BIN LADEN'S PLAN

The Project for the New Al Qaeda Century

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For an examination of Al Qaeda's war strategy since 2005, see

Binladensplan.com

To Socrates, who tells us that an unquestioned life is not worth living.
With this understanding, I publicly present the following theory,
not as a statement but as a question.

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Glossary of Terms

<u>9/11 attack</u>: Al Qaeda's kamikaze bombings in New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001, are referred to throughout this book as a single attack. This terminology emphasizes the fact that 9/11 was a coordinated, multiple "simultaneous" bombing attack perpetrated on behalf of one man, Osama bin Laden, by one coherent group, Al Qaeda, directed to achieve one unified strategy.

Fatwa: An authoritative declaration or command relating to a religious question, decreed by a scholar of Islamic law.

<u>Holy Land region</u>: The geographical region in and around the Muslim Holy Land, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Syria and Iran.

<u>Islamic</u>: Associated with the religion of Islam.

<u>Islamist</u>: A person or group that actively promotes the incorporation of Islamic principles into politics.

<u>Jihad</u>: The religious duty of all Muslims to struggle against sinfulness and battle against those who threaten Islam.

<u>Jihadists</u>: Muslims who support militant action to achieve Islamist goals.

<u>Millennial</u>: Occurring at the turn of the millennium (as opposed to the equally common definition, "occurring over a 1000-year period")

Mujahedeen: Jihadists who actively fight jihad.

Wind ye down there, ye prouder, sadder souls! Question that proud, sad king! A family likeness! Aye, he did beget ye, ye young, exiled royalties; and from your grim sire only will the old State-secret come.

Now, in his heart, Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely: all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad.

(*Moby Dick*)

Introduction

Bin Laden's career pans out like an Islamic terrorist version of two epic geopolitical chess masters of the modern age, Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler. For two decades he remained undefeated, his reputation growing with mounting victories. Throughout this twenty-year rise to global preeminence, he methodically plotted and prepared for one grand match against the master of the world. Then, in the first year of the third millennium, Osama bin Laden began his long-awaited chess match with the American President, George W. Bush. On the world stage, a radical fundamentalist Islamic terrorist emperor challenged a neo-conservative fundamentalist Christian American president for the prize of global domination of the 21st century.

As the world community watched, its destiny diverged into two distinct timelines. Down one path, Bin Laden employs an ingenious bait and trap strategy that beguiles an unprepared president into geopolitical self-defeat. Bin Laden's prize is world domination through nuclear terrorism. Down another path, Bush's brilliant counter-strategy sidesteps Bin Laden's trap and locks Bin Laden's forces into geopolitical isolation. Bush's prize is, in the words of his foreign policy team, "the new American Century", during which time the United States increasingly dominates the world by economic and military might.

Although the 9/11 War has yet to conclusively evolve, major developments have posed a series of provocative questions about its direction towards one of these two alternative scenarios.

- On the eve of both of George W. Bush's presidential elections, Bin Laden launched major assaults against America. Was Bin Laden trying to influence these elections? Did Bin Laden lend crucial assistance to Bush's election campaign in 2000 and 2004?

- The fall of Bin Laden's only official state sponsorship in 2001 recreated Al Qaeda into a global stateless terrorist organization that was immune to nuclear counterattack. Was America's invasion of Afghanistan a predictable result of the 9/11 attack? Did Bin Laden intend to provoke America to topple the Taliban regime and bestow Al Qaeda with a strategic nuclear advantage over America?

- Since 1998, Bin Laden has publicly stated that an American invasion of Iraq would be the best grievance to galvanize global support for Al Qaeda. Was the Bush

Administration's invasion of Iraq an intended result of the 9/11 attack? Has Bush increased Al Qaeda's global support? Is Bush Al Qaeda's most valuable recruiting tool?

- Since his 9/11 attack, Bin Laden has not launched one single attack against the American homeland despite America's largest ever attack on Muslim nations. Has Bin Laden chosen to greatly restrain his terrorist capabilities in order to facilitate Al Qaeda's global recruitment by depicting the hawkish Bush Administration as the primary aggressor and the greatest threat to humanity? Or, perhaps, has Bush's war effort so eroded Bin Laden's forces that he is unable to launch one single attack against the notoriously vulnerable American homeland?

Most fundamentally, victory in this death match between Al Qaeda and the world's only superpower hinges on one key question: What is the scope, nature and motive of Bin Laden's threat?

Part One:

Baiting America

Every major Al Qaeda attack on America, from 1993-2001, shared a highly peculiar characteristic: it was designed to provoke an American invasion of a different enemy of the United States, Iraq. This outrageous American aggression in the Holy Land region could be the ultimate recruitment tool for Al Qaeda's anti-American war. After eight years of failure at this endeavor, Bin Laden must have perceived the emergence of George W. Bush's candidacy at the turn of the millennium as a great gift from Allah. Never had there been a presidential candidate with such a pronounced predisposition to invade Iraq. Bin Laden would not let this opportunity evade him.

Chapter 1.

Provoking a Clinton Invasion of Iraq:

Eight Years of Failure

1.1. The Plot

America's rude awakening on 9/11 provoked a shocked nation to collectively investigate a new threat for a new millennium. Almost immediately, the American public discovered that this Al Qaeda threat should not have been a surprise. In fact, this group had been launching numerous major terrorist attacks against the United States for the past eight years, and even openly declared unrestricted war on America a full three and a half years before the 9/11 attack. This stunning revelation to the American public provoked even further concerted public inquiry into Al Qaeda. A wealth of information about the intentions of Al Qaeda's undisputed leader, Osama bin Laden, existed in the public record of the 1990s. Armed with motivation and opportunity, America was on the verge of understanding and defeating Bin Laden.

But then a new national agenda was formed. In the months following the 9/11 attack, before an adequate public understanding of Bin Laden's intentions had materialized, America's focus was inexplicably shifted to another foreign enemy. As the Bush Administration's march to war with Iraq proceeded, the American public increasingly divested itself of the task of understanding Bin Laden. The Bush Administration's apparent imperialistic motivation for this frivolous pursuit of Saddam Hussein obscured the fact that Bin Laden's primary goal had been to provoke an American invasion of Iraq. Instead of responding to the 9/11 attack with a sustained, focused investigation of America's foremost enemy, the Bush Administration redirected America to respond in such a way as to precisely fulfill Bin Laden's primary objective. While the Bush Administration's predisposition to invade Iraq did help to facilitate this great American blunder, Bin Laden's concerted attempt to provoke this action was equally influential in achieving this outcome.

Bin Laden's decade-long campaign to provoke an American invasion of Iraq was perhaps most visibly revealed by the timing of his major terrorist attacks. Every major Al

Qaeda attack on America occurred on the anniversary of one of the six greatest American victories over Iraq to date[i]. Furthermore, in each of these Al Qaeda attacks, either the operatives used, the choice of target or the coincidence of the bombing during a peak in American-Iraqi tensions conspicuously connected Iraq to the attack. Are these blatantly visible Iraqi ties to every major Al Qaeda attack on America an incredible random coincidence, or is this an amazing display of Bin Laden's diabolical strategy to falsely implicate Iraq for complicity in major terrorist attacks against America?

- *The first World Trade Center bombing of 1993:* Occurred on the anniversary of the liberation of the Kuwaiti capital and the subsequent end of the Gulf War, and involved a ringleader who falsely portrayed himself and his cell as Iraqi agents.

- *The Black Hawk Down Battle of Mogadishu:* Occurred on the anniversary of the beginning of the American-led United Nations' enforcement of Iraqi war reparations, most notably involving the seizure of Iraq's primary economic asset, oil revenues.

- *The Khobar Towers bombing of 1996:* Occurred on the anniversary of America's most provocative bombing of Iraq since the Gulf War, the 1993 bombing of Baghdad that targeted Iraq's Intelligence Headquarters.

- *The African Embassy bombings of 1998:* Occurred on the anniversary of the beginning of the American-led United Nations economic sanctions against Iraq, America's most punishing assault on Iraq.

- *The USS COLE bombing of 2000:* Occurred on the anniversary of the creation of the U.N. Special Commission to dismantle and continuously monitor Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, which was the primary pretext for the sustained

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[i] Each anniversary is actually marked by two consecutive calendar days. The difference in the time zones of the United States and Iraq create an anniversary day displacement phenomena. For example, an event occurring late in the day in New York City would have occurred early in the following morning from the Iraqi perspective. In Baghdad time, an anniversary commemoration of this event could occur late in the day, up to twenty-four hours after the event occurred in the calendar year. An Iraqi anniversary of one of these American victories could quite plausibly be observed more than a day ahead of the anniversary as observed in America.

Furthermore, considering that these terrorist attacks appear to have been designed to portray Saddam's anti-American rallying call to the bombarded Iraqi people, the observed anniversaries of the attacks could commemorate the day following the American victory when the Iraqi populace was first informed of the event. In particular, the anniversaries of the beginning of United Nations resolutions are marked by two days because of the lag time between when the U.N. resolution is passed and when Iraqis actually witness its implementation. Practical limitations on the speed that preexisting systems can be altered to implement the resolution delay the actual execution of the resolution until the day following its passage, the first full day of the resolution's official enactment. The difference in the timing between the American and Iraqi observation of these anniversaries requires that two days be considered for each of these six anniversaries, the day as observed in the United States and the following day.

international coalition against Saddam. Targeted a USS destroyer that was part of America's naval blockade of Iraq.

- *The 9/11 attack:* Occurred on the anniversary of President Bush the Elder's historic "New World Order" speech to Congress, America's greatest verbal assault on Saddam in which the president coalesced a broad international coalition based on his demand that Saddam withdraw from Kuwait or else face an American-led counter-invasion.

Al Qaeda's apparent incrimination of Saddam Hussein appears to have been orchestrated to provoke an unjustified American invasion of Iraq.

This coincidence in Al Qaeda attacks occurred in the explosive context of an active American-Iraqi military conflict. During the period of these attacks, from 1993 through 2001, the only nation America was constantly waging a military conflict against was Iraq. America's No-Fly Zone policy crippled Iraq's economy, supported an economic blockade that killed over one hundred thousand Iraqis, allowed internal rebellion in Iraq to go largely unchecked by Saddam, and cost America nearly $1 billion per year. During this time, Iraq was automatically a prime suspect in any terrorist attack against America.

Despite the fact that Saddam did not have a terrorist alliance with Al Qaeda[1], every major Al Qaeda attack on America up through 9/11 showed conspicuous signs of Iraqi involvement. Most prominently, these six attacks occurred on the respective anniversaries of the six major American victories over Iraq during the decade-long American-Iraq conflict. Statistically, it is extremely improbable that the coincidence between Al Qaeda's bombings and these anniversaries was random. If it were random, this coincidence would be approximately a 1 in 143 million chance occurrence[ii]. While it is true that there was arguably one or two greater American victories over Iraq during the 1990s than are considered here, such as the implementation of the No-Fly Zone, even considering twice as many such anniversaries equates to a statistical probability of nearly 1 in 92 million[iii]. Up through 9/11, Al Qaeda's

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[ii] $(18/365.25)^6 = 1.4e\text{-}8$. The six major American victories over Iraq from 1990-2001 occurred on six different days of the year. For any one attack, there is a 6 in 365.25 chance that the attack will occur on one of these anniversaries. Considering the substantial difference in the time zones of Iraq and America, as well as the delayed recognition of the American victories by the Iraqi people under Saddam's rule, there could be a difference of as much as two calendar days between the anniversary as observed in America and Iraq. Therefore, for every anniversary there are three days to consider. In 365.25 days, there are actually eighteen days an Al Qaeda attack could occur that would fall on one of these six anniversaries. If this 18/365.25 random happening occurred in every one of Al Qaeda's six attacks on America up through the 9/11 attacks, then the probability of this being a collective random occurrence would be approximately 1 in 143,000,000.

[iii] $(36/365.25)^6 = 9.2e\text{-}7$.

major attacks infallibly coincided with one of these prominent anniversaries of American victories over the nation that was the primary focus of America's military aggression. By orchestrating his carefully planned terrorist attacks on America in ways to conspicuously implicate Saddam's Iraq, a known state-sponsor of Islamic terrorism that was engaged in an ongoing military conflict against America, was Bin Laden attempting to provoke an American invasion of Iraq that catalyzed Al Qaeda's anti-American war?

1.2. WTC I

A Post-Gulf War Provocation

The first World Trade Center bombing (WTC I) was Al Qaeda's first and most blatant attempt to frame America's top post-Cold War belligerent, Saddam Hussein, for a major terrorist attack against America. Bin Laden conspicuously executed the bombing on the 2nd anniversary of America's greatest victory over Saddam, the American liberation of the Kuwaiti capital and the end of the Gulf War hours later. This American victory constituted the culmination of a most punishing aggression against Iraq, involving the deaths of over a hundred thousand Iraqis, the bombardment of Iraq and the destruction of many basic services in Iraq, such as water treatment and electricity generation. The coincidence of the first World Trade Center bombing on this anniversary ostensibly portrayed an Iraqi retaliation for the humiliating Gulf War defeat to America.

Occurring in the wake of the devastating Gulf War and the beginning of America's containment of Saddam, Bin Laden's provocative bombing of America's economic power center was the first major terrorist attack inside America. WTC I killed six and wounded over one thousand in a nearly successful attempt at a much more catastrophic attack. The bombing nearly toppled the Twin Towers, which could have killed over one hundred thousand people. Additionally, WTC I involved an attempted release of a cloud of cyanide gas (thankfully incinerated by the extreme heat of the massive explosion), a failed chemical attack that could have killed thousands more. Importantly, there was no official claim of responsibility for WTC I, leaving the blame to fall initially on the usual suspects. Occurring within the first two

months of a new and untested president's term, this menacing attack was clearly intended to pressure an embarrassingly dovish Bill Clinton into a war.

The attempted chemical attack on New York City clearly implicated the man most notorious for using chemical weapons in the previous few years, a man who had been recently engaged in war against America, suffered a humiliating defeat and repeatedly promised horrible repercussions. Saddam's history of supporting international terrorists, such as Abu Nidal, portrayed Iraq as a willing and able supporter of such terrorist attacks. Perhaps the most feared scenario of the post-Gulf War era was an Iraqi chemical weapons terrorist attack on America. Saddam's most loathed act of chemical warfare had occurred only five years before, when he launched a cyanide gas attack against Kurdish civilians[2]. The attempt to launch a massive cyanide gas attack against civilians in New York City on this important anniversary in the wake of the Gulf War clearly harkened to Saddam's globally abhorred gassing of the Kurds. If the 1993 terrorist plot had succeeded and the World Trade Center was destroyed, over one hundred thousand Americans died, a poisonous cloud of cyanide gas hovered over New York City and nobody claimed responsibility for the attack, would not Saddam have been the prime target for a sudden and massive, perhaps even nuclear, retaliation?

In addition to its coincidence with the anniversary of the Gulf War victory, the bombing occurred during a climax in American-Iraqi tensions. Only a few weeks prior to the bombing, Saddam had opposed the U.N. Weapons Inspections and began military operations in Iraq's Northern No-Fly Zone and the demilitarized zone on the Iraq-Kuwait border, prompting the first American bombing attacks on Iraq since the establishment of the No-Fly Zone. This punishing bombing of Iraqi military installations clearly suggested that the American bombardment of Iraq was far from over. Quite obviously, perhaps too obviously, the first World Trade Center bombing was timed to escalate this conflict involving America's most notorious nemesis.

Beyond the timing of WTC I, the bomb plotters ostensibly displayed connections to Iraq.

- Ramzi Yousef, the leader of the Al Qaeda cell, entered the United States on an Iraqi passport.

- In the months prior to the bombing, Yousef introduced himself around as an Iraqi citizen and became known among New York Muslim fundamentalists as "Rashid the Iraqi".

- Two members of this terrorist cell that Yousef created were Iraqis.

- Members of his cell made numerous calls to Iraq that were predictably discovered in the investigation after the bombing. One of these Iraqi plotters made forty-six calls to Iraq in one month's time while he was plotting the bombing, many of these to his Iraqi uncle who was a known terrorist[3].

- The only plotter who successfully escaped capture by America fled to Iraq, where hostile relations between America and Iraq prevented his extradition and furthered the appearance of Saddam's involvement in the bombing[4].

Yousef purposefully allowed some of his cell members to be captured by refusing to fund their escape[5], and when captured these men revealed a bombing plot that very overtly made Iraq seem complicit in the attack.

Although Iraq was never formally accused of complicity in the bombing, a number of investigators suspected some degree of complicity by the Iraqi government. Jim Fox, the director of the New York FBI agency leading the investigation of the WTC I bombing, believed that Saddam's regime had masterminded the attack[6]. Apparently acting on this unofficial conclusion, the Clinton Administration escalated America's military aggression against Saddam in the following months. Four months after WTC I, the Clinton Administration bombed Iraq's intelligence headquarters, ostensibly in retaliation for a less serious, failed terrorist plot in Kuwait. Considering the dovish American administration's renowned devotion to stability and peace in the Middle East, this Baghdad bombing could very well have been muted retaliation for the World Trade Center bombing.

Al Qaeda's first strike

The truth about the first World Trade Center bombing, as it came to be known despite Yousef's efforts, was that Yousef acted without support from the Iraqi government and only as an agent of Al Qaeda[7]. The most concrete evidence of Al Qaeda's complicity in the bombing is the link between the plotters and Bin Laden. Yousef was captured inside a Bin Laden safe

house in Pakistan after failing to execute a series of major follow-up Al Qaeda attacks in Southeast Asia in 1995. Prior to the bombing, Yousef trained in Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and had extensive funding from Al Qaeda and contacts with other members[8].

Yousef's uncle, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM), a collaborator in the bombing, was a Bin Laden associate since the 1980's Afghan war and a founding member of Al Qaeda[9]. KSM is the reputed operational mastermind of Al Qaeda's successful attempt to destroy the Twin Towers on 9/11 and was the third most senior leader of Al Qaeda until his capture in 2003. In 1992, KSM's collaboration with Yousef on the first World Trade Center bombing plot involved both numerous telephone calls between the two and funding for the plot[10]. After WTC I, KSM intensified his collaboration with Yousef. The two met extensively to plan further catastrophic attacks on America, including the plot that would evolve into Al Qaeda's second attack on the World Trade Center[11].

In addition to the WTC I ringleader's strong ties to Al Qaeda, Bin Laden's signature appeared repeatedly on the actions of the other members of the cell.

- The leader of Al Qaeda's reconnaissance team that scouted the sites in 1993 for Al Qaeda's future African embassy bombings was also a coordinator of a number of the WTC I plotters while inside the United States[12].

- Several of the cell members were linked to an institution funded by Bin Laden, the Office of Services Al Kifah in Brooklyn, and were quartered in a safe house from which a call was placed to Bin Laden.

- Bin Laden paid the ensuing legal bills for at least one of the cell members, Egyptian El-Sayyid Nosair[13].

- The most famous conspirator, the blind Sheik Omar Rahman, was a member of the Al Qaeda network who had numerous contacts with Bin Laden prior to 1993[14].

WTC I was, upon investigation, solely an Al Qaeda operation and therefore failed to instigate an American invasion of Iraq. This conclusion was verified in 2003 by a study ordered by then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, an exoneration of Iraq from complicity in this bombing by the advisors to the man devoted to proving a link between Al Qaeda and Saddam[15].

Bin Laden's official pronouncements have most publicly revealed his leadership of this plot. In the year prior to the 1993 bombing, Al Qaeda issued a little known *fatwa* advocating an Islamic holy war against America, in the context of which Bin Laden advocated "cutting the head off the snake" (a satanic metaphor referring to America)[16]. Harkening to this statement, in 2001 Bin Laden referred to the eventual destruction of the Twin Towers as "the blessed attacks against . . . the head of the infidel"[17]. Using his characteristic thinly veiled innuendo, he publicly exalted an attack on America that he himself had ordered. Bin Laden's public statements in 1992 mirrored his public adulation for Al Qaeda's future attacks, such as the African embassy bombings, the USS COLE bombing and the 9/11 attack, all attacks for which he explicitly denied responsibility (until months after 9/11). In 1993, Yousef proceeded to follow Bin Laden's 1992 command by attempting to destroy the symbolic head of America's economy, the World Trade Center.

Revealingly, the primary target of Bin Laden's 9/11 attack was the same target that Yousef had failed to destroy nine years earlier. As the first of three targets, Bin Laden reserved the element of surprise exclusively for the World Trade Center. The subsequent attack on the Pentagon and the attempted attack on the White House occurred after Al Qaeda had fully alerted America to the fact that the nation was under attack. Without the element of surprise, the chances of operational success were clearly less for the final two targets of the 9/11 attack, and therefore these targets were of secondary importance to Bin Laden next to the World Trade Center. Of all targets in the United States, Bin Laden's fixation on the Twin Towers in his first overt attack on the American homeland corroborates the wide body of evidence indicating that he was attempting to rectify his earlier failure to destroy this target. Despite Bin Laden's efforts in 1993, he was unsuccessful in his first attempt to provoke America's Iraq invasion.

1.3. *The Black Hawk Down Battle of Mogadishu*

In the same year as the first World Trade Center bombing, Bin Laden launched a punishing attack on American soldiers through surrogates in Somalia. America's Somalia operation was the largest American military deployment since the wildly successful war with Saddam over Kuwait two years earlier. The Black Hawk Down Battle of Mogadishu, however,

was an embarrassing defeat of the American military colossus by a tiny band of domestic insurgent fighters that quickly led to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Somalia. Bin Laden later claimed responsibility and was indicted by America for masterminding this assault that killed eighteen American troops[18].

The Battle of Mogadishu occurred four months after the American bombing of Baghdad, an assault for which Saddam's regime publicly promised retaliation[19]. Within this belligerent atmosphere, Bin Laden executed the Black Hawk Down attack on October 3, 1993, the one-year anniversary of the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 778. This was the last condemnatory UNSC Resolution on Iraq to date, which seized Iraqi overseas assets to fund the nation's humanitarian needs and general compensation for Saddam's aggressive war against Kuwait. This resolution both largely usurped Saddam's control of Iraq's chief financial resource, oil, and forced Iraq to pay the humiliating war indemnity that Saddam had refused to acknowledge. This U.N. action placed a stranglehold on Iraq's economy, a major assault on Iraq that could well have provoked an Iraqi terrorist retaliation. By timing the humiliating defeat of America in Somalia on the one-year anniversary of America's humiliating defeat of Saddam, Bin Laden attempted to escalate seriously the American-Iraqi conflict.

Once again, Bin Laden's attack did not visibly implicate Iraq enough to provide America with a plausible *casus belli*. Through Bin Laden's covert orchestration, Somali rebels executed this attack under the guise of a domestic retaliation for the large American military deployment charged with neutralizing the warring Somali factions. The Somali signature on this attack distinguishes this from the other Al Qaeda attacks on America as an apparent local reprisal for American aggression, and not an unprovoked attack that would more obviously imply foreign complicity. Although the Black Hawk Down attack alone would most likely not have provoked an American invasion of Iraq, the attack does deserve attention in the context of Al Qaeda's consistent attempts to provoke an American invasion of Iraq. The timing of the Mogadishu attack confirms Al Qaeda's unerring habit of launching its major pre-9/11 attacks against America on an anniversary of a major American victory over Iraq.

In 1996, Bin Laden made a less blatant attempt to frame Iraq for complicity in an attack on America with the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, which killed nineteen American servicemen and wounded nearly four hundred. The bombing of the US military residence occurred on the anniversary of America's deadliest and most provocative bombing of Iraq since the end of the Gulf War, Clinton's 1993 bombing of Baghdad that targeted Iraq's Intelligence headquarters. This bombing of Iraq's capital, in which America fired twenty-four missiles at the Baghdad complex and killed a number of civilians, was ostensibly retaliation for Saddam's attempted assassination of ex-president Bush (hereinafter referred to as Bush the Elder or Bush I) while on a visit to Kuwait[iv]. Following Clinton's bombing of Baghdad, Iraqi intelligence explicitly threatened retaliation[20]. In this temporal context of the ongoing American-Iraqi conflict, Bin Laden's bombing of the American barracks in Khobar superficially appeared to be the fruition of this Iraqi threat.

Of all the possible targets in Saudi Arabia that Bin Laden could have chosen for his 1996 attack, he chose an American military barracks in Khobar that was the American target most strongly associated with an Iraqi attack on American forces in Saudi Arabia. In the final days of the Gulf War, an Iraqi Scud missile hit an American military barracks in Khobar and killed twenty-eight American soldiers, causing the most combat casualties of any single incident in the war. The American military would not have forgotten this five-year old wound, and another punishing bombing of an American military barracks in Khobar would immediately prompt deep-seated suspicion of Iraqi involvement. The fact that the U.S. military was engaged in the No-Fly Zone conflict, an ongoing aerial occupation and bombing of Iraq, at the time of the Khobar attack further heightened suspicion of Iraqi complicity. Bin Laden solidified this ostensible link to the No-Fly Zone conflict by specifically targeting the executors of this military campaign, American airmen. Both the timing and location of the Khobar bombing overtly implicated Iraq.

A pronounced escalation of the American-Iraqi conflict in the days surrounding the auspiciously timed Khobar bombing further suggested Iraqi complicity. Two weeks before the attack, Saddam increased tensions by barring United Nations weapons inspectors from access

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[iv] There has been widespread speculation that this Baghdad bombing was actually retaliation for Iraq's apparent involvement in the first World Trade Center bombing, a fact that, if true, would reveal Bin Laden's consistent success at gradually prodding America into war with Iraq.

to certain sites. Saddam's action precipitated a hostile climate in which the U.N. issued repeated warnings to Saddam about this obstruction of the inspection for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction[21]. The day following the Khobar bombing, the United States sponsored a failed coup attempt against Saddam[22]. This aggression against Saddam was not only demonstrative of the belligerent atmosphere between the two countries, but its proximity to the bombing suggested early American suspicion of Iraqi involvement.

While not disproving the possibility of Iraqi involvement, intelligence intercepts and Al Qaeda media releases made clear that this was an Al Qaeda operation[23]. In the month prior to the bombing, the United States had forced the Sudanese government to expel Bin Laden from the country after four years of sanctuary, a provocation that alone suggested Bin Laden's involvement in the Khobar attack on America. Bin Laden relocated to the Islamic terrorist sanctuary of Afghanistan where he promptly initiated Al Qaeda's introduction to the world stage with a dramatic bang. Immediately after the bombing, Al Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, phoned Bin Laden to congratulate him on the successful operation[24]. Unlike the first World Trade Center bombing, Bin Laden publicly declared his own responsibility for the Khobar Towers bombing in a *fatwa* that he issued a few weeks later, in which he declared war on the American forces inside Saudi Arabia that were besieging Iraq. The Khobar bombing, as it turned out, was the histrionic prelude to Bin Laden's first terrorist *fatwa*. In this cornerstone document, Bin Laden claimed responsibility for the recent attack as well as the 1993 Somalia ambush. Bin Laden more explicitly and publicly reiterated this claim two years later[25]. The 1996 *fatwa* began a trend where an increasingly confident Bin Laden would claim responsibility for his attacks against America, albeit with affirmative innuendo and nebulous denials[26], in concert with his attempts to frame Iraq for complicity. Unlike the World Trade Center bombing three years earlier, Bin Laden publicized his own involvement in the Khobar bombing and his subsequent attacks to portray to American intelligence a definitive alliance of convenience between Saddam and Al Qaeda in a war against their common nemesis.

A unique aspect of the Khobar bombing was that, unlike Al Qaeda's other major attacks on America, the attack also implicated another Middle Eastern enemy of America, Iran. The operatives who executed the attack were members of Saudi Hezbollah, an independent terrorist group tied to Al Qaeda that had received support from Iran in the past[27]. Bin Laden

implicated Iraq, Iran and Al Qaeda in the Khobar bombing, portraying a broad Islamic coalition attacking America. Nevertheless, both the Clinton Administration and the Saudi government absolved Iran and Iraq of complicity in this attack[28], and soon afterwards Clinton signed an executive order authorizing the destruction of the Al Qaeda empire.

As with WTC I, there is evidence indicating the Clinton Administration's suspicion of Iraqi complicity. Three months following the Khobar bombing, America seemingly inexplicably escalated its conflict with Iraq with a two-day bombing raid. Ostensibly, this attack was intended to protect Kurdish-controlled Northern Iraq from Saddam's military advances. This anomalous military aggression was decried as an illegal action, and the Clinton Administration later retracted this policy[29]. Again having failed to provoke a full-blown American invasion and occupation of Islamic nations in the Middle East, Al Qaeda redoubled its efforts to implicate America's most notorious nemesis for a terrorist attack.

1.5. The African Embassy Bombings

Two years after the Khobar attack, Bin Laden launched a more concerted attempt to frame Saddam for complicity in an Al Qaeda attack on America. The unprecedented twin terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies killed 224 people, including twelve Americans, and injured over five thousand people. The massive casualties and sophistication of this unprovoked terrorist bombing amounted to an even greater provocation than any previous such attack on America.

Like his other major attacks, the dual bombings of American embassies in Africa were executed on an important anniversary during a climax in American-Iraqi tensions. After the Gulf War, Saddam had informed the United Nations Security Council that he would actively oppose the ongoing American-led United Nations economic sanctions against Iraq (U.N. Security Council Resolution 661) beginning on the eighth anniversary of their implementation, August 7, 1998[30]. These sanctions marked the beginning of the eight-year old American-Iraqi conflict, America's initial attack on its Middle East ally in the days following Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. During the 1990s, U.N. economic sanctions killed over one hundred thousand Iraqis by starvation and malnutrition, constituting America's most punishing post-Gulf War campaign against Iraq[31].

This ominously anticipated anniversary also commemorated another highly significant event of August 7, 1990, the initiation of the American-Iraqi conflict. On this day, the Bush I Administration officially initiated Operation Desert Shield, a de facto declaration of war that launched America's most destructive campaign against Iraq, the 1991 Gulf War. On the day of its declaration, August 7, 1990, Desert Shield immediately instituted an aggressive American economic embargo of Iraq and commenced the buildup of America's Iraq attack force in Saudi Arabia. This American military presence would not only lead the 1991 assault on Iraq, but would also execute the decade-long aerial bombardment of Iraq during the ensuing No-Fly Zone conflict. Imbedded in an anniversary commemorating America's most punishing assaults on Iraq, the Gulf War and the continuous economic embargo, Saddam's threat to escalate the conflict pinpointed a symbolically powerful day that would portray the attack as a righteous retaliation against a menacing empire. Saddam's deadline in August 1998 added an ominous overtone to the August 1998 embassy bombings.

Three months before this anniversary, in apparent observation of this deadline, Saddam's regime escalated its bellicose rhetoric against America, threatening "dire consequences" if economic sanctions were not removed[32]. Two days before the much-anticipated eighth-year anniversary, Saddam appeared to begin acting on his threat by formally suspending weapons inspections in Iraq, a precipitous action that could easily have been construed to be an act of war. Less than forty-eight hours later, on the day of the anniversary, August 7, 1998, the D-Day for Saddam's impending threat, Bin Laden chose to launch massive terrorist attacks against two of the American administration's official diplomatic hubs in Muslim-populated lands. In the context of the most ominous period of the Clinton Administration's conflict with Iraq, Bin Laden further incited the conflict by precisely enacting Saddam's anniversary threat.

In concert with his implication of Saddam, Bin Laden also made clear Al Qaeda's complicity in the African embassy bombings by using known Al Qaeda operatives in its execution, providing forewarning of the attack in an announcement weeks in advance and claiming responsibility afterwards with his characteristic transparent innuendos. In early 1998, Bin Laden publicly issued his formal declaration of war against America, urging all Muslims to attack American targets globally. Following this publicity stunt, Bin Laden was subject to the self-imposed pressure of proving to the world that he could successfully wage

war against America. The African embassy bombings were the only major terrorist attack for which Al Qaeda claimed responsibility in the two and a half years following his war declaration. Three days before the bombings, Bin Laden's first lieutenant, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, publicly announced that Al Qaeda would imminently deliver a "message" to the Americans[33]. The timing of Al Qaeda's delivery of this "message", as with the Iraq connection, emphasized the symbolic value of the August 7, 1990 anniversary. This anniversary commemorates the inception of Al Qaeda's two primary grievances against America, the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia and the American economic and military aggression against the Iraqi people.

Within two weeks of the August 7, 1998 bombings, the Clinton Administration retaliated against Al Qaeda with cruise missile attacks on Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. Although the Clinton Administration never identified Iraq as a conspirator in the 1998 attack, as with Al Qaeda's previous bombings, the administration sharply escalated the American-Iraqi military conflict. Two months after the embassy bombings and Saddam's cessation of U.N. weapons inspections, the American Congress passed the Iraq Liberation Act, providing $97 million in funding to Iraqi groups seeking to overthrow Saddam's regime[34]. This congressional resolution reflected a dramatic shift in America's Iraq policy from external containment to internal regime change, a tacit declaration of war on Saddam. This seems a disproportionate response to Saddam's ejection of U.N. weapons inspectors, which was a legitimate measure that had been provoked by the revelation of illicit U.S. espionage perpetrated under the cover of the U.N. inspection team. More likely, the American administration's unproven suspicion of an alliance between Saddam and Al Qaeda precipitated the drastic change in America's Iraq policy in late 1998.

In the months following the 1998 embassy bombings, the American-Iraqi No-Fly Zone conflict degenerated into a continuous military engagement, involving almost daily American aerial bombings of Iraq. Within four months of the embassy bombings, America launched its largest post-Gulf War attack on Iraq, the Operation Desert Fox bombing campaign, perpetrated ostensibly in retaliation for Saddam's obstruction of U.N. weapons inspections. Although Desert Fox delivered a crippling assault on Iraq, Saddam remained in power and American troops remained outside of Iraq. Despite the provocative timing of his 1998 twin bombings, Bin Laden still could not convince the American administration to invade Iraq.

1.6. The USS COLE Bombing

Having failed to provoke an American invasion of Iraq during the Clinton Administration, Bin Laden waited until the eve of the beginning of a new American administration to try again. The bombing of the destroyer USS COLE, which killed seventeen Americans, wounded thirty-nine and nearly sunk the billion-dollar ship, was executed three weeks before the historic 2000 Presidential Election. Like WTC I, the Cole bombing placed the burden of retaliation for a provocative terrorist attack on a new American administration that would soon after succeed the imminent lame duck Clinton Administration.

As with his other major attacks on the United States, Bin Laden launched the Cole attack on an important anniversary related to the ongoing America-Iraqi conflict at a time of heightened hostilities. The terrorist bombing occurred on the anniversary of the beginning of U.N. Security Council Resolution 715, the U.N. resolution most important to sustaining the international coalition against Saddam. This resolution set up a long-term U.N. Special Commission to dismantle and continuously monitor Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. This commission's assessment of Saddam's noncompliance with dismantling his WMD capacity was the primary basis for the international legitimacy of the decade-long military and economic assaults against Saddam that led to the toppling of his regime in 2003. WMD inspections served as America's most vital tool to rally an anti-Saddam coalition and hobble Saddam's military power. In late 1998, Saddam had ejected the U.N. weapons inspectors and vociferously denounced the United States for using the inspection process to spy on Iraq. Months later, the America administration admitted that it had illegally used the inspectors to spy on all aspects of Saddam's regime[35]. As the millennium approached, the disagreement over weapons inspections had become the central focus of the America-Iraqi conflict. By timing the bombing to occur on the anniversary of the inception of this explosive issue in American-Iraqi relations, Bin Laden again attempted to spark a war between the two nations.

The Cole bombing occurred in the context of the initial millennial Palestinian uprising against Israel and rising hostilities between Saddam Hussein and an American-Israeli coalition. At this time, Saddam publicly sponsored terrorism against Israel and greatly increased his opposition to American influence in the Middle East. In fact, on the very same

day of the Cole bombing, Iraq released a statement urging Arab nations to liberate Palestine and regard America "as a participant in the aggression . . . and therefore the American military presence on Arab territories, waters and skies should be banned"[36]. Of all possible targets for the bombing, Bin Laden chose the USS COLE, which was en route to joining America's naval embargo of Iraq when it was bombed. Like the Khobar Towers bombing, both the timing and choice of target strongly implicated Iraq for complicity in the Al Qaeda attack.

Along with WTC I, the Khobar bombings, and the African embassy bombings, does the USS COLE bombing reveal Bin Laden's plan to provoke a hawkish American administration to invade preemptively Iraq and justify to the world Al Qaeda's holy war against a "Crusader" empire? In five terrorist attacks over the course of eight years, Bin Laden had gradually goaded America into escalated military aggression against the Iraqi people. Each of Bin Laden's major bombings was followed by an escalation of America's military conflict with Iraq that nearly instigated an invasion in December 1998. However, the Clinton Administration had successfully resisted Bin Laden's ploy. After eight years of failure, the election of George W. Bush offered Bin Laden a golden opportunity to finally provoke the Iraq invasion.

Chapter 2.

Bin Laden's Greatest Success:
The Provocation of Bush's Iraq Invasion

2.1. 9/11

As of spring 2001, Bin Laden realized that he failed to provoke any retaliation whatsoever from the lame duck Clinton Administration or the newly arrived Bush Administration for the bombing of the USS COLE[37]. A few months later, Bin Laden executed his most provocative attack on America. Mirroring his most blatant attempt to instigate an American invasion of Iraq, WTC I, Bin Laden launched his second World Trade Center attack in the first year of a new and untested president's term. By murdering three thousand Americans in the homeland and destroying a colossal symbol of America's economic power, Bin Laden pressured the new president into launching a war. This dual attack on America's economic and military command centers portrayed Iraq, the central and continuous target of America's greatest economic and military assault since the Cold War, as a prime suspect.

The 9/11 attack occurred on the eleventh anniversary of the American-Iraqi conflict's opening verbal salvo, America's greatest rhetorical assault on Saddam. On September 11, 1990, President Bush the Elder coalesced the broad international coalition against Saddam with his epic "New World Order" speech to Congress and the nation, in which he threatened that the massive mobilized American-led military coalition would liberate Kuwait if Saddam failed to withdraw unconditionally[38]. Importantly, Bush the Elder's speech advocated the formation of an American-led New World Order based on securing oil production in the Middle East. On this same day, September 11, 1990, Bush the Elder's Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney rallied the U.S. Senate with a major speech in which he justified an American military presence in the Middle East to secure the region's oil reserves for America[39]. On the anniversary of the historic Bush I/Cheney rhetorical attack on Saddam, Bin Laden launched the largest terrorist attack in history on the Bush II/Cheney Administration[v].

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[v] While some intelligence from Al Qaeda detainees indicates that Bin Laden was unaware of the date of the planned attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the White House, this intelligence contradicts the well-known fact that Bin Laden "micro-masterminded" his attacks down to the last detail and placed particular importance on their symbolic value (*The 9/11 Commission Report*, electronic version (Microsoft Reader format), pgs.189, 408, 500). If Bin Laden were to disregard the importance of the date of the attacks, he would have been inexplicably forgoing a powerful means for enhancing the symbolic value of his attack on the three buildings that represent the economic, military and executive power centers of the American empire. Intelligence indicating that Bin Laden wanted the 9/11 attack to actually occur earlier, first

Attempting to bomb the White House on September 11th of the first year of Bush the Elder's son's presidency, Bin Laden portrayed an apparent attempted assassination of Bush the Younger that strongly harkened to Saddam's purported assassination attempt of Bush the Elder in 1993. The attempted bombing of the White House emphasized to President George W. Bush the very personal interests of his own security, his family's security and revenge for eliminating the megalomaniacal dictator who tried to kill his father. This 9/11 attack, executed on the anniversary of the president's father's most famous speech against Iraq, was intended to instigate a second-generation wave of the Bush war against Iraq.

The 9/11 attack indirectly encouraged the American invasion of Iraq by forcing a readjustment of America's relationship with Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden's use of Saudi Arabian nationals for fifteen of the nineteen hijackers, as well as the use of finances provided by the Saudi government, threatened the stability of U.S.-Saudi relations and pressured the Bush Administration to secure for America the Middle East's next largest supply of oil reserves. In the prelude to the Iraq invasion, the Bush Administration speculated that Iraq could produce as much as six million barrels of oil per day in a few years, enough to supplement a shortfall in the supply from Saudi Arabia and cut into the Saudi control of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries[40]. Following the Iraq invasion, Al Qaeda continued to destabilize U.S.-Saudi ties and to encourage an expanded American invasion of the Middle East (particularly oil-rich Iran) by launching major attacks against Western targets in Saudi Arabia following any major improvement in American-Saudi relations, such as the May 2003 Riyadh bombings following the Saudi-supported Iraq invasion, and more recently, another Khobar attack in 2004 only days after Saudi Arabia publicly agreed to America's request for increased oil production. While provoking an American invasion of its close ally Saudi Arabia would have been a highly unrealistic goal for Bin Laden, a more realistic goal of the 9/11 attack would have been to damage U.S.-Saudi relations in order to facilitate an American invasion of Saddam's Iraq.

The 9/11 attack also emphasized the ineffectiveness of America's concurrent military operation to control Saddam. The primary justification for the 9/11 attack that Bin Laden cited was the presence of a large American military force in Islam's holiest land, Saudi Arabia, to contain Saddam Hussein and safeguard America's energy supply. In the Muslim world, America's military presence in Saudi Arabia was widely viewed as an imperialistic attempt to

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in October 2000 and later in July 2001, suggests that the masterminds of the kamikaze attack had designated at least two other days for the plot's execution that are anniversaries of major American victories over Iraq.

control Middle Eastern oil wealth through a military occupation of the world's most oil-rich nation. The only way America could risk removing these forces from Saudi Arabia, as acknowledged by the Clinton and Bush Administration, was the elimination of Saddam's regime. The second grievance Bin Laden cited for the 9/11 attack was America's catastrophic failure to eliminate Saddam, marked by the indefinite economic and military assault on Islam's second holiest land, Iraq[41], that had already killed over one hundred of thousand Iraqis. The only way America could realistically remove these provocative containment measures would be if Saddam's regime were deposed. By citing the widely held Muslim grievances over the American military presence in Saudi Arabia and the American-led aggression against Iraq as a primary cause of the 9/11 catastrophe, Bin Laden provoked America to invade Iraq out of apprehension of widespread Muslim support for Al Qaeda.

Beyond the details of the attack itself, on 9/11 Bin Laden targeted an American administration that had a globally decried predisposition to invade Iraq and secure Middle Eastern oil wealth. The Bush Administration's hawkish advocacy of the interests of Big Oil made America even more susceptible to respond predictably to Bin Laden's threat to Middle Eastern oil stability. After failing five times to provoke this invasion during the Clinton Administration, Bin Laden finally succeeded on his sixth attempt when the new Bush Administration took his bait.

2.2. Supplementary Provocations

In the days before the 9/11 attack, Bin Laden provided one more piece of "evidence" to buttress the Bush administration's post-9/11 case for a terrorist alliance between Iraq and Al Qaeda. At the same time as Al Qaeda's boldest attempt to instigate an American invasion of Iraq, 2001, Al Qaeda created its Iraqi affiliate, Ansar al-Islam. Bin Laden established this affiliate a mere ten days before the 9/11 attack[42]. Even in the weeks leading up to the invasion, Al Qaeda continued its ploy. As the march towards war intensified in January 2003, London police coincidentally broke up an Al Qaeda cell that had allegedly acquired the deadly poison ricin from the Al Qaeda affiliate located in Kurdish-controlled Northern Iraq[43]. The Bush Administration used this fortuitous event to make the spurious accusation of an active WMD terrorist alliance between Saddam and Al Qaeda. In fact, the existence of this Al Qaeda

affiliate in Iraq was the Bush Administration's central "proof" of this alliance, although this argument conspicuously overlooked the fact that this group was located in a region that had seceded from Saddam's Iraq and was founded on the principal goal of destroying Saddam's regime.

In the days following Secretary of State Powell's infamous February 2003 attempt to prove this alliance between Al Qaeda and Saddam, Al Qaeda released a purported Bin Laden statement that seemed to support Powell's presentation. At this precipitous moment, Bin Laden urged Iraqis to overlook the ideological differences between Al Qaeda and Saddam's regime in order to unite with Al Qaeda in war against America, citing a "convergence of interests" in anti-Americanism as a common cause for a joint Al Qaeda-Iraqi holy war. As if on cue, Al Qaeda provided these final points of instigation for an American invasion of Iraq. This statement was quickly heralded by the Bush Administration as further proof of an alliance between Al Qaeda and Saddam[44], the final "proof" that led in a month's time to the invasion Bin Laden had been trying to provoke for a decade.

Bin Laden admitted this plot to provoke Bush's invasion of Iraq in his videotaped speech released on the eve of the 2004 Election.

> All that we have mentioned has made it easy for us to provoke and bait this administration. All that we have to do is send two *mujahedeen* to the furthest point East (of the Holy Land) to raise a piece of cloth on which is written Al Qaeda, in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses without their achieving for it anything of note other than some benefits for their private companies[45].

Bin Laden explicitly admitted purposefully establishing an Al Qaeda branch in Iraq, the eastern edge of Islam's Holy Land, on the eve of 9/11 in order to bait the Bush Administration into an unjustified invasion. In the aftermath of 9/11, when the Bush Administration conclusively cited the existence of this Al Qaeda branch as proof of an alliance with Saddam, Bin Laden's ten-year campaign to provoke an American invasion of Iraq ended in total victory.

2.3. The Improbability of a Saddam-Bin Laden Alliance

The Bush Administration cited a terrorist alliance between Al Qaeda and Iraq as one of the two primary public justifications for the invasion (until both were subsequently proven false). Bin Laden had once again hoodwinked President Bush. Beyond unsubstantiated public innuendo linking Saddam with the 9/11 attack, the Bush Administration tried its best to build a legal case demonstrating some kind of terrorist alliance between Saddam and Al Qaeda. Although Bush portrayed the fortuitous creation of an Iraqi Al Qaeda affiliate in September 2001 as proof of a Saddam-Bin Laden alliance, the American administration offered no hard evidence to support this extrapolation[46]. In fact, Ansar al-Islam was an avowed enemy of Saddam, located in the large Kurdish-controlled region of Iraq that was outside of Saddam's control.

In the plethora of terrorist ties that Secretary of State Colin Powell detailed in his address to the United Nations Security Council on February 5, 2003, most of the intelligence relied on interrogations of a handful of three thousand Al Qaeda detainees as well as Kurdish operatives, members of groups that had been trying to provoke an American invasion of Iraq for a decade[47]. Intelligence reports about Saddam's invitations to Bin Laden to move to Iraq in the 1990s, if they are accurate, can easily be understood as Saddam's conniving attempt to control and eliminate a man who had repeatedly attempted to provoke the world's superpower to destroy the Iraqi regime, similar to Saddam's assassination of the international terrorist Abu Nidal inside Iraq prior to the American invasion[48]. Many experts have concluded that these possible sporadic contacts between officials of Saddam's regime and Al Qaeda were most likely a continuation of Saddam's well-known tactic of infiltrating and subverting organizations that were a threat to his regime, and most likely not a genuine attempt to form an alliance with Al Qaeda[49]. Not surprisingly, the Bush Administration has substantiated none of the purported terrorist links between Al Qaeda and Saddam since the invasion of Iraq.

Bush's failure to prove his case against Iraq confirmed the flimsy logic of the indictment. The Iraq war was framed as the second stage of Bush's post-9/11 war, launched to deter the imminent threat of a transfer of WMD to Al Qaeda from Saddam. In the retaliation for 9/11, it follows logically that the first goal would be to destroy the base of operations, and the second goal would be to secure the most likely source of Al Qaeda's acquisition of WMD. While Afghanistan was certainly Al Qaeda's base of operations, Iraq was certainly not the most likely source for Al Qaeda's acquisition of WMD. For the past decade, Iraq had been the

nation most heavily scrutinized for WMD, a situation that posed a high risk of failure to any attempt at transferring WMD to Al Qaeda. In reality, the most vast and notoriously unprotected supply of WMD exists in the former Soviet Union, home to over 99% of the world's unsecured WMD. Considering Bin Laden's extensive connections inside the Chechen and Russian mafias, it is most likely that he would primarily pursue WMD acquisition from the immense Russian black market[50].

The inadequacy of the Iraq as a WMD supplier was compounded by the long-standing belligerent history between Saddam and Bin Laden[51]. Based on his fundamentalist Islamic worldview, Bin Laden has vehemently condemned Saddam for his secular and socialist government[52]. Bin Laden even established his Al Qaeda branch in Kurdish-controlled Iraq with the expressed goal of destroying Saddam's regime, a goal it accomplished by manipulating the United States to invade. Considering Bin Laden's hostile posture towards Saddam's regime and the fact that Al Qaeda did not need Saddam's assistance for terrorist attacks against America, many experts have concluded that Al Qaeda was far more likely to provoke an American invasion of Iraq rather than assist Saddam in an attack on America that would somehow benefit Saddam's regime[53]. It is unlikely that Bin Laden would trust as an ally a leader whose regime he had repeatedly attempted to destroy. Revealingly, of the hundreds of calls made by Bin Laden from his satellite phone, not one of them was to Iraq[vi].

In addition to Bin Laden's hesitation in trusting Saddam, it is highly unlikely that Saddam, a notoriously wily survivor, would risk an American invasion by transferring WMD to a group that had vowed to destroy his regime. Certainly Saddam would be running the high risk that Al Qaeda would purposefully reveal the WMD transfer to American intelligence in yet another attempt to provoke an American invasion of its avowed enemy. As concluded in the most authoritative post-invasion reports, such as the Chief U.S. Weapons Inspector Duelfer Report, Saddam's foreign policy in the final years of his rule was dominated by a strategy that strived to avoid dramatically escalating America's de facto war with Iraq (including the No-Fly Zone conflict and the "sanctions" war) and to achieve diplomatically the lifting of the crippling United Nations economic sanctions against Iraq. By offering Al Qaeda

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[vi] Bin Laden used this satellite phone until 1998, when a much-lamented official of the Clinton Administration publicly divulged that American intelligence had been monitoring these calls. Considering that Bin Laden's location could be ascertained when he used this phone, it is highly unlikely that he made the calls believing that American intelligence was monitoring his phone. Furthermore, the sensitive intelligence acquired from the surveillance of these calls also indicates that Bin Laden was not using his satellite phone as a disinformation tool. Most probably, the records of these phone calls reveal Bin Laden's true contacts at this time, none of which were located inside Iraq.

unnecessary support to launch an attack that would likely provoke an invasion of the Middle East, Saddam would have been jeopardizing his primary ambition for essentially no gain.

As psychological profilers have consistently maintained, Saddam was not the insane and unpredictable man portrayed by the Bush Administration, but rather a cold-blooded, self-interested calculator who was primarily motivated by his own survival. Accordingly, Saddam would not have preemptively attacked the United States[54]. Even in the unlikely scenario where Saddam did attack America and risk the retaliatory toppling of his regime, his success in sustaining his regime for three decades indicates that he would not have self-destructed his rule by leaving a conspicuous trail of evidence that overtly incriminated Iraq[vii]. Practically speaking, it is unlikely that Saddam would have jeopardized his rule by even covertly supporting any terrorist group, let alone Al Qaeda, in an attack on America.

Saddam's regime was not a self-destructive government like the Taliban, which was a suicidal regime that sheltered Bin Laden while he launched three major attacks on American targets from 1998-2001. In the twelve years between the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 Iraq invasion, Saddam did not once attack America with a conventional or terrorist attack. Even after the invasion had commenced, during his months in hiding and throughout his humiliating captivity, Saddam did not launch one single terrorist attack against America. In fact, the only time that Saddam has attacked Americans has been in the context of a war in and around Iraq that America initiated. Saddam's actions to date have categorically refuted the Bush Administration's claim that he was "addicted to weapons of mass destruction" and determined to attack the United States.

Instead of attacking his enemies with WMD and provoking America to topple his regime, Saddam's feigned pursuit of WMD after his 1990 reversal of relations with America was simply an effort at deterrence. On the one hand, Saddam would not provoke an American invasion that would topple his regime by hazarding the positive discovery of WMD, but he also needed the threat of WMD to deter hostile regional foes such as Israel and Iran (both of which he had launched aggressive war against and threatened with WMD prior to

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[vii] Dissenters to this view have often highlighted the widely held misconception that Saddam launched his invasion of Kuwait without U.S. approval, and thereby risked the destruction of his regime. However, the official record acknowledged by the U.S. government reveals that Saddam had informed the Bush I Administration of his plan to invade Kuwait weeks before he commenced the invasion, at which time the top U.S. liaison to Iraq assured Saddam that the American administration approved his plan, as it had approved and heavily supported Saddam's invasion of Iran throughout the previous decade (www.truthout.org/docs_2005/092605A.shtml). Subsequently, the Bush I Administration took no apparent action to prevent the Kuwait invasion. Conveniently, Saddam's invasion of Kuwait would serve as the critical pretext for the establishment of a permanent American military presence in the world's prime oil region.

America's containment of Iraq). As concluded by Bush's chief WMD inspector in Iraq, Saddam was a sane leader who walked a WMD tightrope, appearing to pursue the acquisition of a WMD arsenal while not displaying concrete evidence of this effort in order to stave off invasion from a variety of different enemies. While Saddam did believe that he had deceived Iran about his WMD capability, he also believed that the United States was aware he did not possess WMD and merely enforced the economic sanctions to humiliate him[55]. The low probability of Saddam preemptively attacking America with WMD was a fact asserted by the CIA before the invasion that was deleted from the CIA's unclassified pre-war intelligence estimate of Saddam's WMD[56].

Despite Al Qaeda's overt attempts to implicate Iraq since 1993, the Clinton Administration never took the bait and invaded Iraq in retaliation for these Al Qaeda attacks because Saddam's involvement was never substantiated. At best, Saddam was merely suspected of some degree of complicity in the attacks because of the circumstantial evidence fabricated by Al Qaeda. After America's investigations into each of these attacks had been completed, Saddam was exonerated from involvement in every one. Even the Bush II Administration, which displayed such zeal in launching unfounded accusations against Saddam, never explicitly accused Saddam of complicity in any of these attacks[viii]. Upon investigating the wealth of intelligence about Saddam's regime disclosed after his fall, the official findings released by the bipartisan 9/11 Commission assert that there was no alliance between Saddam and Al Qaeda[57]. Specifically, this commission, which oversaw the most extensive federal investigation in history, stated that it had found "no evidence indicating Iraq cooperated with Al Qaeda in developing or carrying out any attacks against the United States"[58]. This fact was supported by numerous intelligence-estimate reports, including the Senate Intelligence Committee Report on Pre-War Intelligence, as well as "Mapping the Global Future" by the National Intelligence Council[59]. In reality, Bush's invasion of Saddam's Iraq eliminated the regime that Secretary of State Colin Powell described in a press release on February 24, 2001 as a "contained threat".

Saddam was not responsible for the obvious Iraqi co-signature on Al Qaeda's first six major attacks on America, rather, this anomaly reveals Bin Laden's diabolical attempt to frame Iraq for complicity in the attacks. Bush submitted to Al Qaeda's manipulation when he

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[viii] Vice President Dick Cheney, arguably the most fanatic advocate of the Iraq invasion, did implicitly accuse Saddam of involvement in WTC I and 9/11. However, these claims were never made explicitly, have never been explicitly supported by other top administration officials, have never been supported by hard evidence and have since been quietly retracted.

succumbed to his predisposition to invade Iraq, an event that coupled disastrously with the Bush Administration's colossal diplomatic failures in marshalling international support for the invasion and occupation. *Has America's diminished reputation since the Iraq debacle shifted world opinion to increasingly view the American occupation as a modern Christian Crusade against Islam in the Holy Land? Has this unnecessary diversion from America's war against Al Qaeda regenerated the terrorist empire by augmenting Bin Laden's global appearance as a righteous holy warrior opposing American imperialism?*

2.4. The Importance of America's Iraq Invasion to Al Qaeda

After a decade of painstaking clandestine attempts, Bin Laden finally succeeded in establishing the cornerstone of his global holy war. Like the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan twenty years earlier, the American invasion and occupation of Iraq has served as the central catalyst for Bin Laden's global recruitment efforts. Fear and loathing of a superpower's apparently reckless global belligerence has created a vast reservoir of potential supporters for Bin Laden's war against the imperialism of an "evil empire". Today, however, it is the very act that he had nefariously endeavored to provoke covertly that explicitly vindicated to an unsuspecting global community his official war justification, particularly the contingent expansion of both the American military presence in the Persian Gulf and the American aggression against Iraq. The invasion of Iraq exemplified the Bush Administration's inadvertent success in making Al Qaeda's holy war appear righteous to a growing block of the world community by giving verisimilitude to Bin Laden's indictment of America as a criminal, "Great Satan" empire.

> Even such establishment voices as London's prestigious International Institute of Strategic Studies, which supported the Iraq war and hosted President Bush during his recent visit to Britain, concludes that the hostility sparked by the Iraq war has substantially increased the growth potential for jihadi terror groups. Rather than isolating the jihadis in Arab public opinion and starving them of support, the effect of the war has been to move their view of the U.S. closer to the mainstream[60].

In the spring of 2005, a CIA assessment reported that the American occupation of Iraq is evolving into an even more effective recruitment and training ground for Al Qaeda than the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s[61].

The American invasion of Iraq has been Al Qaeda's greatest victory in the most important aspect of its current war with America, the public relations campaign against the United States. General John Abizaid, head of U.S. Central Command, has observed that the war on terrorism is "a battle of ideas as much as it is a military battle"[62]. As with any insurgency, public support is the lifeblood of Al Qaeda's global insurgency against American hegemony. In the wake of the 9/11 attack, the world united in the greatest show of support for America in history, and a firm denunciation of Al Qaeda. Nevertheless, less than two years later, on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, the Bush Administration's menacing and duplicitous foreign policy led to the greatest show of global opposition to America in history, as well as an augmentation in Al Qaeda's global support. Public opinion polls repeatedly reflected this new development[63].

- Polls of 15 European nations in the fall of 2003 found that citizens of each nation ranked the United States as one of the top three nations that pose a "threat to world peace".

- Following the Iraq invasion, America's favorability rating in Indonesia, the most populous Muslim nation, fell from 61% to 15%.

- Strong majorities in Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey and Nigeria fear that the United States could become a military threat to them personally.

- More Indonesians, Pakistanis, Palestinians and Jordanians trust Osama bin Laden to "do the right thing in world affairs" than they do President Bush. In fact, Bin Laden's reputation has risen to that of a revered mythical figure in the Islamic world, like a "Thomas Jefferson or Theodore Roosevelt".

More importantly than the diversion of scarce American military and financial resources, the Iraq war has virtually bankrupted America of its most valuable resource, diplomatic capital. A world community that distrusts America intentions and common sense cannot be led coherently by America. Such an environment is optimal for Al Qaeda's anti-American war.

Contrary to claims by the Bush Administration, Iraq is serving primarily as a recruitment base for new Al Qaeda operatives, not as a magnet for existing Al Qaeda operatives. In 2005, Saudi and Israeli investigations into the backgrounds and motivations of foreign jihadists in Iraq concluded that "the vast majority of (non-Iraqi) Arabs killed in Iraq have never taken part in any terrorist activity prior to their arrival in Iraq", but rather have been radicalized by the American invasion and swayed to join the Al Qaeda-led Iraq

insurgency[64]. Experts widely agree that the American occupation has transformed Iraq into "a superheated, real-world academy for lessons about weapons, bomb-making, urban combat and terrorist tradecraft"[65], a prolific factory for producing new Al Qaeda operatives. In a rare display of self-criticism from the Rumsfeld Defense Department, a Defense Science Board report in September 2004 publicly lamented the most catastrophic failure to emerge from the Iraq invasion.

> The larger goals of U.S. strategy depend on separating the vast majority of non-violent Muslims from radical-militant Islamic-Jihadists. But American efforts have not only failed in this respect: they may also have achieved the opposite of what they intended[66].

The month following this report's release, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld unambiguously repeated this conclusion in a top-secret Pentagon memo, opining that radical Islam is churning out more terrorists to fight America than the U.S. coalition is capturing, killing, deterring or dissuading[67]. Rather than serving as America's baiting grounds for Al Qaeda operatives scattered across the globe, American-occupied Iraq has served in the opposite capacity, as the greatest boon to the regeneration and augmentation of Bin Laden's post-9/11 empire. Experts widely agree that Al Qaeda has been the primary beneficiary of Bush's Iraq invasion[68].

This American diplomatic failure was magnified by the global revelation of the baseless justification for Bush's invasion and the failure of the American occupation, events that vindicated and emboldened the opposition to America's Iraq war. In particular, the suffering of the Iraqi people under a terrifying foreign occupation and a brutal terrorist insurgency has coupled with the American failure to restore basic Iraqi services, such as fuel supplies[69], electricity, clean water and sewage[70], to amplify further global anti-American sentiment. A survey released by the John Hopkins University Lancet Group in October 2004 concluded that the Iraqi civilian death rate increased by nearly 100,000 since the American invasion[71]. This figure is supported by mortuary body counts in Baghdad[72]. In a telling sign of the mounting destabilization in Iraq, May 2005 witnessed the most civilian casualties since the end of major combat two years earlier[73]. America's direct responsibility for most of the death and destruction throughout the post-Saddam era[74] has solidified the general perception of the American military presence as an "occupation", and not a "peacekeeping" force. In addition to reconstruction and security failures, the development of the incipient Iraqi government has stagnated over massive corruption[75] and disputes between Iraq's sharply divided religious and

ethnic groups. In an implicit admission of failure, the Bush Administration has greatly reduced its projections for the success of the Iraq experiment. In August 2005, the Bush Administration announced that it no longer expects Iraq to become a model new democracy with a self-supporting oil industry, and that instead a majority of its people would continue to live with serious security and economic challenges for years to come[76]. As the foreign occupier of Iraq, the Bush Administration has assumed responsibility for the failed government, security and infrastructure of the country, including the resulting death toll. By fomenting anti-American sentiment globally through the Iraqi invasion, President Bush has proven himself to be Bin Laden's unwittingly loyal servant.

Bin Laden's propaganda victory was largely a result of his persistent endeavor to vindicate his war against America based on his terrorist empire's ability to combat an amoral American aggression against Iraqis. More than any other terrorist group in history, Al Qaeda has attempted to justify its attacks to the world. Since 1996, Bin Laden has repeatedly cited the continued American aggression against Iraq, Islam's second holiest land, as a central grievance motivating his holy war against America.

> The best proof of this (American attacks on Muslims) is the Americans' continuing aggression against the Iraqi people using Saudi Arabia as a staging post . . . despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance, and despite the huge number of those killed, which has exceeded one million, despite all this, the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific massacres, as though they are not content with the protracted blockade imposed after the ferocious war or the fragmentation and devastation. So here they come to annihilate what is left of this people and to humiliate their Muslim neighbors . . . if the American aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there. The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq, the strongest neighboring Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq . . . (Bin Laden's February 1998 Declaration of Global Holy War against America)

As part of his righteous self-portrait, in this "religious" declaration Bin Laden referred to his group under the pseudonym, "World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders". Most persuasively, Bin Laden justified his war against America as opposition to America's most colossal aggression against Muslims, the brutal American economic embargo of Iraq that killed at least 100,000 Iraqi civilians from 1991-2003. Additionally, Bin Laden

depicted his "righteous" terrorist attacks as a response to the large American military presence in Islam's holiest land (numbering 15,000-20,000 American soldiers from 1991-2003[77]), which, in the context of the Saudi government's seemingly subservient role in its fossil fuel relationship with America, Bin Laden framed as a military "occupation" of Saudi Arabia.

Bin Laden's seemingly prescient indictment of America was more convincingly vindicated by President Bush's 2003 transformation of America's economic aggression against Iraq into large-scale military aggression. In justifying his war against America in 1998, Bin Laden specifically predicted a future American crusade in Iraq that would use Saudi Arabia as a staging post. This invasion would be the "best proof" vindicating Al Qaeda's indictment of America. The Bush Administration's portrayal of (1) an internationally illegal American military occupation of Iraq, (2) launched from Islam's holiest land, Saudi Arabia, side by side with (3) an internationally illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, precisely matched Bin Laden's primary *casus belli*. In addition to America's massive expansion of its aggression against Iraqis and military occupation of the Middle East, the spawning of the millennial Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories gave credence to Bin Laden's war justification. Far more clearly than America's military action in the Middle East during the 1990s, the Bush occupation of Iraq vividly harkens to Bin Laden's 1998 denunciation of America as a criminal Christian empire crusading with the Israelis in the Muslim Holy Land.

Revealingly, the dramatic rise in deadly Islamic terrorism against America has been directly proportional to the extent of the concurrent American military presence in the Middle East that was broadly opposed in the Muslim world, from:

- The 1983 U.S. Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon in the context of the American military buildup there, to
- Al Qaeda's pre-9/11 terrorist campaign against American targets in the context of the American military presence in Saudi Arabia and aggression against Iraq from 1991-2003, to
- The 9/11 attack in the context of the additional grievance of America's unilateral support for Israel's renewed war against the Palestinians, to
- The unprecedented Islamic terrorist campaign against American military targets inside American-occupied Iraq.

Most importantly, the sustainability of each of these Islamic terrorist campaigns against America was proportional to the prevalence of anti-American sentiment in the Islamic world arising from indignation over the American military presence in the Middle East. In a stunning example of a self-fulfilling prophecy, the American invasion of Iraq that Al Qaeda triggered with the 9/11 attack was the crucial element in Bin Laden's wicked plan to rally unprecedented support for his war to destroy the United States.

Accompanying the vilification of America in Iraq, the creation of this new battlefront has offered Al Qaeda a vital arena for its terrorist warfare that more mainstream Muslims support. While mainstream Islam rejects attacks against civilians[78], attacks against an illegal American military occupation of a Muslim nation are viewed more favorably[79]. Less than two years after Muslim clerics throughout the Arab world largely condemned the 9/11 attack, many religious leaders in Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations issued *fatwas* ordering Muslims to wage war against the American military in Iraq[80]. Al Qaeda attacks inside the United States or even in Afghanistan do not rally the level of global support as attacks against Americans in occupied Iraq. Global opposition to the American occupation is also reflected inside Iraq itself, where a majority of the population favors the near-term withdrawal of the U.S. occupation[81]. In pursuit of broader public support, Al Qaeda has shifted its global focus to attacks against the principal agents of the American occupation in Iraq, U.S. forces and Iraqi security forces. As a result of this mounting support for some Al Qaeda attacks, in the future an increasingly radicalized Muslim mainstream will tend to support the whole range of Al Qaeda's warfare, including attacks on the United States.

Bin Laden's war has been publicly redefined as a global insurgency to pressure the withdrawal of the American occupation of Iraq. Although Iraq was not the center of international terrorism under Saddam, the failed state of Iraq today has become "the greatest breeding ground for international terrorism", according to a report titled "Mapping the Global Future" by the National Intelligence Council, the CIA Director's think tank[82]. The American occupation of Iraq has greatly magnified what suicide-bombing experts have identified to be the primary motivation for suicide bombers, the existence of a foreign military occupation[83]. Like the bid by the 9/11 attackers to pressure the removal of U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia, future terrorist attacks on America will be strongly facilitated by a popular mandate to pressure the withdraw of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

> Hence, the longer American troops remain in Iraq and in the Persian Gulf in general, the greater the risk of the next Sept. 11[84].

In stark contrast to mainstream Islam's condemnation of Al Qaeda on 9/11, Al Qaeda's mounting campaign against America in Iraq now enjoys rising support throughout mainstream Islam. With the opportunity to wage war against America in a manner less offensive to mainstream Muslims, Al Qaeda can better portray itself as a righteous defender of Islam from an American menace. In this climate, Al Qaeda can more effectively rally the world community to support its escalating war with the United States.

Bin Laden's ability to harness global support for a war in Iraq that he intentionally provoked is a testament to his aptitude as a propagandist. Bin Laden had to orchestrate carefully his public relations campaign in order to succeed in both provoking the American invasion of Iraq and portraying America as the primary war provocateur. By launching his major attacks during heightened American-Iraqi tensions on anniversaries of major American victories over Iraq, Bin Laden portrayed an Al Qaeda alliance with Iraq to American intelligence, a group preoccupied with the threat of Saddam Hussein. While Bin Laden was portraying an Al Qaeda-Iraqi alliance to America intelligence through red herring clues imprinted in his terrorist attacks, he was portraying just the opposite to the Muslim world. In distinguishing himself as the undisputed leader of Militant Islam, Bin Laden distanced himself from the only other prominent candidate, Saddam Hussein, by publicly declaring his animosity to the Iraqi leader. While upholding his condemnation of Saddam to the world community, Bin Laden framed his war as an independent messianic effort to end America's decade-long aggression against the innocent Iraqi people. In this context, an Al Qaeda attack on America could be depicted to the world community as a justified retaliation for ongoing aggression against Muslims, and an American retaliatory invasion of Iraq could demonize the United States as the primary cause of the war. The general public's ignorance of Al Qaeda's intentional provocation of the Bush Administration's crusade in the Middle East has allowed the terrorist group to avoid incrimination for Bush's misdeeds and succeed in transferring war guilt to America.

The world-renowned British think tank Chatham House aptly summarized Al Qaeda's profit from Bin Laden's ten-year venture to provoke the American invasion of Iraq.

> It (the American occupation of Iraq) gave a boost to the Al Qaeda network's propaganda, recruitment and fundraising," Chatham

> House said, arguing that it also provided an ideal training area for Al Qaeda-linked terrorists and deflected resources that could have gone to help bring suspected terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden to justice[85].

President Bush's gift of Iraq to Bin Laden in 2003 is analogous to a fictitious history in which President Roosevelt gave Adolf Hitler the atomic bomb in 1943. The massive empowerment of this apocalyptic terrorist empire threatens to destroy America more seriously than the Nazis ever did. Through the unwitting assistance of the Bush Administration, Bin Laden has ensnared America in the quagmire of the Iraq occupation in order to rally global support for his imminent nuclear war.

What factors motivated the Bush Administration to redirect America onto this course to self-destruction? Were these factors evident to Bin Laden when he launched an October surprise three weeks before President Bush's millennial election?

Part Two:

The Choice President

The following two chapters analyze the pronounced predisposition to invade Iraq displayed by George W. Bush, both as a 2000 presidential candidate and an American president. In particular, this predisposition was indicated by Bush's neo-conservative agenda

to pursue hawkishly the objectives of the defense industry, Big Oil and militant Zionism. Although this agenda and the agenda of Bin Laden represent opposing pursuits, each one catalyzes the other. Just as the Bin Laden threat has greatly augmented President Bush's popularity inside the United States, the Bush Administration's menacing movement to invade Iraq and the greater Middle East serves as the greatest recruitment tool for Al Qaeda's global war against America. The success of Bin Laden's plan can be gauged by the Bush Administration's success in pursuing its own preconceived designs.

The concluding chapter to this part of the book addresses the question, Was Bin Laden aware of the 2000 Bush team's strong predisposition to invade Iraq? In a presidential race that was poised to be the closest in history, Bin Laden intervened in the final weeks with a major attack on America that was designed to increase the American public's support for Bush. Amidst the drama of the millennium American presidential election, this vitally dramatic aspect of Bush's victory went virtually unnoticed. America's greatest nemesis had intentionally provided the crucial support for the election of this president so that the American administration would respond to Al Qaeda's planned 9/11 attack by invading Iraq. The global anti-American sentiment generated by this invasion would shift the world community's support away from the United States and towards Al Qaeda.

Chapter 3.

Bush's Predisposition to Invade Iraq

3.1. PNAC

On Iraq

In the millennial American presidential election, Al Qaeda's campaign to provoke an American invasion of Iraq coalesced with a candidate administration that displayed a pronounced predisposition to invade Iraq. In particular, the Bush Administration appeared to be dominated by a cadre of hawkish representatives of the defense industry, Big Oil and Israel. The neo-conservative movements within the Middle East's three most influential special interests threatened to direct a new American administration to launch a large-scale military invasion of the world's premier oil real estate and the nation most openly attacking Israel.

Bush's neo-conservative foreign policy team served as the primary advocate for this movement to invade Iraq. Two months before the 2000 Election, the Bush team, led by the future Vice President, Defense Secretary and Deputy Defense Secretary, released its core national security agenda through a neo-conservative think tank presumptuously christened The Project For The New American Century (PNAC). This auspiciously timed PNAC publication, entitled "Rebuilding America's Defenses", was intended to be "a roadmap for the nation's immediate and future defense plans"[86]. Although PNAC's overarching goal was to prevent the rise of holocaustic threats like that which America faced during the Cold War, in practice PNAC aimed to achieve permanent American global hegemony through the aggressive pursuit of megalithic military-industrial corporate interests. American defense contractors, oil industrialists and Zionists had founded PNAC after President Clinton's reelection. Since 1997, PNAC urged the American administration to remove Saddam and establish an American protectorate in Iraq in order to control the world's second largest oil supply, eliminate the regime most publicly threatening Israel, intimidate nations into deference to American power, and establish Iraq as a staging ground for future American military action in the Middle East[87]. PNAC envisioned this aggression against Iraq to be a primary step towards American global domination throughout the 21st century.

In "Rebuilding America's Defenses" (RAD), PNAC's core document, the neo-conservative group specifically recommends using the conflict over Saddam's purported

possession of WMD as the public justification for this initiation of an American military occupation of the Middle East.

> While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate
> justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in
> the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein[88].

Beyond revealing a motivation for the Bush Administration's fraudulent case for war against Saddam, RAD discloses that the American military presence in the Middle East is intended to be a permanent one.

> The Air Force presence in the Gulf region is a vital one for U.S.
> military strategy, and the United States should consider it a *de facto*
> permanent presence[89].

As frankly described by the 2000 Bush Team, America's post-9/11 invasion of the Middle East was primarily an aggressive war based on imperial pursuits.

American fossil fuel interests were perhaps the most widely reviled motivation for Bush's Iraq invasion. A primary objective of PNAC's proposed military aggression was to escalate America's traditional military influence in the Middle East from proxy forces to a large-scale American military presence in order to ensure the security of Middle Eastern oil supplies[90]. In PNAC's founding document, published in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War and authored by the architect of the 2003 Iraq invasion, Paul Wolfowitz explicitly advocates an American military occupation of the Middle East in order to control "vital raw materials, particularly Persian Gulf oil"[91]. Wolfowitz clearly identifies oil, and not Saddam's WMD or any other terrorist threat, as the principal overall objective of this American military action.

> Our overall objective is to remain the predominant outside power
> in (the Middle East and Southwest Asia to) preserve U.S. and
> Western access to the region's oil[92].

Iraq is the most prized oil real estate in the world because it contains vast quantities of easily accessible oil supplies that are virtually untouched. PNAC's bold proposal to seize this oil wealth was perhaps most explicitly stated in a January 1998 PNAC letter to President Clinton, coincidentally released at virtually the same time as Bin Laden issued his declaration of war against America because of the superpower's aggression against Iraq. Emphasizing PNAC's public justification for the war, Saddam's supposed possession of WMD, this letter urged an American invasion of Iraq to secure "a significant portion of the world's energy supply"[93]. Shirking the need for United Nations support, this PNAC letter advocated a unilateral

American military action that would place the totality of Iraq's oil supplies solely in American control[94]. Seven of the eighteen signatories of this letter were later appointed to top positions in the Bush Administration. As revealed to knowledgeable observers before his 2000 election, President Bush's foreign policy was guided by a group that advocated a permanent American military occupation of the Middle East, beginning with an invasion of Iraq, in order to control the world's most cherished natural resource.

Pervasive Influence on the Bush Administration

Beyond Iraq, PNAC's influence pervades much of the Bush Administration's foreign policy. In fact, the PNAC agenda prefigured the administration's most distinguishing feature, President Bush's hawkish global War On Terror. Closely paralleling the military objectives of Bush's post-9/11 war to "liberate the world from evil", this neo-conservative think tank has consistently promoted a bellicose foreign policy to secure American world domination. Like a modern Roman Empire, the PNAC vision advocates that the United States use aggressive war to deter potential rivals and pursue America's imperial objectives. However, instead of global domination for 1000 years, PNAC aims for the more humble objective of 100 years of absolute imperial supremacy. In particular, PNAC has continuously promoted American military aggression, irrespective of the United Nations, against regimes that challenge America's supremacy[95]. Mirroring both the lofty ambitions and pragmatic approach of the Bush foreign policy, PNAC observes that the prerequisite public support for this monumental shift in America's military policy could only occur if there was a large-scale attack on the United States, like "a new Pearl Harbor"[96].

The similarity between the PNAC agenda and the Bush agenda was not a coincidence, in fact, PNAC's core document, "Rebuilding America's Defenses" (RAD), was the blueprint for the Bush Administration's post-9/11 National Security Strategy (NSS). Both RAD and Bush's NSS advocate preemptive war outside of the United Nations against nations that are not an imminent threat to America, nuclear first-strikes against non-nuclear nations, rapid development of National Missile Defense and other space-based military projects, and abrogation of international treaties and alliances[97]. RAD repeatedly identifies Iraq, Iran and North Korea as the three rogue nations that pose the principal threat to American security, the

same nations that Bush labeled the "Axis of Evil" in his first post-9/11 State of the Union Address[98]. This PNAC document specifically recommends increasing America's military budget to 3.8% of the gross domestic product, the precise amount of the Bush Administration's proposed military budget for the year of the Iraq invasion[99]. The striking similarity between the PNAC national security doctrine and the Bush Administration's doctrine strongly suggests that President Bush's foreign policy was pre-formulated by the war hawks in his inner circle of advisors.

PNAC's influence on President Bush's foreign policy is demonstrated as much by the PNAC members of his administration as the actual policy itself. The ideological founder of PNAC, Paul Wolfowitz, was President Bush's Deputy Secretary of Defense from 2001-2004. Along with Wolfowitz and Vice President Cheney, other members of PNAC who were part of Bush's inner circle of advisors for his 2000 campaign included:

- I. Lewis Libby, Cheney's Chief of Staff and National Security Advisor,
- Richard Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State, 2001-2004,
- John Bolton, Undersecretary of State, 2001-2004,
- Richard Perle, former chairman of Rumsfeld's Defense Policy Board (the chief advisory board to the Secretary of Defense), and
- George Bush's brother Jeb Bush, Governor of Florida.

The fact that the core of Bush's foreign policy advisors in his 2000 campaign consisted of members of PNAC was a strong harbinger of Bush's hawkish foreign policy that targeted Iraq.

After Bush's 2000 election, a number of other influential PNAC members joined his administration. In addition to the above mentioned foreign policy advisors of the 2000 Bush campaign, other members of PNAC that Bush appointed to high-level positions in his administration include:

- Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense,
- Douglas Feith, Undersecretary of Defense, 2001-2005,
- Eliot Abrams, National Security Council member and Presidential Advisor on the Middle East,
- Randy Scheunemann, President of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq and Advisor to Rumsfeld on Iraq in 2001, and
- Zalmay Khalilzad, White House advisor on Afghanistan and Iraq.

George W. Bush's decision to appoint mostly PNAC members to his foreign policy team further confirmed his predisposition to invade Iraq.

3.2. *The Triumvirate Behind the Bush Administration*

National Defense

Beyond the Bush Administration's Project for the New American Century, the conspicuous influence of the defense industry, Big Oil and militant Zionism in the formulation of the Bush foreign policy led inexorably to the military invasion of Iraq. The fortunes of the defense industry personally impact George W. Bush not simply because of campaign contributions, but more influentially because he holds a large personal financial stake in major defense corporations. The Bush financial empire is replete with investments in national defense contracting. From 1995 until October 2003, Bush's father, George Bush the Elder, was a member of the board of the Carlyle Group, a multi-billion dollar consortium of defense contractors that has greatly profited from the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions[100]. In a sign of improprieties to come, this was the first time in history that a former president worked for a Pentagon supplier[101]. Bush the Elder continues to be a major stockholder in the Carlyle Group who has profited greatly through his son's escalation of America's military commitments[102]. Bush the Elder's first-born son, President Bush the Younger, stands to receive these profits in his inheritance. In a very direct way, President Bush's invasion of Iraq has greatly multiplied his own personal wealth. The existence of Bush's clear conflict of interest on military contracting policy best exemplified his visible proclivity to be a champion of the defense industry.

The foundation for the Bush Administration's hawkish pursuit of these special interests was the establishment of an aggressive military posture. As the neo-conservative patron of the defense industry, George W. Bush's public persona, his stated foreign policy agenda, and his inner circle of war hawks portrayed the strongest candidate on national defense in Election 2000. Most visibly, Bush's striking public image as a Texas cowboy portrayed a mighty bravado that is traditionally associated with a strong military leader. This proclivity is popularly displayed in the infamous Texan warning, "Don't mess with Texas". Predictably,

after the 9/11 attack, the Bush Administration capitalized on this cowboy image by presenting Bush in the caricature of a western sheriff who was on a mission to capture the outlaw Osama bin Laden "dead or alive". During the 2000 campaign, the public presentation of Bush as a confident, "shoot from the hip" Texan epitomized his successful portrayal of the forceful military defense candidate.

More substantive than his cowboy image, Bush's campaign pledges displayed his inclination to hawkish military action. Consistent with the popular perception of the modern Republican agenda on strengthening the military to pursue an aggressive foreign policy, Bush stated in his 2000 campaign that he planned to revitalize the military with a major upgrade[103].

> I'm going to rebuild our military power. It's one of the major priorities of my administration[104].

Bush portrayed himself as the candidate who would elevate America's military and intelligence services to a level reminiscent of the administrations of Reagan and Bush the Elder. The 2000 Bush team portrayed this revitalization of America's national defense as a salvation from the atrophy it experienced during the intervening Democratic Clinton/Gore Administration, a presidency that had so egregiously under-funded national defense as part of its infamous post-Cold War "peace dividend".

Beyond simply returning America to his father's national defense policy, Bush the Younger campaigned to aggressively rebuild the military through a series of particularly radical proposals. A most militant aspect of Bush's neo-conservative military upgrade was a renewed nuclear arms race, reflected in Bush's opposition to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty[ix]. In particular, Bush fervently endorsed the expansion of the National Missile Defense Program regardless of the resultant escalation of the nuclear arms race[105].

[ix] While the Bush Administration has explicitly opposed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, its opposition to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been implicit, but nevertheless clear. NPT was an international pact forged in 1970 that declared the renouncement of nuclear weapons by 180 nations contingent on a pledge by the five nuclear powers to gradually eliminate their own nuclear arsenals. President Bush's nuclear weapons policy has directly violated NPT by developing a new arsenal of tactical nuclear bombs and failing to implement its agreements to reduce America's nuclear arsenal. Additionally, the Bush Administration has retarded the progress of the NPT initiative by unilaterally opposing (1) the establishment of "nuclear-free zones", (2) a verifiable treaty banning nuclear weapons production and (3) a broadly supported agreement outlawing nuclear strikes on non-nuclear nations. The Bush Administration's hawkish nuclear policy was widely cited as the primary cause of the failure of the 2005 United Nations Nonproliferation Conference to offer an action plan on limiting the spread of nuclear weapons. (www.americamagazine.org/gettext.cfm?articleTypeID=7&textID=3080&issueID=446; News Hour with Jim Lehrer, 5/5/05; AP, 5/5/05; AP, 5/27/05).

While the Bush national defense policy proposals were reminiscent of the Reagan/Bush Administration's hawkish policy, such as Reagan's massive escalation of the nuclear arms race, George W. Bush revealed an even more extreme neo-conservative foreign policy with his unprecedented endorsement of preemptive war.

> I believe the role of the military is to fight and win war and therefore prevent war from happening in the first place[106].

Bush's aggressive military posture, particularly his preemptive war doctrine, would inevitably clash with the organization devoted to world peace. Revealingly, Bush promised to diminish American involvement with the United Nations, effectively to weaken this vital institution of international diplomacy[107]. Combined with his rejection of other international treaties and alliances, such as the Kyoto Global Warming Pact, nuclear arms reduction treaties and the World Court, Bush's conspicuous unilateralism represented a willingness to sacrifice America's friendly international relations for belligerent policies. Bush acted on this foreign policy by initiating a globally opposed war with Iraq in a purported attempt to prevent attacks on America.

The revelation of the radical official doctrine of preemptive warfare in Bush's first presidential campaign was naturally mitigated with softer language, reflecting his intent to bridge a transition from America's previous reactive foreign policy through a new proactive policy to his goal of preemption. In order to facilitate this goal, the Bush team paradoxically complemented his public image as a war hawk with his moderately dovish representation as a "compassionate conservative". While today this campaign slogan has been long lost in the war clouds of the post-9/11 conflict, Bush's 2000 campaign partially succeeded in obscuring from the American voters the unmitigated reality of Bush's hawkish foreign policy. At times, the Bush campaign tried to characterize his foreign policy as more humble than that of the Clinton/Gore Administration, as with Bush's assertions that his administration would diminish the American military's involvement in nation building and policing the world. However, this portrait of a humble foreign policy starkly contradicted Bush's other statements on foreign policy, the interventionist foreign policy of the neo-conservatives in his inner circle and his future actions as president. Bush's sporadic promises of diminished military commitments poorly veiled the fact that he was undoubtedly the most militant presidential candidate.

More definitively than campaign pledges, the domination of the Bush Administration by a neo-conservative inner circle of advisors blatantly revealed its strikingly hawkish foreign policy. During the 2000 campaign, Bush's complete lack of foreign policy education and experience, as well as his total reliance on his advisors, was widely publicized. His ignorance of foreign policy was conspicuously displayed when he failed an interviewer's foreign policy pop-quiz[108]. Among other names, Bush could not recall the leader of the nation that Clinton had recently identified as America's top national security concern[109], President Musharraf of Pakistan, who would become America's most important post-9/11 ally. Bush's apparent ignorance of foreign policy matters led many analysts to conclude that he would defer to the experienced neo-conservatives in his administration for guidance[110]. Confirming predictions made before the election, the foreign policy of the Bush Administration, frequently referred to as the Cheney-Bush co-presidency, has been particularly influenced by his super-hawkish vice president to a greater degree than perhaps any administration in American history[111].

Most visible in George W. Bush's inner circle of advisors was his choice for vice president, Dick Cheney, the super-hawkish Secretary of Defense of the 1991 Gulf War. As a congressman in the 1980s, Cheney established his identity as a perennial war hawk, consistently backing Reagan's precarious escalation of the nuclear arms race with such technological pursuits as the Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicle nuclear missile and the "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative. As head of the Pentagon during the administration of President Bush the Elder, Cheney directed the largest American military engagements since Vietnam, conducting the invasion of Panama followed a year later by the still larger action of the Persian Gulf War.

During the Gulf War, Cheney distinguished himself as a war super-hawk when he clashed with the Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell. Cheney opposed Powell's proposal for jointly extending economic sanctions and delaying moderate military action, and instead forcefully advocated an imminent massive military counterattack against Iraqi forces[112]. Cheney successfully convinced President Bush the Elder to adopt his war plan. This political victory of a hawk over a moderate was symbolized by his assignment, as the official representative of America's hawkish resolve against Saddam, to personally present King Fahd of Saudi Arabia his proposal for sending 200,000 American troops to the kingdom in prelude to the counter-invasion of Kuwait.

In the days before America's 1991 ground counter-invasion, Cheney and then Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz enthusiastically advocated the outright invasion of Iraq[113]. They presented President Bush the Elder with this additional war plan, known as Operation Scorpion, despite the widespread belief that an invasion of Iraq would provoke Arab nations to abandon America's coalition and instigate Saddam to attack America and Israel with his arsenal of chemical weapons[x]. When Cheney finally succeeded in enacting his plan for an American invasion of Iraq twelve years later, he demonstrated the same willingness to foment anti-American sentiment and spark a WMD war in the Middle East in pursuit of his hawkish strategic objectives. The 2003 Iraq invasion was Cheney's climactic military invasion, an action that dwarfs his previous enterprises in Panama and the Gulf War, initiating an American military engagement that threatens to rival even Vietnam.

Beyond the highly influential Vice President, the Bush Administration was guided by a hawkish neo-conservative think tank that was founded in part by the defense industry to advocate military expansionism. The project director of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), Bruce Jackson, was a longtime director of America's largest defense contractor, Lockheed Martin. Following the Bush Administration's inception, this company hired PNAC's deputy director, Tom Donnelly. Additionally, Lynne Cheney, the highly influential Second Lady, served on Lockheed Martin's board of directors from 1994 until the Bush Administration's inauguration in January 2001[114]. President Bush's 2000 Election signaled the usurpation of America's foreign policy by this military contractor lobby.

Predictably, Bush appointed PNAC's foremost interventionist neo-conservatives to formulate and execute America's foreign policy. Among the two administration departments devoted to national security, the departments of defense and state, the 2000 Bush PNAC team included two of the four future top first-term officials, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. After the election, another top PNAC member, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, joined these two PNAC leaders. Guided by this PNAC influence, President Bush appointed to his administration eight policy makers that had direct or indirect ties to America's largest defense contractor, as well as seven policy makers with ties to America's third largest defense contractor, Northrop Grumman[115].

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[x] Unlike the Bush II invasion of Iraq, in 1991 the Bush I Administration definitively knew that Saddam possessed this WMD arsenal because the Reagan/Bush Administration had supplied him with it and implicitly sanctioned Iraq's use of chemical weapons both to fight Iran and maintain internal stability during the 1980s (www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0908-08.htm; www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-1726745,00.html).

Within the Pentagon, President Bush filled many of the top positions with former defense industry executives[116].

As evidence of the Bush Administration's deference to corporate interests, the mega-companies behind the Bush Administration have faithfully enriched themselves through this highly privileged access to America's bully pulpit.

- In fiscal year 2002, 102 companies that have employed 125 elite Bush donors received federal contracts worth $84.1 billion[117].

- During Bush's presidency to date, 148 elite Bush donors have been involved in corporate scandals or helped run companies involved in them, perhaps most prominently Ken Lay of Enron. Eighty-two elite Bush donors either have been involved in campaign-finance scandals or helped run companies involved in them[118].

- Companies awarded at least $8 billion in mostly no-bid contracts inside Iraq and Afghanistan were major Bush 2000 campaign donors[119].

This preferential treatment by the Bush Administration has resulted in an upsurge in federal military contracts that reaped record profits for the defense industry[120], such as the $7 billion no-bid Iraq contract awarded to Vice President Cheney's former company, the oil services and military contractor Halliburton[121]. The super-hawkish inclination towards military expansionism displayed by Bush's foreign policy team was perhaps the strongest indicator of the Bush Administration's predisposition to support the American defense industry and launch aggressive warfare, particularly an invasion of America's perennial post-Cold War nemesis, Saddam's Iraq. Iraq was the ideal target to expedite American public support for a war that enriched the American defense industry.

Oil

The Bush Administration's advocacy of military expansionism coupled with its zealous pursuit of fossil fuel interests to display a pronounced predisposition to invading the world's premier oil real estate. Like the defense industry, the oil industry is a financial foundation for President Bush's personal fortune. Coming from a family whose wealth is based on the cornerstone of Big Oil, George W. Bush was primarily employed by the oil

industry prior to his political career. From the beginning, the political career of Bush the Younger relied heavily on fossil fuel money. Revealingly, the notoriously corrupt energy provider Enron has been his largest campaign contributor. As a prodigy of his father, Bush the Younger's political career and campaign financing were rooted in the Bush family's Mecca, Texas. This is the state most notoriously subservient to the oil industry, distinguished as both the nation's oil headquarters and the most heavily polluted state[122]. In acknowledgement of his Texas roots, George W. Bush ascended to the presidency directly from the governorship of Texas. In his 1999-2000 presidential campaign, Bush received more money from the oil and gas industries than any other federal candidate in the last decade[123]. From its inception, the American fossil fuel industry has funded and guided the Bush Administration.

Not surprisingly, American oil companies will profit greatly from the Bush Administration's involvement in the harvesting of Iraqi oil and the increased oil prices from Middle Eastern oil supply instability emerging from the Iraq invasion[xi]. Considering America's unrivaled foreign influence over the Saudi oil supply, combined with Iraq's oil, the United States now controls nearly half the world's oil reserves (a percentage that will grow as less-oil rich nations deplete their reserves). Consistent with PNAC's plans for American global hegemony, America's domination of the most vital natural resource in the modern petroleum-driven world equates to American domination over every nation. Most critically, America's ability to coerce the Iraqi oil industry has allowed the resolution of its conflict over Iraq's oil transaction currency standard by reestablishing the American dollar. At the time of Bush's 2000 election, Saddam Hussein's ongoing conflict with the United States led him to change the standard currency in which Iraqi oil was traded from American dollars to euros. The future depreciation of the dollar against the euro, as much as 17% in 2002 alone, generated massive profits for Saddam. Based on Saddam's (albeit short-lived) success story, coalitions of other

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[xi] Although American oil companies broadly announced their public opposition to the Bush Administration's invasion of Iraq, this joint declaration cannot conclusively refute claims that at least a significant block of these companies privately supported the invasion. If some American oil executives had colluded with the Bush Administration over the Iraq invasion, they certainly would not risk severely damaging their companies by publicly divulging this information. Instead, they would likely make this very same public declaration of opposition to the invasion. The participation of a number of American oil companies in Vice President Cheney's pre-9/11 National Energy Task Force, which secretly advocated the American invasion of Iraq to seize Iraqi oil, corroborates this assertion about the duplicity of some American oil companies.

Despite whatever complicity some American oil companies share for the Iraq invasion, a large sector most likely opposed the war genuinely. Although the neo-conservative movement that dominates the Bush Administration acts on behalf of the oil industry, its aggressive stewardship of the nation's energy supply can often clash with the oil industry's relatively pragmatic leadership. Along with a large sector of the American public, undoubtedly some oil industry executives understood that a disastrous war for the United States would constitute a cost that far outweighed the benefit of America's usurpation of Iraqi oil.

major oil-producing nations, such as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), are more apt to switch their oil transaction currency standard from dollars to euros. This potential assault on America's economic hegemony would crash the value of the dollar, most directly diminishing the wealth of American oil companies as well as the American economy[124]. Bush's invasion of Iraq represented a neo-conservative campaign to end America's thirty-year old rivalry with OPEC by asserting America's domination of the world oil supply.

President Bush's invasion of the world's second largest oil supply has also succeeded in defending another major Bush ally, the home of the world's largest oil reserve. Saudi Arabia has been a center of financial support for Bush and his family, a long-term relationship that clearly revealed Bush's apparent disposition to defend zealously the security of Saudi oil exports from such threats as Saddam Hussein's Iraq[125]. Perhaps most tellingly, the Bush/Cheney Administration is the ideological successor to the American administration that led America's largest military effort to secure Middle Eastern oil supplies, Operation Desert Storm. In particular, Desert Storm was motivated to protect Saudi Arabia, especially its oil supplies, from Saddam Hussein's imperialistic aspirations. The leader of Desert Storm, President George W. Bush's father, former President Bush the Elder, has been both one of the current president's most valued advisors and a member of the megalithic Carlyle Group that has greatly benefited from the current Iraq invasion[126]. The Carlyle Group, Bush the Elder and President Bush the Younger have strong financial ties to the House of Saud. Saudi Arabia has paid the Bush family and its associates over a billion dollars for oil and defense contracts. George W. Bush's oil company Harken Energy was even saved from bankruptcy by Saudi funding.

> Never before had a president's personal fortunes and public policies been so deeply entwined with another nation[127].

The current President Bush stands to inherit the Bush family fortune created by its extensive partnership with Saudi Arabia and his related advancement of the interests of American Big Oil. Revealingly, amidst all the Bush Administration's war planning following the 9/11 attack, punishing Saudi Arabia for its extensive financial and ideological support for Al Qaeda was never seriously considered[128]. Instead, the Bush invasion of Iraq destabilized the world's primary oil supply, including triggering a civil war in Iraq that has significantly reduced Iraq's oil output, enriching the Saudis, Bush's family and friends with higher oil prices and

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increasing America's economic and political dependence on Al Qaeda's most valuable supporter, the Saudi people. The Bush Administration's elimination of Iraq as a rival to Saudi Arabia is consistent with the advancement of President Bush's personal financial interests.

As obviously as George W. Bush himself, the top members of the 2000 Bush team represented a cadre of Big Oil champions. Bush the Younger's choice for his vice-presidential running mate presented America with a candidate administration led by two Texas oil millionaires who are among the most active representatives of America's first colossal effort to secure Middle Eastern oil supplies in 1991. Dick Cheney was widely anticipated to be the director of the Bush Administration's foreign and domestic energy plan[129]. In fact, Dick Cheney is the most prominent representative of the oil industry in the Bush Administration. For the past fifteen years, Cheney has been the MVP of Big Oil, guiding America as Secretary of Defense and later as vice president in America's most extensive effort to secure the majority of the world's oil supplies, in the Gulf War and the Iraq Invasion, respectively. Cheney led the oil industry during his five-year tenure as head of the world's largest oil fields services company, Halliburton, which has hundreds of millions of dollars in Saudi contracts. In the month of the Bush/Cheney election, November 2000, Halliburton signed at least $180 million in Saudi contracts[130]. Cheney directly transferred from this job as head of Halliburton to the extremely influential vice presidency of the American administration that has championed the agenda of Big Oil as American domestic and foreign policy more boldly than any in history. The centerpiece of Cheney's policy has been the elimination of Saudi Arabia's most notorious foreign threat and the acquisition of the world's most valuable oil real estate.

The most prominent member of PNAC, Dick Cheney, was a long-time advocate of the Iraq invasion as far back as the 1991 Gulf War. As CEO of Halliburton, the world's largest oil fields services company, Cheney continued to campaign for this American invasion of Iraq that would reap billions of dollars in contracts for his company. In a 1999 speech to the London Petroleum Institute, Cheney discussed the growing crisis over limited oil supplies and the need for more oil, asking, "Where is it going to come from?", and noting, "the Middle East with two-thirds of the world's oil and the lowest cost, is still where the prize ultimately lies"[131]. In recent years, neo-conservatives have felt increasing pressure to alleviate America's oil crisis. In 2005, reports by a number of prestigious and nonpartisan energy industry analysts and geologists predicted that the oil production of each of the world's largest publicly traded oil

companies has reached peak "production capacity" (the amount of oil that can be pumped to the surface on a daily basis), and will steadily decline beginning in the next four years[132]. In a widely discussed 2004 New York Times article on the world's largest oil supply, business analyst Jeff Gerth stated that "oil executives and government officials in the United States and Saudi Arabia . . . say capacity will probably stall near current levels, potentially creating a significant gap in the global energy supply". In conjunction with the dramatically escalating global demand for fossil fuel energy, the shortfall in oil production poses an imminent global energy crisis[133]. Considering reports by the U.S. Department of Energy projecting that America's reliance on foreign oil will increase from 53% of American oil consumption in 2002 to 66% by 2025, the United States will be particularly vulnerable to the rising oil crisis[134]. Not surprisingly, Vice President Cheney's 2001 National Energy Policy advocated the aggressive pursuit of foreign oil.

Beyond Cheney, other high-ranking members of the Bush Administration have displayed a clear allegiance to the interests of American oil companies. Most notably, the Bush Administration is dominated by representatives of The Project For The New American Century (PNAC), a group that is funded largely by the oil industry and which fervently promotes a strong American military presence in the Middle East to secure America's oil supply. Zalmay Khalilzad, a leading PNAC member who co-authored the group's founding ideological manifesto with Paul Wolfowitz in 1992, was the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan from 2003-2005 and is the current U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Khalilzad is a top oil industry official, having served as a consultant to the oil conglomerate Unocal in Afghanistan and Chevron-Texaco in Iraq[135]. Khalilzad was one of the key brokers in an oil pipeline deal between the Taliban and Unocal[136], a deal that is currently being implemented by Unocal's foremost representative, Afghanistan's President Karzai. The only influential member of Bush's 2000 foreign policy team who is not a member of PNAC, National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice, was on the board of directors of the company that currently owns Unocal, the oil giant Chevron-Texaco. Like Dick Cheney's enrichment of Halliburton, Condoleezza Rice has guided an administration that helped her former company achieve record profits[137]. The extensive representation of the American oil industry in the Bush Administration has consistently demonstrated the president's predisposition to pursue this special interest hawkishly.

During his 2000 campaign, Bush revealed his favoritism of the oil industry in his public policy statements. Emphasizing the importance of increasing oil supplies at the expense of attention to energy conservation, Bush made clear his intention to generate record profits for the oil industry[138].

I'll have an energy policy that empowers producers[139].

Bush specifically proposed America's rejection of the Kyoto global warming protocols, an international accord that would financially burden the oil industry with new environmental standards. Furthermore, this governor of the most polluted state in America questioned the consensus of the global scientific community that global warming has been largely caused by pollution from fossil fuels[140].

The 2000 Bush Campaign's overt favoritism of Big Oil led predictably to a neo-conservative administration that championed the cause of Big Oil over national security. The Bush Administration's energy policy, formulated by Dick Cheney, unabashedly acceded to the agenda of Big Oil and even advocated military intervention in the Middle East to secure oil supplies for America. Globally, the Bush Administration has earnestly pursued the establishment of U.S. military bases in the world's key oil regions, including the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and Africa[141]. On the domestic front, Bush's support of the corrupt energy giant Enron, Bush's largest campaign contributor, revealed as early as 2001 the Bush Administration's reckless pursuit of fossil fuel interests[142]. Also in 2001, the Bush Administration actively solicited the assistance of America's largest oil company, Exxon-Mobil, in the formation of the nation's energy policy. In particular, this company's "active involvement" in determining the administration's climate change policy led to President Bush's rejection of the Kyoto Treaty, despite overwhelming international support for the global pollution protocols[143]. Perhaps the most apparent evidence of this Bush energy policy "that empowers producers" has been the rising oil prices, which have more than doubled since Bush's invasion of Iraq[144]. While most Americans have suffered from this artificial inflation, the top American oil companies have generated record-breaking profits[145]. As gas prices soared in the fourth fiscal quarter of 2004, Exxon-Mobil posted the highest quarterly income ever reported by an American firm[146].

The Bush Administration facilitated this rise in fuel prices through a foreign policy that broadly destabilized the Middle East and a domestic policy that promoted an increasingly

unregulated free market for American energy companies[xii]. In Iraq, these two policies merged when, following the fall of Saddam Hussein, the Bush Administration disregarded broad Iraqi popular sentiment and attempted to institute this free oil market by privatizing the Iraqi oil industry, opening Iraqi oil to direct American exploitation[147]. This privatization was enacted beginning with Bremer's Order 39 under the early American occupation administration, continuing with the Bush Administration's appointment of Iraqi government officials and rigging of the Iraqi national election, and culminating with the codification of these privatization laws in the final draft of the Iraqi constitution constructed under the auspices of PNAC's top oil ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad[148]. In addition to the Bush Administration's usurpation of Iraqi oil wealth, the increase in global oil prices because of the destabilization of the Middle East served to enrich greatly oil companies. Unfortunately, dramatically escalating oil prices, which have tripled since January 2002[149], represent a fundamental security threat to the fossil fuel driven American and global economies[150]. This threat is potentially dwarfed by an even more pernicious effect, the enrichment of oil-rich Middle Eastern financiers of Al Qaeda[151]. The disregard for both America and the world that the Bush Administration displayed in the invasion of Iraq revealed a deep-seated preoccupation to crusade zealously for oil wealth in the Middle East.

Israel

Beyond military expansion and fossil fuels, the Bush team's Middle East policy has consistently been guided by support for Israeli imperialism. The origin of this Zionist influence on the Bush Administration is both financial and religious. The Bush inner circle's investments in the defense industry have partially motivated the administration to expand the highly profitable defense industry trade with Israel. The American fossil fuel industry also has a vested interest in an Israeli policy that complements America's own massive military presence in the most valuable oil region. By facilitating the expansion of Israel and the

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[xii] One of the key factors behind the particularly dramatic increase in gasoline prices in the United States during the Bush Administration is the artificial supply bottleneck that Big Oil has intentionally established by refusing to build a sufficient number of oil refineries to process America's imported oil (http://worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=46209; www.americanvoice2004.org/askdave/14askdave.html). This energy bottleneck is similar to the California Black Out crisis, in which Enron, First Energy and other major Bush campaign contributors used the national deregulation of the electricity industry as a cover to under fund grossly electricity generation (www.wsws.org/articles/2002/apr2002/cali-a25.shtml). In both cases, the industry could offer no logical reason for this artificial bottleneck other than the fact that it is profitable for the industry.

suppression of anti-American Arab regimes, the Bush Administration has enriched the corporate interests on which it was founded.

Paradoxically coupled with these corporate interests, President Bush's support for Israeli expansionism has also been one expression of the pervasive influence of his evangelical Christian faith, particularly its preoccupation with Apocalypse mythology, in his public policy [152]. In addition to starting a war on one of the main battlefields of the biblical Apocalypse War, Bush has apparently revealed this evangelical influence through his unilateral support for an expanding Jewish homeland in the biblical Holy Land. Biblically hailed as one of the signs of the impending Apocalypse, the reestablishment of Jewish control of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, including the Palestinian West Bank, has been eagerly awaited by evangelicals anticipating the utopian Promised Land of the post-Apocalypse.   As an evangelical Christian Zionist who believes that his administration serves as a righteous agent of God[153], Bush's support for Israeli expansionism suggests his belief that the Jews' inheritance of the biblical Holy Land trumps international law because it is prophesized in the bible. Since the 2000 campaign, George W. Bush's religiously motivated protection and promotion of the Zionist enterprise in the biblical Holy Land has portrayed his predisposition to use America's military colossus to eliminate the most outstanding foreign threats to Israel, such as Iraq and Iran.

Bush's family history with Saddam has helped develop his self-perception as the great Christian Zionist who will defend the world from the threat of Saddam Hussein in the Holy Land region. As director of the Central Intelligence Agency and later during the Reagan/Bush and Bush/Quayle Administrations, Bush the Elder marshaled America's support of the rise of Saddam. After Saddam's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Bush the Elder's declaration of war on his former Middle East ally christened Saddam, a mass murdering dictator, as an avowed enemy of the Bush clan.   The year following Bush the Elder's presidency, Saddam Hussein purportedly attempted to assassinate the ex-president while he was on a tour of Kuwait. Having been targeted for death by Saddam Hussein, Bush the Elder, like other enemies of Saddam, was burdened with a death threat that would linger as long as this murderous tyrant held power in Iraq. As president, his son cited Saddam's assassination attempt on Bush the Elder as a demonstration of the threat that motivated the Iraq invasion[154]. In this context, the toppling of Saddam by Bush the Younger had both an element of wrath and self-defense. This

deeply personal motivation to eliminate the threat of Saddam augmented Bush's evangelical Zionist inclination to invade Iraq.

The top officials in the Bush team displayed equally pronounced tendencies to support an Iraq invasion on behalf of Israel. Paul Wolfowitz, the Pentagon's second-in-command from 2001-2004 and the architect of the Iraq invasion, has consistently advocated an American invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein as a threat to Israel. As a descendant of Holocaust survivors, Wolfowitz was powerfully indoctrinated into the post-Holocaust Zionist movement. An echo of the Holocaust sixty years later, Wolfowitz's campaign for aggressive Zionism has distinguished him as the most visible reactionary American defender of the Jewish homeland. This proponent for the agenda of right-wing Israel reinforced George W. Bush's own sympathy to this agenda, apparently emboldening Bush's own Zionist inclination to invade Saddam's Iraq.

Along with Wolfowitz, other high-ranking administration officials belonging to the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) have publicly championed American military intervention in the Middle East to secure Israel. Some of the most unabashed spokesmen for this policy have been the third highest ranking official at the Defense Department during Bush's first term, former Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, and the former chairman of the Bush Administration's Defense Policy Board, Paul Wolfowitz's mentor, Richard Perle. In 1996, Richard Perle and Douglas Feith published their coauthored paper entitled "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm" through the right-wing Israeli think tank The Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies. In this paper, Perle and Feith promoted an Israeli invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam and destabilize the Middle East, setting the precedent for the toppling of every hostile Arab regime, including Lebanon, Syria and Iran. Fully supporting Israeli aggression against its neighbors, this paper promotes a preemptive military confrontation with all of Israel's enemies at the expense of peaceful negotiation[155]. The similarity between this agenda and that of PNAC reflects the profound influence of this neo-conservative Israel policy on the Bush Administration.

Many of the most influential members of the 2000 Bush team, including Perle, Feith, Cheney, Wolfowitz, and John Bolton (Undersecretary of State, 2001-2004), had belonged to a super hawkish Israeli think tank[xiii], the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA)

[xiii] All of these top officials resigned from the group upon joining the 2000 Bush campaign, apparently in order to avoid publicly appearing subservient to the right-wing Israeli agenda.

based in Washington, D.C. JINSA has continuously advocated hawkish American and Israeli foreign policies that inextricably intertwine the national security concerns of the two nations. Formed largely by American defense contractors[xiv], JINSA advocates drastically increasing American military spending to assist Israel[156]. The JINSA mission statement declares "U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation has been at the heart of JINSA's mission since its inception in 1976", continuing on to blame Muslims entirely for instability in the Middle East[157]. Notably, JINSA was created following Israel's 1973 American-supported victory over an Arab coalition and the retaliatory Middle Eastern oil embargo of the United States that devastated the American economy. Based on this antiquated pretext for a joint American-Israeli coalition against Israel's neighbors, JINSA has campaigned for American military intervention in the Middle East to protect Israel. In tandem with PNAC, the right-wing Israeli American lobby JINSA particularly advocated an American invasion of Saddam's Iraq, which it identified as the chief culprit behind most terrorist attacks on Israel[158]. Even prior to President Bush's election, the collection of JINSA ideologues that constituted the bulk of his foreign policy team foreshadowed his subservience to this agenda.

The 2000 Bush team's advocacy of military expansionism merged with its Zionist allegiance to portray a presidential candidate who favored a militarist Israeli policy towards radical Islamic terrorism. While Bush's support for a hawkish Israel did not dramatically alter the traditional support for the Democratic Party by American Jews, Bush's Israel policy certainly garnered the support of an increasingly belligerent Israel that was under siege from a new Palestinian uprising. During the 2000 campaign, Bush repeatedly criticized the Clinton/Gore Administration for pressuring Israel to conform to the peace process at the expense of Israel's security, clearly stating that his administration would allow Israel a free hand in dealing with the Palestinians[159]. Bush's pledge to Israel was widely received as genuine by Jewish leaders, who were freshly resentful of the Clinton/Gore Administration's conspicuous failure in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations[160]. Encouraged by the highly influential Israeli lobbyists in the 2000 presidential campaign, there was widespread anticipation that a future Bush Administration would deliver strong support for an aggressive Israeli response to the Palestinian uprising.

[xiv] JINSA's policies are largely based on the financial interests of the numerous major military contractors on its advisory board. In fact, every major American defense contractor, except Boeing, has representation on JINSA's advisory board.

Bush's presidency has undeniably displayed to the world his inclination to support Israel's war against the Palestinians, including Israeli actions, such as the military and civilian occupation of Palestinian territory, that have been declared illegal by numerous U.N. resolutions[161]. According to Bush's Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, Bush told his principals that he planned to disengage from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and "unleash Sharon" in his first national security meeting on January 30, 2001[162]. Bush's foreign policy has been distinguished by his absence from intervention in the escalating Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the critical pre-9/11 days of his administration, as well as his continuous support for Israel's violations of international law[163]. Highlighting Bush's pro-Zionist policy was his support for the Sharon government's construction of the Israeli border wall and assassination of the widely revered spiritual leader of Hamas, a hawkish policy condemned by every other member of the United Nations[164].

In the context of the Bush Administration's unprecedented support for Israel, Bush's invasion of Israel's archenemy, Iraq, has confirmed his apparent predisposition to launch a military crusade against Israel's enemies. Numerous respected public figures, such as U.S. Senator Ernest Hollings, have decried the Israeli influence behind the Bush Administration's decision to invade Iraq. This improper influence did not entirely escape the mainstream free press.

- In August 2002, *The Guardian* reported that "Israel signaled its decision yesterday to put public pressure on President George Bush to go ahead with a military attack on Iraq, even though it believes Saddam Hussein may well retaliate by striking Israel".

- In January 2003, the respected Washington journalist Robert Novak reported that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was telling American political leaders that "the greatest U.S. assistance to Israel would be to overthrow Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime". Novak further reported, "that view is widely shared inside the Bush Administration, and is a major reason why U.S. forces today are assembling for war"[165].

Compounding this public appearance of Israeli influence in the decision to invade Iraq, the architects of the Bush plan to invade Iraq, then Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz and his deputy Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, were implicated in a 2004 FBI investigation as having been unduly influenced to invade Iraq by a high-ranking Israeli spy in the Pentagon[166]. As early as 2000, Bush's foreign policy advisors visibly intended to launch an

aggressive military invasion of Iraq to secure Judeo-Christian domination of the oil-rich Holy Land, in stunning parallel to the abominable Crusades of the Middle Ages, an event that would immensely benefit Bin Laden in his public relations war against America.

Chapter 4.

Inaugurating Bush's Iraq Invasion

4.1. America's Millennial Iraq Decision

In the 2000 presidential election, America was presented with two starkly contrasting visions for continuing America's primary active military conflict, the bombing and embargo of Saddam's Iraq. In the 2000 presidential debates, Bush identified Saddam as the most important problem in the Middle East.

> The coalition against Saddam has fallen apart, or it's unraveling, let's put it that way. The sanctions are being - are being violated. There's - we don't know whether he's developing weapons of mass destruction. He better not be, or there's going to be a consequence should I be president.

Bush further explained his Iraq policy by emphasizing that Saddam was the key difference in his and Gore's Middle East policy[167]. Bush's promotion of a forced resolution to America's conflict with Iraq offered a new approach to this Middle Eastern dilemma.

Unlike Bush's hawkish policy on Saddam, Gore advocated a less destabilizing Iraq plan that did not endorse even a multilateral invasion of Iraq[168]. The prospect of a continuation of the Clinton/Gore Administration's Iraq policy threatened to perpetuate the devastating economic embargo of Iraq, an eyesore that was fueling resurgence in Islamic terrorism against America. Failing to address this national security threat, Gore's Iraq policy was couched in a dovish foreign policy that emphasized multilateral diplomatic solutions to foreign conflicts, a policy diametrically opposed to a preemptive unilateral invasion of a sovereign nation. An eagerness to invade Iraq unilaterally was indicated by the candidate whose foreign policy sacrificed multilateralism and diplomacy for a belligerent pursuit of the special interests that fueled America's involvement in the Middle East.

During the 2000 Election, the defense industry's candidate, George W. Bush, was a polar opposite of his chief rival, Vice President Al Gore. Both Gore's association with the Clinton Administration and his campaign platform portrayed a presidential candidate who was weak on national defense. Gore was part of an administration that was widely perceived as having greatly downsized the military and intelligence agencies, cutting defense spending $160 billion in its first term[169]. Most prominently, the Clinton/Gore Administration's dovish, reconciliatory

foreign policy led to one of America's greatest national security breaches, China's clandestine acquisition of state-of-the-art nuclear weapons and missile technology in the 1990s[170]. Emphasizing reconciliation with the world at the expense of national security, Gore promised to continue President Clinton's olive branch foreign policy.

In contrast with Bush's bully club foreign policy, Gore advocated a dovish foreign policy based on international reconciliation and non-provocative, stabilizing measures such as arms control. During the 2000 presidential campaign, Gore endorsed the traditionally dovish Democratic foreign policy of presidents Carter and Clinton, in stark contrast to Bush's representation of the traditionally hawkish Republican foreign policy of Nixon, Reagan and his father. As a U.S. senator and Vice President, Al Gore's extensive experience in foreign diplomacy portrayed a candidate who was knowledgeable, adept and committed to this vital area of government. Emphasizing his commitment to faithful participation in international agreements and organizations, like the Kyoto Pollution Protocols and the United Nations, Gore lucidly presented his foreign policy as chiefly a multilateral, diplomatic enterprise. On the other hand, Bush displayed an ignorance, ineptitude and disregard of foreign diplomacy that was marked by his militarist rejection of numerous international treaties and organizations, foreshadowing his future Iraq debacle. Juxtaposed to Al Gore, George Bush's successful portrayal as the candidate of military expansionism implied a predisposition to expand America's primary post-Cold War military conflict.

The two top presidential candidates also sharply disagreed on the issue of fossil fuels. Bush's advocacy for Big Oil contrasted greatly with Gore's renowned advocacy for an anti-Big Oil platform, the environmental and alternative energy movement. Gore promoted a major shift in traditional American energy policy that would diminish Big Oil's short-term profits through such policies as energy conservation, oil drilling restrictions, conversion to renewable alterative energies, and pollution controls on fossil fuel emissions. On the other hand, Bush advocated a very industry-friendly policy, including expanded fossil fuel use, ambitious oil drilling expansion, pursuit of new sources for America's oil needs, and diminished pollution controls. The disparity between the two energy policies presented Bush as the candidate most likely to zealously pursue Big Oil interests by securing American control over the world's premier oil real estate.

Beyond American corporate interests in the Middle East, the divergent Iraq policies of the two 2000 presidential candidates was reflected in their agendas towards Saddam's perennial enemy, Israel. Gore represented a dovish Middle East policy that had demonstrated a willingness to sacrifice the expansion of Israel for a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as seen in the Clinton/Gore Administration's fruitless millennial Middle East mediation. The failure of this administration that erupted in the millennial Palestinian uprising largely negated any support candidate Gore could receive from an increasingly hawkish Israel in late 2000. As a result of Gore's apparent deficiency on the issue of Israeli security and expansion, candidate Bush appeared as the only amenable candidate to Israeli Zionists. Additionally, Bush was prominently portrayed as the unabashed supporter of Zionism. Most apparently, Bush had appointed militant Zionists to lead his foreign policy team, such as Richard Perle and future Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. Bush's position on the issue of Israel portrayed him as the candidate most likely to conquer and eliminate the clearest state-sponsored threat to Israeli security. Relative to Al Gore, Bush's strong advocacy for the defense industry, Big Oil and militant Zionism presented him as the candidate most likely to invade Iraq.

4.2. President George Bush the Younger v. Saddam

From Inauguration to Invasion

In the first year of the presidential administration of George Bush the Younger, the 2000 Bush Team's militant predisposition redirected America towards aggressive warfare with Iraq. Bush's former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill recalls the urgency of the president's pre-9/11 fixation with Iraq, recounting in his memoirs that in the opening days of the Bush Administration, the president was pressuring his staff to find "any reason to invade Iraq"[171]. Within weeks of Bush's inauguration, his administration began planning the overthrow of Saddam's regime and the seizure of Iraqi oil fields for American companies[172].

Vice President Cheney was a leading figure in the administration's drive to control this oil wealth. As head of President Bush's Energy Task Force, Cheney based its policy on an April 2001 report called "Strategic Energy Policy Challenges for the 21st Century", a report that

recommended an American invasion of Iraq to control Iraq's oil reserves[173]. The report was issued in the context of a National Security Council directive, issued in the opening weeks of the Bush Administration, that instructed NSC staff to cooperate fully with Cheney's Energy Task Force in the "melding" of two policy areas, "operational policies toward rogue states" and "actions regarding the *capture* (emphasis added) of new and existing oil and gas fields"[174]. The early 2001 Cheney Task Force was particularly attentive to the oil fields of Iraq, keenly studying the geographical location of these oil supplies and monitoring the progress of foreign companies in negotiations for Iraqi oil, negotiations from which American oil companies were largely excluded[175]. Revealingly, a month after Bush's 2001 inauguration, his State Department convened a secret conference in which U.S. oil industry advisors were asked to interview possible replacements for a new U.S.-installed dictator in Iraq[176]. In the opening weeks of President Bush's first term, his administration's strong predisposition to invade Iraq was expressed in the aggressive planning for the American seizure of Iraq's oil wealth.

Following the 9/11 attack, Vice President Cheney declared that America's usurpation of Saddam's control of Iraq's oil reserves was as important a justification for the Iraq invasion as the elimination of Saddam's WMD threat, echoing the rationale for the invasion of Iraq that he advocated in 1991 as Secretary of Defense[177]. Presidential biographer Bob Woodward describes Cheney as a "powerful, steamrolling force obsessed with Saddam and taking him out"[178]. Woodward recounts Secretary of State Colin Powell's assessment of Cheney's preoccupation with invading Iraq.

> Colin Powell, the secretary of state, saw this in Cheney to such an extent, he, Powell, told colleagues that "Cheney has a fever. It is an absolute fever. It's almost as if nothing else exists"[179].

In the post-9/11 war, the oil tycoon who was charged with formulating America's pre-9/11 energy policy was pivotal in the movement to invade the world's premier oil real estate.

Despite the Bush Administration's early determination to invade Iraq, the lack of American public support for this belligerent action made the invasion politically infeasible. The central policy document of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), "Rebuilding America's Defenses" (RAD), concluded in September 2000 that "a new Pearl Harbor" was needed to motivate a transformation to an American military policy that endorsed the Iraq invasion[180]. As if on cue, the Bush Administration immediately seized upon the 9/11 attack as an excuse to invade Iraq. The day after 9/11, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld

advised Bush to invade Iraq despite all indications that this was solely an Al Qaeda operation[181]. As early as five hours after the 9/11 attack, notes recorded by Rumsfeld's aide reveal that the final process towards war with Iraq had begun[182]. Rumsfeld's notes from these hours state:

> . . . best info fast. Judge whether good enough hit S.H. (Saddam Hussein) at same time. Not only UBL (Usama bin Laden). Go massive. Sweep it all up. *Things related and not* (emphasis added)[183].

As the ashes from two ground zeros gradually filled the skyline, Rumsfeld quickly proposed bombing Iraq because there were no good targets for bombing in Afghanistan. Rumsfeld's radical suggestion, to overlook the perpetrator of the 9/11 attack and retaliate on an *unrelated* third party, conspicuously ignored the fact that there was no evidence of a terrorist alliance, or even amiable relations, between Al Qaeda and Saddam[184]. In fact, Rumsfeld was so eager to rally support for this action that he asked the CIA on ten separate occasions to find evidence linking Iraq to the 9/11 attack[185]. After the CIA repeatedly failed to uncover any such link, Rumsfeld proceeded undaunted to advocate the Iraq invasion.

Richard Clarke, President Bush's chief counter-terrorism advisor until his resignation a month before the Iraq invasion, recounts that the administration was primarily concerned with invading Iraq immediately after 9/11[186]. Clarke even describes how Bush pressured his counter-terrorism team to incriminate Saddam for the 9/11 attack in a meeting he had with the president on September 12, 2001.

> The President, in a very intimidating way, left us, me and my staff, with the clear indication that he wanted us to come back with the word that there was an Iraqi hand behind 9/11 because they had been planning to do something about Iraq from before the time they came into office . . . And while the World Trade Center was still smoldering, while they were still digging bodies out, people in the White House were thinking, "Ah, this gives us the opportunity we've been looking for to go after Iraq[187].

From his insightful position as the National Security Agency's counterterrorism czar, Richard Clarke perceived the Bush Administration emphasizing Saddam, and not the perpetrators of the 9/11 attack, as the prime target of America's 9/11 retaliation. Then Secretary of State Colin Powell later confirmed this apparent opportunism displayed by the Bush Administration in his observations of PNAC's ideological founder, then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul

Wolfowitz, who had fervently supported Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's proposal to strike Iraq in retaliation for the 9/11 attack regardless of Iraqi involvement.

> Paul was always of the view that Iraq was a problem that had to be dealt with. And he saw this as one way of using this event as a way to deal with the Iraq problem[188].

This revelation from then Secretary of State Colin Powell during his loyal tenure at the Bush Administration offers an authoritative corroboration about the hijacking of the 9/11 catastrophe by PNAC's top ideologue.

The Bush Administration's post-9/11 urgency to invade Iraq was quickly crystallized into a formal policy. Six days after the 9/11 attack, on September 17, 2001, Bush formalized his post-9/11 national security policy in a top secret National Security Directive that emerged from a three-day war council at Camp David. The document, which outlined America's military response to the 9/11 attack, included planning for the American invasion of Iraq, even though there was no evidence of an Iraqi alliance with Al Qaeda[189]. Consistent with the Bush Administration's new national security doctrine that melded America's policies towards rogue nations and capturing foreign oil supplies, President Bush also ordered planning for seizing Iraq's oil fields on this fateful day[190]. Three days later, according to the British ambassador to the United States, President Bush told British Prime Minister Tony Blair that he planned to invade Afghanistan and then Iraq[191]. Revealingly, members of The Project For The New American Century were deeply involved in the Bush Administration's planning groups for the Iraq invasion, particularly plans to privatize Iraqi oil[192]. Predictably, the plan for the Iraq invasion, written by PNAC's ideological founder, then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, fulfilled the PNAC objective for an invasion of Iraq to control Middle Eastern oil at the expense of other military priorities.

Following the American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the Bush Administration shifted America's military focus away from the 9/11 perpetrators and onto Iraq. According to George Bush's presidential biographer, Bob Woodward, Bush secretly initiated America's mobilization for the invasion of Iraq as early as November 21, 2001.

> President Bush, after a National Security Council meeting, takes Don Rumsfeld aside, collars him physically, and takes him into a little cubbyhole room and closes the door and says, "What have you got in terms of plans for Iraq? What is the status of the war plan? I want you to get on it. I want you to keep it secret." Woodward says immediately after that, Rumsfeld told General Tommy Franks

to develop a war plan to invade Iraq and remove Saddam - and that Rumsfeld gave Franks a blank check[193].

President Bush's insistence prior to the conclusion of the Afghanistan campaign that his administration secretly proceed with the Iraq war plan that he had authorized in the days after 9/11 strongly revealed his predisposition to enact this future war regardless of the detriment to America's war against the 9/11 perpetrators. To fund this secret preparation for the Iraq invasion, the Bush Administration secretly redirected $700 million from the Afghanistan appropriations bill without Congressional knowledge in July 2002[194].

The irrationality of this illicit shift in America's military focus was decried by the top military official charged with its implementation. In early 2002, the commander of the American invasion of Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks, told the head of the Senate Intelligence Committee that Bush had turned his attention away from Al Qaeda to pursue a poor target in Iraq. In particular, this distinguished armed forces chief emphasized that Bush's redirection of the war conspicuously ignored the key Al Qaeda targets outside of Afghanistan, such as those inside Yemen and Somalia, as well as the more problematic, extensive direct connections between Saudi Arabia and Al Qaeda[195]. At the expense of the war against Al Qaeda's high command, which continues to operate from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region four years after the 9/11 attack, the Bush Administration opportunistically mobilized for war with Iraq in early 2002.

In March 2002, contrary to the official administration position until March 2003, Vice President Cheney informed Republican senators that President Bush had already decided to invade Iraq and remove Saddam from power[196]. Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh confirmed this assertion.

> By early March, 2002, a former White House official told me, it was understood by many in the White House that the President had decided, in his own words, to go to war (with Iraq) . . . the Bush Administration took many intelligence operations that had been aimed at Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups around the world and redirected them to the Persian Gulf . . .Chalabi's[xv] defector reports were now flowing from the Pentagon directly to the Vice-President's office, and then on to the President, with little prior evaluation by intelligence professionals[197].

[xv] Ahmad Chalabi is perhaps the man most notorious for disseminating the false intelligence that provoked the Iraq invasion. Having a long-standing association with the American neo-conservative movement, Chalabi was one of the top sources for supplying the Bush Administration with intelligence on Saddam's Iraq.
(www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/truth/why/chalabi.html)

Having started an irreversible march to war, the Bush Administration then attempted to justify the action using highly questionable intelligence sources.

In early 2005, the publication of minutes from a July 2002 meeting of Britain's national security council revealed that the Bush Administration's closest foreign ally, Britain's Blair Administration, was privy to unquestioned evidence that the American government was fixing intelligence about Saddam to exaggerate the Iraqi threat and bolster the case for an invasion that had already been secretly authorized by President Bush[198]. In one of the memos, Peter Ricketts, political director of the British Foreign Office, openly questions the Bush Administration's justification for the Iraq invasion.

> U.S. scrambling to establish a link between Iraq and al-Qaida is so far frankly unconvincing . . . For Iraq, "regime change" does not stack up. It sounds like a grudge match between Bush and Saddam . . . But even the best survey of Iraq's WMD programs will not show much advance in recent years on the nuclear, missile or CW/BW (chemical or biological weapons) fronts: the programs are extremely worrying but have not, as far as we know, been stepped up[199].

In the July 2002 memos, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw concurs with this analysis of the Bush Administration's rush to war.

> It seemed clear Bush had made up his mind to take military action, even if the timing was not yet decided. But the case was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbors, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran[200].

Despite this apparently weak justification for war, the British memos reveal that the Bush Administration was irrevocably committed to the invasion. According to Richard Dearlove, head of Britain's central intelligence agency, MI-6, as early as July 2002, the Bush Administration had embarked on a criminal action to justify the war.

> There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But *the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy* (italics added). The NSC (National Security Council) had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record[201].

This revelation about the origin of the Iraq invasion confirmed evidence that the Bush Administration had zealously embraced questionable intelligence about Saddam's WMD and

ignored the assessments of many U.S. intelligence analysts who internally questioned the veracity of almost every major piece of this intelligence[202].

In step with the preparation of public opinion, the Bush Administration greatly expanded the No-Fly Zone conflict inside Iraq in 2002 in prelude to the invasion. As observed by former U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter, President Bush signed executive orders in late August 2002 that authorized the initiation of active military operations inside Iraq. These orders were implemented the following month, most obviously through a large expansion of the joint U.S.-British bombing campaign of Iraqi targets inside and outside of the No-Fly Zone. These operations were designed to degrade Iraq's command and control capabilities, provoke a retaliation by Saddam that helped justify the American invasion, as well as facilitate the insertion of U.S. special operation units into Iraq. These U.S. forces conducted not only reconnaissance, but also direct action against Iraqi targets prior to the official commencement of hostilities on March 19, 2003[203]. Lawyers from the British Foreign Office, as well as the vice president of the International Commission of Jurists, informed the British government that the ongoing escalation of aerial attacks against Iraq in July 2002 were illegal, because the legal basis for attacks on Iraq was the direct deterrence of Saddam's forces, not the intimidation of Saddam or the preparation for an invasion of Iraq[204]. Data released by the British Ministry of Defense in August 2005 confirmed that Saddam had in fact reduced by ten-fold his attacks on Allied aircraft in Iraqi airspace in the nine months following the 9/11 attack, the time period that directly preceded the broad expansion of the Anglo-American bombing of Iraq[205]. This data directly contradicts the Bush Administration's assertion that its escalated bombing of Iraq was in retaliation for a large increase in Saddam's attacks on Allied aircraft in Iraqi airspace. Not only had the Bush Administration committed America to war with Iraq prior to seeking Congressional or United Nations approval in 2002, but it actually initiated the war unofficially at this time as well.

The diplomatic prelude to Bush's official declaration of war involved theatrics at the United Nations. Initially, President Bush did not even intend to approach the United Nations for approval of the invasion of Iraq, consistent with the PNAC plan for a unilateral American invasion that secured Iraqi oil supplies exclusively for American oil companies. After great resistance to this unilateral approach emerged from within and without his administration, Bush proceeded to make overtures for United Nations assistance[206]. This Bush strategy

appears to have been a compromise to rally domestic and international support for the invasion through the weapons inspections process. Consistent with the strategy outlined in one of the leaked top-secret British government memos, the Bush Administration facilitated the resumption of unrestricted U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq to "wrongfoot" Saddam diplomatically[207]. As explicitly stated in these "smoking gun" documents, U.N. weapons inspections were being used by the Bush Administration not to avert war, but rather as a tool to offer legal justification for a war that President Bush had already authorized[208].

At the beginning of the U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq in late 2002, the Bush Administration immediately began to claim that Saddam was obstructing the inspections, and that this breach of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 should trigger a U.N.S.C. authorization for invasion. In prelude to the planned total withdrawal of all weapons inspectors on the eve of the invasion, in February 2003 President Bush rejected a Franco-German proposal to triple the number of U.N. weapons inspectors[209]. Instead, in a bid to seek U.N. approval for the impending invasion, Secretary of State Colin Powell presented America's case against Saddam to the Security Council. Virtually every piece of evidence presented was later proved to be fraudulent[210]. Powell failed to persuade a justifiably skeptical international community into endorsing the planned invasion, forcing the Bush Administration to proceed without a United Nations resolution authorizing this action against Iraq. The following month, after over 700 inspections had failed to uncover any WMD, Bush declared that Saddam was nevertheless hiding vast stockpiles of WMD. Labeling the weapons inspections ineffectual, President Bush prematurely terminated them. Despite the United Nations authoritative refutation of his administration's indictment of Saddam, Bush then proceeded unilaterally to invade Iraq.

Without U.N. involvement, before, during and in the months following the invasion, the Bush Administration planned to transfer ownership of the Iraqi oil industry to American companies[211]. In November 2001, the rapid U.S. military victory in Afghanistan emboldened the Bush Administration to replace the existing plan for a coup in Iraq to an American invasion and occupation of Iraq that could remake the Iraqi economy. Paul Wolfowitz, the central planner of this project, proposed in a 101-page document that most Iraqi state assets, especially the oil industry, be sold to American companies[212]. During the invasion, the first Iraqi facilities secured by Bush's American war machine were not possible sights for WMD or

WMD information, but rather facilities critical to the oil industry such as the Iraqi Oil Ministry[213]. Apparently, securing Iraq's oil was more important to the Bush Administration than preventing Saddam from using his purported vast WMD arsenal against the invading American forces. This initial conduct by the Bush war machine suggested that the WMD threat was a farce perpetrated, in part, to control Iraqi oil. This impression has been perpetuated by the Bush Administration's conspicuous failure to secure Iraqi nuclear power generation equipment and materials that can be used to make nuclear weapons, a major security breach that was first noticed by the International Atomic Energy Agency in October 2004 following large-scale theft of these materials[214].

The 2004 conclusion of the U.S. weapons inspectors that Saddam did not possess any WMD, let alone the vast arsenal described by the Bush Administration before the war, or even have any active WMD programs, further confirmed the suggestion that the case for war was fabricated[215]. A Gallup poll conducted in April 2005, before the release of the infamous Downing Street Memos, suggested that 50% of Americans believed that the Bush Administration "deliberately misled the American public" about Iraq's WMD[216]. A CNN/USA Today poll conducted after the release of the Downing Street Memos corroborated these findings[217]. After the Iraq invasion, then Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz publicly admitted that the fundamental reason for the invasion of Iraq was control of its oil supplies[218]. In a scripted speech in 2005, President Bush explicitly echoed this reason as a primary justification for the continued U.S. occupation[219]. In an unprecedented display of executive corruption, the Bush Administration lied to Congress about the nature of the Iraqi threat to America and the status of diplomatic negotiations and U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq. This impeachable violation of the False Statements Accountability Act of 1996 was a bold display of the extent of the special interest influence in the Bush Administration's decision to invade Iraq[220]. In the context of this unabashed pursuit of Iraqi oil, the Bush Administration's obfuscation of the truth about Saddam's WMD programs and connections with Al Qaeda most prominently revealed the administration's pronounced predisposition to invade Iraq.

Aftermath

Although to date widespread resistance inside and outside of Iraq has stalled the Bush Administration's plans to transfer the Iraqi oil industry directly to American companies, the administration has attempted to seize this wealth through other, more covert means. President Bush's 2005 appointment of the primary architect of the Iraq invasion, PNAC's ideological godfather Paul Wolfowitz, to lead the World Bank reveals the Bush Administration's new plan to seize Iraqi oil wealth. In the tradition of America's policy of economic usury, as described in John Perkins' *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man,* the Bush Administration will coerce the Iraqi government into accepting massive reconstruction loans from the World Bank that will consign Iraq to economic slavery and lead to the privatization of Iraqi industries under foreign ownership. Mirroring a similar concurrent situation in oil-rich Ecuador[221], Iraq will be shackled by a debtor relationship to America, the source of 16% of World Bank funds, forcing the transfer of oil profits to the United States.

This notorious international usury by the World Bank further handicaps the recovery of disaster-stricken nations by greatly hindering reconstruction. Loans are approved on the condition that they are used to hire foreign consultants and contractors at exorbitant rates. These no-bid contracts allow the foreign contractors freedom from competition, and largely from oversight, to further bilk the victim nation through bloated cost statements. In the case of Iraq, much of America's investment in the Iraq loan would be generously paid to American companies without services rendered. To date, in the absence of a World Bank loan in Iraq, American reconstruction contractors awarded with billions of dollars in Iraqi oil revenue have engaged in rampant corruption while only spending a fraction of the monies on actual reconstruction projects[222]. Already in Afghanistan, "the World Bank mandated an increased role for the private sector in water, telecommunications, oil, gas and mining and directed the government to leave electricity to foreign investors". Afghan President Karzai has since bewailed the failures of reconstruction caused by rampant corruption among these foreign contractors[223], a diversion of vital capital that has greatly contributed to Afghanistan's unparalleled resurgence as a narco-state based on the opium trade[224]. The Bush Administration's war and reconstruction profiteering, especially its designs for Iraqi oil, has surpassed reconstruction as the top priority of America's effort in Iraq. A reprehensible result

of this Bush policy has been the crippling of Afghanistan and Iraq's reconstruction efforts, including a deficit in basic services like water, electricity, public health aid and gasoline supplying[225]. This powerful demonstration of the Bush Administration's commitment to war profiteering strongly confirms its predisposition to invade Iraq.

In support of this bid to usurp Iraqi oil wealth, the man most notorious for disseminating the false intelligence that provoked the Iraq invasion, a convicted embezzler, Ahmad Chalabi, was appointed first as the interim Iraqi Oil Minister in April 2005 and later as the Iraqi deputy Prime Minister in charge of energy infrastructure. Chalabi, who has extensive ties to the Israeli political lobby JINSA, particularly through Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz, was the Bush Administration's original choice to be the future Iraqi Prime Minister when the administration was actively pursuing the immediate privatization of Iraqi oil in 2003. Experts on the Iraqi conflict have voiced widespread concern that Chalabi will continue his long-standing record of corrupt practices by facilitating the privatization of Iraqi oil[226]. Ominously, the economic legal framework established by the final draft of the Iraqi constitution has codified the privatization of major Iraqi industries, most notably the oil industry, confirming widespread fears of the Bush Administration's usurpation of Iraq's economy[227].

In addition to the obvious fingerprint of Big Oil on Bush's Iraq decision, American military contractors and militant Zionists both motivated and benefited from the Iraq invasion. The empowerment of America's defense and oil industry in the Bush Administration, most visibly represented by the Bush/Cheney Carlyle-Halliburton complex, reaped huge profits for these interests in both Afghanistan and Iraq[228]. Since the removal of the most overt state-sponsor of terrorism against Israel, the ruling Zionist Likud party has proceeded, largely without terrorist retaliations, to expand large Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank[229] and to construct a highly controversial wall between Israel and the West Bank that seizes significant tracts of Palestinian territory[230]. The advancement of these special interests through the invasion of Iraq has retroactively displayed the Bush Administration's underlying objective.

The global revelation of the Bush Administration's spurious justification for the Iraq invasion confirmed this apparent predisposition to invading Iraq, in particular the degree to which PNAC interests have motivated President Bush's plan to invade Iraq since before his

election. The Republican dominated Senate has refused to investigate this widely publicized impeachable offense[231], a crime that is among the greatest that a president can commit, the prosecution of aggressive war. The Senate has most likely forfeited the golden opportunity to authoritatively refute this damaging claim because the charge is in fact true. Unfortunately, the "cat is out of the bag" and the failure of Congress to formally condemn this action by the Bush Administration merely serves to impugn Congress and its democratic constituents, the American people, for Bush's crime of aggressive war.

America may forget that the Bush Administration lied to initiate a protracted war of imperialism, but the world community will not forget. Even in the United States, it is broadly believed that the Bush Administration distorted intelligence to launch an aggressive war in violation of the United Nations Charter's most sacred law, the abolition of wars that do not serve as self-defense, humanitarian intervention, or an authorization by the U.N. Security Council. The effect of this flagrant violation of international law in Iraq has been the devastation of America's reputation and the destabilization of global security. The broad-ranging, pernicious effects of the Iraq invasion include:

- The diplomatic crippling of the coalition against Al Qaeda,
- The provocation of an unprecedented increase in international terrorist attacks,
- The degradation of the world's foremost security force, the American military,
- The squandering of America's vital financial resources, and
- The stagnation of the global economy through higher fossil fuel prices.

In a most telling display of the Bush Administration's overwhelming predisposition to invade Iraq, this war to enrich a corporate-religious Middle East triumvirate has sacrificed both American and global national security. By leading an American military crusade in the Middle East to eliminate Israel's enemies and control the bulk of the world's oil supplies, Bush has predictably vindicated Bin Laden in his public relations war against America.

Chapter 5.

The Cole Bombing:

Did Bin Laden Try To Put Bush In Office?

Since the early 1990s, two opposing parties have shared the vision of provoking an American invasion of Iraq. As the millennium neared, this vague strategic relationship between Al Qaeda and the Bush Team began to crystallize into a common objective: the election of an American administration that would invade Iraq. On the waters of the Arabian Peninsula, a base of support for both Bin Laden and Bush, Al Qaeda transformed the shared vision into an action against the USS COLE. This bombing redefined Bin Laden's war against America as a campaign to support the election and reelection of George Bush the Younger. On the eve of the millennium, in the hull of an American destroyer, Bin Laden christened the marriage of Al Qaeda and the Bush Administration.

5.1. The Bombing's Effect on the American Public

The most important vote in the 2000 United States Presidential Election was cast on October 12, 2000 by a man who seeks to destroy America. A mere three weeks before the election that was widely predicted to be the closest in American history, Osama bin Laden bombed the naval destroyer USS COLE. As discussed in *The 9/11 Commission Report*, Bin Laden meticulously masterminded this attack[232]. A boat packed full of explosives detonated into the side of the destroyer, nearly sinking the vessel, causing a quarter of a billion dollars in damage and killing seventeen Americans[233]. This unprecedented sea-based terrorist attack was Al Qaeda's first unconcealed attack outside of Bin Laden's homeland Saudi Arabia that targeted the United States military. Following the 1998 African Embassy bombings, the Cole bombing was only the second overt Al Qaeda attack on America abroad outside of Saudi Arabia.

History witnesses that the appearance of a major foreign military threat to a nation at peace immediately results in an enormous surge in public support for national defense,

especially for a leader who is viewed as a champion of the military. In particular, at the onset of a war initiated by an enemy's surprise attack, national opinion broadly advocates a strong military retaliation. At this time, powerful feelings of fear and wrath trump any inclination to pursue a diplomatic solution. This short-term effect of such an attack was most obviously displayed in the 9/11 aftermath, when the overwhelming American sentiment favored military retaliation against Al Qaeda, as opposed to diplomatic efforts to eliminate such underlying causes of terrorism as poverty and economic inequity. This national mandate for military aggression can serve as the most potent catalyst for a prospective national leader's election. Many of history's most terrible tyrants, from Maximillian Robespierre to Napoleon Bonaparte to Adolf Hitler, rode into power on such waves of terror.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, American public opinion is arguably more susceptible to manipulation by a foreign threat than at any point in history. Accordingly, the 2000 Election was the most vulnerable United States presidential election to date. The fact that this was also the closest election in modern history magnified this vulnerability. In such a close contest, an event like a terrorist attack need only change a tiny fraction of 1% of the votes to give one candidate victory. The bombing of the USS COLE immediately before Election 2000 gave the candidate who most favored national military defense the decisive votes in the most malleable election in United States history. While it is true that every election is intentionally and decisively influenced by a number of competing parties, the Cole bombing is significant because the party was not domestic. Instead, the party behind the Cole bombing was a foreign party whose primary purpose is the destruction of America.

Bush v. Gore

The Cole bombing favored Bush in the election of the two remaining candidates on 10/12/00, both as the national defense candidate and as the leader of a new administration in the war against Al Qaeda. The careers and policy statements of the foremost leaders of the Bush team clearly championed a forceful national defense policy, while the Gore team portrayed a presidential candidate who was weak on national defense. Furthermore, Bush's public persona as a cowboy president more convincingly portrayed a forceful national defense

leader than Gore's dovish appearance, which was widely characterized as a tenderhearted "beta-male" personality that seemed incompatible with the traditional image of a strong military leader. Bin Laden's Cole bombing was a boon to the stronger national defense candidate, terrorizing a crucial fraction of the electorate to vote for Bush in the 2000 election.

Bush's audacious and proud cowboy persona is also a window to a more sinister characteristic, his hawkish inclination towards extreme acts of vengeance in response to attacks. The Texas governor's record of death penalty executions became a popularized symbol of Bush's cowboy-vendetta posture as a great avenger during the 2000 Campaign. In the immediate weeks after the Cole bombing, Bin Laden could expect that popular American sentiment would naturally be dominated by an overwhelming desire for vengeance against Al Qaeda. Wrath would sway a crucial fraction of the United States populace to elect the most vengeful candidate to the presidency. The swing vote from the Cole bombing aftermath that narrowly put a neo-conservative war hawk in the Oval Office represented a predictable mandate for a strong United States military retaliation against Al Qaeda.

Perhaps most damningly, the Cole bombing portrayed Gore as the candidate from an administration that had failed to diminish Al Qaeda's military capacity since it publicly declared global war on the United States in 1998. Additionally, the concurrent failure of the Clinton/Gore Administration's policy of reconciliation in the Middle East was widely perceived as the cause of the millennial Palestinian uprising and the ensuing resurgence in the fundamentalist Islamic crusade against America, further damaging Gore's attempt to portray himself as an able candidate to lead the war against Al Qaeda. The combination of Gore's portrayal of both weak and failing military leadership, along with Bush's portrayal of forceful military leadership, presented Bush as the champion of strong national defense. By pressuring the election of a militarist candidate, the bombing of the USS COLE constituted Bin Laden's attack on the Gore campaign and sponsorship of the Bush campaign.

The timing of the Cole bombing was a crucial factor in transforming this short-term shift in American public sentiment into the election of a vengeful, militant candidate and the rejection of the candidate who had served in the dovish administration that failed to diminish the Al Qaeda threat in the four years since its first open attack on the United States. By launching the Cole bombing in the final weeks before the election, American voters were more apt to still feel the immediate emotional impact of the attack in the voting booth than if the

attack occurred earlier in the year. The more vivid the attack in the voters' collective memories on Election Day, the more likely their vote would be influenced by the emotional response for a strong military retaliation. The proximity of the Cole bombing to the election indicated that Bin Laden was attempting to induce this angry response.

On the other hand, had Al Qaeda launched the bombing earlier in the year, the American public's outrage about the unprovoked attack would be significantly diminished by Election Day. Instead of the mandate for military aggression, the long-term effect of a major terrorist attack on a population tends towards the evolution of a less belligerent, more rational diplomatic campaign to rally the general public to deflate the terrorist group's supporters. If the American public had a few months to absorb the shock of the Cole bombing prior to the election, a rational mandate for a diplomatic solution might well have outweighed the emotionally charged mandate for military retaliation in the voting booth. As the candidate most respected for foreign diplomatic prudence and aptitude, Gore might have won Election 2000 had the Cole bombing occurred earlier in the year. Perhaps more likely, the notorious short attention span of most voters would have dissipated the effect of the bombing on the American populace, negating any influence on either candidate and allowing Gore to win free of foreign influence. Instead, Bin Laden chose to launch the attack shortly before the election in order to support Bush, the less diplomatically adept, more militarist candidate.

Substantial evidence indicates that Bin Laden intended to execute an even more dramatic and overt attempt at American regime change prior to the 2000 Presidential Election. Originally, Bin Laden wanted the 9/11 attack to occur in the final weeks of September 2000 or the month of October, but the 9/11 hijackers were not prepared at this time[234]. Such a spectacular terrorist attack would have had an even more pronounced effect on the 2000 Election by generating a much stronger mandate for military retaliation. Notably, this attack would have occurred at the end, and not the beginning, of an American administration, placing a much greater burden of responsibility on the Clinton/Gore Administration than the Bush Administration actually did receive in the ninth month of its administration. As regards the Cole bombing, Bin Laden intended to execute it even closer to Election Day than it actually occurred, but poor command communication led to its premature execution[235]. If this bombing had occurred closer to the 2000 Election date, it would have also generated even a more pronounced shift in American public support towards the militarist candidate. Bin Laden's

well-documented intent to launch a massive attack on America immediately before the 2000 Election most clearly reveals his goal of facilitating Bush's election.

In determining whether Bin Laden intended to effect an American regime change via the Cole bombing, it must be considered that Bin Laden is a geopolitical genius who has successfully evaded his superpower enemies for a decade while devising their destruction and, today, has achieved major victories in Al Qaeda's public relations war against his primary nemesis, America. A proper respect for the genius Bin Laden has clearly demonstrated leads to the conclusion that he most probably considered the effect that the Cole bombing would have on the United States presidential election only three weeks away. Indeed, he would have to be inexplicably foolish not to have anticipated that his attack would in some way affect the election. In fact, the likelihood is very small that the Cole bombing randomly coincided with the eve of the American presidential election. In the 60 months after Bin Laden started openly attacking America in 1996, he launched three major attacks. By this estimation, a major Al Qaeda attack had a 1 in 20 chance of randomly coinciding with the crucial timeframe of October 2000. If this chance scenario was actually the case on October 12, 2000, its origin could only be explained as a result of improbable developments and an uncharacteristic geopolitical ignorance in Bin Laden's planning.

Bin Laden's Terrorist Coups

The bombing of the USS COLE was Al Qaeda's most remarkable and unappreciated feat of regime change to date. Through a number of successful operations, Bin Laden has proven that a major terrorist attack can be a most effective means of regime change in a modern democracy. By manipulating the fear of the voter constituency, a foreign terrorist can sway the voters towards supporting foreign policies that unknowingly favor the terrorist. Bin Laden's assistance in Bush's 2000 election helped spawn Al Qaeda's most valuable recruitment tool, a belligerent administration that isolated America from the world community, especially from the Muslim world. Bin Laden's successful use of this revolutionary weapon in psychological warfare has demonstrated an enormous tactical advantage over any democratic opponent, particularly the United States. Al Qaeda has the power not only to remove

America's executive leadership, but also to replace the administration with the candidate administration that best suits Bin Laden's objectives.

Bin Laden has successfully executed at least two other such acts of regime change. Unlike the case of the USS COLE bombing, these two bombings occurred during a war that was initiated by the targeted democratic nation. In such a situation, this form of voter manipulation typically sways the constituency into overt appeasement, not overt opposition. When an American-led multi-national force entered Lebanon to stabilize the civil-war torn country following Israel's invasion, the bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut in 1983 by Bin Laden and Hezbollah affiliates pressured America and its allies to withdraw the security forces[xvi]. This bombing was tantamount to a regime change because the domestic America resentment at this seemingly unnecessary, disastrous deployment pressured the Reagan Administration, the dominant security force in Lebanon at the time, to reverse its policy, withdraw its armed forces and concede victory to the radical Islamic fundamentalists. The Beirut Marine Barracks bombing represented a coup both in Lebanon and in the regional context of the conflict between radical Islam and America. Less than five years after the Iranian Revolution, the United States was once again forcefully ejected from its pseudo-occupation of the Middle East by a radical Islamic coup.

Two decades later, Bin Laden executed his clearest and most widely recognized act of regime change in a democracy. After Spain sent its troops to assist the American occupation of Muslim Iraq in 2003, the Madrid train bombings on the eve of the 2004 Spanish national elections swayed voter sentiment towards ousting the pro-American government and

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[xvi] In his first restricted declaration of war against America in 1996, Bin Laden claimed responsibility for the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks in Lebanon in his characteristic innuendo. He reiterated this claim in 2002 (posted on www.cnn.com, 10/26/02). Listing this attack exclusively with other attacks widely attributed to him, Bin Laden staked his reputation (at least, among his followers) on this claim. Considering that it has never been proven that Bin Laden has claimed responsibility for an attack he did not commit, and considering the detrimental effect such a false claim could have on his reputation, it is a reasonable conclusion that Bin Laden was in fact involved in the 1983 attack on America. Although widely attributed to America's Islamic arch-rival, Hezbollah, this bombing predictably wrought great devastation to a highly vulnerable Iran as the Reagan Administration responded by sharply escalating its funding of Saddam Hussein's vicious war against Iran. While Hezbollah's motivation to launch this attack seems muddled, Bin Laden's ambition to oust the Cold War superpowers from Islamic lands could easily have led this rising star of the jihadists to fund and/or plan the attack. Bin Laden was also well connected to pursue this objective in the Islamic terrorist world, through the Muslim Brotherhood network, Hezbollah associates and his homeland Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden had motive, method and opportunity to pursue his renowned ambition to defeat America in 1983 Beirut. If the Saudi government had discovered this plot after its execution, they would have every motivation to cover up Bin Laden's involvement, considering the benefit to Sunni Saudi Arabia of increasing America's commitment to halting the spread of the antagonistic Shiite Iranian Revolution, the detriment to the ruling family's lucrative relationship with America if Saudi involvement was revealed, as well as Bin Laden's intimate ties to the Saudi Royal family. Bin Laden himself would also have been motivated to conceal his involvement in order to proceed with his construction of Al Qaeda unfettered by American retaliatory measures, just as he concealed his complicity in the first World Trade Center bombing a decade later.

installing a socialist government that acceded to Al Qaeda's explicit demands for a Spanish withdrawal from Iraq[236]. When a number of other coalition members soon followed Spain's example and withdrew from the Iraq occupation, it became clear that the Madrid train bombings represented a coup both within Spain and within the European-American alliance in Bush's War on Terror. Al Qaeda demonstrated its ability to reduce the American coalition in Iraq, augmenting the appearance of a unilateral, illegal American occupation of Iraq. This first global revelation of Al Qaeda's powerful ability to effect regime change in a democracy was neither the first, the last nor the most noteworthy such terrorist act.

Unlike the Lebanon and Spain bombings, an unprovoked attack during peacetime tends to instill a belligerent attitude in the targeted voter constituency. Instead of provoking the endorsement of a pacifist response, the Cole bombing manipulated a crucial fraction of American voters into indignantly endorsing a militant response to Al Qaeda by means of Bush's election. Similar events occurred in the context of the Russian-Chechen war, a conflict that Al Qaeda initiated in 1999 with the catastrophic Moscow apartment bombings[xvii]. In December 2003, two days before the Russian national parliamentary elections, Al Qaeda-backed Chechen terrorists launched major bombings of Russian trains. In February 2004, a few weeks before the Russian presidential election, the same group launched a provocative bombing on a subway in the Russian capital. Also in 2004, only days before the Chechen presidential election, Al Qaeda-backed Chechen terrorists simultaneously bombed two Russian airliners, killing ninety civilians. These three separate attacks assisted the respective elections of Russian president Vladimir Putin, a more conservative Russian national parliament and the Russian-backed Chechen presidential candidate on the mandate of harsh retaliation. These attacks initiated a Russian retaliation that facilitated the portrayal of Russia as a criminal foreign occupier in Chechnya. Both the Cole bombing and the Russian terrorist attacks were similar to the Madrid bombings in that they all assisted Bin Laden's war against America, collectively supporting the election of administrations that have facilitated the vilification of America and Russia. Most notably among these Al Qaeda coups, the bombing of

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[xvii] Confirming the suspicions of many Al Qaeda experts (www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/congress/9-11_commission/030709-transcript.htm), a Bin Laden message in late 2002 publicly acknowledged its direction of major Chechen terrorist attacks on Russian targets (BBC, 11/12/02). While the Moscow apartment bombings remain officially unsolved, the Chechen branch of Al Qaeda has consistently been the prime suspect (www.time.com/time/europe/magazine/2002/1104/cover/story_3.html). Although Chechen rebels have a history of claiming responsibility for its terrorist attacks, even conspicuously monstrous attacks such as the 2004 Belsan elementary school siege, Chechen militants never claimed responsibility for these apartment bombings (www.truthnews.net/month/2003070102.htm).

the USS COLE assisted Bin Laden's war by installing a neo-conservative American president who has given Al Qaeda a sustained public relations victory over America.

5.2. Repercussions on the U.S. Defense Industry, Big Oil and Israel

Manipulating voters is but one of numerous means that a terrorist can employ to influence the outcome of a national election in the final weeks. The commitment of special interests funding the candidates' campaigns can also be swayed to favor one candidate over another. As with every election, special interests played an influential role in the 2000 election. The Cole bombing significantly impacted the political alignment of some of America's most influential special interests, including the defense industry, Big Oil and Zionist lobbyists. At the most critical moment in the presidential race, this attack manipulated these powerful interests to tip the election campaign financing in favor of one candidate.

The Cole bombing's primary influence on the presidential election was on the issue of national defense. Beyond swaying the American electorate, this advocacy for American national defense also swayed the defense industry's commitment to the upcoming presidential election. Al Qaeda's first attack on the American military provided a pretext for increased military spending to confront this emerging threat. A champion of military expansion, like that advocated by the Bush team's Project for the New American Century, would best exploit this boon to the American defense industry. The bombing of the naval destroyer in an Arabian Peninsula port encouraged the escalation of America's military spending in the conflict against both the perpetrator Al Qaeda and a third party, Iraq, the target of the embargo that the U.S. destroyer was en route to enforce. With a major attack in the region most vital to America's defense industry, the Middle East, Bin Laden prodded the defense industry to support increasingly the election of a new neo-conservative American administration that promised to dramatically increase America's military spending in the Middle East and worldwide.

The Cole bombing also provoked Big Oil to support increasing America's military expansion in the Middle East. The bombing of the USS COLE threatened the security of a chief source of America's oil supply, Saudi Arabia. In particular, Bin Laden's attack on the American military presence in the waters of the Arabian Peninsula directly threatened the primary security force for the trade routes of Saudi Arabian oil, causing a spike in global oil

prices[237]. George W. Bush's extensive financial relationship with the Saudi Royal family presented him as the ideal candidate to address Saudi Arabia's urgent security needs[238]. The predictable response by both the American oil industry and the powerful Saudi lobby was to increase its support of the presidential candidate whose policies would most likely address the prevailing concerns about the security of Middle Eastern oil. Coupled with their differences on national defense, the stark contrast between the oil policies of Bush and Gore solidly positioned Bush to benefit from Bin Laden's attack on the American military presence that secures the Saudi Arabian oil supply.

On Israel

The nature, location and timing of the bombing of the USS COLE demonstrated a radical Islamic threat to both the American and Israeli presence in the Middle East. This terrorist attack by Islamic fundamentalists on the American military presence in the Middle East threatened the superpower sponsor of Israel's military might, the foundation for Israel's continued existence in a region entirely united in its hatred of this nation. As an attack on Israel's chief defender, the Cole bombing threatened Israel as gravely as an equivalent attack on Israel itself. Much like Al Qaeda's October 2004 bombing of Israeli targets near the Egyptian-Gaza border, Bin Laden's October 2000 attack manipulated the Israeli political lobby, arguably the most powerful lobby in American government, into increasing its support for a hawkish American president. This strategy of altering American government through Israeli pressure is consistent with the geopolitical philosophy of Al Qaeda, which views the American government as totally subservient to the militant Zionist agenda[239]. Ironically yet intentionally, the Cole attack helped coalesce an American-Israeli alliance.

The bombing specifically targeted an American warship that was joining the embargo of Saddam's Iraq, the most flagrant financial supporter of Palestinian terrorism against Israel. The naval attack occurred in a port of the Arabian Peninsula, the epicenter of funding for Palestinian terrorism. Within this volatile geographical setting, the Cole bombing occurred during the explosive onset of the current Palestinian uprising against Israel. In fact, the USS COLE bombing happened on the most climatic day of the early Palestinian uprising, October 12, 2000, when a Palestinian mob lynched two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah and instigated the

massive Israeli retaliation that continues today. In the same afternoon as the Cole bombing, American-supplied Israeli helicopters were shelling targets near the compound of the leader of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat[240]. Bin Laden's October 2000 attack reframed the new Palestinian uprising as an Islamic war against the American-Israeli military machine, strengthening an alliance between the two nations based on a militarist solution to the problem of radical Islamic terrorism.

This important transformation in Israel's security situation significantly impacted the American presidential campaigns of two candidates who had drastically different policies on Israeli security. The 2000 Bush team's extreme favoritism of a militarist Israeli policy towards radical Islamic terrorism positioned the Bush campaign to benefit from the attack. Additionally, the Cole bombing's concurrence with the current Palestinian uprising damaged the Gore campaign. By attacking America in this context, Bin Laden fueled the argument that America was to be blamed and punished for the Clinton/Gore Administration's conspicuous failure in its ambitious attempt to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. As an apparent extension of the new Palestinian uprising against Israel, the Cole attack portrayed the joint ineptitude of the dovish American Clinton/Gore and Israeli Barak Administrations to combat radical Islamic terrorism. Since Gore's foreign policy doctrine was essentially a continuation of Clinton's policy of multilateralism and dovish negotiation, the USS COLE bombing raised fears that candidate Gore could exacerbate the failure to address Israel's attackers. The Cole attack portrayed the inadequacy of peaceful negotiation in resolving the problem of radical Islamic terrorism, swaying the Israeli political lobby towards supporting the hawkish, unilateralist candidate Bush. The bombing of the USS COLE in the world's key oil region during the early escalation of the Palestinian uprising motivated the Israeli political lobby, Big Oil and American defense contractors to support the replacement of the dovish Clinton/Gore Administration with Bush's hawkish, pro-Big Oil, pro-Zionist American administration, based on the same threat of Islamic terrorism that would pressure Israel into replacing the dovish Barak Administration with the administration of the super-hawk Ariel Sharon two months later.

The primary consideration behind Bin Laden's choice of an American president in 2000 was how this president would respond to the 9/11 attack that he was planning for the following year. As the historical record of insurgent movements suggests, Al Qaeda's war effort hinges chiefly on its ability to win the public relations conflict against America. Al Qaeda's resurgence since the fall of the Taliban has confirmed that the military impact of America's retaliation for 9/11 was less important than the diplomatic impact, especially the effect on America's global reputation and Al Qaeda's global recruitment. In fact, *The 9/11 Commission Report* identifies one of Bin Laden's motives for the Cole bombing as being the provocation of a massive American retaliation. When President Bush inexplicably failed to retaliate after Al Qaeda's complicity was proven in the days following his 2001 inauguration, Bin Laden, surprised and frustrated at Bush's non-response, proceeded to launch an even more overt attempt to provoke this retaliation, the 9/11 attack[241]. Despite the Cole bombing's failure to provoke an immediate military retaliation, Al Qaeda's auspicious support of the Bush Administration's millennial election set in motion the American invasion of Iraq that Bin Laden had been trying to provoke for nearly a decade.

The extent to which Al Qaeda could transform America's 9/11 military retaliation into a public relations victory depended on the Bush Administration's subservience to special interests and ignorance of multilateral diplomacy. The global vilification of America's imperialistic involvement in the Middle East stems mainly from the superpower's hawkish pursuit of defense industry, Big Oil and Zionist interests. The advancement of this narrow agenda as a result of Bush's Iraq invasion has portrayed an evangelical Christian American military crusade in the oil-rich Holy Land region, side by side with an illegal Israeli occupation, that seeks to subvert the sovereignty of Muslim nations. By installing a president who would turn America's 9/11 retaliation into a seemingly criminal crusade for religion and oil reserves, Bin Laden facilitated the global condemnation of America that would fuel his anti-American war movement. .

As a boon to the Bush campaign, Bin Laden's Cole bombing was also an attack on the opposing presidential candidate who championed a multilateralist foreign policy. By preventing the election of an effective foreign diplomat, Bin Laden increased the likelihood

that the future American administration would act with such diplomatic ineptitude that global anti-American sentiment would rise dramatically. President Al Gore's response to the 9/11 attack would likely have been radically different from that of President George Bush, focusing most strongly on uniting a strong global coalition to combat Al Qaeda rather than fracturing the global coalition with an illicit campaign of military adventurism. Gore's multilateral post-9/11 war would have been a disaster for Al Qaeda's public relations war against America. By keeping the United States in the good will of global opinion, the Gore Administration would likely have continued President Clinton's successful public relations war against Al Qaeda.

While Gore's attentiveness to multilateral diplomacy was ill suited for Bin Laden's plan, Bush's diplomatic ineptitude is the primary catalyst for this anti-American war. Less than a year and a half after the 9/11 attack, President Bush's disregard of prudent diplomacy quickly transformed the biggest showing of global support for America into the biggest showing of global loathing of America. The very quality of Bush that Bin Laden emphasized to get him elected, his military adventurism, threatens to demonize the United States and concede victory to Al Qaeda in the public relations stage of Bin Laden's war. Bush's global response to the 9/11 attack beyond Afghanistan, particularly the invasion of Iraq, has appeared to much of the world as an illegal, opportunistic, outrageous retaliation by the world's super-dominant military on weak and impoverished Muslim nations. This diplomatic alienation of America from the international community was most prominently displayed by the Bush Administration's disparaging of the United Nations in the prelude to the invasion of Iraq. By breaking from the institution entrusted with maintaining world peace, America has become more widely perceived as a criminal empire. Bush's reckless diplomacy has greatly assisted Bin Laden's effort to recruit global support for his holy war.

In a 1961 farewell speech to the nation, President Eisenhower warned of a menace to American security and world leadership. Identifying the coercion of American government by the nation's massive military-industrial complex as the chief threat to the United States, Eisenhower stated that America had been "compelled to create a permanent industry of vast proportions" fused with an enormous standing army. Eisenhower explained that "this conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience." In it, he went on, there resides the "potential for the disastrous rise of

misplaced power." The Carlyle-Halliburton complex, from which President Bush and Vice-President Cheney base their respective personal fortunes, represents the most extreme mutation of this menacing military-industrial complex to date. This conglomerate has audaciously used the presidency to employ the American military to advance the interests of the defense and oil industries to the detriment of American and global security.

At the turn of the millennium, America's chief nemesis initiated a symbiotic relationship with the Bush/Cheney military-industrial complex that catalyzed its traditional manipulation of the executive branch. Each party would prove to be the other's greatest campaigner. To the American public, Al Qaeda portrayed the Bush team as a forceful, competent leader of national security. To Islam and the world community, the Bush Administration unwittingly portrayed Al Qaeda's war against America as a righteous insurgency against an evil empire. The appearance of this criminal American regime in the eyes of the world has isolated and demonized the United States, rallying much of the global community behind the anti-American imperialism movement currently led by Bin Laden's demonic group.

Part Three:

A Global Recruitment War

After developing his global terrorist empire for over a decade, Bin Laden supported the election of a neo-conservative evangelical American president who promised to pursue hawkishly the interests of the oil industry, the defense industry and Israeli Zionism. This new American administration quickly targeted the Middle East, the world's combative oil capital and home to the explosive Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A large American military occupation in this region would precisely portray Bin Laden's *casus belli*, America's belligerent imperialism in the Holy Land region and throughout the Muslim Middle East. Following an October proposal in the hull of an American destroyer, a January wedding-inauguration and nine months of labor, Al Qaeda and an immaculately impregnated Bush Administration gave birth to the Project for the New American Century's war for world domination.

Also born on this day was a shadowy twin to the PNAC crusade, the war of the project for the new Al Qaeda century. PNAC's post-9/11 vindication of Bin Laden's indictment of American imperialism bestowed Al Qaeda with its long-awaited global public relations victory over America. Bin Laden perpetuated this success by limiting his terrorist campaign in order to diminish Al Qaeda's war guilt in world opinion while still goading the United States into further military aggression and maintaining Al Qaeda's position as the leader of the resistance to American world domination. More ominously than the boon to Al Qaeda's popularity, the first stage of Bush's post-9/11 crusade predictably transformed Al Qaeda into a totally stateless global terrorist empire that is inherently immune to nuclear counterattack and therefore endowed with a strategic nuclear advantage over the United States. Equipped with this unmatched military advantage over America, Al Qaeda has played possum while the Bush Administration has unwittingly recruited the world to Al Qaeda's anti-American cause.

Chapter 6.

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda's bold confrontation with the United States has depicted the terrorist empire as a world power of unrivaled fortitude. Unlike a conventional world power, Al Qaeda does not have an official territorial base or a conventional military. Both its support system and army are covertly disseminated throughout a large portion of civilization. While America is burdened with thousands of physical targets that are potential Achilles Heels, such as a cyberspace-based infrastructure, Al Qaeda has only one such fatal vulnerability, the well-hidden top Al Qaeda leaders who are orchestrating the implementation of Bin Laden's war plan. While America's actions are broadly exposed to public scrutiny, Al Qaeda operates in a virtually unseen shadow world such that even the world's top Al Qaeda analysts are uncertain of its basic operational structure[242]. Today, Bin Laden's terrorist empire is endowed with an unmatched elusiveness and stealth that has made it practically invisible and targetless. If Al Qaeda exploded nuclear bombs in American cities today, whom could America retaliate against? Since the fall of the Taliban, Al Qaeda can no longer be hit with nuclear weapons. As a global invisible empire fueled by widespread support, Al Qaeda wields an immense strategic advantage over any nation. Founded on this unique platform of statelessness, Al Qaeda's military, economic and ideological strength qualifies the terrorist empire as a preeminent world power.

6.1. The Military Frankenstein

Terrorist Attacks

In the traditional measure of a world power's global influence, military prowess, Al Qaeda has most convincingly demonstrated its peerless status. As observed by historian Bernard Lewis, Al Qaeda is the only foreign power to have continuously attacked the American homeland and survived. Emboldened by uncharted capabilities of stealth and elusiveness, Al Qaeda has waged a military campaign against America with unprecedented success, executing a series of large-scale terrorist attacks, including:

The 1993 attacks on the World Trade Center and American troops in Somalia,

The 1995 and 1996 bombings of American military personnel in Saudi Arabia,

The 1998 twin bombings of American embassies in Africa,

The 2000 USS COLE bombing,

The 9/11 attack, and

Post-9/11 attacks in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, collectively killing at least ten times as many Americans in the three years after 9/11 than Al Qaeda attacks killed in the eight years before 9/11.

Not only has Al Qaeda survived throughout the 12-year period since it started attacking the United States homeland, the terrorist empire has both grown immensely and successfully provoked a global war. No other world power has ever attempted this feat, let alone succeeded at it. By successfully waging this decade-long war against the world's only superpower, Al Qaeda has demonstrated a capability and fortitude that surpasses any other world power.

The dramatic escalation of Al Qaeda's global terrorist campaign appears to have clearly demonstrated this shadow organization's increasing capabilities. Al Qaeda has greatly expanded its global terrorist campaign outside the United States in the scope and frequency of bombings since the 9/11 attack[243], launching at least twice as many major bombings in the two years following 9/11 than it did in the nine years preceding the seminal attack[xviii]. In its annual assessment of worldwide terrorism, "Patterns in Global Terrorism", the U.S. State Department reported that terrorist attacks and related deaths sharply increased in 2003, marking the highest recorded level of terrorism since Congress mandated the terrorist threat analysis in 1987[244]. The 2004 report concluded another record year for the number of "significant" terrorist attacks worldwide, identifying a dramatic spike to 625 from the 2003 record of 175. These numbers did not even include attacks on American troops in Iraq, the central front of President Bush's War on Terror. The increase in terrorist attacks in 2004 was so dramatic that the Bush Administration refused to publish the data[245]. In the same year, the CIA Director ominously announced that Al Qaeda's power had grown since the previous year[246]. *How would America have reacted if in 1944 the Nazi Empire's power was growing?*

[xviii] In the nine years prior to 9/11, Al Qaeda committed five known major bombings, only one of which killed more than fifty people. In the two years after 9/11, Al Qaeda dramatically increased its attacks, from the Bali bombings in 2002, which killed over two hundred people, to major bombings in Casablanca, Turkey, Kenya, Indonesia and Mumbai in 2003, to the 2004 Madrid train bombings, which killed nearly two hundred people, to the Egyptian Israeli resort bombings, to a score of major bombings in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Indian Kashmir, Chechnya and Russia, and Afghanistan and Iraq.

Beyond its sustained military success in its global terrorist campaign, Al Qaeda reaped great political victories. Al Qaeda has demonstrated its ability to effect regime change in democracies by launching terrorist attacks on the eve of elections to sway voters towards Al Qaeda's most preferred candidate, as displayed in the 2000 Cole bombing and the 2004 Madrid bombings. In the premier example of Al Qaeda's geopolitical influence, Bin Laden has manipulated the American administration into portraying a "Great Satan" empire to the world community by launching an expansive invasion of the Middle East. Al Qaeda has acted as the premier shadow empire to the superpower, precisely influencing America's key foreign policy actions. Coupled with its military prowess, Al Qaeda's political influence has demonstrated its status as a world power.

Strategic Nuclear Advantage

In the nuclear age, the benchmark of world power status is the capability to wage a nuclear war proficiently. Al Qaeda's statelessness has profoundly altered its capability in this ultimate form of warfare. Since Al Qaeda lost its official state sponsorship when the Bush Administration completely removed the Taliban from power in 2001, the terrorist empire has been invulnerable to nuclear counter-attack. In pursuit of this powerful military advantage, Bin Laden purposefully emphasized his direction of the 9/11 attack in order to provoke a predictable American invasion of Afghanistan. This assertion has been supported by *The 9/11 Commission Report*[247], in addition to many 9/11 investigators who, according to Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, concluded that some of the initial clues about the terrorists' identities and preparations were intended to be found[248]. Bin Laden clearly revealed Al Qaeda's perpetration of the 9/11 attack to American investigators in order to eliminate his official state sponsorship and transform Al Qaeda into a virtually invisible empire.

The stateless empire of Al Qaeda has subverted the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction that governed the nuclear peace of the Cold War. A nuclear-armed Al Qaeda without state sponsorship has an undeniable strategic nuclear advantage over any geographic nation, including the United States. According to traditional nuclear warfare doctrine, the initiation of a nuclear war by one nuclear power on another was self-defeating because the

action would most likely result in the nuclear destruction of the two belligerents. As a stateless organization without an official state-sponsored constituency, a visible army or a physical infrastructure, Al Qaeda is invulnerable to retaliation for a nuclear attack and so avoids being bound by the traditional deterrent to waging nuclear war. As observed by some of the world's foremost experts on nuclear terrorism, Al Qaeda lacks a "return address" and therefore has no fear of nuclear reprisal[249]. In fact, if offered the opportunity for official state sponsorship, today's Al Qaeda would likely refuse the offer in order to maintain its strategic nuclear advantage. Al Qaeda's current military, economic and ideological empire is covertly blended throughout the populations of the world to the extent that the only way the empire could be conceivably destroyed with weapons of mass destruction is by the destruction of the whole world.

Al Qaeda's invisibility further adds to the difficulty of deterring this terrorist empire in a nuclear war because it has the guerilla's advantage of surprise attacks. Through its invisible network, Al Qaeda can covertly acquire and deliver a nuclear weapon to a target site in virtually any city in the world and quickly detonate it. In all likelihood, Al Qaeda has acquired nuclear weapons[250], especially considering Bin Laden's history of successful fundraising, the perpetually insecure status of the former Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal[251] and Bin Laden's long-standing connections to the Russian black market[252]. Bin Laden has created a nuclear Frankenstein of a war machine, a global stateless terrorist empire based on a hidden guerilla army that is likely armed with a nuclear arsenal. As its forerunners displayed in the microcosm of the Afghan-Soviet War, Al Qaeda represents the solution to the riddle of the Cold War: How can a state-based superpower be defeated? -- With a globally entrenched, stateless guerrilla army that is fueled by widespread global support.

All of Al Qaeda's capabilities as a war machine would be ineffective if not for an unprecedented feature, soldiers with the will and desire to kill untold millions in a nuclear war. Bin Laden's soldiers are thoroughly indoctrinated religious zealots whose foremost goal is to die in this war that they believe to be the War of the Apocalypse. The zealously unquestioning character of Bin Laden's soldiers greatly adds to Al Qaeda's military strength. Unlike America's nuclear arsenal, which can be deployed with relative ease, Al Qaeda operatives must use limited forms of transportation and devote considerable mental resources to conceal the delivery of a nuclear weapon to a target inside a hostile population. The moral

qualms that might momentarily disturb an American nuclear missile silo operator before he presses the launch button would be much more damaging to the operational success of an Al Qaeda operative in deep cover inside America. A moment's hesitation or a minor lapse in commitment could derail the whole terrorist operation. The deep-set desire to kill Americans that Bin Laden has engendered in his apocalyptic cult serves to substantially increase the likelihood of operational success. The dominant power of Bin Laden's devout warriors in today's world was vividly demonstrated on 9/11 when Al Qaeda used a small group to direct unconventional weapons to execute the largest terrorist attack in history and destroy the symbolic power base for America's economic might. As a super-powerful invisible empire with the active intention to start a nuclear war and with no inhibition about it, Al Qaeda arguably poses a far greater military threat to the United States than any group of nations. In reality, the solution to the military impasse of the Cold War has been realized in Al Qaeda, an invisible nuclear power with a global presence.

Army Specifications and Command Control

Although gravely under-appreciated as a threat by the Bush Administration, Al Qaeda is a radically new war machine of unmatched power that has enabled Bin Laden to proceed with the bold enactment of his world war, much as the German blitzkrieg war machine enabled Hitler's world war sixty years earlier. Al Qaeda is the premier international terrorist organization, boasting the most attacks, the biggest attacks, the greatest military and public relations successes, and the largest constituency of supporters and global presence. Al Qaeda trained and incorporated sixty thousand operatives in its Afghan camps before 9/11[253], and has recruited thousands more by incorporating other Islamic terrorist groups into the Al Qaeda umbrella organization. Al Qaeda now enjoys an active, invisible presence in at least 80 nations[254], including a large contingent in the United States[255]. As of 2005, the high-profile Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan have been replaced by hundreds of Al Qaeda camps in Pakistan, some only a few miles from the capital, strongly supported by the Pakistani military and intelligence agency[256]. Revealingly, Pakistan's public schools, not to mention its private schools and *madrasas*[257], continue to explicitly and fervently promote jihad against the West as a central responsibility of all Muslims[258]. The inability of the Bush Administration to stem the

resurgence of Al Qaeda from its Pakistan base threatens to reconstitute any losses Al Qaeda suffers from the post-9/11 American campaign. These ranks do not include the thousands of radical Islamic fundamentalists who are unaffiliated with Al Qaeda but have nonetheless been influenced by Al Qaeda's ideological movement to commit to war against America. In an age when conventional military power is being increasingly displaced by unconventional military capabilities, Al Qaeda boasts the world's premier guerilla army.

The relative strength of this global terrorist army in today's intricately connected and highly vulnerable world was most visibly demonstrated in the 9/11 attack. Unlike a conventional military that must devote thousands of soldiers to attack another nation, Al Qaeda can launch a most punishing attack, such as 9/11, with as few as 19 soldiers. A small group of Al Qaeda operatives delivered a more devastating assault on the American homeland than any foreign power since the British in the War of 1812. Al Qaeda's brand of warfare allows a single terrorist to be as much of a destructive force as one thousand conventional American soldiers. Primarily communicating in Arabic on the Internet, Bin Laden has hijacked humanity's greatest communications technology to serve as the primary physical infrastructure for his apocalyptic empire. In particular, Al Qaeda has thoroughly exploited the Internet as a knowledge base of training, tactics and command instruction for his operatives[259]. Commanding from the anonymous obscurity of the Arabic-speaking Internet, Al Qaeda's high command has directed small, loosely cyber-connected teams of devout soldiers to launch massively destructive attacks as part of a coordinated global terrorist campaign. Al Qaeda even has the potential to infiltrate America's loosely guarded borders and destroy America entirely using guerilla attacks, all the while remaining largely invulnerable to counterattack. The Al Qaeda army today enjoys the global reach and invisibility to deliver continuously devastating attacks, an unprecedented achievement for a military power.

Like a conventional army, Al Qaeda must adhere to a hierarchical command structure in order to pursue coherently a complex geopolitical strategy. For example, Bin Laden's publicized efforts to "negotiate" truces and ceasefires with certain nations, such as his promise in an April 2004 media release to temporarily suspend Al Qaeda attacks on its enemies in Europe, would be ineffectual if he did not have command control of Al Qaeda cells. Similarly, Bin Laden's campaign to intimidate allies to withdraw from alliance with America could not succeed if Al Qaeda cells were operating independent of central command and, say, launched

a major attack against an American ally that had recently acquiesced to Bin Laden's particular demands. Beyond succeeding in coercing enemies, Al Qaeda could not maintain its most vital supporters in Saudi Arabia if its terrorist cells independently began fulfilling some of Bin Laden's hollow public threats and initiated a campaign of major attacks against the ruling family and crucial economic targets like oil wells. In a more dramatic scenario, Al Qaeda would risk its support throughout Islam and the world if autonomous Al Qaeda cells began to launch WMD attacks on the capitals of pro-Western Muslim nations. With thousands of sleeper cells around the world and a high command system that is both intact and broadcasting from Pakistan via Al Jazeera, why would Al Qaeda's leaders choose to dissolve their command control of the terrorist empire? It is highly unlikely that Al Qaeda's high command, after nearly two decades of careful strategic planning, would relinquish command control to thousands of cell leaders who would inevitably launch attacks that counteract Al Qaeda's central strategy. Grand strategy aside, it is unlikely that a megalomaniac like Bin Laden, who has explicitly compared himself to the greatest Muslim warlord-emperors in history, would trust the decisions governing the fate of his legacy to thousands of extremely zealous terrorist operatives. While several aspects of the Al Qaeda empire, such as recruitment and financing, have become decentralized since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the unified command hierarchy has remained intact.

Although the world's top Al Qaeda experts do not understand the shadowy group's command structure[260], many prominent Al Qaeda experts do believe that, despite erosion in the high command's ability to micro-manage plots, Al Qaeda cells still adhere to the ongoing strategic direction by the high command[261]. This assertion has been confirmed since August 2002 by a solid string of captured audiocassettes and letters from Bin Laden to his senior lieutenants, including Al Qaeda's leader in Iraq, Al-Zarqawi[262]. More openly, the broadcast of coded messages from Al Qaeda's uppermost leaders immediately preceding major post-9/11 Al Qaeda attacks, including the Bali and Casablanca bombings, have displayed the empire's sustained command control capability[263]. The prosecution of its terrorist campaign from 1993-2005 strongly suggests that Al Qaeda cells are not independent of a chain of command, but

rather have been consistently controlled by high command[xix]. This fact has been widely corroborated for virtually every major Al Qaeda attack.

- The decade-long investigation of Al Qaeda by American intelligence agencies has confirmed that all of its terrorist attacks up through 9/11 were "micro-masterminded" by Bin Laden[264].

- The 2002 Tunisia bombing was proven to be a plot orchestrated by Al Qaeda's uppermost leadership[265].

- The 2003 Morocco and Turkey bombings were proven to have been ordered by Al Qaeda's top leadership[266].

- The 2004 Madrid train attack was revealed to be an Al Qaeda plot that Bin Laden ordered in 2000 and triggered three months prior to its execution with a media release that specifically targeted Spain because of its "infidelity and economic superiority over Arab nations"[267].

- The October 2004 and July 2005 bombings in Egypt, the first major terrorist attacks there since 1997, were each executed in apparent response to a recent release of one of only a handful of newly videotaped speeches by Al Qaeda's Egyptian second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, in which he condemns Egypt[268].

- The 2005 London attack was demonstrated to be an operation ordered by Al Qaeda's upper command[269] through the same channel as the Madrid attack[270], involving a high-level Al Qaeda official operating from the high command's base of Pakistan[271].

- Perhaps most persuasively, Al Qaeda has demonstrated its cohesive control over its guerilla empire by restraining its numerous agents from launching one single terrorist attack against the American homeland since 9/11. This command structure was confirmed in 2005 by an FBI investigation in Lodi, California into an Al Qaeda cell, which was still awaiting orders from Al Qaeda's high command to initiate its attacks[272].

[xix] Although some of the internal investigations into Al Qaeda attacks, such as the 2005 London bombings, have concluded that they found no evidence of direct involvement by Al Qaeda's high command, these conclusions are highly suspect. These investigations have failed to address strong evidence that the attacks were in fact ordered by Al Qaeda's high command. Motivations for this cover-up are fairly self-evident. These governments could be attempting to prevent Al Qaeda sympathizers from launching "copycat" attacks, such as the July 21, 2005 imitation attack of the London bombings two weeks earlier, by denying that the Al Qaeda leadership had explicitly sanctioned such action. In addition to limiting the number of potential attackers, these governments could be attempting to stifle any public mandate for military retaliation against the Al Qaeda high command that masterminded the attacks, both because of the inability of their military to invade Pakistan and eliminate the high command, as well as the potential for such action to provoke additional Al Qaeda attacks. Furthermore, a foreign invasion of Pakistan, Islam's only nuclear power, which possesses approximately fifty nuclear bombs scattered across the country, risks destabilizing President Musharraf's tenuous hold on national power and allowing radical Islamic terrorists to acquire nuclear weapons.

This Al Qaeda command structure has allowed the enactment of a sophisticated strategy that has further shifted war blame to America.

This abbreviated list of terrorist operations directly linked to Al Qaeda's high command strongly suggests that the group's command system has remained centralized since 9/11. In today's interconnected world, individual terrorist cells need only await a prearranged signal from Al Qaeda's leadership, be it in the form of a media release, a covert Internet communication or another Al Qaeda attack, to trigger a strategically located cell to launch a specific type of attack inside of a specific timeframe. Through this persistent command system, Al Qaeda's leadership has successfully guided its excessively zealous operatives towards a unified grand strategy.

Al Qaeda's central command carefully wages its world war through its umbrella terrorist organization consisting of affiliates scattered throughout the world. Despite the fact that the post-9/11 Al Qaeda empire has been distinguished by global decentralization, such as in its location, recruitment and funding, its high command has nevertheless maintained centralized command control of major operations. During the 1990s, in exchange for funding and training, Al Qaeda successfully co-opted local Islamic terrorist groups, such as Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia, to join its war against America and adhere to its strategic guidelines[273]. In a display of strategic allegiance to Al Qaeda's leadership, Bin Laden's 1998 Declaration of War against all Americans everywhere was signed by many Al Qaeda affiliates, including jihad groups in Afghanistan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Pakistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Chechnya, Bangladesh, Kashmir, Azerbaijan, and Palestine[274]. Through the subordination of his own "Coalition of the Willing", Bin Laden aimed to dominate the world with a well orchestrated reign of terror. While Al Qaeda leadership does not appear to control the details of some of its post-9/11 attacks, its subordinates are still bound by the basic strategic guidelines the leadership has laid out and executes attacks under the consent or direction of this leadership. Al Qaeda's invisible command system greatly adds to the awesome power and efficacy of its statelessness.

The fortitude of Al Qaeda's global command structure is limited by one fatal weakness, a reliance on central command. Al Qaeda's uppermost command, including Bin Laden, his top lieutenant Zawahiri and other selected advisors, is the one military target that could

permanently cripple this terrorist empire. Certainly not every Al Qaeda operative is aware of Bin Laden's devious strategy, so the elimination of its top executives would significantly diminish the chances of its operational success. Unlike Al Qaeda's other organs, be they terrorist operatives, funds or weapons, Al Qaeda's central command cannot easily regenerate. Like the empires of Napoleon and Hitler, and like the imagined empire of the Sith overlord from the epic space saga *Star Wars*, the Al Qaeda empire is inextricably tied to its leader and his plan. Although Bin Laden undoubtedly has successor candidates for his top lieutenants, the disruption of Al Qaeda's most vital organ could paralyze the execution of its complex and secretive war plan. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's unwillingness to pursue aggressively Al Qaeda's high command in its base of Pakistan[275] is a testament to Al Qaeda's ability to operate with virtual immunity. Although Bin Laden's top lieutenants have orchestrated an unprecedented international terrorist campaign since 9/11 and fueled the Taliban resurgence in neighboring Afghanistan[276], President Bush has inexplicably refused to launch an American or United Nations incursion into Pakistan's territory to eliminate Al Qaeda's headquarters. Instead of unconditionally committing the United States to destroying Al Qaeda's top masterminds, Bush committed America's political, economic and military resources to eliminating a regime that had never attacked the United States. Until Al Qaeda's central command is infiltrated and destroyed, the apocalyptic threat of Bin Laden's army will persist.

6.2. The Economic Power

Al Qaeda's ability to devastate the superpower's economy and continue to survive financially is a testament to its own economic fortitude as a world power. Al Qaeda has demonstrated its power to control the global economy through its primary *modus operandi*, terrorist attacks. Most powerfully illustrated on 9/11, Al Qaeda can profoundly sway the vitality of the global economy, especially the American economy. The direct damage to the American economy from the 9/11 attack was coupled with the financially draining cost of supporting a new homeland security infrastructure. Additionally, Bin Laden's intentional provocation of the Iraq invasion has demonstrated an ability to manipulate the American administration into launching military action that greatly depletes its own military and

economic resources. Since 9/11, the dramatic escalation of world oil prices in response to Al Qaeda attacks in the Middle East, known as oil's "terror dividend", has further demonstrated Al Qaeda's ability to manipulate the global economy[277]. Even a minor Al Qaeda attack, or simply just the threat of an attack, is sufficient to cause a spike in oil prices that disrupts the American economy. In addition to damaging the American economy, the rise in global oil prices has equated to dramatically increased oil revenues for such unofficial terrorist sponsors as Saudi Arabia[278], which in turn translates into a greater source of funding for Al Qaeda. At the same time, Al Qaeda's foreknowledge of its attacks and the effect on major industries, such as airlines, insurance and military contractors, allows the group to reap great profits from stock market "speculation". As a military, political and economic world power, Al Qaeda has the potential to rival any nation.

Al Qaeda's influence over the global economy has been matched by its resiliency in surviving America's financial counterattack. Following the 9/11 attack, the Bush Administration embarked on a campaign to eliminate Al Qaeda's financial sources, facilitators and conduits, involving the freezing of Al Qaeda-linked accounts, the shutting down of known Al Qaeda fundraisers and the elimination of Al Qaeda operatives. Despite this massive American-led international effort, Al Qaeda continues to operate with ample funding. As revealed by the 9/11 Commission Report, released nearly three years after the 9/11 attack, "the U.S. government still has not determined with any precision how much Al Qaeda raises or from whom, or how it spends its money"[279]. In the same amount of time that it took America to enter WWII and totally defeat both the Nazi Empire and Imperial Japan, the Bush Administration has only managed to determine accurately how much suspected Al Qaeda money has been seized. This figure of Al Qaeda's funding is, of course, largely irrelevant if complimentary figures remain indeterminate, such as the amount that Al Qaeda began the war with, the amount Al Qaeda has raised since and the amount Al Qaeda currently spends. The Bush Administration's failure to target effectively a shadowy financial network that it cannot identify has contributed to Al Qaeda's sustained success at fundraising, which some Al Qaeda experts have estimated to be at least $50 million annually[280].

Al Qaeda's financial resiliency is largely due to its unique system of funding. Originating from largely unregulated nongovernmental donations, Al Qaeda transfers its various monies through an obscure, decentralized financial conduit.

Al Qaeda's methods of raising and moving money have bedeviled the world's intelligence agencies for good reason. Al Qaeda has developed (according to the 9/11 Commission) "an elusive network . . . an unconventional web" to support itself, its operations and its people. Al Qaeda has demonstrated the ability, both before and after 9/11, to raise money from many different sources, typically using a cadre of financial facilitators, and to move this money through its organization by a variety of conduits, including *hawaladars*[xx], couriers and financial institutions. These sources and conduits are resilient, redundant and difficult to detect[281].

Based on this strong financial foundation, Bin Laden successfully constructed the world's foremost terrorist empire.

The post-9/11 global dissemination of the Al Qaeda empire greatly augmented its financial resiliency. The loss of Al Qaeda's sole state sponsorship transformed its financial system into a more decentralized network based on grassroots funding from private donors through shadowy financial networks that cannot be effectively shut down. Individual terrorist attacks require relatively small amounts of money that can easily pass unnoticed through Al Qaeda's funding conduits[282], transferring from the donor to the terrorist cell without being funneled through Al Qaeda's central command. Additionally, the post-Taliban decentralization of Al Qaeda has greatly decreased its central operating costs, eliminating Al Qaeda's need to support the Taliban regime, its own Afghan training camps and much of its terrorist army. Al Qaeda's only remaining significant centralized financial obligation is the sustenance of its central command and some training camps in Pakistan, a consideration that Bin Laden most likely anticipated before 9/11 by storing large sums of wealth, like a bear preparing for hibernation. Considering that Saudi Arabia alone has transferred at least $500 million to Al Qaeda from 1992 until 2002[283], and that prior to 9/11 Al Qaeda spent approximately $200 million annually[284], Al Qaeda's central command could easily have hundreds of millions of dollars to support itself following 9/11. This war chest could have been greatly increased during the Taliban's five-year rule of Afghanistan by stockpiles of heroin wealth available to Bin Laden from the Afghan trade, which accounts for over 75% of the global heroin market[xxi]. According to some experts, Al Qaeda has continued to receive

[xx] *Hawaladars* are the operators of *hawala*, informal yet tightly knit financial networks traditionally common throughout the Middle East.
[xxi] The Taliban's ban on opium production in the year before the 9/11 attack caused an enormous increase in heroin prices, up to 2700% higher, which offered the money-savvy Al Qaeda financiers the potential for multibillion-dollar profits from a single year's heroin stocks.

massive funding from the highly profitable Afghanistan-produced heroin industry, which has surged in production since the U.S. occupation[285]. Through a decentralized financial network and large war chest, Al Qaeda effectively insulated itself from America's predictable post-9/11 financial campaign against Al Qaeda.

The continued success of Al Qaeda's active fundraising is due as much to its clandestine nature as to the lack of cooperation with American efforts by key facilitators. In November 2003, the United Nations Chairman of the Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee, Heraldo Munoz, observed that more than half of all U.N. member states were failing to cooperate with sanctions against Al Qaeda. In particular, the majority of member states were disregarding resolutions that mandate cooperation on supplying critical intelligence, making arrests, seizing assets and closing "charities" that funnel money to Al Qaeda[286]. Announced in the wake of the American invasion of Iraq, Munoz's critical assessment of the international coalition against Al Qaeda reflected the Bush Administration's failure in unifying and marshalling the world to end support for Al Qaeda.

Saudi Arabia

President Bush's traditional ally, Saudi Arabia, has most prominently failed to prevent the sustained funding of Al Qaeda's international operations. Both before and in the years following 9/11, Saudi Arabia has served as Al Qaeda's critical foundation, supplying the ideological leadership, human resources and funding[287]. A report by the RAND Corporation think tank to the Defense Policy Board in July 2002 concluded that Saudi Arabia "supports our enemies and attacks our allies . . . the Saudis are active at every level of the terror chain, from planners to financiers, from cadre to foot soldier, from ideologist to cheerleader"[288]. According to the United Nations, from 1992-2002, Saudi Arabia transferred at least $500 million to Al Qaeda[289]. Since 9/11, the chief source of Al Qaeda's funding continues to be private citizens of the world's most oil-rich nation[290]. In the Targeting Terrorists More Effectively Act of 2005, the 109th Congress identified Saudi Arabia as the foremost terrorist financier, stating "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has an uneven record in the fight against terrorism, especially with respect to terrorist financing"[291].

The congruency of the opaque Saudi financial system and the shadowy system of Al Qaeda has proven highly beneficial for Bin Laden's empire. Al Qaeda's financial facilitators receive donations from both witting and unwitting private donors, mosques, and nongovernmental organizations, such as charities. The largely unsupervised network of Saudi charities has been a key source of this funding[292], a conduit in which Bin Laden developed extensive, long-term contacts during the 1980s Afghan jihad[293]. In this phenomenally wealthy Arab theocratic monarchy, every citizen is compelled by both religious and national law to donate to charity, which operates as a form of income tax. Contributions are often donated anonymously into a pool of both public and private funds that can be diverted from otherwise legitimate charities[294]. Further compounding the inability to curb terrorist financing from these sources, Saudi personal income records are not kept for tax purposes and cash transactions predominate contributions[295]. In addition to the unaware donors, many Al Qaeda "charity" donors throughout the Persian Gulf knowingly donated to Al Qaeda[296]. Saudi charitable donations amount to billions of dollars annually, from which hundreds of millions of dollars directly fund foreign Islamic aid[297]. In fact, total Saudi foreign aid to fund "Islamic activities" during the 1990's totaled approximately $2 billion annually[298]. Despite new anti-terrorism laws, Saudi charitable donations continue to be the most common and unregulated method of terrorist fundraising in the kingdom[299]. The vast pool of this financial wealth has cascaded large sums to Al Qaeda, constituting a vital lifeline for the organization.

The Saudi government has waged a comprehensive propaganda campaign to deflect criticism of its funding for Al Qaeda in a bid to preserve its traditional military and economic relationship with the United States. Nevertheless, the Saudi government has proven unwilling to curtail seriously the funding for this wildly popular Saudi-based anti-American group. In fact, the fundamentalist Islamic theocratic culture of Saudi Arabia has fully indoctrinated its populace into extreme antipathy to the United States, which is widely viewed in the Muslim world as an oppressor of Muslims. This perception has been solidified by the advent of a joint American-Israeli occupation in the Holy Land region. A confidential survey conducted after 9/11 revealed that nearly 95% of young educated Saudis are sympathetic to Bin Laden's declaration of war against the United States[300]. According to an October 2002 report by an independent task force sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, Saudi nationals have always constituted a disproportionate percentage of Al Qaeda's membership[301]. The

predominantly Saudi constituency of the 9/11 super cell and the foreign insurgency in Iraq has confirmed this assertion[302]. The widespread ideological sympathy for Al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia has coupled with widespread internal discontent at the seemingly impious Saudi monarchy to force the theocratic government to avoid a full confrontation with Al Qaeda for fear of internal rebellion.

Although official Saudi propaganda has endeavored to convince America that Al Qaeda is just as much an enemy of Saudi Arabia, Al Qaeda's terrorist campaign inside the kingdom has depicted a different relationship. Bin Laden's primary target has always remained the American presence in Saudi Arabia. Throughout the 1990s, even while Bin Laden consistently condemned the Saudi government's corrupt practices, the ruling family allowed hundreds of millions of dollars in donations to Al Qaeda. In fact, compelling intelligence sources suggest that the Saudi government covertly paid Bin Laden millions of dollars as an extortion price to prevent an unrestricted Al Qaeda terrorist offensive against the ruling family[303]. The only two significant Al Qaeda terrorist attacks inside Saudi Arabia at this time specifically targeted the American military presence. Following the withdrawal of this military presence after the 2003 Iraq invasion, Al Qaeda renewed its terrorist campaign inside Saudi Arabia by focusing on the remaining American presence, including Western residential compounds, the "American-dominated" oil ministry[304] and Saudi security forces[xxii]. Al Qaeda has never attacked the Saudi government's most critical asset, its highly vulnerable oil pipelines, or the Saudi central government. Many top Al Qaeda experts, such as Michael Scheuer, former chief of the CIA's Bin Laden unit, concur that Al Qaeda is currently trying to avoid toppling the Saudi government in the short term[305]. Al Qaeda's strategically astute decision to not target either the Saudi royal family or Saudi civilians has perpetuated its traditional support throughout the kingdom.

The Saudi government has remained torn between its alliance with America and its covert support of Al Qaeda. This tenuous balancing act has been prominently displayed by Saudis post-9/11 anti-terror campaign, which has involved the passage of a series of laws aimed at monitoring, limiting and controlling the conglomerate of networks that constitute the

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[xxii] The 2004 attacks on the Saudi internal security forces has been the only exception to Al Qaeda's pattern of exclusively targeting the American presence in its major attacks in Saudi Arabia. Since the Saudi government's crackdown on Al Qaeda terrorist cells inside the kingdom began following the resumption of Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia in May 2003, the Saudi security forces have increasingly cooperated with the American global security forces. The identification of these Saudi forces as an American proxy army has led Al Qaeda to execute major terrorist attacks against these Saudi forces. In this context, these attacks are actually a continuation of Al Qaeda's policy of exclusively targeting the American presence in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi financial system. Predictably, most of these measures have sounded effective in theory but have been largely ineffectual in practice. In June 2004, the Saudi government announced the creation of the Saudi Nongovernmental National Commission for Relief and Charity Work Abroad. This group was charged with monitoring and directing the foreign aid provided by Saudi charitable organizations. This major initiative complemented an August 2003 Saudi law aimed at disrupting money laundering and terrorist financing. As of March 2005, neither the National Commission nor the implementing regulations for the 2003 terrorist financing law had been enacted. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia continued to resist international pressure to adopt the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1999[306]. As a result of the Saudi government's reluctance to confront and supervise its nation's foreign Islamic aid, major charities that have served as primary conduits for terrorist financing, such as the World Assembly of Moslem Youth and the International Islamic Relief Organization, have continued to operate without effective supervision[307]. A 2004 report to the Council on Foreign Relations entitled "Update on the Global Campaign Against Terrorist Financing" lamented the Saudi failure to curb Al Qaeda funding.

> We find it regrettable and unacceptable that since September 11, 2001, we know of not a single Saudi donor of funds to terrorist groups who has been publicly punished[308].

The Saudi government has conspicuously failed to implement its laws aimed at deterring terrorist financing, allowing Al Qaeda to continue to thrive.

In particular, Saudi funding for terrorism has continued largely unabated because of the Saudi refusal to categorize many Islamic militant groups, like the Palestinian group Hamas, as "terrorist" organizations. Saudi Arabia has long been the chief source of funding for Hamas[309], a group with a history of sharing monies and operatives with Al Qaeda. In addition to supporting the Palestinian insurgency against the Israeli occupation, Saudi coffers have served as a critical source of financial support for the Al Qaeda-led Iraq insurgency against the American occupation[310]. The very narrow definition of terrorism observed by the Saudi government has facilitated the sustained funding of Al Qaeda through such channels as the Palestinian and Iraq insurgencies. Furthermore, the Saudi government has been especially reluctant to restrict donations to mosques that promote Al Qaeda's radical ideology, a conduit that has a record of direct financial transfers to Al Qaeda[311]. By failing to identify known

sources and conduits of Al Qaeda funding, the Saudi government has gravely compounded its failure to implement its existing terrorism financing laws.

The August 2005 appointment of a new Saudi ambassador to the United States signals ominously that this covert Saudi support of Al Qaeda will continue. Saudi Arabia's new top representative to the United States, Prince Turki, is a former mentor of Osama bin Laden who led the Saudi government's efforts to bribe the terrorist leader in the 1990s[312]. As subtle as President Bush's message to the United Nations conveyed by the appointment of the arch-neo-conservative John Bolton as America's ambassador, Saudi Arabia has announced its war plan to America with its own new ambassador. In a less official Saudi announcement, public revelations from the British investigation into Al Qaeda's attack on London in July 2005 confirmed evidence of Saudi financing[313]. The Saudi government's tacit appeasement of a threat that it fears to confront has not contained the threat, any more, perhaps, than Neville Chamberlain contained the threat of Adolf Hitler. As a pseudo-state sponsor of Al Qaeda, Saudi Arabia has enabled Bin Laden's empire to thrive as an officially stateless organization in the post-9/11 era.

6.3. The Ideological Movement

Bin Laden's anti-American messianic movement is the most fundamental foundation for Al Qaeda. Based on the popular global support for this movement, Al Qaeda has been able to exist without official state sponsorship, capable of withstanding America's post-9/11 counterattack, and even regenerate and expand. Instead of support from a state, Al Qaeda relies on independent sources of funding and recruitment that will support Al Qaeda based on its ideological appeal, that is, its success in a public relations war. Although popular support for Al Qaeda's Saudi Wahhabi theology, an extremist sect of Islam, is generally confined to Saudi Arabia, the pronounced anti-American sentiment radiating from Al Qaeda's ideology has won supporters among Muslims and some non-Muslims throughout the world. As the only man to have declared war on the American superpower, let alone waged an effective global war on history's most powerful nation, Osama bin Laden has become the most famous person in the world[314]. Al Qaeda's bold anti-American objective is the catalyzing agent of Bin

Laden's ideology, inspiring millions of people throughout the world to transform disgust with American imperialism into support for its most audacious and vociferous opponent.

As demonstrated by the rise in Al Qaeda's support in response to the Bush Administration's post-9/11 military crusade, Al Qaeda's support system is primarily dependent on the global appearance of American imperialism. As colossal a threat as Al Qaeda poses today, during times of global peace it is extremely vulnerable to degradation because Al Qaeda would not have the critical ideological support arising from a wartime climate of indignation. Al Qaeda's survival depends on the support that rebounds from the reverse charisma of a hated enemy state. Without another abominable menace fomenting global instability, world opinion views the terrorist organization Al Qaeda as merely a problem and not a solution. Such an environment cannot provide Al Qaeda with the global support it needs to carry out its apocalyptic designs.

However, during times of sustained United States military aggression in Muslim lands, global outrage at the United States regenerates Al Qaeda in terms of new operatives and new funds, and so negates the effect of any captures or frozen assets. In fact, in a climate of holy war Al Qaeda will only grow stronger in its military capacity and global support. This is a phenomenon that the Bush Administration's hawkish policy has failed to address. The primary focus of Al Qaeda's global recruitment campaign, Sunni Islamists, have demonstrated an ideological shift in favor of Al Qaeda in response to the Bush Administration's invasion of the Middle East. In a revealing reflection of this trend, the Muslim Brotherhood, one of the world's most influential Islamist movements, has gravitated to a more violent platform, supporting attacks against the American occupation in Iraq on the basis that the United States is a "Satan" that is seeking to dominate the Islamic world[315].

Beyond Islam, American military aggression has galvanized the world community to offer increased moral and active support for attacks on the United States by Al Qaeda. Fear and loathing of the global menace posed by the Bush Administration has increased the world community's tolerance of Al Qaeda's more bizarre objectives, such as forced global conversion to fundamentalist Islam, because of the popularity of Al Qaeda's most famous objective, the global defeat of American imperialism. Al Qaeda's appeal across racial, cultural and religious boundaries has been widely publicized with the capture of a handful of Al Qaeda operatives who are non-Arab American citizens who converted to Islam. Other diverse peoples have

displayed the inclination to support Al Qaeda's war at some level short of total allegiance, such as the rising numbers of white males in neo-nazi groups who have assisted Al Qaeda in drug and human smuggling in an effort to support the terrorist empire's global war against Jews[316], especially the vividly aggressive Zionist designs of Israel and her superpower benefactor. Backed by the tacit moral support of hundreds of millions of America-haters and anti-Semites, as well as the active support of millions of associates, Al Qaeda's anti-American movement has harnessed loathing of active American belligerency to gather the ideological momentum to confront increasingly the United States.

As a result of this mounting ideological support for Bin Laden's war against America, Al Qaeda's active global support has continued largely unfettered since the 9/11 attack. In addition to offering a constant supply of financial resources, the ideological alignment of Al Qaeda with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has also allowed a constant supply of human resources.

> Saudi Arabia and Pakistan continue to be the weakest links in the US' so-called war on jihadi terrorism. While acting against terrorists posing a threat to the security and stability of their own countries, the security agencies of the two countries have been closing their eyes to the terrorist recruits from their countries moving to other theatres of jihadi operations -- Iraq in the case of Saudi nationals and Afghanistan and India in the case of Pakistan[317].

By augmenting the holy war with widely abhorred military aggression, the Bush Administration has both strengthened Al Qaeda and weakened America in terms of ideological support and military capacity, eroding the security of this very vulnerable nation.

Having replaced the state with a non-corporeal and vibrant ideological movement as the base for his empire, Bin Laden has made Al Qaeda the world's most invulnerable empire. As a result of its ideological foundation, the Al Qaeda movement has no visible infrastructure, no state-sponsored constituency, a recruitment base spread throughout the world inside nations that are not state-sponsors of Al Qaeda, and a continuous supply of covert, grass-roots funding to finance and regenerate its hidden army globally. Al Qaeda is so powerful it can even afford to restrain its guerilla bombing campaign to a minimum level globally in the midst of the conventional onslaught of the American military colossus. In Bush's War On Terror, with every bullet fired and every bomb dropped over the vociferous objections of the world community, the United States gradually loses its position as the world's superpower and

transfers it to Al Qaeda. The fact that the American military has virtually conceded victory to the Al Qaeda-led insurgency in Iraq, increasingly transferring responsibility for this mounting war to the inferior Iraqi security forces, has powerfully displayed Al Qaeda's superiority over the superpower's military colossus. Considering the current global situation, Al Qaeda could very well soon be the strongest empire in the world, having both a strategic nuclear advantage and overwhelming global support in a war against the United States.

While Al Qaeda is more powerful militarily than America, the organization has an Achilles heel: its overriding ambition to portray a messianic organization. Despite the high probability that, over the past decade, Al Qaeda has acquired nuclear weapons from the vast unsecured stockpiles on the Russian black market, Bin Laden apparently chose not to devastate America with a nuclear attack. Consistent with its quest to appear righteous and sustain its growing ideological appeal, Al Qaeda will only attack America with nuclear weapons if world opinion, especially Muslim opinion, views this action to be that of a messianic organization destroying the Great Satan. By defeating Al Qaeda in a global public relations war, America can both prevent Al Qaeda from launching a nuclear attack and seriously degrade its capability to sustain a terrorist empire.

Chapter 7.

The Foundation of Bin Laden's Post-9/11 War

7.1. Basic Strategy

On September 11, 2001, Bin Laden clearly revealed Al Qaeda's objective and strategy to the world. Consistent with Al Qaeda's media releases and the context of its attacks, the main objective of Bin Laden's ongoing war is limited solely to the United States. Would Al Qaeda have taken the ambitious step of provoking the 9/11 War with the world's superpower if its ultimate objective was far less ambitious, such as regime change in Saudi Arabia? Bin Laden consciously exposed his terrorist empire to a massive American retaliation for the 9/11 attack in order to defeat American influence globally, not simply in the Middle East. In the historical backdrop of the total defeat of the Soviet Union, an event that Bin Laden attributes to his Afghan *Mujahedeen*, Bin Laden is again primarily pursuing the total collapse of a superpower[318]. Interrogations of the assistant to Al Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, confirmed this assertion.

> I myself heard Bin Laden say that our main objective is now limited to one state only, the United States, and involves waging a guerilla war against all U.S. interests, not only in the Arab region but also throughout the world[319].

Al Qaeda experts broadly concur that Bin Laden's primary goal is to end America's global hegemony[320]. According to this strategy, all secondary Al Qaeda objectives are subordinated to this primary objective, and all attacks are designed to help achieve this main goal.

If Bin Laden already has a deployed nuclear arsenal capable of destroying the United States, why has he not already used it? Although circumstantial evidence suggests that Bin Laden does possess such an arsenal, this conclusion is by no means certain. However, regardless of his possession of such a nuclear arsenal, experts broadly agree that Al Qaeda definitely possesses chemical weapons[321], raising the similar question of why Al Qaeda has chosen not to use these WMD in any of its numerous attacks in the years since America's invasion of the Middle East.

Bin Laden's underlying purpose for destroying the United States mandates that he execute this plan in such a way as to maximize global support for this unprecedented act of destruction. Al Qaeda experts largely concur[322] that Bin Laden's grand design for the age following his war with America, as stated in Al Qaeda's founding charter of March 1988[323] and

in its seminal publication *The Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad*, is the establishment of a pan-Islamic empire ruled by Muslim holy law, known as the caliphate, that dominates the world. Al Qaeda's first official newscast, an Internet-based *jihadist* version of *60 Minutes* begun in September 2005, has boldly proclaimed this central goal by its very name, "The Voice of the Caliphate"[324]. The successful future establishment of this state-sponsored Al Qaeda superpower is dependent on two key events, the destruction of the current superpower and the sustained broad global support for Al Qaeda following this cataclysm. Al Qaeda could only achieve this level of public support if it were widely perceived as a righteous messianic group that saved the world from global nuclear destruction by eliminating the greatest threat to humanity, American imperialism. Al Qaeda's post-America rule of the world by nuclear terrorism could also promise to end the ongoing global war and establish world peace, a result that would additionally help recast its nefarious war in a morally upstanding light. Although Al Qaeda has based its war effort on this public relations strategy partly in order to augment its capacity to destroy America, the primary purpose behind this strategy is to rally global support for the terrorist empire's future world domination.

Bin Laden has waged his campaign to destroy the American superpower through the classic insurgent method of recruiting the support of the greater populace. This method revolves around propaganda attacks directed against the insurgent's enemy that publicly portray this foe as the greater evil and the insurgency as a morally righteous and helpful movement. Al Qaeda's highly influential second-in-command, Zawahiri, has clearly expounded the paramount importance of the public relations conflict, observing, "Any Islamic movement that does not connect to the masses loses any reason to exist"[325]. Al Qaeda's unprecedented use of the news media and Internet corroborates this suggestion that its current global insurgent campaign is primarily a public relations blitz. All military objectives for this phase of Bin Laden's war are guided by the overall strategy of vilifying America and glorifying Al Qaeda in the eyes of the world community. Even the 9/11 attack, ironically, was guided by this strategy.

> One recruiting tactic is to stage spectacular acts of aggression that make the insurgency appear to be powerful and exciting. *What the entrepreneur wants to have happen next is a big, indiscriminate counterattack, which, in effect, means that his enemy has been put to work as his chief recruiter* (emphasis added). This initiates what ETA, the Basque separatist organization in Spain, calls the action-reprisal-

> action cycle, and the insurgency takes off . . . to take Bin Laden's
> bait . . . would mean retaliating in ways that leave lots of innocent
> people dead[326].

With millions of innocent Muslim civilians killed, injured or terrorized by Bush's post-9/11 crusade, the 9/11 attack was a spectacular success in initiating this action-reprisal-action cycle of the insurgency-counterinsurgency war. As occurs in any war, Al Qaeda's reputation in its war is primarily dependent on the reputation of its foremost enemy.

7.2. Building Al Qaeda's Case Against America

Bin Laden's rhetorical campaign against the United States has clearly revealed that a public relations victory over America is his primary war objective. Since his first publicized "religious" edict in 1996, Bin Laden has demonstrated that America's reputation is the critical factor in his war effort. More than any other terrorist in history, Bin Laden has strived to justify his attacks as a legitimate response to the aggression, tyranny and inequity of his archenemy, America.

> Why are we fighting and opposing you? The answer is very
> simple: (1) Because you attacked us and continue to attack us.

In this November 2002 media release, Al Qaeda reiterates Bin Laden's indictment of America and proceeds to list the ongoing instances of America attacking Muslims. The primary propaganda goal of Al Qaeda has always been to portray its overt attacks as a justifiable retaliation against attacks by the United States.

As observed in these Al Qaeda media releases, grievances against ongoing American aggression are far more powerful tools for Al Qaeda than grievances over past aggressions. Self defense, or defense of a defenseless third party, is generally perceived as more legitimate than vengeance as a cause for violence. America's sustained thirty years of support for repressive and imperialistic regimes in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Saddam's Iraq (throughout the 1980s), Kuwait, Morocco and Algeria, has served as a primary justification for Al Qaeda's "defensive" war against the United States[327]. More persuasively than indirect American aggression against Muslims, direct American aggression in Muslim lands serves Bin Laden's purpose of convincingly justifying his war against America to the world. During ongoing, direct American aggression against a Muslim nation, an Al Qaeda

attack more clearly appears to have the added dimension of serving a preventative purpose in addition to its penal purpose. In addition to rallying public support, the citation of these ongoing popular grievances as Al Qaeda's *casus belli* makes America reluctant to address the problematic issues for fear of appearing to justify Al Qaeda's attacks, thereby allowing the grievances to perpetuate and even escalate. In such a circumstance, as currently exists in Iraq, Al Qaeda is afforded the opportunity to strengthen greatly the credence of its *casus belli* in world opinion.

In pursuit of his strategy to usurp America's global hegemony by harnessing anti-American sentiment, Bin Laden has, paradoxically, covertly provoked the Bush Administration to pursue global military domination in the short term. *Al Qaeda's most spectacular feat of terrorism, the 9/11 attack, was a trap intended to coax President Bush into an open-ended military crusade that isolated and demonized America while glorifying Al Qaeda's war effort in world opinion.* First-hand accounts from high-level Al Qaeda leaders have confirmed this supposition[328]. Bin Laden's prescient geopolitical acumen most likely understood the Bush Administration's imperialistic predisposition, a knowledge that would have inevitably led Bin Laden to anticipate Bush's broadly focused, massive military retaliation for the colossal 9/11 attack. As disclosed in *The 9/11 Commission Report,* Bin Laden did in fact hope to provoke this reaction[329]. Bin Laden's wickedly clever 9/11 plot was intended to instigate Bush to commit the very transgression that would generate future anti-American support for Al Qaeda's war. The symbolic value reaped by Al Qaeda's colossal suicide bombings of America's economic and military control centers only became fully apparent after President Bush outraged the world by dramatically escalating America's economic and military aggression.

In his rhetoric, Bin Laden often likens his war against an American-Israeli military occupation of the Middle East to the Muslim war against the Christian Crusaders of the Middle Ages. Harkening to one of the more universally condemned abominations in human history, Bin Laden effectively employs the emotionally vivid imagery of the notoriously barbarous invasion of the Muslim Middle East by the Christian West. Led by an evangelical Christian American president whose administration consists prominently of representatives of Israeli imperialism and Big Oil, such as former Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz and Vice President Cheney, Bush's "crusade" in the Middle East strikingly resembles the Christian Crusades for holy land and Middle Eastern treasures. In particular, the Bush Administration's

conspicuous attempts to privatize Iraqi oil and wage a war based on evangelical Christian and Zionist doctrine have proven to be the strongest rallying calls for Al Qaeda[330]. Stoking global hatred of America's ongoing military aggression through historical analogy to the Crusades, Bin Laden sets alight the simmering Muslim rage at centuries of Western domination of the world. By fanning the flames of anti-American sentiment, Bin Laden neutralizes the revulsion Muslims feel at his terrorist attacks and even stirs feelings of righteous enjoyment when America is attacked, as indicated by the increasing support for Al Qaeda in the Muslim world. Furthermore, Bin Laden's comparison of America's war in the Middle East to the Crusades implies that history will repeat itself and the Muslim armies will win the war. Al Qaeda's propaganda machine, an organ that has arguably exceeded the exploits of the Nazi propaganda machine, has translated much of the global outrage at Bush's hawkish foreign policy into support for Al Qaeda.

Beyond Islam, Bin Laden's global campaign aims to recruit world opinion in prelude to his bid for nuclear global domination. Bin Laden's publicly stated *casus belli* is founded on American imperialism, a megalithic problem that threatens humanity with a global nuclear holocaust, as well as lesser acts of belligerence. Bin Laden's official press spokesman, Suleiman Abu Gheith, identified America's tyranny over all humanity as a primary justification for the 9/11 attack.

> What happened to America is something natural, an expected event for a country that uses terror, arrogant policy, and suppression against the nations and peoples, and imposes a single method, thought and way of life, as if the people of the entire world are clerks in its government offices and employed by the commercial companies and institutions[331].

Bin Laden's primary case for war, ongoing American aggression against Muslims, is a symptom of the broader abomination that Bin Laden espouses to fight against, the American government's menacing pursuit of world domination. All peoples, rich and poor, Muslim and Jewish, even Americans, are at least implicitly appealed to in his tirades condemning American military aggression against Iraqis and American economic aggression against the half of humanity that is impoverished.

The direct victims of this American imperialism, who are often desperately poor and undereducated, are naturally sympathetic to Bin Laden's condemnations and constitute a growing pool of recruits for Al Qaeda[332]. Bin Laden appeals to the rest of humanity on the

basis of moral indignation and self-interested fear of American aggression. Popular support for terrorist attacks against militantly imperialistic nations is actually quite common, as witnessed in the United States with the large support among Irish Americans for the Irish Republican Army's terrorism against Britain's occupation of Northern Ireland, as well as the widespread support among the British and other Allies for the state-executed terrorist carpet bombing of German civilian targets during WWII. Although the extent of the moral support for such terrorism is directly proportional to the scope of the imperialist's crime, maximum popular support for such terrorism can only be achieved by convincing the sympathetic population that it is itself directly and imminently threatened by this imperialism. By raising fears that ongoing American aggression will ignite a war that ravages all nations, Bin Laden aims to recruit a majority of humanity to offer some level of moral support to the global anti-American movement led by Al Qaeda.

A host of less offensive historical crimes, many of which continue today, strengthens the credence of Bin Laden's indictment of America. The unprecedented attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, the command centers of America's military and economic strength, set in motion Al Qaeda's righteous portrayal as the base of resistance to the American empire's regrettable history of military and economic aggression. This infamous legacy includes:

- America's identity as the creator and greatest distributor of nuclear weapons, compounded by America's age-old threat to destroy all life on Earth in a global nuclear war,
- America's possession of the world's most feared conventional military,
- America's support of the greatest criminals in the Islamic world, including Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the repressive Shah of Iran, Bin Laden's Afghan *Mujahedeen* and the Taliban in Afghanistan, the House of Saud, and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories[333],
- America's brutal economic embargo of Iraq during 1991-2003,
- America's expropriation of a quarter of the world's resources to fuel the excessive affluence of the American people, a mere five percent of the human population, while the majority of humanity is consigned to an unnecessary state of poverty, a disproportionate allocation of wealth that has been made possible largely through illicit

economic practices (as revealed by such exposes as *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* by John Perkins (2004)),

- America's unparalleled pollution of the world, the deleterious effects of which include global human health degradation and climate change, most notably involving the global catastrophic devastation from rising temperatures, increasingly turbulent weather phenomena and rising sea levels.

America's unfortunate history of imperialist aggression has provided Bin Laden with a popular grievance that he has opportunistically used to build a foundation for his secretly nefarious anti-American war[334]. Despite the great loss of life in the 9/11 attack, Bin Laden's success at destroying the premier symbol of America's global aggression channeled a growing reservoir of anti-American sentiment into latent support for Al Qaeda. According to most experts, the galvanization of this sentiment following Bush's blatant escalation of American imperialism through the Iraq invasion quickly translated into a stunning victory for the 9/11 perpetrator in the war for hearts and minds[335].

Despite America's crimes against humanity, Bin Laden's attempt to orchestrate the vilification of the United States is an enormously ambitious goal, especially considering America's positive contributions to humanity throughout the previous century that Bin Laden conveniently overlooks. Prior to the Iraq invasion, the United States was generally revered for its defense of democracy from such global menaces as the Nazis and the U.S.S.R., as well as for the nation's pivotal role in the modern scientific-industrial revolution that has augmented the global standard of living. This international goodwill towards America served as one of the most vital power bases for the nation's status as a superpower. America's global hegemony, including her disproportionate consumption of the Earth's resources and her authority as civilization's principal security force, is contingent on her maintenance of this positive legacy as the great benefactor of civilization. If America's reputation plummeted to unprecedented depths, like that of the Soviet Union towards the end of the Cold War, the United States would be just as doomed to political and financial bankruptcy as the U.S.S.R.

Bin Laden has successfully usurped the foundation of his enemy's global power, the identity as the defender of civilization from global tyranny, in a manner reminiscent of America's triumph over the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Following such public relations failures as Stalin's purges of the 1930s, the 1939 Soviet pact with the Nazis and the

post-WWII reign of terror from behind the Iron Curtain of Soviet rule, the international communist movement became increasingly bankrupt of the soft power derived from its status as the global defender of the working class from the elites. This soft power was gradually transferred to the Soviet's chief rival, the far less imperialistic United States. Although America's righteous appearance was tarnished by a host of infamous offenses, relative to the criminal regime of the Soviet Union, America's reputation was positive. As the global image of the U.S.S.R. made its final descent with such international outrages as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Chernobyl disaster, the United States was widely heralded as the savior and liberator of the world from reckless Soviet imperialism. America's relatively benevolent reputation inspired the internal pro-Western social movements of *Glastnost* and the global opposition to the Soviet Union that catalyzed the final dissolution of this tyrannical empire.

Following this example of the Cold War, America's identity as a nation that has risen to world domination by committing horrendous atrocities presents Bin Laden with a means to displace the remaining superpower as the world's most powerful empire. However, the dire poverty, repressive regimes and military aggression that America has supported in the past would ineffectively portray the United States as an intolerable threat to humanity today if these transgressions were not currently continuing and even escalating. The highlighting by the Bush Administration of America's regrettable record of supporting illegal wars and dictators across the world has offered Bin Laden a staging point for achieving his colossal undertaking. The intensified global outrage over American imperialism under the Bush Administration has increased global support for Al Qaeda's war against American imperialism both as a punitive and preventative action. In order for Bin Laden to appear sufficiently justified in world opinion to wage nuclear war against America, Al Qaeda is waiting for the post-9/11 American retaliation to reach a certain level. During WWII, broad public support for the firestorm bombing of German cities and the nuclear attack on Japan was only possible after the excesses of Nazi and Imperial Japanese imperialism had sufficiently outraged and frightened the world. Amidst the current climate of fear and loathing of American aggression, the further expansion of the Bush Administration's global war will provide Bin Laden the opportunity to provoke a nuclear war against America for which America itself is widely blamed. Unfortunately, instead of reversing the decay of America's reputation, the Bush Administration continues to hasten it, along with Bin Laden's day of judgment on America.

Although the 9/11 attack initially incriminated Al Qaeda as the primary war provocateur in world opinion, the terrorist assault was necessary to set in motion the Bush team's PNAC plan for American military world domination that would ultimately augment Al Qaeda's reputation as a righteous opposition group. Bin Laden's spectacularly successful 9/11 attack represented a retroactive rallying call to Muslims to unite under the only group capable of continuously attacking America and surviving, Al Qaeda, in order to battle a mounting American-Israeli occupation of the Middle East. Al Qaeda's ability to prosecute the most punishing war against the United States and her allies since the Cold War has served as a continuous demonstration of Al Qaeda's unrivaled status as America's chief opposition to global hegemony. In particular, this Islamic empire's stunning victories over the United States in Islam's two holiest lands has molded this new identity. In response to the most punishing foreign attack on the American homeland since the War of 1812, the Bush Administration quietly acquiesced to Al Qaeda's primary demand and withdrew the American military presence from Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden's eviction of the superpower's military from Islam's holiest land powerfully depicted him as the world's premier military leader. Compounding this portrayal of Al Qaeda's military prowess, the Al Qaeda-led insurgency in Islam's second holiest land has forced the American military to concede victory to the mounting guerilla army by publicly acknowledging that American forces will not defeat the insurgent campaign and transferring responsibility for this incomplete task to an inferior military, the Iraqi security forces[336]. In the context of these two critical victories, Al Qaeda's mounting post-9/11 global terrorist campaign against America's allies has fortified this awe-inspiring image of Bin Laden's shadow army. Al Qaeda's powerful capability to oppose a seemingly menacing American military colossus since 9/11 has fortified its identity as the undisputed leader of the global anti-American movement.

7.3. Targeting Rationale

In Bin Laden's public relations contest, the value of the appearance of criminality in American attacks on Muslims is equal to the value of the appearance of moral righteousness in Al Qaeda attacks. Al Qaeda could not rally global support if it responded to American aggression by, for example, overtly initiating a global nuclear war. Mindful of public opinion,

Al Qaeda has waged a restrained global terrorist campaign and endeavored to justify the targeting rationale for these limited targets, portraying its war as a defensive effort against American tyranny. In acknowledgment of international standards of warfare, Bin Laden has refrained from WMD attacks and has focused his post-9/11 attacks on the most globally vilified American target, the American coalition military forces in Iraq. By concentrating his ongoing terrorist campaign against the principal executioners of American aggression in Iraq, Bin Laden has attempted to portray his war as a popularly supported, reasonable response to fifteen years of escalating American aggression against Iraq.

Ever since Al Qaeda's first major overt attack on an American target in 1996, Bin Laden has predominantly focused his attacks against the foremost agents of American imperialism. Each of Al Qaeda's three major overt attacks on America abroad before 9/11 targeted American military and government installations inside Muslim lands. Even the 9/11 attack, although clearly targeting civilians, was portrayed as an attack on the two principal command centers of American economic and military aggression, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. However, the first five years of Al Qaeda's overt war against America could not target any actual American military occupation forces because the United States was not at war. Without highly visible instances of American imperialism, Al Qaeda was not afforded the capability to rally significant global support for attacks against American targets. The moral authority that Al Qaeda lacked before 9/11 was bestowed upon the group by the American invasion of Iraq. The redirection and amplification of Al Qaeda's terrorist campaign to target American-led forces in this occupied nation reflected the importance of this new war front to Bin Laden's public relations campaign.

Although Al Qaeda has waged a fierce terrorist campaign against American military and government targets inside Iraq, and to a lesser degree Afghanistan and Pakistan, Al Qaeda's campaign outside of these war zones[xxiii] has conspicuously avoided these kinds of targets. In contrast to Al Qaeda's major pre-9/11 attacks, its post-9/11 campaign outside of the war zones has focused on non-American civilian targets abroad. In fact, this campaign has only once targeted an American government or military installation, the December 2004 attack

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[xxiii] Although Pakistan is not an official Al Qaeda-American war zone, this Al Qaeda heartland does serve as an unofficial one. The fact that Al Qaeda's high command is currently based in Pakistan necessarily bestows this belligerent status on the nation, irrespective of the fact that President Bush lacks the political will to send U.S. or U.N.-led Muslim forces into Pakistan's Northwestern frontier province to confront the masterminds of the 9/11 attack and Al Qaeda's ongoing post-9/11 global terrorist campaign. Although Pakistan's military, heavily infiltrated by Al Qaeda and Taliban sympathizers, is currently charged with waging this battle against Al Qaeda's high command, they have executed this charge with a subdued restraint that obscures the fact that Pakistan is in reality the central front of America's war against Al Qaeda's high command.

on the U.S. consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Only two of the attacks in this international campaign targeted American civilian facilities, the May 2003 Saudi Arabia bombings and the August 2003 bombing in Jakarta, Indonesia. The vast majority of Al Qaeda's attacks in this post-9/11 campaign have targeted non-American civilians of nations allied with America in the war.

Al Qaeda's shift towards targeting civilians outside of the war zones reflects an important transformation in world opinion since 9/11. Before 9/11, Al Qaeda was primarily vilified publicly based on its killing, whether intentional or collateral, of civilians. However, since the prosecution of President Bush's retaliation for 9/11, widespread apprehension about the threat posed by this open-ended American crusade has altered the global community's criterion for judging Al Qaeda's attacks. The primary factor that adversely effects Al Qaeda's global reputation today is the extent to which Al Qaeda's attacks offer the Bush Administration a solid pretext for further expanding the global war. Civilian casualties from Al Qaeda attacks are now less objectionable than the provocation of another American invasion of a sovereign Muslim nation. In Iraq, and to a lesser degree Afghanistan, the Bush Administration's responsibility for maintaining security in these globally vilified American occupation zones largely nullifies any justification for another American invasion in response to an Al Qaeda attack there. Today, Al Qaeda's war guilt hinges primarily on the extent to which its direct terrorist campaign on America outside of the war zones provides the Bush Administration a strong pretext for expanded military aggression. Accordingly, in this campaign Al Qaeda has predominantly attacked unofficial targets of the Bush coalition, such as civilians from this group of nations, and has almost completely avoided American targets.

Despite the world community's increased tolerance for attacks on civilians since the onset of the 9/11 War, Al Qaeda's propaganda has endeavored to mollify the remaining public backlash to such attacks. Bin Laden's empire is especially vulnerable to this backlash because Al Qaeda attacks have both directly and indirectly killed more civilians than any other modern international terrorist organization. Bin Laden's *casus belli*, American aggression against Muslims, implicitly justifies these killings. Relative to America's record of civilian casualties, such as Iraqi deaths during the American-led 12-year embargo, the death toll from Al Qaeda attacks is minor. Al Qaeda primarily justifies its murder of civilians as an act of defense of a third party, such as Iraqi civilians, from a far greater slaughter of civilians by the United States.

Civilian collateral damage is broadly tolerated in the context of a world war against a demonic empire, such as the Allied carpet-bombing of civilian targets in German cities during WWII. Using the same rationale as revered Western leaders like Winston Churchill and Harry Truman, Bin Laden publicly justifies his attacks on civilians as the only way to protect his people from a far greater threat. Bin Laden has reframed his war as a clash between two world powers, an apocalyptic sequel to the Cold War, the post-9/11 war between the remaining "evil empire" from the Cold War and a righteous messianic group. The killing of Muslim civilians by the American-led coalition's unfolding invasion of the Middle East has served as optimal evidence to support Bin Laden's bid to appear as the less murderous, more honorable belligerent. If America is killing ten times as many civilians as Al Qaeda during Bush's unfolding invasion of the Middle East, whom will the global audience perceive as the primary aggressor?

In the shadow of infamy cast by Bush's Iraq invasion, Bin Laden has been able to frame effectively his attacks on civilians as a justifiable retaliation, not only in terms of the civilian death toll, but also in terms of the tactic of targeting civilians. Even prior to Bush's invasion, American aggression targeting thousands of Iraqi civilians had powerfully vindicated to the global audience Bin Laden's declaration of war against all American civilians. Al Qaeda targeted and killed the three thousand American civilians and foreign nationals on 9/11 only after years of Bin Laden denouncing the concurrent American economic embargo against Iraqis, which had killed over one hundred thousand civilians. However, in contrast to Al Qaeda's relatively minor global appeal prior to 9/11, the conspicuously needless Iraqi civilian deaths from direct American military aggression during Bush's invasion and occupation dramatically increased the global sympathy for Bin Laden's terrorist rationalization. Al Qaeda's targeting of civilians now appears more similar to America's policy, which apparently initiates unnecessary wars with the implicit acceptance that tens of thousands of civilians will die in order to achieve an imperial objective.

Most troublingly, the official military doctrine of Bush's Iraq invasion specifically advocates the use of state-sponsored terrorism. According to the U.N. Final Report on 21st Century Threats, terrorism is defined as, "any action . . . that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or noncombatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international

organization to do or to abstain from doing any act."[337] The "Shock and Awe" military doctrine that the Bush Administration officially adopted in the invasion of Iraq precisely matches this definition of terrorism. Instead of simply aiming to achieve military victory over the enemy's military, the Shock and Awe doctrine advocates using massive military force to intimidate the population of a targeted nation by inflicting "a deep psychological injury, to terrorize potential rivals into submission"[338]. This doctrine is based on a 1996 National Defense University Advisory report entitled "Shock and Awe", the text of which clearly endorses terrorism and mass destruction.

> (Through) massively destructive strikes directly at the public will . . . intimidation and compliance are the outputs we seek to obtain . . . the intent here is to impose a regime of shock and awe through delivery of instant, nearly incomprehensible levels of massive destruction directed at influencing society writ large. Through very selective, utterly brutal and ruthless and rapid application of force to intimidate, the aim is to affect the will, perception and understanding of the adversary[339].

Through massively destructive strikes, this Bush military doctrine aims to terrorize the public will of Iraqis into forsaking any resistance to the American mission. Based on the diminishing moral threshold set by the Bush Administration's apparent war crimes, Al Qaeda has increasingly adopted terrorist attacks against civilians as its primary *modus operandi*.

Coupled with this comparison to American terrorism against civilians, Al Qaeda has attempted to fortify its public justification for targeting certain civilians by equating them to military targets. Like the United States, Bin Laden does adhere to a certain moral code in warfare, albeit a facade. Bin Laden condemns all attacks on "innocent civilians", but then excludes from this group all citizens of Israel, America and their allies. Roughly analogous to the Bush Administration's broadly inclusive labeling of enemy combatants, Al Qaeda's propaganda portrays its civilian targets as probable supporters of American and Israeli military and economic aggression. An attack on any part of this centralized machine of aggression would constitute an attack on the whole, and by extension any other part, like the American occupation of Iraq. By this simplistic logic, the civilians of America, Israel or their allies located anywhere in the world would be subject to attack on moral grounds for supporting American forces in Iraq.

Bin Laden's exclusion of Israeli citizens from his list of untouchable "innocent" civilians is perhaps the most globally supported exemption, since every Israeli citizen is required to be a

soldier for the Jewish state (a more expansive discussion of the unique global tolerance for terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens and Jews follows in Ch.9.2). A less widely supported view is Bin Laden's exclusion of citizens of the American democracy and her democratic war allies from his list of "innocent" civilians on the basis that they serve as the willing economic and political backbone of the American military, a precedent that could potentially subject every citizen of a democratic nation to "justifiable" attack regardless of their personal political affiliation or economic contribution. Although this tenuous justification lacks moral clarity, the practical effectiveness of this strategy as a means to defeating the army of a democratic nation is much clearer. The ability of a democratic populace to force its government to withdraw support for America's military aggression, as blatantly occurred in the case of Spain's participation in the Iraq occupation, endows the collective populace of the allied nation as that government's most powerful decision maker. While in the case of the American public, which views its war against Al Qaeda as retaliatory and not preemptive, such an attack would only encourage an escalation of its war against Al Qaeda, the opposite is true with America's allies. Among these nations, an Al Qaeda attack on the civilian populace would discourage involvement in the war as a means to end the threat to the general population, which in turn would diminish the strength of America's war coalition. The current focus of Al Qaeda's terrorist campaign outside of the war zones, civilian targets of America's allies, has advanced Bin Laden's goal of appearing as a successful defender of Muslims by diminishing the coalition of the war's present primary provocateur.

7.4. First Move

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Bin Laden launched his new public relations campaign to transfer war guilt to America by denying responsibility for the 9/11 attack.

> The U.S. government has consistently blamed me for being behind
> every occasion its enemies attack it. I would like to assure the
> world that I did not plan the recent attacks, which seems to have
> been planned by people for personal reasons. I have been living in
> the Islamic emirate of Afghanistan and following its leaders' rules.
> The current leader does not allow me to exercise such operations[340].

In this statement issued to the Arabic satellite channel Al Jazeera, Bin Laden discontinued his habit of offering only vague denials in the wake of an Al Qaeda attack, clearly denying responsibility for the terrorist strikes on New York and Washington, D.C.

Bin Laden's initial denial set the stage for America's vilification and Al Qaeda's glorification in the 9/11 War. By raising the early question of his guilt for 9/11 in world opinion, Bin Laden helped to foster the now widespread myth that Al Qaeda did not perpetrate the 9/11 attack. This environment of doubt was intensified by the Bush Administration's general air of secrecy, most glaringly demonstrated by the administration's persistent obstruction of the chief investigating committee, the 9/11 Commission[341]. A BBC poll of British Muslims conducted in November 2001 and a Gallup poll of ten thousand people in nine mostly Muslim countries conducted in 2002 suggested that a majority of Muslims believed that Bin Laden had no involvement in the 9/11 attack[342]. The effectiveness of Bin Laden's ploy in the wake of 9/11 predisposed a significant part of the world community to view America's retaliation against Al Qaeda as unjustified.

Alternative theories about the true perpetrators of 9/11 predictably propagated. Throughout the global community, especially in the Muslim world, there is a widespread suspicion that 9/11 was actually perpetrated by the CIA and Israeli intelligence (Mossad) as a pretext for an American invasion of the Middle East[xxiv]. With this seed of doubt sown in the ashes of 9/11, even Bin Laden's implicit admission of complicity in a low-grade videotape "found" in Afghanistan in December 2001, as well as his explicit claim of masterminding the 9/11 attack in a videotaped message released three years later, has not defused this widespread myth about America's perpetration of the 9/11 attack[343]. Compounding America's public blame for fomenting the 9/11 War in Iraq, Bin Laden has partially transferred blame to America for the precipitating event of the war. Bin Laden's denial set the stage for the world community to view all the Muslims suffering under the future American occupation as innocent victims, righteous martyrs fighting a holy war against demonic American aggression. By eroding Al Qaeda's public blame for its most horrendous attack, Bin Laden has diminished the largest obstacle to Al Qaeda's future glorification in world opinion.

Further heightening America's public culpability for the 9/11 War, Bin Laden's denial prevented the Bush Administration from proceeding with an immediate invasion of

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[xxiv] In Bin Laden's core constituency, the Arab and Islamic world, this theory is most common (*The Road to Al Qaeda* by Montasser al-Zayyat, 2004, p.10). In the Western world, while less prevalent, this theory has been popularly advanced in such books as the French bestseller *The Big Lie*.

Afghanistan based on a United Nations Security Council authorization[xxv]. By raising some doubts in the world community about the perpetrator of the 9/11 attack, Bin Laden stalled and eroded international support for America's retaliation. As a president whose campaign rhetoric revealed a strong predisposition to circumventing the United Nations, Bush's invasion of Afghanistan without official United Nations approval portrayed America's 9/11 retaliation as illicit American aggression from the start.

Bin Laden's denial further instigated Bush into launching a more obviously illegal war by providing a foundation of doubt that the Bush Administration could opportunistically manipulate to insinuate that others beyond Al Qaeda were to blame for the 9/11 attack. By offering Bush a public justification for a non-specific invasion of the Middle East, Bin Laden's denial fostered the widely perceived predisposition of the Bush Administration to seize control of the world's prime oil reserves. Bush's diplomatic ineptitude in presenting the 9/11 retaliation as a legitimate action coupled with Bin Laden's early denial to spread doubts about the legitimacy of the invasion of his impoverished Muslim nation by the world's richest nation. These early suspicions about America's guilt and Al Qaeda's innocence would prove to be a boon to Al Qaeda's global recruitment campaign.

Following Bin Laden's early denial, he gradually reversed his position by making tacit claims of responsibility for the 9/11 attack in the context of directly threatening the United States[344]. Three years after the release of a videotaped meeting in which Bin Laden reveals a level of complicity in the 9/11 attack, Bin Laden finally directly claimed responsibility in October 2004. This belated claim elevated Al Qaeda's global reputation as the boldest, most successful opponent to the American superpower. Bin Laden made this claim in the climate of prevalent anti-American sentiment following the Iraq invasion, a context in which the three-year old 9/11 attack could be viewed more favorably by the world community. Revealingly, Bin Laden's October 2004 claim did not diminish the widespread 9/11 conspiracy theories that his early denial had fostered. The absolution and praise for the 9/11 attack that Bin Laden guilefully prompted from the world community has helped to weaken the global condemnation directed at Al Qaeda.

[xxv] Two weeks after the 9/11 attack, the United Nations Security Council did unanimously pass Resolution 1373, which condemned the attack and "reaffirmed the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense as recognized by the U.N. Charter". However, the resolution did not in any way authorize military action against Afghanistan. In fact, the resolution does not contain a single reference to Afghanistan, the Taliban, Al Qaeda or Osama bin Laden (www.globalpolicy.org/intljustice/general/2001/1113ij.htm)

Chapter 8.

Al Qaeda's Cessation of Attacks Inside the American Homeland

8.1. Transferring War Guilt?

    Consistent with Bin Laden's campaign to woo world opinion, Al Qaeda has <u>chosen</u> not to attack America once since jumpstarting Bush's invasion of the Middle East on 9/11. Even optimistic

observers accept that Al Qaeda has hidden sleeper cells inside America and that American homeland security, particularly border patrol, is grossly under-funded.

> Wherever we go, we see how easy it would be for a terrorist to cause serious harm. A bomb left in a Times Square trash can; a man with a heavy backpack moving through a crowded subway car; a van stuffed with explosives entering the Midtown Tunnel -- this is part of how we experience the city now. But if it seems so easy, why hasn't it happened?[345]

America's open society is so vulnerable that even some Bush Administration officials, such as the chief of the Department of Health and Human Services during Bush's first term, have publicly expressed bewilderment at Al Qaeda's complete halt in attacks on the Homeland.

> Despite dramatic increases in inspections of food imports, only "a very minute amount" of food is tested at ports and airports, Tommy Thompson said. "For the life of me, I cannot understand why the terrorists have not attacked our food supply because it is so easy to do," Thompson said. "We are importing a lot of food from the Middle East, and it would be easy to tamper with that."[346]

From vulnerable imported goods to a poorly guarded internal infrastructure to highly porous borders, Al Qaeda has been presented with ample opportunities to launch devastating attacks on the United States in the post-9/11 era. Even after the four-year absence of Al Qaeda attacks inside the United States, a CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll in August 2005 found that 80% of the traditionally complacent American public believes that the country is as vulnerable or more vulnerable to terrorist attacks since 9/11[347].

The vulnerability of the American homeland is compounded by the demonstrated capabilities of Al Qaeda. Across the globe, Al Qaeda has displayed its increased power by launching at least twice as many major bombings in the three years since 9/11 than in the nine years prior to 9/11. If Al Qaeda can launch multiple bombings inside Iraq every day, it is likely that they could launch at least one single attack inside America over the course of nearly four years. Even a single, relatively small bombing would have a major psychological and financial impact inside America.

> An attack wouldn't have to be on the scale of 9/11 to set off a major panic. A single explosion, just one of the many little bombs that rock Iraq every day, would make midtown feel little safer than the Green Zone[348].

Despite Al Qaeda's ability to easily attack America, they have chosen not to execute one single visible attack since 9/11, let alone a wave of attacks against the United States.

The absence of Al Qaeda attacks inside America since 9/11 is a critical factor in Bin Laden's strategy for a global public relations victory over the United States. In fact, an Al Qaeda attack on America after 9/11 would hinder the transfer of war guilt to America. By only attacking U.S. targets in the Muslim world, Al Qaeda better portrayed itself as a righteous defensive insurgency against American imperialism, and not an apocalyptic cult bent on provoking a world war. At the same time, any U.S. aggression appeared to be an unjustified response to attacks that were far less provocative than strikes against the American homeland. In this manner, despite the origin of the 9/11 War, America became portrayed as the greatest threat to world peace.

During Bush's first term, Al Qaeda did not need to go to such lengths to provoke an expansion of Bush's invasion of the Middle East beyond state sponsors of Al Qaeda, as the invasion of Iraq clearly demonstrated. Terrorist attacks inside the United States would only justify America's post-9/11 military crusade and further incriminate Al Qaeda for war guilt, impeding its primary goal of a global public relations victory over America. As long as Al Qaeda continues to maintain its position as the chief opposition group to the American military crusade, Bin Laden has no need to attack the American homeland. After executing the most spectacular feat of terrorism in history on 9/11, and later leading an unprecedented anti-American terrorist campaign in Iraq, Al Qaeda has no need of demonstrating to the world its awesome military power. Short of an attack with weapons of mass destruction, post-9/11 attacks inside America would be anti-climatic compared to the colossal scale of 9/11. Accordingly, following the successful 9/11 attack, Bin Laden apparently ordered the indefinite delay of plots for the American homeland, such as the Al Qaeda plot to bomb major financial buildings in New York City[349].

Al Qaeda's strategy of avoiding attacks on the United States is consistent with the practices of Bin Laden's top advisor, Al Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who has espoused limiting attacks against his primary enemies in order to facilitate recruitment efforts[350]. Al Qaeda's objective of instigating American aggression without incurring war guilt has been furthered since 9/11 by its apparent disinformation campaign, consisting of alarming revelations about Al Qaeda plots to attack inside America that have never reached fruition. By attacking America in its military occupation zones abroad and disseminating hollow threats of imminent attacks on the American homeland, Al Qaeda has

sufficiently stoked America's post-9/11 aggression to effect the transfer of war guilt to the victim of the 9/11 attack. The strategy of restrained aggression against America clearly demonstrated by Al Qaeda since 9/11 is consistent with a public relations campaign and inconsistent with a military campaign.

8.2. Other Theories

The prevailing understanding of Al Qaeda as a traditional terrorist organization has led prominent Al Qaeda analysts to attempt to explain the complete absence of any post-9/11 Al Qaeda attacks inside America as the result of anything other than Bin Laden's public relations campaign. Perhaps it is too unnerving for these analysts to accept that Bin Laden is so confident of his invisible empire's military prowess that he chose to restrain totally his aggression inside America despite the successive American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Whatever the reason, these Al Qaeda analysts have proposed a number of apparently illogical explanations for the nonexistent Al Qaeda offensive inside America during the nearly four years since 9/11.

They Have Tried and Failed

One thread of hypothesis is based on the postulate that Al Qaeda's upper command has wanted to attack the American homeland throughout the post-9/11 era, but for one reason or another has failed.

- One such explanation proposes that Al Qaeda has been so degraded by the American retaliation for 9/11 that they have been unable to launch attacks against America. This theory overlooks the fact that since Bush's march to war with Iraq, rising anti-American sentiment has swelled Al Qaeda's recruitment base to an extent allowing Al Qaeda to increase greatly its global terrorist campaign. At the same time, Bush's Iraq invasion has severely fractured the global alliance against Al Qaeda. If Al Qaeda can launch numerous large-scale terrorist attacks globally in the years since 9/11, including a persistently ferocious campaign inside Iraq, and if Palestinian terrorists under siege by an

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aggressive Israeli occupation can overcome the world's foremost counterterrorism security state and launch numerous terrorist attacks inside Israel, logic strongly suggests that Al Qaeda could succeed in at least one terrorist attack inside the United States in the nearly four years since 9/11. The improvement in Al Qaeda's abilities coupled with the deterioration of the American-led alliance clearly negates the assertion that Al Qaeda has been degraded to the point where they cannot attack America.

- Some have maintained that American intelligence has thwarted every single determined attempt by Al Qaeda to launch an attack inside America during this timeframe. The accolades for American intelligence because of the total absence of post-9/11 Al Qaeda attacks on the homeland is founded on the assumption that American intelligence has uncovered every Al Qaeda cell in America and has effectively sealed every border from Al Qaeda penetration, assertions that even extremely optimistic apologists would not dare to propose. Most conspicuously, this explanation overlooks the notorious failure of American intelligence to detect both the preparations for the 9/11 attack and the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq prior to the invasion.

> The fact that not a single suicide bomber has turned up in New York can't be due to immigration screening; not when visa extensions were issued for Mohammed Atta and Marwan Al-Shehhi six months after they'd flown planes into the World Trade Center. And bombers could have been planted here before September 11[351].

In addition to existing Al Qaeda threats inside the United States, many experts have decried the fact that the most glaring example of American border permeability, American seaports, has been consistently poorly defended.

> Our ports are woefully unprotected, which is doubly dangerous since they tend to be near metropolitan areas[352].

The continuous failure of homeland security to screen 95% of all incoming cargo in American ports has allowed Al Qaeda ample opportunity to transfer men and materials into the United States[353].

Beyond the institutional deficits of American homeland security, the occurrence of non-Al Qaeda terrorist attacks inside the homeland since 9/11 has demonstrated the nation's vulnerability. From the anthrax post-mail attacks, to the Washington, D.C. sniper attacks, to the 2002 shooting at the El Al counter of Los Angeles International Airport[354], terrorists outside of Al Qaeda have displayed the ease with which determined individuals can still kill many victims inside America. The evasion of American investigators by the anthrax terrorists has further demonstrated the ease with which large-scale attacks can be successfully executed on the American homeland. Certainly Al Qaeda could have sent a flood of post-mail attacks, either anthrax or bombs, from overseas if they so chose.

- Another equally fallacious explanation for the void in Al Qaeda's military campaign inside America maintains that Al Qaeda does not have any sleeper cells inside America and lacks the ability to establish new ones. This theory overlooks the ease with which Al Qaeda established the monstrous 9/11 cell, the opportunity prior to 9/11 that Al Qaeda had to establish sleeper cells, the public revelation of numerous uncovered Al Qaeda cells since 9/11[355] and Al Qaeda's mounting capabilities and America's continually porous borders.

Most conspicuously, this theory ignores the fact that from 2002-2004 numerous Al Qaeda cells have been uncovered while apparently planning terrorist attacks inside America to be executed at an undetermined time in the future, from the provocative dirty bomb plot of Al Qaeda member Jose Padilla[356], to Al Qaeda plots to destroy gas stations, train tracks, apartment buildings, hotels, the Brooklyn Bridge, and an Ohio shopping mall, among others[357]. In addition to Al Qaeda cells captured inside America, continued revelations of Al Qaeda plots to attack the United States, such as the plot to attack financial institutions in New York and Washington, D.C. revealed in the summer of 2004, have demonstrated the active Al Qaeda threat to America's interior. While it is indeterminable whether these Al Qaeda plots were in fact serious future plots or simply part of Al Qaeda's disinformation campaign, it is clear that these plots involved numerous Al Qaeda agents dispersed throughout the United States.

Adherents to the view that Al Qaeda has no terrorist presence inside America frequently praise American culture for "winning over" these Islamic fundamentalist sleeper cells. Many experts, however, disagree with this assessment.

> We've often considered the prospect of sleeper cells. Some people like to believe that once an extremist arrives here, he'll be so impressed by American freedoms and opportunities that he won't want to kill himself, but quite likely, the opposite is true. Islamic fundamentalists can be appalled and disgusted by what they see as the hedonism of American life[358].

Not only is it highly likely that Al Qaeda has sleeper cells inside America, it is equally probable that those hate-filled Islamic fundamentalists are still well motivated to execute attacks.

They Have Not Tried

Another line of thought proceeds from the postulate that Al Qaeda's upper command has in fact chosen not to attack the United States homeland. Unlike the alternative thread of theories, this thread has a more logical foundation that relies on neither the perfection of American intelligence nor the stupendous ineptitude of Al Qaeda.

- One such explanation for Al Qaeda's absent offensive inside America is that Al Qaeda's upper command has ordered its cells not to attack in order to lull American homeland security into complacency to better the chances of operational success for the execution of a spectacular "Doomsday" attack. However, if this were in fact the primary motivation behind Al Qaeda's cessation of attacks inside the United States, Al Qaeda would naturally complement this false portrayal of its dilapidated operational capabilities with a reduction in its attacks globally. In reality, Al Qaeda has greatly increased its overt attacks globally since 9/11, portraying Al Qaeda as a powerful and growing terrorist threat worldwide. Al Qaeda's mounting global terrorist campaign strongly contradicts the theory that Al Qaeda's primary objective behind its abeyance of attacks on the American homeland is to lull America into a false sense of

security. Nevertheless, this objective could likely be a secondary motivation for this strategy, dependent primarily on Al Qaeda's public relations pursuits.

- Another theory contends that Al Qaeda has chosen not to attack America since 9/11 because the primary target of its terrorism is not America, but rather Saudi Arabia. In other words, Al Qaeda is not motivated to continue to attack America. This naïve theory overlooks the prevailing emphasis of Al Qaeda's terrorist campaign, which is a war against America above all others. This theory also implies that Al Qaeda would willingly incur the massive American retaliation for toppling the Twin Towers (an ongoing attempt from 1993-2001) primarily to confront the American-supported Saudi regime. Although toppling the Saudi regime is undoubtedly one long-term objective of Al Qaeda, this goal is secondary to the defeat of its superpower protector, the United States. Most Al Qaeda experts do in fact agree that the group's primary goal is the destruction of American hegemony[359]. Al Qaeda's avoidance of direct attacks on the Saudi central government, as well as its reliance on Saudi funds as a primary source of financing, further confirms that Saudi Arabia is not the primary target of Bin Laden's ongoing war.

- Still another popular theory to explain the absence of homeland attacks offers an alternative explanation for the 9/11 attack. The credulous adherents to this theory accept Bin Laden's publicly stated war justification as truthful, namely, that the goal of this terrorist war is to pressure America to withdraw from the Middle East. Accordingly, Al Qaeda's target is not the American homeland but rather the American presence in the Middle East. This theory proposes that America's retaliation for the 9/11 attack, the escalation of an American military presence in the Middle East, was an unwelcome surprise to Bin Laden. After discovering that the 9/11 attack had actually provoked an escalation of the very problem for which he ostensibly had initiated war to solve, so this theory contends, Bin Laden quickly reversed his strategy and banned attacks on the United States to avoid further provoking an American occupation of Muslim lands. On this basis, Bin Laden redirected Al Qaeda's attacks to less provocative targets, especially the U.S. occupation forces and America's allies, primarily in

order to encourage the total withdrawal of American forces by draining the United States of financial and political capital.

In reality, instead of a war directed solely against American imperialism, Bin Laden's war most prominently targeted the American homeland for destruction. The 9/11 attack predictably encouraged a greater American presence in the Middle East, strongly suggesting that Bin Laden's true motive was contrary to his publicly stated one. Intelligence reports of Bin Laden's conversations with subordinates corroborates this assertion[360], as does the discovery of unfolding provocative Al Qaeda plots to detonate dirty bombs[361] and even nuclear bombs[362] inside the United States. Before and after 9/11, Al Qaeda's history of attempting to provoke American imperialism consistently contradicts this explanation for Al Qaeda's cessation of attacks on the American homeland.

All of the above popular explanations for Al Qaeda's abeyance of post-9/11 attacks inside America are debunked by logical analysis. However, one theory following this thread of explanations for the absence of post-9/11 Al Qaeda attacks inside America does appear to be logically coherent: Al Qaeda has chosen not to attack America as part of an ongoing campaign to transfer war guilt to the American public. Bush's reelection and the future expansion of his crusade in the Middle East threatens to complete this transfer of war guilt and initiate Bin Laden's reinstitution of Al Qaeda's terrorist campaign inside the United States.

Chapter 9.
Al Qaeda's Terrorist Campaign Outside of the United States

Note: Unless otherwise specified, all Al Qaeda attacks discussed in this chapter refer to overt Al Qaeda attacks, that is, attacks that have been claimed by and widely attributed to Al Qaeda.

In concert with the ongoing strategy of not attacking the United States since 9/11, Al Qaeda's global terrorist bombing campaign has been focused on the goal of isolating America as the primary war provocateur and portraying Al Qaeda as the most successful opposition to American imperialism. Al Qaeda has pursued this strategy by refraining from provocative attacks on the United States and her top allies. In particular, prior to America's endorsement of President Bush via reelection, Al Qaeda did not launch one single major attack against an official American government or military target abroad outside of the three American-Al Qaeda war zones, Al Qaeda's homelands of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and illegally invaded Iraq. Furthermore, during nearly four years of Western military aggression in Muslim lands since 9/11, Al Qaeda did not attack the homelands of any of America's major allies, including Britain, Italy, Australia and Japan. Only following the British public's reelection-endorsement of Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2005 did Al Qaeda break this trend and bomb Britain. Instead of unrestricted terrorist attacks against America and her major allies, Al Qaeda has adopted a much less provocative overt bombing campaign, mostly confined to Western targets in Muslim nations, particularly Muslim nations under American occupation. Through a restrained, confined global campaign, Al Qaeda has consistently endeavored to portray the story of a righteous and powerful messianic group battling an aggressive evil empire's global economic and military domination.

9.1. Iraq

Mirroring the Project for the New American Century's plan for world domination, Al Qaeda has initiated its own shadow plan for world domination by waging war in Iraq. In fact, the primary focus of Al Qaeda's post-9/11 terrorist campaign has been illegally-invaded Iraq. Since world opinion deems it more justifiable and less provocative to attack the forces of a foreign military occupation than to attack a sovereign nation itself, Al Qaeda has successfully transferred war guilt to America by focusing its confined bombing campaign against the foreign occupation forces inside Iraq and the Iraqi security forces propped up by the United

States. In the backdrop of widespread global resentment at America's invasion and occupation of Iraq, Al Qaeda can lead a war against this apparent America imperialism with maximized global support. The global perception that the American occupation of Iraq is criminal allows Al Qaeda the impunity from unequivocal global condemnation when attacking American targets there and provoking expanded American military aggression. Revealingly, the Al Qaeda campaign confined to Iraq is the most unrestricted warfare that the group has ever waged. Having arrogated responsibility of Iraq's internal security despite unprecedented global opposition, any violence that occurs in American-occupied Iraq will be blamed on America. For this reason, Iraq is the most likely sight for Al Qaeda to escalate its war with America into a global nuclear war. The Iraq front offers Al Qaeda a golden opportunity to switch its public identity with the United States, such that now America appears as the principal aggressor of the 9/11 war and Al Qaeda appears as the principal defender of Muslims from a superpower's imperialism.

Al Qaeda's campaign against American imperialism inside Iraq is dependent on the continuation and expansion of the American occupation of the Middle East pursued by the Bush Administration. A purported letter by Al Qaeda's top commander in Iraq, Al-Zarqawi, aptly explains the dangers to Al Qaeda of an end to the American occupation of Iraq and the complete transfer of security responsibilities to domestic Iraqi internal security forces.

> The problem is you end up having an army and police connected by lineage, blood and appearance to the people of the region . . . If we fight them, that will be difficult because there will be a schism between us and the people of the region. How can we kill their cousins and sons and under what pretext, after the Americans start withdrawing? The Americans will continue to control from their bases, but the sons of this land will be the authority[363].

The success of Al Qaeda's Iraq campaign, the centerpiece of its war effort, depends primarily on the longevity and size of the American military occupation that the Bush Administration has set in motion.

After provoking the unjustified American occupation of Iraq, Bin Laden magnified America's debacle with a campaign of major bombings aimed at attacking the American coalition and fomenting civil war in Iraq. Until December 2004, these attacks were only covertly, and not publicly, authorized by the Al Qaeda high command, a strategy that

mitigated Al Qaeda's war guilt in world opinion[xxvi]. During the first two years of the Iraq insurgency, more suicide bombings occurred inside Iraq than had occurred globally since the dawn of the age of the suicide bomber 23 years earlier[364]. The use of this horrendous tactic in Iraq has risen steadily during the American occupation, occurring at a rate in 2005 that was five times that of 2003[365]. Captured Al Qaeda documents have confirmed the assertions of various other sources, such as former administrator of the Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority Paul Bremer, that virtually every major suicide bombing during at least the first year of the U.S. occupation was executed by Al Qaeda's Zarqawi terrorist network[366]. Although the shadowy world of Al Qaeda has proven exceedingly difficult to illuminate, many analysts believe that the Zarqawi network is responsible for the majority of insurgent kidnappings, major bomb attacks and assassination attempts in Iraq[367]. In fact, since the 9/11 attack, the majority of people killed worldwide in terrorist attacks died in attacks directly executed by Al Qaeda's Iraq branch[368]. Although the Iraq insurgency is not a movement entirely unified under Zarqawi's command, the Zarqawi network is its most prominent and effective leader[xxvii]. Combined with growing ranks of foreign fighters, the growing Sunni Iraqi base of the clandestine insurgency[369] offers Zarqawi an army that rivals in numbers and effectiveness the national and international Iraqi security forces, as indicated by the mounting success of insurgent attacks[370]. With over ten thousand killed, another ten thousand injured and thirty thousand captured as of the summer of 2005, the Iraq insurgency consists of as many as two hundred thousand guerilla fighters, according to some experts[371]. During this same timeframe, the approximately 300 thousand-strong American-led counterinsurgency forces suffered over five thousand dead and over twenty thousand wounded[372]. In tandem with the growing

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[xxvi] Although Al Qaeda did not publicly claim affiliation with the Zarqawi terrorist network until December 2004, many of the world's top Al Qaeda experts concur that Zarqawi has always been an Al Qaeda agent (http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369721). By publicly portraying Zarqawi as separate from Al Qaeda during the first year and a half of the Iraq insurgency, Al Qaeda avoided public condemnation for its role in destabilizing Iraq during this crucial time period, furthering its overriding public relations objectives.

[xxvii] Some analysts have proposed that the Iraq insurgency is primarily led by remnants of Saddam's regime attempting to evict the foreign occupation in order to reestablish Baathist rule. Most of these analysts concede that the Zarqawi network has been responsible for some of the largest insurgent attacks, but maintain that his media-savvy group has taken much of the credit for attacks by other insurgent groups. This theory overlooks Al Qaeda's strong motivation and capability to lead the Iraq insurgency, as well the virtual absence of a media campaign by these Baathist elements. If former leaders of Saddam's regime were really trying to eventually reestablish their rule by waging this insurgency, why would they have so conspicuously failed to portray themselves as the leader of the Iraq insurgency? How could the secular Baathists hope to regain power if their avowed enemies, radical Islamists, were embraced by the Iraqi people as the victorious leaders of the insurgency? Considering the massive erosion of Baathist military power and influence in Iraq, it would seem that broad public support would be a prerequisite for their return to power. The absence of a noteworthy Baathist public relations campaign in Iraq strongly suggests that its role in the insurgency is secondary to that of the Zarqawi network. Limited Baathist influence on the insurgency has also been suggested by authoritative reports concluding that the majority of the Iraq insurgents are not Saddam Hussein loyalists (www.truthout.org/docs_2005/092305D.shtml).

insurgent campaign inside Afghanistan in 2005, which has wrought the worst violence for the country since 2001[373], the growing Iraqi insurgency has powerfully demonstrated Al Qaeda's ability to win its war against American occupation forces.

In August 2005, the month of the largest death toll of U.S. soldiers in Iraq outside of major combat operations, the third largest U.S. death toll of the war[374], Bush Administration officials announced that they have "given up hope of militarily defeating the insurgents with U.S. forces", and have now resigned to transferring this monumental task to poorly trained and equipped Iraqi security forces[375]. In the same month, the American public echoed this increasing pessimism about the Iraq war and the broader global War on Terror in national polls, which indicated that only 1/3 of Americans believe their country is winning the war, a 50% decrease from January 2005[376]. Ambitions for victory or even a stalemate in the war against the Iraq insurgency have faded, and American and British officials now privately concede that the main goal in Iraq is to simply avoid the image of failure[377]. The Bush Administration's rising failure in Iraq has led a number of America's allies to withdraw or begin to withdraw from the Iraq occupation[378], solidifying the image of an exclusively American occupation that is the most potent rallying call of the Iraq insurgency. In a sign of growing desperation, the Bush Administration, which even with America's resources cannot prevent one million Mexicans from illegally crossing its border every year, is now placing a large share of the blame for the insurgency on Syria's inability to seal its border with Iraq from foreign infiltration. Perhaps the most damning sign of the desperation of American forces has been the widely used tactic of prisoner abuse in Iraqi detention centers by American soldiers, an unofficial administration policy that has served to vindicate Al Qaeda's war in Iraq to a rising body of supporters[379].

The withdrawals of Bush's coalition members from the Iraq occupation and the arrested development of Iraq's domestic security forces have only offered cause for more pessimism. According to congressional testimony by U.S. military leaders, over two years of developing an internal Iraqi security force had only produced 500-600 Iraqi soldiers that can operate without foreign assistance as of September 2005. Major factors contributing to this arrested development have been insurgent infiltration as well as the inability to pay many Iraqi security personnel[380]. The Iraqi National Guard was totally dissolved by August 2005 because of incompetence and insurgent infiltration[381]. The only effective Iraqi security forces are

private Shiite and Kurdish militias, which operate outside the authority, and often times against the objectives, of the Iraqi central government[382]. These failures in creating Iraq's domestic security forces have occurred in spite of America's reallocation of massive reconstruction funds to this security effort, which in turn has augmented the American failures in rebuilding Iraqi basic services, such as water treatment and power generation[383]. As has occurred with funding for reconstruction and the Iraqi government, billions of dollars for funding Iraqi security forces have been lost to embezzlement and corruption[384]. The success of Al Qaeda's top lieutenant in Iraq, Al-Zarqawi, in battling the American military colossus and the American-backed Iraqi security forces suggests that Bin Laden predictably chose one of his best protégé terrorist operatives to lead his (initially clandestine) Iraq branch after Al Qaeda finally succeeded in provoking an American occupation. Like a next generation Ramzi Yousef, Zarqawi has successfully orchestrated a protracted, elaborate terrorist campaign against American targets while evading capture.

The failed security state in Iraq emerging from Al Qaeda's campaign has led to large civilian casualties, for which America has been largely blamed. According to a study released in 2005 by the UK-based Iraq Body Count and Oxford Research Group, nearly 25,000 Iraqi civilians died violently since the American invasion, an average of 34 Iraqi civilians every day since March 2003. While the Iraq insurgency caused 9% of these civilian deaths, 36% of these deaths were caused by the dramatic escalation of non-insurgent criminal activity since the fall of Saddam's regime. The largest percentage of these violent civilian deaths, 37% of this Iraqi death toll, was caused by American-led coalition forces[385]. A 2005 report by the Iraqi health ministry confirmed that U.S. military action had killed at least twice as many Iraqi civilians as had terrorist bombs[386]. As of the summer of 2005, the number of Iraqi civilians killed by "acts of war" each month continues to rise[387]. This rising civilian death toll is largely the result of heavy-handed U.S. tactics in the war against the insurgency, including an average of fifty air strikes every day on suspected insurgent hideouts in high population centers[388]. Adding to America's public blame for failing to secure post-Saddam Iraq and for causing numerous civilian casualties, a growing body of prominent Muslims are expounding the belief that the Zarqawi campaign has actually been covertly orchestrated by the globally distrusted Bush Administration as a pretext for a permanent American military occupation of the country[389]. The dramatic increase in the civilian death rate inside this failed security state since the

American invasion[390] has largely avoided incriminating Al Qaeda while successfully demonizing America in world opinion, fueling the global anti-American sentiment that is Al Qaeda's lifeblood. Most critically to the Iraq insurgency's public appeal, the vivid image of prevalent American military aggression has dispelled the perception of the American coalition as a peacekeeping force and magnified its reputation as a brutal occupation force.

The deteriorating security situation in Iraq has led inexorably to the onset of an Iraqi civil war, as even observed by Iraq's head of state, Prime Minister Iyad Allawi[391]. Al Qaeda's fomentation of sectarian violence among Iraq's Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish groups has propelled this march to civil war. Aside from direct insurgent attacks on the American-backed central government and its largely Shiite Iraqi collaborators, the Al Qaeda-led insurgency has incited bitter sectarian conflict by greatly depleting the central government's chief financial resource, Iraqi oil. In July 2005, the Iraqi oil ministry announced that 300 acts of sabotage on the Iraqi oil industry has cost the nation over $11 billion in oil revenues[392]. The nearly daily attacks on Iraq's inherently vulnerable oil infrastructure have caused the nation's total oil output to actually decline since the American invasion[393]. The Iraq insurgency's success in attacking both the agents and the economic foundation of the Iraqi central government has created a power vacuum that has been filled by sectarian conflict.

Al Qaeda's political attacks on the Iraqi central government have proven most instrumental in weakening the only institution capable of preventing a full-blown civil war. Al Qaeda's success in discouraging Sunni Muslim participation in the January 2005 Iraqi national elections and the pursuant government has led to a widespread Sunni perception of disenfranchisement. This apparent marginalizing of Iraq's Sunni population, which constitutes one-fifth of all Iraqis, has persuaded a large percentage of this group to support the insurgency and oppose the American-backed Iraqi government. This rising Sunni support for the insurgency has facilitated Al Qaeda's major success at sustaining a ferocious terrorist campaign while preventing the infiltration of the Zarqawi network and the capture of its leader in Iraq, Al-Zarqawi[394]. Following the announcement of the new Shiite-dominated Iraqi government in April 2005, insurgent attacks in Iraq dramatically escalated to an average of 70 attacks per day, with over 400 people killed in the first two weeks[395]. The rejection of the Iraqi draft constitution by the Sunni negotiators in August 2005 foreshadows broad Sunni opposition to the democratic constitutional ratification in October 2005[396], an ominous fracture

in the Iraqi government that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had recently warned would signal the death knells of the Iraqi constitutional process[397]. Even if the Iraqi people ratify the constitution, the resulting central government will be based on Islamic law and heavily influenced by Shiite Iran[398]. The early October 2005 revision in the constitutional referendum process by American-backed Iraqi Shiite lawmakers that allows the approval of the constitution based on Iraqi voter registration records, and not actual voter turnout, has been condemned by both the United Nations and Sunnis as an illegal attempt to force the ratification of the constitution[399], a sign that the Iraqi government may invariably collapse. Perhaps the most damning aspect of the final draft constitution has been its economic legal framework, which codifies the widely condemned privatization of major Iraqi industries, portraying the new Shiite-led government as a puppet government of a rapacious American occupation[400]. Broad Sunni opposition to the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government has contributed to deep internal divisions that have stalled the political progress and magnified the sectarian struggle between the various religious and ethnic factions in Iraq.

This political conflict has been highlighted by the transfer of policing powers throughout northern and southern Iraq to brutal American-backed Shiite and Kurdish militias, many operating as official members of the Iraqi government's security forces. Employing Saddam-era tactics, these sectarian "security" forces have used the pretext of fighting the Sunni-based insurgency to conduct a wave of abductions and assassinations in order to advance the political and financial interests of individual factions. The largely Shiite-based counterinsurgency's war against the largely Sunni-based insurgency has provoked Iraq's most menacing sectarian conflict, the clash between the newly politically marginalized Sunni minority and the newly politically empowered Shiite majority[401]. Shiite usurpation of Iraqi security forces has been blatantly revealed within the police forces of at least two of Iraq's major cities, Basra and Nasiriyah, which are dominated by sectarian militiamen operating independently, and often in opposition to, the Iraqi central government. The reign of terror over the Iraqi general populace conducted by these democratically empowered militiamen now rivals the insurgency as a leading cause of the civil chaos in Iraq[402]. Until an Iraqi central government can effectively battle the insurgency while also asserting its authority over the eclectic array of local governments, Iraq will continue to remain a scattered series of enclaves ruled by Shiite, Kurdish, fundamentalist Islamic and Baathist groups loosely connected by an

American-backed central government. Most ominously among these groups, the Zarqawi network has successfully seized control of a number of Iraqi towns and imposed Al Qaeda's version of strict Islamic law[403]. The devastating political setbacks in Iraq have merged with the Iraq insurgency to force a continuous official state of national emergency since November 2004. Both the brutal measures of the Iraqi counterinsurgency and the looming civil war threatens to demonize America for having created a failed state in Iraq.

Al Qaeda has furthered expedited this transfer of war guilt via the Iraq front by not claiming responsibility for many of its bombings. Most prominently, Al Qaeda has not claimed responsibility for some of its most heinous attacks against Muslims, such as the Al Qaeda effort in Iraq to foment civil war by bombing Iraqi Shiites. Although the virulently anti-Shiite Zarqawi network has appeared to bear culpability for some of the major bombings of Shiite targets, Al Qaeda's public disassociation from the Zarqawi network prior to December 2004 rendered Al Qaeda largely blameless for these murders in world opinion. Following his public incorporation into Al Qaeda, in February 2005 Zarqawi made a special announcement to refute claims that one of his bombings had targeted a Shiite mosque, insisting that the real target was an Iraqi National Guard convoy[404]. In the same month as its "official" merging with Al Qaeda, the Zarqawi network published the first issue of its online magazine, *Zurwat al Sanam*, in which Zarqawi decreed that, "One of the basic rules of our religion is not to spill a drop of Muslim blood unless it is justified, because the destruction of the world is no less an offense than that". Nevertheless, the Shiite domination of the Iraqi national government and counterinsurgency forces has coupled with the broad rejection of the Iraqi draft constitution by Sunni leaders to offer Al Qaeda a pretext to target Shiite civilians increasingly as collaborators with the American "crusaders". After a lull in Zarqawi's overt targeting of Shiites following his official incorporation into Al Qaeda, in September 2005 Zarqawi seized upon this new pretext to escalate these attacks dramatically[405]. The careful realignment of Zarqawi's war against Iraq's Shiite population to maximize public support is consistent with Al Qaeda's long-standing effort to appear as a righteous defender of Muslims from American imperialism, rather than as a nefarious group that is intentionally killing thousands of Muslim civilians to foment a greater Middle East war.

Although Al Qaeda's aptitude at manipulating public opinion has greatly bolstered its reputation, the key to increasing support for its terrorist war against America has been the Bush Administration's globally decried failures in Iraq. These grievances include:

- The invasion under false pretenses to pursue the imperialistic objectives of the American defense industry, Big Oil and Zionism,

- The establishment of a seemingly permanent American military occupation of the country,

- The encouragement of massive economic depredation of Iraq by foreign corporations,

- The destruction of vital basic public services followed by the failure to reconstruct them,

- The facilitation of the collapse of the country's most vital economic asset, the Iraqi oil industry,

- The careless security precautions that allowed Iraq's major cities to be looted and non-insurgent criminal activity to persist at record levels,

- The disbandment of the military and the failure to reconstruct a viable domestic security force,

- The provocation of a civil war that involves the worst terrorist campaign in modern history,

- The enfeeblement of the central government to such an extent that its largely ineffective members are mostly confined to a fortified enclave in the capital,

- The relegation of local governmental authority to numerous opposing fundamentalist Islamic sects that impose brutal medieval laws on the populace,

- The prosecution of a war against the newly created insurgency through the aerial bombardment of highly populated cities and the dramatic escalation of the Iraqi national death rate,

- The imprisonment of tens of thousands of Iraqis in military-controlled detention centers where they are subject to barbaric tortures and humiliations,

- The inception of a war in the Middle East that threatens to engulf the entire region and incite a global war that threatens all nations.

By waging a war against America inside Iraq and beyond, Al Qaeda has capitalized on President Bush's usurpation of Bin Laden's status as the primary war provocateur, today portraying the righteous leader of the global resistance to American imperialism.

The American debacle in Iraq has offered Al Qaeda an optimal propaganda platform on which to base a new global terrorist campaign. More than any other event to date, the Iraq war represents a global grievance that Al Qaeda can exploit to rally support for attacks against America and her allies. In the context of the ongoing internationally illegal Western aggression against a Muslim nation that had neither supported Al Qaeda nor attacked any member of President Bush's "Coalition of the Willing", overt Al Qaeda attacks on any of these current members are more convincingly portrayed as a righteous effort to defend besieged, helpless Muslims.

Al Qaeda's post-9/11 global terrorist campaign clearly reflects this new boon to Bin Laden's war effort. In the sixteen months after the onset of the American occupation of Al Qaeda's home base of Afghanistan, from December 2001 to the start of the Iraq occupation in April 2003, Al Qaeda did not launch any "retaliatory" attacks on the homelands of America's international coalition members[xxviii]. Furthermore, Al Qaeda waited until nearly a year after the beginning of the Afghanistan occupation, until October 2002, to launch just one such "retaliatory" attack on an American war ally abroad[xxix], the bombing of Australians in the world's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia. In marked contrast to this relatively tame terrorist campaign, the onset of the American occupation of Iraq triggered a large wave of Al

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[xxviii] Al Qaeda did launch one major attack in 2002 on Russia, an American ally in the Afghanistan invasion. However, the Moscow theatre siege was not executed directly by core Al Qaeda operatives, but rather by Al Qaeda's Chechen affiliate. Most importantly, this attack was framed as another in a series of attacks on Russia in the context of the regional Russo-Chechen War, prosecuted since 1999, and not as the initiation of a new Al Qaeda campaign against America's global war effort. The theatre siege was not depicted by Al Qaeda as retaliation for Russia's support of the American invasion of Afghanistan, and thus was not widely seen as an Al Qaeda attack on the American war coalition.

[xxix] Al Qaeda did launch two major attacks directed against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad in 2002. Although Israel is only an unofficial coalition partner of President Bush's global war, the world's top counterterrorism state is undoubtedly a top ally in the war against Islamic terrorism. However, global anti-Israeli sentiment, and particularly the anti-Semitism prevalent throughout Islam, restrains America from explicitly acting as Israel's protector in the context of the war against Al Qaeda. Such an act would risk precipitously broadening Al Qaeda's global support, a possibility indicated by Israel's absence from Bush's official war coalition, as well as the public downplaying by the Bush Administration that the invasion of Israel's most vociferous international enemy, Saddam's Iraq, was largely a result of Saddam's financing of Palestinian attacks on Israel. Widespread global anti-Israeli sentiment at the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the influence over the American decision to invade Iraq combines with the unique limitations on America's public relationship with Israel to frame Al Qaeda attacks targeting Israelis and non-Israeli Jews as a particularly mild provocation of Bush's coalition in world opinion. The equation of all Jews with Israeli citizens stems both from the unique identity of Israel as a Jewish state that actively recruits Jews worldwide to become Israeli citizens, as well as anti-Semitic ideology, which views the two groups interchangeably. Accordingly, Al Qaeda attacks on Israeli targets and Jewish targets abroad, although in reality as abominable as attacks on other targets, are not considered in this analysis of Al Qaeda's gradually escalating post-9/11 terrorist campaign.

Qaeda attacks against America's allies. In an intimidating demonstration of one group's successful opposition to the entire American-led coalition, Al Qaeda has, since 2002, killed citizens from 18 of the 20 countries that Osama bin Laden cited as supporters of the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq[406]. The majority of these deaths occurred after the Iraq invasion.

In the month following President Bush's invasion of Iraq, Al Qaeda's call for a rejuvenated holy war against America coincided with an unprecedented increase in the number of major Al Qaeda attacks globally, including bombings in Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Chechnya. The first and primary target of this new global campaign was the most strategically important coalition member in Bush's Iraq invasion, Saudi Arabia[407]. After seven years of dormancy, Al Qaeda renewed its terrorist campaign inside Saudi Arabia with an unprecedented streak of bombings of Western targets that killed more than 170 people over two years[408]. Even Muslim nations that opposed the Iraq invasion but had supported the Afghanistan invasion eighteen months earlier, such as Turkey, were now subject to internal Al Qaeda attacks on Western targets because they supported any front of Bush's newly vilified military crusade. Additionally, pro-Western Muslim nations that had not supported either of Bush's invasions were now subject to internal Al Qaeda attacks on coalition-member targets, such as the bombings of Spanish and Israeli targets in Morocco. Only after the invasion of Iraq did Al Qaeda dramatically escalate its world war by launching its first terrorist attacks against Europe and beginning a sustained hostage-taking campaign, mostly confined to Iraq, to pressure nations allied with America to withdraw from the Bush Administration's alliance. As a blatant result of Al Qaeda's augmented campaign against America's allies, President Bush's international coalition began to disintegrate with the first withdrawals (Spain, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras and the Philippines) from the 34-nation Iraq-occupation alliance in 2004. Al Qaeda has used the world community's increased tolerance of attacks against Bush's coalition following the Iraq invasion to escalate its attacks with remarkable results.

Al Qaeda has attempted to solidify this new justification for its international terrorist campaign by overtly attributing to its Iraqi branch many of its major attacks since the Iraq invasion, including the Casablanca, Turkey and Madrid bombings[409]. A year after Al Qaeda involved its Iraqi branch in the Madrid train bombings, American intelligence has publicized

that Bin Laden is actively enlisting the Iraqi branch to attack American targets globally[410]. Although Bin Laden did not formally declare his authority over this Iraqi terrorist group until December 2004, his attempts to redefine his war effort as a gradual coalescence with this Iraq insurgency reveal his intention to use the Iraq invasion as a cover in order to launch terrorist attacks with partial immunity from global condemnation. Accordingly, Al Qaeda's future escalation of attacks on America and her allies, whether directly tied to the Zarqawi network or not, will be earnestly justified to the world community as the righteous defense of oppressed Iraqis by a messianic third party. Predictably, the 2005 London bombings were followed by a flood of radical Islamic media releases justifying the attacks as retaliation for Britain's prominent role in the Iraq occupation. Al Qaeda has even expanded its terrorist campaign to the Israeli homeland through the Zarqawi network, launching its first overt attack on Israel, a joint rocket attack on an Israeli port and an American warship in August 2005, in a depiction of a joint Al Qaeda-Palestinian holy war against the American-Israeli military occupation in the Holy Land region[411]. By directly channeling the widespread anger over America's Iraq invasion, Bin Laden has broadly strengthened the justification for Al Qaeda's attacks in world opinion.

Despite this unprecedented degree of terrorist violence, Al Qaeda's post-Iraq-invasion campaign has displayed a conspicuously image-conscious progression over time in its incitement of Bush's Western-based coalition. This strategy was a calculated bid to reframe Al Qaeda attacks as righteous retaliation, and not unwarranted provocation, in the context of the globally loathed American invasion of Iraq. Similar to Al Qaeda's pre-9/11 campaign against America, which began with a small, covert grenade attack on American forces in the Arabian Peninsula in December 1992, this new post-9/11 campaign gradually increased in scope and intensity in order to minimize the global community's shock and revulsion at the terrorist attacks. As part of this public relations ploy to portray the terrorist campaign as a reasonable, and not reckless, escalation of the global war, Al Qaeda provided ample warning to its targeted nations, particularly the principal members of Bush's coalition. In nearly every case, Al Qaeda preceded its major attacks in this post-Iraq invasion campaign with media releases that explicitly warned the targeted nations[412]. In the cases of the nations leading Bush's coalition, Al Qaeda first attacked targets abroad, and only afterwards proceeded to launch more provocative attacks on the homelands of these nations. By carefully escalating his

aggression, issuing ample advanced warning of his attacks and portraying the failed compliance of the targeted nations with his demands, Bin Laden depicted his war in a more fair and righteous perspective than if he had immediately launched highly provocative attacks against the Bush coalition leaders without warning.

Bin Laden's gradually expanding post-Iraq-invasion campaign began with Al Qaeda's most traditional, least provocative target, the American influence in Saudi Arabia that was Al Qaeda's first overt bombing target. Unlike the 1990s terrorist campaign in Saudi Arabia, however, the May 2003 bombings appeared as a climax to the global protests against the invasion of Iraq, targeting the American presence in Saudi Arabia that had served as a primary base for the widely despised preemptive war[413]. Furthering the overt justification for the attack, the overwhelming Saudi public opposition to the American military presence in the country portrayed the attack against the agents of the feared "foreign occupier" as an action that was morally and even actively supported by the domestic population. The withdrawal of America's military presence in Saudi Arabia that coincidentally followed this attack solidified the Saudi public support for the attack, as well as Al Qaeda itself, based on its apparent success in evicting the superpower's military colossus. In addition to portraying the attack as both domestically and globally supported, these new bombings in Saudi Arabia appeared less provocative than every previous major Al Qaeda attack on America because they did not directly target the American military or government, but rather only American civilians assisting the American military presence in the Kingdom. Unlike an equivalent attack on a hard American target, such as a U.S. Marine barracks, this attack on a relatively poorly defended, unofficial American auxiliary contingent to the forces invading Iraq would most probably not incite an aggressive response by the Bush Administration. By orchestrating the attack to mitigate the degree to which it was globally perceived as Al Qaeda's unwarranted provocation of the Bush Administration, Al Qaeda saved itself from extensive global condemnation. The May 2003 Saudi Arabia bombings portrayed Al Qaeda more as the military wing of the world community's political dissent to the provocative American invasion of Iraq, rather than as the primary war provocateur.

Days after the May 2003 Saudi Arabia bombings, Al Qaeda continued its terrorist campaign in Islam's heartland against civilians of the American-led coalition. This time infiltrating a staunchly pro-Western unofficial ally of Bush's post-9/11 global coalition, Al

Qaeda launched an attack in Muslim Morocco that primarily targeted Israelis. Al Qaeda's target in these coordinated bombings in Casablanca were citizens of a nation long vilified in world opinion for its apparent brutal domination of Palestinians (as reflected in the unequaled U.N. resolutions condemning Israeli aggression against Palestinians[414]), as well as long accustomed to Islamic terrorist attacks. More pertinently, as a top unofficial ally of Bush's coalition that was widely perceived as the principal non-American influence behind the decision to invade Iraq, Israel was framed as both a top-level and non-provocative target for Al Qaeda attacks on Bush's coalition. Additionally, the Morocco bombings targeted citizens of Spain, a second-tier member of the Bush war coalition, an act that did not constitute an attack on the uppermost leadership of the coalition and as such only represented a relatively mild provocation. In the image-conscious tradition of Al Qaeda attacks in Saudi Arabia, "homegrown" militants executed this attack on American allies in Casablanca[415] in an effort to portray domestic support for this opposition to a foreign presence, rather than portray an unjustified foreign aggression on Moroccan territory.

Three months following the Casablanca bombings, notching up the provocation scale, Al Qaeda launched its first major post-9/11 attack on an American target outside of Saudi Arabia and the war zones (Afghanistan-Pakistan and Iraq). Al Qaeda escalated its incitement of the American-led coalition by attacking an American civilian target in Jakarta, Indonesia. The bombing of the Marriott hotel in the capital of Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, represented an extension of Al Qaeda's campaign to include all American civilians in Muslim lands, not simply those civilians who actively assisted the Iraq invasion in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, this attack again conspicuously avoided official American targets (official representatives of the United States, such as military and government installations), focusing exclusively on an unofficial, civilian American target. By executing this attack through a "homegrown" affiliate in Indonesia, a nation with a strongly anti-American and pro-Al Qaeda public sentiment restrained by a pro-Western government, Bin Laden framed the native populace as active supporters of this strike against America's cultural, economic and political aggression in Indonesia. Although incorporating details that diminished the likelihood of a significant American retaliation, Bin Laden had nevertheless executed his greatest incitement of America since 9/11.

After another three-month lull, Al Qaeda gradually expanded its overt terrorist campaign against the American-led coalition to include more provocative targets. Notably, during the six months since the Iraq invasion, the world community learned to a fair degree of certainty that President Bush's case for the invasion, Iraq's WMD arsenal and pre-invasion alliance with Al Qaeda, was unfounded. This development further publicly vindicated and emboldened Bin Laden while vilifying America and her war allies. In November 2003, Al Qaeda increased the degree to which its new campaign incited the Western coalition by launching its first major attack inside Turkey, bombing both Israeli and official British government targets. This major attack outside of the war zones (Afghanistan-Pakistan and Iraq) on the government of America's foremost ally -- Al Qaeda's first such attack on Britain -- represented a significant escalation in the degree of provocation in this post-Iraq-invasion terrorist campaign. Additionally, the Turkey bombings were located on the border of the Middle East and Europe, signaling the gradual expansion of Al Qaeda's campaign from the Middle Eastern epicenter outwards toward Europe. This prelude in late 2003 to Al Qaeda's future attacks inside Europe closely mirrored Bin Laden's carefully crafted strategy for the geographical enlargement of his pre-9/11 overt terrorist campaign against America. The gradual expansion of the scope of Al Qaeda's attacks against America, from targets in Saudi Arabia to outside the Middle East and finally to the American homeland, had demonstrated early on Bin Laden's unwillingness to appear as the primary war provocateur.

Nearly six months after its first attack on the borderlands of Europe, Al Qaeda again expanded the provocative scope of its new campaign by launching its first major attack on Europe, targeting the capital of the second-tier coalition member Spain. Al Qaeda framed this March 2004 attack as the birth of its threat to Spain announced by the less provocative attack on Spanish targets in Casablanca nine months earlier. To solidify this connection between these two attacks on Spanish targets, Al Qaeda employed the same Moroccan affiliate that had launched the Casablanca bombings to execute the Madrid bombings directly[416]. Al Qaeda's gradual escalation of its campaign against Spain portrayed the Spanish government's failure to respond to Al Qaeda's first attack targeting Spain abroad as the cause of the Madrid bombings, a cause with roots in the government's decision to join an aggressive war against Muslim Iraq. By giving Spain clear warning of Al Qaeda's looming retaliation for the nation's continued

support of the Iraq war, Bin Laden mitigated the extent to which the Madrid bombings would incriminate him as the primary war provocateur.

Reflecting its mounting public relations success over America in the months following President Bush's globally decried 2004 reelection[417], Al Qaeda initiated a new series of attacks directed at the American-led coalition's uppermost leadership. Nine months after the Madrid train bombings, Al Qaeda launched its first major post-9/11 attack outside of the war zones (Afghanistan-Pakistan and Iraq) on an official American military or government target, the U.S. consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Al Qaeda had made the image-conscious decision to refrain from such an attack on any one of the thousands of potential targets for the first three years of the 9/11 War, amidst the Bush offensive in Afghanistan and Iraq and Al Qaeda's global counteroffensive. The symbolic audacity of the attack was matched by its methodology, which replaced Al Qaeda's traditional use of bombs with a daring gun battle conducted against one of the most highly fortified targets in Saudi Arabia. Al Qaeda's increased willingness to incite America into a significant military retaliation following Bush's reelection signaled an alarming development in Bin Laden's new global terrorist campaign.

Just over six months after its most provocative post-9/11 attack on America, Al Qaeda once more ratcheted up the scope of its campaign by bombing the capital of America's top ally, Britain. This represented the second most provocative potential target of an Al Qaeda attack in its war against America, the first being an attack on the American homeland. Consistent with its post-Iraq invasion campaign, Al Qaeda had taken measures to mitigate the degree to which its most provocative attack since 9/11 would appear as an unwarranted provocation. This July 2005 attack followed years of Al Qaeda threats against Britain for its support of the American invasion of the Middle East, occurring a year and a half after Al Qaeda had attacked Britain in a less provocative manner, the bombing of the British consulate in Turkey. Mirroring the strategy used in the Spain bombings, Al Qaeda provided fair warning and gradually escalated its attacks against Britain from abroad to the homeland in order to portray the London bombings as a result of the British government's failure to heed Al Qaeda's demand for Britain to withdraw its support for the globally vilified Bush war. Al Qaeda further buttressed its justification for this attack by using "homegrown" suicide bombers[418], portraying the action as having been zealously supported by domestic elements in Britain, as opposed to having been a domestically unsolicited foreign aggression. Occurring in the city

that has served as the European headquarters of Al Qaeda since 1994[419], the London bombings were adeptly orchestrated to minimize Al Qaeda's vilification for the action by sharing the blame with both domestic elements in Britain as well as the British government.

Instead of instantly attacking the British homeland following the Iraq invasion, Al Qaeda allowed the Iraq debacle to fester and British participation in the American occupation to continue unabated for over two years. By waiting for global indignation over the Iraq war to crescendo into an authoritative condemnation of the Anglo-American-led effort, Bin Laden minimized any global backlash against Al Qaeda for the provocative London bombings. By the time of the London attack, the world community had learned definitively that the pretext for the Iraq invasion was baseless, and more scandalously, that the Bush Administration and the British government had colluded to fabricate the public justification for the invasion (as revealed in the infamous Downing Street Memos, discussed in Ch.4.2). Again, Bin Laden's *casus belli* had been publicly vindicated, and again he spent his newfound political capital.

Al Qaeda had carefully escalated its post-Iraq-invasion global campaign against Bush's coalition, targeting first civilians of the coalition nations in the Middle East, then official British government installations in the Middle East, then the homeland of a second-tier coalition member, then an official American government installation in the Middle East, then the British homeland. Amidst the numerous major Al Qaeda attacks in this timeframe, only two targeted the homelands of Western nations. Through a gradual, limited augmentation of its international campaign against Bush's Iraq coalition that mainly targeted Western "imperialism" and not Western nations, Al Qaeda has portrayed itself as the leader of resistance to the globally reviled American "imperialism" in Iraq, appearing more like a righteous retaliator than as the global war's primary provocateur.

Most ominously, Al Qaeda's gradually escalating terrorism seems to be heading towards a nuclear war. On the pretext of the Iraq invasion and possible future American military adventures, Al Qaeda appears to be building a public justification for nuclear attacks against America. At the same time as Al Qaeda's first attempt to provoke the American invasion of Iraq in 1993, which involved a nearly successful WMD attack on New York City launched from the World Trade Center, Al Qaeda made its first known attempt to acquire nuclear weapons[420]. This bold step in the burgeoning terrorist empire's agenda suggested that the invasion of Iraq was the critical precursor to Bin Laden's plan for a nuclear attack against

America. A widely corroborated report that was publicized by Michael Scheuer, former chief of the CIA's Bin Laden unit, stated that, in the month following the invasion of Iraq, Bin Laden received the blessing of at least one Saudi cleric to use a "Doomsday" bomb against the United States[421]. The holocaustic loathing of the United States generated by the Iraq invasion clearly demonstrates the great value of this event as Al Qaeda's tool to intimidate America's allies and portray the messianic group as a righteous and successful opponent to American imperialism.

Part Four:

Reelection War

Bin Laden has employed two methods for provoking the Bush crusade that is so vital to Al Qaeda's war effort. Direct provocations through colossal terrorist attacks, like the 9/11 attack, have been coupled with a more indirect, covert method that aims to assist the election of President Bush. After three years of consistently supporting Bush's portrayal to the American public of an effective wartime president by not attacking the American homeland, Al Qaeda finally succeeded in its goal of ensuring a second Bush term. President Bush's reelection in 2004 signaled an Al Qaeda victory in its public relations war against America. Global outrage at the American public's election-endorsement of Bush's presidency, which has already caused unprecedented anti-American sentiment worldwide, will translate into increased global support for the leader of the war against American imperialism.

Chapter 10.

Bin Laden Reelected Bush

10.1. Another October Surprise

Bin Laden's greatest victory since the Iraq invasion occurred when America announced to the world that Al Qaeda's greatest recruiting tool would reign as president for four more years. This was not an unearned boon for Al Qaeda. In a predictable repetition of his October 2000 surprise, the USS COLE bombing, Bin Laden again intervened in the final lap of an extremely close American presidential election to support George W. Bush's reelection. Four days before the 2004 Election, Al Qaeda stunned America and the world by releasing the first videotaped Bin Laden speech recorded since 2001 (transcript available at www.informationclearinghouse.info/article7201.htm). Most analysts agree that this tape assisted Bush's campaign[422], and many public officials, such as Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, have asserted that this was Bin Laden's intention[423]. Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry has blamed Bush's reelection on this strategically timed intrusion into the election campaign[424]. This intervention in America's presidential election constituted Al Qaeda's most conspicuous attempt to assist the reelection of its foremost recruiting agent, George W. Bush. Bin Laden greatly facilitated Bush's victory by swaying a crucial fraction of the American public to vote for Bush in the closest reelection in modern history[425].

Reverse Psychology

On the eve of the election, Bin Laden released this provocative and convincingly authentic videotaped speech in which for the first time he directly claimed responsibility for the 9/11 attack and threatened more such attacks if the American public did not use this opportunity to change America's foreign policy by diminishing American aggression in Muslim lands[426]. Superficially, this amounted to a menacing criticism of Bush's hawkish preemptive warfare in the Middle East and an endorsement of John Kerry's less inflammatory policy for the War On Terror. Since the only plausible way for the American public to change

America's foreign policy is to change the administration, America's greatest nemesis had indirectly but nevertheless overtly endorsed presidential challenger John Kerry. Revealingly, Bin Laden's message precisely confirmed Vice President Cheney's highly publicized warning, voiced only a few months earlier, that Al Qaeda wanted the American public to elect the "more sensitive", less forceful wartime president, the Democratic presidential contender[427]. By ostensibly trying to intimidate American voters into electing a less aggressive administration on the eve of the premier national election, Bin Laden superficially portrayed an attempt at American regime change. As a toothless version of the Madrid bombings that coerced a Spanish regime change in early 2004, this meager attempt to persuade the famously independent-minded constituency of the world's superpower into appeasing the mastermind of the 9/11 attack was not only destined to fail, it was intended to accomplish the very opposite.

In addition to ordering the American public not to vote for Bush, Bin Laden perpetrated this reverse psychological ploy by aligning himself with the Democrats' anti-Bush propaganda campaign. Bin Laden's speech specifically reiterated a litany of famous grievances that John Kerry and his supporters frequently charged President Bush with during the 2004 campaign, including:

- Bush's inept initial response to the 9/11 attack, specifically citing the oft repeated "Goat Story" of how President Bush continued to read a children's story to a kindergarten class for nearly a half hour after he was informed of the first 747 airliner striking the World Trade Center, and seven minutes after he was informed of the second kamikaze strike on the Twin Towers,

- Bush's poor economic leadership, emphasizing the unprecedented American national debt that Bush has accrued,

- The corruption of the Bush Administration, including its deference to the agenda of Halliburton and other oil companies by invading Iraq to seize control of the world's prime oil real estate, and

- The Bush Administration's usurpation of American political power, beginning with voter fraud in the 2000 Presidential Election in Florida and continuing with the establishment of a new internal security doctrine that impinges on traditional American freedoms, including new Orwellian laws enshrined in the U.S.A.P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act (the

Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, commonly called the Patriot Act).

Avoiding any criticism of the Kerry campaign, Bin Laden precisely allied himself with John Kerry in this vitriolic anti-Bush speech.

Bin Laden's speech was not akin to a public endorsement for a presidential candidate by the Pope. On the contrary, this chilling videotaped message was an endorsement for John Kerry from a man viewed by America as public enemy #1, analogous to an endorsement for a candidate for the office of the prime minister of Israel by Adolf Hitler. Realistically, the American public would not follow the advice of a devious mass murderer whose words and deeds explicitly evinced his intent to destroy America. Bin Laden's association of his criminal agenda with the Democratic campaign made John Kerry appear illegitimate and, predictably, encouraged voters not to elect this candidate whom Al Qaeda endorsed. Furthermore, the obvious similarities between Bin Laden's speech and Kerry's attacks on Bush suggested that the liberal campaign against Bush had empowered Bin Laden with rhetorical weapons to justify his war against America. Thereafter, any time an American charged Bush with these same indictments, the Bush critic could be immediately identified as a Bin Laden sympathizer. By levying these popular criticisms of Bush himself, Bin Laden weakened both the influence these criticisms had on the American public as well as the resolve of the anti-Bush campaign. Lastly, in the context of his war to kill all Americans, Bin Laden's directed condemnation of Bush implied a death threat to this wartime president, an act that would certainly rally Americans to support President Bush on the eve of the election. Bin Laden's carefully crafted "campaign" speech denouncing President Bush constituted a paradoxically powerful attack on the Kerry campaign and a boost for the Bush campaign.

Playing Bush's Trump Card

The interjection of Bin Laden into the final days of the presidential campaign brought to the forefront of voters' attention the issue most favorable to Bush's campaign, national security. Releases of Bin Laden tapes usually precede major Al Qaeda attacks[428], and his speech inordinately focused on the American home front, so the emergence of this video implicitly threatened a major Al Qaeda attack inside America. Furthermore, Bin Laden's

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explicit promise to launch more 9/11-type attacks on Bush's America magnified this national security threat. This vivid presentation of the looming threat of Al Qaeda was intended to scare American voters, clearly benefiting President Bush as the candidate most widely preferred for defending the American homeland from Al Qaeda attacks[429]. Bush's apparent success in preventing any such Al Qaeda attacks since 9/11, a portrayal that Bin Laden highlighted by his apparent inability to launch a physical terrorist attack on the American homeland during the eve of the election, predisposed President Bush to be favored in the election because of Bin Laden's vivid warning.

> The president's approval ratings have uniformly risen in the wake of government terrorist-threat warnings over the last three years, according to a recent Cornell University study. The survey of 26 government reports of increased terrorist activity between February 2001 and May 2004 showed that, on average, each prompted a 2.75-percentage-point increase in the president's approval ratings the following week, as measured by the Gallup Poll[430].

Consistent with this well-known trend, the American public's support for President Bush was most likely increased as a result of Bin Laden's menacing message on the eve of Election 2004.

In the final days before the election, national polls revealed that Bush's popularity was boosted primarily because of the issue of terrorism that the new Bin Laden video had highlighted[431]. Following the election, most polls indicated that Bush had won on a national security mandate[432]. Although national exit polls suggested that the vaguely defined issue of moral values exceeded terrorism by three percentage-points as the primary issue guiding the voters' decision, this assertion is hardly conclusive. Since the election, the only top polling issues that Americans deemed "extremely important" have been the Iraq War (according to 50% of respondents) and terrorism (also 50%). Far fewer Americans rated the "moral value" issues of abortion and gay marriage as "extremely important" (approximately 15% for each of the two issues)[433]. The issue that really changed the most votes was terrorism. The trump power of the terrorism issue was revealed by the fact that 99% of those voters who trusted only Kerry on terrorism voted for him and 97% of those who trusted only Bush on terrorism voted to reelect the president. 19% of voters cited terrorism as the most important issue, of whom 86% voted for Bush. When taking into account how individual states voted in the 2000 Election, it becomes clear that the morality issue did not significantly increase Bush's Electoral

College vote in 2004. On the other hand, the issue of terrorism did cause a significant increase in Bush's Electoral College votes by swaying voters in swing states to change their vote from the Democratic candidate to Bush[434].   Revealingly, Bush increased his support among non-churchgoers more so than churchgoers.

> To focus on (moral) values misses the crucial point that this was the post-9/11 election, and the war on terror set the stage and the context for the choices many voters were making[435].

The primary issue that swayed voters to elect Bush and caused high voter turnout in critical regions was the prevention of future 9/11's, the very threat that Bin Laden so prominently emphasized on the eve of the election.

The Bin Laden video increased Bush's support not because it posed a laughable threat to national security, but because it harkened to a very real, unprecedented American catastrophe about which many Americans still experience some degree of post-traumatic stress. This startling reemergence of Bin Laden after his three-year disappearing act served as a powerful reminder to the American public of the deeply emotional bond it formed with President Bush as the defender of America in its most vulnerable and uncertain hour. Al Qaeda's pre-election message helped to reset America's mindset back to an era when Bush enjoyed the highest presidential approval ratings in American history[436]. Bin Laden cleverly rekindled America's 9/11-Bush bond by directly claiming responsibility for the 9/11 attack for the first time and threatening future 9/11's. In particular, by trying at length to justify his brutal assault on the United States as a legitimate retaliation for American aggression against Muslims, Bin Laden stoked the indignation of the American public concerning what it perceived as the unprovoked 9/11 attack. Bin Laden's speech identified Bush as a prime example of this tradition of American aggression, conspicuously instilling the American public with the impression that Bush's loss in the election would represent America's affirmation that 9/11 was a righteous attack and those American victims deserved to be killed. By recasting Bush as the 9/11 President and the election itself as America's judgment of the legitimacy of the 9/11 attack, Bin Laden's video evoked America's 9/11 trauma to swell Bush's support immediately before the election.

The resurfacing of Bin Laden also distracted the American public from the Democratic campaign's previous focus, the Bush Administration's disastrous occupation of Iraq. In the week prior to Bin Laden's video release, even Republican media bastions like Fox News observed that Kerry appeared to have edged past Bush in the polls largely because of developments in Iraq[437]. On the eve of the election, Bin Laden resoundingly reversed Kerry's crucial gains. Previous headlines, such as:

The infamous Duelfer Report, the conclusion of Bush's chief weapons inspector that Saddam did not have WMD or WMD programs,

The rising tide of the terrorist insurgency in Iraq, and

The disappearance of a vast cache of Iraqi plastic explosives supposedly under American supervision,

were all displaced by headlines about Bin Laden's new video. Polls taken in the weeks after Bush's reelection revealed that a majority of Americans believed that Bush's invasion of Iraq was a mistake[438], but, nevertheless, a majority of American voters overlooked the Iraq debacle and reelected Bush on a mandate of strong national security. Bin Laden had de-emphasized Bush's misguided leadership of the unprovoked American invasion of Iraq in the minds of the voters on Election Day and in its place emphasized Bush's leadership of America's defense from Al Qaeda after the seemingly unprovoked 9/11 attack. As a result of this shift of focus in the final lap of the presidential campaign, Americans were less apt to criticize, indict and oust this wartime president than if the focus had remained on Bush's Iraq invasion. This video constituted a double boost for Bush's support in the sense that it both increased his support on a mandate of national security and decreased the largest impediment to Bush's reelection, the American public's focus on the Iraq debacle.

Although the video also reminded the American public about Bush's apparent failure to capture or kill Bin Laden, this intrinsic criticism was trumped by the fact that Bush was generally viewed as the presidential candidate who would most aggressively fight terrorism and therefore would be best able to seek and destroy this threat. Despite Bin Laden's evasion of Bush's pursuit, John Kerry's portrayal as a less aggressive militarist made him appear less apt to succeed in capturing or killing Bin Laden. Although Bush's invasion of Iraq decreased

America's resources devoted to killing Bin Laden, Kerry, who voted for the Iraq invasion, declared that he would also have invaded Iraq (albeit with more diplomatic tact) had he been president[439]. Furthermore, the American public's urgency about capturing or killing Bin Laden was dramatically reduced since 2002 with the widespread dissemination of the falsehood that Al Qaeda's post-Taliban decentralization included the destruction of the Al Qaeda leadership's central command control over its global terrorist empire, as well as its ability to launch 9/11-type terrorist attacks[440]. This unfortunate myth was buttressed by President Bush's repeated assertions since 2002 that capturing or killing Bin Laden was a relatively insignificant objective of America's war effort[441]. Instead of being a mastermind, Bin Laden was viewed merely as a symbol who could only encourage attacks on America, not direct them. From this perspective, Bin Laden's evasion of President Bush's manhunt was not viewed by the American public as an entirely unacceptable failure in the war against Al Qaeda.

Nevertheless, the revelation that Bin Laden was still alive did emphasize a Bush failure, and, predictably, Bin Laden mitigated the appearance of this failure in his speech. In the list of his justifications for the 9/11 attack that Bin Laden offered in this video, one grievance in particular stood out as an anomaly. Among a host of contemporary grievances, Bin Laden cited the decades old Israeli atrocities in Lebanon as a cause of the 9/11 attack. This citation of a twenty-year old massacre was an uncharacteristically weak excuse for the largest single act of mass murder in modern history. However, the reference to the 1982 atrocities in Lebanon did serve another purpose. In his speech, Bin Laden noted that he began planning for the 9/11 attack at this time in 1982, clearly portraying his war with America and the current manhunt for him as events he had been anticipating for two decades. According to this assertion, Bush's culpability in failing to find Bin Laden was mitigated by the fact that the terrorist leader had been masterminding his evasion of capture by America for such a long time. Additionally, the likelihood that Bin Laden is hiding within the vast mountainous region between Afghanistan and Pakistan, where for two decades he had constructed an underground cave network, further absolved the Bush Administration from achieving this exceedingly difficult task. By emphasizing factors that appeared to mitigate Bush's culpability in failing to capture America's chief nemesis, Bin Laden diminished the degree to which this failure could influence American voters and facilitated his goal of coaxing Bush's reelection.

Like the bombing of the USS COLE three weeks before Bush's 2000 Election, and the Madrid train bombings on the eve of the 2004 Spanish national election, Bin Laden's carefully crafted election speech was intended to alter the outcome of an extremely close national election. This video needed only to sway a small fraction of the American public into voting for Bush on a mandate of national security in order to win the election for Bush. The fact that this October surprise occurred so close to the election made it an even stronger boon for the Bush campaign than the Cole bonus that occurred in October 2000. Reminiscent of Bush's declining popularity in the first eight months of his presidency in 2001, the effect of the 2004 video had largely dissipated in the weeks and months following Bush's reelection, and, combined with the American public's refocusing on the Iraq debacle, this resulted in Bush receiving the lowest approval ratings of his presidency, as well as the lowest ratings of any second-term president in modern times, with the exception of Richard Nixon[442]. Bush's reelection in spite of his domestic unpopularity is a testament to Bin Laden's power to control the American presidency. The 2004 Bin Laden video represented the most blatant, and perhaps most effective, foreign interference with an American election in history. By clearly giving the impression that a vote for John Kerry was a vote for Al Qaeda, Bin Laden beguiled America into reelecting his greatest recruiting tool.

10.2. Al Qaeda's Four-Year Reelection Campaign

October Surprises

Bin Laden's October 2004 rhetorical attack on America was the last in a series of concerted Al Qaeda attempts to support President Bush's reelection. In the first attempt, the Cole bombing supported the Bush/Cheney campaign's closely contested millennial election on the mandate of national security. Indeed, it would be an unlikely coincidence if Bin Laden had randomly launched a major assault on America during the eve of each of Bush's presidential elections. As a group renowned for its careful planning and strategic calculation, Al Qaeda realistically would neither be ignorant of nor indifferent to the effect that a major attack on the United States would have on an imminent American presidential election. Al Qaeda has definitively demonstrated that America's foreign policy, which is primarily guided by the

president, is of central importance to the group. Accordingly, Al Qaeda would not overlook an opportunity to influence this policy in such a profound way, a profundity manifested by the great disparity between the foreign policy agenda of George W. Bush and that of his Democratic opponents in both 2000 and 2004.

Analysis of Al Qaeda's capacity for strategic calculation aside, a statistical analysis of the likelihood of the coincidence of these two Al Qaeda attacks and the eve of Bush's two elections confirms that Bin Laden did in fact intend to influence Bush's victory. As previously explained, there was an approximately 1/20 probability that the Cole bombing randomly occurred on the eve of the 2000 election. The coincidence of Bin Laden's video release on the eve of the 2004 election would have been an even more improbable random occurrence, both because of the scale of the rhetorical attack and the brevity of the timeframe. Although Al Qaeda had released numerous media statements since 2001, few had featured the world's most wanted man, and none had confirmed his continued existence. All of Bin Laden's post-2001 video releases had been recorded in 2001 or earlier[443], and the authenticity of his audio releases is inherently impossible to verify[xxx]. Then, on the eve of the 2004 Election, Bin Laden released his most powerful rhetorical attack on America in the form of a video definitely created in 2004. Bin Laden recited a litany of global grievances against the Bush Administration for which the American public would be indicted and punished if Bush were reelected. This stunning video was the first hard evidence that Bin Laden had survived 2001, his first explicit admission that he had ordered the 9/11 attack and his most direct death threat to America. This major rhetorical assault against the United States, released in the final four crucial days before Election Day, occurred even more narrowly on the eve of Bush's election than the Cole bombing. Of the approximately three major Al Qaeda rhetorical attacks (and zero terrorist attacks) directed against the American homeland since 9/11, the most major one occurred within the narrow timeframe during which America's presidential election was most vulnerable. In the 162 weeks following the 9/11 attack, Bin Laden's most concerted rhetorical attack on America occurred during the week prior to Election 2004. There is a 1 in 162 chance that this coincidence was random. Collectively, there is a 1 in 3240 chance that Al Qaeda's major assaults against America in October of 2000 and 2004 randomly coincided with the eve

[xxx] As opposed to video, audiotapes are notoriously easy to fake and, even if they are of high quality, constitute no definitive proof of the identity of the speaker. Simply using a similar voice to the suspected voiceprint can fool computer voiceprint software, so that a voice similar to Bin Laden's could read a speech written by Bin Laden with a few inserted references to unforeseeable current events to create a "convincing" fabrication of a recent Bin Laden audiotape release. The poor to mediocre quality of every Bin Laden audiotape made even a rough verification of their authenticity exceedingly unreliable.

of the two respective American presidential elections[xxxi]. In reality, the support these attacks provided the Bush campaign on the issue of national security accorded with Al Qaeda's strategy of defeating America in a public relations war.

Depicting a Wartime President

Aside from assaulting the United States on the eve of two of America's closest presidential elections, Bin Laden assisted the reelection of his MVP (most valuable president) through the carefully orchestrated 9/11 attack. This event would serve as President Bush's political trump card, offering him the domestic political capital both to enact the Project for the New American Century's ambitious foreign policy plan and to secure reelection. In pursuit of this strategy, Bin Laden ensured that Bush was not killed on 9/11 by designing his assault on America to target the White House[444] when the president was out of state on a publicity tour. By intentionally leaving Bush alive to be elevated to the position of a wildly popular wartime president, Bin Laden also acted as an unholy priest in the wedding between the American public and President Bush. In a one-hour ceremony on 9/11, Bush was transformed from a president with disastrous approval ratings[445] to the most widely supported American president in history, with a 92% approval rating among Americans[446]. Appropriately, the Al Qaeda hijackers used the codename "the Big Wedding" to refer to the 9/11 attack[447]. Less than a year after Bin Laden's support for Bush's 2000 election, Bin Laden created a deep emotional bond between Bush and the American public through the unprovoked 9/11 attack. Consequently, the American public was confronted with the daunting decision in 2004 of whether to break this 9/11 bond with Bush and change the presidency in the midst of an unprovoked war. Bipartisan consensus confirms that the 9/11 attack was in fact the greatest boon to President Bush's domestic political support.

Continuing this support of Bush's reelection, Bin Laden falsely portrayed Bush to the American public as a successful defender of the nation by directing Al Qaeda not to attack the American homeland since 9/11. In addition to facilitating the transfer of war guilt to America in world opinion, this strategic decision buttressed Bush's domestic support as a successful wartime president. If Bin Laden had not wanted Bush to be reelected, Al Qaeda would likely have capitalized on its greatly augmented global capacity to launch terrorist attacks, as well as America's notorious failures in post-9/11 homeland security, to attack the America homeland

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[xxxi] (1/20)* (1/162)=1/3240

repeatedly since 9/11 in order to show the ineptitude of the president's national security leadership. By christening Bush as a wildly popular wartime president through the unprovoked 9/11 attack, particularly by conspicuously avoiding attacking him on that day, and then stopping all Al Qaeda attacks inside America, Bin Laden supported Bush's appearance as a successful wartime president. Bin Laden intentionally instilled the American people with a false sense of satisfaction and complacency about President Bush's prospects for success in the war against Al Qaeda to further his chances for reelection.

Buttressing Bush's 2004 Reelection Campaign

During the influential two-month timeframe before America's 2004 Election, Al Qaeda's terrorist campaign conspicuously generated powerful support for Bush's reelection. Although the American homeland was necessarily off-limits to Al Qaeda attacks, carefully orchestrated terrorist operations elsewhere could significantly bolster President Bush's chances of victory on Election Day. In September, Al Qaeda covertly launched the most deadly and globally abhorred terrorist attack since 9/11. The Russian school siege by Al Qaeda's Chechen branch[448] targeted over one thousand children and resulted in over 340 deaths, mostly children[449]. This abominable attack occurred in the wake of two other devastating attacks by this Al Qaeda branch, the twin bombings of Russian airliners and the Moscow subway bombing. While Al Qaeda avoided a public relations backlash by using an affiliate widely seen as relatively independent of Al Qaeda and by not claiming responsibility for the school siege, the effect was to increase the general fear of international terrorism.

Equally, as an attack on Russia in the apparent context of the decade-old Russo-Chechen conflict, this terrorist victory was not widely perceived as President Bush's failure, though nevertheless regenerated fears concerning America's conflict with Al Qaeda. In the United States, this Russian school attack sparked widespread warnings from the U.S. Education Department advising school leaders to watch for suspicious people spying on schools or school buses in order to help detect a similar terrorist attack in the United States.

> "The horror of this attack may have created significant anxiety in
> our own country among parents, students, faculty staff and other
> community members," Deputy Education Secretary Eugene Hickok
> said in a letter sent Wednesday to schools and education groups.
> The American government is advising schools to take many steps

to improve their security, including installing locks for all doors and windows and establishing emergency evacuation plans[450].

Unlike every other previous post-9/11 terrorist attack, the reverberations of terror from this most despicable attack in Russia profoundly affected America's national consciousness. The American public's predictable fear and loathing of such an attack on innocent children occurring inside the United States translated into more American support for the reelection of the hawkish Bush Administration. Fighting fear with fear, the American response to the Russian school siege was a movement towards electing the leader perceived to be stronger on defending the American homeland and inclined to harsh retaliation for such horrendous terrorist attacks. Not surprisingly, the Bush Administration, and not the Kerry campaign, made particular use of this Russian attack to buttress its campaign efforts, as when Bush referred to this attack in the first 2004 Presidential Debate while advocating the need for his reelection. Just as President Putin predictably responded to this attack with a policy favoring preemptive military action and virtually excluding diplomatic solutions[451], the Bush campaign predictably transformed the Russian school siege into an American public mandate for a hawkish preemptive war against terrorists. Through this concord of reactions, Bin Laden augmented the domestic appeal of the Bush campaign.

Less than four weeks before the 2004 election, Al Qaeda again supported Bush's reelection bid by launching its most devastating attack to date on Israeli targets. The bombings of popular Israeli resorts on the Egyptian border with the Gaza Strip killed over thirty people[452], constituting both the deadliest Al Qaeda attack on Israeli targets as well as the closest Al Qaeda attack to the Israeli homeland. Notably, this first Al Qaeda attack inside Egypt was also the first significant terrorist attack on Israel's neighbor since 1997. Reminiscent of the October 2000 Cole bombing's effect on the Israeli political lobby in America, Bin Laden's October 2004 surprise for Israel mobilized the powerful right-wing Israeli government lobby to increase its support of President Bush in his like-minded, militant effort to confront international terrorism, particularly anti-Israeli terrorists like Saddam Hussein and Bin Laden, at the expense of diplomacy and international relations. By prodding one of the most influential American lobby groups into complete alignment with Bush's war against Al Qaeda during this crucial timeframe, this Al Qaeda bombing gave Bush's reelection bid a further boost.

Less than a week after the Egyptian bombings, Al Qaeda once more supported Bush's reelection by choosing not to attack a very vulnerable and important target. Afghanistan's first democratic elections were a vitally important symbolic event that represented the first real test of Bush's experiment in exporting democracy by the gun to the Middle East. Widespread trepidation of Al Qaeda attacks dominated global anticipation of this event, particularly considering that, nearly three years since the Taliban fell from power, Afghanistan security still remained notoriously perilous and the nation was still subject to numerous Al Qaeda attacks[453]. Despite the ease with which Al Qaeda could have smuggled a bomb into the voting areas, or simply sporadically attacked these sites with gunfire or grenades, not one single attack occurred. The fact that this auspiciously timed demonstration of the success of Bush's war on Al Qaeda was not marred by any terrorist attacks significantly assisted his reelection bid as an able wartime president. The peaceful conclusion of the Afghan elections provided an additionally powerful portrayal to the American public during this crucial timeframe before the American presidential election, depicting the success of Bush's bold foreign policy in defeating Al Qaeda in its homeland and rectifying the failed state of Afghanistan.

More than any other single factor, Bush's reelection was based on his identity as the post-9/11 wartime president, a public image that Bin Laden christened, nurtured for over three years and highlighted on the eve of the 2004 Election. Bin Laden's history of attempting to sway American voters to support the election of his greatest recruiting tool includes:

The bombing of the USS COLE three weeks before Bush's 2000 election,

The 9/11 attack (that conspicuously did not attempt to kill Bush),

The absence of attacks inside America since 9/11,

Al Qaeda's campaign in the two months prior to the 2004 Election, including the Russian school siege by its Chechen branch, the bombing of Israeli targets in Egypt, and the absence of attacks on Bush's much vaunted Afghan election, and

- Most obviously, Bin Laden's video release four days before Bush's reelection that attacked Bush and indirectly but nevertheless ostensibly endorsed presidential candidate John Kerry.

Mirroring the wicked gracefulness of his 9/11 ballet, Bin Laden deftly orchestrated Bush's reelection by providing the key selling points of his political campaign.

Chapter 11.

Bush's Victory . . . And Bin Laden's

11.1. The Importance of Bush's Reelection to Al Qaeda

Bin Laden's covert but unerring support for Bush's reelection clearly reveals that the key to Al Qaeda's success is Bush's presidency. In his infamous message to the American people on the eve of Election 2004, Bin Laden offered the clearest admission of his plan to support the reelection of Al Qaeda's MVP.

> That being said, those who say that Al Qaeda has won against the administration in the White House or that the administration has lost in this war have not been precise because when one scrutinizes the results, one cannot say that Al Qaeda is the sole factor in achieving those spectacular gains. Rather, the policy of the White House that demands the opening of war fronts to keep busy their various corporations -- whether they be working in the field of arms or oil or reconstruction -- has helped Al Qaeda to achieve these enormous results . . . So we are continuing this policy of bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy[454].

Bin Laden observes that the Bush Administration has catalyzed Al Qaeda's success in the war, particularly by spending away America's human, financial, and, most importantly, political capital through such actions as the invasion of Iraq. Prior to this Bin Laden speech, Al Qaeda clearly and overtly stated its goal of supporting Bush's reelection in a poorly publicized press release following the Madrid train bombings.

> The statement tells American voters that Abu Hafs al-Masri (an Al Qaeda subgroup) supports the reelection campaign of President Bush. "We are very keen that Bush does not lose the upcoming elections." The statement said Abu Hafs al-Masri needs what it called Bush's "idiocy and religious fanaticism" because they would "wake up" the Islamic world[455].

Bush's unwitting aid to Al Qaeda is so great that its subordinates cannot even restrain their jubilation regarding Bush's idiotic conduct in the public relations war.

As presciently observed by Al Qaeda, global anti-American sentiment was solidified in the wake of President Bush's reelection. World opinion had overwhelmingly supported the

election of John Kerry over Bush because of the global outrage at Bush's seemingly criminal foreign policy[456].

> Over the past three years, to judge by these polls, the Bush administration has squandered a huge wealth of global goodwill towards America -- a moral, political and social asset as necessary to managing the world as money or military power[457].

Even Bush himself has explicitly confirmed that he, along with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, is the most hated man in the world[458]. A BBC poll of 22,000 people in 21 nations revealed that a majority of the global community believes that the world is more dangerous because Bush was reelected. Even among traditional American allies, a majority of those polled espoused this belief, including 77% in Germany, 61% in Australia, 55% in Italy and 64% in America's closest ally, Britain[459]. Numerous authoritative polls conducted following President Bush's reelection have concluded that global anti-American sentiment is at an all-time high[460]. The continuation of the Bush Administration has allowed Al Qaeda the golden opportunity to portray itself to the world as a lesser evil than America, a portrait that entirely serves Bin Laden's public relations campaign.

The more provocative and menacing the American administration appears to the world community, particularly Muslims, the more Al Qaeda can generate a tidal wave of anti-American sentiment that even the American military colossus will be unable to withstand. Bush's reelection freed him from the need to curtail his neo-conservative ambitions out of concern for reelection prospects. Furthermore, this vindication and mandate for his foreign policy by the American public has undoubtedly emboldened the president. Bush's 2005 appointments of two of PNAC's most arch-neo-conservative leaders, Paul Wolfowitz as president of the World Bank and John Bolton as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, reveals the administration's intent to pursue respectively the American acquisition of Iraqi oil wealth and the unilateral invasion of Iran. The increasingly hawkish foreign policy of Bush's second term will likely amplify global anti-American sentiment and crystallize Al Qaeda's public relations victory over the United States. More than any other American loss, the political bankruptcy of the United States stemming from Bush's sustained alienation of the world community will enable Al Qaeda to proceed with its goal of destroying America.

In addition to ensuring four more years of the Bush Administration's crusade in the Middle East, President Bush's reelection has offered Bin Laden a critical pretext for his attacks on the American homeland. Bush's reelection signaled the American public's endorsement of the Bush foreign policy that has been broadly condemned by the world community as a criminal enterprise. The Bush Administration's first term convinced most of the world that American foreign policy is guided by an aggressive imperialism that disregards global security. The reelection of this administration represented a validation of Bush's first term and consent to a second term that has made the American public appear to be a willing participant in his administration's acts of malfeasance.

At the time of his most notorious crime, the invasion of Iraq, massive protest inside America against this war facilitated the deflection of blame from the American people and focused it on an administration whom most Americans had not elected, and even fewer had understood. The undisputed global revelation of the baseless foundation for the Iraq war, the Bush Administration's claims of Saddam's possession of WMD and alliance with Al Qaeda, has magnified the appearance of President Bush's criminality. As observed by President Reagan's former Assistant Treasury Secretary Paul Roberts, the widespread reporting in the world and American free press on the Bush Administration's illicit actions in Iraq has effectively informed the global and American public of definitive grounds for impeachment of the president. Since Americans were intimately familiar with the incumbent Bush Administration in 2004, the world community has been held the American public accountable for the results of the presidential election. In particular, observes Roberts, the lack of will by American voters to remove Bush from office has made America appear complicit in his administration's crimes in Iraq[461]. Election 2004 was the pivotal moment, when the American people chose to join Bush in being the object of global isolation and condemnation instead of rejecting the Bush Administration and salvaging America's prestige.

On the eve of Bush's reelection, Bin Laden's speech to the American people encapsulated their imminent indictment. Omitting his typical religious references, flowery rhetoric and blood-curdling hyperbole, Bin Laden submitted a clear request to the United States electorate. Adopting a conciliatory tone, Bin Laden cunningly echoed global sentiment

by imploring American voters to use the opportunity of the election to change America's menacing foreign policy. Bin Laden promised security for America if the voters would accede to the global desire for a decrease in American aggression. Like a prosecutor trying America before a global court, Bin Laden made a case that the United States would be found guilty if Bush was reelected. Bin Laden's self-portrait in this video also presented himself as the defender of humanity from an evil empire, a role he can fully embrace now that all of America has become complicit in Bush's globally loathed policies.

President Bush's reelection has especially influenced Bin Laden's target audience, mainstream Islam, on the American-Al Qaeda war. Although the vast majority of Muslims share Al Qaeda's grievances against the West, they reject Al Qaeda's violent tactics (along with the rest of its extremist ideology). In particular, mainstream Islam condemns attacks on civilians under any circumstances. However, the supposed political empowerment of the general public in a democratic government blurs the distinction between the nation's rulers and the nation's subjects, redefining the democratic "civilian", at least theoretically, as more of a privileged ruler and less of a servile subject. Nevertheless, mainstream Islam has not viewed the American public as responsible for the American administration's foreign policy, at least up until the 2004 Election[462]. Bin Laden has attempted to bridge this crucial ideological difference by depicting American civilians as the economic backbone of the American military colossus. However, prior to the 2004 Election, Bin Laden was less apt to argue that the American general public was politically complicit in its government's attacks on Islam. Mainstream Islam would likely reject this latter rationale, both because it explicitly contradicted the widespread belief that corporate interests dominated American government and because American aggression against Islamic nations had never been the central focus of an American presidential election. Since the 2004 Election was focused on America's war in the Middle East, more mainstream Muslims are likely to view the American public as responsible for the aggression against Muslims perpetrated by the democratically elected president. By successfully portraying the American public as both a politically and economically willing and vital foundation for an increasingly belligerent American military, Bin Laden can coax mainstream Islam into identifying American civilians as legitimate targets and offering more support to his anti-American war.

The same logic that has increasingly motivated mainstream Islam to support attacks against the American public undoubtedly resonates with global appeal. The 2004 endorsement of President Bush's stunning display of diplomatic ineptitude in his first term constituted a diplomatic insult to the nations of the world. In addition to anti-Bush sentiment, many analysts concluded that this president's reelection sharply escalated general anti-American sentiment.

> Our research makes very clear that the reelection of President Bush
> has further isolated America from the world[463].

By reelecting a president who is quite possibly the most globally reviled man in the world, the American public signaled its indifference to the world community's fear and loathing of President Bush. President Bush's reelection nearly completed the fracture of the global alliance against Al Qaeda that is the vital factor in Bin Laden's public relations war. The global magnification of anti-American sentiment in the wake of the reelection has provided Bin Laden a necessary pretext for his planned expansion of Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks against the United States. While Bin Laden's past attacks on the American homeland were limited to the nation's economic, military and political power centers, America's endorsement of the Bush Administration and its imminent expansion of America's war in the Middle East will provide Al Qaeda broad global support for a terrorist campaign to attack all targets inside the United States.

11.2. The Promise of Another Bush Term: The Iran Invasion

NOTE: Elements of this section, written in 2005, involve out-of-date speculations about a possible future decision by the Bush Administration to invade Iran. I still include this section as a relevant examination of the commitment of both the American neoconservatives and Al Qaeda to provoking a U.S.-backed invasion of Iran. Please see the essay "Bush Elected Ahmadinejad" (Binladensplan.com/Bush_Elected_Ahmadinejad.htm) for a more current analysis of the military aggression against Iran that the Bush Administration committed during its second-term.

The reelected Bush Administration appears to be increasingly unabashed in its implementation of the Project for the New American Century's neo-conservative agenda. Following reelection, Bush has clearly displayed a tendency to pursue this neo-conservative agenda regardless of his campaign pledges, such as his 2000 pledges for decreased

government spending, less nation building and a commitment to combat human-induced global warming. Despite his public political affiliation, George W. Bush is not really a Republican president; he is the PNAC president.

The most striking feature about another PNAC presidential term may be the escalation of America's military engagements. As revealed in its central policy document, "Rebuilding America's Defenses" (RAD), the first major step in PNAC's radical plan for world domination involves establishing a permanent American military presence in Iraq in order to humble hostile rogue nations in the region and secure oil supplies[464]. As of 2005, the Bush Administration is currently constructing 12-14 permanent American military bases in Iraq[465]. Despite its public declarations to the contrary, the Bush Administration has no intention of withdrawing American forces from this strategically pivotal nation[466]. Accordingly, an argument could be made that the Bush Administration has intentionally designed its security failures in Iraq, including the inept planning and execution of America's counterinsurgency war, especially the undersupplying of American and Iraqi security forces with men and materials[467] and the ineffective border security in the first eighteen months of the occupation that permitted substantial foreign infiltration of anti-American insurgents. Considering PNAC's overarching goal of preventing the rise of rogue nations or superpowers that could threaten to destroy America totally, it is not entirely unbelievable that the Bush Administration has chosen to sacrifice a few thousand Americans in a bid to advance this goal. In this context, President Bush's infamous "Bring 'em on!" taunt to Iraqi insurgents attacking American troops connotes a much more diabolical meaning than simple cowboy swagger. The longer Iraq remains destabilized, the longer the Bush Administration will be publicly justified in occupying the nation as the foremost security force. As with the provocation of the Iraq invasion, Al Qaeda and the Bush Administration endeavor towards the same objective in Iraq, the establishment of a permanent American military occupation.

The PNAC doctrine prefigures American-occupied Iraq to serve as a massive American military base from which the United States will subdue regimes that oppose the superpower's regional and global domination. Instead of establishing a peaceful Iraq and withdrawing American forces, President Bush may use the Iraq base to invade the next member of his "Axis of Evil", Iran, one of the three primary threats to America identified in RAD.

> The neo-conservative ideologues in the Bush Administration have never made any secret of their desire to see the U.S. military pursue

"regime change" in Tehran next. "Real men go to Tehran" was one of their playful slogans during the buildup to Operation Iraqi Freedom. And they took Iran's inclusion in President Bush's rhetorical "Axis of Evil" as a sign that their agenda might prevail[468].

Proceeding down the list of prime oil real estate and most overt state-sponsored threats to Israel, the Bush Administration targets Iran after Iraq[xxxii]. The U.S. military buildup in Iraq on the pretext of bolstering security for the late 2005 elections[469] may serve jointly as a preparation for the American invasion of Iran. Revealingly, this massing of American military forces inside Iran's neighbor coincides with the deadline for Iran to comply with international negotiations over its nuclear energy program or face referral to the U.N. Security Council for retaliatory measures[470].

Recent military and political developments in occupied Iraq have augmented this American neo-conservative movement to invade Iran. In addition to the possible Iranian ties to the Iraqi insurgency and the existence of large Shiite militias inside Iraq that are controlled by Iran, Iraqi politics has been thoroughly infiltrated by Iran. Iraq's democratically elected Prime Minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, a former member of Iran's Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, has led his government to form a close strategic alliance with Iran. Consistent with his political origins and his present policies, many analysts believe that Al-Jaafari has continued to function as an Iranian agent[471]. In addition to the head of state, Iraq's predominantly Shiite population elected representatives of the Shiite Iranian Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq to seven of the nine southern provinces, including Baghdad[472]. The potential loss of Iraq to Iranian influence, the very threat that motivated President Bush the Elder to support Saddam's regime in the 1980s, today galvanizes the Bush Administration's belligerency towards Iran.

Public Justification

As the most widely anticipated Iraqi political development linked to the fall of Saddam Hussein, the expansion of Iranian influence in Iraq was certainly factored into PNAC's plan for invading Iran. The virulently anti-American Iranian regime's usurpation of Iraq's national autonomy and newly acquired influence over nearly one-fifth of the world's oil reserves serves

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[xxxii] Possessing 12% of the world's proven oil reserves, Iran is OPEC's second largest oil producer. Additionally, Iran possesses the second largest proven natural gas reserves (AP, 3/14/05).

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as a public justification for any American invasion of Iran. In pursuing the PNAC war plan's second target, the Bush Administration's apparent march to invade Iran bears a striking resemblance to the 2002-2003 march to invade Iraq. Again, a primary *casus belli* is an improbable alliance between the targeted Islamic nation and Al Qaeda-led terrorist attacks against Americans. Even prior to the 2004 Election, the public justification for this future invasion began to coalesce in the Bush Administration's largely unsubstantiated accusations about Iran's ties to the Iraq insurgency and Al Qaeda[473]. Only three years after berating Iran and Iraq as an Axis of Evil, President Bush accused Iran of being "the world's primary state sponsor of terror" in his 2005 State of the Union Address. Reminiscent of former Secretary of State Colin Powell's infamous presentation to the United Nations on Saddam's WMD in February 2003, in September 2005 the Bush Administration presented a myopic, bloated estimate of Iran's nuclear weapons program to the United Nations[474]. On this basis, the Bush Administration has insisted that the U.N. Security Council retaliate on Iran for its supposed nuclear violations[475]. Continuing this replay of the march to war with Iraq, the Bush Administration is disseminating intelligence that portrays Iran as the world's foremost terrorist threat[476]. Former U.S. weapons inspections chief David Kay has warned that the Bush Administration is once again basing its intelligence on unreliable sources, particularly dissidents who wish to provoke an American invasion[477].

The questions arises as to why Shiite-dominated Iran would support Al Qaeda and/or the Al Qaeda-led Iraq insurgency, a group and a movement that are coherently dedicated to:

- Spreading an anti-Shiite ideology,
- Destroying a government that Iran largely controls,
- Fomenting a region-wide conflict between neighboring Sunni and Shiite Muslims,
- Strengthening America's political pretext for maintaining a large military presence to the immediate east and west of Iran, and
- Attempting to provoke America to destroy Iran.

For its part, Iran heightened its pre-existing animosity with Al Qaeda by leading the international community's support of the anti-Taliban/anti-Al Qaeda Afghan alliance prior to 9/11. Based on this ongoing history of hostilities, many experts have concluded that Iran does not have a terrorist alliance with Al Qaeda[478]. The Bush Administration's illogical assertion of an Al Qaeda-Iran alliance strongly harkens to the spurious case proposed to justify the

invasion of Iraq. Unlike the Taliban, which had sponsored two major terrorist attacks on America prior to 9/11, the Iranian regime has no record of supporting major attacks against the United States since the confrontational early years of the Iranian Islamic Republic over two decades ago (excluding the Iranian regime's dubious involvement in the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia). Experts widely agree that Iran has not conducted any terrorist attacks since the early 1990s[479]. Furthermore, the Iranian regime has displayed no evidence that it is a suicidal regime like the Taliban. Without convincing evidence of a rationale for Iranian terrorist attacks on Americans, an American invasion of this Muslim nation would appear to serve neither a preventative nor preemptive purpose.

Pursuant to the infamous "conjunction of terrorism and WMD" war justification, the Bush Administration has exaggerated the possibility of Iran constructing a nuclear bomb. In early 2005, the Bush Administration made the unsubstantiated but nevertheless ominous claim that a covert Iranian nuclear weapons program will have produced enough weapons-grade fissionable material to build an atomic bomb in as early as one year. The 2005 U.S. Intelligence Estimate, the official intelligence inter-agency review representing the consensus among U.S. intelligence agencies, soundly refuted the administration's claims, concluding that Iran is actually a decade away from this nuclear milestone[480]. Additionally, the National Intelligence Estimate states that, while there are credible signs that Iran's military is doing some clandestine work, there is no information connecting that work to a nuclear weapons program. Moreover, U.N. inspectors have not uncovered any convincing proof that Iran is conducting a nuclear weapons program[481]. In fact, there is universal consensus that even Iranian uranium enrichment activities would not violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In contrast, two of Iran's most bitter enemies, Israel and Pakistan, have active nuclear weapons programs and refuse to sign the NPT or submit to IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) inspections. President Bush's authorization to offer U.S. assistance to enhance the nuclear capabilities of India[482], another country using this aggressive nuclear weapons strategy, enhances the appearance of U.S. hypocrisy and opportunism in its vociferous quarrel over Iran's suspected nuclear weapons program.

In another parallel with the march to war with Iraq, Israel has waged a concerted campaign to provoke the American invasion of Iran, which it views as the foremost state sponsored threat to Israel itself. The government of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

provided some of the questionable intelligence on which the Bush Administration has based its widely unsupported accusations against the Iranian government[483]. Former chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, General Brent Scowcroft, has confirmed claims that Bush was "mesmerized" by Sharon[484]. In perhaps the most menacing display of Israel's pressure on America to invade Iran, the Sharon Administration has threatened to bomb Iran's nuclear sites if the Bush Administration does not soon take this action itself[485]. Sharon's powerful influence on the American presidency threatens to collude with the Project for the New American Century to lead the United States into another war based on false intelligence.

Along with the advancement of Zionist Israeli interests and defense industry profiteering, the Iran invasion would serve to secure America's domination of the global energy market through the capture of Middle Eastern oil supplies. Most ominously, in August 2005 Iran challenged America's global economic hegemony by confirming that this Islamic theocracy would be changing its oil exchange standard from the dollar to the euro[486], the very economic policy enacted by Saddam Hussein that helped to incite the Bush Administration to invade Iraq. Iran's new economic attack on the United States fuels PNAC's ambitions for another oil grab and broadens support inside America for some form of forceful containment of this new threat to America.

Evidence

Having begun to portray Iran as an imminent threat to the survival of the United States, much like the case of Iraq in 2002-2003, President Bush appears to be facilitating Bin Laden's plan again by threatening to Iran without U.N. approval and against the overwhelming sentiment of global opinion. In a sign of this impending action, Bush has appointed as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations without Congressional approval one of the foremost PNAC advocates of the Iran invasion, as well as one of the central figures involved in the manipulation of intelligence on Saddam's WMD programs, Undersecretary of State from 2001-2004, John Bolton[487]. In a more concerted effort than occurred prior to the Iraq invasion, the Bush Administration has proceeded to dismantle the international authority of the United Nations in order to allow America the diplomatic flexibility to proceed with the PNAC war of imperialism outside of the central institution for maintaining world peace. Consistent with

Bolton's past public advocacy of the destruction of the United Nations, immediately following his appointment Bolton provoked international outrage when he proceeded to create chaos at the United Nations by disrupting the carefully negotiated platform for the U.N. summit in September 2005 with a radical new set of late proposals (including 750 amendments to a 36-page text) that largely rejected the U.N.'s anti-poverty efforts and insisted that confronting Iran be the U.N.'s central priority[488]. The Iran crisis looms as the central U.N. Security Council issue on which Bolton will represent the United States.

As occurred in the months prior to the official invasion of Iraq, the Bush Administration is covertly preparing for a possible invasion of Iran with illegal military aggression against the Islamic republic.

- According to Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, numerous sources inside the American military and Bush Administration have revealed that Bush is refusing to negotiate with Iran on practical terms and is planning to invade Iran soon[489].

- In 2005, Vice President Cheney's office ordered the Pentagon to begin designing a contingency war plan to invade Iran using both conventional forces and tactical nuclear strikes in response to another 9/11-type attack, regardless of Iranian involvement in the future attack[490].

- Globally renown former U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter announced that, as of February 2005, President Bush had already ordered the bombing of Iran to begin as early as June[491].

- As of early 2005, President Bush has already begun to violate Iranian airspace with extensive surveillance flights[492] and, more ominously, greatly expanded American covert commando operations inside Iran to survey possible WMD sites and combat terrorist groups[493].

- The Bush Administration has begun construction of an American military base in Azerbaijan, Iran's northern neighbor that is optimally positioned to host a land-based American march on Tehran.

- Coupled with preparation for the American invasion of Iran through Azerbaijan, the Bush Administration is fomenting internal opposition to the Iranian regime among the Azeri ethnic group in northern Iran[494].

The Bush Administration's menacing military buildup forebodes a possible invasion of the second member of the "Axis of Evil".

Mirroring the unofficial beginning of the Iraq invasion in the summer of 2002, and in fulfillment of Scott Ritter's warning[xxxiii], as of June 2005 the Bush Administration has already initiated a de facto state of war between America and Iran. At this time, the Bush Administration covertly supported an anti-Iranian terrorist group, the Mujahedeen el-Khalq (MEK)[xxxiv], in its participation in the biggest terrorist campaign inside Iran in the past decade[495]. Occurring on the eve of the Iranian national elections, this string of bombings was credited, along with President Bush's conveniently timed bellicose statements denouncing the Iranian government[496], with facilitating the victory of the conservative parties that threaten to increase the possibility of war with America[497]. Already, Iran has responded with its largest military buildup on its border with Iraq since the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s[498]. The escalation of the Iraqi conflict side by side with a new American-Iranian conflict would threaten to spiral into a greater Middle East war, the likely fate of Bush's expanded crusade in the Middle East.

The Final Steps

PNAC specifically recommends the reinstatement of the draft in order to pursue its military objectives[499]. Because of pressing military engagements, most particularly in Iraq, a de facto draft, known as a "back-door draft", has already begun in America through a policy of impressing active duty soldiers into indefinitely prolonged tours of duty and calling up an unprecedented amount of reservists for uncommonly extended periods. At least 40,000 American troops have been drafted in this fashion[500]. The official draft would be necessary for Bush to strengthen the drastically overstretched armed forces fighting his new war in Iran and continuing the American occupation in Iraq and, to a lesser degree, Afghanistan. The reinstitution of the American draft and the invasion of Iran are bold military policies that will

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[xxxiii] Although Ritter appeared to be warning of an aerial bombing of Iran by American forces, the coincidence of his prediction and this American-backed bombing campaign inside Iran in June 2005 at least partially fulfills his prediction, strongly supporting his assertion about the imminent invasion.

[xxxiv] Supporting assertions that the Bush Administration is intentionally sabotaging America's war against the Iraq insurgency in order to justify a permanent American military presence in Iraq, this MEK group with which the administration has covertly allied America is: 1) officially designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department, 2) has received more than $100 million from Saddam Hussein over the years, and 3) has participated in some of the major terrorist campaigns against America, such as the 1979 hostage-taking in Iran, and, currently, the Iraqi insurgent campaign against the American occupation (www.hillnews.com/news/040203/terrorist.aspx). In order to facilitate the Iran invasion, the Bush Administration is actually supporting an insurgent group that is engaged in ongoing attacks against the American coalition in Iraq.

require some level of Al Qaeda provocation, such as another 9/11, to generate sufficient American public support to initiate this precipitous action.

Acting separately but working toward the same goal, Al Qaeda is once again pursuing the identical strategic objective as the Bush Administration, the American invasion of Iran and the greater Middle East. Mimicking its past attempts to provoke an American invasion of Iraq, Al Qaeda has increasingly attempted to portray publicly an alliance with Iran.

- In the month following the fall of Saddam, Al Qaeda began this next phase of its plan to provoke American invasions of Muslim nations with the May 2003 bombings of American civilians in Saudi Arabia, an operation that ostensibly appeared to have been orchestrated by Al Qaeda leaders operating inside Iran[501].

- Aside from the leaders of the May 2003 Saudi Arabia bombings, Al Qaeda has disseminated intelligence that implies possible Iranian refuge for its other top leaders, including a possible heir to Bin Laden's "throne", his son Saad bin Laden[502]. The release of a Bin Laden videotape in October 2004 that apparently proved he is still alive raises the prospect that Iran is sheltering Bin Laden, offering another justification for this Iran invasion. The purported relocation to Iran of the leader of Al Qaeda's Iraq affiliate, Al-Zarqawi, has amplified this justification[503].

- Bin Laden's past public statements have repeatedly hinted at the collusion of Al Qaeda and the Iranian government in a joint war against their most menacing common enemy, the "Great Satan" America[504]. Al Qaeda's first overt attack on America, the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, clearly depicted this operational relationship (see Chapter 1).

- As the American buildup to the invasion of Iran intensified in the first year of Bush's second term, Al Qaeda portrayed Iranian complicity in an Al Qaeda attack that targeted both the Israeli homeland and an American warship. By executing this attack with a particular kind of rockets that have become synonymous with Hezbollah attacks on Israel[505], Al Qaeda both portrayed an alliance with Iran and an expansion of Hezbollah's conflict against Israel to include American targets.

2009 UPDATE:

The election of President Obama in 2008 appears to have halted America's ominous march to war with Iran. However, the contemporary election of the Israeli warhawk Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offers Al Qaeda the opportunity to provoke this invasion by proxy. Not only would the U.S.-backed Israeli invasion and occupation of Iran further vindicate Bin Laden's indictment of American imperialism, this event, according to the CIA, would also force the active alliance of Al Qaeda with the world's second largest and most sophisticated terrorist group, Hezbollah, in a joint war against America[506]. This radical transformation of the American-Al Qaeda war would likely seal Al Qaeda's eventual public relations victory and initiate Bin Laden's true military campaign to destroy America.

Chapter 12.

Al Qaeda's Future Terrorist Campaign

Unlike every other chapter, which involves examinations of past events, this chapter projects possible scenarios for Al Qaeda's future terrorist plots based on a trends analysis of the syndicate's attacks and intentions that accurately predicted the 9/11 attack. As an inherently less authoritative discussion of Bin Laden's plan, this particular chapter has been separated from the book. Interested readers can view the contents of this chapter within the essay available at Binladensplan.com/Our_Purpose.htm

Part Five:

How To Defeat Al Qaeda

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie nor establish the truth. Through violence, you can murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.
(Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Chapter 13.

A New American Foreign Policy

WE HAVE ONLY ONE PURPOSE -- THE DESTRUCTION OF BIN LADEN. IF BIN LADEN INVADED HELL, WE WOULD MAKE AT LEAST A FAVORABLE REFERENCE TO THE DEVIL IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS[xxxv].

Bin Laden's Threat

The Al Qaeda empire is the greatest threat that America has ever faced. While it is true that Al Qaeda, unlike past enemies such as the Nazi empire, possesses the powerful backup threat of a large group of ideologically inspired, independent "rogue" terrorists, the organization directly commanded by Bin Laden is the chief menace. Since the millennium, Bin Laden has consistently manipulated the Bush Administration's Project for the New American Century (PNAC) into setting the stage for a global *coup d' etat* in which Al Qaeda will checkmate the superpower and steal the throne of world domination. Bin Laden's future success would represent the climax of a conflict between the two most ambitious victors of the Cold War, the American neo-conservative movement and America's shadow Afghan *Mujahedeen* movement. Jointly emerging from the anti-Soviet Afghanistan coalition forged in the final great battle of the 45 year-long clash of superpowers, these two movements degenerated from the cooperation of the 1980s into a millennial competition for world domination between the two most radical respective leaders, PNAC and Al Qaeda. Bin Laden revealed to the world his dominant influence within this post-Cold War conflict on 9/11 with a spectacular act of aggression that baited PNAC's Bush Administration into exchanging America's international support for Al Qaeda's war guilt.

More valuable than the strategic nuclear advantage bestowed by President Bush's retaliation against Afghanistan, Al Qaeda's most crucial asset has been its covert hijacking of its rival for global hegemony. Bin Laden began this shadow relationship with the Bush

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[xxxv] "I have only one purpose -- the destruction of Hitler. If Hitler invaded hell, I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons" (Winston Churchill)

Administration through a colossal terrorist attack that predictably bolstered PNAC's bully pulpit by creating massive domestic support for its American president that translated into *carte blanche* for PNAC's militarist neo-conservative agenda. In turn, this freshly incited American military aggression catalyzed Bin Laden's global public relations efforts by demonizing the United States as the world's foremost evil empire and justifying a war against American imperialism. As leader of this war, Al Qaeda has siphoned the anti-American sentiment generated by Bush's imperialism, transforming the fuel of America's soft power that Bush fecklessly cast away into vital global support for Al Qaeda. This new soft power source revitalizes Al Qaeda in terms of operatives, funding and, most importantly, global moral support for the future day when Bin Laden's shadow empire wages nuclear war against the PNAC-led United States in a final battle for world domination.

The coalescence of the major victories of Bin Laden and President Bush has powerfully demonstrated this symbiotic relationship between Al Qaeda and the Bush Administration.

- In the 2000 Presidential Election, Bush was elected leader of the world's superpower and Bin Laden successfully assisted the election of his choice for the United States president, the man who would unwittingly galvanize the Al Qaeda movement by fomenting hatred of America.

- In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attack, Bush became America's most popular wartime president and began PNAC's global military crusade, while Bin Laden became the most famous man in the world as the foremost leader of the movement against American imperialism.

- By provoking an unjustified invasion of Iraq and then halting all attacks on America, Bin Laden bolstered President Bush's domestic image as a successful and forceful wartime president. At the same time, Bin Laden succeeded in provoking Bush into depleting America's military, economic and political resources, including, most perniciously, isolating the United States by transferring war guilt to the Bush Administration.

- Through his October 2004 surprise videotaped speech, Bin Laden assisted President Bush's reelection in a bid to complete America's geopolitical defeat.

The progression of the PNAC agenda has become inextricably intertwined with the success of Al Qaeda's global recruitment such that Bin Laden's victory over the United States seems to be an inevitable result of America's continued pursuit of this neo-conservative foreign policy.

2009 UPDATE:

The election of President Obama has initiated the reversal of America's portrayal as a belligerent "Great Satan" empire. On this ideological platform, the U.S.-led alliance against Al Qaeda can pursue a novel strategy for defeating Bin Laden's insurgency within three years.

For a detailed description of this silver-bullet strategy, see:

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Part-by-Part Summary

Ch. 1+2: Baiting America

For nearly a decade, Osama bin Laden was trying to provoke an unjustified American invasion of Iraq in order to facilitate global recruitment for his war against an apparent modern American Crusade in the Holy Land region.

Ch. 3-5: The Choice President

In a bid to capitalize on the Bush team's apparent predisposition to invade Iraq, Bin Laden supported President Bush's 2000 election.

Ch. 6-9: A Global Recruitment War

The guiding objective of Bin Laden's post-9/11 war effort is to facilitate the Bush Administration's galvanization of Al Qaeda's global recruitment. Bin Laden has used his revolutionary war machine to wage a restricted terrorist campaign against the United States that, in tandem with Bush's belligerent foreign policy, has portrayed Bin Laden's American nemesis as the greater threat to humanity.

Ch. 10-12: Reelection War

Bin Laden supported the Bush Administration's reelection so that America would lose the global public relations war against Al Qaeda, principally because of a neo-conservative expansion of the millennial Middle East war. In this context, Bin Laden will wage his future terrorist campaign against America to provoke a nuclear war for which the United States is blamed.

Ch. 13: How To Defeat Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda represents an unparalleled threat to the world that must be immediately addressed at the expense of all other objectives, primarily through the concerted multilateral public relations campaign advocated by Binladensplan.com.

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