

Ten Years Later: Insights on Al-Qaeda's  
Past and Future Through Captured Records

Panel 1: "What Did Scholars and Policy-Makers Know  
About Al-Qaeda and Affiliated Movements (AQAM) before 9/11?"

**Dr. Thomas Hegghammer (Chair),**

Senior Research Fellow, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment

**Dr. Mark Stout,** Lecturer, Center for Advanced Government  
Studies, Johns Hopkins University

**Ms. Cindy Storer,** Lecturer at Coastal Carolina University,  
Senior Analyst at Pherson Associates LLC; and former CIA Analyst

**Dr. Mary Habeck,** Association Professor of Strategic Studies,  
School of Advanced International Studies,  
Johns Hopkins University

**Dr. Yonah Alexander,** Director,  
Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies

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**DR. THOMAS HEGGHAMMER:** Thank you very much, Lorry, for this overly generous introduction. I am very, very grateful for the invitation to come here and chair as the first panel where we will be discussing what scholars and policy-makers knew about al-Qaeda and associated movements before 9/11.

I also want to just congratulate the organizers on putting together what I think is really one of the most impressive lineups of conference speaks that I've seen in the past decade, and the panel that we have here is a very good illustration of that.

We have four truly distinguished speakers, some of whom were pioneers in al-Qaeda studies, and we have a very interesting combination of informative intelligence analysts and academics, which should make for a fascinating discussion this morning.

Let me just say a few words about the format, which is that each of the panelists will speak for 10 minutes, and when everyone has presented, I will offer a few comments and, well, many questions, really. You'll have a chance to respond, and then at the end, we'll open it up for questions.

Our first speaker is Dr. Mark Stout, who is a former intelligence analyst who served in various institutions, including the CIA, and he now lectures at Johns Hopkins University.

Mark's main research interest, I believe, is intelligence history, and he also works as the historian at the International Spy Museum here in D.C. And I also warmly recommend his blog, "On War and Words."

Mark is going to speak about the evolution of intelligence assessments of the Jihadi threat and from 1989 to 2009. Before I hand it over to you, Mark, I just want to stress that you will have 10 minutes to speak. I may not look it, but I am very straight about keeping these deadlines. So, please, Mark, the floor is yours.

**DR. STOUT:** Well, thank you very much, Thomas. It's a pleasure to be here. I'll just jump right into it.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11, of course, will be remembered as one of the great intelligence failures in many ways in American history, but of course, also, the failure to stop these attacks obscures, I would argue, a success story, one which has much to do, more to do with a nuanced real world of intelligence analysis in which day-to-day work is more about conveying and understanding than predicting specific events.

The success was a development over time of a picture of a Salafi-Jihadist enemy, which violated numerous presumptions of the national security and the intelligence communities in the United States at the time, and notable among these presumptions was the terrorism was not, frankly, a vitally important national security issue, and to the extent that it was important, it was largely a matter of state sponsorship. And also notable among these presumptions was the idea that religion wasn't really a factor to be considered in national security.

Just very briefly, looking at intelligence assessments, there are a number of things that go into influencing them. Obviously, the first is objective reality, but it's an awkward fact here that al-Qaeda changed over time quite substantially, and then to add onto that fact, there's always an intelligence lag. Just by the intrinsic nature of the business, intelligence officers always are behind the times, a literally unavoidable problem.

Secondly, of course, is interaction with policy-makers, and I'm not speaking here in the sense of actual politicization where policy-makers tell analysts what they want the analysis to be, rather that intelligence analysis is often focused on what it is that policy-makers ask about and what they're interested in. If they don't think terrorism is important, if they're not particularly interested in non-state-sponsored terrorist and not interested in religious issues, they're not going to ask about it, and thus, huge amounts of time gets sucked up into doing other things.

And then finally -- so let me just say that in the early 1990s when these issues started to come to the attention of American intelligence analysts, the very small number of analysts working on the problem, a very small number of analysts -- the woman to my right is by herself a significant percentage of that initial group. And they found themselves in the first half of -- actually through much of the '90s in a game of what they considered catch-up, at the same time that they had to sell these, frankly, heretical ideas to their policy consumers.

1993 with the first World Trade Center bombing was when really we began to see focus, some degree of serious attention on the Jihadists. These folks who were leaving Afghanistan, bleed out from Afghanistan. That attack led to early work on funding from non-governmental organization in the Islamic world, which previously had been looked on, to the extent they were interested at all, they were to some degree our allies, because these were in some cases groups

that had been funding the Mujahideen in Afghanistan.

1993 saw also a really prescient paper written by an analyst at I&R, certainly not the only paper at the time that addressed these sorts of issues, but it was, A, a good one and, B, it's actually publicly available now. Gina Bennett, an analyst at I&R, wrote a paper called "The Wandering Mujahidin: Armed and Dangerous" in which she talked about the bleed-out from Afghanistan of these people who felt like they had triumphed over the Soviet Union and were now going back to their home countries and searching for ways in which they could carry on what they viewed to be their religious mission. The paper noted that among these people, among these leading lights, was a man named Osama bin Laden, and talked about a variety of conflicts around the world and how there were links on a lot of these Jihadist groups.

By 1995, in one of the very, very few national intelligence estimates that talked about this problem, there was a discussion of a new breed of terrorist who had emerged, referring to these wandering Mujahideen that Gina had written about, and how this new breed was increasingly capable of operating inside the United States.

Over the next couple of years, the community decided to -- or expanded its understanding of this community. By 1995, they learned the name "al-Qaeda," which at that point was 8 years old, and they started to see al-Qaeda as an organization, started to see bin Laden at its head, started to see how it was connected to groups like the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Egyptian Islamic Group, and others.

By 1996, when the key defector came out from al-Qaeda and who had been embezzling money from al-Qaeda and decided that that would be -- got caught and figured that would be a good time to leave, he came out with a blueprint of the organization in his head, and this was important in two ways, because, one, in a lot of ways, it allowed analysts to confirm a lot of what they had pieced together from individual sources and, secondly, really to color this in. They now saw an al-Qaeda that had a sophisticated command and control structure, that had a presence in something on the order of 50 countries around the world. It was the center of a constellation of Jihadist groups and was interested in acquiring WMD.

So the next few years then were devoted to filling in the details of this, proselytizing, and watching the developments over time, but we can skip strictly ahead then to 9/11. Certainly, there were numerous plots and whatnot in between, some of them foiled, some of them sadly not, but 9/11 saw important change in perception, not only in the intelligence community but among their consumers.

I think part of this was just a visceral impact of the threat. Part of it also was that you had enormous numbers of new analysts who were being brought into CIA's Counterterrorism Center and other counterterrorism components of the intelligence community, who brought with them their own perceptions about the problem, sometimes informed, sometimes not, and frankly often brought in a great deal of animosity towards the people who had been doing this job on 9/11.

The sense of the analysis and also the way it was being received by the administration and then transmitted by the administration to the public was an enemy of unbounded bloodthirstiness. You started to see the daily publication taking the to the precedent of the threat matrix, which

was basically just a laundry list, if you will, of the days in new threat reporting, which was an enormous list, big every day. And what that did was, that even though everybody knew that most items on this were going to turn out to be garbage and some of them were laughable on their face, the sheer bulk and volume every day of enormous amounts of threat reporting increased this level of anxiety, both on the part of the intelligence analysts and the part of the people receiving it.

There was great attention now being focused on the notion that al-Qaeda or one of its affiliates might actually have or might be on the cusp of acquiring a nuclear weapon. At least one, nuclear weapons were reported to be in the United States, concern about the enemy amount us, sleeper cells in the United States, and also then a return actually to this issue of state sponsorship. And one of the big issues over which blood was let in 2002, 2003 was over the extent, if any, of the relationship between Saddam's regime and al-Qaeda, with people in the counterterrorism world tending to see more of a relationship possibly and people, the regional analysts, tending to see less of a relationship, but all agreeing that no hard conclusions could be drawn.

But perhaps most importantly, religion came to front and center as an issue here, but this was something that the national security community was profoundly uncomfortable dealing with, and it was a real, real difficult thing. It had been beaten out of intelligence analysts, any inclination to address religion to begin with.

One of the things you started to see in the first, maybe somewhere around 2004 or so, very roughly speaking, was there started to be a strain of thought that developed in the intelligence community, and as near as I can tell, it was particularly strong, though by no means exclusively, but particularly strong in the military intelligence world that looked at al-Qaeda and its brethren and said -- and from that inferred that Islam itself was the problem. After all, al-Qaeda is saying not only that they are Muslims, but that they are the true Muslims. They are going back to the way Islam is properly done, and they were annunciating themes, al-Qaeda was, that appeared on their face to be very widely popular in the Islamic world, and nobody really likes the United States very much, nobody is really enthused about Israel, you know, et cetera, et cetera.

So you had some people within the intelligence community who argued literally Islam itself is the problem. Analysts at CIA, by and large, did not tend to support that view, and some of them started fighting back, expressing ideas that had been sort of bubbling below the surface for a long time, largely unexpressed in formal products.

They did agree with those folks that Islam is definitely relevant here, Al-Qaeda and its affiliates really are sincere Muslims, and their ideology is genuinely rooted in Islam; but these analysts, this trend of thought, also emphasized the marginality of the Salafi-Jihadists in the broader Muslim community. Perhaps, they suggested -- and here is one of these places where the evolution of al-Qaeda itself comes into play. They suggested that al-Qaeda wasn't merely a network, but also, it was maybe an idea or a brand or even a sputtering social movement that was trying to spread its ideas to all 1.5 billion Muslims in the world.

So then, sort of taking some of these ideas in approximately 2005, this women right here with some of her colleagues received a request from consumers to put the al-Qaeda movement

into some sort of holistic context, and out of that developed a structure, a concept called the "Zuggurat of Zealotry," which basically saw the Islamic world as consisting of a stepped pyramid. And at the bottom of the pyramid was most Muslims, peaceful Muslims simply wanting to lead pious lives. Above them were Islamists who sought social change. Above them were radicals who sought the overthrow of what they thought was apostate regimes by any means necessary but not necessarily violent, and at the very pinnacle then was a small group of radicals, violent radicals who were seeking neutralization of the West and the overthrow of the nation state system by violence, people like al-Qaeda.

And what was useful about this movement or what was useful about this analysis was that it emphasized, it acknowledged, rather, the reality that al-Qaeda and their various affiliates and their brethren and their followers are legitimately and truly and genuinely anchored in Islam, but it also made clear that they are not identical with Islam. And I think strategically, that turns out, I would argue, to have been -- and by the way, this product that Cindy can speak to from first knowledge was very popular, widely briefed, and really like lodged itself in the brains of police-makers. And I think what this did was it opened up this strategic opportunity to pursue policies which would not only be of the kinetic kill-capture variety against the actual terrorists themselves, but to open up that gap and to lever open that gap between al-Qaeda, the Salafi-Jihadists on the one hand, and all other Muslims on the other hand.

So I would simply close by saying, then -- and this has been a whirlwind tour. Read my book chapter if you want the detailed version, but I think if you look over time, the analysts were chasing not only an elusive enemy, elusive in the sense it was hard to acquire information, but that the enemy itself was evolving over time as it gained adherence, as it became a brand, as U.S. and allied forces sought to dismantle the network. But also, you saw sort of, first, an overreaction in terms of the role that religion played and then sort of a modulation of that, and I think if you look more specifically -- and I haven't focused on them here -- at views about WMD, for instance, and to a lesser degree views about state sponsorship, you have seen that.

So we saw a remarkable development of understanding in the 1900s, a quick overreaction. The pendulum swings in a far opposite direction at 9/11 and for the first couple years after that, and then I think we've settled down to I think a remarkably nuanced understanding that I would argue forms a good basis for strategy going forward.

**DR. HEGGHAMMER:** Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Cindy Storer, who has been briefly introduced already. I'll say that Cindy spent 20 years as an analyst in the CIA, but she's now an adjunct professor at -- the University of Maryland?

**MS. STORER:** Actually, I am now a lecturer at Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina.

**DR. HEGGHAMMER:** Okay.

I first read about Cindy not by name but in my chosen books about the legendary women in the Bin Laden unit in the CIA in the late '90s. It is a real pleasure to meet you in person finally.

Cindy's paper is entitled "Al-Qaeda: Analytical Challenges before 9/11."

**MS. STORER:** Thank you. I'm actually quite glad to meet you as well.

I think following up on what Mark has said, I want to make some comments about what it's like working with the kinds of material that we're talking about here and what it's like working on a new phenomenon, if you will, because we're going into a period now with the Arab Spring that feels eerily familiar for those of us who began working al-Qaeda when they were founded, even though we didn't know what they were at the time. The world was sort of turning upside-down, if you think about it.

At the beginning, the Soviet Union was collapsing. The whole globalization issue was coming to the fore, and new technologies were being invented. This left room for a kind of social movement that we hadn't seen in the Islamic world, and that was very hard for people to come to grips with. I think with the Arab Spring -- and some other analysts have mentioned this to me -- we're in another one of these situations where things can be turned upside-down, and we need to start thinking about how to deal with that, including on the terrorism issue, and so I hope there will be some lessons from our experiences on al-Qaeda that we can bring forward into this new era.

Let me start with just giving you a brief summary of what we knew by 1997 and 1998, before the Africa bombings, because we were working on a broad range of issues, and I'm going to talk about each of these things and how we worked with it.

We knew, and we had warned, al-Qaeda was capable of car bombings. They had the training. They had a fatwa justifying suicide bombings, which is something that was fairly new for Sunni Muslims. They had a pattern of conducting multiple simultaneous attacks. This was a matter of debate in the intelligence community, but the case was being made by some people. They had an operational presence in Africa. They were exploring chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. All these things were things that we had been -- they had a plot previously to fly a plane into CIA Headquarters. They had been training people on deep sea scuba diving. Why were they doing that? We know all of these things beforehand.

Then finally, when al-Qaeda's fatwa came out in February of 1998, it gave us an inkling of the timing of what would be their first major anti-U.S. attack, the simultaneous bombing of two embassies in Africa, and we knew that that that gave us some timing, because we had studied the religion, even though we couldn't write about it. We knew what the words in that fatwa meant, and we knew there would be attacks sometime after 3 months had passed. And indeed, when that 3-month time was over, bin Laden came out with his big press conference in Afghanistan, to which a lot of people attended, mostly reporters, and he said, "Okay, your time is up. We're going to attack now." So we knew we were on the right track. We just didn't have, as usual, exact place, date, all those things. We just ran out of time.

So I'm going to talk a little bit about how we got to that point now. Ten minutes is challenging. I'll do my best.

Let me give a series of lessons. So number one is you have to, as colleagues of mine

have said, love and respect ambiguity and uncertainty. Terrorists are what we call a hard target. You're never going to have the whole picture. You're constantly assessing your gaps. You have to make judgments along the way, without perfect information, without perfect models, without great data sets. All those things that we would love to have when doing academic research, right, we never quite get?

It's the same problem on the intelligence side, but amplified, because you have to make those decisions daily, and somebody's life is at stake if you're working counterterrorism.

This means you have to hold those mental models in your head all the time, and you have to hold more than one in your head all the time, because there's more than one possible way to read all of the information.

Now, Mark has talked about us figuring out the search of al-Qaeda by 1996. There's on contradiction in this, because it was all dotted lines. There was a box, but as far as I was concerned, the box was dotted lines. And we didn't necessarily know all the contents, and they were mixed up, and some of them were damaged, and some of them had been taken out of the box. So you have to keep all of that in mind as you continue to sift through the information.

This process is not inductive or deductive, which is, I know, what people like to teach as abductive, and I like this definition that was posted online by Butte College, because it really does describe what it is that intelligence analysts do, "Abductive reasoning typically begins with an incomplete set of observations and proceeds to the likeliest possible explanation for the set. Abductive reasoning yields the kind of daily decision-making that does its best with the information at hand, which often is incomplete." It really affects you from the bottom up, and then through an iterative process, continually modifying your understanding and your mental models with the information.

So the downside of just doing a deductive approach is it's easy for people to cherry-pick the information, which, of course, there's been plenty written about how the Bush administration did this in the run-up to the Iraq War, and the downside to just doing an inductive approach is that you can have a small base set and draw way too many conclusions from your small set, which I continue to see people doing today.

Now, this takes a lot of patience. Some of us analysts have speculated maybe this is why women do this, tend to do this better than men. Obviously, there are exceptions, but it is largely the women who have done this over the years. Everywhere I traveled in the world, it was women as well. I just think that's interesting and would be a good subject for someone to study why that has been the case.

Let me talk about how we assembled this picture very quickly. We put together all these bits and pieces, as Mark was talking about, and you have to put all of that into context of what's going on in the world, which I had just talked about, too, for the world turned upside-down.

Our first insights of what was going on, that something big was going on was because we were looking at Peshawar, Pakistan, and we were seeing all sorts of things happening at the end of the Afghan War. And when we started pulling those threads, all roads led back to Muhammad

Atef, which we now know, of course, was al-Qaeda's chief operating officer, if you will.

That in turn led us to more reflection, which in turn led us to the rest of the network, so that by 1996, we had built up the knowledge of this network all over the world through lots of collection. Part of that collection was Mike Scheuer and his team. I was the analyst, the Director of Intelligence Analysis, and then Mike had the people working for him. And they went out into the world, and they just collect -- they got all the information that was available. You know, there's nothing wrong with going to all of your friends and allies and even other people and saying, "What do you know?" It's a great place to start, right, rather than risking lives and resources?

So that was done. We had a good picture by '96. Then we had to walk in. Okay. That process continues today. Every success on al-Qaeda is built on that basis, and it continues with all of the information that continues to come in. Analysts are going through this constantly.

Now, this put analysts at odds with the way things are done in the rest of the agency, because the men just said policy-makers want one line of analysis, otherwise they get confused.

[Laughter.]

**MS. STORER:** So you're not supposed to give them two or three different possibilities from the same bit of data, but of course, this is a bad practice, because then you're not telling people what you don't know and what could go wrong based on information you don't have. And then when the different information comes in, you have to change your line of analysis or you look stupid. So this is bad all the way around, bad practice in my opinion.

An alternative analysis doesn't help. Taking a footnote on a paper doesn't help, because then that makes like, "Well, most people think this, and only one person thinks that, so we can ignore that one person." I have seen NIE coordinating sessions where it's almost 50/50, but only one view is going forward. That's bad for policy.

All right. Secondly, the only way to fully investigate all of these possibilities is to make use of multiple disciplines at the same time, and we use what's used in the business world called STEEP, PESTLE, SWOT, call it whatever you want. It's looking at various factors that are important.

One of these factors is socially, are you all looking at all the social issues that are going around. I have mentioned this sort of new world that was emerging and needing to look at those issues. Terrorist analysts focused on subcultures. Analysts tend to focus on the mainstream, you know, what is stability at the time, but terrorism analysts are focusing on the subcultures. So that's why we were busting a lot of conventional wisdom, because we were looking at this very specific set of people.

To say at the time that Iraq had a bunch of Mujahideen, could be capable of running a worldwide multifaceted organization bent on taking over the world sounded like James Bond, so it sounded a little crazy to people, but that was in fact what was going on.

On language, we took translations very seriously, and the issue here with translation is, again, you're talking about how people talk in a particular subculture in a clandestine organization, so it's a linguistic problem, not just a language problem, and that's very important to understand. I will never have enough Arabic to be able to sort all that out, but we had people who did. And the analysts learned the right questions to ask.

Politically -- oh, sorry. Religion. Two minutes. I got to go fast.

So then we talked about the religious issues. Politically, you're looking at organizational behavior mostly, rather than state behavior and small group dynamics and individual psychology reports.

Economically, you're focused on the unofficial economy as opposed to the official economies. That even reached to al-Qaeda being used to skirt nonproliferation agreements by various states at times. Technically, you're looking at piecing together aspects of technical programs. You don't have a blueprint. You don't know whose plan or whose model they're following. If you want to know what would happen if you fly a plane into a building, you need engineers and architects, not political analysts like me, and it's not always easy to get those people on board.

Legal issues, you're talking about, again, religion. Al-Qaeda has their own aqidah, their own doctrine, and if you try to analyze them from the perspective of more traditional doctrines, you're going to get it wrong. An example, I'll just skip over.

Okay. Analytical methods. You know, this means putting everything in a chronology. Don't throw data out. You've got to keep it somewhere. Doing network analysis, using process models, using models of leadership, psychology, organizational dynamics, insurgency, political instability, anything and everything you can get your hands on, and feeding all of those models all the time. That's resource intensive and again not something that we generally have enough people or enough time to do. And if folks on the outside do it, they don't have access to the same classified information, so we really do have a problem of how the inside and the outside relate to each other to bring the best minds to bear on these problems.

You've got to have a creative approach to source evaluation, because everybody lies, and somehow, you've got to find a true in all of those lies. You can't just throw it out, because people lie because they're psychologically unstable, because they're selling information, because they posted on Wikipedia, or they sent a text. You've got to carefully analyze everything, which of course has an impact on data analysis. You can't just throw stuff out.

Be careful not to confuse intent and capability. Always ask why, why am I not seeing intent, why am I not seeing capability, why am I seeing one or the other, why am I seeing only some aspects in others. Sometimes you're not seeing it, but it's there. Sometimes you're not seeing it, it isn't there, but the reason why it isn't there is important.

And then finally, your consequences in all of this are very real. We can go on forever about the debate between law enforcement and war, but the reality is that it's a war with law enforcement. It's all going on at the same time. Every country in the world does terrorism,

counterterrorism the same way, and so everything you say has consequences. Everything an academic says and everything a journalist says can have real-world consequences with policy-makers, so it's important to keep all of these things in mind -- and intelligence analysts.

On the other side of the ledger, real quick, because I'm sure I'm over time, you should never take any kind -- you know, what I've learned in sort of a more academic world to apply into intelligence analysis -- and other people have talked about intelligence analysis -- never take anything off the table. Have that discussion about should you kill bin Laden or not. Nothing should be taboo.

Analytical methodologies and assumptions should be in papers. People should know how you got from A to Z. New analysis on topics should be required to produce a literature review inside the intelligence community.

And then finally, the issue of peer review, we don't do peer review in the intelligence community. We do coordination, which is not at all the same thing, and so we've got to find a way for the minority voices, the people who see things first, as Mark said, to get your message out and to be heard.

Sorry I ran over time.

**DR. HEGGHAMMER:** Thank you very much. You will get a chance to expand a little bit in the Q&A.

Our third speaker is Dr. Mary Habeck, who is associate professor at Johns Hopkins University, and she is the author of the acclaimed book, "Knowing the Enemy." She's also served as a Special Adviser for Strategic Planning -- or Planning on the National Security Council staff. And Mary is going to talk about al-Qaeda strategies, operational art, and tactics on 9/11.

**DR. HABECK:** For the sake of time, I'm actually going to cut out a lot of that and focus on the things that I think are going to be perhaps the most interesting but also the most controversial in my talk.

This is amazing for EL professors. As at least one of my students can attest, when I left there in 2005, they still weren't using PowerPoint. I'm a major electronic [inaudible] are concerned.

What I'm going to do is talk very briefly about al-Qaeda's grand strategy; that is, the very highest policy level. I'm using a very academic term, because I think it encompasses a whole lot more than just policy objectives. This follow-on, actually I'm in the midst of writing a trilogy. The first was the ideology, why they attacked us. The second is how they are fighting their wars, so that's strategies and tactics, and the third one will be our response to all that, how it's interacted with those other two pieces.

So what I'm going to do very briefly, if I can get things to work for me, is talk about just the last three, only very briefly about the first two, but just so you know, I cover all of those in

my first chapter of this book, which is sort of setting the stage by saying where was al-Qaeda at on 9/11, what did they think about the world, about the war they were involved in, and how they were going to go about winning it. And then from there, the rest of the book takes that as a kind of starting point and how they evolved over time in order to adjust the changing circumstances.

So their views as the enemy and their self-image are extremely important for understanding what they thought they were dealing with in the world today. First of all, they had a whole series of enemies that basically encompassed about 90 percent of the world, maybe 99 percent, and their problem was sorting out who was the most important enemy to attack first and then how you deal with each one of these groups in nuanced ways.

So they had two innovations that they came up with when it comes to Jihadist groups. The first innovation was they argued that all the Jihadist movements of the 1980s and '90s had failed because people had insisted on trying to attack the apostates first, and because they had done that, they had left alone the main support for the apostates; that is, their puppet master, the United States. Until you took out the United States, you couldn't get at the apostates. That was the first innovation. The second innovation they had was that we need to involve not just a small Jihadist group but the entire community in this war, and if we don't find some way to mobilize the entire community, we're going to lose. And those two innovations make them different from every other Salafi-Jihadist group or every other Jihadist group when they were created.

Their vision of themselves is that they are fulfilling prophecy, literally. They look back at the sayings of Muhammad, the Hadith, and they found themselves in references, the end times, when this victorious sect, the Saved Party would come out and rescue the Muslim community from a terrible situation and usher in the end of the world. That's their vision of themselves.

And these, I'm also going to be very, very brief about, because I cover them in great depth in "Knowing the Enemy," but in my second book, I actually talk about the practical strategic implications for each one of these concepts, just enough to know that they refused to compromise on any of these visions, and they will not compromise on their vision of Tawhid. The center, the core of the Islamic religion implies that democracy, elections, voting are evil and wrong and must be avoided in all cases. That Jihad, we must fight, we can't avoid fighting. That "wala wa'l-bara'a" means that we cannot align ourselves with anybody who disagrees with us and must in fact hate and avoid them, and promoting virtue and preventing vice, that we have to impose Sharia first and foremost on other Muslims.

And finally, those principles are always balanced with a pragmatic outlook, so these principles kind of set their constitution, their boundaries, their legal boundaries that they don't want to go beyond, but beyond that, there is an awful lot that these touch on, and military, economic, media strategies, they're very open to all sorts of pragmatic meetings when it comes to things like that. Who is the *epi du jour*? Whatever circumstances say. Lots of TTPs are entirely based on pragmatic things.

I have this in here just to show you all of these words used, and you can find them in every single -- and emphasize, because one of their main problems is that group that I called the "SHEET," don't seem to get it and don't seem to understand. So every single speech they give, it doesn't matter when it was made -- and I put something from the 1990s as easily as 2009, you

would see it the same way -- have to be convinced of these ideals.

Here's their objectives as they then were based on this reading of the world situation and their enemies. First of all, we have to expel the occupiers, so that is attack the Americans, so that they leave our lands and stop supporting the apostates; then we can overthrow the apostates, only after we've gotten rid of the Americans.

We are going to impose our version of Sharia on everybody, even unwilling Muslims -- well, especially unwilling Muslims, because it's the only right vision for God to unearth.

We're going to establish the Caliphate; by that, they just mean an Islamic state, and it can be as small as a city and as big as the entire world eventually.

And then eventually, we're going to make the word of God the highest, and by that, they mean the whole world will acknowledge our version of Sharia and live by its rules.

Those are their grand strategic objectives. How are they going to go about achieving these, though? Well, here's the means. Fighting and fighting alone, they argue. Then throughout the 1990s, they had arguments back and forth with lots of other groups that eventually gave up fighting, that tried getting into elections, that tried working through social transformation, gradual sorts of things, and they argued all those are failing, and they're failing because we're not fighting.

The second thing that they did was we are going to train Mujahideen, tens of thousands of them if necessary, in order to take up this fight. We are not going to be dependent on just a small vanguard, that is, us, to carry out this fight. We are going to have a lot of people trained in how to use weapons, tactics, and all sorts of other things, so that they can carry this fight to the rest of the world.

We're going to insight the entire community then to join us with us somehow, either through words or deeds, and get them to join us in the fight.

And we are going to unify all of the Jihadist groups that are out there into one by radicalizing them. They have an entire program of radicalization that they put Jihadist groups through, just as they do individuals, in order to get them on their side and eventually become what I call "many bees." All of these were first developed during the 1990s and first attempted in places like Chechnya and elsewhere.

Their plan, then, at the very highest level divided the world into three arenas for Jihad. There were the Zionist Crusaders, who were the first people we're going to have to take on, but then there were these open battlefronts; that is, places where the battle is already joined, and there are Jihadist groups not affiliated with us, perhaps, already out there fighting openly. And finally, there are what they called the "occupied Islamic lands," i.e., every other place that's ruled by a so-called "Muslim ruler," and they decided to take each one of these on with their own specific strategies in order to take them down.

In fact, they came up with a staged plan to win the war. This is one of those things they

actually get from a closed reading of Muhammad's life, the so-called "sirah." Their vision was that we have to have stages, because each one will take on a different enemy and defeat them and then move on to the next bigger, and we will have different means that we will emphasize during each one of these as well.

So here's the plan. Phase one, attack America. And by the way, that was the tentative title for my second book, "Attacking America: How Al-Qaeda is Fighting its 200-Year War with the West," and I'm actually changing the title because it no longer made sense, because I understand that attacking America is actually not their main purpose in life. We used to think it was all about us, but it's not.

Phase two, they want to globalize the Jihad; that is, take it beyond just one or two arenas; in fact, make it as many arenas as possible open to Jihad.

Phase three, overthrow those; that is, the tawaghits that rule our countries.

Set up the Caliphate through the use of Amirates, which will be sort of testing grounds for ideas and eventually will spread somehow to running into each other and create the Caliphate.

And finally, phase five, that's sometime in the eschatological future, we'll make word about the highest.

Along with every single one of these phases, there were military strategies, economic strategies, media strategies, all sorts of things in order to support these concepts, but I'm only going to talk about the military strategies, because I think these are the most controversial part of what I'm going to say.

The first phase was attack America with qualitative strikes and raids. They figured it would take more than one in order to take down the United States, but eventually, after one or two or three strikes, the U.S. would get the picture and would just leave all of our lands.

Phase two, we'll mobilize the Umma through inciting them to Jihad through strikes that will catch their imagination. We'll unify the Jihad by now making the appeal to all the other Jihadists and say, "Look, we're the ones who are on the right path, and it's working," and then we'll create the conditions for a global Jihad.

Phase three, use trained Mujahideen that have already sent out there, that are in other countries, already favor your ideology, your ideas, and are trained the way you want them to be trained to create multiple battlefronts against the tawaghith.

Phase four, what one of the great theorists -- I highly recommend his book, "Management of Savagery" -- said, "We'll manage savagery by imposing our version of Islamic law and slowly create the conditions for states.

And finally, we will around the world have everyone obeying our version of Islamic law. That also has to be done through violence.

So here's the evidence from captured documents that I used for a lot of this, and for my focus now on the training and combat sections of al-Qaeda -- rather than focusing on what we call the "external operations" for things like that.

So here's the actual organizational charge for al-Qaeda from the 1990s. At the very top is what they call the "High Command or the "Command Council." It had two committees or councils that hung off of it that didn't report to other things but reported just up the chain to the High Command, and one of them, the Fatwa Committee, had the right to overrule any of their orders, so that Regional Council, I'll talk about in greater depth later. And there were military, financial, political media, and a lot of other committees. Muhammad Atef was the head of the military committee. That's why he shows up in so much of the reports.

Underneath that, then, were about 10 sections, but number one and two were the training section and the combat section. Those are the ones that got most of the attention, the time, and the best people assigned to them, because they saw those creation of those Mujahideen that they were going to send around the world as "the" focus group for globalizing the Jihad.

Underneath those was what they called "special operations." That in fact is what KSM was the head of. When people talk about that guy as being number three in al-Qaeda, I look back at this chart, and I go, "I don't even think he's number ten," you know. That's how much emphasis they placed on attacking America. We're number ten, you know? We're not anywhere near number three in their visions.

And here's some more evidence. I think the numbers speak for themselves, right, where the emphasis was placed? Well, how about funding? This is from a UN report in 2003. Ninety percent was going towards their globalizing the Jihad; 10 percent was going towards attacking us.

And there's an awful lot more that is said during the 1990s that supports the concept that al-Qaeda was creating a centralized command and control center node that would be able to handle somehow a global Jihad. Now, whether they're actually going to be able to do that or not, I'm going to find out when I start doing my 1990 to post-9/11 in-depth summary on this particular issue, but they also created a Regional Council, which was supposed to bring together all of their affiliates in other countries and coordinate their activities, so that they would follow al-Qaeda's particular vision for the world.

And that's basically my presentation, so thank you.

[Applause.]

**DR. HEGGHAMMER:** Thank you very much.

We have one last speaker, and that is Dr. Yonah Alexander, who is a Senior Fellow at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies and also the Director of the Inter-University Center for Legal Studies. He's published numerous books on terrorism, and many of you will know him as the author of one of the very first books on bin Laden and al-Qaeda published before 9/11. Yonah will speak about academic intelligence on al-Qaeda pre-9/11, lessons learned.

**DR. ALEXANDER:** Thank you, Tom.

First, if I may commend the NDU and Johns Hopkins University for their continued leadership and scholarship and professionalism in this field. I want to personally take this opportunity to cooperate with the two institutions, and I want to thank the panelists, my colleagues, for their rich insights, which are very important.

If I may, I would like to provide a broader perspective or context to see if the forest, they're not just the trees, because otherwise, we don't realize exactly what happened before 9/11 and what is likely to happen in the future.

After all, the world academic community, as all of us know, number one is to learn the lessons of history in order to know something about the future, to try to anticipate at least some permanent trends, and we always talk about being surprised about the surprise and uncertain about uncertainties, but there are certainties about certainties that are a given. And as we all say, that nothing is new under the sun, King Solomon observed that about the intentions of there is no end to the evil intentions of terrorism. There is no end to their imagination. As far as capabilities, the only difference between other types of terrorism and contemporary is basically the technology or elements.

Now, as a participant observer in this area, I would like to share with you some of my understanding of what took place, actually going all the way back, if I may, 50 years ago when I studied at the University of Chicago and then Columbia. I tried to do a Ph.D. in this field, but there wasn't one professor who specialized in the area. There weren't any courses at the time.

So now today, we do have, obviously, Ph.D. dissertations in the field. Maybe this is a sad commentary, but on the other hand, that's the good news. We have probably more terrorist specialists than terrorists.

[Laughter.]

**DR. ALEXANDER:** But, at any rate, I would like to point out that, again, as a participant observer, I have the opportunity to be a member of the New York State, New York City task force with the FBI, the police, and the Tri Border Area of the Tristate Group, Port Authority, and we met, ironically, at the World Trade Center in the 1980s. And I'm mentioning this because for us it wasn't really a surprise to talk about the realization about the politicization of religion an particularly from the Middle East states itself. So we weren't exactly surprised about the surprise, because on the top list of targets, both the World Trade Center and the garage -- and in 1993, as we know, it was the first strike of the al-Qaeda there.

Now, I prepared a PowerPoints to share with you. Since I'm sending materials, it is going to be published, and then I am going to look through with you very quickly on some of the broader aspects, as I said, to put it in the context, and you will have obviously a copy of the presentation. If you have any particular questions, I can deal with that.

Now, we have to remind ourself again and again that terrorism is only one of the major

challenges facing civilization in terms of the threat and in terms of the responses. Then again, it became very vivid after the cold war that we were dealing with a different type of strategy. This is just a reminder.

And I think the key questions we have to ask ourselves, especially at the 10th anniversary, is the worst ye to come, and the short answer is definitely yes. It's not if, but when, where, and with what impact.

And if this is the case, through the al-Qaeda, if it makes some other sources, will civilization survive, and again, the short answer is definitely yes. If we want to, we are going to do whatever is necessary to control that challenge, and clearly, this book is part of the solution.

Now, we have to understand that we are dealing with a challenge for the survival of civilization, and unless we cooperate, the survival of the fittest, then all of us are going to sink.

Now, I'm not going to go into details, because it seems to me the academic work and the work of the intelligence community is very similar in many ways. It is certainly interdisciplinary. It is international and so forth. But before we discuss today the role of Congress -- and this is just one example, and I worked with Congress very closely for any years. Twenty-seven years ago, Senator Barry Goldwater in a letter to me indicated exactly that one response there was, his strategy, the targeted killings, for example, but it's not going to be accepted by the American people, and now today we know this is a major, I think, principle of counterterrorism strategy of this administration.

As I said, we have to look at the history and learn from history. Unfortunately, we learned from history that we don't learn trough history and so on.

[Laughter.]

**DR. ALEXANDER:** One of the problems, the definition of bankruptcy, we cannot really agree, or the terrorists. We cannot agree what are some of the root causes of the political and social and so forth. That what is clear, which is a permanent fixture of life throughout history, and we see it now through the al-Qaeda particularly but not only the al-Qaeda group. Clearly, the use of religious terms, concepts, ideas, and clearly, you will try to outline exactly what it is all about in order to achieve some political strategy.

Now, a key, it seems to me -- and this actually is reflected, what we knew about al-Qaeda before 9/11 -- is the existence of international networks throughout the world and how they organized themselves. It is clearly right to point out what it is.

I want to remind all of us that here, with the 10-year anniversary, if we look to this month of September, one of the major encouraging, I think, effects, both the Munich effect -- and this clearly illustrated that if al-Qaeda wanted to put on the map of the world, that the entire world will see, then they looked at the Munich effect. And, of course, there were some others.

We know history just to remind us they attack, for example, in Tehran and Beirut and so forth. What is really critical to remember -- and I think you tried to outline in your studies --

exactly the roots go all the way back, as we know. So we shouldn't be surprised about al-Qaeda. We shouldn't be surprised about their social structure. We knew about it before 9/11, and we knew about the goal of the Muslim diaspora, so to speak, the foreign affinity of links and so on.

We knew exactly about the Deed by Propaganda. They didn't have to throw a bomb. They simply sent their communications, going all the way back, as we know, to '96 and in '98, and then, of course, in '98 in terms of the stipulation to the weapons of mass destruction that al-Qaeda tried to obtain over the years. And then, of course, the propaganda by the deed, selected targets throughout the world before 9/11.

Now, it seems to me that we missed actually the critical aspects of the [?]. They knew about that, to prevent, to pursue, to prosecute, to punish, to persuade and protect. Somehow -- and, of course, we read the 9/11 Commission report, and we know exactly what happened. We knew exactly what it means, success, how to reduce the incidents, for example, and so on, but more importantly, the question of reserving the basic structures and policies, the rule of law in democracy and civil liberty and all that was a critical element in fighting terrorism before 9/11.

Now, again, on the basis of the academic work, my colleagues, myself, all over the world, we gave to some specific inclusion for surety with the government. We distributed the report. It wasn't a question of the absence of the report. It was a question of the implementation of recommendations.

Now, finally, I think that the balance should be very, very clear, and we're still debating how to deal with that particular challenge, and hopefully, this conference will provide some recommendations in this area.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

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