

Al Qaeda's Miscommunication War: The Terrorism Paradox

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The Bush administration's response to the September 11 attacks has rendered more urgent Al Qaeda's stated objective to eject the United States from the Middle East. The aim here is not to evaluate the direction of the war on terrorism, but to explore why Al Qaeda has been so unsuccessful in capitalizing on its political violence. The article begins with the premise that terrorism is a communication strategy. It contends that Al Qaeda's policy failures are due to its inability to convince Bush that it would refrain from attacking Americans if the United States moderated its Middle East policies. Borrowing from the literature in political psychology and perception and misperception in international relations, the article offers several explanations for Al Qaeda's ineffectiveness in getting this message across. The article concludes by deriving general observations about the limitations of terrorism as a form of political communication.

Introduction

According to Al Qaeda, its terrorism is a bloody communication strategy intended to warn the United States against meddling in the Middle East. Yet President Bush's public statements on Al Qaeda, and the direction of the war on terror itself, indicate that he sees no connection between unpopular U.S. Middle East policies and the Al Qaeda threat. This disconnect suggests that Al Qaeda's inability to moderate U.S. Middle East policies may be due, first and foremost, to a failure in its communication strategy. Drawing from the literature in political psychology and perception and misperception in international relations, this article develops several explanations for why Al Qaeda has failed to convince President Bush that U.S. national security hinges on its Middle East policies.

Most political scientists and terrorism experts treat terrorist groups as "procedurally rational" actors who use violence to further their objectives.¹ This interpretation emphasizes that terrorism is a form of political communication. Several important studies have explored how terrorists use violence to signal their capabilities and resolve.² Surprisingly few studies, however, systematically examine whether terrorism effectively conveys to the targeted government the terrorist group's policy objectives.³ Bush's views

I would like to acknowledge David C. Rapoport for his insightful comments on numerous drafts, Deborah Larson for critiquing the manuscript at a late stage, Bruce Hoffman for his personal kindness, and Peter Krause for challenging my thinking on terrorism in the course of countless discussions. Responsibility for any errors, however, remains the author's alone.

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of Al Qaeda represent a timely case study on how targeted governments can misperceive terrorists' policy demands. His understanding of Al Qaeda's motivations provides insight into both why Al Qaeda has been unable to capitalize on its political violence and the limitations of terrorism as a communication strategy more generally.

Al Qaeda's Communication Strategy

Al Qaeda's stated grievances against the United States have exhibited notable consistency. The hundreds of communiqués uttered by Osama bin Laden and his associates on Al Jazeera, Al Qaeda Web sites, and Arabic newspapers do not deplore Hollywood, American crime, prostitution, or even its separation of church and state. Instead, they focus on U.S. Middle East policies.⁴ Al Qaeda has been most impassioned about three policy areas in particular: (1) since the first U.S. troops were dispatched to Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Desert Shield, Al Qaeda's founding mujahideen publicly resolved to drive out the "crusader armies" from "the land of the two holy places," Mecca and Medina; (2) although never allying itself with Saddam Hussein's (secular) Ba'athist dictatorship per se, Al Qaeda has continuously protested U.S. interference in Iraqi affairs, including Operation Desert Storm, subsequent U.S.-led boycotts and weapons inspections regimes, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and postwar reconstruction; (3) Al Qaeda leaders have condemned the "crusader-Zionist alliance," which indirectly assists Israel in its war against the Palestinians.

Since the September 11 attacks, Al Qaeda has threatened that "America will not be able to lift this ordeal unless it leaves the Arabian Peninsula and stops its involvement in Palestine."⁵ While the salience of this ultimatum has increased in Al Qaeda's communiqués with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Al Qaeda leaders have been making this point for over a decade. In his most notorious fatwa, bin Laden denounced the American presence in Arabia, interference in Iraqi affairs and support for Israel, and then threatened to kill Americans if the United States refused to alter these policies.⁶ Similarly, he used the occasion of his first televised interview to alert the mothers of American troops stationed in Saudi Arabia: "If they are concerned for their sons then let them object to the American government's policy."⁷ In another well-known speech he warned that "neither America nor the people who live in it will dream of security before we live in Palestine."⁸

Al Qaeda spokesmen describe terrorism as "a message with no words" and "the only language understood by the West."⁹ Yet this language of violence is clearly not working. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, the United States has dramatically increased its regional presence: Saddam Hussein and the Taliban have been supplanted by American troops; the U.S.-Israeli "special relationship" has soared to unprecedented heights, encapsulated in President Bush's April 2004 Letter of Understanding to the Sharon government, which formally recognized Israel's right to retain "major population centers" (i.e., settlements) in the West Bank; both the Israeli and Saudi governments have found common cause with the United States in their discrete but overlapping wars on terror, in spite of the fact that Israel's policy of targeted assassination inflames the Arab world and fifteen of the nineteen hijackers hailed from Saudi Arabia.

Bush's Perception of Al Qaeda

Bush's statements on Al Qaeda help account for the discrepancy between Al Qaeda's ultimatum for the United States to moderate its Middle East policies and the

direction of the U.S.-led war on terrorism. While Al Qaeda attributes terrorism to foreign policy injustices, Bush has been equally steadfast that “the United States and other nations did nothing to deserve or invite the threat.”¹⁰ In direct contrast to Al Qaeda’s communiqués, Bush has repeatedly declared that Al Qaeda “hates not our policies, but our existence.”¹¹ In a joint session before Congress two weeks after the September 11 attacks, he articulated his views of Al Qaeda’s motivations: “They hate what we see right here in this chamber—a democratically elected government . . . They hate our freedoms—our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”¹² Since then, he has maintained that because America is the leader of the free world, it is an attractive target for enemies that “hate democracy and tolerance and free expression and women and Jews and Christians and all Muslims who disagree with them.”¹³

Al Qaeda’s communiqués notwithstanding, Bush’s war on terrorism is based on the premise that Al Qaeda hates the United States (and all liberal democracies) unconditionally. This assumption is critical; the implied counterfactual follows logically that changing U.S. policies would not make Americans any safer. The U.S. military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as Bush’s heightened relationships with unpopular Middle Eastern allies (e.g., the House of Saud, Ariel Sharon) are rooted in this notion that U.S. policies do not motivate Al Qaeda. In sum, both Bush’s statements on Al Qaeda’s motivations and the policies that radiate from them are a testament that Al Qaeda’s communication strategy has failed.

In Defense of a Communication Model

There are four main objections to the claim that Al Qaeda’s policy failures are due to miscommunication. First, it is sometimes alleged that Al Qaeda has actually achieved its policy goal: to intentionally provoke the United States into retaliating in order to polarize the Muslim world.¹⁴ As one Middle East scholar imaginatively put it:

America, cast as the villain, is supposed to use its military might like a cartoon trying to kill a fly with a shotgun. The media will see to it that any use of force . . . will be broadcast around the world, and the *umma* [worldwide Muslim community] will find it shocking how Americans nonchalantly cause Muslims to suffer and die.¹⁵

This interpretation is attractive because, as David Rapoport has observed, terrorist groups have historically used the “politics of atrocity” to “produce counter-atrocities rebounding to the advantage of the original assailant.”¹⁶ The Russian anarchists of the nineteenth century, Menachem Begin’s paramilitary Irgun organization, and the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) all sought to garner popular support by provoking targeted governments to overact. The evidence, however, does not support the theory that Al Qaeda is deliberately pursuing a dialectical strategy of eliciting a massive U.S. military response.¹⁷ Prior to the September 11 attacks, Al Qaeda believed that the United States was a paper tiger; both publicly and privately, Al Qaeda leaders expressed the opinion that the United States would respond to attacks with either token gestures or political concessions.¹⁸ When the Bush administration responded by declaring all-out war on Al Qaeda and states harboring terrorists, bin Laden ordered his Asia terrorism chief to launch attacks in Southeast Asia. Instead

of trying to draw the United States into the Middle East, Al Qaeda was apparently hoping to divert U.S. forces elsewhere.¹⁹ More importantly, bin Laden and his associates have been explicit that September 11 has not achieved its policy goals. They have complained on numerous occasions that Americans are failing to internalize "the lesson" of September 11, which is to stop interfering in the Muslim world.²⁰

Second, many scholars contend that Al Qaeda is "driven by fanaticism and hatred" without "a political agenda to promote."²¹ If Al Qaeda is motivated solely to inflict religiously inspired mass casualties, rather than to coerce the United States into retreating from the Middle East, then its terrorism does not constitute a form of political communication at all. Terrorists who regard their attacks as an end goal in themselves by definition have no message to communicate. A videotape circulating in Afghanistan and Pakistan that documents bin Laden's rapture upon learning of the September 11 attacks appears to buttress this interpretation.²² Yet, ultimately, it is sustainable only by discounting Al Qaeda's rationalizations for violence and admissions that the attacks have not achieved the desired policy outcome.

Third, others might object to a communication model by asserting that the United States, as a rule, never negotiates with terrorists. If this were the case, then Al Qaeda's policy failures would have nothing to do with its communication strategy. While the United States typically responds to security threats by taking the offensive,²³ it has not practiced an unequivocal "no concessions" policy to terrorists. It is useful to distinguish between redemptive terrorism and strategic terrorism. The former attempts to coerce another actor into ceding specific human or material resources (e.g., prisoners, money), while the latter attempts to coerce substantive policy changes.²⁴ Although September 11 was an unprecedented mass casualty terrorist attack on the U.S. homeland, it bears noting that the United States has conciliated both redemptive and strategic terrorism in the past. To end the Iran hostage crisis, President Reagan released almost \$8 billion in Iranian assets in exchange for the fifty-two American captives, and terrorist attacks in Lebanon in 1983 forced U.S. troops to withdraw the following year.

Fourth, others might argue that Al Qaeda has been unable to achieve its policy goals not because its communiqués are ineffective, but because Al Qaeda's ultimatum is simply unacceptable. Paul Wilkinson has observed that in deciding whether to negotiate with terrorists, the targeted government must first decide whether their demands are "corrigible" or "incorrigible." When terrorists are perceived as corrigible, the targeted government engages in a roots debate—an assessment of the pros and cons of conciliating the terrorists. When terrorists are perceived as incorrigible, concessions are rejected outright because the demands are deemed so extreme that they fall outside of the realm of consideration.²⁵ In Wilkinson's model incorrigible terrorists are not categorically implacable, but placating them would exact a prohibitive cost.

In the discourse of international relations theory, realists would support this objection. Realists argue that the United States has opted against retrenching from the Middle East because Al Qaeda's policy demands conflict with U.S. national interests.²⁶ According to this view, the United States has not entered a post-September 11 roots debate because the United States is strategically wedded to the Middle East. Indeed, as the world's hegemonic stabilizer, which is deeply dependent on both regulating and consuming Middle Eastern crude oil, the consequences of retreat would have severe economic consequences on the world economy. Furthermore, in the

post-September 11 environment a robust American influence in the Middle East is arguably more important—not less—in order to deter and preempt terrorists and directly assist moderate Arab regimes and reformers.²⁷

While realists are on strong ground in their prediction that a hegemon would not willingly concede a geographically vital region of the world to terrorists, Bush shows no signs that he views the Al Qaeda threat in these terms. Wilkinson's distinction between corrigible and incorrigible terrorism applies when the targeted government believes that the terrorists' use of violence is conditional on meeting their demands. In this case, however, the evidence indicates that Bush does not agree in the first place with the claim that terrorism directed against America derives from its unpopular Middle East policies.

Why Al Qaeda has Failed to Communicate its Demands: A Theoretical Framework

Three decades ago Robert Jervis noted that actors in the international system transmit signals to communicate their policy demands. For the receiver of the signal to conciliate the sender, the communication must succeed on two levels. First, the receiver must understand what message the sender is trying to communicate. Second, the receiver must believe that the message accurately reflects the sender's intentions; otherwise, the receiver will be skeptical about making concessions.²⁸ This framework provides a useful set of hypotheses to conceptualize the disconnect between Al Qaeda's policy demands and the U.S.-led war on terrorism. The following analysis considers both hypotheses for why Bush has not engaged in a roots debate and conciliated Al Qaeda: (1) Bush assumes that Al Qaeda opposes America unconditionally because he is unaware of the extent to which Al Qaeda's anti-America rhetoric focuses on specific U.S. Middle East policies; (2) Bush recognizes that Al Qaeda's rhetoric is directed against specific Middle East policies, but he doubts that it accurately reflects Al Qaeda's full intentions. After laying out the arguments for both hypotheses, the article concludes by evaluating their implications for terrorism as a communication strategy.

Hypothesis 1: The Receiver Does Not Understand The Sender's Message

Prior to the September 11 attacks there was almost no congressional action or hearings on Al Qaeda, American media coverage of Al Qaeda was sparse, the public consistently ranked terrorism as a second-tier threat, and many students of international affairs felt that the threat of terrorism was being exaggerated.²⁹ In the 2000 presidential campaign neither George W. Bush nor his opponent ever mentioned Al Qaeda, never mind the terrorist group's stated grievances against the United States. Bush's critics charged that the Texas governor was unfit to be president because he lacked "the intellectual curiosity that leads to asking questions resulting in the acquisition of knowledge that can facilitate good judgment." The media promoted this image. A Pew study found that at least thirty newspaper stories questioned Bush's intellectual gravitas in the five months they collected data. Particularly in the area of foreign policy, Bush was criticized for being "unwilling or unable to engage issues in a nuanced manner" and "lacking the motivation to know what he should."³⁰

Evidence affirms that, once in office, Bush did not treat Al Qaeda as a top priority. According to testimonies by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (i.e., the 9/11 Commission) and other high-ranking terrorism experts in the government, the Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG)—the interagency nerve center of senior counterterrorism experts from the CIA, FBI, Department of Justice, and Defense Department—met with Bush's principals and deputies only a handful of times before September 11.³¹ The first deputy-secretary meeting on terrorism did not take place until the spring of 2001. At the time several deputies admitted that they were unfamiliar with the specific goals and capabilities of bin Laden, whom they regarded as the "little terrorist in Afghanistan."³² After that briefing in April with the CSG, the administration did not markedly increase its attention on Al Qaeda. Throughout the summer of 2001, only four of the thirty-plus deputy-level meetings mentioned Al Qaeda; all but one of these meetings mentioned the group in passing.³³ In the thirty-three cabinet-level meetings before September 11, only one of them dealt with Al Qaeda, and it took place just one week before the attacks. When the principals finally met with the CSG on September 4, 2001, one of them reportedly questioned the wisdom of concentrating on the Al Qaeda threat, which the administration continued to view as less urgent than the CSG described. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Hugh Shelton testified on record that "terrorism had been pushed farther to the back burner."³⁴ Only on September 11 did the CSG brief the president on Al Qaeda.³⁵

Premature Cognitive Closure

Bush has not contested the thrust of these points, many of which have since been raised in the media. He has acknowledged that before September 11, "I was not on point. I didn't feel the sense of urgency."³⁶ Although Bush admitted to having scant knowledge of Al Qaeda before the attacks, this paucity of information did not preclude him from making important policy decisions about how to respond. In an interview with Bob Woodward shortly after September 11, Bush acknowledged that as soon as he was notified that a second plane had struck the World Trade Center, "I made up my mind at that moment that we were going to war." For Bush the lesson of the attack was clear: "This country must go on the offense and stay on the offense."³⁷ The veteran journalist has speculated that Bush's inattention to terrorism before September 11, coupled with the sudden nature of the attack, may have forced him into adopting a policy response before he fully understood the nature of the threat.³⁸

Cognitive theories on decision making reinforce this interpretation. Research in cognitive psychology has shown that people frequently make far-reaching judgments on the basis of limited information, especially if there are strong pressures to reach a swift decision. Once a decision has been made, people often engage in what psychologists call "premature cognitive closure," a resistance to changing one's opinion even if it was a "snap judgment." This is particularly common once a public statement is articulated and the decision maker's prestige becomes tied to the success of the policy. Studies show that in cases of premature cognitive closure, active defense mechanisms can actually preclude the decision maker from understanding countervailing information.³⁹ The theory of premature cognitive closure implies that Bush's swift decision to launch an offensive war on terrorism interferes with his ability to internalize evidence suggesting that unpopular Middle East policies may exacerbate the Al Qaeda threat.

Empirical Evidence That Bush Does Not Understand Al Qaeda's Message

Al Qaeda spokesmen lend empirical support to this hypothesis. They allege that a fundamental misunderstanding of Al Qaeda's motives undergirds the war on terrorism. According to Al Qaeda, Bush's decision not to moderate unpopular Middle East policies after September 11 derives from the fact that he "does not proceed from a careful and in-depth study of the enemy."⁴⁰ In audiotapes and videotapes released to Al Jazeera, bin Laden has indicted Bush for failing to "understand" that America is a target because "you attacked us and continue to attack us."⁴¹ This position also has strong advocates within the U.S. intelligence community.⁴² Michael Scheuer, a senior CIA officer formerly in charge of the station devoted to tracking bin Laden, has written that the administration's failure to heed Al Qaeda's warnings is due to its misunderstanding of Al Qaeda's motivations. In *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror*, he states that the war on terrorism is philosophically misguided because it "overlooks" Al Qaeda's consistent warnings for the United States to limit its regional influence. According to him, "Never in the history of U.S. foreign policy have so many officials failed to read so much pertinent information to the detriment of so many of their fellow citizens."⁴³ The allegation, it bears emphasizing, is not that the administration underestimated Al Qaeda's capabilities (which it did), but that it failed to familiarize itself with Al Qaeda's stated grievances. Former chairman of the CSG, Richard A. Clarke, has leveled an even stronger allegation: there is a direct correlation between those whose understanding of Al Qaeda is "not based on analysis" and those who do not appreciate the need for a roots debate.⁴⁴ In his bestseller critique of the war on terrorism, Clarke writes:

Many times since September 11 I have wondered what difference it made that George Bush was president when we were attacked . . . Although Bush had heard about Al Qaeda in intelligence reports before the attack, he had spent little time learning about the sources and nature of the movement . . . Others (Clinton, the first Bush, Carter, Ford) might have tried to understand the phenomenon of terrorism, what led fifteen Saudis and four others to commit suicide to kill Americans. Others might have tried to address the root causes.⁴⁵

The Foreign Policy Elite Outside of the Administration

Evidence suggests that elite opinion-makers outside of the administration also underestimated Al Qaeda's opposition to U.S. Middle East policies. In an edited volume published shortly after the terrorist attacks by the Council on Foreign Relations, President Clinton's former national security advisor cowrote a book chapter entitled "Commandeering the Palestinian Cause: Bin Laden's Belated Concern" where they asserted: "Until it served his larger purposes after the September 11 attacks, bin Laden had been no champion of the Palestinian cause."⁴⁶ This claim, prevalent in the media both before and after the book's publication, is inconsistent with the facts.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, bin Laden attended the King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he joined the Muslim Brotherhood, a devoutly anti-Israel organization. There he came under the tutelage of Abdullah Azzam, a prominent teacher of Islamic thought known for his vehemence toward Israel. It was Azzam, a Palestinian refugee born near the town of Jenin in 1941,

who convinced bin Laden to join the Afghan jihad. By 1984 they cofounded the Maktab al Khidmat lil Mujahidin al-Arab (i.e., MAK) to repel the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Although the United States was its principal patron and ally, MAK's recruitment propaganda stressed the immorality of the "Israeli occupation" and the "Judeo-Crusader alliance." Three years later, Azzam became Al Qaeda's intellectual leader and bin Laden's principal spiritual mentor.⁴⁷ By the early 1990s bin Laden was publicly urging a boycott of American goods in support of the (first) Palestinian intifada.⁴⁸

In the mid-1990s the prominence of Israel and its relationship with the United States intensified in bin Laden's statements. In October 1996, he gave an interview in the Islamic magazine *Nida'ul Islam*, where he "directed a call throughout the world to declare a jihad against the Judeo-Christian alliance, which is occupying Islamic sacred land in Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula."⁴⁹ A few months later, he issued his first fatwa condemning "the blood spilled in Palestine" and beseeching his followers "to prepare and instigate the *Umma* against the enemy, the American-Israeli alliance."⁵⁰ In May 1997 he declared on CNN "jihad against the United States government because it ... has committed acts that are extremely unjust, hideous, and criminal whether directly or through its support of the Israeli occupation."⁵¹ Nine months later, he lambasted the "Jews' petty state," its "occupation of Jerusalem," and the "murder of Muslims there."⁵²

In fact, it is uncommon to find an Al Qaeda communiqué that does not at least allude to Israel. While Al Qaeda references to Israel do appear to accelerate in the mid-1990s, it was not until then that the CIA began systematically tracking and documenting bin Laden's communications. It is reasonable to assume that most of his criticisms before this time were not picked up by U.S. intelligence services and therefore never made their way into the public record. Furthermore, bin Laden's growing tirades against Israel coincided with his growing outspokenness about all of his foreign policy grievances, undermining the argument that Israel is a "belated concern" for him.

Miscommunication and Misperception are the Norm

It may seem unlikely that Bush and senior policy makers from both his and the Clinton administration could systematically underestimate the importance that Al Qaeda assigns to U.S. Middle East policies. However, in the international system adversaries focus more on each others' capabilities than policy demands.⁵³ The history of international relations is beset with incidences of miscommunication and misperception between enemies. In the fall of 1940 Hitler did not grasp Churchill's demand that if the Nazis continued to wage the war, Britain would keep fighting regardless of whether the Nazis shifted their assault to the east. During the Korean War the United States did not appreciate China's warning that if United Nations forces crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, she would fight alongside the North Koreans. Indeed, Jervis has noted that in the international system "the message sent is almost never the message received."⁵⁴

The history of terrorism is the history of miscommunication. The most illustrative example is the Weather Underground, which appeared inimitably well suited to communicate its radical antigovernment message in the late 1960s and early 1970s. An extreme offshoot of the Students for a Democratic Society, the Weathermen had an unusually keen awareness that political violence can only work when the targeted audience (receiver) understands the terrorists' (sender's) demands.

Their manifesto noted: "Armed actions forward people's consciousness... yet they must be clearly understandable to the people." Comprised of middle-class American college students, the Weathermen composed op-eds in national newspapers (including the *New York Times*), met with American journalists, and even wrote a book criticizing the moral bankruptcy of "American imperialism." While large segments of American society empathized by 1968 with their most immediate policy goal—ending the Vietnam War—few Americans understood that bombing New York City's police headquarters, the Capitol building, and the Pentagon were intended to amplify this issue, among other more radical ones. As Schmid and Graaf have observed, "The terrorists could bomb their names onto the front pages but they could do next to nothing to make sure that the message intended by their bombings was also the message transmitted."⁵⁵

Communication Is Especially Problematic for Terrorists

Compared to states, terrorists are particularly disadvantaged in transmitting their intentions. Neorealists have extrapolated from the Hobbesian observation that the world is anarchic. In their view, the absence of a central international authority not only makes individuals feel less secure, it impedes interstate cooperation by fostering mistrust and misperceptions among states. The most recognizable example of this problem is the security dilemma. To bolster their security, states strengthen their militaries. But doing so (generally) leads other states to feel less secure, convincing them to take defensive actions which in turn are regarded by other states as menacing. Anarchy creates a nasty cycle in international affairs as the desire for survival tragically leads to competition for power.⁵⁶ To compensate for the anarchic structure of the international system, states have developed highly institutionalized methods of communicating with each other. Terrorists, however, lack such methods.

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines diplomacy as "the process by which governments, acting through official agents, communicate with one another."⁵⁷ Other authorities define diplomacy as "a process whereby communications from one government go directly into the decision-making apparatus of another."⁵⁸ Diplomacy serves three main functions: (1) it helps states discover and pursue a mutuality of interests; (2) if no mutuality of interests can be found, diplomacy can help manage disagreement by enabling states to select the least conflicting policies; (3) if military confrontation is deemed inevitable, diplomacy can help mitigate the conflict by reducing misunderstandings that could otherwise lead to unnecessary bloodshed.

States have a variety of instruments to communicate with each other. To transmit their intentions states regularly use five methods of communication: (1) the trial balloon, usually in the form of an unattributed semiofficial statement; (2) an official public statement issued through the media, such as a presidential address; (3) oral exchanges in person or by telephone by accredited mediators (e.g., ambassadors-at-large, presidential envoys, cabinet officers, the commander-in-chief); (4) written exchanges between governments; (5) and executive agreements, security commitments, and treaties.⁵⁹ This panoply of techniques is imperfect; governments occasionally misarticulate their concerns and intentions and, of course, lie for advantage.⁶⁰ However, diplomacy does provide a set of tools designed to counteract the signaling problems inherent in an anarchic world. For this reason, diplomacy has been described as "the first line of defense."⁶¹

Because terrorists lack this line of defense, the world is even more anarchic for them. Without institutionalized methods of communication, terrorists are beholden to the media—especially the Western media—to interpret their signals. This is a precarious strategy. The media are generally regarded as a tool for terrorists, providing them the proverbial “oxygen of publicity.” However, media coverage of terrorist attacks tends to focus on the violence of the attack, the human and economic fallout, and the government’s response to it, rather than the terrorists’ stated objectives.⁶² Studies show this is especially true in Britain and the United States.⁶³ It is perhaps no coincidence that these have been two of the most ardent supporters of a “no concessions” policy to terrorists, assuming there is a connection between understanding terrorists’ signals and complying with them.⁶⁴ The lack of institutionalized methods of communication and the media’s propensity to ignore terrorists’ policy demands may help explain why historically even high-profile terrorist attacks rarely translate into policy successes.⁶⁵

Hypothesis 2: The Receiver Does Not Believe The Sender's Message

There is an alternate explanation for why Bush believes that Al Qaeda “hates not our policies, but our existence.” While Bush is aware of Al Qaeda’s demands, he doubts that Al Qaeda’s intentions are actually confined to altering U.S. Middle East policies. Since the early 1990s, Al Qaeda has blamed U.S. foreign policies for its rage, suggesting that it would refrain from attacking Americans if the United States were to reduce its regional influence. This proposition, however, could be an expedient ploy for Al Qaeda to weaken the U.S. position in the Middle East before setting its sights on American democracy itself. This hypothesis accords with H. E. Goemans’s research that victims of aggression in international relations are leery of making concessions because they fear the “winner” will take advantage of its newly acquired power and subsequently increase its policy demands.⁶⁶ An historical example helps illustrate the plausibility of this explanation. In 1939, Finland chose to fight an all-out war with the Soviet Union instead of ceding to Stalin several small islands in the Gulf of Finland. Although surrendering these islands would not, ipso facto, have posed an existential threat, the Finns interpreted Stalin’s ultimatum as a direct challenge to their national survival because they believed he would steadily raise his demands.⁶⁷

Indices Trump Signals

Jervis theoretical work on perception provides a framework for why Bush might doubt Al Qaeda’s signals that its objectives are limited to the Middle East. In *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, Jervis distinguishes between signals and indices. A signal (i.e., statement from sender to receiver) can be thought of as a “promissory note.” By contrast, an index of the sender’s intentions is thought to carry inherent evidence about what the sender hopes to accomplish. Whereas signals can be manipulated for advantage, indices are by definition either uncontrollable or not consciously controlled, providing direct insight into the mind of the sender. For obvious reasons, the receiver will rely on indices when signals are suspect. Examples of indices include either behavior that discloses (unknown to the sender) important information, or private messages overheard or intercepted that affect the perceived validity of the sender’s signals.⁶⁸ Evidence suggests that, for Bush, both types of indices undermine the credibility of Al Qaeda’s signals.

The Terrorism Index

The strongest index of Al Qaeda is, paradoxically, its use of terrorism. Although Al Qaeda says that terrorism is intended to convey its opposition to U.S. Middle East policies, Bush claims that terrorism actually renders suspect the perpetrator's stated agenda. In a televised speech from the National Cathedral three days after September 11, he declared: "The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism—premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents."⁶⁹ On a trip to Poland several months later he expanded on this view: "The true nature of these terrorists" can be seen not in their professed political agenda, but "in the nature of their attacks."⁷⁰ The "war on terrorism" nomenclature is itself a telling manifestation of how terrorism obviates Al Qaeda's professed agenda.

Terrorism delegitimizes Al Qaeda's signals in three closely related ways. First, terrorism is an index of Al Qaeda's immorality. "In this world there are good causes and bad causes, and we may disagree on where the line is drawn," Bush told the UN General Assembly, "yet there is no such thing as a good terrorist."⁷¹ Second, if terrorism constitutes an index of Al Qaeda's immorality, then it is also an index that Al Qaeda is untrustworthy. In the 2003 State of the Union address, he posed the rhetorical question: "Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their [true] intentions?"⁷² Third, and most crucially, terrorism is an index that Al Qaeda secretly harbors maximalist intentions.

That Bush views terrorism as an index of Al Qaeda's maximalist intentions becomes evident in his comments on other terrorist groups. When asked by a reporter in October 2001 if there was any direct connection between September 11 and the spate of anthrax attacks that followed, Bush replied: "I have no direct evidence but there are some links . . . Both series of actions are motivated to disrupt Americans' way of life."⁷³ This interpretation of the unknown terrorist perpetrator(s) is revealing. The identity of the person(s) who sent the anthrax is irrelevant because all terrorists, by virtue of their methods, "share common goals," which presumably transcend specific U.S. policies.⁷⁴ In a televised address in March 2003 Bush reinforced this point: "The terrorist who takes hostages or plants a roadside bomb near Baghdad is serving the same ideology of murder that kills innocent people on trains in Madrid and murders children on buses in Jerusalem and blows up a nightclub in Bali and cuts the throat of a young reporter for being a Jew."⁷⁵ Regardless of their stated goals, terrorists are, by definition, motivated by "global ambitions."⁷⁶

The Taliban Index

Bush's statements suggest that the Taliban's oppressive treatment of the Afghan people may have also provided him an index of Al Qaeda's intentions. During the run-up to Operation Enduring Freedom, Bush asserted, "We see the true nature of these terrorists in the nature of the regime they support in Afghanistan."⁷⁷ Supporting the Taliban was not only an egregious human rights violation. It provided incontrovertible proof of Al Qaeda's long-term objectives. Bush was explicit about his logic: People who "brutalize their own people" and reject "basic human values" must "hate the United States" itself because they evidently oppose "everything for which it stands."⁷⁸ Negotiating with the enemy would therefore be folly because "in Afghanistan we see Al Qaeda's vision for the world."⁷⁹

Terrorism: The Universal Index

It is tempting to dismiss Bush's descriptions of Al Qaeda as instrumental, jingoistic propaganda. However, historically when actors have employed means that violate common standards of international conduct, governments have tended to conclude that they harbor maximalist goals.⁸⁰ In a fascinating study, Edy Kaufman analyzed polling data of the Israeli public during the (first) Palestinian intifada. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Palestinian terrorist groups were still relatively restrained in their use of terrorism. Analysts viewed the mass rioting, tire burnings, and sporadic shootings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip more as a protest against the Israeli occupation than a strategy to eliminate the Jewish state. Yet even before the onset of the sustained attacks on Israeli civilians that would derail the Oslo peace process, 49 percent of Israelis saw the intifada as a deliberate attempt to destroy Israel.⁸¹ This assessment of terrorists is not unique to the current wave of Muslim extremists. More than one hundred years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt called for a crusade to exterminate terrorists everywhere based on the view that anarchists would not stop until they had destabilized governments worldwide.⁸² Indeed, a common feature of targeted populations seems to be the perception that terrorists—by virtue of their tactics—have maximalist intentions irrespective of their stated objectives. Jervis's schematic is potentially useful for understanding why targeted governments frequently ignore terrorists' policy demands as the decision to use terrorism may serve as an index that trumps the terrorists' signals. The gulf between terrorists' signals and indices may also explain why terrorists routinely suffer a credibility gap, militating against making concessions to terrorists.

Dissonance Reduction can Invalidate Signals

The theory of cognitive dissonance may also help account for Bush's belief that unpopular U.S. Middle East policies are unrelated to Al Qaeda terrorism. In his *Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Leon Festinger demonstrated that individuals are psychologically uncomfortable when they hold views that are incompatible with each other. To achieve consonance, individuals will disbelieve countervailing information while confirming evidence is quickly embraced as valid.⁸³ This prognosis fits remarkably well with Bush's propensity to discount Al Qaeda's signals and post-September 11 criticisms from the intelligence community.⁸⁴

Festinger observed two counterintuitive consequences resulting from dissonance reduction. First, when a decision has high costs, the decision maker is likely to convince himself that his decision was worthy of great sacrifice. Second, large amounts of discrepant information can cause a "boomerang effect." Instead of convincing the decision maker to reevaluate his views, the negative feedback can actually strengthen his conviction that he made the right decision.⁸⁵ Cognitive dissonance theory may have prescriptive utility for the war on terrorism. It predicts that heightened instability in Iraq or additional terrorist attacks on the American homeland may ironically reinforce Bush's belief that U.S. Middle East policies are unconnected to Al Qaeda violence.

Al Qaeda's Misdirected Religious Rhetoric

Statements are indices rather than signals if the receiver thinks that he was not the intended audience (i.e., receiver) and therefore the message could not have been sent in order to deceive him.⁸⁶ The evidence suggests that Al Qaeda's religious rhetoric

directed to its followers may provide Bush other indices that Al Qaeda's objectives extend beyond the Middle East.

Like all terrorist groups, Al Qaeda's communication strategy relies on the international media to reach its two main constituencies: its supporters (actual and potential) and its enemies.⁸⁷ Al Qaeda disseminates its messages using the full range of contemporary media options available, especially Arab television networks, newspapers, and increasingly the Internet. The Western media then rebroadcasts and reprints Al Qaeda's communiqués. While this global communication strategy acts as a force maximizer for Al Qaeda's messages, it risks misdirecting them.

There is an inherent tension in Al Qaeda's communication strategy. On the one hand, Al Qaeda must convince targeted governments that its policy goals are limited to the Middle East. As Robert Pape has observed, targeted governments are more likely to make concessions if the perpetrator's policy demands are perceived as limited.⁸⁸ On the other hand, Al Qaeda seeks to mobilize the *umma*—especially militant Islamists—by pledging to transform the entire world. In using a shared media for both messages, Al Qaeda's rhetoric to its supporters may strengthen Bush's impression that Al Qaeda has maximalist goals and is therefore untrustworthy.

To counteract this problem, Al Qaeda typically addresses the audience to whom it is speaking. A standard audiocassette that was broadcast on Al Jazeera last October began: "This is a message from Osama bin Laden to the American people regarding your aggression in Iraq."⁸⁹ Conversely, messages to the *umma* are routinely addressed to fellow Muslims. These communiqués differ from those addressed to Americans in an important way: they emphasize the religious aspect of jihad by promising that "the victory of Islam is coming."⁹⁰ Such religious rhetoric is largely instrumental. Peter Bergen has observed, "As a practical matter, the restoration of the Khalifa (Caliphate) has about as much chance as the Holy Roman Empire suddenly reappearing in Europe. But as a rhetorical device the call for its return exercises a powerful grip on . . . bin Laden's supporters."⁹¹

Al Qaeda's religious rhetoric to its followers serves three primary purposes. First, it is an important "legitimizing force."⁹² Whenever Al Qaeda kills innocent civilians, especially if they are Muslim, it tries to legitimize its attacks by invoking god's name. After the East Africa embassy bombings in August 1998, bin Laden explained to his supporters that the attacks were carried out "with the help of God."⁹³ References to Islam have always been important to Al Qaeda because its most prominent leader was never a religious scholar. Bin Laden did not attend any of the Islamic colleges in Saudi Arabia and does not have the authority to deliver a fatwa on his own.⁹⁴ Second, Al Qaeda emphasizes the religious nature of jihad in order to unify its followers. Al Qaeda is keenly aware that intra-Muslim divisions have historically hindered efforts to resist the West. Al Qaeda frequently warns fellow Muslims of the "Muslim duty to ignore the minor differences among ourselves" because those "engaged in an internal war" will suffer "grave consequences." In messages directed as much to his supporters as to god, bin Laden has implored, "Oh Lord, unify the Muslims" and "praise be to Allah . . . [who] defeats factionalism."⁹⁵ Third, Al Qaeda skillfully uses religion to motivate its following. Its most chilling rhetoric employs the language of religion to inspire followers to join the jihad "destroying, fighting and killing the enemy until, by the Grace of Allah, it is completely defeated."⁹⁶

Al Qaeda's use of religion is obviously having the desired effect on its follower constituency. Few Muslim critics today challenge bin Laden's religious credentials,

even if they oppose his radical Wahabi interpretations. In the wake of September 11, Afghan peddlers sold candies in wrappers painted with bin Laden's face. One of the most common names for newborn males in the Muslim world is presently Osama. Factions within Al Qaeda are undetectable and Al Qaeda's base is growing, not receding. Polls show that support for Al Qaeda has risen in inverse relation to support for the United States.⁹⁷

Yet Al Qaeda's success communicating to its followers stands in stark contrast to its policy successes. Ironically, the former may actually weaken the latter. As Jervis would predict, Al Qaeda's signals to American policy makers that it is motivated by unpopular U.S. policies are undermined by its religious rhetoric to the *umma*, which Bush apparently views as an index that a divine "directive commands them" to impose their "radical beliefs on people everywhere."⁹⁸ This interpretation is consistent with Kenneth Schultz's research demonstrating that heads of state frequently ascertain their adversaries' intentions by paying close attention to the statements they make to their home constituency.⁹⁹

The September 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*—the blueprint for Bush's post-September 11 preemption doctrine—is the clearest manifestation that Al Qaeda's calls for martyrdom (and the martyrdom operations themselves) provide him an index of Al Qaeda's collective mindset. It argues that during the cold war, "we faced a generally status quo, risk-averse adversary" where "deterrence was an effective defense." However, with "so-called soldiers [who] seek martyrdom in death" the threat of "retaliation is less likely to work" because they are evidently "more willing to take risks, gambling with the lives of their people." The document concludes that because the new enemy is fanatical, the United States "can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past."¹⁰⁰ In this way, the document suggests that Al Qaeda's calls for divine self-sacrifice may impede its policy goals by serving as an index that Al Qaeda must be preemptively attacked.¹⁰¹

Al Qaeda's Misdirected History Lessons

Al Qaeda's religious rhetoric to its followers is not the only misdirected signal providing an index of Al Qaeda's intentions. Throughout the 1990s, one of bin Laden's main rhetorical motifs to his followers was that historically the United States has retreated in the face of asymmetric attack. In countless speeches, he reminded Muslim audiences that U.S. forces withdrew from Lebanon just four months after 260 U.S. Marines and Navy seamen were killed in simultaneous suicide bombings. In Al Qaeda lore "the most disgraceful case was in Somalia" when eighteen soldiers were killed and America promptly evacuated the area.¹⁰² As with bin Laden's religious rhetoric to his followers, this propaganda to his followers seems to have profoundly affected Bush. In direct response to bin Laden's claims that the United States is a paper tiger, Bush has repeatedly warned American audiences: "The terrorists have cited the examples of Beirut and Somalia, claiming that if you inflict harm on Americans we will run from a challenge. . . . [Clearly] we can no longer . . . seek to appease them."¹⁰³

Bush's Analogical Reasoning

This notion that Al Qaeda "cannot be appeased or ignored" recurs in Bush's speeches. In employing the language of World War II, he implies that Al Qaeda is analogous to the German and Japanese threats of the 1930s. At the heart of the

World War II analogy is the lesson that appeasement does not work for one reason: notwithstanding the aggressor's claims, it cannot be trusted because it secretly harbors maximalist goals that can only be thwarted with the use of force. In November 2001, Bush alluded to the World War II analogy before the UN General Assembly: "The aggression and ambitions of the wicked must be opposed early, decisively and collectively before they threaten us all."¹⁰⁴

American policy makers have often invoked "the lessons" of World War II to rationalize not conciliating various aggressors. During the cold war, President Truman invoked this analogy to justify opposing North Korea's invasion of the south. President Johnson drew on it to underscore the costs of ceding South Vietnam to the Vietcong.¹⁰⁵ It would be easy to dismiss such analogies as propaganda. Stanley Hoffman, for example, has claimed that historical analogies are a "grab-bag from which each advocate pulls out a 'lesson' to prove his point."¹⁰⁶ However, analogical reasoning has been shown to play a causal role in policy making. In his detailed analysis of the Korean and Vietnam wars, Yuen Foong Khong concluded that historical analogies informed American policy makers' perceptions of the enemy, the stakes of the conflict, and the optimal policy response.¹⁰⁷ Although the Bush administration warns that the war on terrorism is unlike any other American war, policy makers tend to rely on historical analogies in precisely these situations: when the threat is unfamiliar and guidance is needed on how to interpret and combat it.¹⁰⁸ Bush's repeated comparisons of the war on terrorism to World War II indicate that analogical reasoning may thus provide him a cognitive index against appeasement.¹⁰⁹

Evaluating the Two Hypotheses

The standard explanation for why Al Qaeda has been unable to moderate U.S. Middle East policies is that the United States is strategically pinioned to the region. This is indisputably true. Yet President Bush's statements on Al Qaeda, and the policies that emanate logically from them, indicate that he does not accept Al Qaeda's claims in the first place that unpopular U.S. policies motivate Al Qaeda. This article advances two hypotheses for why Bush believes that Al Qaeda "hates not our policies, but our existence."¹¹⁰

Notwithstanding the familiar allegation that Bush is an intellectual lightweight, understanding terrorists' demands is inherently problematic: governments feel compelled to respond quickly to terrorist attacks—sometimes before the enemy's motivations are fully understood; once a leader formulates the main contours of his policy, premature cognitive closure can impede the processing of discrepant information and constrain action channels offering countervailing opinions; the condition of anarchy in the international system promotes misperceptions among enemies, especially over intentions; without the panoply of diplomatic tools afforded to states, the world is even more anarchic for terrorist groups; in the absence of institutionalized methods of communication, terrorists are obliged to broadcast their grievances via the foreign media, which they do imperfectly.

In the event that a targeted government understands the terrorists' demands, it will frequently not believe them. For American politicians, the received "lesson" from World War II is that appeasement does not work, militating against making concessions to aggressors. Yet the credibility deficit facing terrorists is not simply a function of historical experience or ideology. Historically, targeted governments

have perceived terrorists as immoral negotiating partners who will renege on their promises. Furthermore, targeted governments have presumed that terrorists hold uncompromising policy aims—even when their stated goals were limited. This opinion is often expressed as a fear that the terrorists have an irredeemable hatred of the victims and other states sharing their values.¹¹¹ In these ways, terrorism can hinder compromise by acting as an index that trumps the terrorists' signals.

The aim here is not to provide a definitive answer on which hypothesis, or combination of arguments among them, best explains the disconnect between the U.S.-led war on terrorism and Al Qaeda's professed political agenda. Rather, it is to present what Harry Eckstein refers to as a "plausibility probe," an attempt to determine whether a line of inquiry is sufficiently persuasive to warrant further exploration.¹¹² It is interesting to ponder the counterfactual of how another American president might have prosecuted the war on terrorism differently than Bush. Several analysts have speculated that as president, Al Gore, for example, would have invaded Afghanistan without proceeding to depose Saddam Hussein.¹¹³ It is worth noting in this context bin Laden's declaration during the 2004 presidential campaign that the Middle East policies of Bush and Democratic nominee John Kerry were functionally indistinguishable to Al Qaeda.¹¹⁴ Such statements indicate that the United States will remain a target *at least* until it drastically alters its regional influence.

Yet analyzing the disconnect between Al Qaeda's rhetoric and the U.S.-led war on terrorism suggests that Al Qaeda's policy successes will depend less on its ability to cause bloodshed than on convincing Americans that their policies are responsible for it. In the ongoing debate over U.S. grand strategy, the question of whether to accept or reject the validity of Al Qaeda's ultimatum will determine—as much as any other factor—policy makers' positions on the war on terrorism. What distinguishes Bush's thinking is his apparent certainty that unpopular Middle East policies are not the source of Al Qaeda's hatred, whereas liberal internationalists like Gore and Kerry agree with isolationists that U.S. strategic interests in the region must constantly be weighed against the costs of defending them. Although liberal internationalists and isolationists are more inclined than neoconservatives to believe Al Qaeda's signals, history suggests that terrorism will only amplify them by simultaneously discrediting them. This is the terrorism paradox.

Notes

1. For a recent article on this subject, see Max Abrahms, "Are Terrorists Really Rational? The Palestinian Example" *Orbis* 48, no. 3 (2004): 533–49.

2. Harvey E. Lapan and Todd Sandler, "Terrorism and Signaling," *European Journal of Political Economy* 9 (1993): 383–97; Per Batlzer Overgaard, "The Scale of Terrorist Attacks as a Signal of Resources," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38 (1994): 452–78; Bruce Hoffman and Gordon H. McCormick, "Terrorism, Signaling, and Suicide Attack," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27 (2004): 243–81. In general, most research in political science dealing with signaling tends to focus on how actors communicate their capability and resolve, while largely ignoring how effective their signals communicate their policy objectives. See, for example, H. E. Goemans, *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Kenneth Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

3. For a notable exception to this tendency, see Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

4. Peter Bergen, *Holy War, Inc: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 223; Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*

(New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 45; [Michael Scheuer], *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (New York: Brassey's, 2004).

5. Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris*, 153.

6. "A Declaration of War by Osama bin Laden, Together with Leaders of the World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders." August 1996. <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>. Accessed 10 July 2004.

7. Interview with CNN, "Islamic Militant Leader Vows More Anti-U.S. Bombings," 11 May 1997. <http://www.cnn.com/world/9705/11/bin.laden>. Accessed 12 May 2005.

8. "Text of Interview with Al-Jazeera," 7 October 2001, http://www.bbc/text_of_usama_video_7october2001.htm. Accessed 10 April 2005.

9. Quoted in Oxford Analytica, "Middle East/Afghanistan: Al Qaida Threat," 14 May 2002, <http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/oxan/oxa05142002.html>. Accessed 4 May 2005.

10. "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation", White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html>. Accessed 12 June 2005.

11. "Statement by the President to the United Nations General Assembly", <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/18967>. Accessed 14 June 2005. A number of scholars share this view. See Ralph Peters, *Beyond Terror: Strategy in a Changing World* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackhole Books, 2002), 46; Malise Ruthven, *Fury for God: The Islamist Attack on America* (London: Granta Books, 2002).

12. "Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress," White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

13. "Speech by the President to the German Bundestag," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2004982.stm>. Accessed 14 June 2005.

14. Samuel R. Berger and Mona Sutphen, "Commandeering the Palestinian Cause: Bin Laden's Belated Concern," in *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War*, eds., James F. Hoge Jr. and Gideon Rose, 124. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2001).

15. Michael Scott Doran, "Somebody Else's Civil War: Ideology, Rage, and the Assault on America" in *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War*, eds. James F. Hoge Jr. and Gideon Rose, 32 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2001).

16. David Rapoport, "Terrorism", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, eds. M. Hawkesworth and M. Kogan, 1192 (London: Routledge, 1992).

17. For an alternate view of Al Qaeda's objectives see Alan Cullison, "Inside Al Qaeda's Hard Drive," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 2004, 56.

18. "A Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places: A Message from Osama bin Muhammad bin Laden," <http://www.mideastweb.org/osamabinladen1.htm>, accessed 8 June 2005. See Bergen, *Holy War*; Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*.

19. See Romesh Ratnesar, "How an Al Qaeda Bigwig Got Nabbed," *Time Magazine* August 25, 2003, 47.

20. Quoted in Schueur, *Imperial Hubris*, 153.

21. James F. Hoge Jr. and Gideon Rose, eds., *How Did this Happen? Terrorism and the New War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2001) x, 5.

22. Bin Laden described their joyous reaction to the September 11 attacks in a videotape made in mid-November 2001 that was later captured during Operation Enduring Freedom. see <http://www.homelandsecurity.org/showquotes.asp?authorid=50>.

23. John Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 13.

24. Gary C. Gambill, "The Balance of Terror: War by Other Means in the Contemporary Middle East," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 109 (1998): 55-7.

25. Paul Wilkinson, "Security Challenges in the New Reality," (lecture, Tufts University, Boston, MA, October 16, 2002).

26. Realists would also claim that it is unsurprising that the United States has not conciliated Al Qaeda because the world's predominant military power is by definition the most resistant to coercion.

27. Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 9.

28. Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 24.

29. "Statement by Commissioner Thomas H. Kean during Testimony of Condoleeza Rice before the 9/11 Commission," <http://www.cnn.com/2004/allpolitics/04/08/rice.transcript>, accessed 8 June 2005; Andrew J. Bacevich, "Terrorizing the Truth," *Foreign Policy* 125 (2001): 74–5; Flora Lewis, "The New Anti-Terrorism," *New York Review of Books*, Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, February 4, 1999; "Candidate Qualities May Trump Issues in 1999," <http://www.people-press.org/oct99mor.htm>, accessed 8 June 2005.
30. Stanley A. Renshon, "Appraising Good Judgment Before It Matters," in *Good Judgment in Foreign Policy*, eds. Stanley A. Renshon and Deborah Welch Larson, 69, 71, 73, 273, 289, 292 (Oxford, England: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).
31. "Statement by Commissioner Jamie Gorelick during Testimony of Condoleeza Rice before the 9/11 Commission," Cable News Network, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/allpolitics/04/08/rice.transcript>. Accessed 14 June 2005.
32. Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004) 231–32.
33. Julian Borger, "Interview: Richard Clarke," *Guardian Unlimited*, March 23, 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,1175790,00>. Accessed 6 June 2005.
34. "Statement by Commissioner Lee Hamilton during Testimony of Condoleeza Rice before the 9/11 Commission," FindLaw/news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/terrorism/911comm40804tran.html. Accessed 3 June 2005.
35. Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 237–38.
36. "Remarks by the President to the Nation," White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04>. Accessed 5 May 2005.
37. Woodward interview quoted by Robert Jay Lifton, "American Apocalypse," *Nation*, December 22, 2003; See "President Addresses the Nation in Prime Time Press Conference," White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases>. Accessed 5 May 2005.
38. Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 39.
39. Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 194, 215, 291.
40. Quoted in Scheuer, 22.
41. "Full Text: Bin Laden's 'Letter to America,'" 24 November 2002, <http://www.observer.guardian.co.uk/worldview>. Accessed 4 May 2005.
42. Julian Borger, "Bush Told He Is Playing into Bin Laden's Hands," *Guardian Unlimited*, June 19, 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/012271,1242639,00.htm>. Accessed 8 June 2005.
43. Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris*, 128, 32.
44. Quoted in "Profiles: Against All Enemies, Political and Otherwise," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July/August 2004.
45. Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 244–245.
46. Berger and Sutphen, *How Did this Happen?*, 124.
47. Abdullah Azzam, "Al-Qa'idah al-Sulbah," *Al-Jihad*, April 1988, quoted 4 January 2000 in Reuven Paz, "The Heritage of the Sunni Militant Groups," <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articleid.cfm?articleid=415>. International Center for Terrorism (ICT) 2000. Accessed 6 June 2005.
48. Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 90.
49. Quoted in Schueur, 153.
50. "War against the Americans."
51. Interview with CNN, 11 May 1997, op. cit.
52. "War by Osama bin Laden."
53. Goemans, *War and Punishment*, 31.
54. Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, 119.
55. Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication* (London: Sage, 1982), 111.
56. Herbert Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (London: Collins, 1951), 19–20.
57. Elmer Plischke, "Diplomacy," in *Modern Diplomacy: The Art and the Artisans*, ed. Elmer Plischke, 32 (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1979).
58. Charles O. Lerche Jr. and Abdul A. Said, "Diplomacy—Political Technique for Implementing Foreign Policy," in *Modern Diplomacy: The Art and the Artisans*, ed. Elmer Plischke, 19 (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1979).

59. Plischke "Diplomacy," 5, 12, 13.
60. For a landmark article on how lying is endemic in international affairs, see James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379–414.
61. Quoted in Plischke "Diplomacy," xi.
62. Ronald D. Crelinsten, "Television and Terrorism: Implications for Crisis Management and Policy-Making," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (1997): 23.
63. Christopher Hewitt, "Public's Perspectives," in *Terrorism and the Media*, eds. David L. Paletz and Alex P. Schmid, 177 (London: Sage, 1992).
64. Steven Poe, "Nations' Responses to Transnational Hostage Events: An Empirical Evaluation," *International Interactions* 14 (1988): 31–37; David Tucker, "Responding to Terrorism," in *Debated*, eds. Gregory Scott, Louis Furmanski, and Randall J. Jones Jr. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000). The observation that terrorists reside in a more anarchic world than states is meant to be descriptive, not normative. There is no suggestion here that terrorists ought to be embraced by the international community by permitting them to have spokesmen at the United Nations, for example.
65. Abrahms, "Are Terrorists Really Rational?" 533–49.
66. Goemans, *War and Punishment*, 31.
67. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanation," 408–9.
68. Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, 21, 70, 18, 19.
69. "Presidential Speech at the National Cathedral," White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html>. Accessed 1 May 2005.
70. "Presidential Speech to the Warsaw Conference," *Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bush_text110601.html. Accessed 3 May 2005.
71. "Statement by President " (see no. 11).
72. "State of the Union Address," Cable News Network, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/allpolitics/01/28/sotu.transcript.8/>. Accessed 7 June 2005.
73. "Speech to Employees at the Dixie Printing Company," Cable News Network, <http://www.cnn.com/transcripts/0110/24/mlld.00.html>. Accessed 3 May 2005.
74. "Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress," op. cit.
75. "Remarks by the President," (see no. 10).
76. "Presidential Speech Commemorating Pearl Harbor Day," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/12/20011207.html>. Accessed 19 April 2005.
77. "Presidential Speech to the Warsaw Conference."
78. "Presidential Speech at the National Cathedral."
79. "Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress."
80. Jervis, 101.
81. Edy Kaufman, "Israeli Perceptions of the Palestinians' 'Limited Violence' in the Intifada," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 3, no. 41 (1991): 1–38.
82. David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," in *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, eds. Audrey Kurth and James M. Ludes, 46 (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004).
83. Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 13, 31; Ole R. Holsti, "Cognitive Dynamics and Images of the Enemy," in *Image and Reality in world politics*, eds. John C. Farrel and Asa P. Smith, 16 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967); see also Deborah Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).
84. Richard Clarke, *Good Morning America*, ABC, March 22, 2004, www.abcnews.go.com/sections/gma/US/040322.transcript_Richard_Clarke-1.html; see also Larson, (note 83). Accessed 2 May 2005.
85. See Jervis, 394, 404.
86. Jervis, 35.
87. Hewitt, 170.
88. Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003): 343–361.

89. "Text of Osama Bin Laden's Message to the United States," aired on Al-Jazeera 10 September 2003, posted 18 October 2003 by Northeast Intelligence Network, at <http://www.homelandsecurityus.com/bin%20Laden.htm>. Accessed 2 May 2005.
90. Al Qaeda recruitment videotape, 2001, quoted in Bergen, (note 4), 27.
91. Bergen, *Holy War*, 21.
92. Bruce Hoffman, "Old Madness, New Methods: Revival of Religious Terrorism Begs for Broader U.S. Policy," www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/rr.98.9/methods.
93. Quoted in Bergen, *Holy War*, 27.
94. *Ibid.*, 99.
95. "War against the Americans."
96. "War against the Americans" "War by Osama Bin Laden."
97. Daniel Bergner, "Where the Enemy Is Everywhere and Nowhere," *New York Times Magazine*, July 20, 2003, pp. 14–15; James Kitfield, "Breaking AlQaeda Means Getting Bin Laden," *National Journal*, November 23, 2002, p. 3496; "Muslims and the U.S.," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 4, 2003, p. 16.
98. "Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," http://www.bushcountry.org.bush.speeches/president_bush_speech.111103, accessed 4 May 2005; see also "Presidential Address" (note 12).
99. Schultz, *Democracy*, chapter 6.
100. "Speech by the President," White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>. Accessed 11 June 2005.
101. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," White House, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc>. Accessed 6 June 2005. An important corollary to cognitive dissonance theory is that people often reduce dissonance by assuming that contradictory signals result from duplicity rather than confusion or multiple agendas. This assumption is due to the human tendency to perceive the behavior of others, especially adversaries, as more coherent and centralized than is actually the case. Bush's rhetoric suggests that he may view Al Qaeda's statements against U.S. Middle East policies as a form of deception, which is belied by Al Qaeda's religious statements to fellow Muslims. For descriptions of this psychological tendency, see Jervis, 195, 340, 338; Holsti, "Cognitive Dynamics and Images of the Enemy"; Larson, *Origins of Containment*.
102. "War against the Americans."
103. "President Addresses the Nation," White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/09/20030907-1.html>; accessed 5 May 2005; see also "President Bush Addresses the Nation."
104. "Statement by President to the United Nations General Assembly." New York.
105. Ernest May, *Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).
106. Stanley Hoffman, *Gulliver's Troubles* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 135.
107. Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 252–253.
108. James Fallows, "Councils of War: Matching Confusing Historical Realities to Historical Experience," *Atlantic Monthly*, December 2001, 53. The World War II analogy may illuminate several of Bush's most important foreign policy decisions. On the night of September 11 he wrote in his diary, "The Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place today." According to senior policy planners in the Pentagon, this analogy informed his view of how to wage the war on terrorism. "The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, but the weight of the resulting war effort was in Europe," which was perceived as the greater threat. In similar fashion, the Bush administration decided to target the global terrorism structure by focusing on "rogue states," even though they were not responsible for the attacks. To make the case for deposing Saddam Hussein, the centerpiece of his war on terrorism, Bush warned the UN General Assembly in September 2002 that if it failed to enforce its resolution to disarm the Iraqi dictator it would repeat the mistakes of the League of Nations. In his weekly radio address, he then rationalized occupying Iraq by invoking precedents from World War II. "We're not an imperial power as nations such as Japan and Germany can attest. We're a liberating power." In this way, analogical reasoning may have helped convince him not only what policies to adopt, but their moral basis in international history.

109. Still, his underlying fear of emboldening Al Qaeda through concessions is universally recognizable—even if historically the strongest advocates of a “no concessions” policy have not been entirely systematic in their application of this principle.

110. “Statement by President to the United Nations General Assembly.” A number of scholars share this view. See Peters, *Beyond Terror*, 46; Ruthven, *Fury for God*.

111. Kaufman, “Israeli Perceptions,” 1–38; Frederick J. Hacker, “How Effective Is Diplomacy in Dealing with Terrorism?” in *Diplomats and Terrorists: What Works, What Doesn't*, ed. Martin F. Herz (Washington DC: Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, 1982).

112. Harry Eckstein, *Handbook of Political Science: Strategies of Inquiry* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 79–138.

113. Quoted in Schueur, *Imperial Hubris*, 153.

114. Al Jazeera, October 29, 2004.