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ASSESSMENT

Al-Qa'ida

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Al-Qa'ida is a multi-national terrorist group with a worldwide presence. Established in 1988 by Usma bin Ladin (UBL), its core members initially consisted of Afghan war veterans. Al-Qa'ida serves as an umbrella organization that funds and orchestrates the activities of Islamic militants worldwide. Using an extensive international network to maintain a loose connection between Muslim extremists throughout the Middle East, Europe, Asia, Canada, and the United States, al-Qa'ida uses conventional communication such as the Internet, faxes, and satellite telephones to organize, plan, and financially support terrorist activities. Al-Qa'ida's current goal is to expel Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries and to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate throughout the world by working with allied Islamic extremist groups to overthrow regimes it deems "non-Islamic."

HISTORY

UBL was born circa 1957 to the wealthy Saudi construction magnate Muhammad bin Ladin. At the time of his inheritance, UBL's wealth was estimated at \$250 million. Prior to 1979, UBL attended the King Abd al-Aziz University's (KAAU) School of Economics and Management where he attended a class taught by Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian theologian who was regarded as the historical leader of HAMAS. Azzam's theology appealed to UBL who based many of his beliefs on Azzam's teachings. Many of the qualities that people now attribute to UBL were seen earlier in Azzam.

During 1979 UBL dropped out of KAAU to fight in Afghanistan. By 1985 UBL was based in Jiddah and was a major fundraiser for the war. Azzam, who also wanted to assist the Mujahidin, moved to Peshawar, Pakistan, the headquarters of the Afghanistan resistance. UBL joined Azzam in Peshawar and together they set up the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), to recruit and train resistance fighters.

MAK advertised worldwide for young Muslims to fight in Afghanistan. Much of its financing came from UBL who paid for the transportation of the new recruits and set up facilities to train them. The Afghan government donated land and resources, while UBL brought in experts on guerilla warfare, sabotage, and covert operations. Within a year, MAK had thousands of volunteers training in private camps. Nearly half of the fighting force came from UBL's native Saudi Arabia; the others came from Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan, and the Sudan.

By 1989 the Mujahidin had driven the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. What had begun as a fragmented army was now regarded as a well-organized and equipped army. Toward the end of the war UBL split with MAK co-founder Azzam and in 1988 formed al-Qa'ida ("the base") to continue the work of the jihad. While Azzam continued to focus on support to Muslims in Afghanistan, UBL turned his attention to carrying the war to other countries. On 24 November 1989 Azzam died in a car bomb explosion, generally blamed on a rival Afghani faction.

The defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan led UBL to expand his Islamic fundamentalist ideology into the desire to spark an Islamic revolution, setting him at odds with the conservative Saudi monarchy. When Saudi Arabia became a staging point for American forces during the 1991 Gulf War, UBL, who had returned to Saudi Arabia in 1989, declared a war to liberate

Islam's holy lands (Saudi Arabia and Israel) from the "Jews and Crusaders" and viewed the Saudi monarchy as traitors and allies of the West. In 1991, the Saudi's revoked UBL's citizenship and expelled him from the country. Together with his family and a large band of followers, UBL moved to Khartoum, Sudan. There he invested heavily in Sudanese construction projects including the country's main highway. UBL also set up training camps where members of jihad could receive military training.

In May 1996, the Sudanese government requested UBL to depart Sudan. This request was based on pressure the Sudanese government was receiving from the U.S. government to expel UBL and also from the threat of UN sanctions after alleged Sudanese complicity in the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. In May 1996, UBL moved to Afghanistan leaving behind a network of Afghan war veterans and several successful factories and corporations.

During February 1998, in order to further his ideological crusade, UBL founded the "World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders" (Al-Jabhah al-Islamiyyah al-Alamiyyah li-Qital al-Yahud wal-Salibiyyin), saying it was the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens, civilian or military, and their allies everywhere. This Fatwah signified a change in UBL's elevation of hostility towards the United States and its allies. The Fatwah was signed by UBL; Ayman al-Zawahiri, a prominent leader of the Egyptian al-Jihad and al-Qa'ida's second in command; Abu Yasir Rifa'I Ahmad Taha, a leader of the Egyptian Islamic Group; Sheikh Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat ul-Ulema-e-Pakistanh; and Fazlul Rahman, leader of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh.

In June 2001, al-Qa'ida and the Egyptian al-Jihad merged into a single entity, serving as a focal point or umbrella organization for a worldwide network that includes many Sunni Islamic extremist groups such as members of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Harakat ul-Mujahidin. All of these groups have been designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations by the United States Department of State.

STRUCTURE

Prior to 11 September 2001, Al-Qa'ida's structure was based on a pyramid format with a core leadership to facilitate strategic and tactical direction. To organize and coordinate operations within the groups, UBL created a shura (consultative) council, that has a rotating membership. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Muhammed al-Masry, and Sayf al-Adl were among the first to join. Council members are trusted individuals appointed by UBL to key positions based on family, friendship, and nationality. Following are four of the known committees and their responsibilities.

Military Committee:

- Recruiting
- Training
- Management of training camps
- Procuring
- Transporting
- Planning & launching "military" operations

- Appoints managers for international cell network
- Oversees al-Qa'ida's internal security (bodyguards, etc.)

The Finance and Business Committee

- Manages sophisticated financial resources that sustain the organization
- Includes professional bankers, accountants and financiers
- Prefers raising funds through legitimate businesses and Islamic NGOs it infiltrates
- Support cells and funds operational cells
- Committee also responsible for obtaining travel documents, forged or otherwise

The Media and Publicity Committee

•Media is used to wield direct and indirect control over its members and associates through occasional statements, speeches, and writings, al-Qa'ida's "Emir" can indoctrinate, train and control inner group, while providing inspiration to associates, and sympathizers

- Media and publicity are part of overall communications strategy
 - Supports its political and military activity
 - Attracts recruits
 - Raises funds

•Al-Qa'ida uses conventional communication to organize, plan, and financially support terrorist activities.

- Audio and video communications
- Internet
- Magazines and newspapers
- Faxes
- Satellite telephones

The Fatwa Committee's role is to justify al-Qa'ida's actions.

- Use of religion as justification for violence against non-Muslims as well as Muslims
- Da'wah activity

Since 11 September 2001, the United States and its allies have captured/killed two-thirds of al-Qa'ida's senior leadership. Although this disruption has weakened al-Qa'ida's structure, enabling communication and operational planning, it is still able to support major terrorist attacks via other radical Islamic groups. Al-Qa'ida continues to draw supporters even in its weakened state based on its ideology that appeals to young Muslims. With al-Qa'ida's robust capacity for regeneration, it is anticipated that it will continue to modify and adapt its organizational structure and remain a paramount threat in the near future.

MILITARY TRAINING

Al-Qa'ida places a strong emphasis on training and retraining. The *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jiha*, procedures for conducting guerilla warfare and terrorism, is 17,000 pages and is, "dedicated to God" with acknowledgements for Abdallah Azzam and UBL. Culled from U.S.

and British military manuals it was first printed in Arabic in 1996 and appeared on CD-Rom in 1999. It was designed with future generations in mind and caters to a wide range of environments. Even though most of al-Qa'ida training camps have been disrupted, members continue to train for future operations. In the United States, individuals who associate themselves with radical fundamentalist groups have been observed using paint ball guns and equipment to conduct military style training.

Prior to 11 September 2003, Al-Qa'ida operated a variety of camps with three standard courses.

Basic

- Guerilla warfare and Shari'a (a.k.a. justification through religious indoctrination)

Advanced

- Explosives, assassination techniques, heavy weapons

Specialized

- Surveillance and counter-surveillance, forging and adapting documents, conducting attacks (vehicle-borne, etc.)

Al-Qa'ida has no formal procedure for recruitment. It specifically targets young, Muslim men, but converts are welcome. Ties of family, friendship, and nationality play an important role. Traits that al-Qa'ida looks for in their recruits include knowledge of Islam and ideological commitment, maturity, self-sacrifice, discipline, patience, observation and analytical skills, intelligence, and the ability to act.

Al-Qa'ida's Intelligence Section operates on the cellular model, utilizing multiple cells whose members do not know each other. The responsibilities of the Intelligence Section are to infiltrate political establishments, security forces, and intelligence apparatuses of foreign governments in the Middle East and elsewhere. The Intelligence wing also infiltrates Muslim communities in the West to recruit for future operations.

Al-Qa'ida's modus operandi for operational security includes the use of agents and sub-agents, couriers for communications, and covert operatives. Al-Qai'da operatives avoid attracting attention via avoiding Islamic public places. Their operations involve three key phases:

- Intelligence collection on target, surveillance, and rehearsed operations based on information
- Support team sets up safe-houses near target, pulls together weapons, vehicles, and other operational necessities
- Strike team arrives (then withdraws if not suicide mission)

KEY FIGURES

Al-Qa'ida's organizational hierarchy is in constant change. With the aid of allied Nations, key al-Qa'ida figures are being captured and or eliminated at an astonishing rate. Although this is the main goal, the remaining members are quick to adapt to their new situation and immediately take responsibility of their predecessor's position, thus, making it extremely difficult to track the organizational structure. Based on the above, a list of senior leaders, operatives, and network figures cannot be charted; however, the following individuals are among al-Qa'ida's key figures.

- Ayman al-Zawahri: Second in command. Al-Zawahri was advisor and doctor to UBL and the founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

- Sayf al-Adl: Believed to have assumed many of the late Military commander's, Mohammed Atef's, duties.

- Abu Mohammed al-Masri: Known to have run al-Qa'ida's training camps in Afghanistan, including the al-Farooq camp near Kandahar.

- Shaykh Sulaiman Abu Ghaith: Al-Qa'ida's spokesman. Can be seen with UBL in one of the videotapes released since 11 September.

- Sheikh Said: UBL's brother-in-law and one of al-Qa'ida financial controllers.

Many of al-Qa'ida's key figures are detained and have provided valuable information concerning al-Qa'ida's modus operandi, to include:

- Khalid Sheik Mohammad: Arrested on 1 March 2003 in Rawalpindi Pakistani. Responsible for attacks against U.S. targets inside the United States.

- Abu Zubayah: Captured March 2002 in Pakistan. Key al-Qa'ida recruiter and operational planner.

- Ramzi Binalshibh: Captured September 2002 in Pakistan. Believed to be significantly involved with the plot for the 9/11 attack.

- Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, a.k.a Abu Asim al-Makki: Captured November 2002. Al-Nashiri, a senior al-Qai'da member, was believed to be the leader of the network's Gulf operations.

TERRORIST ATTACKS

Following is a list of the main suspected al-Qa'ida terrorist attacks since 1992.

11 March 2004	Bombing of three commuter trains in Madrid, Spain.
20 November 2003	Suicide truck bomb attack on the U.K. Consulate in Istanbul.
15 November 2003	Suicide truck bomb two Synagogues in Istanbul, Turkey.
28 November 2002	Suicide truck bomb attack on the Paradise Hotel, Mombasa, Kenya and subsequent attack on an Arka Airliner via two missiles from the perimeter of the MOI Mobassa Airport.
12 October 2002	Suspected of supporting nightclub bombing in Bali Indonesia.
8 October 2002	Responsible for attack on U.S. military personnel in Kuwait.
6 October 2002	Suicide attack on the MV Limburg off the coast of Yemen.
11 April 2002	Suicide truck bombing, El Ghriba Synagogue in Djereba, Tunisia.
11 September 2001	Al-Qa'ida hijacked and crashed four U.S. commercial jets.
12 October 2000	Attack on the USS Cole in the port of Aden, Yemen.
1998 August	Bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
1993	Suspected of supporting the bombing of the World Trade Center.
1993	Al-Qa'ida claims to have shot down U.S. helicopters and killed U.S. servicemen in Somalia.
1992 December	Claims to have conducted three bombings that targeted U.S. troops in Aden, Yemen.

Threats from Al-Qa'ida and associated terrorist groups will continue; however, with support from our allies terrorism will not prevail.

Questions or comments regarding this communication may be directed to the Counterterrorism Analysis Section at dvanduynd@fbi.ic.gov.