Exhibit 3

Al Qaeda

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SUMMARY

Formed: August 11, 1988

Disbanded: Group is active.

First Attack: August 7, 1998: Al Qaeda operatives detonated car bombs outside the U.S. embassies in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya. The majority of casualties occurred in Nairobi. The bombings took place on the 8th anniversary of U.S. troops' presence in Saudi Arabia. (223 killed, 4,000+ wounded).[1]

Last Attack: On January 7, 2015, two gunmen attacked the offices of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris. The paper had previously been targeted by Islamic extremists for its satire of Islam and was listed in an AQ "most wanted" list. An AQ affiliate, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), claimed the attack, and there is evidence that at least one of the gunmen traveled to Yemen, participated in AQ training, and receiving funding for an attack. (12 killed, 11 wounded)[2]

OVERVIEW

Al Qaeda (AQ) is one of the most powerful terrorist organizations in the world, with a long history and a global reach. It is composed of a core group of operatives and leadership largely based in Pakistan and Afghanistan and maintains relationships with a number of affiliate organizations around the world. AQ and its affiliates have been responsible for many of the deadliest terrorist attacks in the past twenty-five years.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Al Qaeda (AQ) is one of the longest-operating and largest jihadist militant organizations in the world. The group was founded by Osama bin Laden on August 11, 1988 after he had gained experience training and organizing opposition against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Since then, it has grown to become an organization with affiliates and supporters all over the world and has carried out some of the most violent and infamous attacks in the last twenty-five years.[3] It

seeks to rid the Muslim world of foreign influence and establish Shariah-based Islamic governments.[4]

Al Qaeda emerged from the mujahideen movement that challenged the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan beginning in the late 1970s. Osama bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan to join the fighting in 1980. The son of an extremely wealthy Saudi businessman, he became an important member of the jihad by providing funding for the movement.[5] Throughout the occupation, he worked with prominent Palestinian cleric Abdullah Azzam to create a group called Mektab al-Khidmat ("Bureau of Services") that funneled jihadis into Afghanistan.[6] In the mid-1980s, Haqqani Network (HN) leader Jalaluddin Haqqani granted bin Laden land in the mountainous region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Bin Laden established a presence in the region and built a training camp there that became the elite camp for Afghan Arab mujahideen. It was called al-Qa'ida al-'Askariyya, or "the military base," Al Qaeda's namesake.[7] Throughout AQ's development, HN continued to serve as an enabler, providing AQ with training, combat experience, and resources. HN created a safe haven for jihadists and housed AQ and other Islamist militants, facilitating networking between AQ and these other groups.[8] The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Saudi Arabia provided financial assistance to mujahideen groups through Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) throughout the Soviet occupation, though both AQ leaders and CIA members denied that Al Qaeda received U.S. funding.[9] Some accounts allege that over $600 million in U.S. funding went to mujahideen who worked closely with bin Laden.[10]

In April 1989, the Soviet Union declared that it would withdraw from Afghanistan. Bin Laden and Azzam established Al Qaeda from the fighters, financial resources, and training and recruiting structures left over from the anti-Soviet war. Al Qaeda continued to use the mountainous region—including places like Khost, Nangarhar, Paktia, and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan—as a headquarters for its leadership. By August 1989, bin Laden had announced his intentions to have AQ operatives work all over the world, while Azzam preferred to focus on Afghanistan. Azzam died in a car bombing in November 1989, reportedly at the hands of rival Egyptians, and left bin Laden as the undisputed leader of Al Qaeda.[11]

In the meantime, the Islamist movement in Egypt battled the Egyptian government. This fight was marked by the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat at the hand of the Islamists, followed by a government crackdown that weakened the movement and left it with two major extremist organizations. One of these two groups was the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), an organization that would develop ties with AQ largely due to the efforts of Ayman al-Zawahiri. Zawahiri, the leader of an EIJ faction, built rapport with bin Laden through near-constant communications with the AQ leader. Their relationship was so strong that many began to consider Zawahiri the deputy head of AQ.[12]

Between 1989 and 1990, Hassan al-Turabi, the head of an Islamist political party in Sudan, encouraged bin Laden to bring Al Qaeda to Sudan. Bin Laden reportedly agreed to join in the Sudanese Islamists' war against African Christians in Southern Sudan, and his agents began to buy property in the country in 1990.[13] When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, bin Laden was in Saudi Arabia and reportedly approached the Saudi monarchs with a proposal to send mujahideen into Kuwait to fight the Iraqis. The Saudis ignored the proposal and instead joined the U.S.-led coalition. When bin Laden began to denounce the coalition, the Saudi government took away his passport. He fled the country in 1991 and moved to Sudan soon thereafter.[14] In Sudan, bin Laden and his operatives worked to reorient the organization toward a more global mission following the end of the anti-Soviet jihad. The group continued training operations near the Afghan-Pakistani border, expanded its connections in Muslim countries, especially Somalia and Yemen,

and bought weapons and technical equipment.[15] AQ established a network of businesses, NGOs, and private donors across the globe to grow the AQ arsenal and covertly support its terrorist activities. Bin Laden also forged connections with extremist Islamist groups from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Oman, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Somalia, Eritrea, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. AQ began to provide equipment, training assistance, and recruits to Islamist insurgencies in the Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. AQ also reportedly played a role in a number of terrorist attacks throughout the early nineties by training operatives or providing equipment. AQ allegedly trained the Somali militants that shot down two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters in 1993, and AQ may have provided the explosives used in a car bombing against a Saudi-U.S. joint training facility in Riyadh in 1995. In many cases, it is impossible to prove AQ links to these attacks based on public information alone. A U.S. government report found no reliable information to prove that bin Laden was involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, which killed six in New York, although one of the major plotters was Ramzi Yousef, the nephew of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who would later play a major role in the 9/11 attacks.[16]

After a failed 1995 assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak supported by bin Laden, the Sudanese government faced increasing international pressure to stop sheltering Islamist terrorists. Meanwhile, the depreciation of Sudanese currency, combined with increased pressure on AQ, created financial shortages in the organization. Under pressure in Sudan and barred from returning to Saudi Arabia, bin Laden moved back to Afghanistan in May 1996.[17]

The Taliban provided bin Laden with safe haven, though the group was wary of him.[18] AQ reportedly paid the Taliban between $10 and $20 million per year for shelter.[19] In 1996, bin Laden declared war on the United States in an extensive fatwa published in the newspaper al-Quds al-Arabi.[20] After the highly publicized fatwa, Saudi Arabia put pressure on the Taliban to quiet bin Laden. Although bin Laden promised to avoid drawing too much attention, he later gave a highly publicized and inflammatory interview to CNN in March 1997.[21] A year later, bin Laden and leaders of several other jihadist organizations made a sweeping declaration of global jihad from a camp in the mountainous Afghani-Pakistani border region, calling on all Muslims all across the world to kill Americans wherever they were.[22]

Meanwhile, Zawahiri had traveled around the world, including within the U.S., to raise funds and support various jihadist movements. He returned to Afghanistan in May 1997 where he remained with bin Laden for the next four years. During this time, he still commanded EIJ attacks. The Egyptian government continued its crackdown against Islamist groups, sentencing Zawahiri to death in absentia.[23] EIJ merged with AQ informally in 1998, and formally in June 2001.[24]

In Afghanistan, AQ made more connections with other jihadist movements, recovered financially, and planned terrorist attacks. AQ-funded camps trained between 10,000 and 20,000 fighters between 1996 and 2001. While it collaborated with many different organizations and trained thousands of fighters, the group kept its core membership small.[25]

In August 1998, AQ carried out car bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, killing 224. The act represented a shift from AQ's supportive role – providing training, finances, and equipment to other groups carrying out terrorist attacks – to exercising full operational control over attacks.[26] In 2000, AQ members in Yemen bombed the USS Cole in Aden, killing seventeen American sailors.[27]

Between 1998 and 1999, AQ leadership began to plan the 9/11 attacks. According to AQ leadership and captured operatives, the goal of 9/11 was to provoke a U.S. invasion of

Afghanistan, drawing the U.S. and its allies into the same kind of long war similar to that which had drained the Soviet Union in the 1980s.[28] Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was the alleged operational manager of the attacks, arranging logistics and funding. Bin Laden also played a significant personal role, recruiting operatives and playing a large part in target selection.[29] Around 2000, Mohammed Atta, an Egyptian architect, went to Kandahar, Afghanistan to join AQ. In early 2000, bin Laden put him in charge of on-the-ground operations for the coming attack. The operatives, including Atta, began to move to the U.S. in mid-2000.[30] On September 11, 2001, the nineteen operatives hijacked four planes, crashing two into the World Trade Center buildings and one into the Pentagon, while the fourth crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. The operation killed 2,973 people, likely caused almost $200 billion in physical and economic damage, and cost Al Qaeda between $400,000 and $500,000.[31]

The 9/11 attacks brought Al Qaeda and Islamist terrorism to the forefront of international security concerns. The United States invaded Afghanistan in October 2001, seeking to root out Al Qaeda and deny it a safe haven by toppling the Taliban government. Bin Laden escaped a December 2001 effort to capture him in the mountains at Tora Bora, beginning a decade-long manhunt. Meanwhile, the CIA and the Northern Alliance, a political and military Afghan organization, worked together to overthrow the Taliban.[32] Despite bin Laden's escape, U.S. forces and allies had killed or arrested much of the group's mid-level leadership by 2005.

AQ's dominant strategy since 2001 has been to encourage affiliate organizations to attack the West, sometimes with financial or operational support.[33] These affiliate organizations flocked to AQ after 9/11; several groups either emerged or reoriented themselves to pledge allegiance to bin Laden. These groups included Al Qaeda in Yemen (AQY, which would later become Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP); Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI, which would later split from AQ and become the Islamic State, or IS); and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM, which would become one of the most deadly AQ affiliates).[34] For most preexisting groups, which largely focused on local issues, pledging allegiance to Al Qaeda meant adopting a more global jihadist worldview. However, they largely continued to carry out attacks in their own countries. While some AQ affiliates attacked the presence and interests of Western states in the Middle East, no affiliate made an attempt to attack the U.S. homeland until 2009.[35] Though affiliates allowed AQ to expand its reach and gain local expertise, these relationships sometimes posed challenges for AQ. For example, AQI, which later became the Islamic State, had a troubled relationship with AQ from its beginnings. After bin Laden accepted AQI as an affiliate in 2004, AQI's leader, Zarqawi, consistently ignored warnings from AQ leadership to cut back on sectarian attacks and attacks that indiscriminately killed Muslims.[36] In 2005, AQI bombed Western-serving hotels in Amman, killing mostly Muslims. This attack caused a huge public backlash against Al Qaeda. Despite pushback from AQ leadership, AQI continued its disobedience throughout its time as an AQ affiliate.[37]

The most well-known AQ attacks since 9/11 have, for the most part, involved very little operational involvement from the core group of AQ leaders who planned 9/11. Instead, these attacks were carried out largely by affiliates or by local actors who were inspired by AQ and other extremist clerics or organizations and who may have received money and training from AQ. In October 2002, militants from the group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) bombed two Bali nightclubs, killing 202. JI operative Hambali, who reportedly was also counted among AQ leadership, planned the attacks and claimed to have received funding from AQ.[38] In November 2003, four truck bombs exploded in Istanbul, killing 58 and wounding about 750. Al Qaeda allegedly sponsored the attack that was carried out by local extremists.[39] On July 7, 2005, four suicide bombers detonated in the London Underground and on a London bus, killing 56 and wounding over 700. The bombers were British by birth, and most visited Pakistan before the attack. Al

Qaeda claimed responsibility for the bombings, but there is no clear evidence that shows that AQ directed the attack.[40] On December 25, 2009, AQAP was the first AQ affiliate to attempt an attack against the U.S. homeland when Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab, known as the underwear bomber, failed to set off an explosive device on a plane. The next fall, AQAP attempted to bring down several planes through mail bombs.[41]

In May 2011, the search for bin Laden came to an end when U.S. Navy Seals killed him at his Abbottabad hideout. Ayman al-Zawahiri succeeded him as AQ leader.[42] Bin Laden's true control over AQ operations and overall strategy has been widely debated, with some experts claiming that he had little real power to command the organization, while others hold that he was heavily involved in most of AQ's operations.[43] However, most sources agree that, while followers widely viewed bin Laden as inspirational and charismatic, Zawahiri is not as likeable and remains unpopular with many members, despite his many years of high-level service to the group.[44] As of 2018, discontent with Zawahiri has led AQ to look towards Osama bin Laden's son as a future leader.[45]

Bin Laden's death was followed by an aggressive U.S. drone strike campaign that eliminated several high-ranking AQ members. Those killed include Ilyas Kashmiri, an AQ operative and one of the most dangerous terrorists in South Asia, in April 2011; Atiyah abd al-Rahman, reportedly AQ's second-in-command after Zawahiri, in August 2011; Rahman's successor, Abu Yahya al-Libi, in June 2012; and Nasser al-Wuhayshi, the leader of Al Qaeda in in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the alleged new second-in-command after Zawahiri, in June 2015. Under the Obama administration, drone strikes reportedly killed at least thirty-four AQ leaders in Pakistan alone, along with over 230 AQ fighters.[46] By some analysts' measures, the proportion of AQ leaders who have been killed by drones may be as low as two percent.[47] AQ core leadership remains on the Afghan-Pakistani border region and is weaker than it was before bin Laden's death.[48]

During the Arab Spring, experts debated whether the movements and their results would strengthen or weaken Al Qaeda. The strongholds of AQ leadership—the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Somalia, and Yemen—remained largely untouched by the clashes and political changes, and the effect of the Arab Spring on potential recruits is difficult to measure.[49] The release of thousands of AQ militants from Egyptian prisons in 2012 and 2013 invigorated the organization, providing it with additional manpower and momentum as the Middle East slipped into political turmoil.[50] The most significant result of the Arab Spring for Al Qaeda has been the expansion of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which harnessed the Syrian civil war to grow dramatically in size and power. AQI changed its name to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and announced a merger with new AQ-affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, which operated in the Syrian civil war with the support of AQI/ISIS. When the commander of al-Nusra denied the merger, Zawahiri supported al-Nusra, saying that the organizations should remain separate.[51] ISIS's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, publicly rejected Zawahiri's statement.[52] ISIS continued to operate in Syria, often clashing with other Islamist groups and ignoring calls for mediation. Attempts at reconciliation with Al Qaeda leadership failed, and AQ officially renounced any connection with ISIS in February 2014 before it became the Islamic State (IS).[53] The Islamic State currently draws pledges of allegiance from militant groups all over the world, including from some groups that had previously sworn allegiance to Al Qaeda. In some areas, fighting has broken out between IS and AQ supporters. Some groups have splintered as members decide between AQ or IS affiliation.[54] Al-Nusra has become deeply entrenched in Syria, using the civil war to assert its leadership among Islamist groups fighting the government and IS. Similarly, the civil war in Yemen has provided AQAP with an opportunity to expand. It has taken control of territory in Sunni-majority parts of Yemen while the government largely focuses on fighting the Houthi rebellion in other parts of the country.[55]

In the 2010s, AQ has conducted few high-profile attacks on the West, and, in contrast to IS, the group has not inspired so-called self-radicalized lone wolf attacks.[56] The most notable exception is the January 2015 shooting of employees of the French satirical publication *Charlie Hebdo* by Chérif Kouachi who had ties to AQAP. Most of AQ's attacks have been carried out by its affiliate organizations in their own theatres of operations, most commonly Kenya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen.[57] Many analysts note that AQ's lack of recent attacks in the West should not be interpreted as an indication of a lack of ability: rather, it is a strategic choice. Zawahiri banned external operations in Europe and the U.S. in order to concentrate resources on the group's efforts to rebuild after the emergence of IS and on its global expansion through the establishment of additional affiliate organizations.[58]

In the wake of the explosive rise of IS, analysts have debated the future of AQ. Some hold that AQ is declining as a result of falling popular support and counterterrorism measures by the U.S. Others counter that AQ is on a path to become stronger than ever, transitioning from a small, centralized organization to a transnational network commanding the loyalty of legions of affiliates. Since the early 2000s, AQ's affiliates have grown in strength and number.[59]

Al Qaeda also cultivates ties with several groups below the threshold of formal affiliates. In total, AQ enjoys relationships with over 20 groups across the world from the Maghreb to South Asia and has roughly 32,000-44,000 militants, according to some analysts, across its affiliates and partners.[60] Thanks to the strength of this network, largely built quietly and attributed to the strategic guidance of Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda is considered by some observers to be the most dangerous Islamist militant group in the world, especially as IS continues to lose territory.[61] AQ has taken steps to exercise control over its affiliates, dispatching senior leaders to assume top positions in AQ branches and leaving only a small contingent in the traditional headquarters in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Encrypted communications technology allows global AQ leadership to stay in close contact with subsidiary groups.[62]

The apparent split between AQ and Jahbat Al Nusra in 2016 presents an obstacle to AQ's consolidation of a transnational network. Seemingly rejecting AQ's model of international jihadism, Al Nusra militants rebranded twice, first as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (JFS) and soon after as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, in order to focus on local operations in Syria.[63] Although it appeared at first that the rupture may only have been for reasons of optics (distancing from AQ's unpopular brand),[64] by mid-2017, many analysts concluded that the relationship between the former Al Nusra, now HTS, had soured.[65] Consequently, AQ's position in Syria has contracted. Rather than the 20,000 fighters it could boast in the past, AQ in Syria commanded only about 2,000-3,000 fighters as of mid-2018.[66] A new AQ loyalist group, Tandhim Hurras al-Deen, has emerged, but its official ties to AQ remain unclear.[67]

Many security analysts believe that the war in Yemen, raging since 2015, and its ensuing political and economic turmoil foster an environment in which AQ can gain a deeper foothold in the region through its affiliate AQAP. Although AQAP was pushed out of the provincial capital of Al Mukalla in 2016 after a year of control, the group seized millions of dollars before fleeing the city, and 4,000 to 7,000 AQ-aligned fighters remain actively engaged in the conflict. Local populations marginalized by the Yemeni government could provide a groundswell of support for a strengthened AQ.[68]

AQ's strategy in the construction and strengthening of its global network is thought to be Zawahiri's handiwork. In addition to diverting resources from operations in the West, Zawahiri has focused on incorporating local grievances and issues into AQ's wider platform to secure the

loyalty of affiliates in various regions. He has also instituted a policy of avoiding mass killings of Muslims, allowing the group to adopt a stance of "moderate extremists" in relation to IS. Finally, Zawahiri has consciously sought to keep AQ out of the news, allowing IS bear the brunt of Western counterterrorism efforts while AQ steadily rebuilds its capabilities outside the spotlight.[69] Under this view, it is only a matter of time until AQ attempts to strike in Europe and the U.S. once again. Indeed, analysts have maintained as recently as December 2018 that AQ retains a capability to launch attacks in Europe.[70]

Despite Zawahiri's apparent successes in expanding the group's global reach, his hold on the group's top leadership post may be tenuous. As of 2018, AQ's leadership structure seems to have become more unstable. Ayman al-Zawahiri lacks the charisma of his predecessor, Osama bin Laden, and is thought to be losing the confidence of rank-and-file members. Some analysts believe that AQ is grooming bin Laden's son Hamza to take over command and reinvigorate the group in the future.[71]

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A. LEADERSHIP

1. **Osama bin Laden** (1988-May 2011): Bin Laden was the Saudi-born founder and leader of Al Qaeda. He supported the Afghan resistance to the Soviet occupation in the 1980s, then began to target the U.S. and other Western influences with Al Qaeda. He was killed by U.S. Navy Seals in May 2011.[72]

2. **Ayman al-Zawahiri** (unknown-present): Zawahiri was AQ's longtime second-in-command who became the group's leader in 2011 when bin Laden was killed. Some analysts credit Zawahiri with controlling the group's strategy before bin Laden's death, while bin Laden acted as AQ's figurehead.[73] Others call Zawahiri, who comes from a family of politicians and religious scholars, AQ's ideological mastermind.[74]

3. **Mustafa Abu al-Yazid**, also known as Sheikh Saeed al-Masri (unknown-May 22, 2010): Yazid was a founder and financial chief of AQ and was also believed to be third in command of the group behind Zawahiri and bin Laden. He played a vital role in the planning of operations, especially attacks on Western forces in Afghanistan. Yazid was killed in May 2010 by a U.S. drone strike.[75]

4. **Atiyah abd al-Rahman** (unknown-August 22, 2011): Rahman, an AQ operative from Libya who was close with bin Laden, took over as AQ's operational planner after bin Laden's death, effectively serving as the organization's second-in-command. He was killed by a U.S. drone strike in August 2011.[76]

5. **Abu Yahya al-Libi** (unknown-June 5, 2012): Libi was a Libyan Islamic scholar who played large role in AQ operations. He was reportedly second to Zawahiri when he was killed in a U.S drone strike in North Waziristan.[77]

6. **Nasser al-Wuhayshi** (unknown-June 2015): Wuhayshi was the leader of AQAP and reportedly became the second-in-command of Al Qaeda soon before his death in June 2015, when he was killed by a U.S. drone strike.[78]

7. **Hamza bin Laden** (unknown-present): The 30-something son of Osama bin Laden, Hamza is believed to operate in AQ leadership in some capacity. The group is reportedly preparing him to take over from Zawahiri.[79] In 2016, he began appearing in AQ propaganda, and in 2018 he was granted the title of "shaykh," a title commonly meaning the leader of an Arab tribe.[80]

B. NAME CHANGES

The name "Al Qaeda" comes from the name for one of the mujahedeen training camps established during the Afghan insurgency against the Soviet invasion in the 1980s. According to bin Laden in a taped interview with A*l Jazeera* in October 2001, the name was thought up by Abu Ebeida El-Banashiri in reference to one of these camps and means "the foundation" or the "base."[81]

C. SIZE ESTIMATES

The organization has an extremely tight-knit core leadership group and mostly utilizes operatives from allied affiliate groups to carry out attacks. Estimates of core membership are generally less than 1,000, though second-tier membership lies in the thousands to tens of thousands and outer-shell support could be up to 100,000.[82]

- 1989: 75 (core) (CIA-FBI Task Force)[83]
- September 11, 2001: 500-1000 (core) (CIA-FBI Task Force)[84]
- 2004: 18,000 (London International Institute of Strategic Studies)[85]
- September 2011: 3,000-4,000 (Pentagon)[86]
- 2018: 32,000-44,000, including global affiliates and partners (Council on Foreign Relations)[87]

D. RESOURCES

While many analysts initially believed that bin Laden personally financed the majority of AQ activities through family inheritance, the CIA now reports that private donations funded most of the $30 million per year that it took to operate AQ before 9/11. A core group of fundraisers reportedly collected both from donors who knew the eventual destination of their money and those who did not, primarily in the Gulf States. Additionally, corrupt employees at charitable organizations siphoned money to AQ. Some charities, such as the Al Wafa Organization, were likely run entirely by AQ operatives to funnel money directly to AQ.[88] Many wealthy donors to Al Qaeda are nationals of Qatar who see AQ militants as "moderate extremists" fighting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime and the Islamic State (IS).[89]

AQ has also obtained funding by holding hostages for ransom. While the U.S. and U.K. ban payments to terrorist groups, some European countries lack such policies. Between 2008 and 2014, AQ is estimated to have raised around $125 million from kidnappings alone.[90] In the past 20 years, ransoms have surged from $200,000 per hostage in 2003 to up to $10 million per hostage in 2014.[91] Three of AQ's major affiliates – Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Shabaab, and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula – are known to have engaged in kidnapping for funding. Analysts believe that AQ's global headquarters in Pakistan coordinates hostage-taking protocol across affiliates and regions of operations.[92] Allegations that AQ received funding from the Saudi state, relied heavily on drug trafficking, traded in conflict diamonds, and manipulated the stock market with its advanced knowledge of 9/11 were found by the U.S. 9/11 Commission Report to be unsubstantiated.[93]

Recruitment of trainees and militants largely occurs through engagement with local tribes in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which at one time offered new recruits between $1,000-$1,500 per

month plus numerous benefits and vacations in exchange for sworn allegiance and secrecy.[94] Decades of running training camps along the Afghan-Pakistani border has allowed AQ to pick the most promising candidates for recruitment into AQ.

E. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS

Disclaimer: This is a partial list of where the militant organization has bases and where it operates. This does not include information on where the group conducts major attacks or has external influences.

AQ's leadership has largely operated out of Pakistan since the American invasion of Afghanistan.[95] It has a particularly strong presence there, in Somalia, and in Yemen.[96] As of 2013, Al Qaeda or AQ affiliates had significant presence in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Algeria, Mali, Libya, Niger, Tunisia, Morocco, and Nigeria.[97] By 2018, AQ had expanded its areas of operations to include a presence in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Russia.[98]

STRATEGY

A. IDEOLOGY & GOALS

Al Qaeda aims to rid the Muslim world of Western influence, to destroy Israel, and to create an Islamic caliphate stretching from Spain to Indonesia that imposes strict Sunni interpretation of Shariah law.[99] However, not all AQ members and affiliates agree on the same laws. Some consider Shiite Muslims to be apostates, while others do not. This disagreement has caused rifts between AQ and its affiliates — for example, when AQI targeted Shiites in Iraq against the instructions of bin Laden.[100]

B. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Core Al Qaeda has never engaged in the political process on any level. Bin Laden personally advocated for followers to focus on education and persuading others to join their cause, rather than political engagement with Islamic political parties.[101]

C. TARGETS & TACTICS

Al Qaeda uses a wide variety of tactics to achieve their goals. AQ and its affiliates employ suicide bombings, IEDs, rocket and small arms attacks, grenades, kidnapping and hostage-taking, ransoms, hijackings, and propaganda to further these goals against a number of different countries, both in the Middle East and around the globe. Al Qaeda also has reportedly sought nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and the group attempted to purchase weapons-grade uranium as early as 1997.[102]

AQ and its affiliates have attempted and carried out a number of assassinations. It assassinated Ahman Shah Massoud, a powerful anti-Taliban military and political leader in Afghanistan, on September 9, 2001.[103] The group killed former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in a suicide bombing attack in 2007.[104] It may have been involved in two assassination attempts against Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in 2003.[105] In addition to political leaders, AQ also reportedly was behind multiple attempts to kill Kurt Westergaard, the Danish cartoonist who published cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed.[106] AQ also allegedly trained at least one of the gunmen who attacked the offices of French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, included on an AQ "most wanted" list, and may have funded the 2015 attack.[107]

AQ and its affiliates target U.S. and Western presence and interests in the Middle East, as well as political figures and security forces that attempt to prevent AQ from reaching its goal. AQ affiliates rarely attempt to attack the U.S. homeland, although AQAP was behind two attempted airplane attacks in the mid- to late-2000s.[108] Some analysts believe that AQ has not carried out another 9/11-scale attack partly because it is waiting for the resources and opportunity to undertake a larger attack. Others claim that AQ is not currently planning larger attacks because it is no longer capable and instead is willing to rely on smaller, more achievable attacks.[109] In December 2018, the United Kingdom's security minister, Ben Wallace, voiced concern that AQ, newly "resurgent," may be planning future attacks on passenger planes in Europe in the style of 9/11.[110]

MAJOR ATTACKS

Disclaimer: These are some selected major attacks in the militant organization's history. It is not a comprehensive listing but captures some of the most famous attacks or turning points during the campaign.

- August 7, 1998: Two truck bombs detonated outside the U.S. embassies in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya. The significant majority of casualties occurred in Nairobi. The bombings took place on the eighth anniversary of U.S. troops' presence in Saudi Arabia. Al Qaeda and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility. (223 killed, 4,000+ wounded)[111]

- October 12, 2000: An AQAP suicide bomber drove a small watercraft towards the side of the hull of the U.S.S. Cole naval ship, detonating a large bomb stored on the watercraft upon impact. (17 killed, 39 injured)[112]

- September 11, 2001: In the most destructive attack ever attributed to Al Qaeda, operatives hijacked four U.S. jetliners and piloted two into the World Trade Center towers and one into the Pentagon building. The fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania, probably en route to an additional target. It was the first major foreign attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor, the most violent day in America's history after the battle of Antietam in 1862 and resulted in economic damages valued at between $100 billion and $2 trillion. Following the attacks, the United States invaded Afghanistan to find and prosecute those responsible for the attacks, driving bin Laden and his organization to flee to remote regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. (2,996 killed, 6,000+ wounded)[113]

- November 15, 2003: Carried out over two days (November 15 and November 20, 2003), four truck bombs ran into 2 Jewish synagogues, a bank, and the British Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. The bombing at the British Consulate may have been coordinated with U.S. President Bush's meeting with Tony Blair, which occurred the day of the second bombing (11/20/2003). (67 killed, 700+ wounded)[114]

- May 29, 2004: Seventeen members of the self-proclaimed "Jerusalem Squadron," attacked two oil industry buildings in Khobar, Saudi Arabia. The militants took 41 hostages, reportedly questioning and releasing only Muslim hostages prior to their standoff with police. Abdulaziz al-Muqrin, the leader of AQAP from 2003-2004, claimed responsibility for the attacks in an audio tape. (22 killed, 25 injured)[115]

- March 11, 2004: Coordinated bombs went off on Madrid's public transportation system, killing 191. A Spanish government investigation report found that AQ may have inspired the attacks, but that AQ had no involvement in the planning or operation of the bombings. Intelligence gathered after the investigation suggests that AQ may have facilitated and supervised the attack. (191 killed, 1,800+ injured)[116]

- July 7, 2005: Four British men detonated 3 bombs on the London Underground and one on a double-decker bus during morning rush hour in London. Al Qaeda claimed the bombings, but there is no direct evidence that shows that AQ directed the attack. (56 killed, 770+ injured)[117]

- November 23, 2006: Al Qaeda in Iraq detonated a series of car bombs and carried out mortar attacks in Sadr City, Iraq. It was the deadliest sectarian attack since the beginning of the U.S.-led war in Iraq in 2003. (215+ killed, 257 injured)[118]

- December 27, 2007: Al Qaeda spokesman Mustafa Abu al-Yazid claimed that AQ was responsible for the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, former prime minister of Pakistan, in advance of upcoming elections.[119] (24 killed, unknown wounded)[120]

- September 20, 2008: A truck bomb exploded at the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad. Intelligence officials suspected AQ, although the attack was never claimed. (40+ killed, 250+ wounded)[121]

- December 25, 2009: AQAP made the first attempted attack against the U.S. homeland by an AQ affiliate when Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab failed to set off an explosive device on a plane. (No casualties)[122]

- October 2010: AQAP sent bombs through cargo mail, attempting to down planes over the U.S. The bombs were discovered before the planes left for the U.S. but had successfully passed through several cargo screening facilities in different countries. (No casualties)[123]

- January 7, 2015: Two gunmen attacked the offices of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris. The paper had previously been targeted by Islamic extremists for its satire of Islam and was listed in an AQ "most wanted" list. AQAP claimed the attack, though there is evidence that at least one of the gunmen traveled to Yemen, participated in AQ training, and receiving funding for an attack. (12 killed, 11 wounded)[124]

INTERACTIONS

A. DESIGNATED/LISTED

- U.S. State Department Foreign Terrorist Organizations: October 8, 1999[125]
- United Nations: October 15, 1999[126]

B. COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

During AQ's inception and development, the majority of its supporters were mujahedeen fighters that sought to install Islamic government in the Muslim world after the end of the Cold War. Currently, a significant portion of Al Qaeda members are tribal leaders and former madrasa students, largely of Pakistani descent. Al Qaeda has a positive relationship with some parts of the

Pashtun community; bin Laden himself was Pashtun and frequently referenced this identity in his statements. AQ relied on engagement with local tribes in Pakistan and Afghanistan to recruit new members, offering to pay new recruits between $1,000-$1,500 per month in addition to numerous benefits and vacations.[127]

Support for AQ among Muslims has declined since the early 2000s. Between 2003 and 2011, support for bin Laden among Muslim publics dropped by 38 points.[128] A 2013 Pew survey found that a median of 13% of Muslims across 11 Muslim-majority countries had a favorable view of AQ, while a median of 57% had an unfavorable view.[129]

The letters found in bin Laden's Abbottabad hideout revealed bin Laden's ongoing concern with the image and status of AQ as a leader in the global jihadist movement.[130] A significant part of his concern came from actions of the affiliate organizations, which can influence AQ's reputation even when their activities are not approved by AQ leadership. Large-scale attacks, especially indiscriminate attacks that kill Muslims, have drawn backlash from the Muslim community. For example, when AQI bombed Western hotels in Amman against the wishes of AQ, tens of thousands of Jordanians took to the streets to protest AQ and support the king of Jordan.[131] AQ must balance the support of their affiliates with their reputation with the Muslim community at large. In the case of the Jordanian bombings, it chose its relationship with its affiliate, rebuking AQI leader Zarqawi privately, but not issuing a public apology or repudiation.[132]

In 2007, attempting to boost its support in the Muslim world, AQ increased outreach over the internet and made its instructions on when and how to carry out terrorist attacks public to separate itself from some of the more indiscriminate attacks of its affiliates.[133] In spring of 2008, Zawahiri conducted an online Q&A to address critics and the concerns of potential supporters.[134] Zawahiri has made outreach to local populations a priority for AQ in Syria.

Relationship-building with communities appears to have had success for AQ in Yemen. Operating against a backdrop of war and instability, AQ attempts to secure the support of populations in areas where governments are unable to provide basic services. In Yemen, order has broken down amid civil war, and AQAP has recruited hundreds, possibly thousands, of fighters from local communities. Rural areas, where people are generally conservative, have proved fertile grounds for finding new combatants and supporters.[135]

C. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS

Al Qaeda's network is a topic of significant research. AQ may seek affiliate relationships to increase its operational reach, gain local expertise, and boost its legitimacy across Muslim movements around the world. But affiliate organizations come with a variety of challenges, including disparate priorities and ideologies, expensive managerial structures, difficulty enforcing AQ's requests, and problems with branding when affiliates act against AQ's official ideology and tactics.[136] Some argue that the affiliated organizations make AQ significantly stronger and deadlier, while others argue that the organizational ties between AQ and its affiliates are operationally insignificant, or that the effort of maintaining the network is a burdensome strain on AQ core.[137] In the past, many analysts assumed that the relationship between AQ and its affiliates was that of director and follower; AQ core would issue commands, and the affiliates would carry them out. However, the documents seized from Abbottabad when U.S. forces killed bin Laden in 2011 revealed more complex relationships.[138] There is sometimes overlap between AQ core and the leadership of its affiliate organizations.[139]

Beginning in 2014, as the Islamic State (IS) challenged AQ for dominance in the global jihadi movement, some groups have begun to pledge allegiance to the Islamic State, in some cases replacing their pledges to AQ. Notably, Boko Haram, which previously followed AQ, swore

allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in March 2015.[140] Controversies over allegiances have caused some groups to splinter as some members retain loyalty to AQ while others pledge to Baghdadi, such as Al Shabaab (see below).

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is an Algerian-based Sunni Islamist militant group that supports the establishment of an Islamic state and the overthrow of the Algerian government. It was originally formed as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in 1998 by a group of militants who defected from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). In September 2006, Ayman al-Zawahiri announced a union between AQ and GSPC, and in January 2007 GSPC changed its name to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[141] AQIM carries out small arms attacks, assassinations, suicide bombings, and kidnappings to achieve its goal of expelling Western influence from North Africa and establishing Islamist governments in the region.[142] AQIM remains loyal to Zawahiri according to a pledge made in July 2014, but its membership is fragmented between supporters of the Islamic State and AQ.[143] In September 2014, an AQIM regional commander split from AQ, taking AQIM members with him to form a new militant group that pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.[144] In December 2018, a secret letter from a senior IS leader to the emir of AQIM, Abdelmalek Droukdel (also known as Abu Musab al-Wadoud), emerged, urging AQIM to join the growing IS caliphate.[145] Ultimately, AQIM elected to remain loyal to AQ; soon after the letter was received, an AQIM leader went public with critiques of IS and declared it to be illegitimate.

Al Qaeda in Yemen (AQY) was the Yemeni affiliate of the Al Qaeda organization. Coming into existence in 2000 with the USS Cole bombing, AQY became the dominant jihadist player in Yemen. AQY targeted Western interests and individuals in Yemen as well as the Yemeni government. In 2009 it merged with its Saudi counterpart under the umbrella of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (See AQAP).

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), an extremist organization of Saudis and Yemenis, is considered one of the greatest terrorist threats to the United States, regularly attempting to attack the U.S. and U.S. interests in addition to its fight against the Saudi government and its participation in the civil war in Yemen.[146] After a government offensive in Saudi Arabia, Al Qaeda was nearly extinguished in the country when its remaining members fled to merge with AQY in 2009 under the name Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). AQAP became one of the most active strains of Al Qaeda activity and is deeply embedded in Yemeni tribal society. AQAP's tactics are modern and innovative, as seen by their English-language magazine *Inspire* and their techniques used to penetrate security systems, which they utilized in the 2009 Christmas Day bombing attack and the parcel bombing attack in 2010.[147] Of all AQ affiliates, AQAP has always had the closest ties to AQ core leadership. However, those ties do not prevent disagreements.[148] Captured letters between bin Laden and other AQ leaders revealed that bin Laden worried about AQAP's aggressive plans to expand and declare a caliphate in Yemen, as well as its targeting of local security forces rather than the United States.[149] While AQAP published a message of support for the Islamic State (IS) in 2014, it rejected IS's claim on territory in Yemen and reportedly engaged in gunfights with IS members in Yemen in 2015.[150]

Since the onset of Yemen's civil war between Houthi rebels and the internationally recognized Yemeni government, AQAP has fought a parallel war against Yemeni forces that are supported by the U.S. and UAE. Its objectives include territory, weapons, and money. Despite losing ground, AQAP retains a large force estimated 4,000-7,000 fighters, in addition to support among conservative rural Yemenis. The group continues to operate in at least seven provinces across the country.[151]

Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) AQI was the first affiliate organization formally accepted by AQ and the only one personally announced by bin Laden.[152] The relationship between Al Qaeda and AQI/ISIS had a rocky foundation that ultimately led to Zawahiri severing ties. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who had worked with AQ leaders before establishing his own group, approached AQ to begin a formal relationship. The affiliation process took about ten months, and by the end of 2004 bin Laden publicly affirmed the relationship. AQ gained a leading role in the highly visible Iraq War, while AQI gained legitimacy and recognition as an AQ affiliate, which had positive implications for funding and recruiting.[153] Early problems included AQI's intentional targeting of Shiites, which AQ did not condone, and AQI's extremely strict interpretation of Shariah law, which resulted in attacks on other Sunnis, like men who smoked and women who refused to wear the niqab.[154] AQI's 2005 bombing of Western hotels in Amman, which killed mostly Muslims, caused a huge public backlash and drew private criticism from AQ leadership.[155] Zarqawi ignored warnings against the behavior from AQ core leadership, and although there was backlash against AQI that reflected poorly on AQ in jihadist communities, the prominence of the Iraq conflict made it impossible for AQ to drop the relationship altogether. The disagreements between AQI and AQ continued after Zarqawi's death and into Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's tenure.[156] Bin Laden would later invoke AQI's behavior and the backlash against it when he encouraged other leaders to heed his advice.[157] (See the Islamic State section below for more current information.)

Al Qaeda Kurdish Battalions (AQKB) is a militant Islamist organization founded in 2007 through the merger of several Kurdish terrorist organizations. It operates along the Iranian border with Iraq.[158] AQKB allegedly severed ties with the Islamic State and reaffirmed its commitment to AQ in April 2014.[159]

Al Shabaab is an Islamist militant group that primarily focuses on creating a Shariah-run state in Somalia.[160] The U.S. believes that Al Shabaab is able to carry out its attacks due to an influx of money and training from foreign jihadists linked to Al Qaeda.[161] While Al Shabaab has openly claimed affiliation with Al Qaeda since 2007, the group was accused of hosting Al Qaeda cells as early as 2002 when the AQ cells were reportedly planning the twin attacks on Israeli targets close to the Kenyan resort of Mombasa.[162] Many Al Shabaab leaders have trained at Al Qaeda camps, including Al Shabaab leader Ibrahim Haji Jama, who trained with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, and Tariq Abdullah, who was Al Qaeda's leader in East Africa and is reportedly the financier for its African operations.[163] In addition, Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, killed in a U.S. raid in September 2009, was a senior All Qaeda leader who trained terrorists in Somalia and took the lead in coordinating relations between Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda.[164] Adan Hashi Ayro, the first leader of Al Shabab, was also a top AQ operative in East Africa.[165] In March 2007, Sheikh Abu Yahy al-Liby, head of the Al Qaeda in Libya, called Al Shabaab "the lions of Somalia and champions of the deserts and jungles," while Zawahiri and Bin Laden have praised Al Shabaab and issued statements to "call on the international mujahedeen to rush to the aid of their Muslim brothers in Somalia."[166] However, in 2010, bin Laden denied an Al Shabaab request for official recognition as an AQ affiliate, citing concerns that such an affiliation would both make Al Shabaab a bigger target and that foreign aid to impoverished Muslims in Somalia might be compromised if the association was made public.[167] A letter to bin Laden, probably from Zawahiri, critiqued the decision to not accept Al Shabaab's pledge.[168] In 2012, after bin Laden's death, AQ and Al Shabaab reportedly released a joint video in which Al Shabaab leader Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr pledged allegiance to Zawahiri and Zawahiri accepted the pledge.[169]

In 2015, IS called on Al Shabaab to join its network, but the group chose instead to reaffirm its longstanding support of AQ. This decision triggered the formation of a splinter group of former Al Shabaab militants now allied with IS, Jahba East Africa, in 2016.[170]

Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) is AQ's principal affiliate in South Asia. Announced by Zawahiri in September 2-14, the organization is a composite of several smaller militant groups that had previously supported AQ. Asim Umar, a close follower of Zawahiri, serves as AQIS's leader.[171] Consequently, analysts believe that AQIS is likely the only affiliate which the AQ's central leadership under Zawahiri is able to directly control.[172] It is thought that AQIS, formed when the Islamic State (IS) was surging in recruitment and territorial conquest, was founded by AQ in order to more aggressively promote its own brand, and to preserve AQ's presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[173] AQIS also reportedly cultivates close ties with the Taliban relative to other AQ branches.[174]

Jabhat al-Nusra (later Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and then Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) has traditionally been affiliated with AQ, although its allegiance to AQ is now in question. Founded by Abu Mohammed al-Julani on the orders of emir Ayman al-Zawahiri, it has served as AQ's only official branch in the Syrian conflict after Zawahiri publicly disowned ISIS following months of ISIS disobedience to AQ orders.[175] Al Nusra has emerged as a leader of Islamist rebels in Syria, regarded as one of the most effective groups fighting the Syrian government and the Islamic State. Beginning in 2012, Al Nusra began to harbor the so-called "Khorasan Group," an experienced cell of AQ jihadists that planned to use the relatively ungoverned territory to develop international terror plots.[176]

Several name changes and reorientations of goals in the past three years have clouded the former Al Nusra's relationship with AQ. In July 2016, Al Nusra's leader, Mohammed al-Jolani, announced that the group was severing ties to AQ and changing its name to Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (JFS), the "Front for the Conquest of Syria." Jolani declared that the move, sanctioned by a top AQ deputy, was intended to depict the organization as a moderate presence in the Syrian civil war and evade U.S. and Russian counterterrorism operations.[177] Hoping to unify Muslims in the Syrian opposition and secure community support, Al Nusra realized that the AQ brand, increasingly viewed as extremist in many parts of the world, hindered this objective.[178] The rebrand was intended to demonstrate the group's dedication to interests in Syria as opposed to jihad on an international level.[179] Analysts believe that Jabhat Fatah al-Sham's ideology originally remained close to AQ's and that the split was coordinated by AQ leadership in order ensure long-term sustainability of jihadism in Syria.[180] Under this view, the dissolution of formal ties between the organizations does not indicate a more substantive schism. Nevertheless, the split was controversial, and nearly half of Al Nusra leaders preferred to remain publicly affiliated with AQ.[181] Many of these individuals are believed to now be working towards establishing a new militant organization based in Syria that is more closely tied to AQ.[182]

In early 2017, after subsuming several other opposition groups, including an influx of defectors from a rival militant organization, JFS formed Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). HTS continues to adhere to Salafism but rejects the AQ model of transnational jihadism, preferring to concentrate on ensuring the sustainability of the jihadi movement within Syria.[183]

Many analysts concluded that the relationship between JFS (then HTS) and AQ had unraveled by early 2017. Members of AQ leadership revealed that Zawahiri was not consulted about Al Nusra's split from AQ and rebranding as JFS or HTS.[184] By this account, AQ no longer considers HTS to be its affiliate in Syria due to its "impurity" and its insufficient loyalty to Zawahiri.[185] In *Lawfare,* researchers Tore Refslund Hamming and Pieter Van Ostaeyen argue strongly on this point, asserting that Al Nusra's successor groups, JFS and the currently operating HTS, should not be considered affiliated with AQ at all.[186]

Nevertheless, other analysts continue to write that HTS is "linked" or "affiliated" with AQ as recently as December 2018.[187] Some warn against "exaggerating" the extent of the AQ-HTS rupture and theorize that the organizations could reconcile in the future.[188] The U.S., U.N., and Turkey to continue to consider HTS a terrorist group "linked" to AQ.[189]

Tandhim Hurras al-Deen is believed to be a prospective AQ affiliate in Syria. In February 2018, many AQ loyalists in Syria, disenfranchised by the apparent split between AQ and the former Al Nusra, cohered around a new group. With the goal of preserving the AQ presence in Syria, several smaller short-lived groups merged to form Tandhim Hurras al-Deen. Despite the new organization's ambition, it has not yet officially been recognized as an AQ affiliate by Zawahiri. Analysts believe that negotiations on this point are ongoing and that Tandhim Hurras al-Deen will eventually obtain this status.[190]

Other groups with notable ties to Al Qaeda include:

Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is a militant criminal and terrorist organization that operates in the Philippines and seeks to establish an independent Islamic state for Muslim Filipinos.[191] ASG leader Abdurajak Janjalani had a close relationship with Osama bin Laden, which influenced Janjalani's decision to create ASG and strengthened the affiliation between the two groups.[192] AQ allegedly provided funding and training in ASG's early stages. Although a Philippine military report alleged that AQ had provided support in 2000, the exact state of the AQ-ASG relationship has been unclear since the mid-1990s.[193] In 2014, some ASG leaders and members pledged support to IS.[194] While internal debates over the propriety of the group's ties to IS continue, analysts have concluded as of 2017 that ASG no longer has a "traceable relationship" with AQ.[195]

Ansar al-Islam (AI) is a Sunni extremist group made up primarily of Iraqi Kurds. Some AI members participated in the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan and have reportedly received financial and ideological support from Al Qaeda leaders. In 2003, the U.S. State Department claimed that AI hosted a training camp for then-AQI leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The State Department also reported that one of the senior AI leaders was an AQ operative, although AI leader Najmeddin Faraj Ahmad denied links with AQ in the early 2000s.[196] The relationship between AQ and AI has been unclear throughout the 2000s.[197]

The Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) is a militant organization that emerged in the late-1970s with the intention of overthrowing the secular Egyptian government and installing an Islamic administration. The group opposes Western influence in the Muslim world. In 2001, the EIJ shifted its ideological focus and parts of EIJ merged with AQ after a terrorism campaign in Egypt.[198]

The Haqqani Network (HN) is an Islamist nationalist militant organization based out of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Northern Pakistan. It has always prioritized the local goal of driving foreign influences from Afghanistan. However, in response to U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts after 9/11, HN's members have reportedly adopted a broader view of global jihad.[199] The group has a long history of cooperation with Al Qaeda and other Islamist groups. It has been hugely influential in AQ's formation and survival, from hosting AQ members and camps in the 1980s to helping AQ escape from Afghanistan after U.S. forces toppled the Taliban.[200]

Much of HN's strength and influence comes from its strategic location in the mountainous border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a crossroads between battlefields for many jihadis and a relatively safe haven from security forces. There, it has hosted members of different groups,

leading to new connections between organizations.[201] By being relatively open to Arab mujahideen in the 1980s, in contrast to other Afghan jihadi groups, HN ended up hosting a number of future AQ leaders as they used HN territory as a base for fighting against the Soviets.[202] In the mid-1980s, the emir of HN, Jalaluddin Haqqani, granted bin Laden land for training and sheltering Afghan Arabs. One training camp that bin Laden built there became known as al-Qa'ida al-'Askariyya, "the military base," Al Qaeda's namesake.[203] HN continued to provide protection for AQ after 9/11, and the groups have carried out attacks cooperatively. One of Jalaluddin Haqqani's sons was killed in a firefight alongside a reported regional AQ commander in July 2008.[204]

Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen (HuM) is a Sunni Islamist group based in Kashmir. HuM's former leader, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, has ties to bin Laden. He signed bin Laden's 1998 fatwa calling for jihad against Americans.[205]

Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI) was founded in Afghanistan and was part of the fight against the Soviet Union. A number of its members trained at AQ camps, and some members reportedly split from HuJI to join AQ.[206] HuJI's leader and founder, Qari Saifullah Akhtar, once commanded an AQ unit called Brigade 313.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is an Islamist militant group who has sought to install a Shariah-based Islamic government in Uzbekistan since 1991. Although the group had stronger ties with Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), it also reportedly maintained a relationship with Al Qaeda.[207] Despite this alleged relationship with AQ, the IMU began to show signs of building closer ties to IS in late 2014.[208]. In March 2015, IMU leader Uthman Ghazi recognized the Islamic State's Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as caliph.[209] In August 2015, Ghazi publicly declared allegiance to IS in a video posted online.[210] An IMU splinter group, still calling itself the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, emerged in June 2016 and renewed its loyalty to AQ and the Taliban.[211]

The Islamic State (ISIS, IS): See Al Qaeda in Iraq, above, for information before 2014.

After entering the Syrian Civil War, AQI rebranded itself as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and subsequently as the Islamic State (IS). The first big conflict between IS and AQ came when IS declared that it had merged with AQ affiliate Al Nusra, though Al Nusra denied the merger. Zawahiri ruled in favor of Al Nusra and decreed that the two organizations would continue to operate independently of one another. He also appointed AQ leader Abu Khalid al-Suri to mediate the conflict in Syria and ensure that his orders were followed.[212]

In February 2014, after IS's repeated refusals to heed Zawahiri's commands and make peace with other Islamist groups in Syria, AQ formally ended the affiliate relationship.[213] Later that month, Abu Khalid al-Suri, Zawahiri's delegate to Syria and a leader of Ahrar al-Sham, was killed in a suicide bombing. Many Islamists blamed IS for the attack.[214]

As IS has gained global notoriety and grown in strength, jihadist groups around the world have begun to pledge allegiance to the group, some renouncing their allegiance to Al Qaeda to do so. Many experts believe that AQ and IS are locked in a competition for leadership of global jihad.[215] The two organizations have competed for support from affiliate groups, such as Al Shabaab and Boko Haram.

Al Qaeda and IS differ fundamentally in organization and strategy. While AQ is a transnational network focused on sensational attacks, IS simultaneously operates as a transnational network,

insurgency, and a purported state. AQ promises a utopia far in the future, while IS seeks to make a global caliphate an immediate reality.[216] AQ follows the "far enemy" strategy of targeting the United States, which it considers the source of problems in the Middle East, in order to topple regimes in the region later.[217] IS, on the other hand, operates based on the "near enemy" strategy, attacking local regimes that it views as "apostates" and purifying Muslim populations by eliminating Shias, ethnic and religious minorities, and rival militant groups.[218]

Jemmah Islamiyah (JI) is an extremist group based in Indonesia that seeks to overthrow the government to create a pan-Islamic state in Southeast Asia. AQ reportedly provided training, resources, and advising to JI leaders from its creation, beginning in the late 1980s. Some JI members received training in AQ affiliated camps in Afghanistan during the mid-1990s.[219] Multiple individuals from JI have either worked for or maintained close ties with both JI and AQ. For example, Hambali, JI's operational leader and a head of a regional JI council until his 2003 arrest by Thai officials, was also reportedly AQ's director of operations in East Asia.[220] He was thought to be a key factor in the relationship between AQ and JI, and his appreciation of AQ's ideology and goals oriented him to attack Western targets. Analysts also agree that AQ has influenced JI ideologically and encouraged attacks on the West, such as the 2002 Bali bombing. In the early 2010s, analysts assessed that AQ's influence on the group had declined since the early years of JI.[221] The group has not committed a major attack since 2009, although it continues to operate religious boarding schools, publishing houses, and other institutions.[222] By 2018, however, other analysts predict a possible Jemmah Islamiyah resurgence in the wake of intensified persecution of the Rohingya, a largely Muslim minority group, in Myanmar beginning in 2017.[223] AQ has called on jihadists in the region to defend the Rohingya, and a former JI member has testified that the group is interested in expanding its activity to Myanmar.[224] JI's membership base has mostly remained loyal to AQ amid the rise of IS in southeast Asia.[225]

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) maintained active ties with Al Qaeda beginning in the early 1990s through its operational commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, who is the brother-in-law of bin Laden's deputy Abu Abdur Rahman Sareehi.[226] LeT actively collaborated with Al Qaeda post-9/11. LeT leaders were reportedly paid $100,000 USD to protect Al Qaeda leaders of Arab origin in Pakistan, house their families and arrange for their travel from Pakistan. In March 2002, senior Al Qaeda operative Abu Zubaydah was captured at an LeT safe house in Faisalabad.[227] AQ's establishment of a formal affiliate in Kashmir in 2017, Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, has introduced friction into the relationship. A leader of LeT condemned AQ's entry into the region, as the two organizations pursue markedly different objectives: LeT, like Jaish-e-Mohammed, hopes to remove Kashmir from Indian control and add the province to Pakistan, while Al Qaeda advocates global jihad.[228]

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) is a prominent militant organization in Pakistan known best for its anti-Shiite attacks. It has ties to Al Qaeda, including overlapping membership. For example, one jihadist commander, Qari Rehman (also known as Abdul Samad) served as both a chief operational commander for LeJ and a planning director for AQ.[229]

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) is an extremist Islamist group in Pakistan that aims to undermine Indian control over the Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK). JeM's leader, Masood Azhar, allegedly met with Osama bin Laden and secured his support to create JeM in the late 1990s or early 2000s. Although some analysts alleged close ties between AQ and JeM, the extent and type of assistance that AQ has provided is largely unknown.[230] Along with Lakshar-e-Taiba (see above), JeM has opposed AQ's presence in Kashmir due to differences in mission: JeM is single-mindedly devoted to bringing Kashmir under Pakistani sovereignty, while Al Qaeda positions itself as the leader of a global jihadi movement.[231]

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is the Pakistani Taliban, based out of the numerous Pakistan provinces and carrying out attacks only within Pakistan. The TTP was closely allied with Al Qaeda, and relied on it for financial, logistical and ideological support. TTP allegedly assisted with AQ attacks in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.[232] As time went on, however, bin Laden became personally opposed to the tactics and methods of the TTP, leading to a strained relationship. A 2010 letter from AQ core to TTP chastised TTP for its ideology and tactics, particularly its indiscriminate violence and the killing of Muslims, and threatened public action if TTP did not correct its errors.[233]

The Taliban has a complex relationship with Al Qaeda. The groups have reportedly been suspicious of each other throughout their histories. However, the Taliban did harbor Al Qaeda beginning in the 1990s, allegedly for a price of $10 million to $20 million per year.[234] Mullah Omar, the former leader of the Taliban, was particularly bothered by bin Laden's attention-grabbing media appearances and fatwas.[235] After bin Laden issued his 1996 fatwa from Taliban lands, he reportedly promised Omar that he would draw less attention to the region, but soon gave a highly-publicized interview with CNN promising to attack the West.[236] Omar allegedly exclaimed, "How dare he [bin Laden] give a press conference without my permission! There will be one ruler in Afghanistan, either I or Osama bin Laden."[237] He then asked bin Laden to move to Khandahar, likely so that he could keep a better eye on AQ activities.[238]

However, the two groups continued to collaborate. On September 9, 2001, Al Qaeda operatives assassinated Ahmad Shah Massoud. Massoud was an influential Afghani political and military leader of the Northern Alliance, the Taliban's most significant opposition in Afghanistan. A Taliban offensive against the Northern Alliance was coordinated in conjunction with the assassination, suggesting that AQ carried out the attack for the Taliban.[239] While the Taliban and AQ cooperated against the Northern Alliance and American forces in Afghanistan after 9/11, underlying tensions did not disappear, and some analysts have held that the strength of the relationship between the two groups has often been overstated in the media since then.[240] The Taliban retains control of rural and relatively inaccessible territory in Afghanistan, and the country continues to be a base of operations for AQ.[241] In January 2019 peace negotiations with the U.S., however, the Taliban reportedly agreed to cease allowing AQ to operate within Afghanistan, calling the state of the AQ-Taliban relationship into question.[242]

Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind is an AQ affiliate that largely operates in Jamma and Kashmir, India. It was formed in 2017 and is headed by Zakir Musa.[243]

Ansar al-Shariah Pakistan, led by Ahmad Farooq, is a militant organization advocating for the return of AQ to Pakistan since June 2017. Composed of AQ fighters returning from Iraq and Syria, Ansar al-Shariah Pakistan is an aggregate of a number of smaller local jihadi groups.[244]

D. STATE SPONSORS AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

AQ has a fraught relationship with the Shiite state of Iran. Documents declassified by the CIA in 2017 reveal that Iran provided funding, arms, and training in Hezbollah camps to Al Qaeda militants in order to facilitate attacks against the United States.[245] Letters found in the Abbottabad house where bin Laden was killed revealed that AQ was engaged in extensive negotiations for Iran to free AQ-affiliated individuals and members of bin Laden's family, but that not all of the promises of the negotiations were being met.[246] However, as of 2013, the U.S. State Department claimed that Iran allowed AQ to operate a facilitation pipeline through the country in order to move fighters and resources to South Asia and Syria.[247] Iranian operatives also reportedly trained

AQ members in explosives, intelligence, and security in the early 1990s.[248] In sum, the AQ-Iran relationship is characterized by both limited collaboration when mutually beneficial and (often ideological) tension.[249]

One of bin Laden's earliest grievances was that Saudi Arabia allowed the presence of U.S. soldiers on Saudi soil. Now, Saudi Arabia considers Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as the biggest terrorist threat to the Kingdom.[250] The Saudi government has carried out domestic military operations against the group, including a particularly effective crackdown around 2008 and 2009 that drove many AQAP members from Saudi Arabia.[251] However, some analysts allege that members of the Saudi royal family maintained a relationship with AQ throughout the 1990s and made major donations to the group.[252] Some of Al Qaeda's funding does appear to come from wealthy individuals in Saudi Arabia, but U.S. reports have not found evidence that the Saudi government or high-level Saudi officials contributed to Al Qaeda.[253] Some analysts argue that Saudi Arabia has been aware of these donations but has not taken enough action to stop it.[254] In 2014, Saudi Arabia outlawed support for AQ.[255]

Pakistan has a long history of interacting with militant Islamist organizations and has served as both a supporter and victim of extremist violence. When the U.S. and Saudi Arabia sent money to the mujahideen fighting the Soviet Union in the 1980s, it was funneled through Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI).[256] Pakistan, and the ISI in particular, continued to maintain a strong relationship with the Taliban. When bin Laden relocated from Sudan to Afghanistan in 1996, he likely did so with the knowledge of Pakistani officials. Pakistani military intelligence officers may even have facilitated his travel and introduced bin Laden to Taliban leaders in Khandahar with the hope that he would open his training camps to Kashmiri militants.[257] Pakistan's ISI may interact with militant groups without the knowledge or consent of Pakistani officials, and some members of the Pakistani government have accused the ISI of failing to protect against militant Islamist attacks.[258] Throughout its counterterrorism efforts in the region, U.S. officials regularly suspected that the ISI worked with bin Laden and warned him of U.S. efforts against him.[259]

In the late 1990s, the U.S. urged Pakistan to press the Taliban to stop sheltering bin Laden, and later Pakistani prime minister Sharif requested U.S. assistance to train a Pakistani special forces team to go after bin Laden. The U.S. agreed, but the plan never came to fruition because Sharif was deposed by Musharraf in October 1999.[260] The U.S. continued to pressure Musharraf to crack down on bin Laden, but little came from the efforts.[261] Since 2001, AQ has used Pakistan as a safe haven. Bin Laden was found and killed a few hundred yards from a Pakistani military academy, and many experts speculate that at least some Pakistani officials must have known of his whereabouts.[262]

However, throughout the 2000s, AQ became increasingly confrontational with the Pakistani state, regularly calling for the government's ouster and collaborating with militant Pakistani groups. In July 2007, after a high-profile confrontation between Islamist militants and the Pakistani government at the Red Mosque in Islamabad, AQ's calls for violence against the government became more frequent. It has claimed responsibility for some attacks in Pakistan and been suspected of others.[263] In 2017, analysts reported that AQ was resurging in Pakistan, strengthening relationships with local jihadi groups, including the newly formed Ansar al-Shariah Pakistan, and collaborating with them in the planning of attacks.[264] As of 2018, AQ operates in Pakistan with the goal of challenging the government in Islamabad, which has accordingly made AQ a focus of its counterterrorism policy.[265] The AQ affiliate Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) openly advocates attacks on the Pakistani military.[266]

Maps featuring Al Qaeda

- Global Al Qaeda
- Global Islamic State
- North Africa
- North Caucasus
- Iraq
- Pakistan
- Somalia
- Syria

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