

Al-Qaida Trends After the 9-11 Terrorist Attacks

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Abstract

Since 9-11, the al-Qaida High Command has placed its maximum emphasis on propaganda. They are using this to acquire new recruits and expand their power. Meanwhile, those who sympathize with it and wish to become new members have established local branches in their own areas of activity, becoming independent from the High Command and engaging in their own terrorist activities. A division of labor has arisen between the High Command and local branches.

Possible methods for weakening al-Qaida could include: (1) getting people to lose interest in Islamic fundamentalism; and (2) changing the education curriculum in Middle Eastern countries, in order to prevent the values embraced by Islamic fundamentalism from taking root, but neither of these ideas shows much feasibility at the present time.

Introduction

al-Qaida shook the world when it perpetrated the 9-11 terrorist attacks, and has since that time continued to show an active presence. This research analyzes al-Qaida trends since 9-11, and seeks to clarify the organization's true picture. For this presentation, Section 1 covers "From the Birth of al-Qaida to 9-11," with a focus on the lives of important figures. Next, Section 2 clarifies the development of the ideology of radical Islamic Fundamentalism up to the establishment of "The al-Qaida Ideology" in the late-1990s. Section 3, "al-Qaida Since 9-11," then describes in detail the division of labor that has arisen between the organization's High Command and local branches, the new establishment and expansion of local branches, and High Command propaganda activities. Section 4, the "Conclusion," explores some effective prescriptions for coping with this problem.

1. From the Birth of al-Qaida to 9-11 – Focusing on the Lives of Important Figures

This section tracks the process of al-Qaida's formation, with a focus on the trail up to 9-11 that was left by such important figures as Usama Bin Ladin (the supreme leader of al-Qaida), Ayman al-Zawahiri (the al-Qaida's second-in-command), 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām (Bin Ladin's mentor), and Muḥammad 'Aṭā' (the pilot of the plane which crashed into the World Trade Center in the 9-11 suicide attacks).

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(1) Usama Bin Ladin

The Saudi Arabian-born¹ Usama Bin Ladin (1957-) is said to have established al-Qaida² in Afghanistan around 1988.³ Triggered by the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, during the 1980s large numbers of Islamic fundamentalists from Arab countries gathered in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan as volunteer soldiers. As a result, a multinational network of Islamic fundamentalist groups began to take form.⁴ al-Qaida is one of the organizations that was established as part of that movement.

In 1989, the year after al-Qaida's establishment, the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan. In response, in that same year Bin Ladin also returned to Saudi Arabia, and temporarily recommenced work as a businessman there. However, in the following year, in August 1990, in response to Iraq's sudden occupation of Kuwait and apparent readiness to invade Saudi Arabia as well, Saudi Arabia invited U.S. forces to defend the country. This enraged Bin Ladin. In the understanding of Bin Ladin and his Saudi Islamic fundamentalist compatriots, people who are not Muslim cannot be allowed to reside on the Arabian Peninsula.⁵ Bin Ladin condemned the Saudi government for bringing the infidel U.S. forces into these locations. This is the incident that triggered Bin Ladin's enmity towards the United States and the Saudi government.

Due to his confrontational stance with the government, it eventually became impossible for Bin Ladin to continue living in Saudi Arabia, and he moved to Sudan under the 'Umar al-Bashir's regime. Then in 1996, because relations with the regime had deteriorated, Bin Ladin took his followers and returned again to Afghanistan. During this period, the Taliban⁶-controlled areas in Afghanistan were expanding, and the area where Bin Ladin was staying also fell under Taliban control. The Taliban welcomed Bin Ladin and al-Qaida as being Islamic fundamentalists like themselves, and Bin Ladin in turn readily accepted the Taliban's patronage.

¹ Bin Ladin lost his Saudi Arabian citizenship in 1994, and since that time has been effectively stateless. Shuji Hosaka, *Shotai—Osama Bin Radin no Hansei to Seisen [Real Identity—The Life and Holy War of Usama Bin Ladin]* (Asahi Sensho, 2001), p.116.

² Literally, this name carries such meanings as principle, foundation, stronghold, base, etc.

³ Hajime Ishino, *Usama Bin Ladin—Sono Shiso to Hansei [Usama Bin Ladin—His Ideology and Life]* (Seiko Shobo, 2001), p.28.

⁴ One reason why large numbers of Islamic fundamentalists from Arab countries came to Afghanistan during this period is that governments of Arab countries had encouraged them to go to Afghanistan in the hopes of being rid of them. Ishino, *Usama Bin Ladin*, p.31.

⁵ In Islamic doctrine, it is acceptable for persons who are not Muslims to reside in any locations around the world outside of the Arabian Peninsula. In the Arabian Peninsula, however, such persons are only allowed temporary residence or stay as travelers passing through, and are theoretically not allowed to live as permanent residents. This doctrine is said to be based on the precedent set by the Prophet Muhammad who, in the last years of his life, expelled and purged a number of Jewish clans then living on the Arabian Peninsula. While Muslims residing in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Arabian Peninsula are strongly aware of this doctrine, Muslims residing in other regions (including Islamic fundamentalists) are generally not very interested since it is an issue that does not directly involve them. For this issue, see Tatsuya Kikuchi and Masami Nishino, "2004 nen 10 gatsu Bin Ladin Seimei to Sono Igi—Honyaku to Kaidai [The Statement of Bin Ladin in October, 2004 and Its Meaning—Translation and Analysis]," *Kanda Gaigo Daigaku Kiyo*, No.18 (2006), pp.449-461. Also, for the expulsion and purge of Jews see, for example, Kazuo Otsuka, et al., eds., *Iwanami Isuramu Jiten [Iwanami Islam Dictionary]* (Iwanami Shoten, 2002), p.334, item on the Quraiza clan.

⁶ Literally, it means students. The Taliban was originally formed by students studying at the religious schools of the Deobandis, a movement within the Sunni Muslims, hence the name.

Later, in August 1998, coordinated bomb attacks targeted the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. It appears that Bin Ladin was involved in these incidents, and in November the United States issued an indictment for Bin Ladin's arrest.⁷ Up until the end of 1998, Bin Ladin was still accessible to contact, even responding to interviews with *Newsweek* magazine and other media outlets.⁸ Sometime in 1999, however, he disappeared from sight, and since that time contact has been impossible right up to the present day.

(2) 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām⁹

The Palestinian 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām (1941-89) was Bin Ladin's mentor.¹⁰ When 'Azzām went to Egypt to study in 1970-73, he became involved with the family of Sayyid Quṭb, and came under the influence of the Quṭb ideology.¹¹ Later, in 1981, while serving as a lecturer at a university in Saudi Arabia, he was sent to Pakistan. He was soon involved in support activities for Arab volunteers heading to Afghanistan. He first met Bin Ladin in 1984, in either Afghanistan or Pakistan, and Bin Ladin appears to have then become a follower of 'Azzām, who was 16 years his senior. In that same year, when 'Azzām established an organization to support volunteer soldiers, Bin Ladin also became an active member of this organization. However, differences of views subsequently surfaced between the two: on the one hand, 'Azzām emphasized logistic support rather than fighting, and took a negative stance toward independent military operations by Arabs, who were outsiders in Afghanistan; on the other hand, Bin Ladin insisted on fighting and providing enthusiastic support for independent Arab military operations. Around 1986 Bin Ladin broke away to take independent action. However, Bin Ladin's separation from 'Azzām was not a bitter one, and he appears to have maintained respect for 'Azzām as a teacher even after that time. In 1989, 'Azzām was assassinated by a bomb attack in Peshawar, Pakistan.

'Azzām's most famous work is *Defending the Land of the Muslims Is Each Man's Most Important Duty*. This book argues that defensive jihād against invaders is the duty of all Muslims in countries such as Afghanistan and Palestine, which are originally Muslim lands and which are

⁷ Ishino, *Usama Bin Ladin*, p.60.

⁸ For example, in December 1998 Bin Ladin gave an interview to al-Jazeera, an Arabic language news channel based in Qatar. For this interview, see Bruce Lawrence, ed., *Osama Bin Ladin Hatsugen [The Statements of Osama Bin Ladin]* (Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 2006), pp.110-147.

Although al-Jazeera has broadcast a large number of video messages from Bin Ladin since 9-11-2001, these have all been either delivered unilaterally to al-Jazeera or posted on websites, and none have involved direct interviews.

⁹ The content of this section is based on a paper by Seiji Higuchi, "'Abd Allāh 'Azzām and the Arab Mujahideen,'" distributed at a workshop "*Afuganisutan wa Ima Donatte Iruka [The Current State of Afghanistan]*" held at Kyoto University on October 18, 2008; and the following website:

<<http://bait-al-maqdis.ahlamontada.com/montada-f20/topic-t2335.htm>> accessed on March 19, 2009.

¹⁰ The 9-11 5th anniversary documentary film, "The Manhattan Raid: Knowledge Is for Acting Upon," released in 2006 by al-Qaida included a recorded image of 'Azzām's speech. It could be evidence that Bin Ladin still had respect for 'Azzām. For more on this film, see below.

¹¹ Sayyid Quṭb is a person who developed the ideology of radical Islamic fundamentalism. al-Qaida can itself trace its ideological lineage to Quṭb. For more on Quṭb, see below. Also see Masami Nishino's article "*Saiido Kutobu no Shakai-ron [The Social Theory of Sayyid Quṭb]*," *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies*, No.17-1 (2002), pp.97-122.

now under attack by infidels. As a thinker, ‘Azzām played a crucial role in linking the radical Islamic fundamentalism ideology of Sayyid Quṭb to Bin Ladin.

(3) Ayman al-Zawāhirī¹²

The Egyptian Ayman al-Zawāhirī (1951-) was born into an upper class household, and graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of Cairo University in 1974. He is said to have covertly established an Islamic fundamentalist organization while still in his teens. As the ideology of al-Zawāhirī was strongly influenced by the teachings of Sayyid Quṭb, one impetus for his radicalization had been the shock he felt when Quṭb was executed in 1966. In 1981, al-Zawāhirī was arrested and imprisoned in the wake of the assassination of Egyptian President Muḥammad Anwar Sādāt, because he was a member of the al-Jihād Group, the group behind the assassination. During the public trial for the assassination case, al-Zawāhirī attracted attention because of a speech he gave in English that was directed at the Western media.¹³ While in prison he was subjected to severe torture, and this treatment is said to have bolstered his revulsion for the Egyptian government. He was released from prison in 1984, and in 1985 headed to Saudi Arabia. Then he went on to Afghanistan in 1986. He had already visited that country in 1980 and 1981, shortly after the Soviet invasion, so this marked at least the third time he had visited Afghanistan. It was likely that the relationship between al-Zawāhirī and Bin Ladin began during this 1986 visit to Afghanistan. Later, with the Soviet withdrawal and intensification of civil war, it became impossible to continue living in Afghanistan and al-Zawāhirī moved to Sudan. Then, after the Taliban had gained effective control over almost all of Afghanistan, al-Zawāhirī is said to have returned to Afghanistan, probably no later than 1996.

While al-Zawāhirī is generally regarded as al-Qaida’s second-in-command,¹⁴ some observers say that “in the organizational operation Bin Ladin may be the supreme leader and al-Zawāhirī second-in-command. But in the sphere of Islamic fundamentalism ideology, al-Zawāhirī is much more erudite than Bin Ladin, and therefore al-Zawāhirī is the teacher and Bin Ladin is his disciple.¹⁵” Leading figures of al-Qaida, such as Bin Ladin and al-Zawāhirī, have disseminated a series of declarations and video messages since 9-11. In terms of quantity, al-Zawāhirī’s statements are far more voluminous than Bin Ladin’s statements. This tendency has become particularly noteworthy in recent years. As a result, at the present time it is probably not an overstatement to say that al-Zawāhirī’s ideology represents almost the entirety of al-Qaida ideology.

¹² The content of this section basically relies on *The Road to al-Qaeda: The Story of Bin Laden’s Right-Hand Man* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), biographical account of al-Zawāhirī written by Montasser al-Zayyat, an Egyptian fundamentalist who is a friend of al-Zawāhirī.

¹³ This scene can be found in such programs as the U.K.’s BBC documentary “The Power of Nightmares,” broadcast in 2004.

¹⁴ For example, al-Jazeera uses this expression on a daily basis.

¹⁵ The above-mentioned BBC documentary “The Power of Nightmares” also takes this stance. In addition, the BBC website includes an expert’s opinion that when the al-Jihād Group run by al-Zawāhirī merged with Bin Ladin’s al-Qaida in the late 1990s, “al-Zawāhirī’s al-Jihād Group virtually took over al-Qaida.”

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1560834.stm> accessed on March 20, 2009.

(4) Muḥammad ‘Aṭā’,¹⁶

The Egyptian Muḥammad ‘Aṭā’ (1968-2001) was the pilot of one of the hijacked planes that crashed into the World Trade Center (WTC) on 9-11 in an act of suicide attack, and is considered to have been a key figure among the team of 9-11 operatives. However, although ‘Aṭā’ was a key figure among the team of operatives, he was neither a central figure nor even a member of al-Qaida (High Command). For example, it was not even certain for a long time whether he and Bin Ladin ever had contact.¹⁷

Muḥammad ‘Aṭā’ was raised in Egypt, graduating from the Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University, and then studying at the Hamburg University of Technology in Germany. While he did not originally have much interest in Islamic fundamentalism, after studying abroad he is said to have suddenly tilted toward Islamic fundamentalism.¹⁸ During his studies in Germany, he visited Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere, coming into contact with al-Qaida in Afghanistan, while in Saudi Arabia he appears to have performed a hajj to Mecca. After acquiring a Master’s Degree at the Hamburg University of Technology in 1999, he went to America in 2000 to receive flight training at an aviation school, and then, in the following year, he perpetrated the 9-11 incident.

To sum up the above, Islamic fundamentalists such as ‘Azzām and al-Ṣawāhirī who studied in Egypt had an ideological effect on Bin Ladin. This is why the Islamic fundamentalist ideology of Bin Ladin can be considered the “orthodox” Islamic fundamentalist ideology traceable to the Egyptian Sayyid Quṭb. But Bin Ladin is a Saudi, and as a result he also has the Saudi’s peculiar exclusivist ideology of outrage at “foreigners residing on the Arabian Peninsula.” Bin Ladin is the person who has overlaid “orthodox” Islamic fundamentalism with the Saudi-type exclusivist ideology, and he is the person who developed the network-type organization of al-Qaida among the volunteer soldiers from Arab countries gathered in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, the relationship between Muḥammad ‘Aṭā’, the central figure among the team of 9-11 operatives, and Bin Ladin was quite tenuous. However, this tenuous relationship between High Command, including Bin Ladin, and the teams of operatives committing individual acts of terror, is not limited to 9-11 alone. In many other terrorist incidents perpetrated by al-Qaida, the relationship between the teams of operatives and the High Command has generally appeared to be weak.

¹⁶ The content of this section relies mainly on the 9-11 one-year commemorative program “Sirrī li-l-Ghāyah al-Ṭarīq ilā 9/11” broadcast by al-Jazeera in September 2002, and a book by the Asahi Shimbun Ata reporting team, *Terrorisuto no Kiseki [Tracks of a Terrorist]* (Soshisha, 2002).

¹⁷ In October 2004, Bin Ladin at last revealed that there had been contact with ‘Aṭā’. See the video message by Bin Ladin broadcast on al-Jazeera on October 29, 2004.

¹⁸ For example, as can be seen from the London bombing incidents of July 2005, which were carried out by the descendants of Pakistani immigrants to Britain, there have been many cases of Muslims (who are not originally fundamentalist) failing to adjust to a different cultural sphere and, as a result, becoming fundamentalist and perpetrating terror incidents. For the London bombing incidents, see http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/uk/2005/london_explosions/default.stm accessed on March 20, 2009.

2. The al-Qaida Ideology

When the Saudi exclusivist ideology is omitted, the al-Qaida ideology is a typical “orthodox” ideology of radical Islamic fundamentalism, and does not really have a distinctive coloring of its own. (1) A prototype of this radical Islamic fundamentalism ideology was formed in the 1960s, (2) which underwent further theoretical development in the 1970s and 1980s, and (3) was further transformed in the late 1990s. Below there follows a three-part presentation of the ideology of radical Islamic fundamentalism. The final stage, or in other words, stage (3), is the al-Qaida ideology.

(1) Theoretical Groundwork Laid in the 1960s

The person who built the ideology of radical Islamic fundamentalism was the Egyptian thinker Sayyid Qutb. In 1964, he wrote *Ma‘ālim fi al-Ṭarīq (Milestones)*, but as the content of that work was deemed to be dangerous, he was executed in 1966.¹⁹

His ideology, summarized in *Milestones*, can be summarized as follows.²⁰

All societies²¹ existing in the world are divided into Islamic society and *jāhiliyah*²² society. There is no middle position. An Islamic society is a society in which the resident people profess to be Muslims, practice worship, fasting, and other religious observances, and implement Islamic law (*sharī‘a*). In this society, sovereignty resides with God. Divine law²³ is implemented, and all people submit to the laws legislated by God. As a result, with “all people equally following divine law,” equality is achieved among people. For this reason, Islamic society is an equitable society.²⁴

On the other hand, *jāhiliyah* society refers to all other societies that are not Islamic societies. *Jāhiliyah* society can be classified into four categories. The first category is a communist society. A communist society denies the existence of God, and views people and animals as the same. As is clear from the denial of God, this society lacks the conditions for an Islamic society. The second category is an idol-worshipping society such as that found in Japan and India. The fact that these societies, at the philosophical level, deify things that are not God,²⁵ and, at the action level, implement man-made laws, shows

¹⁹ For the life of Sayyid Qutb, see the article, Masami Nishino “*Saiido Kutubu no Shogai—Tenki no Mondai wo Megutte [The Life of Sayyid Qutb: Concerning His Turning Point]*”, *The World of Islam*, Vol.58 (March, 2002), pp.19-39.

²⁰ For the following, see Sayyid Qutb, *Ma‘ālim fi al-Ṭarīq (Milestones)* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 17th print, 1993).

²¹ The original word is *mujtama‘* (society). But since Sayyid Qutb makes no distinction between society and the state, society equals the state.

²² Literally, *jāhiliyah* means ignorance and darkness. A *jāhiliyah* society can be loosely translated as a dark society in which ignorance and obscurantism run rampant. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), vol.2, pp.352-354.

²³ As the name implies, this is the law whose legislator is the God. The polar opposite would be laws that are legislated by people, or in other words, man-made laws.

²⁴ In other words, equality in Islamic society does not mean economic equality.

²⁵ Islam is monotheism and strictly forbids idol worship.

that these societies lack the conditions for an Islamic society. The third category is Jewish and Christian society. The fact that such a society at the philosophical level asserts the theory of a divine trinity, thus committing the sin of polytheism, and, at the action level, implements man-made laws, shows that this society also lacks the conditions for an Islamic society. The fourth category is a society in which residents falsely allege that their society is an Islamic society (a self-professed Islamic society). The fact that this society bestows sovereignty and legislative power on something other than God, and extracts laws from it, shows that it lacks the conditions for an Islamic society. In addition, even if residents of this society allege that they are Muslims, they are not Muslims so long as they bestow sovereignty and legislative power on something other than God.

At the present time Islamic society no longer exists in the world. All currently existing societies are classified as *jāhiliyah* societies.

Sayyid Quṭb thus classified *jāhiliyah* societies into the four types above. What was so shocking about his theory was the fourth category, or in other words, the concept regarding self-professed Islamic societies, which condemned the actual states and societies. Before that time, people had simply assumed that “a society where Muslims live is an Islamic society.” Quṭb, however, intoned that “even if people are worshiping or practicing religious observances, as long as they are not implementing Islamic law (*shari‘a*), that society is a *jāhiliyah* society,” thereby rejecting the Islamic-ness (and therefore the legitimacy) of the governments of the Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, with this argument Quṭb theoretically legitimized insurrection, which had been forbidden in traditional Islamic political thought. In traditional Islamic political thought, insurrection against Muslim rulers was forbidden. This is because insurrections lead to anarchy and chaos, and anarchy and chaos are situations to be strongly avoided.²⁶ By creating the concept of a self-professed Islamic society and the self-professed Muslim, Quṭb worked out the theory that “rulers previously viewed as Muslims are not in fact Muslims. Therefore, insurrection against these people is legitimate.” This argument thereby legitimized insurrections or dissident campaigns by Islamic fundamentalists within their own countries (war with near enemies). Moreover, since Quṭb included Communist societies, and Jewish or Christian societies in the *jāhiliyah* society categories, it also legitimized Islamic fundamentalists’ wars against the Soviet Union or against the West (war with far enemies). In other words, Quṭb made war legitimate for Islamic fundamentalists against everyone other than themselves. And his theories have been handed down to become the basic theory for radical Islamic fundamentalists today.

When Quṭb articulated this theory in the 1960s, of the four categories named, particular importance appears to have been placed on the first and fourth categories. The Egypt of his day

²⁶ For this kind of viewpoint in traditional Islamic political thought, see, for example, Association for Islamic Studies in Japan, supervising editors, *Shin Isuramu Jiten [New Islam Dictionary]* (Heibonsha, 2002), pp.119-120, item on “Ibn Jamā‘a.”

was under the regime of Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir, who had taken a socialist turn. As a result, Quṭb appears to have viewed the Egyptian society of the time as a “*jāhiliyah* society fusing the first and fourth categories,” and to have legitimized calls for its overthrow.²⁷

(2) Theoretical Developments in the 1970s and 1980s²⁸

The Quṭb theory was further developed in the 1970s and 1980s by the Egyptian Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Faraj. Faraj constructed a theory of armed struggle, and created the so-called “revolutionary *jihād* theory.”

Faraj’s recognition that the current Middle Eastern countries are not Islamic states coincided with the view held by Quṭb. According to Faraj, the status of the current Middle Eastern countries was virtually the same as having infidels invade Islamic countries, and the *jihād*²⁹ that was required was not offensive *jihād* but defensive *jihād*, and therefore *jihād* was not a collective duty (*farḍ kifāyah*)³⁰ but an individual duty (*farḍ ‘ayn*).³¹ Moreover, while the governments of Middle Eastern countries and the governments of foreign countries in the West and elsewhere (the Far Enemy) should ideally all be overthrown, the overthrow of the Middle Eastern governments (the Near Enemy) takes priority. This is because the Christians and Jews of the West are born infidels (*kāfir*) and have never been Muslims. The people ruling the Middle Eastern governments, on the other hand, were born as Muslims but have been derelict in their duties and have become apostates (*murtadd*).³² In a war against infidels and a war against apostates, it is the war against apostates that takes priority. Therefore, Muslims should first seek the overthrow of Middle Eastern governments.

As can be seen from the above, Faraj constructed a theory of armed struggle. In the war against the far enemy and the war against the near enemy, he asserted that the war against the near enemy takes priority, thus clarifying the order of enemy priority. His theory was put into practice in 1981 with the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sādāt by his own group, the al-Jihād Group. But while the al-Jihād Group was successful in assassinating the president, it failed to seize the reins of government, and its plans for establishing an Islamic state were frustrated.³³

²⁷ For the above analysis, see the article, “The Social Theory of Sayyid Qutb.”

²⁸ This section relies mainly on Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Faraj, *al-Farīdah al-Ghāibah*, printed in Ni‘mat Allāh Junayna, *Tanẓīm al-Jihād: Hal huwa al-Badīl al-Islāmī fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥurriyah, 1988), and Ko Nakata, “Seisen (Jihado) ron Saiko [Holy War (Jihād) Theory Revisited],” *Orient*, Vol.35, No.1 (1992), pp.16-31.

²⁹ While *jihād* literally means effort, it is also used in the meaning of holy war. When used in the meaning of holy war, *jihād* can be a great *jihād* or a small *jihād*, with a great *jihād* being “spiritual warfare with earthly passions within one’s own heart,” and a small *jihād* being “warfare with infidels and apostates” (See *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol.2, pp.369-373). *Jihād* as used here indicates the small *jihād*.

³⁰ A duty that can be fulfilled by some members of the Muslim community. It does not require that all Muslims fulfill it.

³¹ A duty that all Muslims must fulfill. For example, praying five times a day falls into this category.

³² An apostate is a person who was Muslim previously but has abandoned his/her religion.

³³ For the Sādāt Assassination, see, for example, Gilles Kepel, *JIHAD: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), pp.86-87.

(3) Shift in Attack Targets Starting in the Late 1990s—From Near Enemies (Governments in Middle Eastern Countries) to Far Enemies (Europe, North America and Other Areas Outside of the Middle East)³⁴

The Sādāt Assassination of 1981 was the result of faithful execution of the theory, “put priority on war with the Near Enemy.” Just before that, however, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Arab Islamic Fundamentalists began participating as volunteer soldiers in Afghanistan in the war against the Soviet Union, a country that falls within the scope of a Far Enemy. So the war with the Far Enemy began in practice ahead of the theory. It is probable that this was the first time for Islamic fundamentalists to actually confront a Far Enemy. There is a possibility that this war with the Far Enemy in Afghanistan constituted an opportunity to advance the order of priority for war with the Far Enemy.

When the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the fighting ended for a while, and the volunteer soldiers went back to their Arab home countries. Not long after that, however, beginning in about 1992, the Islamic fundamentalist organization “Islamic Group” (*al-Jamā‘ah al-Islāmīyah*) committed a number of attacks on foreign tourists in an Arab country, Egypt. This phenomenon could be considered a war with the Far Enemy (the West and other countries outside of the Middle East) within the sphere of the Near Enemy (the governments of Middle Eastern countries). In addition, in 1993 the same Islamic Group carried out a large-scale terrorist attack in the U.S. city of New York, bombing the World Trade Center. This was pure war with the Far Enemy. It has been noted that many of these terrorist incidents of the 1990s involved “Afghan returnees,” Islamic Fundamentalists who had received military training during the course of the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan.³⁵ On the practical level, then, the war with the Far Enemy was already eclipsing the war with the Near Enemy. But on a theoretical level, in the 1990s the theories of Islamic fundamentalism stagnated temporarily. For example, ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmān, the Egyptian arrested as the theoretical leader of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, had not changed his theoretical position that “war with the Near Enemy takes priority,” even as he led an attack on the Far Enemy in practice. In addition, Ayman al-Zawāhirī said in 1995-96 that “Muslims should first fight their inside enemies (governments of their home countries), who constitute the ‘Near Enemy.’ Once they have fallen, Muslims should then proceed to fight their outside enemies (the United States and Israel), who are identified as the ‘Far Enemy.’ The war with the Near Enemy takes priority. This is because the Qur’ān, chapter 9 verse 123 states, ‘Believers! Fight against the unbelievers who live around you.’³⁶” As can be seen, by the mid-1990s a gap had begun to open up between theory and practice. This situation

³⁴ This section relies mainly on the presentation, “Shift in Radical Islamic Fundamentalists – From ‘Near Enemies’ to ‘Far Enemies,’” by Masami Nishino at the Third Alumni Association Memorial Lecture at the Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Letters, the University of Tokyo on March 15, 2008.

³⁵ See, for example, Masato Iizuka, “*Musurimu Dohodan to Shin Sedai Erito* [The Muslim Brotherhood and the New Generation Elite],” Yasushi Kosugi, ed., *Isuramu ni Nani ga Okite Iruka* [What Is Happening in Islam?] (Heibonsha, 1996), p.104.

³⁶ al-Zayyat, *The Road to al-Qaeda*, pp.62-64.

was resolved in 1998.

In 1998, the Bin Ladin-led al-Qaida and the al-Zawāhirī-led al-Jihād Group merged together.³⁷ They announced the formation of the “World Islamic Front for Jihād Against Jews and Crusaders” (al-Jabhah al-Islāmiyah al-‘Ālamīyah li-Jihād al-Yahūd wa-al-Ṣalībīyīn), and issued a *fatwā*³⁸ ordering the killing of Americans.³⁹ With such a *fatwā* being issued by a powerful Islamic fundamentalist organization, the shift in priority to war with the Far Enemy was clear even on the theoretical side. In that same year, al-Qaida launched bomb attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (attacks on the Far Enemy), showing that the group had brought its own theory and practice into alignment. And from 1998 up to the present time, the war with the Far Enemy has been executed in both theory and practice.⁴⁰ The 9-11 attacks were a part of this trend.

3. Al-Qaida Since 9-11⁴¹

(1) High Command and Local Branches

From the period of planning for 9-11, al-Qaida activity had already become split between the High Command and detached units (the team of operatives of the 9-11 attacks). At that time, while the High Command consisting of Bin Ladin, al-Zawāhirī, and other senior leaders, was in hiding in Afghanistan or Pakistan, Muḥammad ‘Aṭā’ and the rest of the 9-11 operatives were active in Germany and elsewhere.⁴²

Even after 9-11, the division of labor marking the independent behavior of the High Command and detached units has continued unchanged. The High Command produces and distributes video messages, audio messages, and documentary films, putting the greatest emphasis on propaganda activities. These propaganda activities appear to be aimed at capturing sympathizers of radical Islamic Fundamentalism (or in other words, new recruits for the al-Qaida detached units or local branches) to increase their forces.

On the other hand, in reference to the detached units, the team of operatives of the 9-11 attacks

³⁷ Since the combined organization’s name after the merger is al-Qaida, ostensibly al-Zawāhirī’s al-Jihād Group was absorbed into the other.

³⁸ *Fatwā* is a religious opinion regarding Islamic law.

³⁹ See ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Alī, *Tanzīm al-Qā‘idah ‘Ishrūna ‘Āman wa-l-Ghazw mustamirr* (Cairo: al-Maḥrūsah, 2007), pp.85-86, and the text of the Statement published in the al-Quds al-‘Arabī newspaper on February 23, 1998. The text of the Statement can also be viewed at the website address below.

<<http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/fatw2.htm>> accessed on December 9, 2009.

⁴⁰ One reason that Muntaṣir Zayyāt gives for the shift in attack target from Near Enemy to Far Enemy in the 1990s is that the armed conflict (war with the Near Enemy) waged by Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East ended in failure. According to him, a severe crackdown by the authorities forced the Islamic fundamentalists to give up on attempting to overthrow the Near Enemy, and so they turned instead to the Far Enemy. Muntaṣir al-Zayyāt, *Ayman al-Zawāhirī Kamā ‘ariftu-hu* (Cairo: Dār Miṣr al-Maḥrūsah, 2002), pp.121-126.

⁴¹ This section relies largely on video files collected by the author from websites since 2001.

⁴² Moreover, the man serving as the liaison between Bin Ladin (the head at the High Command) and Muḥammad ‘Aṭā’ (the head of the team of operatives) was Ramzī bin al-Shaibah. In a secret interview conducted by al-Jazeera in Pakistan in 2002, this man admitted to being the coordinator between the two men for the 9-11 attacks. Later, in September 2002, he was arrested in Karachi, Pakistan. Yosri Fouda and Nick Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), pp.15-21.

became virtually extinct when they blew themselves up on the hijacked planes.⁴³ However, those who sympathize with the High Command propaganda form new detached units (or become members of local branches) and shoulder the burden for later terrorist activities. Since 9-11, there have been a large number of terrorist incidents with al-Qaida involvement, and the majority of them appear to have been perpetrated by people who have sympathized with this propaganda, with no actual involvement by the High Command. Since 9-11 was a one-shot suicide attacks, those involved can be appropriately called detached units. On the other hand, since 9-11, and particularly in many of the al-Qaida terror activities since 2004, these people have formed a power base in a specific region, recruiting a certain number of members and operating continuously over a certain period or longer. Their methods extend beyond suicidal terror to a range of repeated terror activities.⁴⁴ As a result, people involved in such activities are better referred to as members of local branches instead of detached units.

While the High Command puts emphasis on propaganda, the local branches put their emphasis on individual terror activities.⁴⁵ The local branches are not under the control of High Command or in a subordinate relationship, but are typically engaged in independent behavior. Generally, the local branches are active as members of al-Qaida only in the sense of sympathizing with the theories and philosophies put out by the High Command. Some local branches are previously existing Islamic fundamentalist organizations (in other words, not al-Qaida) that changed their names in order to participate in al-Qaida.

Local branches exist all over the Middle East, on the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia), and in Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, and elsewhere. al-Qaida is a loose network-type organization without rigid membership, so that theoretically it is possible for anybody to become a member of al-Qaida instantly (in other words, be self-described as a member), and this makes it easy to establish new local branches. For example, the Iraq branch of al-Qaida was originally an independent Islamic fundamentalist organization, whose name was the “Group of Unity of the God and Jihād” (Jamā‘at al-Tawhīd wa al-Jihād), and carried out many terror activities in Iraq from 2003 on.⁴⁶ In 2004, however, the organization’s leader, the Jordanian al-Zarqāwī, pledged allegiance to Bin Ladin and became affiliated with al-Qaida,⁴⁷ and changed the organization’s name to “Organization of Jihād Base in the Mesopotamia⁴⁸” (Tanẓīm Qā‘ida al-Jihād fī Bilād al-Rāfidayn, or Iraqi branch of al-Qaida), thereby creating the Iraqi branch of al-Qaida based on a name change from an existing organization. In the same way, the Algerian branch was originally an independent Islamic fundamentalist organization with the name of the “Salafist Group for

⁴³ As there was at least one member who was detained without entering the United States, and therefore did not participate in the 9-11 attacks, I have used the expression “virtually.”

⁴⁴ The methods used by Abū Muṣ‘ab al-Zarqāwī in Iraq are a typical example.

⁴⁵ However, the local branches are also engaged in propaganda. The Iraqi branch, the Arabian Peninsula branch, and the Algerian branch all post their own videos on websites separate from the High Command.

⁴⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3677658.stm> accessed on March 20, 2009.

⁴⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3752616.stm> accessed on March 20, 2009.

⁴⁸ The “al” in al-Qaida is the definite article in Arabic, and is sometimes omitted for grammatical reasons related to the position of other words coming before and after.

Preaching and Combat” (al-Jamā‘ah al-Salafīyah li-l-Da‘wah wa-l-Qit‘āl⁴⁹), but in January 2007 it changed its name to the “al-Qaida Organization in the Islamic Maghreb⁵⁰” (Tanẓīm al-Qā‘idah fī al-Maghrib al-Islāmī, or Algerian branch of al-Qaida); at the same time the group’s leader, following the example of the Iraqi branch leader al-Zarqāwī,⁵¹ changed his name to Abū Muṣ‘ab ‘Abd al-Wadūd.⁵²

As can be seen, existing local Islamic fundamentalist organizations have taken on the al-Qaida name to become new local branches,⁵³ thus expanding the al-Qaida network. This trend has been particularly noticeable since the birth of the Iraqi branch in 2004. It is unclear whether this creation of local branches was approved beforehand by the High Command. However, the High Command is capable of expressing its own opinions in the form of video messages and audio messages, and since these messages often include words of congratulation for the birth of local branches, and never include criticism of arbitrary actions by the local branches, it would appear that the High Command accepts the situation of local branches being created and then engaging in their own individual terror attacks.

(2) High Command Involvement in Individual Terror Attacks

As has already been mentioned, the majority of terror attacks perpetrated by al-Qaida since 9-11 have been independent actions by local branches, and it is likely that the High Command has not been involved. For example, the kidnapping and murder of Japanese citizen Shosei Koda occurred shortly after the Iraqi branch was established, and the possibility that Bin Ladin and the High Command people were involved in it is virtually zero.

Nevertheless, it appears likely that the High Command was involved in two major terrorist incidents (including a failed attempt), namely, the 7 July 2005 London bombings, and the simultaneous attempted bomb attacks on airliners departing from London on August 10, 2006.⁵⁴ In the case of the 7 July 2005 London bombings, the evidence for this conclusion is a video released after the incident by the al-Qaida High Command PR department, al-Saḥāb.⁵⁵ In the video one of the Pakistani perpetrators who died in the incident recited his will. Additionally, al-Qaida’s second-in-command Ayman al-Zawāhirī appeared in the video. al-Saḥāb is the High Command PR department, and each local branch has its own separate PR department. Moreover, al-Saḥāb does not generally report terror attacks independently perpetrated by each local branch (or in other words, does not issue claims of responsibility). For this reason, the 7 July 2005 London bombings can be viewed as having High Command involvement.

⁴⁹ Known in the West as “Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat” (with the acronym GSPC).

⁵⁰ Literally, Maghreb means “West,” and normally is used to indicate the broad region in North Africa stretching across Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. However, since the main area of activity for this organization is in Algeria, the organization can fairly be called the Algerian branch.

⁵¹ By taking Abū Muṣ‘ab, part of his name: Abū Muṣ‘ab al-Zarqāwī.

⁵² <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6356781.stm>> accessed on March 20, 2009.

⁵³ The al-Qaida Algerian branch has announced that “the change of organization name was made under the express order of Bin Ladin himself.” <<http://www.meij.or.jp/members/kawaraban/20070131algeria-hp.PDF>> accessed on December 9, 2009.

⁵⁴ It was this incident that resulted in the restriction of bringing liquids aboard aircraft.

⁵⁵ The Arabic word “al-Saḥāb” means “cloud.”

Next, regarding the simultaneous attempted bomb attacks on airliners departing from London on August 10, 2006, just before the plot was exposed, a video message produced by al-Saḥāb that appeared to give advance notice of an incident was obtained by al-Jazeera and broadcast. This video message featured a speech by the second-in-command al-Zawāhirī. However, its screen composition differed from his usual video messages. In general, al-Zawāhirī video messages either do not have any background at all (probably staged in front of a large piece of cloth) or are filmed in front of bookcases filled with lots of Arabic books. This time, however, the video message included two props set beside al-Zawāhirī: (1) a photo of one of the 9-11 operatives; and (2) a miniature artillery gun. This was a truly rare case, and when the video was broadcast the al-Jazeera commentator ventured the opinion that “these two props may mean that al-Qaida is planning another incident like 9-11.” In addition, in the video message al-Zawāhirī said, “Today I must announce the following. Everywhere around the world, we are targeting the interests of Jews and the United States for our attacks. And not only that, we must target the interests of all countries complicit in the attacks on Muslims in Chechenya, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon. The governments and people of all countries at war with Muslims (are targets for our attacks).⁵⁶” This appears to have been a reference to the plan to bomb a series of aircraft departing from London. For this reason, it is likely that this video message was an announcement of a forthcoming attack by the al-Qaida High Command.⁵⁷ And if this was an advance notice video, it means that the High Command knew of the plan, or in other words, it can be concluded that the High Command was involved in the plan.

As is clear from the above two examples, while the High Command is not involved in the majority of individual terror attacks, there is a good likelihood that it is involved in some large-scale terror activities.

(3) Al-Qaida (High Command) Propaganda Strategies

After 9-11, the al-Qaida High Command remained in hiding and would not show itself in public. Under these conditions, they put the greatest emphasis on propaganda activities for spreading the ideology and expanding power, producing and publishing audio messages, video messages and documentary films, etc.

After 9-11 through 2003-04, they⁵⁸ adopted a propaganda strategy of (1) producing audio messages and video messages; (2) sending them to the Qatari al-Jazeera satellite TV station; and (3) having al-Jazeera broadcast them. In other words, at this time it was a television station, not al-Qaida, that was transmitting messages directly to the people.

⁵⁶ This message was broadcast by al-Jazeera on July 28, 2006.

⁵⁷ Before the bombing attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Bin Ladin gave an interview with a map of Africa in the background, and after the attacks reportedly said that “I predicted the attacks (by standing in front of a map of Africa).” So there is a precedent for al-Qaida giving advance notice of attacks. However, the advance notices of terrorist attacks in both 1998 and 2006 did not reveal any specific times or places whatsoever, and so could not be of much use to security officials in taking countermeasures against terrorism.

⁵⁸ More accurately, al-Saḥāb, which is the High Command PR Department.

Beginning around 2003-04, however, al-Qaida gradually adopted the new method of (1) producing audio messages and video messages; and (2) posting them in file formats on websites. Whereas the old information transmission route had been from al-Qaida to viewers via a TV station, in which al-Qaida was not directly disseminating information to the people, the new information transmission route was now from al-Qaida to viewers, so that al-Qaida had eliminated the middle man to directly disseminate information to the people.

The reason that this new method became possible was the spread of ADSL and other forms of broadband. With the spread of broadband, massive files such as video files of several hundred MB became easy to send and distribute. As a result, even if al-Qaida no longer sends messages to al-Jazeera for broadcasting, they can now distribute the messages directly by themselves.⁵⁹ One side effect of this ease in distributing massive files is that, since that time, the audio messages and video messages have tended to get longer.⁶⁰

In this way, around 2003-04, al-Qaida became capable of doing everything from message production to distribution. And since that time, they have developed their ability at video production. As a result, they have moved beyond simple video messages to capabilities for advanced video production, such as video programs and documentary films. The 9-11 5th anniversary video released by al-Qaida in September 2006 was evidence of this trend.

(4) An Example of Propaganda—“The Manhattan Raid: Knowledge is for Acting Upon”

al-Qaida positions the 9-11 attacks as an extremely important event, and since 2002 has often released important video messages or other items on or around September 11 of each year.⁶¹ One example is the 9-11 5th anniversary documentary film, “The Manhattan Raid: Knowledge is for Acting Upon,” released around September 11, 2006. This production is perhaps the first

⁵⁹ However, this does not mean that al-Jazeera has lost its importance for al-Qaida. Since this time, al-Qaida has used the new method of (1) producing an audio message or video message, (2) sending that message to al-Jazeera, (3) having al-Jazeera broadcast it (or parts of it), (4) enabling viewers who want to see (all of) it to search for the file on websites, and (5) implementing file distribution through websites. This method is often used when the distributed message is important and/or large (very long). For example, this method was used in production and release of the al-Qaida fifth anniversary documentary film of the 9-11 attacks in September 2006.

In this method, the “broadcast of part of the message by al-Jazeera” plays exactly the same role as TV commercials for upcoming movies. First broadcasting just a part of the message on a TV station piques the viewer’s interest, and then the entire message (in the recorded file) is distributed on websites.

al-Qaida video messages can be as long as two hours or more, which is generally too long for TV stations to broadcast from beginning to end due to time constraints.

⁶⁰ As the messages become longer, the size of the files to be distributed also grows. After the spread of broadband, however, this is no longer much of a problem. In addition, since TV stations do not broadcast entire messages, al-Qaida no longer has to worry about time constraints of TV programs.

⁶¹ For example, in 2002 a video footage of Bin Ladin and al-Zawāhirī walking with sticks through a mountain region was sent to al-Jazeera. In 2005, a video message by Ayman al-Zawāhirī was posted on websites. However, it is not certain that an important message will regularly be released on or around September 11 of each year.

As is clear from the fact that “important messages are released on or around September 11,” it appears that al-Qaida, when faced with the Western calendar (solar calendar with one year of 365 days) and the Islamic calendar (Hijri calendar; lunar calendar with one year of 354 days), tends to put an emphasis on the Western calendar. While September 11, 2001 in the Western calendar is the 22nd day of the 6th month, 1422 in the Hijri calendar, al-Qaida never releases an important message on the 22nd day of the 6th month in the Hijri calendar. For calculation of Western calendar and Hijri calendar dates, see

<http://www.ide.go.jp/Japanese/Research/Region/Mid_e/koyomi.html> accessed on March 15, 2009.

full-scale film to be produced by al-Qaida (the High Command). Release of this production is evidence that al-Qaida has advanced beyond simple video messages to advanced film production. In addition, this production has significance for two reasons: (1) it provides new evidence regarding 9-11 from al-Qaida itself; and (2) it presents al-Qaida's historical perspective and world view.⁶²

In regards to item (1), for some time after 9-11, Bin Ladin, while applauding the attacks, would neither confirm nor deny his own involvement in 9-11. Then, in 2002, one of al-Qaida High Command top members Khālīd Shaikh Muḥammad and an al-Qaida High Command member Ramzī bin al-Shaibah admitted al-Qaida's role in secret interviews with al-Jazeera.⁶³ Even at this point, however, they merely revealed that "al-Qaida (or at least some members of the High Command) was involved in 9-11," and nothing was said about Bin Ladin's involvement. Then, in 2004, Bin Ladin at last revealed that he had been directly involved with 9-11, and that he had been in direct contact with Muḥammad 'Aṭā', the team leader of the 9-11 operatives.⁶⁴ However, aside from Bin Ladin's own words, there was still no physical evidence showing Bin Ladin's involvement with 9-11.

The anniversary film in 2006, however, included for the first time a recorded image in which Bin Ladin met with Ramzī bin al-Shaibah in a mountainous region before 9-11.⁶⁵ Ramzī bin al-Shaibah had already revealed his role as the liaison between the High Command and the team of 9-11 operatives in a secret interview in 2002. In other words, this video, which was disclosed for the first time in 2006, was physical proof that Bin Ladin had actually met with Ramzī bin al-Shaibah, and that a route existed connecting Bin Ladin at High Command to the team of 9-11 operatives via Liaison Ramzī bin al-Shaibah, showing that Bin Ladin had himself been involved in 9-11.

Regarding item (2), here is a summary of al-Qaida's historical perspective and world view disclosed in the film:

With the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, and the deployment of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia in 1990, the Islamic Community (or the

⁶² This film also contains elements of counter-propaganda against U.S. Hollywood movies. In 2006, the Hollywood movies "United 93" and "World Trade Center" had come out depicting as heroes the passengers on the 9-11 hijacked aircraft and the police officers engaged in rescue activities at the terror sites, and these had been shown in countries all over the world. By contrast, it was this al-Qaida production, taking the perspective that the "heroes of 9-11 were not the passengers, policemen, etc., but rather the al-Qaida members who hijacked the aircraft and crashed into the World Trade Center," that was distributed and released to the world from websites.

⁶³ Al-Jazeera showed this interview in September 2002, on the 9-11 one-year commemorative program "Sirrī li-l-Ghāyah al-Tariq ilā 9/11."

⁶⁴ Kikuchi and Nishino, "The Statement of Bin Ladin in October, 2004 and Its Meaning" pp.449-461. After Bin Ladin's declaration of involvement in the 9-11 attacks, the Japanese mass media changed its expression from earlier "Mr. Bin Ladin" to "the suspect Bin Ladin."

⁶⁵ Since it is impossible to tell from the meeting video when the video was actually shot, it is theoretically possible that it was shot at some point in time after September 11, 2001 and before September 2002 when bin al-Shaibah was arrested. Even assuming this possibility, however, the importance of this video remains unchanged in that it is evidence that the two men had met and talked with each other.

Islamic State or Islamic Society) has disappeared from the Earth. In this situation, the supreme leader of the Taliban Muḥammad Omar established an Islamic Emirate⁶⁶ in Afghanistan in the 1990s, marking the reappearance of an Islamic state after about 70 years. Because of this, the Zionists and Crusaders viewed this country as a threat and targeted it for attack. For this reason, in 1998 the “World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders” was formed by Bin Ladin and al-Zawāhirī in Afghanistan to resist the United States and Israel. Furthermore, that same year Muslims successfully bombed the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. These two embassies were main sites in Africa for U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies. Later, Bush came into office, and this Administration felt dissatisfaction because the Islamic Emirate⁶⁷ was an impediment to plans to extend a pipeline from the Caspian Sea, and because that country had abolished opium cultivation. The Bush Administration attempted to intimidate and threaten the Islamic Emirate, but that country never gave in. In 2001, the Bush Administration planned a military invasion of the Islamic Emirate. In reaction, while that country dug entrenchments and made other preparations for defense, al-Qaida pressed ahead with the Manhattan Raid⁶⁸ to strike a blow at the United States before the U.S. forces could invade. In other words, the attack on Afghanistan by the U.S. forces from the end of 2001 was not due to the Manhattan Raid made by al-Qaida on September 11, but had been planned since before that time by the Bush Administration.

The al-Qaida historical perspective and world view, which had been known only in bits and pieces from earlier video messages, etc., was presented in this film in a much clearer form. Furthermore, this film verifies that al-Qaida had a long-term plan for activities after 9-11, even before the execution of the 9-11 attacks in 2001. If there had been no long-term plan, it is hard to see how they could have continued “revealing the plot” bit by bit (e.g. through important videos) for five years after 9-11.

This kind of propaganda activity is difficult to suppress due to free speech rights. However, propaganda activity is the main tool for al-Qaida to successfully maintain and expand its power following 9-11.

4. Conclusion—Are There Any Prescriptions for Weakening al-Qaida?

After September 11, 2001, the United States and international community have continued the war on terror. However, al-Qaida has engaged in large-scale terror attacks since 9-11, such as the 7 July 2005 London bombings, and has actually expanded its sphere of activities with the launching of branches in Iraq, Algeria, and elsewhere. One reason why al-Qaida has maintained

⁶⁶ Islamic emirate in Arabic is called *imārah islāmīyah*. Namely, the head of the country is an amīr, and not a caliph.

⁶⁷ Here the Islamic Emirate means the Taliban regime.

⁶⁸ The Manhattan Raid means the 9-11 attacks.

and expanded its power is that the people who sympathize with their ideology are not necessarily a minority. Ideologically, al-Qaida espouses an orthodox Islamic fundamentalism (if Saudi-type exclusivist ideology is excluded). Moreover, in Middle Eastern countries, and particularly in the Arab countries, Islamic fundamentalism is highly popular among ordinary citizens. For example, in Palestinian legislative elections in January 2006, the Islamic fundamentalist organization Hamas won by a landslide, taking a majority of the seats. And in elections for the Egyptian parliament held in November and December 2005, the world's largest Islamic fundamentalist organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, surged into position as the effectively largest opposition party despite indications of massive illegal intervention by the government. So with the popularity of Islamic fundamentalism itself so high, it should not be difficult for al-Qaida to obtain people's support or to recruit new members.

In 2006, the U.S. forces in Iraq killed the Jordanian al-Zarqāwī, the leader of al-Qaida Iraqi branch.⁶⁹ This was a major achievement for the U.S. forces at that time, and even U.S. President Bush drew attention to it. However, shortly thereafter the Iraqi branch announced the selection of his successor.⁷⁰ Furthermore, after that the Iraqi branch announced the establishment of an independent state, the "Islamic State of Iraq," and even went so far as to announce a list of Cabinet ministers. In addition, there appeared to be no prospect of a slackening of terror attacks by this branch, which produced and distributed on websites a large number of videos in which the soldiers and policemen of the Iraqi state (recognized by the international community) were condemned as "false soldiers and false policemen of a false state" and executed by "security forces" of the "legitimate" state, the Islamic State of Iraq. In other words, while the U.S. forces were successful in killing the leader of the Iraqi branch, it failed at weakening the branch. In fact, this is proof that killing a specific important member (al-Zarqāwī) does not necessarily lead to the weakening of al-Qaida. Furthermore, when President Bush praised the killing of al-Zarqāwī, in al-Zarqāwī's home country of Jordan a few parliamentary members visited the family of the "martyr" al-Zarqāwī to offer their condolences, much to the consternation of the United States and the international community.⁷¹ Al-Zarqāwī was a person who had personally beheaded an American, and had ordered subordinates to behead Japanese citizen Shosei Koda,⁷² and who was viewed by the international community as nothing more than a criminal.⁷³ Nevertheless, he was viewed as a hero by some people in Jordan and other Middle Eastern and Islamic countries.⁷⁴ Such views showed that the values of the "international community" and those of Middle Eastern

⁶⁹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5072104.stm> accessed on March 20, 2009.

⁷⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5084336.stm> accessed on March 20, 2009.

⁷¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5073170.stm> accessed on March 20, 2009.

⁷² In the case of the beheading of the American, it is actually impossible to confirm whether al-Zarqāwī was the murderer, since the man in the video performing the act and presumed to be al-Zarqāwī is hooded.

⁷³ For major incidents that al-Zarqāwī was involved in, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5058262.stm> accessed on March 20, 2009.

⁷⁴ For example, during the period when the al-Zarqāwī's terror in Iraq was most pronounced, "lets pretend to be al-Zarqāwī" was a popular pastime for some children in Iraq (in the same way that children in Japan might play games pretending to be Kamen Rider).

and Islamic countries could diverge dramatically. Given such a situation, are there prescriptions for weakening al-Qaida?

The first prescription that may be offered is to weaken the interest the populace in Middle Eastern and Islamic countries has in Islamic fundamentalism. Hajime Ishino, considered to be the number one authority in Japan on al-Qaida, has already touched on this point in a book written immediately after 9-11.⁷⁵ However, Bin Ladin is aware of this possibility, and he therefore continues to release messages designed to stir up interest, as Ishino has also pointed out. If the populace should lose interest in Islamic fundamentalism, the influence of al-Qaida as an espouser of Islamic fundamentalism would also decline and be rendered harmless. While logically this is probably correct, in the current circumstances in which so much attention is placed on al-Qaida, it is not a very practical proposal and cannot be considered an effective prescription.

The second prescription that may be offered is that “Islamic fundamentalism has not yet experienced a devastating defeat, and this is why the populace has not become disillusioned with it. If Islamic fundamentalism were to once experience such a defeat, the populace would become disillusioned, with the result that Islamic fundamentalism would be weakened.” As is well known, by the 1960s secular nationalism was flourishing in Middle Eastern and Islamic countries, and particularly in Arab countries. However, in 1967 the nationalist regimes of Arab countries were decisively defeated by Israel in the Third Middle East War, with the result that the populace became disillusioned with nationalism, further weakening it. After that, the ideology that the populace opted for in place of nationalism was Islamic fundamentalism because it had “never experienced a defeat.” Islamic fundamentalism began a rapid rise in influence from around the 1970s, gained prestige in the 1980s with the victory over the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and became still stronger in the 1990s and later. al-Qaida is clearly aware that the reason for its popularity is the fact that Islamic fundamentalism has never experienced a defeat. As a result, the video messages by Bin Ladin and others repeatedly assert the victory over the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s and over the United States in Somalia in the 1990s. So, how does one go about getting Islamic fundamentalism, which has never experienced a serious setback, to taste its first defeat? The easiest way is to let Islamic fundamentalists run a state, that is, handle the administration of a government, and let them fail at it. Since Islamic fundamentalists do not have realistic plans for state administration, if they were to seize and run a state administration, and the international community were to impose no sanctions or refrain from interfering with Islamic fundamentalist government,⁷⁶ it is likely that such a government would either seize up and collapse or have no recourse but to effect a major change in course. In this case, there is a good

⁷⁵ Ishino, *Usama Bin Ladin*, pp.242-247.

⁷⁶ If sanctions were to be imposed or other interventions attempted, the Islamic fundamentalist regime could allege, “Foreign interference is the reason why our government administration is not going well. If there were no interference, we would be successful.” An example of this can be seen in Iran.

chance that the populace would conclude that “Islamic fundamentalism is defeated” and become disillusioned with it. However, the international community cannot leave Islamic fundamentalist governments alone, and too often intervenes. For example, in Algeria in 1992, when an Islamic fundamentalist regime was on the verge of becoming reality as a result of a democratic election, the country’s military intervened and nullified the election results, with the tacit approval of the international community. In addition, when the Taliban gained effective control over most of the territory in Afghanistan in the late 1990s, the Taliban regime was refused recognition by the international community. And again in 2006, when the Islamic fundamentalist organization “Islamic Courts Union” had most of Somalia under its control, the international community tacitly approved an intervention by Ethiopian forces. As can be seen, the international community has a strong preference for preventing the formation of an Islamic fundamentalist regime; therefore, it is not likely for an Islamic fundamentalist regime to fail in government administration due to its own mistakes. As a result, Islamic fundamentalist regimes have never encountered a fatal defeat, and their popularity among the populace remains unflagging. Furthermore, since the 1990s the possibility of inflicting a defeat on Islamic fundamentalism has become still more difficult because of the rise of terrorist organizations such as al-Qaida that do not hold concrete geographical territories. For this reason, this prescription is also not very realistic.

The third prescription that may be offered is to make revisions to the educational curriculums in Middle Eastern and Islamic countries, raise a new generation that is not sympathetic to Islamic fundamentalism, and through that generation weaken Islamic fundamentalism (and al-Qaida). While this would require a long period of 20 to 30 years, it is theoretically possible. Most of the operatives of the 9-11 attacks were Saudis, and after 9-11 the United States demanded that the Saudi Arabian government change their Islamic fundamentalist-leaning education curriculum. However, the Saudis viewed this as internal interference and resisted, so that in the end, the curriculum was left unchanged. As is clear from this case, any attempt to force changes in the curriculums of Middle Eastern and Islamic countries would be difficult. In addition, even if these countries were to accept changes in their curriculums, there would still be the problem of how to train the teachers to provide this new education. In other words, this prescription is also realistically difficult.

We have offered up three prescriptions that, if realized, would be effective in weakening the strength of al-Qaida and Islamic fundamentalism worldwide, yet neither of the three are realistic under current conditions. Here we offer an example, although lacking in universality, which succeeded in temporarily weakening al-Qaida in a specific region. In the al-Anbār Province of western Iraq, starting in the latter part of 2007, the U.S. forces were generally successful in using conciliatory tactics to drive a wedge between the local Sunni tribal people and the al-Qaida-affiliated armed groups that consisted mostly of foreigners. While the local tribal people and al-Qaida-affiliated armed groups shared an aversion to the U.S. military occupation, the local

tribal people wanted to bring the occupation to an end at an early date and get on with postwar reconstruction, but the al-Qaida-affiliated armed groups thought it “desirable for Iraq to continue in an unstable condition in order to continue terrorist activities.” Here the opinions of the two groups diverged sharply. With the protracted deterioration of security in Iraq, feelings of war exhaustion began to spread among the local Sunni tribal population. The U.S. forces focused on this discontent, and provided funds, arms, etc., to the local Sunni tribal population, which succeeded in separating them from the al-Qaida-affiliated armed groups. As a result, terror incidents assumed to be due to al-Qaida-affiliated armed groups declined from the latter part of 2007 through the end of 2008 in al-Anbār Province and surrounding areas. However, it is doubtful whether this method can be applied to Afghanistan, for example,⁷⁷ and it is unknown how much this can contribute to the weakening of al-Qaida on a worldwide scale. The western part of Iraq was not originally an area of influence for al-Qaida, and the very fact that al-Qaida had infiltrated the region in 2003 and later could be traced to the ineptness of the U.S. occupational administration. While this success can be considered a local tactical victory, it probably cannot be expanded into a strategic victory.

Other than the case of the Iraqi branch, no evidence exists of a decline in al-Qaida strength. Even today in 2009, al-Qaida continues its active propaganda on websites.

⁷⁷ In Afghanistan, disarmament of militias is one of important issues. Supplying arms as the U.S. forces did in western Iraq would in Afghanistan surely make the situation even worse. In addition, the supply of arms by the U.S. forces to tribal people in western Iraq might in the long term convert them into militias, possibly making disarmament a tough issue to solve as well.