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National
Intelligence
Estimate

**Trends in Global Terrorism:
Implications for the United States
(U//~~FOUO~~)**

*NIE 2006-02R
April 2006*



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Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States (U//~~FOUO~~)

This Estimate was approved for publication by the National Intelligence Board under the authority of the Director of National Intelligence. (U)

*Prepared under the auspices of [REDACTED]
National Intelligence Officer for Transnational Threats.
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[REDACTED] ~~(C)~~*

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Scope Note

This National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) analyzes the nature of the threat that terrorist groups across the world will pose to US lives or property worldwide (herein referred to as US interests), including in the Homeland, during the next five years. This Estimate does not analyze the many ways in which terrorist groups might directly or indirectly affect broader US interests, including regional stability, access to energy resources, or the longevity of friendly regimes. Based upon all-source reporting over the last several years, it provides a broad, strategic framework for understanding the trends that will define the primary international terrorist threats to the United States. It focuses primarily on radical Islamic groups because the Intelligence Community judges that the preponderance of the terrorist threat comes from radical Islamic groups. A separate National Intelligence Estimate is under development that will assess more specifically the terrorist threat to the US Homeland over the next three years. The information cut-off date for this NIE is 28 February 2006. (U//~~FOUO~~)

The definition of "terrorist group" is any group practicing, or that has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism; the definition of "international terrorism" used herein is the one provided in US law for reporting purposes.¹

- This Estimate focuses heavily on Sunni terrorist groups. [REDACTED]

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The Intelligence Community defines "al-Qa`ida" (the Base) as the organization founded and led by Usama Bin Ladin and his lieutenants. Al-Qa`ida is considered a part of the global Salafi jihadist movement in which many groups and individuals participate; not all are connected to or cooperating directly with al-Qa`ida. For the definition of other related terms, see *Who Wages Terror and Jihad: Pros and Cons of Frequently Used Terms* (U//~~FOUO~~), NIC 3853-05, of June 2005. (U)

Conflicts that have occurred in the following countries and regions have been designated as jihads by many participants of the global jihadist movement: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Burma, Chechnya, Dagestan, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iraq, Kashmir, Kosovo, Palestine, Philippines, Somalia, Tajikistan, and Thailand. ~~(C)~~

The potential for use of CBRN weapons and materials remains a major component of the threat from the global jihadist movement, and al-Qa`ida in particular. This Estimate makes only brief reference to the CBRN threat from terrorist groups; other IC products explore this issue in depth and the NIC is producing a follow-on piece to this NIE on this topic. ~~(S//NF)~~

¹ "Terrorism" is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. "Noncombatant" includes, in addition to civilians, military personnel who at the time of the incident are unarmed or not on duty. "International terrorism" means terrorism involving the citizens or territory of more than one country. 22USC 2656i(d) (U)

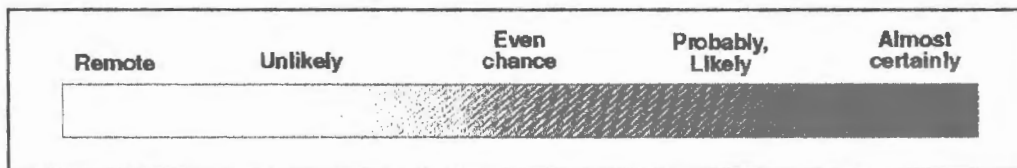
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What We Mean When We Say: An Explanation of Estimative Language (U)

When we use words such as “we judge” or “we assess”—terms that we use synonymously—as well as “we estimate,” “likely,” or “indicate,” we are trying to convey an *analytical assessment* or *judgment*. These assessments, which are based on incomplete or at times fragmentary information, are not a fact, proof or knowledge. Some analytical judgments are based directly on collected information; others rest on previous judgments, which serve as building blocks. In either type of judgment, we do not have “evidence” that shows something to be a fact or that definitively links two items or issues. (U)

Intelligence judgments pertaining to likelihood are intended to reflect the Community’s sense of the probability of a development or event. Assigning precise numerical ratings to such judgments would imply more rigor than we intend. The chart below provides a rough idea of the relationship of terms to each other. (U)



We do not intend the term “unlikely” to imply that an event will not happen. We use “probably” and “likely” to indicate that there is a greater than even chance. We use words such as “we cannot dismiss,” “we cannot rule out,” and “we cannot discount” to reflect an unlikely—or even remote—event whose consequences are such that it warrants mentioning. Words such as “may be” and “suggest” are used to reflect situations in which *we are unable to assess the likelihood* generally because relevant information is nonexistent, sketchy, or fragmented. (U)

In addition to using words within a judgment to convey degrees of likelihood, we also ascribe “high,” “moderate,” or “low” *confidence levels* based on the scope and quality of information supporting our judgments.

- “High confidence” generally indicates that our judgments are based on high-quality information and/or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment.
- “Moderate confidence” generally means that the information is interpreted in various ways, that we have alternative views, or that the information is credible and plausible but not corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence.
- “Low confidence” generally means that the information is scant, questionable, or very fragmented and it is difficult to make solid analytic inferences, or that we have significant concerns or problems with the sources. (U)

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Indicators of the Spread of the Global Jihadist Movement (U//FOUO)

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The judgment regarding the expansion of the global jihadist movement is based on a large body of all-source reporting, [REDACTED] the dramatic expansion in jihadist websites, and a growing consensus among leading academic observers. All indicate an increase in the number of activists in more locales who, although a small percentage of Muslims, ascribe to the general belief that Islam is under "attack" worldwide and that a global militant response is necessary.

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- [REDACTED] our closest allies and partners—including the UK, France, Belgium, and Germany—observe that the number and diversity of individuals and cells engaged in various jihadist activities is growing.
- Although most academic experts have agreed with the assessment that the global jihadist movement is spreading, there is no universally accepted set of metrics to measure the number of individuals and groups in the movement.

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- [REDACTED] (C)

We assess that the growing presence of jihadist activists and supporters on the Internet and in other media is an indicator of the expansion of the movement. Voluminous open source reporting in the past four years (since the publication of our last NIE on terrorism*) points to a significant expansion in the number of dedicated jihadist websites that conduct propaganda, fundraising, training and recruitment of supporters, and their use as a virtual venue for collaboration. Specifically, according to one respected academic, in 1998 the number of such sites could be measured in the dozens; by 2003 the number was in the hundreds and today the number is estimated at from 4,000 to 6,000 jihadist websites. Equally worrisome is the growth in the number of password and otherwise protected sites that allow for more secretive discussions and direction.

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- [REDACTED] (S//NF)

As these examples illustrate, jihadist networks are emerging with little affiliation to known terrorist groups and, in some cases, involve individuals located in countries not known to have a significant Islamic extremist presence. The combination of multilateral counterterrorism efforts and diffusion of the jihadist movement could result in a greater percentage of terrorist incidents being of lower lethality. (U//FOUO)

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Key Judgments

United States-led counterterrorism efforts have seriously damaged the leadership of al-Qa'ida and disrupted its operations; however, we judge that al-Qa'ida will continue to pose the greatest threat to the Homeland and US interests abroad by a single terrorist organization. We also assess that the global jihadist movement—which includes al-Qa'ida, affiliated and independent terrorist groups, and emerging networks and cells—is spreading and adapting to counterterrorism efforts.

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- [REDACTED] a large body of all-source reporting, [REDACTED] indicates that activists identifying themselves as jihadists, although a small percentage of Muslims, are increasing in both number and geographic dispersion.
- **If this trend continues, threats to US interests at home and abroad will become more diverse, leading to increasing attacks worldwide.**
- Greater pluralism and more responsive political systems in Muslim majority nations would alleviate some of the grievances jihadists exploit. **Over time, such progress, together with sustained, multifaceted programs targeting the vulnerabilities of the jihadist movement and continued pressure on al-Qa'ida, could erode support for the jihadists.** ~~(S//NF)~~

We assess that the global jihadist movement is decentralized, lacks a coherent global strategy, and is becoming more diffuse. New jihadist networks and cells, with anti-American agendas, are increasingly likely to emerge. [REDACTED]

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- **We assess that the operational threat from self-radicalized cells will grow in importance to US counterterrorism efforts, particularly abroad but also in the Homeland.**
- The jihadists regard Europe as an important venue for attacking Western interests. Extremist networks inside the extensive Muslim diasporas in Europe facilitate recruitment and staging for urban attacks, as illustrated by the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London bombings. ~~(S//NF)~~

We assess that the Iraq jihad is shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives; perceived jihadist success there would inspire more fighters to continue the struggle elsewhere.

- **The Iraq conflict has become the “cause celebre” for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of US involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement. Should jihadists leaving Iraq perceive themselves, and be perceived, to have failed, we judge fewer fighters will be inspired to carry on the fight.** ~~(C//NF)~~

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We assess that the underlying factors fueling the spread of the movement outweigh its vulnerabilities and are likely to do so for the duration of the timeframe of this Estimate.

- **Four underlying factors are fueling the spread of the jihadist movement:** (1) Entrenched grievances, such as corruption, injustice, and fear of Western domination, leading to anger, humiliation, and a sense of powerlessness; (2) the Iraq jihad; (3) the slow pace of real and sustained economic, social, and political reforms in many Muslim majority nations; and (4) pervasive anti-US sentiment among most Muslims—all of which jihadists exploit. ~~(C/NF)~~

Concomitant vulnerabilities in the jihadist movement have emerged that, if fully exposed and exploited, could begin to slow the spread of the movement. They include dependence on the continuation of Muslim-related conflicts, the limited appeal of the jihadists' radical ideology, the emergence of respected voices of moderation, and criticism of the violent tactics employed against mostly Muslim citizens.

- **The jihadists' greatest vulnerability is that their ultimate political solution—an ultra-conservative interpretation of *shari'a*-based governance spanning the Muslim world—is unpopular with the vast majority of Muslims.** Exposing the religious and political straitjacket that is implied by the jihadists' propaganda would help to divide them from the audiences they seek to persuade.
- **Recent condemnations of violence and extremist religious interpretations by a few notable clerics signal a trend that could facilitate the growth of a constructive alternative to jihadist ideology: peaceful political activism.** This also could lead to the consistent and dynamic participation of broader Muslim communities in rejecting violence, reducing the ability of radicals to capitalize on passive community support. **In this way, the Muslim mainstream emerges as the most powerful weapon in the war on terror.**
- **Countering the spread of the jihadist movement will require coordinated multilateral efforts that go well beyond operations to capture or kill terrorist leaders.** ~~(C/NF)~~

If democratic reform efforts in Muslim majority nations progress over the next five years, **political participation probably would drive a wedge between intransigent extremists and groups willing to use the political process to achieve their local objectives.** Nonetheless, attendant reforms and potentially destabilizing transitions will create new opportunities for jihadists to exploit. ~~(C/NF)~~

Al-Qa'ida, now merged with Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's network, is exploiting the situation in Iraq to attract new recruits and donors and to maintain its leadership role.

- **The loss of key leaders, particularly Usama Bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and al-Zarqawi, in rapid succession, probably would cause the group to fracture into smaller groups.** Although like-minded individuals would endeavor to carry on the mission, the loss of these key leaders would exacerbate strains and disagreements. We assess that the resulting splinter groups would, at least for a time, pose a less serious threat to US interests than does al-Qa'ida.

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- **Should al-Zarqawi continue to evade capture and scale back attacks against Muslims, we assess he could broaden his popular appeal and present a global threat.**
- The increased role of Iraqis in managing the operations of al-Qa'ida in Iraq might lead veteran foreign jihadists to focus their efforts on external operations. ~~(S//NF)~~

[REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED] ~~(S//NF)~~

We judge that most jihadist groups—both well-known and newly formed—will use improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks focused primarily on soft targets to implement their asymmetric warfare strategy, and that **they will attempt to conduct sustained terrorist attacks in urban environments. Fighters with experience in Iraq are a potential source of leadership for jihadists pursuing these tactics.**

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- [REDACTED] ~~(C//NF)~~
- [REDACTED]

- While Iran, and to a lesser extent Syria, remain the most active state sponsors of terrorism, many other states will be unable to prevent territory or resources from being exploited by terrorists. ~~(S//NF)~~

Anti-US and anti-globalization sentiment is on the rise and fueling other radical ideologies. This could prompt some leftist, nationalist, or separatist groups to adopt terrorist methods to attack US interests. **The radicalization process is occurring more quickly, more widely, and more anonymously in the Internet age, raising the likelihood of surprise attacks by unknown groups** [REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED]

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Discussion

Primary Terrorist Threats to US Interests (U//~~FOUO~~)

The terrorist threat is evolving. This Estimate first outlines the status of the terrorist movement today as a baseline. It then examines the trends driving the evolution of terrorism and future threats, considers certain vulnerabilities in terrorists' ideology and tactics that might be exploited, and assesses the implications for the United States. (U//~~FOUO~~)

Global Jihadist Movement Spreading (U//~~FOUO~~)

The belief that Islam is under attack around the globe, requiring the mobilization of a worldwide militant response—a global jihad—is spreading among a small minority of primarily Sunni Muslims as evidenced by the growing number of active cells, networks, groups, and supporters identifying themselves as jihadists in more locations around the world. (C//~~NF~~)

The jihadist movement emerged out of the Afghan-Soviet “jihad” in the 1980s but has been fueled by larger social, political, and ideological trends affecting Muslim populations around the globe for decades. Adherents of the movement, from organized groups to loosely connected networks and individuals, subscribe to or are influenced by a shared set of radical Salafi Islamic beliefs (see box). A succession of jihads following the Afghan-Soviet conflict produced expanded networks of veteran fighters and facilitators willing to use violence and terrorism to further the movement and defend their beliefs against perceived enemies. (U//~~FOUO~~)

For a decade al-Qa`ida both supported and derived assistance from affiliates, acting as a top-down organization. Al-Qa`ida engaged in—though it did not direct—most of the jihads by providing rhetorical support, money, fighters, training, and guidance, and, in turn,

Religious Interpretations Behind the Movement (U//~~FOUO~~)

Jihadists believe that violent jihad, including terrorism, is necessary to defend Islam from perceived aggression and attempts to subjugate Muslims. Most jihadist groups have adopted this belief system and rely on radical Salafi Islamic interpretations to justify their actions.

- A largely non-violent current in Islam, **Salafism** is followed by a small percentage of Sunni Muslims. Salafis view the Koran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (7th Century) and his companions as the only legitimate source of religious conduct. They believe that the subjugation of the *ummah* (Islamic community) has been the result of errant religious practices compromising the purity of Islam.
- **Radicals or Salafi Jihadists**, a small subset of Salafis, believe their interpretation of Islamic doctrine must be implemented in society and the state through an absolutist interpretation of *shari'a* (Islamic law). They contend that violence is necessary to create and defend pure Islamic states and societies. (C)

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recruited from among the fighters and sought to influence the strategic direction of their actions. ~~(C//NF)~~

Today the global jihadist movement consists of three categories of actors:

- The first is al-Qa'ida. While al-Qa'ida retains a weakened, hierarchical structure, the leadership is still intent on directing transnational operations. Al-Qa'ida consists of the central leadership located primarily in Pakistan, al-Zarqawi and the networks directly associated with him in Iraq and elsewhere, and regional nodes in the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa that operate in an increasingly autonomous fashion.
- A second category of groups describing themselves as jihadists is composed of affiliates of al-Qa'ida (not under its command and control) and other independent Sunni extremist groups, some with ethnic separatist or anti-regime agendas.

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- A third category of jihadists has emerged in the form of unaffiliated groups, cells, and individuals that have been inspired by the jihadist message and subscribe to a loosely defined global, anti-US agenda. ~~(C//NF)~~

Al-Qa'ida has promulgated the unifying vision that the United States is the "head of the snake," focusing on jihad against the United States as the primary enemy.

~~Terrorists Exploit Global Trends (C)~~

Macro trends that facilitate the growth of the jihadist movement include:

- The communications revolution, allowing for instant connectivity.
- Dispersal of information on weapons and weapons technology on the Internet.
- Massive legal and illegal migration across international borders.
- Demographic trends and the youth bulge in Muslim countries, with under-employment among educated youth.
- Education in many Arab, Asian, and African countries that inculcates a conservative Islamic worldview.
- Media sensationalism and exploitation of violence.
- Decades of well-funded proselytizing efforts, particularly by Saudi Arabia, that have been exploited by radicals. ~~(U//FOUO)~~

- The popularity of the jihadist movement stems largely from the jihadists' ability to portray themselves as champions of opposition. They exploit feelings of frustration and powerlessness to change authoritarian regimes and resist outside interference.
- Jihadists foster a perception that US counterterrorism policies are a cover for efforts to subjugate Muslims.
- The war in Iraq and the Internet culture supporting the jihad have served to widen the appeal of the global jihadist movement

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with disillusioned Arab and Muslim youth worldwide and among those who see the United States as an occupying force and the jihad as legitimate resistance.

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- [REDACTED] the status of al-Qa'ida's leadership is unimportant compared with the idea that "a fire has been set in the Hearts of Muslims that will not be extinguished until ultimate victory, be it 10, 20, or 100 years" into the future. ~~(S//NF)~~

Muslims in general are becoming more aware of their Islamic identity, leading to growing political activism. We assess that political Islam is likely to grow in influence among publics across the Muslim world, but this does not necessarily signal a trend toward radicalization. The radical jihadist message resonates among only a small percentage of Muslims. ~~(S//NF)~~

We assess that the jihadist movement lacks a coherent global strategy despite the fact that many participants share over-arching goals: (a) the replacement of current "apostate" regimes, particularly those aligned with the West, with strict Islamic ones in an effort to establish a Caliphate, and (b) the elimination of US influence from the Islamic world. While the jihadist ideology is grounded in religious beliefs, its goals are essentially political.

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

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Europe: A Key Battleground (U)

Western Europe has become a key battleground in the internal struggle over Islam's future. For some time Western Europe has been the setting for efforts aimed at Muslim assimilation and multiculturalism. Meanwhile, attitudes of second- and third-generation Muslims show a strengthening of Islamic identity as the relevance of their country of origin wanes and is not replaced by allegiance to their new home, and they experience real or perceived racism. This identity is being shaped in an environment of past economic, political, and social patterns of exclusion that clash with increased opportunities for education, upward mobility, and exposure to popular culture. ~~(U//FOUO)~~

The discovery in 2004 of multiple cells in the UK, the Madrid bombing, the van Gogh murder, and the July 2005 London bombings—all of which involved citizens born and educated domestically—suggest a more threatening characterization. The emergence of extremists from large diasporas and of converts to radical Islam (including in prisons) indicates that terrorist networks probably will grow in this region, with the potential that such networks also can be used again as a platform for mounting an attack in the US Homeland. ~~(S)~~

Counterterrorism efforts in Europe are complicated by the ability of individuals to move freely across large swaths of the continent [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] High evidentiary thresholds required for prosecutions and extraditions, civil liberties protections, and social welfare systems also impede European counterterrorist efforts while creating a permissive operating environment for extremists. ~~(S)~~

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somewhat larger groups, are increasingly likely to emerge over the next five years.

- [REDACTED] (C//NF)

- The individuals who perpetrated bombings in May 2003 in Morocco, March 2004 in Spain, and 7 July 2005 in London appear to have been radicalized locally but to have been influenced—to varying degrees—by members of known jihadist groups, including al-Qa’ida.

- This trend points increasingly to a “new face of terrorism” with newly formed indigenous groups, radicalization without a direct personal link to the global jihad, and “bottom-up” recruitment. Such groups are less likely to need the support and guidance of an operational leader based elsewhere.

New Formations Emerging. Currently, the primary trend in the jihadist movement is toward diffusion.

- Some of the drivers of this diffusion of jihadist actors have emerged from successful counterterrorism efforts in the past four years: the loss of Afghanistan as a base, the death or capture of key leaders, and the interruption of lines of communications. These factors have forced jihadists to make decisions on their own and to rely on their own resources.
- Another driver of diffusion is the growing role of the Internet and other communications tools as a virtual congregating site. (C//NF)

- As the movement grows more decentralized, new groups and networks are likely to attempt to conduct terrorist attacks without necessarily belonging to al-Qa’ida or another organized jihadist group. [REDACTED]

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In the meantime, the appeal of the Salafi jihadist ideology, Bin Ladin’s continued leadership, and the unpopularity among Muslims of the war in Iraq are driving groups to adopt al-Qa’ida’s anti-US agenda, bringing a sense of shared purpose to disparate groups. This confluence of shared purpose with dispersed actors presents a new and different challenge to efforts to find and undermine jihadist groups and prevent their attacks. (C//NF)

Al-Qa’ida Reinventing Itself? Al-Qa’ida has in the past demonstrated the organizational flexibility, loyalty of its cadre, and leadership to adapt to significant disruptions and carry on its role as a unifier of disparate groups. The Intelligence Community judges that al-Qa’ida will continue to pose a threat of operations against US interests, including in the Homeland, and to articulate the case for anti-US jihad.

We assess that “homegrown” jihadist cells of a few isolated individuals, and possibly

- Prior to the merger with Zarqawi’s organization in October 2004, the

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Intelligence Community estimated that US and allied counterterrorist efforts had reduced al-Qa'ida's manpower in Pakistan and Afghanistan [REDACTED]

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- Al-Qa'ida leaders in Pakistan have been able to plan attacks or provide guidance to regional leaders, such as in Saudi Arabia and East Africa, with minimal input from Bin Ladin and Zawahiri. Junior al-Qa'ida members have had time to prove themselves.

- Academic studies into the life cycle of terrorist groups suggest that over the long term unaffiliated individuals and small groups are likely to consolidate into larger groups. The al-Qa'ida of 9/11 had benefited from this process throughout the 1990s; [REDACTED]

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- Should al-Qa'ida succeed in carrying out another attack in the United States, its popularity and ability to influence other groups would increase. ~~(S//NF)~~

The jihad in Iraq is providing al-Qa'ida's central leadership with an opportunity to influence a major jihadist conflict. Bin Ladin and his lieutenants would like to use this clout to focus more of the jihad movement's resources on conducting another major attack in the US Homeland.

- Through Zarqawi, al-Qa'ida leadership is exploiting the situation in Iraq in an effort to rebuild itself, attract new recruits and donors, and make a comeback. The merger with Zarqawi's organization has nominally increased al-Qa'ida's

membership, although the group's central leadership exercises limited direct influence over the cadre in Iraq.

- The merger gave al-Qa'ida leadership the propaganda victory of direct involvement in the most important jihad since the Afghan-Soviet conflict and positioned al-Qa'ida to leverage Zarqawi's network of Levant and Europe-based associates to conduct al-Qa'ida operations elsewhere.

~~(S//NF)~~

The effectiveness of the al-Qa'ida-Zarqawi merger is limited by logistical challenges and possible strategic differences. We assess that the merger will be more successful if there is increased movement of experienced personnel between Pakistan and Iraq, increased funding to compensate for al-Qa'ida's weakened financial position, and a common strategic outlook for the global jihad.

- [REDACTED]

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- Donor networks based in at least the Middle East and Europe are supporting the jihad in Iraq. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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One area in which the merger benefits al-Qa'ida is in Zarqawi's willingness to facilitate attacks outside Iraq. An inhibitive operating environment in Pakistan since at least mid-2004, and the potential opportunities borne from the Iraq jihad, have prompted al-Qa'ida leaders to advance plans to leverage the Iraq

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[REDACTED] (U//~~FOUO~~)

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[REDACTED]

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theater as a main platform from which to launch external operations. Even though Zarqawi has focused intensely on operations in Iraq, his network has conducted several attacks elsewhere and has been involved in plotting attacks in neighboring countries, particularly in the Levant, which has been a longtime focus of Zarqawi's. The increased role of Iraqis in managing the operations of al-Qa'ida in Iraq might lead veteran foreign jihadists to focus their efforts on external operations.

- [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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- European allies are investigating the potential role of Zarqawi's network in several plots in Europe uncovered in the last two years, including in France and Germany.
- With the December 2005 death of al-Qa'ida operational planner Hamza Rabi'a, al-Qa'ida leaders may rely even more heavily on Zarqawi to implement operations against the US and Western allies. (S//NF)

...But Plagued by Potential Succession Problems. We assess that al-Qa'ida would remain the pre-eminent global Salafi group even without Bin Ladin, at least temporarily.

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The longer al-Qa'ida's dispersed leaders are able to operate with the tacit approval of Bin Ladin and Zawahiri, the less impact the removal of the top leadership would be likely to have.

- Bin Ladin's hands-on operational leadership has become less necessary and his Pakistan-based and regional network leaders have proven themselves capable of functioning with limited direction. ~~(C//NF)~~

The loss of Bin Ladin, however, would threaten the group's cohesion and we judge the group would undergo some fracturing.

E.O. 1.4(c)

- [REDACTED] Zawahiri does not carry the same authority as Bin Ladin and would not be able to hold the group together for long.
- The loss of second in command Zawahiri could be a catalyst to change and disrupt the centralized direction of al-Qa'ida, particularly if Bin Ladin is also killed or captured. Other leaders would be able to act more independently, and the group's chain of command might deteriorate. ~~(S//NF)~~

The loss of both Bin Ladin and Zawahiri would leave Zarqawi in a position to attract the bulk of al-Qa'ida's following, although remnants of al-Qa'ida would be likely to continue to fight for control of Afghanistan. Although some Pakistan-based members and regional leaders might go their separate ways, we judge al-Qa'ida's center of gravity would move toward Zarqawi's arm of the al-Qa'ida organization. ~~(S//NF)~~

The cumulative impact of the loss of several key leaders in quick succession—particularly Bin Ladin, Zawahiri, and Zarqawi—probably would lead to the group's fracturing. While

like-minded individuals would endeavor to carry on al-Qa'ida's mission, without the leadership that exists today it probably would splinter into smaller groups as a result of personality clashes. [REDACTED]

E.O. 1.4(c)

[REDACTED] ~~(S//NF)~~

E.O. 1.4(c)

[REDACTED] ~~(S//NF)~~

Other Groups Expanding Reach. Previously organized Islamic extremist groups are adopting al-Qa'ida's anti-US focus and selective Salafist views, according to a review of [REDACTED] and extremist media. Some of these known jihadist organizations are likely to attain expanded reach within five years as they replace lost leaders, recover from disruptions, and seek to establish a presence beyond their traditional areas of operation.

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- [REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED] (S//NF)

We assess that the reach and targeting interests of these jihadist groups will ebb and flow over the next five years. Groups will react to counterterrorism measures against them and attempt to adjust to perceived changes in popular support for their activities, sometimes leading them to restrict their attacks to local government targets. (C//NF)

Jihadist Support Networks Evolving (U//FOUO)

Just as the jihadist movement is undergoing organizational transformations, the underlying support networks engaged in fundraising and logistical support are adapting and decentralizing to recover some degree of their capabilities after disruptions. (S//NF)

Impact of Saudi Proselytization (U)

In response to international pressure and domestic terrorism, Riyadh has taken unprecedented steps to close or scrutinize its NGOs as well as official programs to promote traditional Salafism and to limit the ability of terrorists to exploit them. Nonetheless, we assess that the spread of Salafism and other conservative interpretations of Islam in foreign countries has become a self-sustaining process and is fostering extremist violence.

- We judge that additional measures the Saudi regime might take in controlling proselytization activities would have impact only along the margins. (C//NF)

Propaganda Options Expanding. Extensive use of websites with rich imagery, music, and oratory as well as satellite television, books, CDs, DVDs, tapes, and text messaging is enabling jihadists to reach more people, to appeal better to their emotions, and to portray Islam as under attack. We also are seeing evidence of market segmentation and narrowcasting techniques, including the targeting of messages to children through videogames.

- Jihadists are adopting new information and dissemination tools, such as Flash-based mini-documentaries and music videos, to propagandize and recruit effectively without relying on person-to-person vetting procedures, speeding up the process of recruitment.

- [REDACTED] (S//NF)

E.O. 1.4(c)

Mobile and Virtual Training. Training probably will continue to be conducted in small groups or on-the-job in conflict zones such as Iraq.

- Iraqis and non-Iraqis participating in the jihad in Iraq are gaining hands-on experience in a variety of operational and support activities, including explosives construction, target surveillance and counter-surveillance, counter-interrogation, operational tactics, logistics, and integrating media with operational activities. "On-the-job" training provides highly desirable real-life experience that camp instruction cannot.

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Jihadists Exploit Virtual Ummah (U)

An academic study into the jihadists' use of the Internet concludes that the power of anonymity and instant intimacy of the Internet is allowing jihadists to forge strong bonds among people on the Internet, creating a virtual *ummah*. One of the dangers of the Internet is that it provides "sound bite" versions of Islam that are particularly attractive to individuals with little religious education.

- This study also argues that jihad will gradually become more "randomly distributed," include younger participants, and involve more women due to the gender neutrality of the Internet. (U)

- Al-Qa'ida has sustained its core training agenda—ideology, clandestine tradecraft, terrorist tactics and methods, and counterintelligence—since 9/11 by frequently relocating small-scale training and disseminating materials on the Internet. ~~(S//NF)~~

We judge that the Internet will remain a powerful tool for training and a virtual global classroom for many jihadists, allowing volunteers to "contribute" to the cause with little formal training. ~~(C//NF)~~

New Funding and Support Methods. While the funds necessary to plan and carryout terrorist attacks are often relatively small, major terrorist groups, such as al-Qa'ida operating in Iraq and South Asia, require millions of dollars each year to sustain and expand terrorist infrastructures.

- The primary sources of terrorist funding continue to flow from wealthy and grassroots individual donors, otherwise

legitimate business activities, and revenues raised by NGOs.

- [REDACTED] other groups, [REDACTED] will continue to exploit the international banking system.

E.O. 1.4(c)

- [REDACTED] ~~(S//NF)~~

E.O. 1.4(c)

Jihadist financing is likely to continue to decentralize—with disparate cells finding innovative ways to make up for the disruption of money flowing from the leadership.

- [REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED] ~~(S//NF)~~

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- [REDACTED]

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(S//NF)

New, and Old, Forms of Communications.

Given their interest in communicating securely and their consistent recruitment of young educated individuals, jihadists are likely to remain on the cutting edge of communications technology. They are exploiting new communications and encryption technologies, and the US Intelligence Community will have to undertake extensive efforts to counter them. At the same time, US-led operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have forced jihadists to rely on tried-and-true, though slow, courier networks to pass leadership communications.

~~(C//NF)~~

Jihadists Pursue More Targets, New Tactics (U)

We assess jihadists will continue to target softer targets, such as transportation infrastructure, businesses, and places where large numbers of people congregate, especially in Western countries where attacks would be less likely to kill Muslim bystanders. Jihadists also are likely to continue to strike locations that cater to US or Western citizens in predominantly Muslim countries, principally when hardened official targets are too difficult to attack. We do not rule out continued attempts to attack hardened targets of symbolic value. ~~(S//NF)~~

We assess that the jihadists are likely to continue to attempt mass-casualty strikes against soft targets. In addition, we judge that the potential is increasing that jihadists will work toward sustaining terrorist attacks over a period of time, particularly in urban environments, along the lines of the Algerian

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Armed Islamic Group's (GIA) terrorist campaign in Paris in 1995. The younger generation of jihadists tends to come from, and live in, urban areas. Many jihadists have noted in open forums what they consider to be the successful impact—particularly on their opponents' political will—of sustained terrorism campaigns in Iraq and Israel.

- The attacks in Spain in 2004, with plans for additional bombings, and the London bombings in July 2005 have signaled Europe's potential vulnerability to repeated attacks by local networks of jihadists in urban areas.
- In their propaganda and internal discussions, many jihadists have praised the urban campaigns of Palestinians for "forcing" Israel out of the Palestinian Territories. ~~(S//NF)~~

Improving Tactics and Methods. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

E.O. 1.4(c)

The Internet will continue to be an increasingly important tool that jihadists use to communicate, propagandize, recruit, train, and obtain various forms of logistical and financial support.

- [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

E.O. 1.4(c)

The Internet has accelerated the transmission and availability of improvised explosive device (IED) innovations. Some veterans of the Iraqi jihad are proving adept at fabricating

IEDs, including using sophisticated circuitry. ~~(S//NF)~~

These trends in terrorist tactics are consistent with suicide operations, which we judge are likely to remain a preferred delivery method for jihadists' attacks. Jihadists opt for suicide operations because of their effectiveness and the imagery that surrounds "martyrdom." Their use does not signal necessarily any sense of desperation.

- Suicide attacks kill on average four times as many people as other types of operations.
- The terrorists reap a fear dividend because a suicide attack is difficult to defend against; such attacks also reinforce the terrorists' self-perpetuated heroic underdog image.
- Jihadist groups are likely to expand the use of women as suicide bombers due to their lower security profile and propaganda value. ~~(S//NF)~~

Hizballah To Focus on Core Strategy
~~(U//FOUO)~~

In addition to the threat posed by Sunni global jihadists, the Shia Lebanese Hizballah will likely remain a terrorist threat to US interests. We assess that Shia Lebanese Hizballah, which continues to vehemently oppose US policy and influence in the Middle East, will continue to pursue aggressively its core strategic goals in the Middle East, opposing the existence of Israel through operational support to the *intifadah* and expanding the group's political role and influence in Lebanon and the Arab world. ~~(S//NF)~~

Hizballah publicly claims to eschew armed confrontation with the West—despite its provision of military training to Iraqi Shia in Lebanon in the last year.

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- Hizballah provided antitank, artillery, and special forces training in Lebanon for Iraqi Shia late last year.
- Hizballah's activity with Iraqi militants is consistent with its pattern in the last several years of using cutouts, surrogates, and allies to deny its involvement in attacks that would otherwise harm the group's more public and official role. ~~(S//NF)~~
- US or Israeli attacks on Iran could prompt Hizballah, in coordination with Tehran, to attack US interests. ~~(S//NF)~~

Residual Nationalist, Separatist, Leftist Threat (U//~~FOUO~~)

In most cases we assess that groups primarily motivated by nationalism, separatism, or ethnicity or by leftist ideologies will create little direct terrorist threat to US interests. Some of these groups will pose a threat to US allies, nonetheless. ~~(C//NF)~~

Although currently Hizballah appears committed to retaining its terrorist and military components, in the next five years potential developments in the Middle East might challenge Hizballah to evolve further away from terrorist activity.

Most *nationalist, separatist, or ethnic* groups are losing organizational cohesion—they are splintering, eroding, and/or are becoming reliant on an individual leader. Radical splinter factions or younger members are more likely to pose a terrorist danger. By transforming into increasingly networked groups that rely on both local and “virtual” sympathizers, most of the organized groups are likely to survive the next five years, however.

- Progress toward resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and establishment of a Palestinian state could present Hizballah's pragmatic and experienced leaders with some tough choices, because support to the “Palestinian resistance” is one of the principal reasons Hizballah advances for its possession of arms.
- Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, along with the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1559, which calls for the disarmament of all militias inside Lebanon, places additional pressure on Hizballah to relinquish its military and terrorist capabilities. ~~(C//NF)~~
- Nationalist, separatist, and ethnic groups are tapping into pockets of sympathy scattered around the world, thanks to advances in information and communication technology, to sustain their organizations. The Liberation of Tamil Tigers Elam (LTTE), for example, maintains a large international support network of expatriates for funds, weapons, and propaganda. ~~(S//NF)~~

E.O. 1.4(c)

[REDACTED]

We judge that *leftist ideologies* will decline further as a primary driving force behind terrorist actions. Many groups are fracturing and are losing popular support, resorting to increased extortion, drug trafficking, and other crime to make up for their loss of material and ideological support with the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. Nonetheless, some leftist groups could pose a threat of increased urban terrorism.

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Terrorist-State Relations To Remain a Challenge (U//~~FOUO~~)

After decades of policies meant to isolate and stigmatize state sponsorship of terrorism, the number of states that directly participate in terrorist acts continues to decrease. The list of official state sponsors represents only a fraction of the states that provide lower levels of support to terrorist groups, however. Some of the most threatening terrorist groups have derived more benefit from sanctuary in lawless zones than from state sponsors.

- Terrorists also exploit weak states or countries where civil liberties, large immigrant populations, and lenient or lax immigration laws make it easy for them to “hide in plain sight” and difficult for the state to find them.
- Nonetheless, [REDACTED] will remain the most directly engaged in supporting terrorists at the behest of the leadership in Tehran.

~~(S//NF)~~

E.O. 1.4(c)

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

Some governments, including those in Yemen and Pakistan, hesitate to confront terrorist sympathizers who are politically expedient or useful. They also are reluctant to close down terrorist havens due to lack of military capabilities or political will.

~~(C//NF)~~

- Some traditionally rural groups, such as Sendero Luminoso (SL) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), or factions of them, are looking to revitalize urban cells to gain recruits and conduct operations. ~~(S//NF)~~

[REDACTED] ~~(S//NF)~~

E.O. 1.4(c)

Iran Continues Sponsorship Activities

~~(C//NF)~~

Iran remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, and its support to Islamic extremists, particularly those opposed to Israel and including some Sunni groups, has not diminished since the beginning of the US-led war on terrorism.

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• [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ~~(S//NF)~~

co-opted by the state to foster alternative networks of religious, educational, and charitable centers, as well as media outlets sponsored by radical Salafi. [REDACTED]

Factors Shaping the Direction of Terrorism (U//~~FOUO~~)

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[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ~~(C)~~

E.O. 1.4(c)

Powerlessness. Jihadists are re-branding terrorism as justified resistance by exploiting in their propaganda emotions of revenge, anger, fear, and humiliation with images of Muslims under attack, particularly in the Palestinian territories and Iraq. By offering a course of action for enraged or frustrated Muslims, including first and second-generation Muslims living outside Muslim majority countries who feel alienated and

We assess that four underlying factors will shape the terrorists' landscape over the next five years. These trends will have a bearing on jihadist violence as well as the potential for other ideologies to threaten US interests. (U//~~FOUO~~)

Entrenched Grievances Will Continue To Fuel Jihadism (U//~~FOUO~~)

Jihadist groups place ongoing political, economic, social, and territorial struggles into the context of the "West versus Islam." They deftly exploit long-standing grievances that—unless addressed holistically—will continue to resonate powerfully among many Muslim populations, enabling the jihadist movement to continue to grow. (U//~~FOUO~~)

Corruption and Injustice. Jihadists emphasize popular complaints of regime corruption and nepotism and the immorality of the economic inequalities of some regimes. They are exploiting perceptions among many Muslim populations that the traditional religious institutions in their states have been

Radicalization Process (U)

Numerous studies, both from within the Intelligence Community and from academia, illuminate the process by which individuals and groups become radicalized. While there are differing interpretations and theories about how and why individuals join terrorist groups or become radicalized—from religious, sociological, and psychological perspectives—most studies suggest that the process happens over time, presenting opportunities for prevention or discouragement along the way. (U//~~FOUO~~)

Similarly, most of the studies conclude that deterring individuals from adopting violent and extremist ideas, and from acting upon them, requires the sustained involvement of a host of actors, including religious and educational leaders, a spectrum of information outlets, role models, friends, and family. (U//~~FOUO~~)

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dislocated, the jihadists provide an alternative to feelings of powerlessness. (U//~~FOUO~~)

Fear of Western "Domination." Jihadists claim that many of the Muslim world's grievances are caused by Western efforts to weaken Muslim lands in order to dominate them. They point to US-led forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and call attention to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the existence of apostate regimes "subordinate" to the West to prove their theory and call on all Muslims to come to Islam's defense. (~~C~~)

The Iraq Jihad Shaping A New Generation of Jihadists (U//~~FOUO~~)

Jihadists are looking to Iraq to build momentum for their movement and to secure a stronghold for their fighters. The extent to which the global jihadists succeed in doing so will have a significant impact on the *agenda, scope, and capabilities* of the rising generation of global jihadists—evidence of which we expect to begin to unfold over the next five years.

- The Iraq conflict has become the "cause celebre" for the jihadist movement, breeding a deep resentment of US involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement who may never become fighters in Iraq but who may in the future make up the majority of jihadists conducting anti-US and anti-Western operations.
- While previous jihads, particularly the Afghan-Soviet conflict, have spawned large numbers of key terrorist leaders and operatives, the number generated by the Iraqi jihad is likely to be significantly lower. There have been relatively fewer foreign fighters in Iraq than in the Afghan-Soviet conflict, and jihadist ideology, while attractive to some Iraqis,

has not been the primary motivator for most of the Iraqi insurgents.

- Nonetheless, we judge that jihadists will continue their attempts to exploit even temporary strongholds and loose political alliances with new Sunni organizations in Iraq to conduct training and to plan and direct operations outside the country. Protracted instability could lead to the creation of jihad safe zones—along the lines of Fallujah in 2004—that would allow groups to plan and direct attacks outside Iraq as well. As al-Qa'ida indicated in the letter from Zawahiri to Zarqawi, the group hopes to secure a stronghold in Iraq from which to launch attacks elsewhere, including in the US Homeland, and to further its propaganda. (~~S/NF~~)

Of the jihadists leaving Iraq, some will have gained experience and many will be motivated to continue fighting outside of that country, and their dispersion could inspire sympathizers outside of Iraq to move beyond rhetoric to conduct anti-US and anti-Western operations. At the same time, individuals not fighting in Iraq learn about operations there via the Internet.

- We expect that the departure of jihadists from Iraq will include not only foreigners who have been engaging in the violence, but also some Iraqis who have joined al-Qa'ida there under Zarqawi or have adopted Salafi jihadist ideology. Such Iraqis will have difficulty adjusting to and accepting political changes in Iraq and will be more inclined to seek out jihad wherever it is active, like the generation of jihadists before them. (~~S/NF~~)

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Should jihadists leave Iraq quietly admitting they failed to “defeat” the United States, and should they be perceived to have failed to do so as Iraqis move toward establishing a stable political and security environment, we judge that fewer fighters will be inspired to carry on the fight. ~~(C//NF)~~

In Short Run, Political Reforms Problematic (U//~~FOUO~~)

The jihadists exploit resentment in Muslim majority nations over the slow pace of real and sustained economic, social, and political reforms. Potential democratic reforms and political liberalization in Muslim majority countries in the next five years will be, however, double-edged swords. With progress toward pluralism, regimes can lose control, resulting in unpredictable outcomes that can undercut current counterterrorism policies in those nations and cooperation with the United States. Furthermore, we assess that groups that currently refuse to engage in political processes are likely to take advantage of reforms and democratization where they can.

- As seen in Iraq, jihadists require little or no prior foothold to be able to take advantage of emerging security vacuums.
- Academic research indicates that the highest levels of political violence typically occur in countries with substantial levels of discontent but with enough openness to allow groups to organize and mobilize rather than in countries with repressive governments.
- Reforms could raise expectations among some groups who, if their hopes are not achieved, could lash out by using terrorism. Dashed expectations in the political process also could lead to more popular support for a violent course of action, as Algeria experienced in the

1990s. In some cases, perceived US responsibility for failures in the democratic process could lead violent groups to target US interests. ~~(C//NF)~~

Reforms that entice Islamic oppositionists to engage in political activity in the coming years could drive a wedge between groups willing to use the political process and those committed to rejecting it and overthrowing it with violence.

- Groups such as Hizballah and HAMAS that already have an established political agenda are participating in formal governmental activities and bolstering their political credentials while maintaining a resistance component. Since their followers broadly support their armed activities, these groups are unlikely to eschew violence in the near-to-medium term. Political pressures—such as those on HAMAS after winning a majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council—might, however, compel them to modify their methods and targeting and could, over time, lead to a gradual evolution away from terrorist and military operations. ~~(C//NF)~~

A recent academic study suggests that when presented with greater opportunity to engage in a political process predicated on rejection of violence, groups tend to splinter.

- Under governmental and popular pressure, the Pakistan-backed Kashmiri-based group Hizb ul-Mujahedin became more moderate over time. But some of its extremist members joined other radical groups.

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The Impact of Shia Dominance in Iraq (U//~~FOUO~~)

Regime change in Iraq and the emergence of a government there led by Shia has made sectarian identity central to future politics in the Middle East. If Zarqawi continues to foment sectarian violence in Iraq, the next generation of jihadists might become increasingly anti-Shia. A more openly anti-Shia jihadist movement could provoke sectarian violence elsewhere in the region.

~~(C//NF)~~

Iran is facilitating the Shia position in Iraq as it acts to build its regional influence and claim to “great power” status. How these trends evolve will directly impact the status of jihadist politics in the region, which in turn will affect the recruitment base for Sunni radicalism. ~~(C//NF)~~

Iran and Hizballah have thus far sought to avoid being drawn operationally into a sectarian conflict of Zarqawi’s making in Iraq.

- We assess that Iran will carefully calibrate its response to Zarqawi’s attacks on Shia, weighing the goal of averting civil war in Iraq with its broader aims of supporting the ascendancy of a Shia government over whom Tehran could hold some influence. While Tehran probably approves of the way the Sunni insurgency has succeeded in bogging down Coalition forces, the Iranian regime probably will act against Zarqawi if it perceives Iranian interests, either in Iraq or at home, are being seriously threatened. ~~(S//NF)~~

Hizballah appears more concerned about its own security and avoiding sectarian violence in Lebanon than it is about attacks in Iraq. Hizballah is unlikely to react operationally to Zarqawi’s actions in Iraq unless requested to do so by Iran. ~~(S//NF)~~

- In the early 1990s in Algeria, the Islamic Salvation Front—a legal political party— included both militant and moderate members until it divided over how to respond to the military rejection of its victory in the 1992 elections. (U//~~FOUO~~)

political participation than extremist violence.

- Even groups that participate in democratic processes may still demand a role for Islamic law in governance and harbor hostility toward US policies.
- Groups that splinter would face further strain if governmental institutions, particularly the police, military, and courts, were capable of enforcing the rule of law and protecting citizens.

- Democratic liberalization could lead some groups to conclude that their local goals are more likely to be achieved through

- Terrorists suffer when public confidence in state institutions is high. Therefore, if democratization progresses, the performance of new democratic

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Other Events To Shape The Context (U)

A number of geopolitical developments during the next five years could impact radical Salafi and radical Shi'a trends. (U//~~FOUO~~)

Iran. A US military confrontation with Iran poses the risk of opening a new front in the war on terrorism. It also would serve to "confirm" in some quarters al-Qa'ida's contention that the United States is out to conquer all Muslims, and possibly push Sunni and Shia extremists to work together against US interests. (S//~~NF~~)

Developments in the Middle East Peace Process. A breakthrough would eliminate a key driver underlying both the radical Salafi and Hizballah movements and would undermine a primary propaganda and recruitment tool of the jihadists, although radical splinters of Palestinian groups could join jihadists if they viewed a settlement as "selling out." (C//~~NF~~)

A Major Terrorist Event. Mass-casualty attacks in Europe or in highly urbanized and/or commercial areas of Southeast Asia could put pressure on the governments of these regions to rethink how closely they work with the United States on counterterrorism—some would move toward greater cooperation. (C//~~NF~~)

Use of Western Military Forces in Another Venue. US or Western military involvement in a predominantly Muslim country would be likely to ratchet up sympathy for jihadists and could produce another jihadist conflict. Some governments not involved in the conflict probably would face public pressure to reduce cooperation with Washington. (C//~~NF~~)

Regime Change. A takeover by Islamic extremists, particularly in Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, would create new sanctuary opportunities for jihadist groups. (C//~~NF~~)

institutions will be an important factor in reducing terrorist activity. (C//~~NF~~)

Anti-US Sentiment Will Animate Jihadists and Proponents of Other Ideologies (U//~~FOUO~~)

While anti-US sentiment alone will not necessarily motivate individuals or groups to conduct terrorism, we assess that it will continue to be a factor that extremists exploit. Jihadists point to the US military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, policies vis-à-vis Israel and the Palestinians, and perceptions that the US-led war on terror is a campaign against Islam to inflame anti-US sentiment and use it to recruit and obtain support.

- Jihadists blame US influence, policies, and promotion of democratic change in the Middle East for the economic, social, religious, and political problems facing Muslim societies there and elsewhere. (C//~~NF~~)



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[REDACTED]

openings to limit the growth and spread of the movement.

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- Jihadist groups themselves will remain highly vulnerable to the removal of their leaders, particularly charismatic leaders who provide vision for the broader jihadist movement. ~~(C//NF)~~

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We assess that four key areas of vulnerability limit the appeal and effectiveness of the movement. ~~(C//NF)~~

- [REDACTED]

Dependence on Ongoing Conflicts ~~(C//NF)~~
The expansion of the jihadist movement depends largely on the continuation of current regional Muslim-related conflicts and the emergence of new ones.

~~(S//NF)~~

[REDACTED]

- Reduction of the US military presence, the legitimacy and increased effectiveness of the emerging Iraqi government, and the resolve of Iraq Sunni parties and local leaders in opposing the jihadist agenda could alter the momentum of the jihadist movement in Iraq.

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- [REDACTED]

- Continued popular acceptance of the government and the political process under way in Afghanistan would prevent the country from becoming more vulnerable to the jihadist movement.
- The eventual resolution of other regional disputes that involve Muslim communities would limit the ability of extremists to call for jihads. Disputes over Palestine (Israel/Arab and neighboring states) and Kashmir (India/Pakistan) currently motivate Islamic terrorist groups.

~~(S//NF)~~

Vulnerabilities of the Jihadist Movement ~~(U//FOUO)~~

Concomitant with the trends that suggest the jihadist movement will expand over the next five years, vulnerabilities emanating from the jihadists' ideology and tactics present

- Places that already have experienced jihadist involvement remain vulnerable to renewed interest. These include ongoing conflicts in Chechnya, Kashmir, Sudan, Somalia, and Thailand. ~~(S//NF)~~

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Unpopularity of Jihadist Ideology ~~(C//NF)~~

The jihadists lack a critical element in gaining widespread acceptance among the majority of Muslim populations that they seek: their political solution—an ultra-conservative interpretation of *shari'a*-based governing authority that spans the Muslim world—is unpopular. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] expressing strong support for *shari'a* as a source of law, but a vast majority in each country believed that reforms aiming toward free elections and freedom of speech should be made within the next five to ten years.

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- [REDACTED] reporting, media, and polling indicate that Muslim populations in several Middle East, Asian, and African states are receptive to free speech, press, congregation, and even in some places, religion—all of which are incompatible with the jihadists' vision.
- In a *Time Magazine* interview in October 2005, even an Iraqi Sunni insurgent who supplies suicide bombers to jihadists indicated his opposition to a "Taliban-style government" in Iraq, saying "one day, when the Americans have gone, we will need to fight another war, against these jihadists."
- Jihadists rarely articulate how they would provide economic relief or plan for long-term social services and economic growth and stability should they rule.
- Jihadist propaganda ignores the disconnect between what they would propose and what many Muslim communities desire. Exposing this disconnect would help to create a divide

between the jihadists and the audiences they seek to persuade. ~~(C//NF)~~

Reliance on Lack of Competition ~~(C//NF)~~

Jihadists have been steadfast in their opposition to the US, the West, and local governments in the Middle East. The movement remains vulnerable, however, to the emergence of moderate voices and factions as responsible and respected oppositionists and competitors who could break the jihadists' near monopoly in propaganda and undercut their appeal.

- Opposition groups and peaceful political activists who enjoy a legitimate local support base would be best positioned to compete with jihadists.
- Groups that are perceived as puppets of foreign backers, however, would not only be viewed as illegitimate, but also would provoke local regimes. ~~(C//NF)~~

A debate is emerging between the jihadists and credible Islamic authorities, who are beginning to challenge the jihadists' religious interpretations—particularly regarding the justification for the brutality of some of their tactics. As this debate intensifies, it could lead to the consistent and dynamic participation of broader Muslim communities in rejecting violence, ultimately delegitimizing the jihadist ideology and limiting recruitment. **The most powerful weapon available in this context will be the Muslim mainstream.**

- Hundreds of influential clerics in the UK condemned the July 2005 London bombings, calling them "disgraceful and shameful" and transgressing important criteria of "acceptable jihad."
- Influential and legitimate Muslim scholars, including the head of Egypt's

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al-Azhar University, the Shi'a leader in Iraq, and senior clerics from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Jordan issued a *fatwa* in July banning killings in the name of Islam and urged respect for other opinions in the Muslim world. ~~(C//NF)~~

Violent Tactics Backfiring ~~(C//NF)~~

The jihadists replay images of Muslim civilians under attack by the West to justify their actions to Muslim audiences. Some of their more violent and indiscriminate attacks, as well as grisly beheadings, have come increasingly under fire, however.

- Media coverage of Muslim victims of jihadist terror, particularly innocent bystanders, women and children, has generated significant criticism of the jihadist groups, even those operating in Iraq.
- Attacks involving large numbers of Muslim victims, such as the 9 November attacks in Amman, Jordan, have produced public outcry and even criticism from some jihad supporters.
- Public confidence in the ability of governments to restore order and services after an attack, such as in London following the attacks in July, reduces the long-term disruption, economic loss, and panic that jihadists seek to create with their terrorist attacks. ~~(U//FOUO)~~

Implications ~~(U//FOUO)~~

Some of the vulnerabilities in the jihadist movement have only recently emerged—such as a growing disgust with the jihadists' excessive violence—and have been slow to build momentum. We assess that the driving factors will more likely have the advantage over the limiting ones for the duration of this Estimate. As the jihadist movement continues

to spread, it will create more diverse threats to US interests, leading to increasing numbers of attacks worldwide on softer targets. Anti-US sentiment, both within the jihadist movement and as a motivating factor for other radical ideologies, will ensure US interests at home and abroad remain a target of many terrorist groups. ~~(S//NF)~~

Threats More Diverse (U)

The spread of the jihadist movement's appeal and the decentralization of groups is likely to produce threats to US lives and property in more locales than would result from a purely centralized threat.

- Jihadists are expanding their targets, improving tactics, and adapting to counterterrorism disruptions. Even jihadists brought into the movement via the Internet are benefiting from these trends.
- Newer groups unaffiliated with al-Qa'ida are already the primary focus of many of our allies, especially in Europe. We assess that the operational threat from self-radicalized cells will grow in importance to US counterterrorism efforts, particularly abroad, but also in the Homeland. Because pre-operational activity will be difficult to detect, surprise attacks could result.
- Known jihadist groups, some of which are affiliated with al-Qa'ida, that are expanding their reach are likely to include US interests in their threat planning, although they pose less of a danger to the Homeland than al-Qa'ida. The focus of their attacks is likely to ebb and flow between local regime targets and regional or global ones. ~~(C//NF)~~

The threat to US interests will be intrinsically linked to perceptions of Iraq's success or

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failure. An Iraq that disintegrates into civil war is not only likely to fuel jihadists, but would breed longer-term resentment of the US action in Iraq among nationalists and other groups throughout the region who do not share the jihadist ideology.

- An increasingly stable and credible Iraqi government would not necessarily be able to prevent pockets of jihadists from planning and directing anti-US terrorism attacks in and outside of Iraq. However, it would be likely to cause fewer fighters to be motivated to initiate jihad elsewhere. ~~(C//NF)~~

Because of its intense anti-US focus, al-Qa'ida will remain a unique threat to US interests. Zarqawi's support networks in the Middle East, Europe, and North Africa will serve to amplify the al-Qa'ida capability to mount attacks in the West.

- The diffusion of the jihadist movement may lead some of our [REDACTED] partners to shift their counterterrorism focus toward more localized threats in the coming years, particularly if mass-casualty attacks outside of Iraq are difficult to link to al-Qa'ida. Such a trend would result in the United States having to shoulder a heavier burden in disrupting al-Qa'ida worldwide. ~~(C//NF)~~

Impact of Political Reforms (U)

Perceptions of the success or failure of political reforms, as they unfold throughout the Middle East, also will affect the spread of the movement.

- Successful democratic processes could bring about more popularly legitimate governments, but some of those probably will oppose US foreign policy goals and influence in the region.

- On the other hand, democratization attempts in the Middle East that fail to meet rising expectations of the local populaces could result in security problems for currently stable governments as well as produce riper environments for jihadist recruitment and increased anti-US sentiment. Volatile situations, such as large, spontaneous protests, could result in violence in which US persons or property are targeted.
- Nonetheless, steady progress toward pluralism and more responsive political systems in Muslim majority nations would alleviate some of the grievances jihadists exploit. **Over time, such progress, together with sustained, multifaceted programs targeting the vulnerabilities of the jihadist movement and continued pressure on al-Qa'ida, could erode support for the jihadists.** The key to success in undermining the jihadist movement lies with the consistent and aggressive involvement of Muslim communities in countering jihadist ideology and activity. ~~(C//NF)~~

Understanding "Lessons Learned" (U)

The spread of the jihadist movement over the past decade and the challenges it has posed offer important lessons to help strengthen future counterterrorism efforts. (U//FOUO)

International Cooperation against Global Terrorists Takes Time. Building effective counterterrorism cooperation is a lengthy, multi-stage process requiring the engagement of security services, government leaders, and the population.

- Countries *where the population itself feels threatened* are more likely accept more far-reaching counterterrorism legislation. The European Union, for example, has issued a number of legal and bureaucratic directives, and member states

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are in the process of adopting and implementing these decisions.

- Countries with *committed leaders, but where the population does not feel threatened*, probably will balance cooperation with domestic political considerations. While President Musharraf has been an effective ally against al-Qa'ida, Pakistan continues to withhold cooperation against terrorists it views as "domestic"—even when linked to al-Qa'ida. ~~(S//NF)~~

Sanctuaries Remain Important to Terrorists.

While no terrorist sanctuary has emerged to replace the relatively unfettered freedom al-Qa'ida enjoyed under the Taliban in Afghanistan, safehavens can be found in almost every region of the world and remain valuable to terrorist groups.

- To varying degrees, terrorists exploit the conditions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan for safehaven. Iran and Syria continue to provide sanctuary for terrorists.
- Extremists find varying degrees of sanctuary in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon, Indonesia, the southern Philippines, and in remote or lawless regions of Latin American and Africa.
- We judge that new sanctuaries have the potential to emerge elsewhere as groups adjust to international counterterrorism

efforts [REDACTED]

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- Emerging groups will take advantage of "virtual" sanctuary by hiding in plain sight in the West, however. ~~(S//NF)~~

Pre-empting Future Threats (U//FOUO)

Assessing future trends in terrorism depends on an ability to monitor movements, groups, and emerging cells that are not yet using terrorist tactics, and to recognize from a strategic level a new set of behaviors. Certain activities of emerging groups are important to identify and track:

- Their propaganda, both publicly available and in private communications and manifestos.
- The demographics and grievances of the location in which they are operating.
- Their use of the Internet and other media as tools for propaganda, organization, communications, and recruitment.
- The variety of ways in which individuals become radicalized and what factors might determine how they move from extremism to terrorism. ~~(C//NF)~~

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Outside Views (U//~~FOUO~~)

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(Continued...) **Outside Views (U//~~FOUO~~)**

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The National Intelligence Council

The National Intelligence Council (NIC) manages the Intelligence Community's estimative process, incorporating the best available expertise inside and outside the government. It reports to the Director of National Intelligence in his capacity as head of the US Intelligence Community and speaks authoritatively on substantive issues for the Community as a whole.

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East Asia	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Economics & Global Issues	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Europe	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Military Issues	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
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Russia and Eurasia	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
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Transnational Threats	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Warning	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Weapons of Mass Destruction and Proliferation	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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**National Security
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**Information available as of April 2006 was used in
the preparation of this National Intelligence Estimate**

**The following intelligence organizations participated
in the preparation of this Estimate:**

- The Central Intelligence Agency
- The Defense Intelligence Agency
- The National Security Agency
- The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
- The Bureau of Intelligence and Research,
Department of State
- National Counterterrorism Center
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation
- The Department of Homeland Security
- The Department of Energy
- The Department of the Treasury

also participating:

- The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Department of the Army
- The Director of Naval Intelligence,
Department of the Navy
- The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,
Department of the Air Force
- The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters,
Marine Corps

**This Estimate was approved for publication by the National
Intelligence Board under the authority of the Director of National
Intelligence.**

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