Are We Winning?

Measuring Progress in the Struggle Against Violent Jihadism

2007
2006
2005
2004
2003
2002
2001

Bernard I. Finel with Holly Crystal Gell

AMERICAN SECURITY PROJECT

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Mission of the American Security Project

The American Security Project is organized around the belief that honest public discussion of national security requires a better-informed citizenry – one that understands the dangers and opportunities of the twenty-first century and the spectrum of available policy responses.

Security is a fundamental responsibility of government. In the new millennium, however, U.S. national security policy has not kept pace with rapidly changing threats to American interests. Globalization has quickened, but the United States has not built alliances or institutions to protect and advance American security. Terrorists have expanded their reach and lethality, but the moral authority of the United States is at an all-time low. Changes in the Earth's climate are more evident every day, but the United States has failed to act, alone or with allies, to avoid disaster.

America needs a new national security vision for this new era and a dialogue at home that is as robust as it is realistic. Yet the quality of our discussion on national security has been diminished. Fear has trumped conversation. Artificial differences have been created and real differences have been left unexamined. The character of our national dialogue has grown increasingly shrill while the need for honest discussion has grown more urgent.

Only by developing real analysis and thoughtful answers can a genuine foreign policy consensus be rebuilt for a dangerous and decisive age. Only then will America again marshal all her resources – military, diplomatic, economic and moral – to meet the challenges of a complex world.

Are We Winning?

Measuring Progress in the Struggle Against Violent Jihadism

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. foreign policy has focused largely on confronting the violent jihadist threat worldwide. There have been numerous successes and failures over the past six years in this so-called "war on terror."

The American Security Project has developed ten criteria to measure progress – or lack of progress – in the struggle against violent jihadism. These metrics are designed to be both reproducible and as objective as possible. They are intended to comprise a holistic approach, examining causes and processes associated with violent jihadism, in addition to outcomes.

On balance, these metrics indicate that the United States is not winning the "war on terror." The lack of measurable progress on most indices, the collapse of international public support for the United States, and the dramatic increase in jihadist violence since 2003 paint a bleak picture.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The metrics in this report are presented in order of importance.
They are judged against this question:

"Do trends in this indicator demonstrate progress in the struggle against violent jihadism?"

NO	UNCERTAIN	YES

I. NUMBER OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS

There has been a massive and dramatic increase in Islamist terrorism since 2003. Terror attacks by Islamist extremist groups have increased significantly during this time, even when excluding attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, and those related to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

II. HEALTH OF THE JIHADIST MOVEMENT

The jihadist movement remains vibrant and dynamic. Early claims about disruption of the al Qaeda network were dramatically overstated. Only five of the twenty-two most wanted terrorists in 2001 have been captured or killed. Though some high ranking al Qaeda members have been eliminated, the organization has been able to promote or recruit members to replace losses.

III. AL QAEDA AFFILIATED MOVEMENTS

Al Qaeda has expanded its reach globally by forging closer relationships with previously autonomous groups.

IV. STATE SPONSORSHIP OF TERRORISM

Active state sponsorship of terrorism has diminished worldwide.

V. PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

U.S. foreign policy is perceived throughout the Muslim world as an aggressive, hostile, and destabilizing force.

VI. PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THE UNITED STATES

American citizens remain very concerned about the terrorist threat. Significant numbers fear attacks on themselves or their family and friends. Increasing numbers of Americans believe the U.S. is losing the "war on terror."

VII. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND POLITICAL FREEDOM

Broad measures of economic prosperity and political freedom show slow but steady improvement throughout most of the Muslim world.

VIII. UNGOVERNED SPACES

There has been minimal progress on reducing ungoverned spaces. Iraq and Afghanistan are no longer state sponsors of terrorism, but vast ungoverned areas within both of those states make them homes to vibrant jihadist movements that are less vulnerable to traditional instruments of statecraft.

IX. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISTS

The number of countries committed to combating terrorism has increased since 9/11.

X. TERRORIST FINANCING

International cooperation has led to some successes in curtailing terrorist financing, but there is no clear evidence that Islamist terror groups are being starved of resources. Trends in Afghan poppy production suggest a disturbing new source of terrorist financing.

I. NUMBER OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS

There has been a massive and dramatic increase in Islamist terrorism since 2003. Terror attacks by Islamist extremist groups have increased significantly during this time, even when excluding attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, and those related to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.
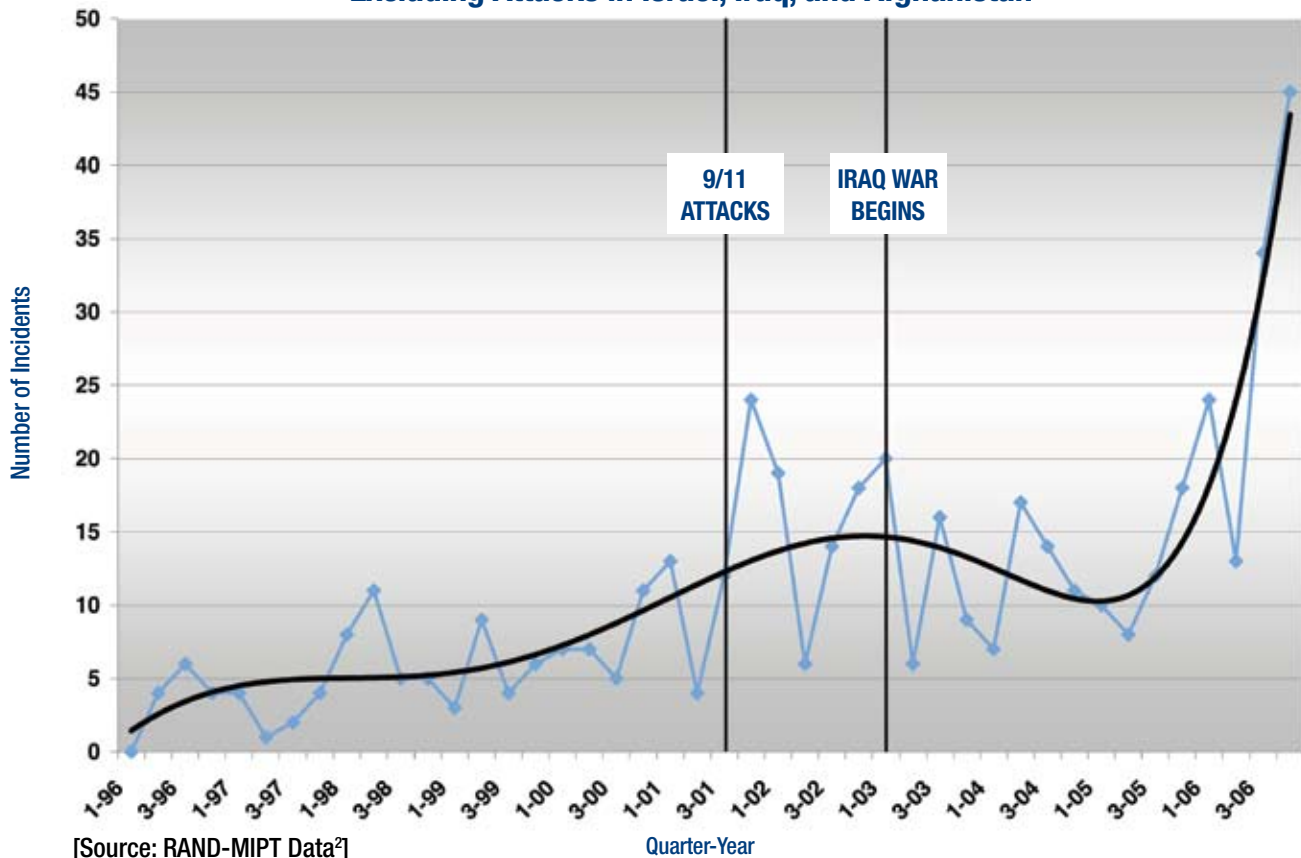
▶ **Incidents of Terrorism January 1996 - September 2006**

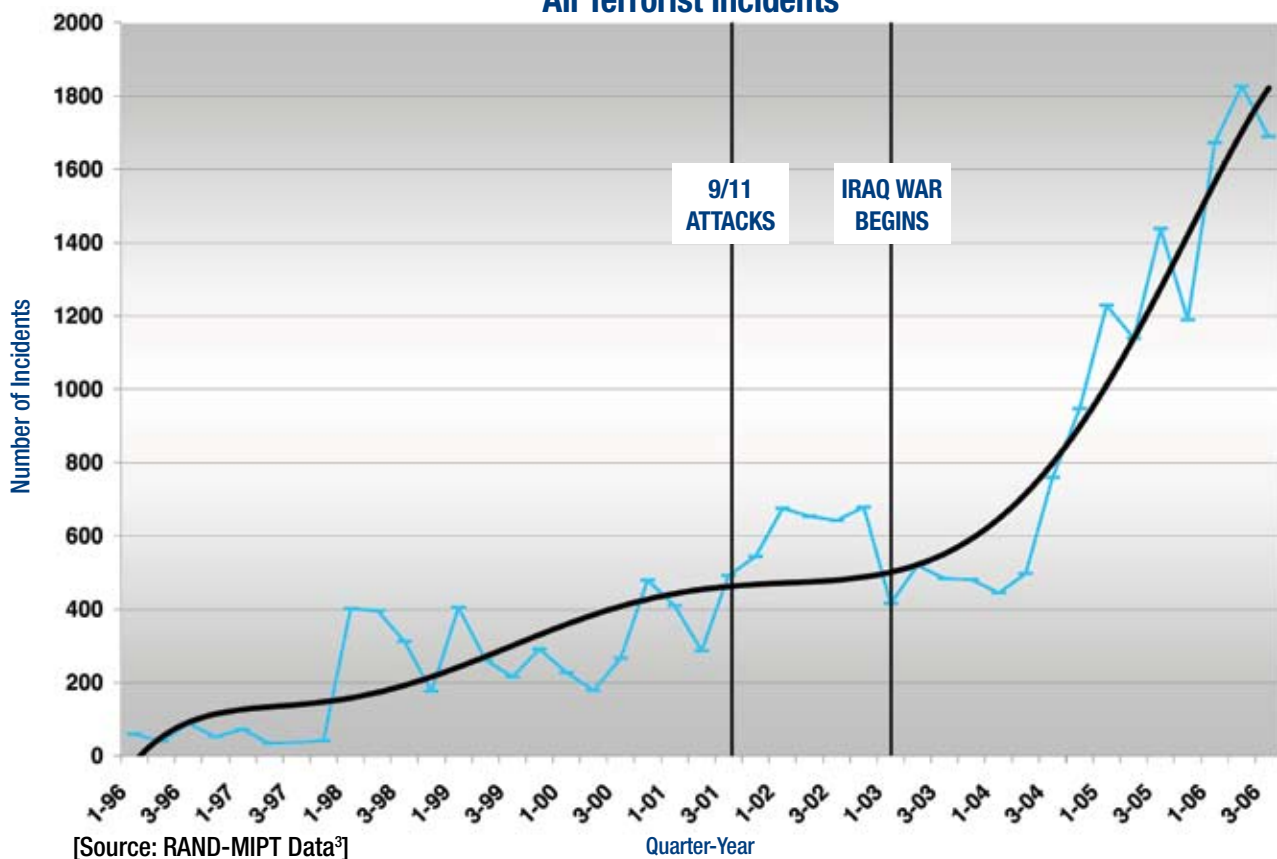## Incidents Attributed to Known Islamist Terrorist Groups
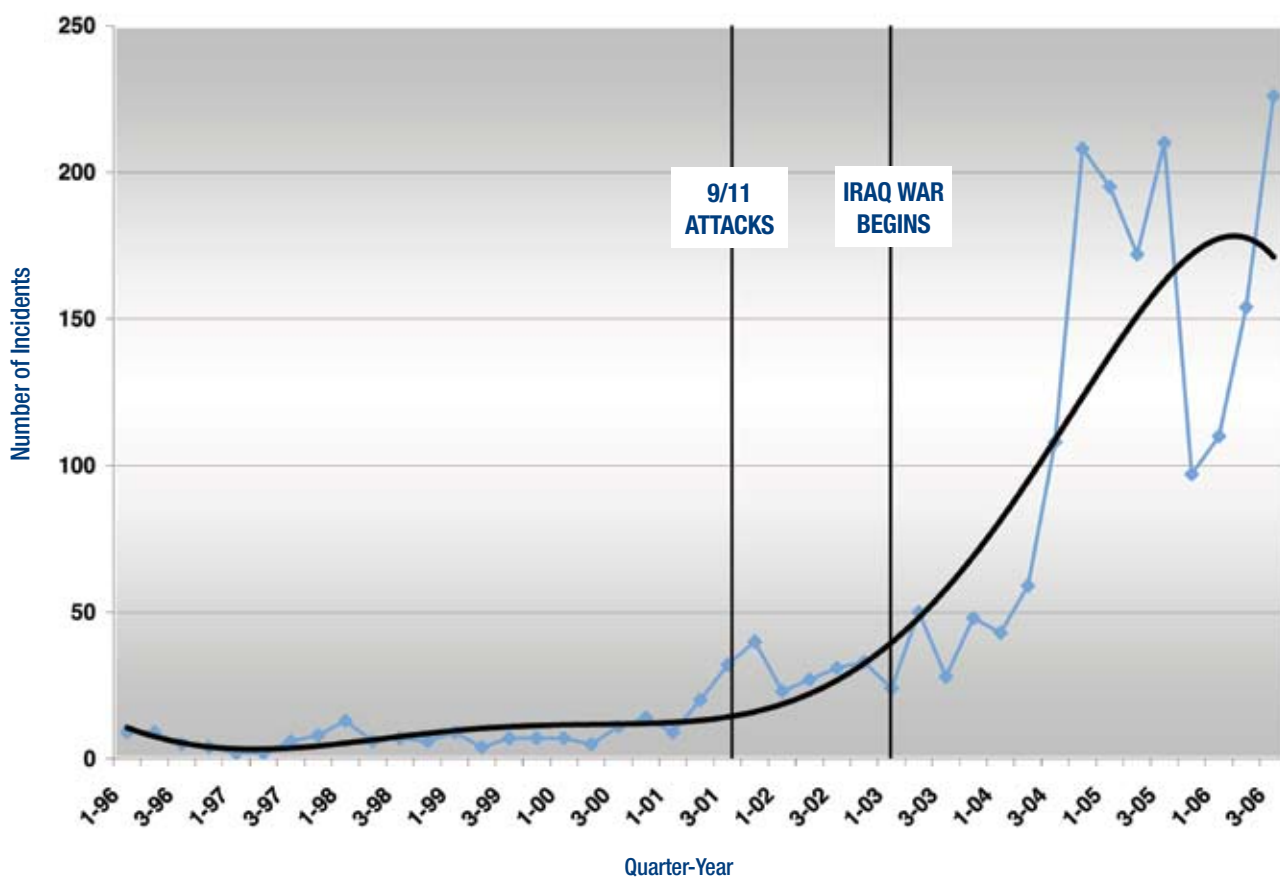
[Source: RAND-MIPT Data[1]]

Incidents Attributed to Islamist Terrorist Groups
Excluding Attacks in Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan

9/11 ATTACKS

IRAQ WAR BEGINS

[Source: RAND-MIPT Data[2]]

Quarter-Year

All Terrorist Incidents

9/11 ATTACKS

IRAQ WAR BEGINS

[Source: RAND-MIPT Data[3]]

Quarter-Year

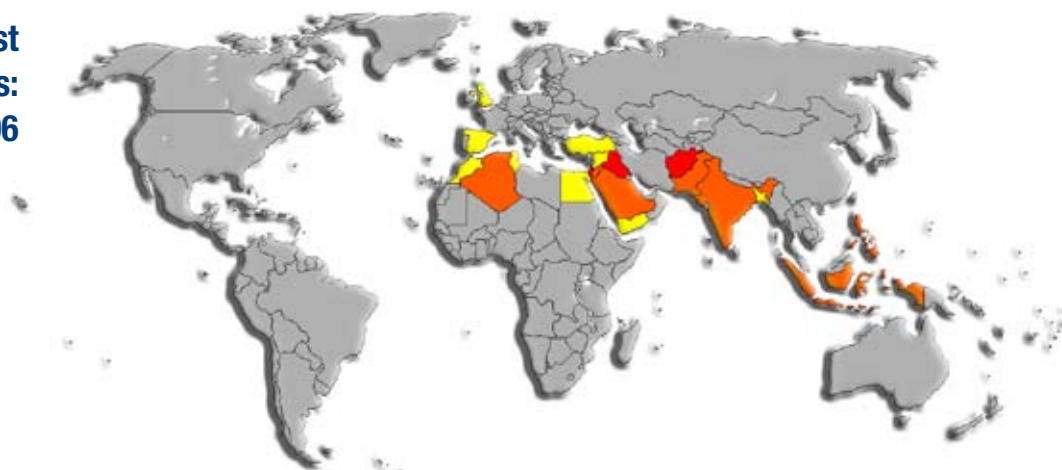## Distribution of Islamist Terrorist Attacks: Jan. 1996 - Sept. 2001

[Source: RAND-MIPT Data[4]]

Distribution of Islamist Terrorist Attacks: Oct. 2001 - March 2003
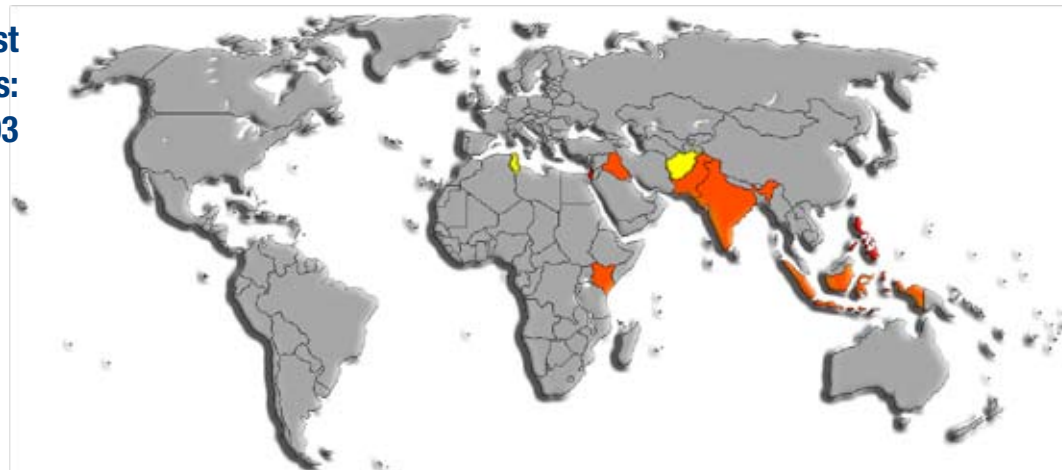
[Source: RAND-MIPT Data[5]]

Distribution of Islamist Terrorist Attacks: April 2003 - Sept. 2006

[Source: RAND-MIPT Data[6]]

Measured by the number of terrorist incidents, the jihadist threat is more significant now than it was prior to September 11, 2001. It is, most notably, significantly worse even than in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks when the American response focused on al Qaeda's infrastructure in Afghanistan. Even when excluding attacks in Afghanistan, Iraq, and those related to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, there are more attacks by jihadist groups on an annual basis than at the beginning of the Iraq war. This is a stunning finding given the tremendous activity of jihadist groups in those three theaters. This finding fundamentally undermines the Bush Administration's claim that we are "fighting them there so we don't have to fight them here."[7] In reality, the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan exists in addition to the broader threat posed by Islamist violence. Worse, the spillover effects of Iraq and Afghanistan will likely mean that when those conflicts do end, there will be a much larger pool of battlefield-trained fighters capable of bolstering the global jihadist movement.[8] In short, the war in Iraq has not noticeably reduced the numbers of jihadists outside of Iraq; rather it has created many more fighters to join the movement.[9]

Between January 2001 and September 2001 there were 1,188 terrorist incidents around the world, including the three separate 9/11 events which have become infamous in the memory of Americans.[10] Attacks within Israel alone accounted for 238 terrorist incidents, with Iraq and Afghanistan contributing four. Counting only those incidents attributed to Islamist extremist groups, there were 61 incidents globally with 40 occurring outside of Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan. The comparison with the same time period in 2006 is stark. Worldwide, there were 5,188 terrorist incidents, 1,437 excluding Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan.[11] Of those remaining incidents, 490 were attributed to Islamist terrorism, of which 92 were extraneous to the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Israel.

If anything, this data understates the growth of Islamist violence. Most of the terrorist attacks of the past six years, as tracked by RAND-MIPT, are unattributed to any particular group due to competing claims of responsibility, lack of claims or evidence, or other reasons. As a result, some attacks are not counted as Islamist even though their location and targets make it likely that Islamist groups were responsible.

II. HEALTH OF THE JIHADIST MOVEMENT

The jihadist movement remains vibrant and dynamic. Early claims about disruption of the al Qaeda network were dramatically overstated. Only five of the twenty-two most wanted terrorists in 2001 have been captured or killed. Though some high ranking al Qaeda members have been eliminated, the organization has been able to promote or recruit members to replace losses.

22 Most Wanted Terrorists as of 2001	
1. Osama bin Laden	At Large
2. Ayman al-Zawahiri	At Large
3. Abdelkarim Hussein Mohammed al-Nasser	At Large
4. Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah	At Large
5. Muhsin Musa Matwalli Atwah	Killed, Oct 2006
6. Ali Atwa	At Large
7. Anas al-Liby	At Large (Amnesty disputes)
8. Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani	Captured
9. Hasan Izz-al-Din	At Large
10. Ahmed Mohammed Hamed Ali	At Large
11. Fazul Abdullah Mohammed	At Large
12. Imad Fayez Mugniyah	At Large
13. Mustafa Mohammed Fadhil	Captured/Disappeared
14. Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan	At Large (Amnesty disputes)
15. Abdul Rahman Yasin	At Large
16. Fahid Mohammed Ally Msalam	At Large
17. Ahmad Ibrahim al-Mughassil	At Large
18. Khalid Shaikh Mohammed	Captured
19. Mohammed Atef	Killed, Nov 2001
20. Ali Saed Bin Ali El-Hoorie	At Large
21. Saif al-Adel	At Large
22. Ibrahim Salih Mohammed al-Yacoub	At Large

[Source: Multiple Sources[12]]

Senior al Qaeda Leaders and Operatives	
Abu Hamza al-Muhajir	At Large
Sheikh Said	At Large
Abu Mohammed al-Masri	At Large
Sulaiman Abu Ghaith	At Large
Thirwat Salah Shirhata	At Large
Abu Faraj al-Libbi	In Custody
Abu Zubaydah	In Custody
Ramzi Binalshibh	In Custody
Adb al-Hadi al-Iraqi	In Custody
Mohammed Haydar Zammar	In Custody
Ali Abdul Rahman al-Ghamdi	In Custody
Mohamedou Ould Slahi	In Custody
Zacarias Moussaoui	In Custody
Richard Reid	In Custody
Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri	In Custody
Abu Musab al-Zarqawi	Killed
Amjad Farooqi	Killed
Ali Qaed Senyan al-Harthi	Killed
Abu Hazim al-Shair	Killed
Omar al-Farouq	Killed

[Source: BBC News[13]]

Although the United States and its allies have captured or killed significant numbers of top al Qaeda operatives, evidence suggests that al Qaeda and affiliated groups have been able to replace leaders as fast as they can be eliminated. The inability of the United States to successfully pursue the most senior al Qaeda leaders has become a significant policy failure. Though the Bush Administration has tried to minimize the importance of Osama bin Laden through public statements,[14] his continued defiance of the United States serves as a beacon to jihadists around the globe. The U.S. decision to rely on Pakistan to police its own territory has led to the establishment of a safe haven for al Qaeda on the border with Afghanistan, allowing the organization to re-establish terrorist training camps and other facilities. This finding underscores the July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate assessment that al Qaeda has largely reconstituted all the capabilities that made it such a threat in 2001.[15]

There has been an increase in the number of jihadist websites, but there is no reliable way to measure the actual reach of the jihadist movement.[16] Public attitude surveys are a blunt instrument, and we remain woefully ignorant of the dynamics of the violent jihadist ideology in Muslim populations. Nonetheless, the size and sophistication of the jihadist media apparatus suggests a vibrant, dynamic movement.
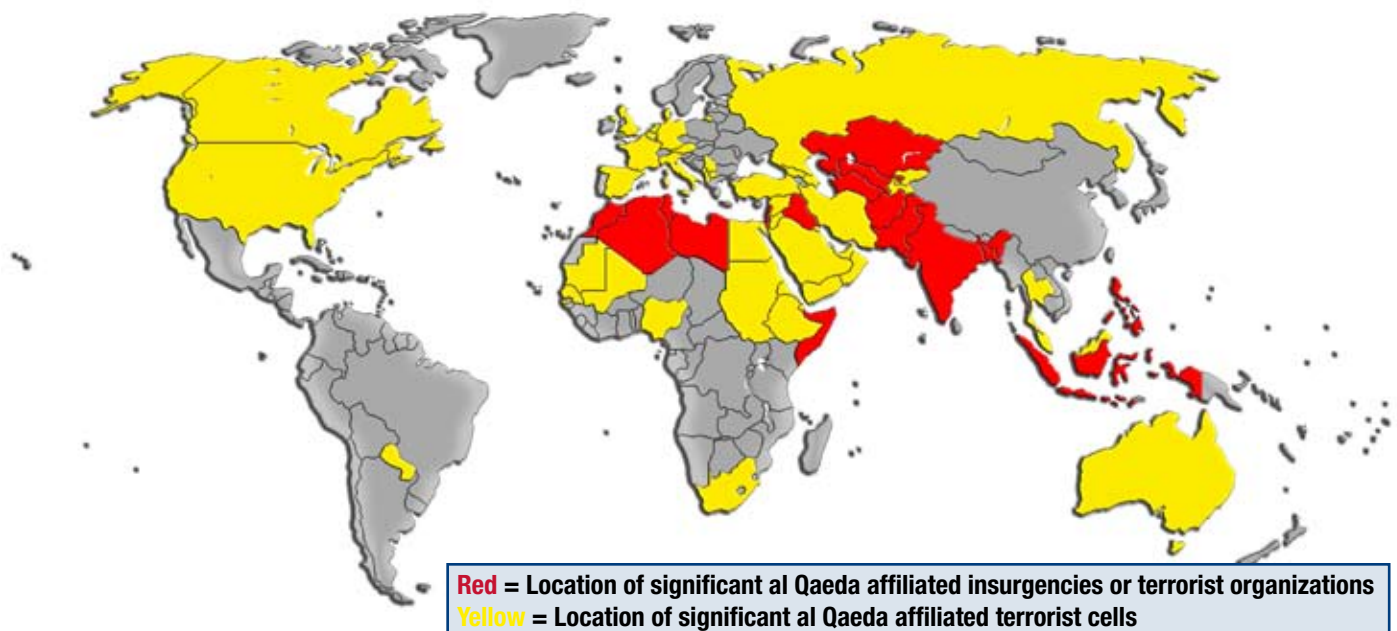

[NOTE: Screenshots from websites listed by the SITE Institute and MEMRI]

III. AL QAEDA AFFILIATED MOVEMENTS

Al Qaeda has expanded its reach globally by forging closer relationships with previously autonomous groups.

▶ **The Global Reach of al Qaeda**

Red = Location of significant al Qaeda affiliated insurgencies or terrorist organizations
Yellow = Location of significant al Qaeda affiliated terrorist cells

[Source: RAND Corporation and U.S. Department of State[17]]

Al Qaeda has mitigated U.S. success in capturing or killing top al Qaeda operatives by building institutional ties with groups in North Africa, Iraq, and Southeast Asia.[18] In addition to formal statements of allegiance to al Qaeda, there is also clear evidence of information sharing and parallel learning processes within the jihadist movement.[19] Groups are learning from past operations. Their lessons are being disseminated through personal connections and through various media – including the Internet, training manuals, pamphlets, and videos. The role of personal connections in the spread of the violent jihadist ideology and tactics is shadowy, but in many operations in the West there is evidence of groups acquiring training and guidance from outside sources.[20] This should not be surprising. The jihadist movement is self-consciously transnational. Jihadists speak with pride about travels to various hotspots of activity, including Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, Iraq and elsewhere.[21]

IV. STATE SPONSORSHIP OF TERRORISM

Active state sponsorship of terrorism has diminished worldwide.

State sponsorship of terrorism – that is, states that provide active logistical and financial support to terrorist organizations – has declined significantly over the past decade. In addition to the elimination of the regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, Libya and Sudan have also increasingly renounced terror.[22] The level of state sponsorship of terrorism is lower today than at any time since the early 1970s.

▶ **U.S. Government List of State Sponsors of Terrorism: 2001 and 2007**

2001	2007
Afghanistan	Cuba
Cuba	Iran
Iran	North Korea
Iraq	Sudan
Libya	Syria
North Korea	
Sudan	
Syria	

[Source: U.S. Department of State[23]]

▶ **Independent List of State Sponsors of Terrorism: 1991 to 2007**

By Date of Initiation/Termination of Sponsorship
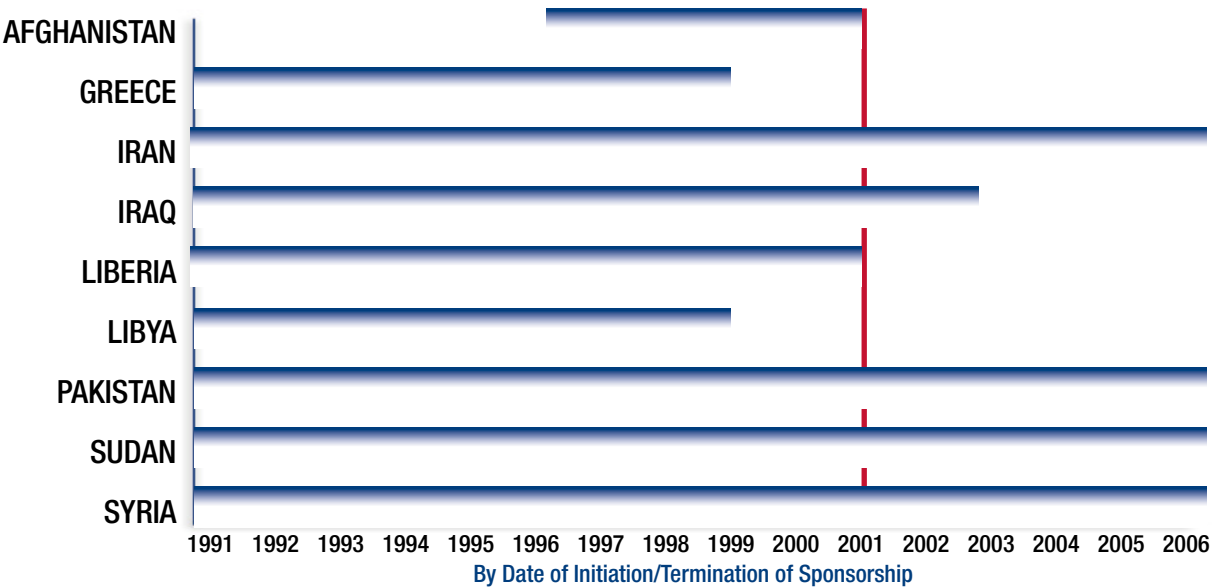
[Source: Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections*[24]]

V. PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

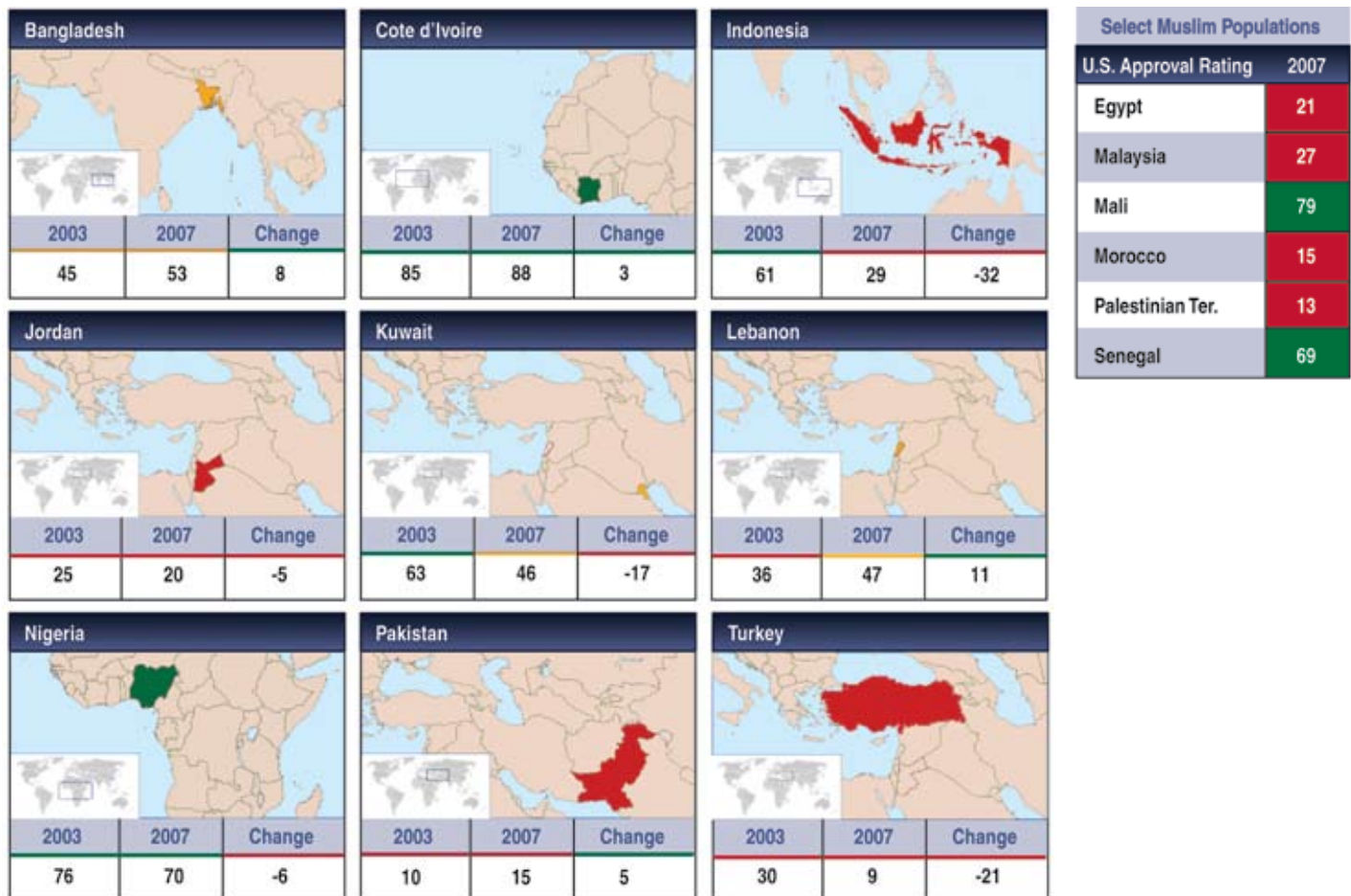U.S. foreign policy is perceived throughout the Muslim world as an aggressive, hostile, and destabilizing force.

Increasing numbers of Muslims declare themselves opposed to attacks on civilians.[25] However, large numbers continue to express admiration for Osama bin Laden and sympathy for al Qaeda's goals.[26] Support for attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan ranges from substantial to overwhelming in the Muslim world.[27] Fear and suspicion of U.S. motives and policy are prevalent.

▶ **Approval of the United States**

Favorable views of the United States in percentage of respondents. Countries are shaded according to 2007 results.

Bangladesh		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
45	53	8

Cote d'Ivoire		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
85	88	3

Indonesia		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
61	29	-32

Jordan		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
25	20	-5

Kuwait		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
63	46	-17

Lebanon		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
36	47	11

Nigeria		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
76	70	-6

Pakistan		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
10	15	5

Turkey		
2003	**2007**	**Change**
30	9	-21

Select Muslim Populations	
U.S. Approval Rating	**2007**
Egypt	21
Malaysia	27
Mali	79
Morocco	15
Palestinian Ter.	13
Senegal	69

[Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project[28]]

Percentage of Muslims Who View Suicide Bombing as Justified Often/Sometimes

Often/Sometimes Justified	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	02–07 % change
Lebanon	74	--	39	--	34	-40
Bangladesh	44	--	--	--	20	-24
Pakistan	33	41	25	14	9	-24
Jordan	43	--	57	29	23	-20
Indonesia	26	--	15	10	10	-16
Tanzania	18	--	--	--	11	-7
Nigeria	47	--	--	46	42	-5
Turkey	13	15	14	17	16	+3

Countries with available trends shown. Based on Muslim respondents.

[Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project[29]]

Support for Attacks on Civilians:

"How justified are attacks on civilians that are carried out in order to achieve political goals?"

Justified:	Strongly	Justified	Weakly	Not at all
Morocco	2	6	19	57
Egypt	7	8	6	77
Pakistan	1	4	8	81
Indonesia	1	3	7	84

[Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project[30]]

Groups Using Violence Against Civilians:

"Groups that use violence against civilians, such as al Qaeda, are violating the principles of Islam. Islam opposes the use of such violence."

	Agree	Disagree
Morocco	66	19
Egypt	88	7
Pakistan	30	35
Indonesia	65	21

[Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project[31]]

Percentage of Muslims Who Express "A Lot" or "Some" Confidence in Osama bin Laden

A lot/some confidence:			
Muslims in:	2003 %	2007 %	Change
Jordan	56	20	-36
Lebanon	20	1	-19
Indonesia	59	41	-18
Palestinian Ter.	72	57	-15
Turkey	15	5	-10
Pakistan	46	38	-8
Kuwait	20	13	-7

Countries with available trends shown. Based on Muslim respondents.

[Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project[32]]

► **Allies and Threats**

Percentage of Respondents Identifying a Given Country as an "Ally" or a "Threat"

AFRICA

	Closest Allies	%	Biggest Threats	%
Ethiopia	U.S.	58	Eritrea	86
	China	53	Nigeria	69
	EU	40	al Qaeda	29
Mali	U.S.	56	al Qaeda	31
	China	49	U.S.	15
	France	48	Ivory Coast	12
Nigeria	U.S.	58	U.S.	32
	Britain	40	Iran	14
	China	27	China	12
Senegal	France	50	U.S.	15
	U.S.	45	Gambia	12
	China	30	al Qaeda	8
Tanzania	U.S.	37	al Qaeda	27
	China	32	U.S.	23
	Britain	22	Iran	13

[Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project[33]]

ASIA

	Closest Allies	%	Biggest Threats	%
Bangladesh	India	54	U.S.	72
	China	45	India	47
	U.S.	44	Pakistan	32
Indonesia	Japan	41	U.S.	63
	Malaysia	36	China	17
	China	24	Russia	13
Malaysia	China	39	U.S.	46
	Japan	32	Abu Sayyaf	7
	U.S.	15	N. Korea	6
Pakistan	S. Arabia	60	U.S.	64
	China	58	India	45
	EU	25	Israel	32

[Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project[34]]

MIDDLE EAST

	Closest Allies %		Biggest Threats %	
Egypt	S. Arabia	44	Israel	86
	Palestinian Ter.	19	U.S.	39
	Syria	16	Iran	27
Jordan	S. Arabia	42	Israel	81
	Egypt	41	Iran	46
	Syria	21	U.S.	25
Kuwait	U.S.	54	Iran	52
	S. Arabia	48	Iraq	30
	Britain	23	U.S.	26
Lebanon	S. Arabia	57	Israel	74
	France	53	Syria	43
	Iran	23	Iran	42
Morocco	France	36	U.S.	17
	U.S.	18	Israel	15
	Spain	14	Algeria	15
Palestinian Ter.	S. Arabia	21	Israel	60
	Iran	13	U.S.	48
	Egypt	9	Britain	16
Turkey	Pakistan	11	U.S.	64
	Germany	10	Iraq	13
	S. Arabia	9	Russia	9

[Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project[35]]

Data indicates that terrorism is becoming increasingly delegitimized in the Muslim world, yet many Muslims continue to believe the goals of terrorists to be legitimate. The picture is particularly discouraging if one takes a holistic view of public attitudes. While the vast majority of Muslims considers attacks against civilians – in the abstract – as contrary to Islam, other questions reveal much greater ambivalence. On the whole, very large numbers of Muslims around the world believe the following arguments:

- The United States seeks to weaken and divide the Muslim world.[36]
- The goal of the United States in the "war on terror" is something other than self-defense.[37]
- The attacks of 9/11 were committed by a group other than al Qaeda.[38]
- Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden are pursuing generally legitimate goals.[39]

Ultimately, the issue is not whether individuals support terrorism in the abstract, but whether attacks on U.S. interests can be justified by individuals on the basis of self-defense. The United States is making progress in delegitimizing terrorism, but at the same time it is increasingly viewed as an aggressive and hostile power by much of the Muslim world – a fact that complicates counter-terrorism efforts.

VI. PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THE UNITED STATES

American citizens remain very concerned about the terrorist threat. Significant numbers fear attacks on themselves or their family and friends. Increasing numbers of Americans believe the U.S. is losing the "war on terror."
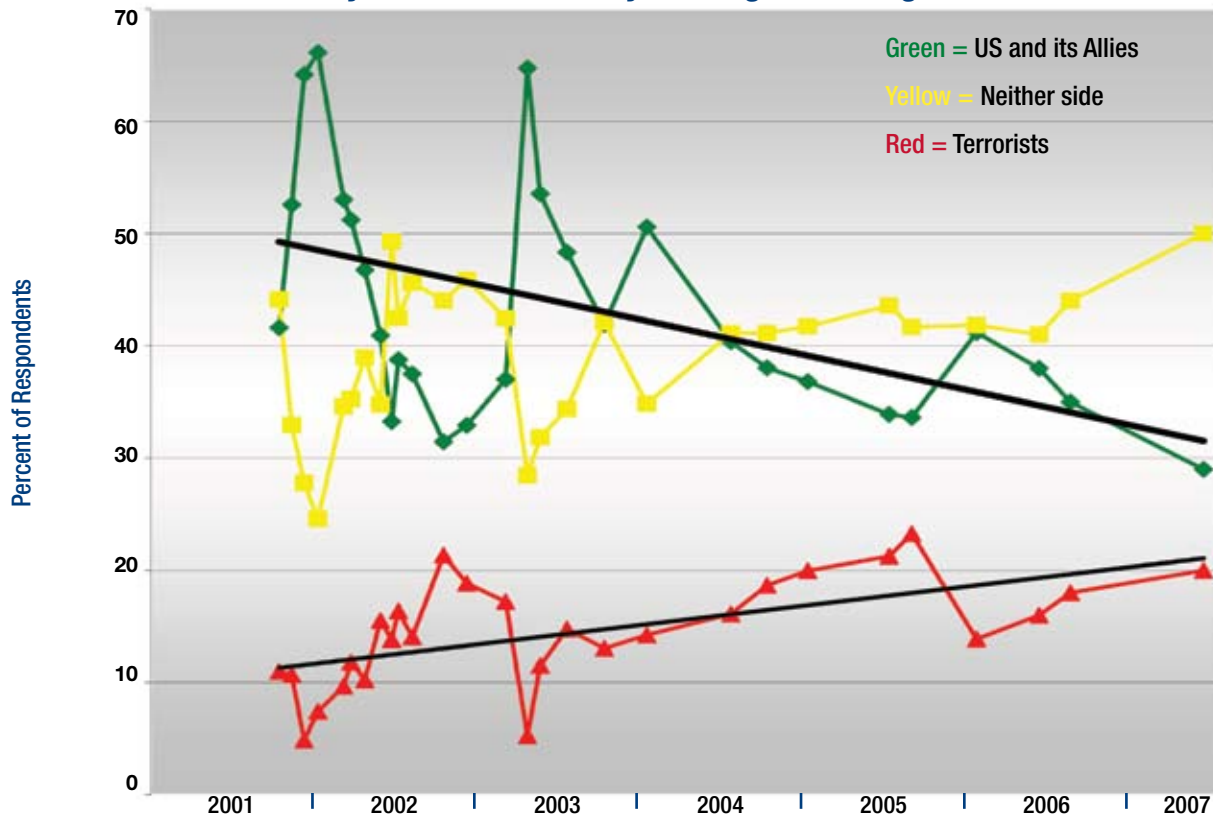
How worried are you that you, or someone in your family, will become a victim of terrorism?

Blue = Very or Somewhat Worried

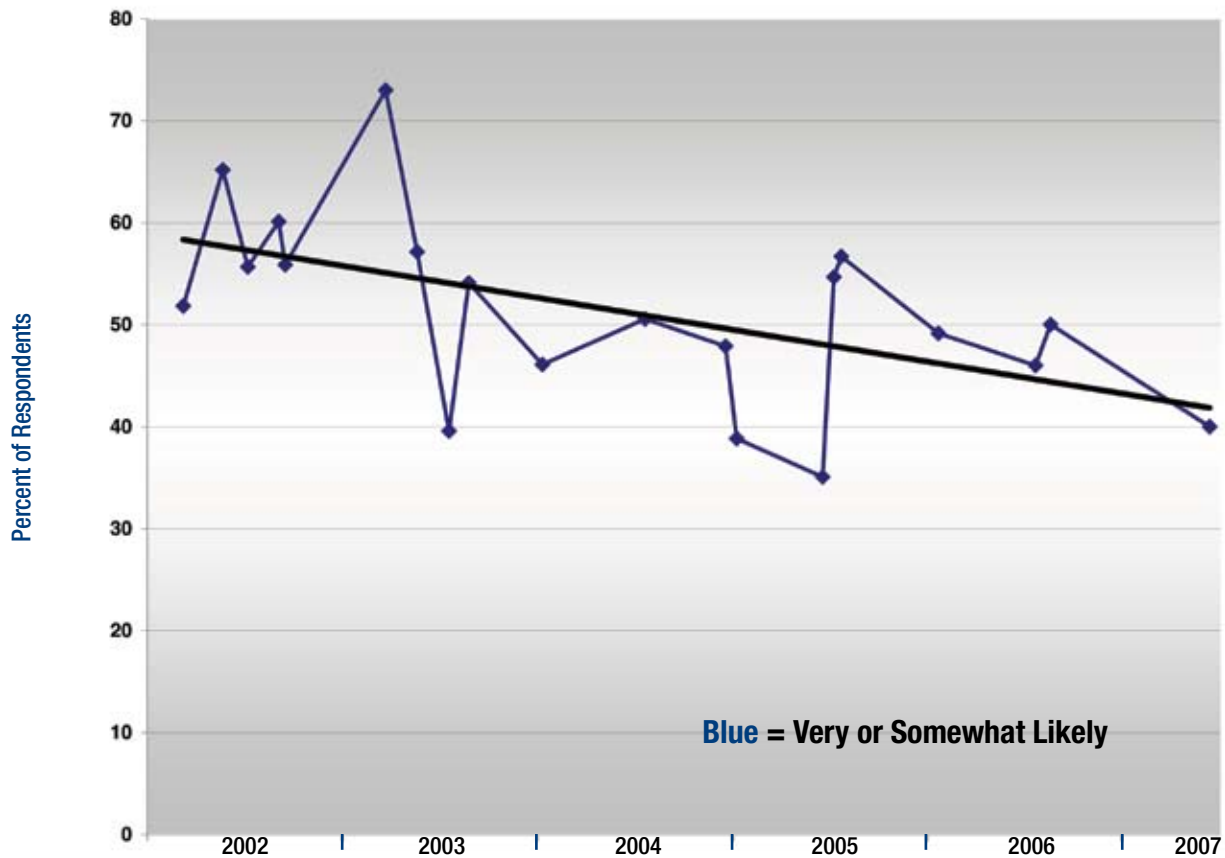[Source: The Gallup Organization[40]]
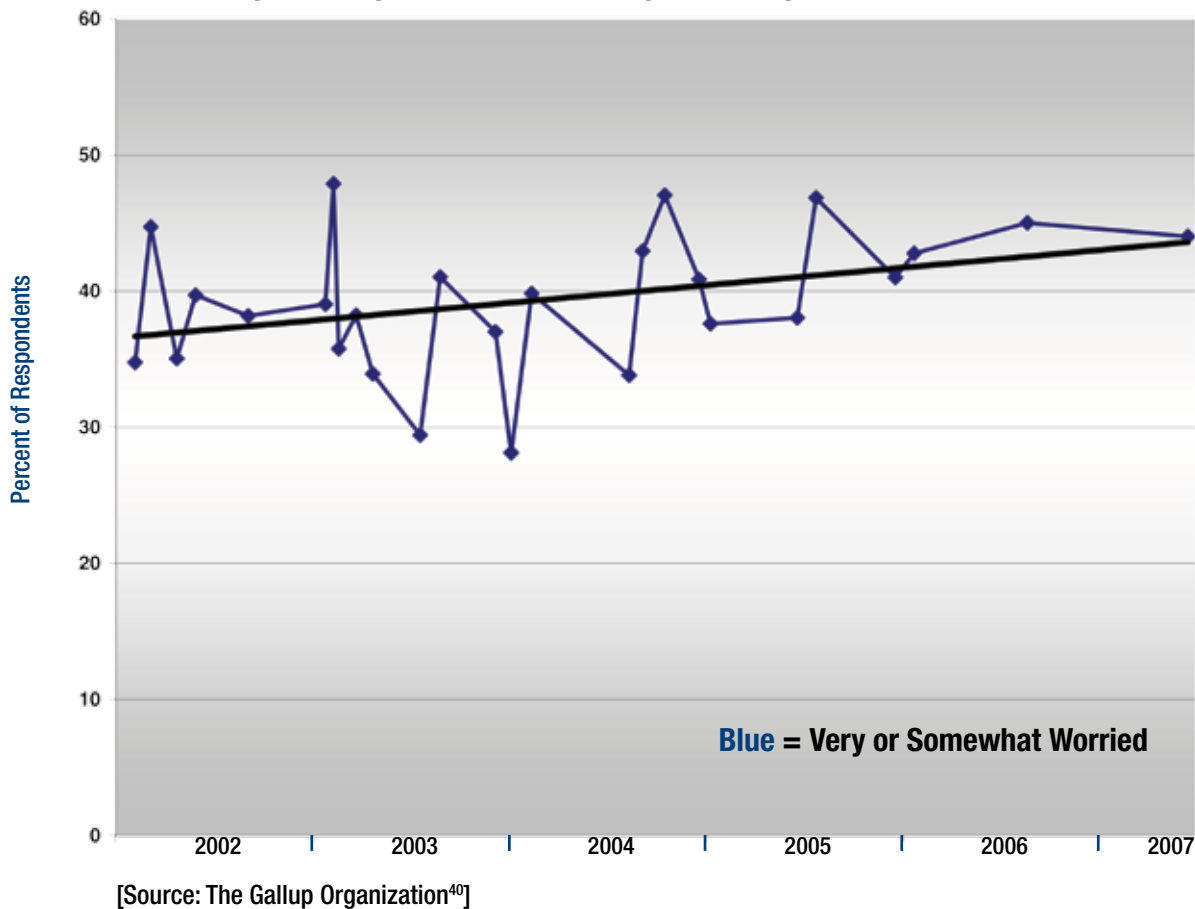
The effectiveness of terrorism can be measured, in part, by the reactions it prompts. Regardless of what terrorists do, they cannot be successful if their targets are not terrorized. One indicator of progress in the "war on terror" would be that Americans feel less threatened. An increase in anxiety would indicate failure.

Americans continue to demonstrate a high level of concern about the threat of terrorism. As numerous analysts have demonstrated, fear of terrorism is out of proportion given the multiplicity of other risks Americans face in their daily lives.[41] The consequence of this high level of insecurity is not just increased vigilance, which is a positive outcome, but also the possibility of counter-productive policies driven by fear rather than rational assessment.

Who do you think is currently winning the war against terrorism?

Green = US and its Allies
Yellow = Neither side
Red = Terrorists

[Source: The Gallup Organization[42]]


Blue = Very or Somewhat Likely

[Source: The Gallup Organization[43]]

VII. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND POLITICAL FREEDOM

Broad measures of economic prosperity and political freedom show slow but steady improvement throughout most of the Muslim world.

Over the past six years, there has been slow and steady progress ameliorating some of the factors identified as root causes of terrorism. Political progress has been slow, but generally positive. According to Freedom House data,[44] measures of political freedom and civil liberties have improved in the Muslim world, though the region remains highly repressive compared to the developed world.

▶ **Political Freedom and Civil Liberties in the Muslim World**

Green = Improving
Yellow = Unchanged
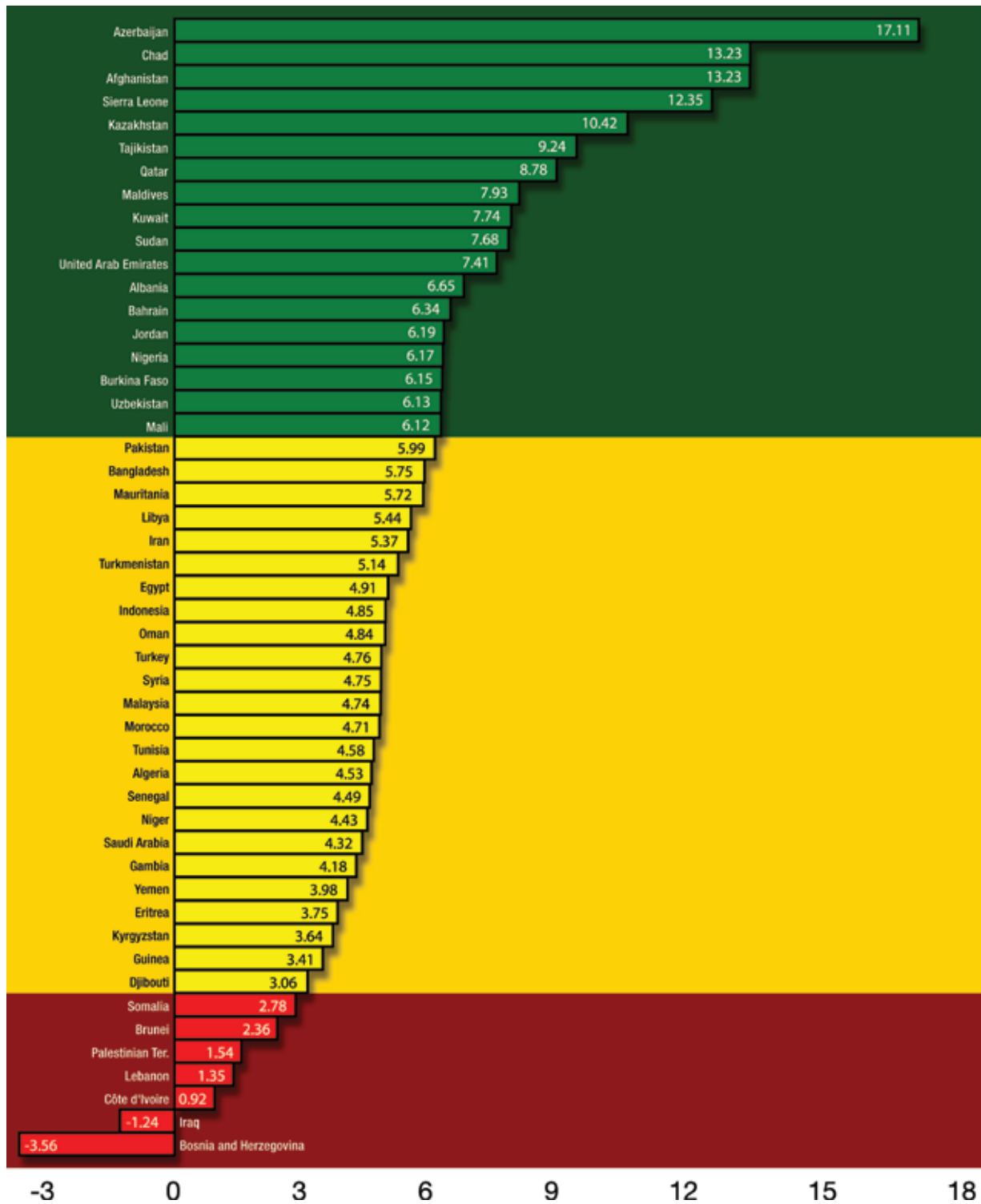Red = Worsening
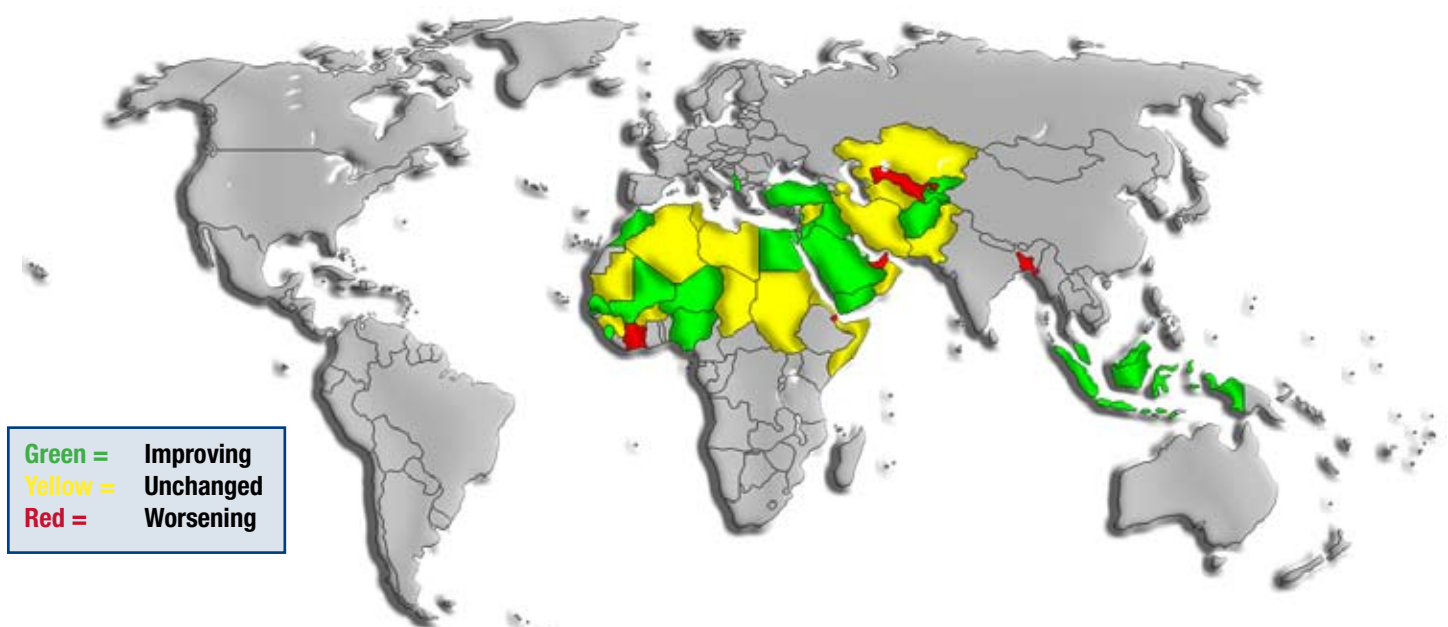
[Source: Freedom House[45]]

On the economic front, there has been gradual economic growth in most Muslim countries, without noticeable negative consequences in income distribution. Gross national income per capita has grown by over four percent per year throughout the Middle East and North Africa since 2000.[46] Foreign direct investment has tripled.[47] Debt burden has declined.[48] Secondary measures, such as infant mortality rates and access to health care, have also improved.[49] This economic growth has been in part a function of higher oil prices and increased U.S. support for countries deemed allies in the "war on terror," but it also reflects increased investment in the economies of Muslim countries. This economic growth correlates with generally higher levels of satisfaction with local governments.[50]

Though these statistical measures are generally positive, economists remain very concerned about dynamics that

are not being addressed.[51] These include a continued lack of effort to integrate women into the workforce and disregard for the education of women. Economists also remain concerned about the effects of guest workers in several Arab countries, most notably in the Gulf states. Finally, there has been relatively little progress in moving toward diversified economies that are less reliant on oil exports.

▶ **Economic Growth in the Muslim World**

Average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth for 2001 - 2006

Country	Value
Azerbaijan	17.11
Chad	13.23
Afghanistan	13.23
Sierra Leone	12.35
Kazakhstan	10.42
Tajikistan	9.24
Qatar	8.78
Maldives	7.93
Kuwait	7.74
Sudan	7.68
United Arab Emirates	7.41
Albania	6.65
Bahrain	6.34
Jordan	6.19
Nigeria	6.17
Burkina Faso	6.15
Uzbekistan	6.13
Mali	6.12
Pakistan	5.99
Bangladesh	5.75
Mauritania	5.72
Libya	5.44
Iran	5.37
Turkmenistan	5.14
Egypt	4.91
Indonesia	4.85
Oman	4.84
Turkey	4.76
Syria	4.75
Malaysia	4.74
Morocco	4.71
Tunisia	4.58
Algeria	4.53
Senegal	4.49
Niger	4.43
Saudi Arabia	4.32
Gambia	4.18
Yemen	3.98
Eritrea	3.75
Kyrgyzstan	3.64
Guinea	3.41
Djibouti	3.06
Somalia	2.78
Brunei	2.36
Palestinian Ter.	1.54
Lebanon	1.35
Côte d'Ivoire	0.92
Iraq	-1.24
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-3.56

[Source: United Nations Statistical Division[52]]
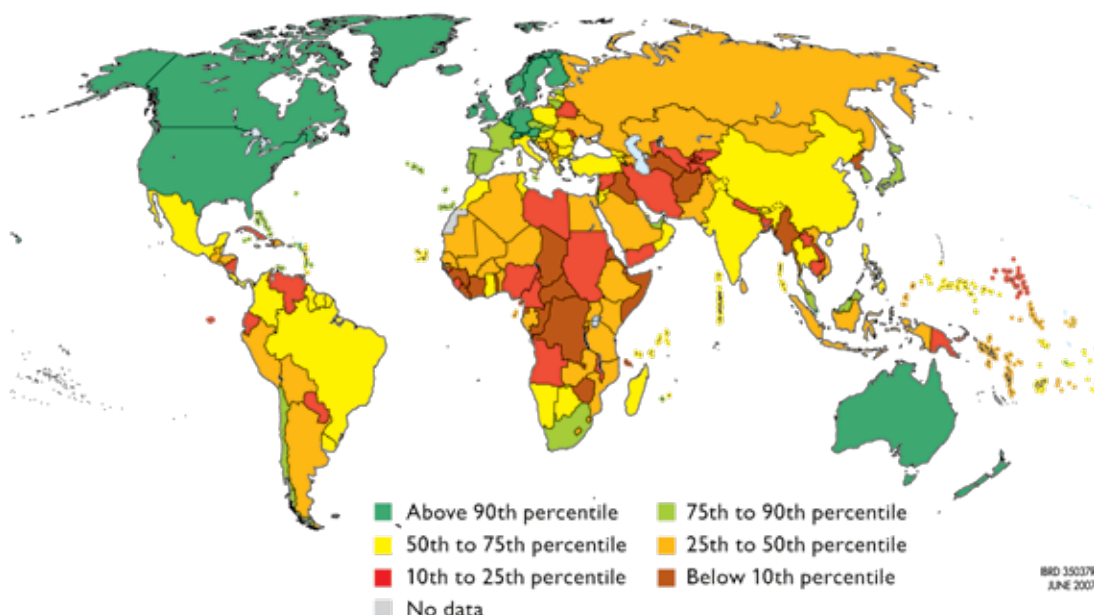
VIII. UNGOVERNED SPACES

There has been minimal progress on reducing ungoverned spaces. Iraq and Afghanistan are no longer state sponsors of terrorism, but vast ungoverned areas within both of those states make them homes to vibrant jihadist movements that are less vulnerable to traditional instruments of statecraft.

Though the problem of ungoverned spaces has been extensively discussed, there has been little progress on reducing areas of political vacuum. Indeed, over the past five years we have seen the growth of two significant ungoverned spaces in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the case of Afghanistan this remains a net improvement – replacing an active terrorist sponsor with an ungoverned space is likely a worthwhile trade-off. Iraq is much more troubling. Given its location in the center of the Middle East, the establishment of an ungoverned space in Iraq must be counted as a major failure in the "war on terror."

The record is decidedly mixed on ungoverned spaces that existed before 9/11. Greater military-to-military contacts and training in West Africa, combined with a gradual reduction in intrastate violence, have had some positive effects.[53] But the lack of government capacity, low levels of technological penetration, porous borders, and ethnic cleavages have left state control spotty across the region. We see similar dynamics in most other ungoverned areas, including the tri-border region in South America (between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay) and numerous islands in the Philippines and Indonesia.

The situation in northwestern Pakistan is an unmitigated disaster.[54] Since the autonomy agreement between Islamabad and tribal leaders in the region took effect, jihadist groups have been able to solidify their safe haven in the area. The July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate highlights the role of this region in a resurgent al Qaeda.[55]

▶ **Government Effectiveness**

Legend:
- Above 90th percentile
- 75th to 90th percentile
- 50th to 75th percentile
- 25th to 50th percentile
- 10th to 25th percentile
- Below 10th percentile
- No data

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[Source: World Bank[56]]

IX. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISM

The number of countries committed to combating terrorism has increased since 9/11.

The number of countries committed, either fully or nominally, to combating terrorism has increased since September 11, 2001. However, perceptions of American unilateralism and contempt for existing standards of international law under the Bush Administration, and the war in Iraq, have undermined the ability of even friendly states to cooperate closely and openly with the United States on counter-terrorism issues.[57]

Since 9/11, the international community has gone to great lengths to establish the legal instruments and agencies necessary to combat global terrorism. While this is one of the areas of greatest activity, it would be an overstatement to call it unprecedented. The United Nations, for example, has 13 conventions aimed at mitigating terrorism dating back to 1963. Only one of these was adopted after 9/11, and it has not yet come into force.

Nonetheless, great strides have been made, especially at the regional level, to create more effective bodies and conventions, even though their efforts may be duplicative. Furthermore, existing forums have assumed a greater priority for more nations. Prior to the attacks in 2001, only two countries had ratified all 12 then-existing UN conventions against terrorism, but they are now joined by an additional 28 member states.[58] In some cases, the increased attention being paid to terrorism has mobilized organizations which have been heretofore marginalized and lacking in resources. Rhetorical commitments to counter-terrorism continue to far exceed the commitment of resources, yet a general increase in the importance of anti-terrorist activities can be seen globally.

New Cooperative Institutions		
Agency/Organization/Position	**Association**	**Created**
Counterterrorism Committee	**United Nations**	**2001**
Counterterrorist Action Group	**G8**	**2003**
3+1 Group on Tri-Border Area Security	**Argentina, U.S., Brazil, Paraguay**	**2002**
Counter Terrorism Task Force	**APEC**	**2003**
Counter Terrorism Co-Ordinator	**EU**	**2004**
African Center for Study and Research on Terrorism	**African Union**	**2006**
Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism	**Council of Europe**	**2005**
Convention on Counter Terrorism	**ASEAN**	**2007**

[Source: Multiple Sources[59]]

UN Conventions on Terrorism

Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed On Board Aircraft ("Tokyo Convention," 1963--safety of aviation)

Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft ("Hague Convention," 1970--aircraft hijackings)

Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation ("Montreal Convention," 1971--applies to acts of aviation sabotage such as bombings aboard aircraft in flight)

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons (1973--outlaws attacks on senior government officials and diplomats)

International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages ("Hostages Convention," 1979)

Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material ("Nuclear Materials Convention," 1980--combats unlawful taking and use of nuclear material)

Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1988--extends and supplements the Montreal Convention on Air Safety)

Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (1988--applies to terrorist activities on ships)

Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (1988--applies to terrorist activities on fixed offshore platforms)

Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (1991--provides for chemical marking to facilitate detection of plastic explosives, e.g., to combat aircraft sabotage)

International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombing (1997)

International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999)

International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005)
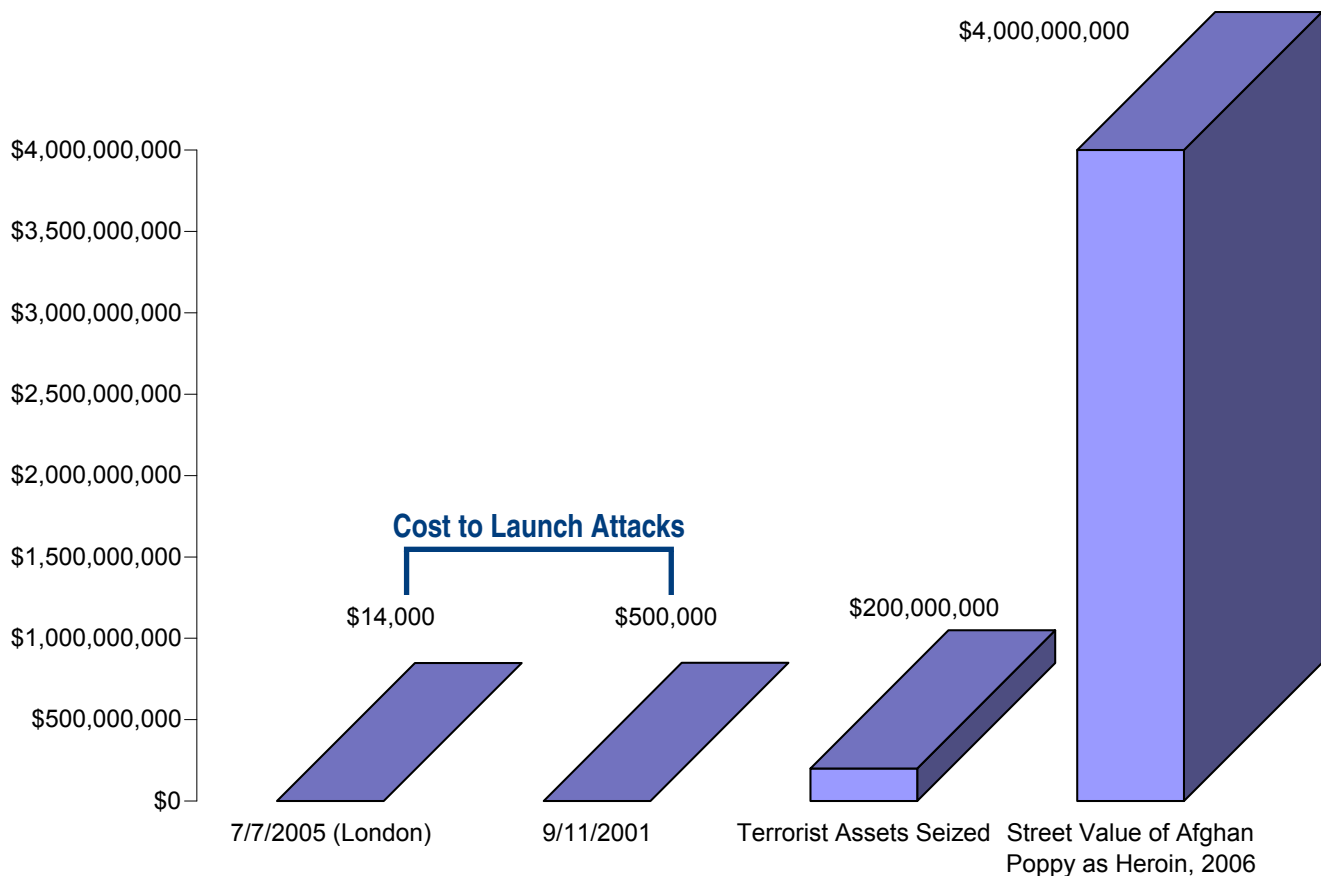
[Source: United Nations[60]]

X. TERRORIST FINANCING

International cooperation has led to some successes in curtailing terrorist financing, but there is no clear evidence that Islamist terror groups are being starved of resources. Trends in Afghan poppy production suggest a disturbing new source of terrorist financing.

International financial regulation and efforts to curb money laundering have had some impact on terrorist financial networks. According to White House reports, 167 countries have "issued orders freezing terrorist assets, and others have requested U.S. help in improving their legal and regulatory systems so they can more effectively block terrorist funds."[61] Additionally, the White House claims that as much as $200 million has been blocked from terrorists since 9/11.[62]

Unfortunately, there is no clear evidence that Islamist terror groups are being starved of resources, in part because the dramatic resurgence of poppy production in Afghanistan is likely more than sufficient to offset any benefits that accrue from better control over financial transactions and the activities of charities.

▶ Terrorist Finances: Comparative Metrics

[Source: Multiple Sources[63]]

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. NUMBER OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS
The United States must abandon the notion that "victory" on any central front will lead to an elimination of the jihadist threat. The challenge is global and growing, and policies based on an oversimplification of the threat are likely to produce unintended negative consequences that might actually strengthen the jihadist movement as the war in Iraq has done.

II. HEALTH OF THE JIHADIST MOVEMENT
The jihadist movement has two primary strengths – a dynamic ideology that is appealing to millions in the Muslim world, and iconic leaders whose defiance of the international community makes them heroes to their supporters. A successful strategy in the struggle against violent jihadism will focus on these centers of gravity.

III. AL QAEDA AFFILIATED MOVEMENTS
To defeat violent jihadism, the United States must balance stability with justice by securing cooperation from leaders in the Muslim world while maintaining a distance from repressive regimes. Making allies of oppressive authoritarian regimes has the effect of pushing those governments' domestic opponents into the arms of the jihadist movement.

IV. STATE SPONSORSHIP OF TERRORISM
The United States must apply the "state sponsor of terror" designation consistently in order to establish international standards of behavior. Keeping Cuba on the list of state sponsors of terrorism, while exempting ostensible allies in the "war on terror," delegitimizes the designation and undermines the development of consensus about permissible state behavior under international norms.

V. PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THE MUSLIM WORLD
American policy and public diplomacy must go hand-in-hand. Ritualistic denunciations of terrorism in the abstract must be joined by policies and public diplomacy that demonstrate a positive vision of the future across societies and faiths.

VI. PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THE UNITED STATES
American political leaders must stop using terrorism as an electoral wedge issue. Instead, they must engage in a serious discussion with the public over the real level of risk Americans face and the price the nation is willing to pay to combat the violent jihadist threat.

VII. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND POLITICAL FREEDOM
The United States must lead the world in a transition away from oil-based economies to limit its stake in the internal affairs of the Middle East. It must also encourage oil-rich nations to move toward sustainable, post-oil economies.

VIII. UNGOVERNED SPACES
The United States must lead the world in developing international law for ungoverned spaces which clearly defines state responsibilities for establishing governance. This law must also create a set of rights and obligations for the international community to respond to threats to international peace and security that emanate from these areas of limited governance.

IX. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISTS
The United States must prioritize international cooperation and consensus above unilateralism and freedom of action in order to enhance its ability to counter violent jihadism most effectively.

X. TERRORIST FINANCING
The illicit market created by the "war on drugs" is one source of funding for terrorists. Policy makers must create policies that effectively address this linkage.

Notes

1. Raw data extracted from the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, Terrorism Knowledge Database (produced in conjunction with the RAND Corporation). (Available at http://www.tkb.org/). Data for Islamist groups was produced exclusively using cases where specific attacks where ascribed to a particular group. Groups that ASP has classified as Islamist are those which are reported to have a religious ideology and primarily Muslim membership by the Terrorism Knowledge Base. In cases where incidents have been ascribed to multiple groups, they have been counted just once in each case that at least one of these groups met the criteria to be classified as Islamist. "Attacks" relies upon the Terrorism Knowledge Base's definition of "incidents" and therefore includes plots which were not successfully completed. Group data is available at http://www.tkb.org/Category.jsp?catID=1. For more details about this coding process, please contact Dr. Bernard I. Finel at the American Security Project. Trendlines produced in MicroSoft Excel using 6th degree polynomial function in order to produce best fit possible.

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3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

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8. Rod Nordland, "Terror for Export," *Newsweek*, Nov. 21, 2005. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10018673/site/newsweek/.

9. Director of National Intelligence, "Declassified Key Judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate.Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States. Dated April 2006." http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/Declassified_NIE_Key_Judgments.pdf.

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13. BBC News, "Who's Who in al-Qaeda," April 27, 2007. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/2780525.stm.

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16. Rita Katz, Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, United States House of Representatives, "The Online Jihadist Threat," written by Rita Katz and Josh Devon, February 14, 2007. http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/TUTC021407/Katz_Testimony021407.pdf. Additional research available at http://siteinstitute.org/index.html. Also see, the research produced by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) Islamist Websites Monitor Project, http://www.memri.org/iwmp.html.

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26. Steven Kull, et al., "Muslim Public Opinion," pp. 13-16. Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Rising Tide Lifts Mood" (July 24, 2007), pp. 57. http://pewglobal. org/reports/pdf/257.pdf. Trends are encouraging, however, significant percentages of Muslims in several key countries continue to express confidence in Osama bin Laden include 38% of respondents in Pakistan and 41% in Indonesia.

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30. Ibid, p. 55.

31. Ibid, p. 57. Steven Kull, et al., "Muslim Public Opinion," p. 16.

32. Adapted from Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Rising Tide Lifts Mood" p. 57.

33. Ibid, pp. 48-54.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Steven Kull, et al., "Muslim Public Opinion," p. 5.

37. Ibid, p. 6.

38. Ibid, p. 17.

39. Ibid, pp. 20-23.

40. Graph created using data from Gallup Poll, "Gallup Brain" Poll Archives. http://brain.gallup.com/ .

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53. For more information see the reports and statements at http://www.defenselink.mil/africom/

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Methodology

This report was developed by producing a list of indicators of progress in the struggle against violent jihadism. We devised appropriate metrics and found solid, objective evidence to assess trends in each relevant area. The goal was to avoid biases that occur due to oversimplification, while at the same time producing a document that can be updated on an annual basis in order to track progress over time.

The policy making community has significant gaps in its knowledge. There is insufficient evidence available to make clear assessments about whether terrorist groups are finding it more or less costly to launch attacks. There is virtually no understanding of the specific dynamics within Muslim communities that lead some individuals to radicalism. Further, we have little ability to assess the appeal of religious arguments that may sustain or undermine jihadism. Even relatively straight-forward measures, such as global counter-terrrorism expenditures, are virtually impossible to calculate given opaque accounting procedures and funds spent on related endeavors.

Nonetheless, we believe this report provides a fuller, richer evaluation of progress in the struggle against violent jihadism than other publicly available work.

The findings is this report are presented in order of importance. While there is no purely objective way to rank metrics, we believe the order in this report reflects a reasonable weighting of indicators. Throughout, we have coded positive developments, green; negative, red; and ambiguous, yellow to provide the reader with a visual representation of the struggle against violent jihadism.

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