

CURRENT HISTORY

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Preparing for a War on Terrorism

JESSICA STERN

A war on terrorism must be fought on many fronts, using every tool at the American government's disposal: diplomacy, intelligence, and military strikes. But America's goal should also be to "drain the swamps" where extremists thrive, and that implies a combination of measures: stopping the flow of money to these groups, intelligence cooperation, and military force. Most important, it implies understanding that failed and failing states are important sanctuaries as well as sources of recruits for extremist movements. When we talk about Pearl Harbor, we should also be thinking of a Marshall Plan.

The desire for revenge at a moment like this is perfectly understandable: we are traumatized as a nation. But America's goal must be to prevent future strikes by its enemies. The United States cannot afford to allow an emotional desire for quick retribution to override its long-term national security interests. It would not be difficult to make things worse rather than better—through hasty, emotional, or ill-planned military reaction or even through bellicose rhetoric.

BIN LADEN AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Several surprising facts about Osama bin Laden's group came to light during the trials of those involved in the 1998 attack against United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. And those facts reveal how well organized, sophisticated, and elusive a network the United States is up against. United States government officials estimate that bin Laden's organization, al Qaeda, has thousands of operatives who are active, or suspected to be active, in dozens of countries, including the United States. But the threat does not come from bin Laden's group alone.

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Many groups, such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, are closely affiliated with al Qaeda. They train at bin Laden's camps and carry out his objectives. Bin Laden is probably correct that if the United States government kills him, hundreds of "Osamas" are prepared to take his place.

The al Qaeda organization, and others like it, have branches that handle finance, documents, public relations, and intelligence. They run businesses. They conduct surveillance of enemy targets. They cultivate journalists to ensure favorable coverage in the press. They have sophisticated web sites for both fund raising and recruiting.

Like any conventional business, al Qaeda includes both skilled and unskilled labor. A former Sudanese member of al Qaeda, Jamal Ahmed al-Fadl, said that he was paid a monthly salary of \$500, while Egyptian members of the group were earning up to three times as much.

He said that he received a \$10,000 bonus for arranging a deal to purchase uranium. Still, his anger about his monthly compensation led him to steal \$110,000 from the organization and eventually to become a witness for the United States government in the trial against the embassy bombers.

When he complained to bin Laden about the Egyptians' higher salaries, al-Fadl said that bin Laden told him that the Egyptians traveled more, worked harder, and had alternative employers in their own country. "That's why he tried to make them happy and give them more money," he said. In other words, bin Laden paid operatives based partly on their earning power in alternative positions.

Like other business managers, bin Laden also needed to recruit unskilled labor. K. K. Mohamed, for example, received no monetary compensation for his efforts, which involved acquiring a truck and grinding explosives—and, given his role in the embassy bombing in Tanzania, will spend the rest of his life in an American prison. Other operatives reported undergoing training in engineering or flying planes. One talked about purchasing a plane with

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the goal of transporting equipment, including Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, from Pakistan's Peshawar to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan.

This group and others like it have thought carefully about evading law-enforcement detection. A manual that came to light in the trial instructed operatives living in enemy territory to dress in such a way that they could not be identified as Muslims. They were told to shave their beards, to rent apartments in newly developed areas where people do not know one another, and not to chat too much, especially to taxi drivers. The manual says that destroying the places of amusement and sin is less important than attacking embassies and vital economic centers.

Not surprisingly, we know the September 11 hijackers followed these general instructions. They had no beards. They wore Western clothing. One business traveler, Roger Quirion, who flew on the first leg of a flight with two of the hijackers, told a *Washington Post* reporter that the "two men struck him as clean-cut, wearing slacks, dress shoes and casual shirts, and carrying dark shoulder bags. Their hair was closely cropped. They had no facial hair. In short, they looked like typical businessmen." These hijackers also spoke little to their neighbors and moved frequently. Neighbors noticed only one thing unusual about them: meetings in the middle of the night involving up to a dozen participants.

The most important aspect of training these militants is mental training. It takes relatively little time and effort to learn to fly a plane; many people can do that. But training someone mentally to carry out suicide mass-casualty attacks is more difficult. Clerics teach operatives that killing civilians is allowed. A former member of al Qaeda explained how a charismatic teacher taught him not to fear killing noncombatants. If the innocent victim is a "good person," his teacher said, "he goes to paradise." If he's a bad person, "he goes to hell." Afghanistan's ruling Taliban were actually borne out of extremist madrassahs (religious schools) in Pakistan. These schools function as orphanages. Families that cannot afford to feed their children send them to madrassahs, where they are not only educated but also clothed and fed. In the most extreme of these schools, which Pakistani officials estimate to comprise 10 to 15 percent of its religious schools, children are taught a distorted version of jihad. A child should learn that jihad means doing

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your homework, helping the poor, and purifying the self. At these schools, however, children are taught about hate. Madrassahs I have visited had children from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Chechnya, Kuwait, Mongolia, Nepal, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Yemen. In a school that purportedly offered a broad curriculum, a teacher I questioned could not multiply seven times eight. Children that graduate from these schools are trained to be mullahs, but many of them cannot find jobs. They are thus susceptible to their teachers' message that the best way to fulfill their religious duty is to fight on behalf of the Taliban or to join so-called *jihadi* groups. The children are also taught that Osama bin Laden is a hero.

Pakistan is not only home to these extremist madrassahs but also borders Afghanistan. The country's military government is prepared to assist an American-led international antiterrorist coalition on the basis of principle; it does not expect a quid pro

quo, according to Pakistani officials. But still, now would be a good time offer assistance—because it is in United States national security

interests to do so. If the United States inadvertently turns Pakistan into a second Afghanistan, the results would be disastrous for India—and the entire world.

How can the United States help Pakistan? Pakistan has long been seeking market access for its textiles. Opening American markets would translate into \$300 million to \$400 million per year, according to the Pakistani embassy, which could make a crucial difference to Pakistan's economy.

The United States should also consider debt relief and help in the areas of health care and education. Extremist religious parties and *jihadi* groups are already mobilized to fight the Pakistani government. It may be wise to make some of these efforts visible. The extremist groups are unlikely to change their minds, but the United States can reduce their ability to mobilize others.

The situation in Afghanistan is even worse. According to a UN report issued in April, "life expectancy is less than 43 years, the literacy rate is around 25 percent, the mortality rate is the highest in the world, and the GDP per head is estimated to be less than \$700. Only a small minority of Afghans has access to safe water, sanitation, health care, and education. In addition, Afghanistan is one of the most mine-infested countries in the world."¹ The situation has grown worse since, in part because of the worst drought in 30 years. If the United States

¹"The Battlefield," *The Economist*, September 20, 2001.

attacks Afghanistan, conditions will deteriorate even further.

DICTATING LESS, LISTENING MORE

How can the United States fight this scourge, which is now spread, in tiny packets of fury and pain, around the world? Military might alone cannot win this war because the United States is fighting a movement, not a state, and not even just a network. The United States may discover that bin Laden is not directly responsible but instead, one of the groups he funds or inspires, perhaps together with a state or states. Thousands of so-called mujahideen have trained in Afghanistan and are now spread throughout the world. For example, 100 mujahideen from Afghanistan recently joined Laskar Jihad, a new *jihadi* group fighting in Indonesia. What is the target list in a situation like this?

September 11 makes clear that the United States can no longer afford to allow states to fail and conflicts to fester. Extremists thrive when the state is no longer able to provide basic services, such as health care, education, and law and order. They also thrive on lingering conflicts, such as those in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Kashmir.

The United States needs to think about how to undermine the appeal of these groups. Islam strictly prohibits targeting innocent civilians. Religious scholars need to get out the message that Osama bin Laden's version of Islam is a grotesque distortion of their faith. Those scholars should be speaking out, not just in America, but all over the world.

It is also important for religious leaders to accept that religion has often been used to justify conflicts. Religion has two sides. One is spiritual. It unifies people, transcending national and religious boundaries and promoting tolerance. The other side is all about boundaries: to be Catholic is to be not Protestant, to be Christian is to be non-Muslim, to be Muslim is to be not Jewish. Us versus Them. Religious leaders should also come forward to make clear that respect for human life is the most important aspect of religion. Extremists focus on the divisive aspect of religion, on those elements that divide us one from another, ignoring the spiritual, universalist aspects.

Finally, the United States has to learn to dictate less and listen more, as Harvard's Joseph Nye argues in a forthcoming book on America's soft power. We have a stake in the welfare of other peoples and need to devote a much higher priority to health, education, and economic development, or new Osamas will continue to arise. ■

Terror in the Name of God

MARK JUERGENSMEYER

Perhaps the first question that came to mind on September 11 when the horrific images of the aerial assaults on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were conveyed around the world was: Why would anyone want to do such a thing? As the twin towers crumbled in clouds of dust and the identities and motives of the perpetrators began to emerge, a second question arose: Why would anyone want to do such a thing in the name of God?

These are the questions that have arisen frequently

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in the post-cold war world. Religion seems to be connected with violence everywhere—from the World Trade Center bombings to suicide attacks in Israel and the Palestinian Authority; assassinations in India, Israel, Egypt, and Algeria; nerve gas in the Tokyo subways; unending battles in Northern Ireland; abortion-clinic killings in Florida; and the bombing of Oklahoma City's federal building.

What does religion have to do with this virtually global rise of religious violence? In one sense, very little. If the activists involved in the World Trade Center bombing are associated with Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda, they are a small network at the extreme end of a subculture of dissatisfied Muslims who are in turn a small minority within the world of Islam. Osama bin Laden is no more representa-

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