

## **Al-Qaida / Al-Qaeda (the Base)**

**al Qadr**

**Group for the Preservation of the Holy Sites**

**International Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders**

**Islamic Army for the Liberation of the Holy Places**

**Islamic Army for the Liberation of Holy Shrines**

### **General Overview**

Al-Qaeda is an international terrorist network led by Usama bin Laden [the "Osama" spelling is deprecated, because there is no letter "O" in Arabic]. Established around 1988 by bin Laden, al-Qaeda helped finance, recruit, transport and train thousands of fighters from dozens of countries to be part of an Afghan resistance to defeat the Soviet Union. To continue the holy war beyond Afghanistan, al-Qaeda's current goal is to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate throughout the world by working with allied Islamic extremist groups to overthrow regimes it deems "non-Islamic" and expelling Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries.

In February 1998, al-Qaeda issued a statement under banner of "The World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders" saying it was the duty of all Muslims to kill US citizens—civilian or military—and their allies everywhere. Al-Qaeda would merge with Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Al-Jihad) of Ayman al-Zawahiri in June 2001.

After al-Qaeda's September 11, 2001, attacks on America, the United States launched a war in Afghanistan to destroy al-Qaeda's bases there and overthrow the Taliban, the country's Muslim fundamentalist rulers who harbored bin Laden and his followers. "Al-Qaeda" is Arabic for "the base."

In an al-Qaeda house in Afghanistan, New York Times reporters found a brief statement of the "Goals and Objectives of Jihad":

- Establishing the rule of God on earth
- Attaining martyrdom in the cause of God
- Purification of the ranks of Islam from the elements of depravity

In 1998, several al-Qaeda leaders issued a declaration calling on Muslims to kill Americans—including civilians—as well as "those who are allied with them from among the helpers of Satan."

## Activities

Tactics include assassination, bombing, hijacking, kidnapping, suicide attacks, et al. Numerous reports and public bin Laden proclamations indicate strong desire to obtain and utilize biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. Targets tend to be prominent symbols (public buildings, embassy and military personnel, etc.) of the United States, its allies, and moderate Muslim governments. According to the former CIA Director George J. Tenet, "Usama Bin Ladin's organization and other terrorist groups are placing increased emphasis on developing surrogates to carry out attacks in an effort to avoid detection. For example, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) is linked closely to Bin Ladin's organization and has operatives located around the world—including in Europe, Yemen, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Afghanistan. And, there is now an intricate web of alliances among Sunni extremists worldwide, including North Africans, radical Palestinians, Pakistanis, and Central Asians. Some of these terrorists are actively sponsored by national governments that harbor great antipathy toward the United States."

The group has targeted American and other Western interests as well as Jewish targets and Muslim governments it saw as corrupt or impious — above all, the Saudi monarchy. Al-Qaeda linked attacks include:

- May 12, 2003 car bomb attacks on three residential compounds in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- November 2002 car bomb attack and a failed attempt to shoot down an Israeli jetliner with shoulder-fired missiles, both in Mombasa, Kenya
- October 2002 attack on a French tanker off the coast of Yemen
- Several spring 2002 bombings in Pakistan
- April 2002 explosion of a fuel tanker outside a synagogue in Tunisia
- September 11, 2001, hijacking attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon
- October 12, 2000 U.S.S. Cole bombing in Aden, Yemen killing 17 crew members and wounding 39.
- August 7, 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Al-Qaeda is suspected of carrying out or directing sympathetic groups to carry out the May 2003 suicide attacks on Western interests in Casablanca, Morocco; the October 12, 2002 nightclub bombing in Bali, Indonesia; the 1993 World Trade Center bombing; and a series of incidents in Saudi Arabia against U.S. targets from 1995 to 1996

Plots linked to al-Qaeda that were disrupted or prevented include: a 2001 attempt by Richard Reid to explode a shoe bomb on a transatlantic flight; a 1999 plot to set off a bomb at Los Angeles International Airport; a 1995 plan to blow up 12 transpacific flights of U.S. commercial airliners; a 1995 plan to kill President Bill Clinton on a visit to the Philippines; and a 1994 plot to kill Pope John Paul II during a visit to Manila.

Any information about Al-Qaeda's U.S. operations has come from investigations following the September 11 attacks and the December 1999 foiled Los Angeles airport attack. Interrogations of captured al-Qaeda terrorists are occurring at Guantanamo Bay and from additional undisclosed locations. The extent to which valuable intelligence or information about al-Qaeda's organization is being provided is not known.

In the federal indictment of Zacarias Moussaoui, who was apprehended in August 2001, prosecutors described how the hijackers lived in the United States for months before the attacks—renting apartments, taking flight classes, joining health clubs, and living off funds wired from overseas.

On 29 October 2004, four days before the U.S. presidential election, al-Qaida leader Usama bin Laden had threatened new attacks on the United States. He appeared in a video broadcast on the Arab TV network Al Jazeera claiming responsibility for the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York. Speaking in a calm but strong voice, the terrorist leader referred to the following week's U.S. election, telling Americans their security did not depend on President Bush or Democratic candidate John Kerry or al-Qaida, but would depend on government policies. Bin Laden said al-Qaida decided, in his words, to destroy New York's World Trade towers in 2001 and listed several factors that motivated the attack, including frustration over what he called America's pro-Israeli Middle East policies. He said Israel's bombing attacks on Beirut in 1982 gave him the idea of targeting New York's skyscrapers.

### **Al-Qaeda's Operations Manual**

In the early 1990s, al-Qaeda produced the Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad, a detailed how-to guide for using handguns, explosives, and biological and chemical weapons, in print and on CD-ROM. Materials belonging to a captured al-Qaeda operative in England detailed techniques for forgery, surveillance, and espionage.

### **Location/Area of Operation**

Al-Qaida has cells worldwide and is reinforced by its ties to Sunni extremist networks. Coalition attacks on Afghanistan since October 2001 have dismantled the Taliban–al-Qaida's protectors—and led to the capture, death, or dispersal of al-Qaida operatives. Some al-Qaida members at large probably will attempt to carry out future attacks against US interests. Other known areas of operation: United States, Yemen, Germany, Pakistan.

Al-Qaida is a multi-national network possessing a global reach and has supported through financing, training and logistics, Islamic militants in Afghanistan, Algeria, Bosnia, Chechnya, Eritrea, Kosovo, the Philippines, Somalia, Tajikistan, and Yemen, and now Kosovo. Additionally, al-Qaida has been linked to conflicts and attacks in Africa, Asia, Europe, the former Soviet Republics, the Middle East, as well as North and South America.

The headquarters of al-Qaeda are not known anymore.

- From 1991 to 1996, al-Qaeda worked out of Sudan.
- From 1996 until the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, al-Qaeda operated out of Afghanistan and maintained its training camps there.
- U.S. intelligence officials now think al-Qaeda's senior leadership is trying to regroup in lawless tribal regions just inside Pakistan, near the Afghan border, inside Pakistani cities or in Iran.
- In May 2003, administration officials claimed that senior al-Qaeda figures were in Iran and urged Tehran to apprehend them. Sa'ad bin Laden, Usama bin Laden's son, in an October 2003 report, is said be among those in Iran.
- Al-Qaeda has autonomous underground cells in some 100 countries, including the United States, officials say. Law enforcement has broken up al-Qaeda cells in the United Kingdom, the United States, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Albania, Uganda, and elsewhere.

### **Strength**

It is impossible to know precisely, due to the decentralized structure of the organization. Al-Qaida may have several thousand members and associates. It trained over 5,000 militants in camps in Afghanistan since the late 1980s. It also serves as a focal point for a worldwide network that includes many Sunni Islamic extremist groups, some members of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Harakat ul-Mujahidin.

## External Aid

Bin Laden, member of a billionaire family that owns the Bin Ladin Group construction empire, is said to have inherited tens of millions of dollars that he uses to help finance the group. Al-Qaida also maintains moneymaking front businesses, solicits donations from like-minded supporters, and illicitly siphons funds from donations to Muslim charitable organizations. US efforts to block al-Qaida funding has hampered al-Qaida's ability to obtain money.

Al-Qaida has cooperated with a number of known terrorist groups worldwide including:

- Armed Islamic Group
- Salafist Group for Call and Combat and the Armed Islamic Group
- Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Egypt)
- Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya
- Jamaat Islamiyya
- The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
- Bayt al-Imam (Jordan)
- Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad (Kashmir)
- Asbat al Ansar
- Hezbollah (Lebanon)
- Al-Badar
- Harakat ul Ansar/Mujahadeen
- Al-Hadith
- Harakat ul Jihad
- Jaish Mohammed - JEM
- Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam
- Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan
- Laskar e-Toiba - LET
- Moro Islamic Liberation Front (the Philippines)
- Abu Sayyaf Group (Malaysia, Philippines)
- Al-Ittihad Al Islamiya - AIAI (Somalia)
- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
- Islamic Army of Aden (Yemen)

These groups share al-Qaeda's Sunni Muslim fundamentalist views. Some terror experts theorize that Al-Qaeda, after the loss of its Afghanistan base, may be increasingly reliant on sympathetic affiliates to carry out its agenda. Intelligence officials and terrorism experts also say that al-Qaeda has stepped up its cooperation on logistics and training with Hezbollah, a radical, Iran-backed Lebanese militia drawn from the minority Shiite strain of Islam.

Al-Arabiyah television reported on 20 October 2004 that Jama'at Al-Tawhid wa Al-Jihad had released a statement claiming it has officially joined the Al-Qaeda terrorist network. Al-Jazeera broadcast a statement by the group identifying itself as Tanzim Qa'idat Al-Jihad in Bilad al-Rafidayn (Organization of Jihad's Base in the Country of the Two Rivers). Iraq is commonly known as the land of the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. The statement has not been verified. Usama bin Laden's 29 October 2004 video broadcast on the Arab TV network Al Jazeera made no mention of Zarqawi, suggesting that the report a few days earlier that Zarqawi and Bin Laden had joined forces were in error.