful bombings aimed at targets in the West.

The plot that was foiled in the U.K. in August 2006 to bring down half a dozen American airliners with liquid explosives, an event that would have rivalled 9/11 in magnitude had it succeeded, was directed by al Qaeda from Pakistan, according to the January 2007 testimony of Lt. General Michael Maples, head of the US Defence Intelligence Agency.¹⁵

On November 5 2007, Jonathan Evans, the head of Britain's domestic intelligence service MI5, said there were 2,000 individuals in the U.K. that the British government

believed to be a threat to security. Evans noted that the “terrorist attacks we have seen against the UK are not simply random plots by disparate and fragmented groups. The majority of these attacks, successful or otherwise, have taken place because al Qaeda has a clear determination to mount terrorist attacks against the United Kingdom....Over the last five years much of the command, control and inspiration for attack planning in the UK has derived from al Qaeda's remaining core leadership in the tribal areas of Pakistan.”¹⁶

2. The vitality of al Qaeda's propaganda division, *As Sahab*.

Bin Laden has observed that 90% of his battle is conducted in the media.¹⁷ Al Qaeda understands that what the Pentagon calls IO (Information Operations) are key to its successes. *As Sahab's* first major production debuted on the Internet in the summer of 2001 signalling a major anti-American attack was in the works. Since then, has continued to release key statements from al Qaeda's leaders and has significantly increased its output in the last year or so. In 2007 *As Sahab* released more audio and video-tapes than any year in its six year history; at least eighty.¹⁸ These tapes are increasingly sophisticated productions with subtitles in languages such as English, animation effects and studio settings. *As Sahab's* increasingly sophisticated and regular output is evidence that al Qaeda has recovered to a degree that it is capable of managing a relatively advanced propaganda operation. That operation is unlikely to have a fixed studio location, but it does include a number of cameramen as well as editors using editing programs such as Final Cut Pro on laptops.

3. The continuing influence of bin Laden and Zawahiri.

Bin Laden may no longer be calling people on a satellite phone to order attacks, but he remains in broad ideological and strategic control of al Qaeda around the world. An indicator of this is that in 2004, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the then-leader of foreign fighters in Iraq renamed his organization “Al Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers” and publicly swore *bayat*, a religiously binding oath of allegiance, to bin Laden.¹⁹

Moreover, the dozens of video and audiotapes that bin Laden and Zawahiri have released since 9/11 have reached hundreds of millions of people worldwide through television, newspapers and the Internet, making them among the most widely distributed political statements in history. Those tapes have not only had the effect of instructing al Qaeda's followers to kill Americans, Westerners and Jews, but some tapes have also carried specific instructions that militant cells have acted upon. For instance, on October 19, 2003 bin Laden called for action against Spain because of its troop presence in Iraq, the first time that al Qaeda's leader had singled out the country.²⁰ Six months later, terrorists killed 191 commuters in Madrid.²¹ And in the spring of 2004, bin Laden offered a three-month truce to European countries willing to pull out of the coalition in Iraq.²² Almost exactly a year after his truce offer expired, an al Qaeda-directed cell carried out bombings on London's public transportation system that killed 52 commuters.²³ In December 2004, bin Laden called for attacks on Saudi oil facilities and in February 2006, al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia attacked the Abqaiq facility, arguably the most important oil

production facility in the world. (That attack was a failure.) In September 2003 Zawahiri called for attacks on Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf. Within three months Musharraf narrowly survived two serious assassination attempts organized by al Qaeda.²⁴

4. Al Qaeda's influence in Iraq.

Al Qaeda only established itself in Iraq in October 2004, well after the U.S. invasion, when its leader Abu Musab al Zarqawi, fused his "Tawhid and Jihad" group with Al Qaeda by publicly pledging allegiance to Osama bin Laden.²⁵ Indeed, Zarqawi's initial Iraq operation was limited to Kurdistan, part of the no-fly zone established by the United States in northern Iraq that was outside of Saddam Hussein's control.²⁶

The foreign fighters in Iraq have had considerable strategic influence on the war. In August 2003 Zarqawi's group bombed the United Nations' headquarters in Baghdad, prompting the UN to withdraw.²⁷ And Zarqawi also provoked the civil war. On August 30, 2003, his group exploded a massive car bomb outside a Shiite mosque in Najaf that killed 125.²⁸ Zarqawi's strategy to attack the Shiites has, unfortunately, proven wildly successful. The tipping point in the slide toward full-blown civil war was al Qaeda in Iraq's February 2006 attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra.²⁹

According to figures tracked by Mohammed Hafez of the University of Missouri, as of October 15, 2007, there have been 864 suicide bombings in Iraq that killed more than 10,000 Iraqis.³⁰ The U.S. military estimates that Al Qaeda's foreign recruits have been responsible for up to 90 percent of such attacks. Al Qaeda in Iraq may be relatively small compared to the largest insurgent groups in Iraq, but it has punched above its weight in terms of both its strategic impact on the war and the trail of body bags it has left in its wake.³¹

Since Zarqawi's death in 2006 his Egyptian successor, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, seems to have strengthened ties with al Qaeda Central. In July 2007 U.S. forces captured an Iraqi al Qaeda operative, Khalid al Mashdani, who told his interrogators that he had acted as a conduit between the top leaders of al Qaeda in Iraq and bin Laden and Zawahiri.³² According to the US military, Mashdani revealed that there was "a flow of strategic direction, of prioritization of messaging and other guidance that comes from the Al Qaeda senior leadership to the Al Qaeda in Iraq leadership." Also Masri, a member of Egypt's Jihad group is likely to have longstanding ties with Ayman al Zawahiri.

Today Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is probably more of a wholly owned subsidiary of al Qaeda central than the nominally affiliated but independent operation it was under Zarqawi. However, since AQI is, for the moment, under so much pressure it's hard to see how al Qaeda central could leverage its relationship with AQI for funding or help with a terrorist attack outside of Iraq in the short term.

For the moment, Al Qaeda in Iraq is a wounded organization. The number of foreign fighters coming in to Iraq has declined from 120 a month in 2007 to 40 or 50 today. According to the US military foreign fighters are now trying to leave the country.³³

However, future withdrawals of U.S. troops from Iraq will obviously help Al Qaeda's ability to operate in the country. Al Qaeda has a 'paper tiger' narrative about the United States based on American pullouts from Vietnam during the '70s, Lebanon in the '80s and Somalia in the '90s. American drawdowns from Iraq will be seen as confirming this narrative.

More importantly, Al Qaeda also has a strategy laid out by Ayman al Zawahiri who wrote in his November 2001 *Knights under the Banner of the Prophet*, that "victory by the armies cannot be achieved unless the infantry occupies territory. Likewise, victory for Islamic movements against the world alliance cannot be attained unless these movements possess an Islamic base in the heart of the Arab region."³⁴ Obviously, securing such a safe haven in Iraq is a primary goal of al Qaeda and will remain so whatever the scale and timing of an American withdrawal.

It's worth recalling that foreign fighters continued to arrive on the Afghan-Pakistan border after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 to fight the Afghan communist government that replaced the Soviets. Indeed, one of the fighters was Zarqawi. So too the Shiite dominated governed in Iraq will continue to be seen as puppet of the U.S. and 'apostate' by al Qaeda whatever the disposition of American troops in the country.

5. Al Qaeda continues to attract other militant groups to its standard.

In addition to Al Qaeda in Iraq stating on several occasions over the past three years that it takes overall direction from al Qaeda central, in September 2006 the Algerian Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) announced that it was putting itself under the al Qaeda umbrella.³⁵ GSPC is considered the most significant terrorist movement in Algeria. Abu Musab Abdul Wadud, the leader of the GSPC explained that "the organization of al-Qaeda of Jihad is the only organization qualified to gather together the mujahideen."³⁶ And in May, 2006 Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who leads a key militia fighting US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, pledged allegiance to bin Laden and al Zawahiri on a tape broadcast by al Jazeera.³⁷ In November 2007 the Libyan Fighting Group merged with al Qaeda.³⁸ The fact that militant groups continue to join al Qaeda is indicative of the organization's continued strength.

6. The rapidly deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan over the past year is, at least in part, the responsibility of al Qaeda.

The use of suicide attacks, improvised explosive devices and the beheadings of hostages--all techniques that al Qaeda perfected in Iraq--are methods that the Taliban has increasingly adopted in Afghanistan, making much of the south of the country a no-go area. Hekmat Karzai, an Afghan terrorism researcher points out suicide bombings were virtually unknown in Afghanistan until 2005 when there were 21 such attacks.³⁹ US sources say there were 139 suicide attacks in 2006.⁴⁰

Mullah Dadullah, a key Taliban commander gave two interviews to Al Jazeera in 2006 before he was killed, in which he made some illuminating observations about the

Taliban's links to al Qaeda. Dadullah said, "We have close ties. Our cooperation is ideal," adding that Osama bin Laden is issuing orders to the Taliban.⁴¹ Indeed, a senior US military intelligence official says that "trying to separate Taliban and al Qaeda in Pakistan serves no purpose. It's like picking gray hairs out of your head."⁴² Dadullah also noted that "we have 'give and take' relations with the mujahideen in Iraq."⁴³

7. Pakistan

To the extent that al Qaeda has a new base, it is in Pakistan. From there bin Laden and Zawahiri have released a stream of audio and videotapes. Evidence of al Qaeda's growing strength in Pakistan can also be seen in the advice and personnel it is offering the Taliban in its campaign of suicide attacks in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda today clandestinely operates small training camps in Pakistan, "People want to see barracks. [In fact] the camps use dry riverbeds for shooting and are housed in compounds for 20 people where they are taught calisthenics and bomb making" says a senior US military intelligence official.⁴⁴

The fact that Pakistan is the new training ground for al Qaeda recruits indicates that the organization will continue to be a significant threat. Terrorist plots have a much higher degree of success if some of the cell's members have received training in bomb-making and operational doctrine in person. For example, two of the London July 7, 2005 suicide bombers received al Qaeda training in Pakistan.⁴⁵

In Pakistan, al Qaeda has also been able to deepen its cooperation with Kashmiri militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. Al Qaeda operative Abu Zubaydah, for instance, was arrested at the home of a Lashkar-e-Toiba leader in Pakistan in 2002.⁴⁶ The same year Jaish-e-Mohammed and al Qaeda cooperated together in the kidnapping/murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl.⁴⁷ The Kashmiri issue is also being mobilized by al Qaeda in Pakistan to bring in recruits.

The future of al Qaeda over the next five years.

1. The leadership.

The single biggest variable about the future of al Qaeda is what happens to bin Laden. For six years he has already survived the most intense manhunt in history. It would be wishful thinking to believe that he won't survive another five years. However, if he were to be captured or killed that would have a devastating effect on al Qaeda.

On several occasions bin Laden has said that he's prepared to die in his holy war – statements that should be taken at face value. In the short-term, bin Laden's death would likely trigger violent anti-American attacks around the globe, while in the medium-term, his death would deal a serious blow to al Qaeda as bin Laden's charisma and organizational skills have played a critical role in its success. However, bin Laden does have eleven sons, some of whom might choose to go into their father's line of work.

Already Saad bin Laden has played a significant role in al Qaeda (although he is presently under some form of house arrest in Iran and is therefore, at least for the moment, not able to do much.)⁴⁸

Should bin Laden be captured or killed, that would likely trigger a succession battle within al Qaeda. While Zawahiri is technically bin Laden's successor, he is not regarded as a natural leader. Indeed, even among the Egyptians within al Qaeda Zawahiri is seen as a divisive force. The loss of bin Laden would likely challenge the unity of the organization, a unity that al Qaeda's internal documents indicate has often been fragile.

2. Haven on the Afghan-Pakistan border, and al Qaeda's ideology and tactics increasingly being adopted by the Taliban.

The Pakistani military and its intelligence agency ISI have proven either unwilling or incapable or both of destroying al Qaeda and its Taliban allies in their country, although, as considered later in this testimony, it is possible that the new Pakistani political environment may change that.

Unless the Pakistani government takes real action the safe havens that Taliban and al Qaeda enjoy in Pakistan are unlikely to be extirpated unless there is a significant attack in the U.S. or U.K. that is traceable to the tribal areas, and subsequent intense political pressure from those countries results in the measures necessary to destroy the militant organizations and movements in Pakistan.

This has unfortunate implications for countries with large Pakistani diaspora populations such as the United Kingdom, whose citizens make 400,000 visits to Pakistan each year.⁴⁹ A tiny minority of those visitors end up training with terrorist groups in Pakistan including al Qaeda. That problem is less pronounced in North America and Europe where Pakistanis make up a relatively small proportion of the Muslim population, but already in Spain and France, terrorism cases involving Pakistani immigrants are emerging.

In addition, the Taliban on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border are increasingly identified as the true guardian of Pashtun rights, but at the same time they have also increasingly adopted both al Qaeda tactics and ideology. As the Taliban and al Qaeda merge both tactically and ideologically, this could give al Qaeda a political constituency of sorts. This is worrisome as the Pashtun tribal grouping--the largest such grouping in the world--numbers some 40 million people on both sides of the border.⁵⁰

Further, should Afghanistan slide into chaos--at this moment a real possibility--that would also benefit al Qaeda as it would increase the number of safe havens along the border regions.

3. The influence of European militants in al Qaeda.

The Islamist terrorist threat to the United States today largely emanates from Europe, not from domestic sleeper cells or--as is popularly imagined--the graduates of Middle Eastern madrassas who can do little more than read the Koran. Omar Sheikh, for instance, the kidnapper of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl, is a British citizen of Pakistani descent who studied at the academically rigorous London School of Economics. The 9/11 pilots became more militant while they were students in Hamburg.⁵¹ Indeed, Robert Leiken of the Nixon Center has found that of 373 Islamist terrorists arrested or killed in Europe and the United States from 1993 through 2004 an astonishing 41 percent were Western nationals, who were either naturalized or second generation Europeans or converts to Islam.⁵² Leiken found more terrorists who were French than the combined totals of Pakistani and Yemeni terrorists!

Future terrorist attacks that will be damaging to American national security are therefore likely to have a European connection. Citizens of the European Union, who adopt al Qaeda's ideology, can both easily move around Europe and also have easy entry into the United States because of the Visa Waiver Program that exists with European countries.

The most likely perpetrators of another major terrorist attack on American soil come from an unexpected quarter: citizens of the United States' closest ally. Militant British citizens of Pakistani descent are the most significant terrorist threat facing the United States. Most of those arrested in the 2006 plot to bring down American airliners over the Atlantic, for instance, were young British Pakistanis.⁵³

The threat posed by militant British citizens of Pakistani heritage is not a new one. Since 9/11 British-Pakistanis have been responsible for a wide range of terrorist attacks and plots around the globe. They mounted suicide attacks in London in July 2005⁵⁴ plotted to blow up a huge fertilizer bomb possibly aimed at Heathrow airport in 2004⁵⁵ carried out a suicide attack in Tel Aviv that killed four in 2003⁵⁶ and attempted two separate suicide operations against US airliners in 2001 and 2006.⁵⁷ They also participated in the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl in Pakistan in 2002.⁵⁸ In a number of these cases, al Qaeda either trained or worked with the British terrorists.

The danger to the United States of the nexus between British Pakistanis, al Qaeda and the Kashmir issue was underscored in August 2004 when British police arrested eight individuals--many of them British citizens of Pakistani descent--for involvement in an operation to attack financial landmarks such as the New York Stock Exchange and the IMF in Washington, targets they surveyed between August 2000 and April 2001. The leader of the cell, Abu Issa al-Hindi, a British convert to Islam, was radicalized by his experience fighting in Kashmir, while the cell was broken up after the arrest in Pakistan of al Qaeda computer expert Mohammed Noor Khan in July 2004.⁵⁹

More broadly, European Muslim militants, both converts and immigrants will provide foot soldiers for al Qaeda. Muriel Degauque, for instance, a Belgian baker's

assistant who converted to Islam, carried out a suicide attack for al Qaeda in Iraq directed at an America convoy outside Baghdad in November 2005.⁶⁰

Three out of four of the 9/11 pilots and two key 9/11 planners, Khaled Sheik Mohammed and Ramzi bin al Shibh, became more militant while they were living in the West. It seems that some combination of discrimination, alienation and homesickness turned them all in a more radical direction. And this is true for other anti-Western terrorists. *Los Angeles Times* researcher, Swati Pandey and I examined the biographies of 79 terrorists responsible for five of the worst anti-Western terrorist attacks in recent memory -- the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the Africa Embassies bombings in 1998, the September 11 attacks, the Bali nightclub bombings in 2002, and the 2005 London bombings. We found that one in four of the terrorists involved had attended colleges in the West.⁶¹

Similarly, researchers such as Dr. Marc Sageman argue that many terrorists affiliated with al Qaeda are either immigrants to the West or second-generation Muslims who have not integrated into their European host countries. For demographic reasons--the native populations of most Western countries are in steep decline-- and for economic reasons- -the economies of many Muslim countries are in free fall- -there will be an exponentially growing number of Muslim immigrants to the West in coming years, some of whom will feel alienated, adopt bin Laden's world view, and volunteer to become part of al Qaeda.⁶²

How critical this issue becomes depends to a large degree on the ability of imams and Muslim community leaders to turn the younger generation away from radical ideologies. There is some evidence that imams in Europe are beginning to take steps to tackle this radicalization.

5. The impact of the Iraq War on the global jihadist movement.

a. A recruiting tool for al Qaeda.

The Iraq War increased radicalization in the Muslim world and provided al Qaeda with more recruits than it would otherwise have had. Some have claimed that Iraq will reduce terrorism by drawing jihadists to the country like moths to a flame--where they can be killed or captured before doing damage in the West. President Bush has continued to put forward the so-called "flypaper" theory for fighting Al Qaeda in Iraq saying in 2007: "If we were not fighting these Al Qaeda terrorists in Iraq most would be trying to kill Americans and other civilians elsewhere—in Afghanistan, or other foreign capitals, or on the streets of our own cities."⁶³ But this assertion is unconvincing, because it based on the faulty premise that the world contains a finite number of jihadist terrorists. In fact, the pool of potential terrorists has expanded in the past five years. As the 2006 National Intelligence Estimate explains, "[T]he Iraq War has become the 'cause célèbre' for jihadists ... and is shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives."⁶⁴

To test that thesis empirically, Paul Cruickshank of New York University and I compared the period after September 11 through the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 with the period from March 2003 through September 2006. Using numbers from the authoritative RAND terrorism database and a conservative methodology, we found that the rate of deadly attacks by jihadists had increased *sevenfold* since the invasion. And, even excluding terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, fatal attacks by jihadists in the rest of the world have increased by more than one-third since March 2003. Iraq, of course, did not cause all of this terrorism, but it certainly increased the tempo of jihadist attacks from London to Kabul to Amman.⁶⁵

Nor has the Iraq war diverted al Qaeda from continuing to plot spectacular anti-American terror attacks. The ‘planes plot’ of the summer of 2006, for instance, if it had succeeded would have brought down six American airliners departing the United Kingdom and would have cost hundreds or thousands of lives. The head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lt. General Michael Maples, testified before a congressional committee in 2007 that the planes plot was directed by al Qaeda from Pakistan.⁶⁶

b. “Blowback.”

As did the Afghan war against the Soviets, the current war in Iraq may generate a ferocious blowback of its own, which could be longer and more powerful than that from Afghanistan. Foreign volunteers fighting U.S. troops in Iraq today will find new targets around the world after the war(s) in the country end. Those fighters have already aligned themselves with al Qaeda.

Several factors could make blowback from the Iraq war even more dangerous than the fallout from Afghanistan. Foreign fighters have conducted most of the suicide bombings in Iraq—including some that have delivered strategic successes, such as the withdrawal of the UN and sparking the civil war. Fighters in Iraq are more battle hardened than the “Afghan Arabs” led by bin Laden, who fought demoralized Soviet army conscripts. The foreign fighters in Iraq are testing themselves against arguably the best army in history, acquiring skills in their battles against coalition forces that will be far more useful for future terrorist operations than those their counterparts learned during the 1980s. Mastering how to make improvised explosive devices or how to conduct suicide operations is more relevant to urban terrorism than the conventional guerrilla tactics used against the Red Army. U.S. military commanders say that techniques perfected in Iraq have already been adopted by militants in Afghanistan.⁶⁷

In the short run, the countries most at risk from blowback are those whose citizens have travelled to fight in Iraq. Thus Arab countries bordering Iraq are particularly vulnerable to “blowback” as demonstrated by the November 2005 bombings in Amman, Jordan.⁶⁸ The country perhaps most vulnerable to returning jihadists is Saudi Arabia because Saudis make up the largest bloc of foreign fighters in Iraq. Given Saudi Arabia’s strategic importance to the United States, this is of great concern. In November 2007, for instance, more than 200 Saudi and foreign militants were arrested over their alleged involvement in various plots, including assassinations and a planned attack on an oil facility, Saudi officials say. A Saudi official said 112 of those arrested were “linked in

with elements stationed abroad who facilitate the exit and travel of those to conflict zones" such as Iraq.⁶⁹

There is also evidence of Iraq War recruits from Europe beginning to return back home. To date there is no evidence of any individuals traveling from the U.S. to fight in Iraq so the number of "returnees" to the United States is likely to be minimal. However there is a risk that foreign fighters in Iraq will begin to migrate to Western countries (a trend that will be accelerated if these veterans are not allowed to return to their home countries, as was the case after the Afghan jihad).

Al Qaeda's ideas have found more fertile ground among Iraqis than was the case among Afghans, who are culturally quite different than the Arabs who form the core of Al Qaeda. What's more, there is the growing Iraqi refugee population: Already there are two million Iraqi refugees outside the country, most of them Sunnis, and two million more have been displaced internally.⁷⁰ Those numbers are likely to increase significantly as the United States draws down in Iraq. We know from the experiences of the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan that refugee populations can be breeding grounds for militants, such as the Taliban. Considering that there are substantial refugee populations in places like Jordan and Egypt, this could prove a significant problem to important American allies and a destabilizing force throughout the region

c. What has al Qaeda 'learned' in Iraq?

The Iraq war saw the strategic innovation of a massive and effective campaign of suicide attacks; the most intense and widespread campaign in history, a campaign that did much to embroil Iraq in chaos. In one month, for instance, in July 2007, there were 54 suicide attacks in Iraq. Contrast that with the 76 suicide attacks conducted by the Tamil Tigers in the 14 years between 1987 and 2001 counted by Robert Pape in his 2005 book *Dying to Win* who describes the Tigers as "the world's leading suicide terrorist organization."⁷¹ No more. Al Qaeda in Iraq, which is responsible for at least 80% of the 860 suicide attacks in Iraq in the past five years, has conducted around ten times more suicide attacks than the Tamil Tigers has done and did so in a third of the time span.

The suicide campaign in Iraq saw the innovation of the use of double suicide bombers, for maximum impact. For instance, the attack on the Hamra hotel in Baghdad in 2005 used two suicide attackers driving bomb filled vehicles.⁷²

The suicide campaign was characterized by the increasing use of female suicide bombers, something that salafis jihadist groups have generally eschewed. And the campaign also saw the use of husband-wife suicide teams as was the case in November 2005 when Muriel Degauque, a female Belgian baker's assistant, along with her husband were recruited by al Qaeda in Iraq. They both carried out suicide attacks on American convoys. This operation was noteworthy also as it was the first time that a female European jihadist had launched a suicide operation.⁷³

Another innovation has been the use of chlorine in bomb attacks in 2007, although the insurgents seem to have stopped this tactic of late, perhaps because it has not been especially effective, and/or because the use of chemical weapons is seen as beyond the pale.⁷⁴

Iraq was the first war waged as much on the Internet as on the battlefield. All attacks are filmed and then posted to jihadist websites. It was in Iraq that beheading videos, first seen in the kidnapping of American journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan in 2002, became a commonplace of jihadist actions and propaganda.

The manufacture of IEDs went through warp-speed innovations in Iraq beginning with simple 'passive' trip devices, and progressing to cell phone-triggered devices, IED 'daisy chains', infrared-triggered devices, and EFPs that shoot pellets of molten metal through almost any armored vehicle.

Al Qaeda in Iraq in November 2005 launched operations in other countries, for instance, simultaneous suicide bombing attacks in Jordan bombing three American-owned hotels in Amman that killed 60.⁷⁵ The group also rocketed two US warships in the Port of Aqaba in August 2005 killing one Jordanian citizen.⁷⁶

In a November 2006 audiotape Al Qaeda in Iraq's leader al Masri said that his organization "would not rest from Jihad until...we have blown up...the White House."⁷⁷ Other insurgents organizations in Iraq are nationalist and don't identify themselves as part of the wider global jihad as Al Qaeda in Iraq does.

However, Al Qaeda today is more likely to be able to organize a terrorist attack against the United States from Pakistan than from Iraq. Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell testified in February 2007 that the next terrorist attack in the United States was most likely to emanate from Pakistan.⁷⁸

5. Tactics and Targeting al Qaeda will use in the future.

a. Attacking Western economic targets, particularly the oil industry.

Since the 9/11 attacks, al Qaeda and its affiliated groups have increasingly attacked economic and business targets. The shift in tactics is in part a response to the fact that the traditional pre-9/11 targets, such as American embassies, war ships, and military bases, are now better defended, while so-called 'soft' economic targets are both ubiquitous and easier to hit. The suicide attacks in Istanbul in November 2003-- directed at a British consulate and the local headquarters of the HSBC bank-- that killed sixty are indicative of this trend. The plotters initially planned to attack Incirlik Air Base, a facility in western Turkey used by American troops, but concluded that the tight security at the base made the assault too difficult. Therefore, the plotters transferred their efforts to the bank and consulate because they were relatively undefended targets in central Istanbul.⁷⁹

Al Qaeda also learned an important lesson from 9/11: disrupting Western economies and, by extension the global economy, is useful for their wider jihad. In a videotape released in October 2004, bin Laden pointed out that for al Qaeda's \$500,000 investment in the 9/11 attacks, the United States economy sustained a \$500 billion loss. Bin Laden crowed over al Qaeda's leveraged investment: "Every dollar al Qaeda invested defeated a million dollars."⁸⁰

Al Qaeda and its affiliated terrorist groups are also increasingly targeting companies that have distinctive Western brand names. In 2003, suicide attackers bombed the Marriott hotel in Jakarta.⁸¹ The same year in Karachi, a string of small explosions at eighteen Shell stations wounded four⁸², while in 2002 a group of a dozen French defense contractors were killed as they left a Sheraton hotel, which was heavily damaged.⁸³ In October 2004 in Taba, Egyptian jihadists attacked a Hilton Hotel.⁸⁴ In Amman, Jordan in November 2005, Al Qaeda in Iraq attacked three American-owned hotels-- the Grand Hyatt, Radisson and Days Inn-- killing 60 people.⁸⁵ Around the same time a Kentucky Fried Chicken was attacked in Karachi killing three.⁸⁶

Al Qaeda attacks on oil facilities accelerated sharply beginning in 2004. Suicide bombers struck Iraq's principal oil terminal in Basra on April 21, 2004.⁸⁷ In Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, al Qaeda's Saudi Arabia affiliate attacked the offices of ABB Lummus Global, a contractor for Exxon/Mobil, on May 1, 2004 killing six Westerners.⁸⁸ Four weeks later, in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia, al Qaeda attacked the office buildings and residential compounds of Western oil firms. Twenty-two were killed.⁸⁹ On December 16, 2004, bin Laden drew unusually specific focus to al Qaeda's operations in Saudi Arabia and the need to target oil interests, stating in an audio recording, "One of the most important reasons that led our enemies to control our land is the theft of our oil...Be active and prevent them from reaching the oil, and mount your operations accordingly."⁹⁰

And, as noted above, in February 2006, al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia unsuccessfully attacked the Abqaiq facility, perhaps the most important oil production facility in the world. Al Qaeda will continue its attacks on oil installations, pipelines, and oil workers for the foreseeable future in both Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the two countries that happen to sit on the largest oil reserves in the world.

b. Attacking Israeli/Jewish targets

Attacking Jewish and Israeli targets is an al Qaeda strategy that has only emerged strongly post- 9/11. Despite bin Laden's declaration in February 1998 that he was creating the "World Islamic Front against the Crusaders and the Jews," al Qaeda only started attacking Israeli or Jewish targets in early 2002. Since then, al Qaeda and its affiliated groups have directed an intense campaign against Israeli and Jewish targets, killing journalist Daniel Pearl in Karachi, bombing synagogues in Tunisia⁹¹ and Turkey⁹², and attacking an Israeli-owned hotel in Mombassa, Kenya, which killed thirteen. At the same time as the attack on the Kenyan hotel, al Qaeda also tried to bring down an Israeli passenger jet with rocket propelled grenades, an attempt that was unsuccessful.⁹³

In the future, al Qaeda will likely intensify its campaign of attacking Jewish and Israeli targets. For that reason, bin Laden's statement in October 2004 that Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 inspired his desire to attack the United States is worrisome, as bin Laden has now moved the Israeli-American alliance to the centre of his justification for al Qaeda's attacks against the West.⁹⁴

c. Al Qaeda is increasingly likely to deploy female suicide bombers.

As mentioned above, on November 9, 2005 Muriel Degauque became the first woman to conduct a suicide operation for al Qaeda, detonating a bomb in the town of Baquba as she drove past an American patrol. She was killed immediately but inflicted no casualties (BBC, 2 December 2005).⁹⁵ And only hours after Degauque's attack, Saijida al-Rishawi, a thirty-five year old Iraqi woman walked into a wedding reception at a Radisson hotel in Amman Jordan, dressed festively like the man accompanying her, Hussein Ali al-Samara, whom she had married just days earlier.⁹⁶ Under their clothes, they were both wearing explosive belts. According to a televised confession she later gave, when her belt failed to explode her husband pushed her out of the hotel and exploded his. The couple had been dispatched by Abu Musab al Zarqawi as part of an operation that killed sixty.⁹⁷

Historically there had been a powerful taboo against the use of women in combat among the Sunni militants that make up al Qaeda. Now, al Qaeda, like Hamas and Chechen militants before them after overcoming initial reluctance, has turned more to females because they give operations a greater chance of success. They attract far less suspicion and are less likely to be flagged for security checks. Also, in 2005, Islamist terrorist groups used female suicide attackers for the first time in Egypt and Kashmir.⁹⁸

6. Al Qaeda will continue to plug into the spread of the Internet jihad.

A few years ago there were a dozen jihadist websites. Now there are something like 4,000 websites spreading militant ideology, training manuals and allowing potential terrorists to meet online.⁹⁹ The power of the Internet to foment jihad was underlined in June 2006 with the arrests of suspected bombing plotters in Ontario. The suspects reportedly became radicalized through militant Web sites and received online advice from Younis Tsouli, the Britain-based webmaster for Islamic extremist sites who called himself "Terrorist 007," before he was arrested in March of last year.¹⁰⁰

Increasingly, al Qaeda strategy, tactics, and even operational instructions will be posted in password protected jihadist forums.

7. Tactics that al Qaeda is likely to deploy in the next five years that it has hitherto not used successfully.

There are two tactics that al Qaeda might successfully deploy in the next five years that for differing reasons would have significant detrimental effects on American interests. Both tactics are well within the capabilities of the organization so they do not represent Chicken Little scenarios (such as the use of nuclear devices).

The first tactic is the use of RPGs (Rocket Propelled Grenades) or SAMs (Surface to Air Missiles) to bring down a commercial jetliner. As mentioned above, al Qaeda already attempted such an attack against an Israeli passenger jet in Kenya in 2003.¹⁰¹ That attempt almost succeeded. A successful effort by al Qaeda to bring down a commercial passenger jet anywhere in the world would have a devastating effect on both global aviation and tourism.

The second tactic would be the deployment of a radiological bomb attack, most likely in a European city. Such an attack would have a much greater ability to terrorize than the small-scale chemical and biological attacks that terrorists have mounted in the past, as it would seem to most observers that the terrorists had “gone nuclear” even though, of course, a radiological bomb is nothing like a nuclear device.

In June 2004, a report in the *New Scientist* magazine, based on records from the U.N.’s International Atomic Energy Agency, indicated that the risk of a radiological “dirty bomb” attack is growing.¹⁰² In 1996, there were eight incidents of smuggling of radioactive materials suitable for such a device. In 2003, there were fifty-one such cases. The dramatic rise in smuggling has coincided with efforts by al Qaeda to acquire radioactive materials and to deploy and detonate a “dirty” radiological bomb, a task described by the al Qaeda ideologue Mustafa Setmariam Nasar as a necessity (Bergen 2006, 347-8). A radiological bomb attack in a Western city would kill relatively few people but would cause enormous panic and likely severely damage global investor confidence.

The study by Swati Pandey and myself of the biographies of the 79 terrorists responsible for five of the worst anti-Western terrorist attacks since 1993 that is referred to earlier in this testimony has some sobering implications for the use of chemical, biological, radiological and even nuclear weapons by al Qaeda in the future.

In our sample 54% of the terrorists had attended college. (52% of the American population has attended college). The most popular major for the terrorists was engineering followed by medicine. In other words, the terrorists who have succeeded in carrying out spectacular attacks against Western targets in the past have been the type of college-educated, technically proficient men who are capable of manufacturing and deploying chemical, biological and radiological weapons.¹⁰³ At some point they could also assemble a crude “gun-type” nuclear device and detonate it in a European city. In my view this extremely unlikely to happen in the five year time frame considered in this testimony.

8. Al Qaeda’s strategy over the next five years.

As al Qaeda’s number two, Ayman al Zawahiri, explained shortly after 9/11 in his autobiographical *Knights under the Prophet’s Banner*, the most important strategic goal of al Qaeda is to seize control of a state, or part of a state, somewhere in the Muslim world. He writes, “Confronting the enemies of Islam, and launching jihad against them

require a Muslim authority, established on a Muslim land that raises the banner of jihad and rallies the Muslims around it. Without achieving this goal our actions will mean nothing.”¹⁰⁴ Such a jihadist state would then become a launching pad for attacks on the American homeland. We have seen al Qaeda do this once before in Afghanistan. Now the goal is to establish a jihadist mini-state in Iraq, in the heart of the Middle East, rather than on the periphery of the Muslim world as al Qaeda was able to do under the Taliban. This will be al Qaeda’s main strategic goal for the next few years.

Another key goal will be to maintain their base on the Afghan-Pakistan border. Al Qaeda seeks a safe haven that replicates some of the features of its Afghan haven before the fall of the Taliban. The tribal areas along Pakistan’s western border are proving a congenial place for al Qaeda to regroup.

Al Qaeda’s aim in the next five years will also be to stay relevant and to stay in the news. The organization will be opportunistic in spinning hot-button issues for Muslims around the world for their purposes, as they did during the Danish cartoon controversy and the month-long conflict in Lebanon in 2006.

It’s possible that al Qaeda may also seek to aim more attacks at Christians in the coming years. Attacks on the Pope both verbal and literal should be expected.

The situation in Darfur is also likely to be a flashpoint. Al Qaeda seems to view western humanitarian interventions in Darfur in the same way as it viewed the humanitarian mission in Somalia in the early ‘90s--as a western attempt to colonize Muslim lands. Al Qaeda fighters are likely to become embroiled in the Darfur conflict in the next few years.

9. Will al Qaeda (rather than “homegrown” terrorists) be able to attack the United States itself in the next five years?

In my view it is a low-level probability that al Qaeda will be able to attack the U.S. in the next five years.

In the past, when al Qaeda terrorists have tried or succeeded to launch attacks in the United States they have done so only after arriving from somewhere else. Ahmed Ressam for instance, who lived in Canada before he tried to blow up Los Angeles International airport in December 1999, was an Algerian who had trained with al Qaeda in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, the nineteen 9/11 hijackers hailed from countries around the Middle East. Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the first World Trade Center attack in 1993 that killed six, was a Pakistani who had also trained in an al Qaeda camp.¹⁰⁶ None of these attackers relied on al Qaeda “sleeper cells” in the US and there is no evidence that such cells exist today. Moreover, the US is a much harder target than it was before 9/11, and the ability of an al Qaeda terrorist to enter the country and mount a successful operation has been greatly diminished by US government actions, the heightened awareness of the American public, and the weaker state of al Qaeda itself. This is not,

however, to imply that American homegrown terrorists inspired by al Qaeda might not carry out a small-bore terror attack inside the United States in the next five years.

An area of concern is American citizens of Pakistani descent traveling back home to Pakistan to acquire terrorist training and direction from al Qaeda as the London bombers did before the July 7, 2005 attacks. There are indications that some have tried to take this route. The FBI says Syed Ahmed, an American citizen of Pakistani descent, traveled from Atlanta to meet with a cell in Ontario, Canada to discuss possible additional attacks in the US after attempting to attend a terrorist training camp in Pakistan.¹⁰⁷ And in June 2003, Iyman Faris, a US citizen born in Kashmir, pled guilty to helping al Qaeda plan attacks in the United States, including a plot to bring down the Brooklyn Bridge.¹⁰⁸ Faris admitted to meeting Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, in 2002 in Pakistan to plan those operations. However, the American Muslim population as a whole is far less radicalized than in Europe and therefore the number seeking training or contact overseas with al Qaeda is likely to be near zero.

Of course, al Qaeda itself remains quite capable of attacking a wide range of American economic interest overseas, killing US soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, and targeting US diplomatic facilities in Asia, the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East.

10. Al Qaeda's long-term strategic weaknesses and the extent to which they may weaken the group over the next five years.

a. Al Qaeda keeps killing Muslims civilians.

This is a double whammy for al Qaeda as the Koran forbids killing civilians and fellow Muslims. Al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia lost a great deal of support after its campaign of attacks in 2003 that killed mostly Saudis, Ten percent of Saudis have a favorable view of the al Qaeda terrorist network, according to a survey released in December 2007 by Terror Free Tomorrow, an international public opinion research group based in Washington. Similarly, in Indonesia where Jemaah Islamiyah, the al Qaeda affiliate, has killed mostly Indonesians in its attacks over the past four years the militants have lost any vestiges of support they once enjoyed. Popular revulsion also followed al Qaeda in Iraq's 2005 attacks against the three American-owned hotels in Amman, Jordan that killed mostly Jordanians.

b. Al Qaeda has not created a genuine mass political movement.

While bin Laden enjoys personal popularity in much of the Muslim world that does not translate into mass support for al Qaeda in the manner that Hezbollah enjoys such support in Lebanon. That is not surprising--there are no al Qaeda social welfare services, schools, hospitals or clinics. Even al Qaeda's leaders are aware of the problem of their lack of mass support. In a 2005 letter from Zawahiri to Zarqawi, al Qaeda's number two urged the terrorist leader in Iraq to prepare for the US withdrawal from the

country by not making the same mistakes as the Taliban, who had alienated the masses in Afghanistan.

c. Al Qaeda's leaders have constantly expanded their list of enemies.

Al Qaeda has said it is opposed to all Middle Eastern regimes; Muslims who don't share their views; the Shia; most Western countries; Jews and Christians; the governments of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Russia; most news organizations; the United Nations; and international NGOs. It's very hard to think of a category of person, institution, or government that Al Qaeda does not oppose. Making a world of enemies is never a winning strategy.¹⁰⁹

d. Al Qaeda has no positive vision.

We know what bin Laden is *against*, but what's he really *for*? If you asked him he would say the restoration of the caliphate. In practice that means Taliban-style theocracies stretching from Indonesia to Morocco. A silent majority of Muslims don't want that. An interesting poll in Saudi Arabia in 2003 gets to this.¹¹⁰ In that poll 49% of Saudis admired bin Laden, while only 5% wanted to live in a bin Laden-run state. Many Muslims admire bin Laden because he "stood up" to the West. That doesn't mean they want to live in bin Laden's Islamist utopia. Sudan under Turabi, Afghanistan under the Taliban, and Iran under the ayatollahs don't look very attractive to most Muslims.

The four strategic weaknesses of al Qaeda we have just considered have already led to declining support both for bin Laden and for terrorist attacks on civilians in a number of Muslim countries. However, although these long-term tragic weaknesses will damage al Qaeda over time, they are unlikely to have a significant impact on the group over the next five years because all Qaeda is drawing energy, support and new recruits from insurgencies in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan--conflicts that are likely to go on for longer than five years. In an authoritative study of 91 insurgencies in the past century, Seth Jones of the Rand organization found that it takes 14 years for the government to win against the insurgency, and 11 years for the insurgents to win against the government.¹¹¹ Either way, we are in for protracted conflicts in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Those conflicts will energize and fuel al Qaeda over the next five years.

3. Strategic and tactical steps to eliminate al Qaeda from its safe haven on the Afghan/Pakistan border.

(Thanks to Laurence Footer, fellow at The Foundation for the Defense of Democracies; for his input in this section.)

Recent events in Pakistan may be the best potential positive development in the fight against al Qaeda in years. Because jihadist terrorists allied with al Qaeda have unleashed some sixty suicide attacks in Pakistan in 2007 support for suicide operations have precipitously dropped in the past five years among Pakistanis from 33% to 9%. Similarly, favorable views of bin Laden have plummeted from 70% to 4% in the past nine months in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan where US officials have long believed bin Laden to be hiding. And the jihadist terrorists may have made a serious strategic error by carrying out a campaign that has principally targeted Pakistani policemen, intelligence officials, politicians and soldiers.¹¹²

This campaign may finally create the political will among the Pakistani establishment and military to do what is necessary to eliminate al Qaeda and the Taliban in Pakistan. So far that is something that they have proven unwilling or incapable of doing. And if they don't do it this year when the Pakistani public has overwhelmingly turned against the jihadist terrorists it's not clear that they ever will have a better opportunity.

The United States should take a back seat in all this. Nothing has damaged Pakistani officials fighting al Qaeda more than the charge that they are American stooges. The campaign against the jihadi terrorists in Pakistan must be understood by the Pakistani public to be in their own interests. And it is.

- 1. Understand it's a Regional Problem.** Just as it would be absurd to have an American strategy for Palestine without reference to Israel, so the US government must adopt a "joint" strategy on Afghanistan and Pakistan rather than having individual strategies aimed at both countries. This should be reflected in Afghanistan/Pakistan desks at State and the Pentagon and Afghanistan/Pakistan accounts at the various intelligence agencies and other relevant government departments. The United States must also engage more with settling the Kashmir issue, something the Indians and Pakistanis have been moving forward on for the past several years. Kashmir is a core grievance for many Pakistani Muslims and is also a training ground for jihadist terrorists, some of whom end up working with al Qaeda. A Kashmir settlement would reduce the importance of this grievance and curtail Kashmir's use as a training ground for extremists.
- 2. Publicly State that the United States is in Afghanistan for the Long Term.** For obvious reasons the United States will never again make the mistake it made in Afghanistan in 1989 when it closed its Embassy there and then washed its hands of the country during the early 1990s. Instead, the U.S. has plans to stay in Afghanistan

for at least 15 years. As this is already a fait accompli American leaders should announce that the U.S. will be in Afghanistan for the long term, which will send an important signal to NATO allies, the Afghans, the Taliban and the Pakistani government all of whom will have to adjust their hedging strategies accordingly.

3. **Aid Pakistan's Efforts to Wage an Effective Counterinsurgency:** Encourage Pakistan to conduct counterinsurgency operations in Waziristan. Invite Pakistani army officers to train at Fort Bragg or Leavenworth in best counterinsurgency practices, including the use of clear and hold tactics, isolating the insurgents from the population, and neutralizing insurgent propaganda. Increase military aid, but condition it on Pakistan hiring, equipping and training more counterinsurgency troops and adopting counterinsurgency best practices.

In order to grow the force size, the US should assist Pakistan in creating a counterinsurgency academy and a police academy. Because Pakistanis are intensely nationalistic and 74% oppose any direct US military action to go after the Taliban or al Qaeda in Pakistan, such counterinsurgency training should be done at the invitation of the Pakistani government and should be achieved with a very light American footprint.¹¹³ Bolster the Frontier Corps on the Afghan/Pakistan border with embedded Green Berets.

4. **Attempt to Transform Pakistan's Tribal Belt:** This area is a vital national security interest of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, and NATO countries because that is where the Taliban has a safe haven and al-Qaeda is regrouping.

-The President should coordinate a regional conference including Pakistan, Afghanistan, NATO, China and the United States to develop a roadmap to regional stability.

-New infrastructure and other development projects (focusing on jobs creation as well as construction of roads, schools, and hospitals) should be initiated. A proposed \$750 million in U.S. aid to the tribal region should be conditioned, in part, on letting international observers and journalists into the tribal areas. Right now there is no independent information about what is going on these areas.

-In addition, the United States should quietly advocate for political reform in the seven Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to allow the emergence of secular political parties to represent Pashtuns and provide a political alternative both to the Pakistani Taliban and the religious parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam which are presently the only parties allowed to operate in the FATA.

5. **Universal Database to Trace and Track Foreign Fighters, Insurgents and Terrorists:** More than six years after the September 11th attacks, the U.S. government still does not maintain an integrated database of jihadists (foreign fighters, insurgents and terrorists). The database needs, above all, to map the "facilitative nodes" that bring young men (and increasingly young women) into the jihad, such as websites, operational planners, financiers, and jihadist underground networks. A building block of such a database should be identifying the suicide attackers in Afghanistan and Pakistan, a process that can be accomplished using DNA samples, accounts on jihadist websites, good intelligence work, and media reports. We know from former

CIA officer Marc Sageman's investigations of the histories of hundreds of jihadist terrorists that friends and family are the ways most terrorists join the global jihad, and so this investigatory work should include an effort to identify friends and/or family members who brought the suicide attackers into the jihad.¹¹⁴

-Mapping the social networks of the terrorists, as outlined above, must also include identification of the clerical mentors of the suicide attackers, as it seems likely that only a relatively small number have persuaded their followers of the religious necessity of martyrdom. Armed with that intelligence, the United States and NATO can turn to the government of Pakistan where most of the suicide attackers in Afghanistan originate, and insist that it reins in particularly egregious clerics.

6. **Without Fanfare Redouble Efforts to Find Bin Laden:** Given the continued importance of bin Laden the bin Laden unit at CIA should be reopened and be run by one person who reports to the Director of National Intelligence to coordinate all CIA activities related to capturing or killing bin Laden with the Department of Defense, Central Intelligence Agency, State Department, and foreign intelligence services. Similar units should be set up targeting Ayman Zawahiri and Mullah Omar. These steps should be taken without fanfare so as to avoid providing al Qaeda with a propaganda victory.
7. **Learn to Speak their Language:** As illustrated by the fact that only three dozen FBI agents speak any Arabic at all, a new emphasis must be placed on teaching Arabic, Farsi, Pashtu, Bengali, Urdu and Punjabi.¹¹⁵ The funding at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) should be adjusted to support an increase in the number of students annually from 2,000 to 5,000 with an emphasis on these targeted languages. As language skills are perishable, ongoing investments in language maintenance should be made for DLI graduates. DLI's activities should both be coordinated with colleges and universities to attract new students as well as web-enabled to facilitate remote learning through online training. In order to increase the number of teachers, a National Language Institute should be created to train tomorrow's language instructors. Tuition grants and other financing should also be increased to reward students for reaching fluency in desired languages.
8. **Streamline and "Smart-line" the Security Clearance Process:** Certain hiring procedures which are relics of the Cold War have created obstacles to recruiting new talent. To make it easier for intelligence agencies to hire linguists and country experts, the President should mandate the streamlining of the hiring process, especially those background check policies that exclude new hires simply because they have lived in foreign countries. Right now, the process is too onerous and time-consuming, turning off potential recruits who are required to wait a year or more for clearances. The process needs to be "smart-lined."
9. **Report on Metrics:** To monitor public opinion, democracy-promotion, nation-building and terrorism metrics, an Office of Metrics should be created at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. To inform policy, this new office should provide regular briefings to the public and Congress. The United States will know it is gaining ground when the following results occur: Consistent declines in the number of attempted Jihadist attacks; fewer terrorist and insurgent safe havens in the Muslim

world; a rise in the level of good governance and open societies in the Muslim world; a steady rise in the number of leading Muslim figures critiquing al-Qaeda and its affiliates; a falling number of jihadi web sites and level of jihadi Internet activity; a continuing drop in support of suicide bombings in the Muslim world; a constant decrease in the level of support for militant jihad ideology; an improvement in world public opinion of the United States; and a decrease in the cost of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations.

10. **Monitor “Ungovernable” Regions:** al-Qaeda and its affiliates have targeted the ungovernable regions within Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan, Somalia to establish safe havens, and they may be achieving success in certain areas. Areas such as these should be regularly monitored, al-Qaeda and affiliate activities should be disrupted and al-Qaeda should not be permitted to establish safe havens within these territories. As many African nations face the greatest threats from ungovernable regions, the U.S. should increase its annual funding for the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.¹¹⁶
11. **Hydrogen Peroxide Controls:** The U.S. Government should increase the monitoring of sales of industrial strength hydrogen peroxide, as it was the weapon of choice for terrorists in the London 7/7 2005 bombings, the failed plot against American airliners in the summer of 2006 in the U.K., and the failed attack directed at a US base in Germany in 2007.¹¹⁷

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