

# Case-Specific Counterterrorism Policies for Islamic Fundamentalist Groups

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CASE-SPECIFIC COUNTERTERRORISM  
POLICIES FOR  
ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Political Science  
in the College of Sciences  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Since 9/11, counterterrorism policies have been one of the crucial policy issues facing the United States. After the attacks on the United States, counterterrorism in this country transformed. Fifteen years later, counterterrorism is typically organized as a one-size fits all approach. This approach generalizes all terrorist threats, trying to target terrorism as a whole. This thesis explains how this is an improper approach to counterterrorism. Instead, policies should be case-specific and created in regards to the specific characteristics embodied by each terrorist organization. These characteristics include history and ideology, organizational and leadership structure, finances, and tactics and targets. These characteristics have been proven to comprise the composition of a one-of-a-kind terrorist organization. Each group expresses these characteristics differently, even if they share the same geographical location or religious background. Through research utilizing academic journal articles, current events, government publications, and published books, it is discovered how the unique characteristics displayed by Islamic Fundamentalist groups have counterterrorism policy implications. In order to portray this, this thesis analyzed characteristics of Al Qaeda, ISIS, and the Taliban. Through these case-studies, it was shown how distinct these groups are from one another and how these differences should be accounted for in counterterrorism policies. Once these differences are implemented into individualist counterterrorism policies, the United States can provide effective policies that target specific aspects of each terrorist organization instead of trying to combat terrorism as a whole.

## **DEDICATIONS**

For my parents and family, thank you for always supporting me no matter the dream,

For my professors, thank you for pushing me farther than I ever thought I could go,

For my friends, thank you for cheering me on along the way,

For every single person who has been negatively impacted by terrorism.

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## **I. Introduction**

The issue of terrorism has been on the forefront of political elections, government decisions, and the safety of the American public. This has caused the United States government to keep terrorism as one of the main aspects of American policies, especially foreign affairs. In order to do this, the United States develops counterterrorism policies. International counterterrorism policies, according to the U.S. Department of State, promotes “U.S. national security by taking a leading role in developing coordinated strategies and approaches to defeat terrorism abroad” (U.S. Department of State). Typically, the United States government creates a broad counterterrorism policy that incorporates aspects from multiple terrorist organizations in different regions around the world. Or, the U.S. focuses on one specific attribute of a terrorist group (like their finances) and fails to recognize multiple characteristics in their policies. By combining these two types of counterterrorism policies, the United States can create a more successful and preventative counterterrorism plan. Each individual policy will focus on each terrorist group that is a threat to the United States. The unique characteristics of each terrorist group will be incorporated into these individualized counterterrorism policies.

This information and prior research contributed to the main research question presented in this thesis: How do characteristics of Islamic Fundamentalist groups affect U.S. counterterrorism policies? This leads to the following hypothesis: If an Islamic Fundamentalist group is comprised of a unique set of characteristics, then United States should incorporate these characteristics into individualistic counterterrorism policies. Therefore, each terrorist group (in this case, Islamic Fundamentalist group) will have their own policy directed at the vulnerabilities



apparent according to their characteristics. Using this approach, counterterrorism policies will hopefully become increasingly effective since they are targeting certain aspects of a group.

The independent variables in this thesis are the different characteristics in the case studies of the three Islamic Fundamentalist Groups. These characteristics are the group's history and the development of their ideology, their leadership and organizational structure, their targets and tactics, and their finances. The dependent variable is United States counterterrorism policies. There are also two control variables that were kept consistent and influenced which case studies were chosen. The first control variable was the underlying religion of these organizations. The three case studies that were chosen are all Islamic Fundamentalist groups, meaning their underlying religion is Islam. Islamic fundamentalism focuses on the fundamentals of Islam and adheres strictly to the Quran. This adherence is often considered 'real Islam' and is accompanied by violence and intolerance (Kte'pi). The reason Islamic Fundamentalist terrorism was chosen was because these groups have had immense effects on the United States, through attempted and successful attacks on this country. This not only includes the devastating 9/11 attacks that occurred 15 years ago, but recent attacks as well. This includes the Boston Marathon Bombings in 2013 (Cooper et al). There was also an intentional focus on Islamic Fundamentalist groups that were based on Sunni Islam, which is why the case studies of ISIS, Al Qaeda, and The Taliban were selected. By narrowing the belief system, it made it easy to compare each group's specific ideological foundation. Differences in religion or even the schism of Islam could possibly impact certain characteristics of the terrorist group, especially history and ideology. This is why each case study was a Sunni Islamic Fundamentalist group.

The second control variable is the region of the world these groups are located, which is the Persian Gulf region of the Middle East. By limiting the region of the world, the scope of each fundamentalist group was able to be narrowed down to the specific geographical region they inhabit. This means that any geographical influences were able to be controlled. For example, if a terrorist group was established in Russia, they might act differently than a terrorist group based in Iraq. This control variable was also able to show how Middle Eastern countries are interrelated with one another. This includes Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. By using these two control variables, two key characteristics were kept consistent regardless of the case study. Since the thesis was already centered on four varying characteristics, it was necessary to have at least two characteristics consistent for the basis of comparison

Throughout my research, it was shown how vital it is to understand how certain characteristics of Islamic Fundamentalist groups can affect U.S. counterterrorism policies. This shows that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is strong. Some characteristics of Islamic Fundamentalist groups do affect and shape counterterrorism policies more than others. For example, the finances of terrorist groups have direct implications on how to approach counterterrorism. Al Qaeda's main source of revenue is through financial facilitators. Therefore, Al Qaeda counterterrorism policies should focus on these facilitators (Roth et al 20). On the other hand, ISIS raises funds through their control of oil reserves. This means the main focus of this group needs to be on their selling of smuggled oil to Middle Eastern countries (Stergiou 193). Although Al Qaeda and ISIS are both Islamic Fundamentalist groups, it is shown that there needs to be different approaches in counterterrorism based on a certain characteristic, such as their main sources of revenue.

## Methodology and Research Design

In order to suggest meaningful counterterrorism policies and to accurately describe the characteristics that should impact counterterrorism, any research must be properly organized and conducted. The primary method utilized throughout this research was an analysis of a culmination of peer-reviewed academic journals, unbiased newspaper articles about current events, published books, and government publications. This information was then analyzed objectively, with the objective being to link characteristics to counterterrorism implications. The research and the findings were also going to be qualitative, focused on descriptions and explanations, not numbers. Since this research came from many different sources and there was an abundance of information and examples collected, the next focus was how to organize all of this data. This is when the research design was developed.

The first section in this thesis is an introduction to both the research and the background of Islamic Fundamentalism. The purpose of this section is to decipher between the differences between traditional Islamic beliefs and how Islamic Fundamentalists tend to interpret these beliefs. In order to accomplish this, there is research regarding the Quran, which is the holy book of Islam, as well as specific Islamic beliefs, like the 5 pillars of Islam (Johnson). Then, how these Islamic Fundamentalist groups take those traditional Islamic beliefs and interpret them according to their ideology is explained. Within the introduction, the funnel method is incorporated as a representation of how Islamic Fundamentalism/Jihadism is just one division of Islam. The general concept, Islam, is narrowed down to Islamic Fundamentalism. Islam is the overlying religion. Within this religion, there is a major struggle between Sunni and Shia Muslims (Moore

229). The Islamic Fundamentalist groups in my research are all Sunni Fundamentalist groups, and within the Sunni population, they are known as Salafists. Within Salafism, there are Jihadists, which are what the three case studies identify as (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 77). Overall, the introduction shows the progression of Islam to Jihadism and provides an overview of the characteristics of a Jihadist. In addition to the background knowledge, the introduction discusses the fundamentals of this thesis. This not only includes the hypothesis, but the research design, methodology, research significance, and literature review. These sections are necessary in order to show that this is a proper and valid research project that can be verified by fellow researchers.

After this introduction to Islam and some of the major differences between Fundamentalism and traditional Islamic beliefs, three main sections follow based on the 3 case studies. These case studies center around three different Islamic Fundamentalist groups: Al Qaeda, ISIS (more recently referred to as the Islamic State), and The Taliban. Within these case studies, specific characteristics of these 3 Islamic Fundamentalist groups are discussed. The first of these characteristics is the history and ideology of each group. This not only is necessary for the counterterrorism aspect, but in order to learn the foundations of the group. These ideologies also have similarities with the beliefs discussed in the introduction. The other sections within these case studies include leadership and organizational structure, finances, and the tactics and targets the group utilizes. After each characteristic of that Islamic Fundamentalist group is explained, the basic counterterrorist implications this certain characteristic has towards United States policies is formed. In the conclusion, these United States policy implications are explained more in-depth.

The reason these four characteristics were chosen was because throughout the research process, it was revealed that these characteristics affect the counterterrorist policies the United States should implement. These characteristics also had enough information from various sources so substantial policies could be formed. Instead of taking a broad approach to counterterrorism and having one general policy (a one size fits all approach), the U.S. needs to take the specifics of each individual terrorist threat and create a policy for each. This would be known as case-specific counterterrorism policies. By replacing general policies, case-specific policies can be more effective by utilizing this approach. This is because policies will be individually shaped and targeted towards each terrorist organization. More evaluative research will need to be done in the future to determine how much more effective U.S. counterterrorism policies are when they take this case-specific approach.

It was also necessary to explain the differences between the various beliefs of Islam first in the introductory chapter because it is important to realize that there are differences between traditional Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalists (Jihadists). Counterterrorist experts need to understand these differences when they are creating policies because they cannot discriminate against all Muslims when implementing any counterterrorism efforts. They also have to understand Islamic Fundamentalism beliefs in order to have an idea as to why Islamic Fundamentalist groups behave the way they do. Experts must also understand what their underlying grievances are. Once they have an idea of the motives behind an Islamic Fundamentalist group, counterterrorist experts will be able to get to the root of the terrorist behavior and try to prevent or remedy it. This will create a proactive way to solve the 'War on Terror' and the fight against terrorism. This is compared to the more reactive plan currently in

place. This reactive plan can only discuss options and implement policies after an attack has already occurred. By combining case-specific counterterrorism policies with policies that focus on Islamic Fundamentalist (not necessarily Islamic) beliefs, the United States will have a solid counterterrorism plan that does not discriminate against all Muslims and is effective towards the specific group each policy focuses on.

After discussing the 3 case studies, the conclusion chapter explains the importance of having case-specific counterterrorist policies and the next steps for United States counterterrorism. A comprehensive U.S. counterterrorism plan is also laid out in the conclusion that contains policies based upon the characteristics of the three case studies. After the explanations of these counterterrorist policies, the thesis ends with research questions that have developed throughout this research. This includes ways the research can be taken further. This thesis is just the first step into creating case-specific counterterrorism policies. Additional research can be done regarding different terrorist groups, different regions of the world, and different characteristics.

### Literature Review

The key to proper research is utilizing past research that influences the formulation of new research questions, hypotheses, and policy. Therefore, in order to conduct the research needed for this thesis, a variety of sources needed to be utilized in order to see where this research fits in with past literature and how it differs from those sources. Older, historical sources were used, especially those that described the history of each Islamic Fundamentalist group and Islam as a whole. These sources were needed to get an accurate description of history

and ideology written by credible sources. The more recent academic journals used included current counterterrorism policies utilized by President Barack Obama. I also used current news stories from various newspapers in order to have up to date information on recent attacks, any recent leadership changes, or financial gains or losses. Government publications were also helpful throughout this research because of the policy implications this thesis has. These publications include congressional hearings, department websites, press releases from the President and other cabinet members, and policy outlines. Peer-reviewed academic journals were the primary source utilized throughout this research. These were used to describe the specific characteristics of each Islamic Fundamentalist group. Culminating all of these different types of sources together ensured that the thesis would have information from a variety of sources from accredited authors.

Within the countless sources utilized, the research presented in this thesis found a unique place in published literature. Throughout the research process of examining journal articles, books, and websites, there was not a single source that had taken many characteristics of multiple Islamic Fundamentalist groups and created comprehensive and individualized counterterrorism policy based on those characteristics. There are many books written about one certain terrorist group, where it lists the general information about the group, the history, and their ideology. Sometimes, but rarely, these sources touch on counterterrorism. However, this is usually in the general aspect and not specific to the terrorist group. The term ‘general aspect’ in this case means the typical defenses the United States uses, regardless of the threat. This includes military or diplomatic means. On the other hand, there are many books, journal articles, and government publications that extensively describe United States counterterrorism policies. The

issue with these forms of literature is that current counterterrorism policies do not directly relate to the characteristics of different terrorist organizations or differentiate between radical and traditional Islam.

In order to account for these issues, this research topic fits in between these two types of literature, meaning it bridges the gap between an Islamic Fundamentalist group and counterterrorist policies. In order to bridge this gap, multiple characteristics of Islamic Fundamentalist groups are analyzed and counterterrorism policy implications are presented according to those characteristics. After each characteristic is individually discussed, they are combined into one comprehensive counterterrorist policy per Islamic Fundamentalist group. This is not one counterterrorist policy for all terrorist groups or even for all Islamic Fundamentalist groups. It is a separate plan for each group discussed. Take Stergiou's research article on ISIS's finances. Stergiou begins his article with how ISIS funds their operation. He then discusses how the United States plans to use counterterrorism policies to defeat ISIS through only their finances (Stergiou 201). The issue with this is that the counterterrorism plan presented doesn't take other characteristics into account, including ISIS's ideology, their allies, their methods of violence, etc. This issue is apparent in many sources utilized in this thesis, with them only taking one characteristic into account.

On the other hand, certain literature has the opposite problem. These sources focus on a one size fits all approach to counterterrorism. In other words, these sources just focus on past, current, or proposed U.S. counterterrorism policies. These sources do not take into account the specifics of each terrorist organization. They also do not focus on only one terrorist group, like the Taliban, or even one type of terrorist group, like Islamic Fundamentalist groups or religious



terrorist groups. By combining each terrorist group together, these counterterrorism policies only do half the work. Only some vulnerabilities of certain groups will be targeted, while other groups will be able to continue their operations unharmed. For example, in regards to organizational structure, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi claims to have direct control over their fighters and their territory. This is because he is the political and religious leader of ISIS, otherwise known as caliph. On the other hand, Al Qaeda's leader Ayman al Zawahiri states that he does not have direct hierarchal control over the vast network of Al Qaeda. Instead he and the rest of Al Qaeda's core leadership focuses on centralizing their message and strategy compared to the daily operations of their franchises (Glenn). These two different types of organizational structures offer different situations for counterterrorism policies to take into account. With ISIS, experts must listen, understand, and communicate with the leaders, because whatever Baghdadi wants, everyone follows. The other option is to kill Baghdadi and try to prevent another from taking his place. This loss of direct leadership could mean catastrophe for ISIS because of the established hierarchy. Since Al Qaeda is more decentralized, experts need to focus on the smaller cells and affiliates, where there are different leaders involved and different areas to cover. This requires extensive work in trying to map where these cells are located. That is why the death of Bin Laden didn't completely demolish this group. If these two groups were combined into one counterterrorism policy, the organization structure of the groups could withstand certain policies because of how different they are from each other. Comparing the two group's organization and leadership structure shows how necessary it is to differentiate between varying groups, because each group is unique based on their characteristics. Not all terrorist groups and not all Islamic Fundamentalist groups are alike.

There are two examples that show this broad approach to counterterrorism the United States currently implements. The first is found directly through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. Within this bureau, there are countless programs and initiatives being considered by the United States (U.S. Department of State). Although there are over 10 unique approaches to counterterrorism listed on the Bureau's website, none of them refer to a specific terrorist organization. These initiatives are covering vast amounts of ground while they try and encompass all types of terrorism. Instead, initiatives and programs can be shaped in accordance to each specific terrorist organization depending on their specific characteristics. Another example is based upon a Congressional Research Service Report. In 2016, specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs Christopher Blanchard and analyst in Middle Eastern and African Affairs Carla Humud developed a U.S. policy report based on the Islamic State. In comparison to the programs sponsored by the Department of State, these policies are directed at a specific terrorist group, ISIS. The issue with this report is that the policies contained within it are still broad. It discussed the overall U.S. strategy, threat assessments, and military operations (Blanchard and Humud 7). What this report doesn't do is create policies in response to the specifics of ISIS. It is targeted to ISIS but not catered to ISIS. Therefore, even when policies refer to a specific organization, they are usually general and not specified to the varying structures within a group.

Another way the research presented in this thesis takes current literature one step further is with Stanford's Mapping Military Organizations research project. This research project gave an overview of all three of the case studies in this thesis; Al Qaeda

, ISIS, and the Taliban. This source gave details on many characteristics of these three Islamic Fundamentalist groups, including the four characteristics discussed in this thesis. What this thesis does differently than this project is that it relates these characteristics to specific United States counterterrorism implications (Stanford University). Two other sources have discussed larger scale counterterrorism policies that are presented in the conclusion chapter. Ganor discusses the toolbox that can be available to counterterrorist experts if they pursue multiple forms of counterterrorism policies (Ganor 344). The issue is that he does not define these 'tools' as related to certain terrorist groups. Throughout his article he describes some of the 'tools' or options experts can use, but he does not specify which tactic would be used for each threat a terrorist group presents. Another source was Bouzis's article on U.S. counterterrorism against ISIS. Bouzis's research was a small comparison of this thesis's research, as it focused on linking ISIS's tactics into counterterrorism measures (Bouzis). However, Bouzis failed to go into greater detail about how other characteristics like history, ideology, leadership, and finances can also be used to develop equally successful plans. To go into greater detail about the sources utilized in this thesis's research, a literature review was conducted of the most influential sources.

Throughout the past few decades, there has been multiple sources that have contributed to research on Islamic Fundamentalist groups, Islam, and counterterrorism. In 2003, two years after the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the academic journal article published by Quintan Wiktorowicz and John Kaltner argued the reasoning behind 9/11. Al Qaeda has continuously justified the killing of civilians as a part of a total war against the United States, even though the religion of Islam condemns violence. This article also discusses the basis of Al Qaeda's

ideology. They are part of the Salafist movement, which is a part of the Sunni Muslim ideology. There are 4 ways Salafists promote Islam and work to create an Islamic society/caliphate. Al Qaeda is a part of this violent jihadist movement, which promotes using violence in order to promote Islam. Regardless of every criticism other Muslims have with Al Qaeda's methods, they always have a justification for their defensive jihad, whether it is engaged because of broken treaties or the use of civilian targeting. For example, Al Qaeda follows conditions and rules of engagement for their use of their tactics against their specific targets. These justifications even lead to how Al Qaeda justified their attacks on the United States during 9/11. This is also shows why it would be difficult to 'compromise' with Al Qaeda to stop their attacks, because they believe their attacks are completely justified (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 85).

Also in 2003, Walter Lacquer's book "No End to War" offered information on the foundations of terrorism, Islamic terrorism, the quest for a global jihad, tactics used by terrorist groups like suicide, and why America has become a target of terrorism. The beginning sentence itself proves one of the main points of this thesis. This is that attacks and violence are not the only things important to understanding terrorism, it is the underlying ideology of these terrorist groups (Lacquer 11). Lacquer also argues that religious terrorism is one of the primary forms of terrorism currently, which is a reason why religious terrorism was the type of terrorism that is focused on in this thesis. The entirety of the 2nd chapter focuses specifically on the origins of Islamic terrorism, which is a part of the introductory chapter. This includes details about Salafism, which is the movement within Islam that the three case studies in this thesis identify with. Lacquer also dedicates an entire chapter to why America is the focus of contemporary terrorism, which proves why America is a significant country to focus on when discussing

counterterrorism policies. He even goes in to detail about how America has felt about Muslims since the 9/11 attacks, with recent Islamophobia beliefs plaguing Americans and not helping relations with the Muslim community.

In 2004, one of the most significant sources used in this research was published, which was related to Al Qaeda and counterterrorism. During 2004, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States wrote the 9/11 Commission Report. This commission was created by the United States Congress and signed into effect by President Bush in 2002. One section focused on in this report was the financing of terrorist groups, which focused on Al Qaeda in particular because of their involvement in the 9/11 attacks. This section was titled Monograph on Terrorist Financing and was one of the two Staff Monographs included in this report (Roth et al). There were also many other aspects of this report that related to counterterrorism options and policies for the United States in regards to terrorism as a whole and Al Qaeda specifically. For example, one recommendation the commission was in Chapter 12, What to Do? A Global Strategy. “The U.S. government must identify and prioritize actual or potential terrorist sanctuaries. For each, it should have a realistic strategy to keep possible terrorists insecure and on the run, using all elements of national power. We should reach out, listen to, and work with other countries that can help” (Kean and Hamilton 367).

Jumping ahead, many sources utilized were recently published in 2013. One was a report published by the AEI titled “The Al Qaeda Network a New Framework for Defining the Enemy”, which was written by Katherine Zimmerman. Al Qaeda has a complex organizational structure that has gone through multiple transformations since their formation in 1988. In 2013, Zimmerman discussed these transformations, including the difference between a networked

organization and hierarchal organization. The networked organization represents a more latticed structure, which prevents the deaths of Al Qaeda leaders from bringing down the entire group (Zimmerman 7). This network also shows how ideas are passed between one another. There is a difference between Al Qaeda Central and the rest of the group. Al Qaeda Central is the part of the group that is located in Pakistan and is directly led by the emir. There are also Al Qaeda affiliates that have been recognized by this emir and share Al Qaeda's ideology and resources. Besides affiliates, Al Qaeda also has many associates who do not operate under Al Qaeda's name but support the group and share the same ideology. These three groups together form Al Qaeda's strong network (Zimmerman 14). This source is an example of a piece of literature that offers a detailed explanation of a specific characteristic of one Islamic Fundamentalist group.

Since the history of Al Qaeda was discussed in great deal, it was necessary to have a reliable source focused on describing the history of this group. Therefore, the information would be simplified and understandable. In December 2013, Watts, a FBI agent assigned to a joint terrorism task force and a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, wrote about the transformation of Al Qaeda since their formation in 1988. Watt argues that Al Qaeda has been through three versions or 'incarnations' since 1988. These three versions represent three different forms of Al Qaeda and three ways this organization has been able to adapt to the changing jihadist, political, and technological atmospheres of the world. The first version spans from their original form in 1988 to the September 11th attacks on the United States. After these attacks, Al Qaeda entered into their second version. They were able to begin using the Internet to their advantage, recruit members around the globe due to the publicity of 9/11, and sponsor affiliates in surrounding Middle Eastern countries. Since the 2011 Arab Spring, the Syrian Civil War, and

the founder, Osama Bin Laden's death, Al Qaeda has entered their third and current version (Watts).

### Significance

The topic of Islamic Fundamentalism has academia, theoretical, and policy dimensions. Each of these dimensions offers something different in terms of research. The research in this thesis focuses on the policy dimension of Islamic Fundamentalism. More specifically, it focuses on counterterrorism policy. Once it was decided that the policy implications of Islamic Fundamentalism would be focused on, the next step was to figure out whose counterterrorism policies would be examined. United States and their counterterrorism policies. This is when United States' counterterrorism policies were chosen. The United States is a global superpower. Vladimir Putin himself stated that Russia (the largest nation in the world) accepts that the United States is the only true superpower in the world (Reilly). To study and research the counterterrorism policies of a global superpower is significant because they have great influence worldwide, a mass amount of resources at risk, and their actions have the ability to affect every other country. Middle Eastern politics and Islamic Fundamentalist groups engaging in acts of terrorism are important to the United States because the U.S. has allies in the Middle East. Besides this, there have been multiple attacks carried out directly against the U.S. and their allies. The United States also has interests, like oil, in the Middle East that needs to be protected from these terrorist groups.

This research topic has utmost policy importance, as policy change is the potential outcome of this research. By looking at the defining characteristics of three Islamic

Fundamentalist groups that pose a threat to the United States, the foundation for individualistic counterterrorist policy is cemented. For example, by researching the ideology of different Islamic Fundamentalist groups, specific details within counterterrorist policies can be shaped according to why these radicals think and act the way they do. In the introduction section, this research begins by defining what it means to be an Islamic Fundamentalist and how that differs from being a traditional Muslim. This includes some of the main differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims and basic characteristics of Islamic Fundamentalists. The contrast between the many schisms of Islam affects policy because any counterterrorist policy trying to combat Islamic fundamentalist terrorism must not discriminate against all Muslims. Therefore, policy experts must understand the differences between these schisms. It is also important to understand the history of Islam so that historical contexts can be incorporated into U. S's foreign policy regarding the Middle East (Moore 226). If there is an understanding of the basics of Islam, the United States can work with countries that have significant Muslim populations while being able to respect their customs and beliefs.

The conclusion chapter is where the policy importance of this research comes together and explains why describing these terrorist groups is significant. This section begins by looking at the counterterrorism implications that were made throughout the three case studies and combines them into their own comprehensive counterterrorism policy. This has policy importance because this research shows that a counterterrorist policy must be shaped based on a variety of factors and characteristics, not just a one size fits all approach. By having multiple policy options in the United States' overall counterterrorism plan, counterterrorism will become increasingly effective. If one plan fails or proves ineffective, the U.S. has multiple other options.



As of 2013, when President Obama last outlined point by point his strategy for U.S. counterterrorism, the policy didn't touch on any specific terrorist group except Al Qaeda. This means that based on U.S. counterterrorism policies that have been laid out by the President himself, there is no mention of ISIS or the Taliban ("The President's May 23 Speech on Counterterrorism"). Along with the varying groups that remain a threat to the United States, counterterrorism policies should be specifically formed based on each individual terrorist threat and their underlying characteristics. Overall, this research has policy significance, specifically United States counterterrorism.

### Background Information

Before the topic of terrorism that is conducted by Islamic Fundamentalist groups can be discussed, there needs to be an understanding of what Islamic Fundamentalism actually is and how it compares to traditional Islam. In order to do this, a brief history of Islam as well as the branch of Islam these fundamentalists fall under must first be discussed. This will create the foundation necessary to discuss the radical interpretation of Islam that fundamentalists believe in. By researching and discussing traditional Islamic beliefs and customs, it is possible to compare these traditional beliefs to the radical beliefs held by Islamic Fundamentalists. Once there is a distinction drawn between traditional and radical Islam, experts will be able to discuss ways to prevent this radicalization, help those who have been radicalized, and stop future terrorist attacks. This foundation will also give policy experts the ability to understand the differences between varying branches of Islamic faith and be able to keep these differences in mind when creating counterterrorism policies and working with Muslims of all backgrounds.

These differences must be understood not only to create effective counterterrorism policies, but to avoid discrimination against all Muslims.

Islam is one of the major religions followed around the world. Islam has 1.6 billion followers, considered Muslims, which cumulates to 23% of the world's population (Johnson). The sheer amount of Muslims in the world is one reason why Islamic Fundamentalists pose such a large threat around the world. There are 1.6 billion people connected to this religion, following the beliefs, celebrating the rituals, visiting the sacred sites, and reading the holy books. Within the vast religion, there is a small minority, a select few that radicalize the beliefs shared by so many others. The fact that there are 1.6 Muslims worldwide, spread across every continent and nationality, makes it difficult to find the minority of radicals that are committed to engaging in acts of terrorism to 'advance' this religion. Another effect this extensive number of Muslims has is on politics. If one plays a numbers game, Muslims have the ability to show the pure power a group can have if they wish to project their values onto others. This means that if a group of Muslims band together to bring about change, the possible number of Muslims that can join together is enormous. Politics is also affected through policy change and whether these policies are advocated by Muslims or not. Policies that are created must take into account the general Muslim populations in each country. Muslims are predominately located in North Africa, the Middle- and Near-East, and Indonesia (Ball et al 2009). The government of these countries must take into consideration the types of people they are representing. If the population is majority Muslim (assuming that there is some sort of democracy present), Muslims are able to direct the government towards decisions that cater to them.

Power isn't necessarily derived from just pure quantity like the number of practicing Muslims. Power also comes from the quality, in this case the Islam religion, meaning what the religion is actually comprised of. To Muslims, Islam is not just a religion, it is a way of life. Through Islam, there are rules dictating every part of life. This includes prayer, welfare, morals, food, celebrations, and family life. These rules are derived from the origins of the religion itself, because Islam is also the Arabic word for submission. More specifically, it is the submission of one to God. Muslims' God is named Allah (Ball et al 299). This submission lays the foundation of not just Islam, but is a crucial component of Islamic Fundamentalism. Fundamentalists not only give up their individuality to Allah, but oftentimes their life. By completely giving themselves to Allah, these radicals believe that anything they do is for their God, and any action is justified because they are submitting themselves to God's will.

### The 5 Pillars of Islam

The 5 pillars of Islam are the fundamental commitments that a Muslim must fulfill during their lifetime. These pillars are one of the major ways experts can compare how traditional Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalists interpret Islam. Similar to the 10 Commandments found in Christianity, these pillars of faith direct followers on the principles that should guide their daily life. The first pillar of Islam is Shahadah, which is known as the profession of faith. Through this pillar, Muslims recognize that there is only one true God. They also recite this creed in acceptance: "There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God" ("The Five Pillars of Islam"). Upon taking this creed, Muslims express their total commitment to Islam.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar is Salah, or prayer. This pillar focuses on a Muslim's direct relationship with God through prayer. In order to properly respect the relationship between Man and God, Muslim's all turn towards Makkah. Makkah is Islam's holiest city. Muslims repeat prayer 5 times a day, showing the timely dedication required to fulfill this pillar of faith. Like Church on Sundays for those who follow Christianity, Muslims also attend a congregational service on Fridays. Although the necessity to pray 5 times throughout the day is time consuming, Muslim's are able to pray anywhere, whether it is by themselves or in a group ("The Five Pillars of Islam"). This allows some flexibility in such a rigid practice. Muslims prayer is something that every Muslim engages in. This represents how Muslims are connected with one another, not only throughout the world but throughout history.

The third pillar is known as Zakat, or almsgiving. This pillar looks at a Muslim's social responsibility to God. Zakat is a more liberal value and states that Muslims must pay a fixed 2.5% percentage of what they own to the community. This is a liberal value because a Muslim gives a specific proportion of their wealth to those in need, compared to a fixed value. This means that the wealthier you are, the more you must contribute. It is also liberal because the contribution goes towards helping fellow members of the community that are less fortunate. This pillar also benefits Muslims in other ways besides providing charity. It frees them from their love of possessions, greed, and money. Zakat also teaches that a Muslim is only rich or poor because Allah has chosen that path for them and that they should not take advantage of that ("The Five Pillars of Islam").

Ṣawm is the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of Islam, and represents the fulfillment of fasting during the month of Ramadan. Fasting is the act of not eating, drinking, or doing other sensual pleasures from

dawn to sunset. Fasting is important in Islam because it is an act of deep personal worship and it strengthens one's relationship with God. It also allows wealthier Muslims to understand the deprivation that the poor faces with lack of food, which strengthens their sense of empathy. The entire month of Ramadan follows the following pattern: There is a special meal at sunset, called *itfar*. Then, Muslims perform an additional nocturnal worship, *tarawih*, after the typical evening prayer. Afterwards, they celebrate. At the very end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate *Eid Al-Fitr*, which is a recognized holiday of Islamic faith ("The Five Pillars of Islam"). This is also where the fasting can officially be over. The act of fasting shows the self-control and discipline Muslims must practice day after day, ignoring the temptations of food, drink, and sensual pleasures.

The 5<sup>th</sup> and final pillar of Islam is the *Hajj*. This is a Muslim's pilgrimage to Mecca. This pilgrimage occurs once a year in the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Any Muslim, regardless of ethnicity, country or origin, social class etc., joins together in Mecca to worship Allah. This journey is required of all Muslims who are mentally, physically, and financially able to ("The Five Pillars of Islam"). The *Hajj*'s importance is to bring together Muslims of all different backgrounds to realize their brotherhood, sisterhood, spirituality and equality. This shows that according to Allah, all are equal.

By using the pillars that are the basis of Islamic belief, it is possible to compare how traditional Muslims interpret these pillars and how Islamic Fundamentalists could interpret them. These potential radicalized interpretations are vital to understand in order to get inside the mind of an Islamic Fundamentalist and attempt to fathom why they commit acts of terrorism. When experts can get into the minds of any terrorists, they can get to the root cause of the dissonance.

With the first pillar, Shahadah, it is rather easy to see how radicals Muslims can interpret it. A total commitment and complete acceptance of Islam allows extremists to justify acts of violence in defense of their religion. In other words, if a Muslim interprets the Quran in a violent manner or they believe that their total commitment to Islam must include violence and terror, radical Muslims will accept this violence as a legitimate means to bring about change. The flexibility of Salah, or the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar, allows for extremists to pray anywhere they are able. These prayers can be seen whether a Muslim is at a theme park or in the comfort of their own home. The 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar is also the first pillar that represents the dedication and self-discipline required of a Muslim. In order to maintain praying 5 times a day, a Muslim must dedicate specific times throughout the day to satisfy this pillar. This dedication is also seen in a fundamentalist, as they will go to any length to fight for their version of Islam.

Even though the third pillar represents helping those less fortunate, it can still have implications for radical Muslims. There are times that extremists claim that they are fighting for the people of Islam when committing acts of violence. Therefore, just like Zakat, extremists may believe that they must always look out for those less fortunate and all members of their community. This is in order to fulfil their social responsibility to God. The ability to fast during Ramadan, otherwise known as the Sawm (the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar), shows that extremists that follow the 5 pillars have the ability to ignore temptations when they are working on strengthening their relationship with God. To extremists, their mission is to promote jihad. Jihad is, “a holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty” (“Jihad”). On a more individual level, jihad is a personal struggle for a devoted Muslim. Much like fasting, the violence perpetrated because of this jihad and other extremist beliefs cannot be stopped because of temptations or polite

conversation. These extremists are dedicated to their beliefs and will not be swayed to break their obligation to Allah for trivial matters. This means that the dedication a Muslim can have for fasting during Ramadan can also be used for other purposes in their life. This includes dedication to promoting jihad and violence. The ultimate test of dedication for a Muslim is the 5<sup>th</sup> and final pillar, Hajj, also known as the pilgrimage to Mecca. If a Muslim can be dedicated enough to their religion to travel the steps Muhammed did thousands of years ago means that they are able to do almost anything they desire.

No matter the specific interpretations a Muslim has in regards to Islam, all Muslims share the values of the 5 pillars. These shared values connect all Muslims together regardless of gender, region of the world, age, or any other characteristic. This is simply because these values represent the basic identity of a Muslim. Nowhere in these 5 pillars is any negative connotation or adjective used to describe Islamic faith, beliefs, or practices. The issue arises when extremists take the 5 pillars, along with other sacred symbols of Islam, and turn them into symbols of violence and revolution. Their own interpretations to the 5 pillars as well as the qualities portrayed when following these pillars (like extreme dedication) is what can potentially breed a radical ideology.

### Sunni's v. Shi'as

Among the billion Muslims practicing Islam, there are various schisms, or divisions, that separate Muslims based on their history and beliefs. These schisms can be categorized into two main divisions of Islam, Sunni and Shi'a. This major division must be understood first in order to recognize the division of Islam that the terrorism discussed in this thesis is committed by.

Generally speaking, Sunni Muslims make up a majority of the Muslim population. A small proportion of Muslims are Shi'a's, comprising around 10-15% of the overall Muslim population. Shi'a Muslims are generally located in Iraq, Iran, Bahrain, and Azerbaijan (Blanchard and Humud 1). The differences between these two types of Muslims isn't due to disagreements about the basic beliefs of Islam. In actuality, the division comes from varying opinions on the succession of the Prophet Muhammed after he died. The succession of the Prophet is a major source of debate in Islam because any successor becomes the next leader of the Muslim community. If one entire group of Muslims disagree with who the successor shall be, then conflict is bound to arise because everyone wants to be represented by a leader who they support.

On one side, there were Muslims who believed that the successor was to be a direct relative of the Prophet. These were known as Shi'a Muslims, which means supporters or helpers of Ali. On the other side were the Sunni Muslims. These Muslims agreed that the Caliph (the Arabic word for successor) and the caliphate (the Islamic state) was legitimate. The disagreement was that they did not agree that the Caliph had to be a direct relative of the Prophet. As long as the successor was qualified and would properly follow Islam, the Sunni Muslims were satisfied (Blanchard and Humud 1). This disagreement came to light with the succession of the first caliph after the Prophet Muhammed's death in 632 AD. After his death, community leaders selected Abu Bakr as the first Caliph. Although he was not in the Prophet's bloodline, he was a close companion and a reasonable choice to carry on the Prophet's rule. Bakr was not the first choice for Shi'a Muslims, however, as they supported Ali ibn Abi Talib's ascent to the throne. Ali was not only the husband of one of the Prophet's daughters, he was also his cousin. This meant he was directly related to the Prophet. Once Bakr, and eventually the caliphs that came after him,



ascended to rule the caliphate, Shi'a Muslims claimed that these caliphs were illegitimate. "Ali's followers believed that the Prophet Muhammad himself had named Ali as successor and that the status quo was a violation of divine order" (Blanchard and Humud 1). This division, one that was created thousands of years ago due to the question of who would be the first successor to Prophet Muhammed's throne, was the original reason why there is discord between Muslims today.

Not only did this split between Islam create controversy on the matter of the first Caliph, it created a breeding ground for the dissidence and even the terrorism that is still occurring. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the caliphate had lost most of its prestige and influence. By 1924, the name caliph was even abolished. The dissolution of this institution (the caliphate) angered Sunni Muslims, especially an institution that had laid out a foundation for Islam since the time of the Prophet himself. Activists claimed that the reason the caliphate's power declined was because Muslims had strayed from the 'true path' of Islam. These activists are the same individuals who are also known as Sunni extremists. These Sunni extremists include the founder of Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden. In order to return to this true path, these activists plan on reconstructing a new caliphate based on pure Islam (Blanchard and Humud 1). This desire is one of the reasons Islamic Fundamentalists give when creating their propaganda, disseminating their message, and committing acts of terror. Fundamentalists believe that they are the true followers of Islam and that their actions (regardless of how violent they are) are helping Islam get back to its' true form. The conflict between Sunni and Shi'a's that occurred almost 2,000 years ago does have modern implications and has evolved throughout this time period, splitting the religion of Islam in two.

The reason that this conflict is necessary to explain before discussing the specific characteristics of Islamic Fundamentalists and the three following case studies is because Al

Qaeda, ISIS, and the Taliban are all based on Sunni Islam. There are fundamentalists based on Shi'a Islam, but they display different characteristics including ideology, tactics, and targets. The ideological differences have already been explained, but these differences only act as an underlying foundation for these groups. What is equally as important is how these ideological differences manifest in their actual attacks. According to the Brookings Institute, there are 6 main differences between Sunni and Shi'a terrorism, especially dealing with targets and tactics. Sunni terrorists focus on a continuous and high intensity war against 'infidels'. Shi'a terrorists, on the other hand, set their sights on state and organizational objectives and on their war against Israel. The second difference is that Shi'a terrorists are more likely to be state-sponsored, and receive resources directly from Iranian government. Sunni terrorists, especially Salafi-Jihadis (which these three case studies resemble), instead rely on international support. This means they communicate with Muslims in various countries who believe in the same extremist ideology that they do. Speaking of tactics, both Sunni and Shi'a terrorists kidnap victims. The difference is that Sunni terrorists kidnap with the expectation that they will kill their victim, while Shi'a terrorists kidnap with the intention to barter their life. Another difference is their targets and how much damage their attacks cause. Shi'a terrorists employ targeted assassinations for political gain, meaning they only have a few casualties with a specific purpose in mind. Sunni terrorist attacks, especially Salafi-Jihadis, have a much higher casualty count, as they conduct wide ranging attacks. When promoting their attacks, Sunni Muslims are much more public, taking credit for the destruction caused and trying to make the attack worldwide news. Shi'a Muslims tend to stay away from this large-scale approach to publicizing their attack (T. Lynch). The differences between these two types of Islamic Fundamentalist groups' shows why it is necessary to choose

case studies that all identify as Sunni groups with Salafist jihadi beliefs. Since Shi'a groups have different ideological beliefs, targets, and tactics compared to Sunni groups, different counterterrorism approaches need to be taken against them.

### Islamic Fundamentalist Characteristics

There isn't a single description, a certain stereotype that can describe an Islamic Fundamentalist. Islamic Fundamentalists are oftentimes described as muta' assib. This means an individual that is alienated and has dogmatic and rigid beliefs. They are also described as individuals with, "an inferiority complex that is reflected in their aggressiveness, authoritarianism, intolerance, paranoia, and conspiratorial tendency" (Monroe and Kreidie 21). In regards to their religion, they are devoted to Islam and incorporate their beliefs in their everyday life. Not only are they remarkably devoted to Islam, they are faithful to Allah and Islamic fundamentalism. Through this dedication, they expect to live a life full of struggle. Islamic Fundamentalists are oftentimes educated, as they are frequently university graduates. A religious upbringing is also a common attribute, and this traditional background lays as the foundation of an extremist ideology. Besides religion, these Islamic Fundamentalists face inequality in their politico-economic backgrounds, and this inequality leads them to feel alienated and frustrated with their government (Monroe and Kreidie 22). The typical background of an Islamic Fundamentalist offers counterterrorism experts a look into the type of individual they are dealing with when they target members of an Islamic Fundamentalist group like Al Qaeda. The ideology of Islamic Fundamentalists will individually be discussed further in the following case studies. The reason behind this is because each Islamic Fundamentalist group has

their own version of Islam and Jihadi-Salafism that they follow. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to explain ideology in regards to the specific Islamic Fundamentalist group.

## **II. Al Qaeda Case Study**

The terrorist organization and Islamic Fundamentalist group Al Qaeda has been a devastating force the past almost 3 decades. Since the devastating 9/11 attacks on the United States, Al Qaeda has become a household name and a continuous threat to not only the Middle Eastern, but to Westernized countries around the world. This threat has forced the most powerful countries in the world to adapt their defenses on the home front, focusing on defensive and reactive measures. Vulnerable countries have also come up with proactive and offensive counterterrorism tactics in order to prevent future attacks. The chaos Al Qaeda has caused since 1988 is why it is necessary to study and learn from one of the first influential Islamic Fundamentalist groups that has threatened the United States. This research will help develop counterterrorism policies that will benefit the United States and other targets of Al Qaeda. Even though other terrorist groups currently seem more of a threat, like the Islamic State (ISIS), Al Qaeda was the original terrorist group that launched the United States into the War on Terror in the Middle East. During the War on Terror, the United States was forced to completely overhaul their counterterrorism policies. The counterterrorism policies created 15 years ago must continue to adapt to the evolving nature of Al Qaeda, and they must be formed based on the following characteristics of the group.

### History and Ideology

Although Al Qaeda has only been an established group since 1988, their grievances and the basis of their ideology has been around years prior. By following the history and the

development of Al Qaeda's ideology, there is a sophisticated path of development that Osama Bin Laden and his successors have taken since the beginning of this group. This development shows that Al Qaeda is not a group to dismiss or underestimate, even with the death of their leader Osama Bin Laden in 2011. Throughout the years, both Al Qaeda and jihadism have gone through multiple eras and have transformed from a small group of mujahedeen into a transnational global network. Clint Watts, a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute and a FBI special agent apart of the joint terrorism task force, divides Al Qaeda into three versions since their formation. By compiling Al Qaeda's history into three sections, it is easier to follow Al Qaeda's transformation into the group that is around today. Altogether, an accurate historical timeline provides a foundation that is required before going more in depth into the specifics of Al Qaeda. Each point of transition into the other version also shows an important string of events that caused Al Qaeda to change, and these events can be used to see how Al Qaeda adapts to different situations. Discussing the history and the ideology of any terrorist group, including Al Qaeda, is necessary for a United States counterterrorism expert because it allows them to understand the group they are dealing with, the reasons why they are committing acts of violence against the United States, and the development of their goals as an organization.

Before starting with the actual creation of Al Qaeda, there was a period prior to the formation of Al Qaeda that is equally as important. The struggle between Pakistan and Afghanistan against the Soviet Union is what originally led militant jihadists to want to fight on behalf of Pakistan and Afghanistan. This was not only the beginning of Al Qaeda, but an entire global jihadist network, including the Taliban. One original key contributor to this network was Abdallah Azzam. He is relevant to the history of Al Qaeda because he was the mentor of Osama

Bin Laden, who was the founder of Al Qaeda. Azzam preached about the obligation all Muslims have to jihad. Throughout his campaign, he was able to raise funds from sympathizers to the jihadist cause. Osama Bin Laden followed Azzam from Pakistan to Afghanistan, fighting alongside other Arab fighters while learning Azzam's leadership style and financing strategies (Watts). Once the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1988, Bin Laden took this opportunity to recruit the Arab fighters and mujahedeen. These fighters became the recruits for his own organization, Al Qaeda. Meanwhile Azzam focused his own efforts on the Palestinian struggle. The original purpose of Al Qaeda was to serve as, "a training base and integration center to help Arab fighters support other jihads around the world" (Watts). This purpose is why Al Qaeda was named what it was, since Al Qaeda means the base. This was Al Qaeda 1.0.

Since the fight was over in Afghanistan, Bin Laden moved his focus onto Saudi Arabia. Originally, he wanted to use his forces to defend Saudi Arabia from the Iraqi's in the Iraq-Iran War. However, the Saudi regime decided to ally with the United States. This angered Bin Laden, as he believed that the United States was a nonbeliever of Islam and jihad. He also believed they were only claiming to help protect the holy lands of Islam. Eventually, Bin Laden was exiled from Saudi Arabia to Sudan in 1992. This Saudi Arabian conflict also represented Al Qaeda's first struggle with the United States. This shows that when the United States tries to mediate or help Muslim countries, Al Qaeda fights back. There was also a shift in Al Qaeda's motives at this point, as Bin Laden started focusing his violence towards the U.S. For example, as early as 1992, Al Qaeda tried bombing American soldiers at the al Gidor hotel in Yemen (Watts). Eventually, he found his way back to Afghanistan, since he was expelled from Sudan because he continued to denounce American presence in the Middle East. It is in Afghanistan where he

declared war against the United States for the first time. This declaration was made public in his fatwa, “Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places”, in 1996. A fatwa is a ruling made by an authority in regards to Islamic law. Two years later, he co-signed another fatwa with his eventual second in command, Ayman al Zawahiri. This fatwa was titled “Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders” and spelled out Al Qaeda’s want for a global caliphate dictated by Sharia Law (Watts). In order for this global caliphate to be created, Al Qaeda must battle the near and far enemy. The near enemy was considered the corrupt governments in the Middle East and North Africa. The far being the United States and their Western allies. The reason these enemies were targeted was because they were enemies of Islam, they were occupying Muslim holy lands, and they had caused harm to practicing Muslims during previous wars.

While in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda was protected by a follow jihadist organization, the Taliban. Through their coalition, they were able to launch a successful attack on the United States. They first attacked the U.S. embassies in both Kenya and Tanzania and then proceeded to attack the USS Cole that was stationed in Yemen. With multiple successful attacks, Al Qaeda proved their capabilities and their plan to continue to attack the United States. No attack, though, was as detrimental to the United States as the 9/11 attacks. After the embassy and USS Cole bombings, Osama Bin Laden, in either 1998 or 1999, gave permission to Khalid Sheikh Muhammed to begin planning 9/11. Muhammed was the primary architect of 9/11 and one of Bin Laden’s trusted leaders (Kean and Hamilton 145). The attacks on this day is where Watts’s second version of Al Qaeda begins.



After the 9/11 attacks, Al Qaeda was forced to transform their organization to coincide with the revolution of counterterrorism policies not only from the United States, but Western countries around the world. Unlike after Al Qaeda's previous attacks, the United States retaliated with military force, sending ground troops to Afghanistan. These attacks threatened both Al Qaeda and their allies, the Taliban. Osama Bin Laden was able to find refuge in Afghanistan and then in Pakistan, where the U.S. was not able to use their military. By moving the central leadership to Pakistan to avoid the U.S. military, Al Qaeda began their steps to their global enterprise, as they were now carrying out attacks away from their homeland of Afghanistan. This included the bombing on the London metro station in 2005. This hideout in Pakistan is also when Al Qaeda Central was formed, which was, "a global headquarters providing ideological direction, propaganda, attack guidance, and resource distribution" (Watts).

Meanwhile, in 2003 the U.S. invaded Iraq. This invasion occurred even though the U.S. supported Saddam Hussein led government had no participation in the 9/11 attacks and were barely linked to Al Qaeda. The Hussein government prior to this was even created with the help of the United States. During this time, Al Qaeda was able to find ways to get past new counterterrorism efforts through the Internet and the rise of technology. Through the Internet, Al Qaeda was now able to connect with sympathizers and recruit fighters from around the world in their quest for global jihad. Recruitment methods included Al Qaeda run websites, training manuals, and video footage of attacks. All the while, Al Qaeda was able to stay hidden in Pakistan while a technological warfare stirred. The large scope of the 9/11 attacks also gave Al Qaeda the opportunity to grow affiliates in other Middle Eastern countries, including the precursor to ISIS, Al Qaeda in Iraq. AQI's violent tactics were directed on the U.S. troops who

had invaded Iraq and they quickly grew into a strong Al Qaeda affiliate. Another affiliate was Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Their focus was on the Saudi government as well as Middle Eastern oil sectors (Watts). Eventually, AQAP had enough resources and leadership to take the lead in attacking the West and the United States directly. This led to the U.S. attacking Yemen with drone strikes intended for AQAP. This shows how even just an affiliate of Al Qaeda managed to threaten the United States. An increase in affiliates and technological advancements were not the only developments Al Qaeda was able to make after 9/11. Homegrown terrorism also began to increase, meaning that individuals born in the West were committing attacks on behalf of Al Qaeda (Watts). Overall, Al Qaeda 2.0, from the September 11<sup>th</sup> Attacks to 2011, attempted to adapt to the changing global conditions, even with counterterrorism efforts being directed at them and weakening recruitment and attack methods.

The drone strikes from the United States didn't remain secluded to Yemen. The United States, knowing that Al Qaeda had sanctuary among another terrorist group, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), started directing drone strikes towards Pakistan as well (Watts). These drone strikes led to increased losses in both Al Qaeda and TTP's leadership. With less resources and less capability to execute their own plans because of this loss of leadership, Al Qaeda Central spent time logistically facilitating their global network of affiliates. These affiliates, especially AQI and AQAP, were proving to be successful in planning their own attacks in their own Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, Al Qaeda Central could continue what they started in Pakistan at the beginning stages of 'Al Qaeda 2.0', developing the guides, goals, ideologies, and resources for the foreign fighters spread across the world. Meanwhile, affiliates would be in charge of executing their own attacks.

Once the Arab Spring and Syrian Civil War began in 2011, Al Qaeda entered into their third and current version. The Arab War brought difficulties onto Al Qaeda, as seemingly successful peaceful uprisings were happening around the Middle East. Since peaceful tactics were becoming successful, violent tactics became less appealing. Osama Bin Laden was also killed in 2011, signaling a turn in both global affairs and leadership. Instead of this bringing the entire organization down, Al Qaeda instead decentralized their organization. This means Al Qaeda relied on the leadership of their affiliates to carry out attacks instead of central leadership. Since the Middle East was brewing with conflict during the Arab Spring, Al Qaeda set their sights on Middle Eastern countries like Yemen, Egypt, and Syria. This allowed for affiliates, like al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (located in Yemen) to step up and prove they could coordinate attacks themselves (Watts). Luckily for Al Qaeda, the so-called ‘successful’ peaceful uprisings actually left countries with weak and exposed governments, paving a way for affiliates of Al Qaeda to attack weakened governments, become stronger individual organizations, and resort back to violent tactics.

The future of Al Qaeda 3.0 could rely partially on the outcome of the Syrian Civil War. Syria has produced many foreign fighters for the jihadist cause, and if the radicals succeed in this Syrian conflict, Syria could become a breeding ground for more terrorist operations. Al Qaeda might also shift their focus to Africa, as the continent has become increasingly unstable. Instability creates opportunities for Al Qaeda to enter new recruitment grounds and control new territory. Their influence could reach farther borders than ever before. Affiliates of Al Qaeda 3.0 have also been able to raise funds for themselves and they have been relying less on Al Qaeda Central since the death of Osama Bin Laden (Watts). This means that there would be even less of

an impact to Al Qaeda affiliates if the financing of Al Qaeda is targeted. The last change that has been seen in this new version of Al Qaeda is that they have actually started focusing less on the United States and more on localizing their efforts. This shift in focus may give the U.S. the time they need to revise any counterterrorism policies they need to, especially before a solution is found to the Syrian conflict.

These versions of Al Qaeda offer an array of counterterrorism implications for the United States. The main focus needs to be on Al Qaeda '3.0', the version of Al Qaeda that has been created since Bin Laden's death under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri and during the Arab Spring. It is useful to understand the previous two versions, but in order to create effective counterterrorism policies, the present and future is most important. The Syrian Civil War is one part of current global affairs that will affect the outcome of Al Qaeda. The Syrian Civil War is one of the few wars still in full force since the beginning of the Arab Spring and the creation of Al Qaeda 3.0, meaning it is a conflict the United States can continue to engage in. A defeat of the Syrian government could mean a defeat for Islamic Fundamentalist groups. The United States currently backs Syrian rebels like Rojava. If the U.S. continues with increased support, the rebels may be able to pull off a victory.

The future of Al Qaeda is part of the unwritten history that also presents counterterrorism implications. Since affiliates are beginning to fund themselves instead of from central leadership, the finances of Al Qaeda Central are not as relevant of a priority anymore. Instead, the United States has to shift their efforts towards the individual affiliates that threaten the United States. America also needs to keep a close eye on Africa. If Al Qaeda shifts geographically towards Africa, the United States has to at least discuss with African leaders on how both parties can

remain safe, what the boundaries are, and what each government wants from one other. Finally, if Al Qaeda continues to turn their focus away from the United States like Watts suggests, perhaps the United States needs to put resources towards other terrorist threats, while keeping a close eye on any Al Qaeda movements. This is the time the United States can work on their defensive plans, like improved security measures and mapping techniques. If Al Qaeda becomes less of a threat to the United States (both direct attacks and attacks on U.S. resources), there does not have to be as many offensive measures taken, especially ones that risk American lives.

The timeline through Al Qaeda's history offered some insight into the ideological transformation of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda follows jihadism, which is a violent form of Salafism. Al Qaeda's struggle is for a global jihad against a corrupt West, especially the United States. It is important to realize that members of Al Qaeda think that they are true believers of Islam. Most practicing Muslims do not use Islam and terrorism to further their political agenda or gain wealth and prestige. The irony of that statement is that most jihadists also believe that they do not use Islam or violence because of any political agenda or potential resources, even if that is an outcome of these practices. Instead, jihadists believe they need to commit violence and that their actions are justified because they are defending their religion in its' truest form (Hellmich 40).

Al Qaeda's current leader Ayman al-Zawahiri has influenced the development of the main ideological roots of the organization since the beginning. Al-Zawahiri combined his beliefs with Bin Laden's in order for them to create a shared vision for the world and jihad (Riedel 24). Generally speaking, this shared vision centers around violence and hatred for America. It is not necessarily hatred for American/Western culture or democracy, it is hatred for what they believe America did to Islam and the Muslim Community. They believe that the United States, through

their foreign policy and actions in the Middle East, have caused Islam to decline. This includes actions like aiding in the division of Islamic states so that they are ruled by pro-Western and corrupt leaders. This isn't a recent decline of Islam either, as they believe this decline started during the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. This is because according to Al Qaeda, the Ottoman Empire was the last true Islamic empire until the rise of the Taliban State in the 1990's. There is also a link between the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the United States, because the West and the Zionist movement were the forces behind the Ottoman's destruction (Riedel 25). Zawahiri uses this time period as the basis of Al Qaeda's ideology, citing examples of the successes achieved by the Ottoman Empire. For example, the Ottoman Empire was able to defeat Napoleon and Palestine before their eventual decline, and this defeat represented the ummah coming together to resist the West.

Osama Bin Laden is also recognized as one of the main forces behind the motivation, the rage, and the violent actions of not only Al Qaeda, but groups that have come after (like ISIS). One of the recent motivations behind the violent actions of Islamic Fundamentalist groups is due to Bin Laden's fatwa that he released in 1998. "By God's leave, we call on every Muslim who believes in God and hopes for reward to obey God's command to kill the Americans and plunder their possessions wherever he finds them and whenever he can. Likewise we call on the Muslim ulema and leaders and youth and soldiers to launch attacks against the armies of the American devils and against those who are allied with them from among the helpers of Satan" (Saloom). This fatwa is exclaiming that it is a Muslim's responsibility to kill American infidels. Osama Bin Laden was qualified to issue these fatwas and justify violent actions as long as Muslims believed he was a previous legitimate imam of an Islamic state. Although Bin Laden is deceased, his rage

lives on through Al Qaeda and the others he influenced through his messages, like a previous affiliate ISIS. Bin Laden's rage draws from historical events like the fall of the Ottoman Empire due to Western influence to motivate his followers to want to help in the destruction of the United States and any other infidel. The beliefs that Osama Bin Laden projected to others and perceived fight against infidels is hard to counter. For one, even though Bin Laden was killed, the beliefs still remain in the minds of Al Qaeda members. Since these beliefs are imbedded in historical events also means there is nothing that can be done to change history. Members are going to perceive these events in a way that justifies their actions, regardless if that is how American intelligence sees it.

Not only is the study of Al Qaeda's ideology essential to understanding the group itself, it also helps counterterrorism efforts as well. "Without addressing the ideological root causes of terrorism, the surgical targeted killings of Al-Qaeda leaders will not result in the disappearance of the phenomenon" (Ganor 359). This means that even if the United States kills the leaders of Al Qaeda, the ideological roots will remain within the minds of the followers. As long as the ideology remains, there will always be a chance for future terrorist groups to rise up. Understanding ideology also gives the U.S. the ability to compare extremist views with views of a moderate Muslim. If the United States creates policies that are discriminatory to all Muslims, the moderate Muslim will feel alienated, and more likely to agree with some of the beliefs extremists hold. It will also mean strained relationships with U.S. allies in the Middle East, where these relationships are vital in order to have a joint force combating terrorism.

### Organization and Leadership Structure

A unique feature of Al Qaeda is their cell-based organizational structure. This structure allows Al Qaeda to have influence around the world. Al Qaeda Central, which is the group of Al Qaeda located in Pakistan, is directed by Al Qaeda's emir (ruler). Outside of Pakistan, Al Qaeda has various affiliates that Al Qaeda's emir recognizes. As of 2013, Al Qaeda had 6 recognized affiliates, al Qaeda in Iraq, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Jabhat al Nusra, al Shabaab, and the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus. These affiliates share Al Qaeda's resources, ideology, and network. Besides these recognized affiliates, Al Qaeda has numerous associates. These groups share the same ideology of Al Qaeda but do not operate under the Al Qaeda name because they have not been identified by Al Qaeda's emir. Nonetheless, these groups strengthen Al Qaeda's overall network (Zimmerman 15).

Al Qaeda Central does not have direct control over their affiliates, as the Al Qaeda organization is based on networking rather than hierarchy. The difference lies in the distribution of responsibilities. Al Qaeda Central focuses on the organization's message and strategy while the affiliates focus on daily operations. One way that Al Qaeda Central manages to maintain their control and authority is by having their affiliates consult with them before any large-scale attacks. Besides the leadership within Al Qaeda Central and the leaders of their affiliates, Al Qaeda has a shura council and multiple committees for their military operations, finances, and information sharing (Glenn). The separation between Al Qaeda Central and their affiliates affects not only Al Qaeda's organization but counterterrorism policies as well. Since the affiliates of Al Qaeda focus on the day to day operations of the organization, the United States needs to focus on day to day operations if the U.S. decides to target Al Qaeda affiliates. If the U.S. feels the need to attack Al Qaeda Central, they need to focus on the underlying grievances of Al Qaeda's ideology



and preventing their messages from circulating to their affiliates, their associates, and to sympathizers around the world.

Besides the global reach a cell-based structure creates, this kind of structure has other counterterrorism implications. Understanding the relationships between Al Qaeda Central and their affiliates and associates is necessary in order to create a picture of Al Qaeda's network and how this network can be used against America. If one cell is destroyed, another one can take its place. It also means that if one affiliate is being focused on by the United States, another one has the ability to stay behind the scenes. "Both its structure and its adaptive nature have made the network extremely resilient, which has limited the ability of outside actors, such as the United States, to defeat it" (Zimmerman 18). For example, Al Qaeda Central leaders in Pakistan have been weakened by the U.S. government. 4 of the top 5 leaders of the Al Qaeda cells in Pakistan have been killed. On the other hand, Al Qaeda affiliates in Syria are quickly growing. The Al Qaeda affiliate Syria, Jabhat al Nusra is, "emerging as the best motivated, best trained, and best equipped force fighting the Assad regime" (House of Representatives 2). The fact that Al Qaeda's influence and leadership is diminishing in one area of the world while rising up in another presents a major problem for countries trying to stop a terrorist group. "Al Qaeda will continue to threaten the United States and its interests until the network is fully dismantled. It is not sufficient to destroy the capabilities of only one node in the network; time has proven that others groups will rise to the occasion and attempt to attack the United States" (Zimmerman 24). In order to prevent this, the United States must broaden their views and pay attention to every Al Qaeda affiliate. This may be possible if there is a small task force within the Executive Branch that focuses on a few Al Qaeda affiliates in a certain area.

Al Qaeda's leadership structure is also unique compared to other Islamic Fundamentalist groups. Before his death in 2011 by a United States Navy Seals team, Osama Bin Laden was the founder and 1<sup>st</sup> General Emir of Al Qaeda. Making appearances in broadcasts, Bin Laden often used his charisma, fatwas, and rhetoric to rally his fellow jihadists (Glenn). Osama Bin Laden didn't become one of the most prolific terrorists of all time overnight, though. Since his childhood, there have been events that have led to his radicalization and his future involvement in the Salafi-Jihadist movement. Colin Ross developed a psychological profile of Bin Laden that considered nature (genes), nurture (the environment), and his executive decisions as reasons why Bin Laden became an extremist. Osama Bin Laden was born in 1957 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He was one of the 54 children his father, Mohammed bin Oud bin Laden, had with 11 different wives. The sheer amount of siblings Bin Laden had indicated he most likely didn't have a strong relationship with his father. Therefore, Ross believes Bin Laden was an emotionally neglected child. (Ross 311). His mother, on the other hand, was progressive, engaged in westernized traditions, and independent. Osama didn't live with his mother, which meant that he lacked a relationship with both of his parents.

In his free time, Osama read religious texts, in part because his father was highly engaged in religious debate. One source of father-son bonding Osama did have was when his father would take him and his brothers to a desert camp, where they learned to shoot guns, ride horses, and live outdoors. This experience indirectly trained Osama for a life as a terrorist. Because of his yearning for a relationship with his parents and his religious interest, Osama Bin Laden wished to form a connection with God. After his parents died, Bin Laden led the life of a college student at a boarding school in Beirut. Anywhere he went, he flashed his wealth and engaged in

extravagant activities. His party days ended, though, when Osama decided to fulfil the 5<sup>th</sup> pillar of Islam, the pilgrimage to Mecca. “Salim, Osama's older half-brother, invited Osama to make the pilgrimage with him, and he accepted. While in Mecca, he experienced a religious conversion” (Ross 313). This brother who contributed to Osama’s religious epiphany died while hang gliding in Texas, which was another reason for Osama’s hatred of the West. Another direct event that caused his hate for the West was when the United States dropped him as an asset. The U.S. utilized Bin Laden during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Once the Soviets were defeated, the U.S. no longer needed his assistance. Afterwards, Osama was angry, resentful, and he felt betrayed. He then began to despise American presence in the Middle East (Ross 316). This was another turning point in Osama’s life and the beginning of his hatred for the United States. Osama lacked a relationship with his parents, was born into wealth and prestige, was trained to handle guns and live in the wilderness, and had a solid religious education. His pilgrimage to Mecca was a turning point in his life and is what led him towards Islamic Fundamentalism. Getting dropped by the United States was the nail in the coffin. It stirred his resentment for the West, a resentment that propelled him towards his quest for jihad and eventually 9/11.

After Osama Bin Laden was killed, fellow founder Ayman al Zawahiri took over leadership as the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Emir of Al Qaeda. In his leadership role, he continues to maintain media presence like his predecessor (“Profile: Ayman al-Zawahiri”). By having a vocal and charismatic leader appearing on media sources, messages are coming directly from the top, showing how powerful and prestigious the information is. This causes individuals to actually pay attention to the message. The way the U.S. can counter these messages is by trying to prevent

Americans from viewing them in the first place. The issue with this, though, is that this can step on the freedoms given in the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment of the Constitution. If the United States censors certain websites or stops the media from showing Islamic Fundamentalist propaganda, Americans could retaliate.

### Finances

In order to manage the day to day operations of a terrorist organization as well as carry out large-scale attacks like 9/11, Al Qaeda has had to rely on various methods of raising funds. It is difficult to know exactly how much Al Qaeda raises and what percentage of their funds comes from each method, since the United States does not have access to their financial records and leaders aren't willing to release this information. Luckily, since 9/11 the United States has been able to gain some information from detainees. There are two issues presented when gaining any type of information from an Al Qaeda member. The first is that they can simply be lying, giving false information to lead the U.S. off their trail. The second issue is that even if detainees are telling the truth, the information oftentimes comes too late and investigators are not able to follow these tips in order to disrupt the money trail from the facilitators and donors to operational elements (Roth et al 19).

Before 9/11, there was little truth known about Al Qaeda. Since the terrorist group was able to gain tremendous traction and was able to raise a considerable sum of money, many intelligence officials believed that the money came directly from Osama Bin Laden because he was the son of a wealthy construction family. When Bin Laden's father died, people assumed that he had inherited a fortune, a fortune that he was able to use as the basis of his organization.

Though Bin Laden managed to earn around a millions dollars per year, this did not equate to the supposed \$300 million inheritance. In 1994, the Bin Laden family's account was actually frozen by the Saudi Arabian government, meaning any money used to create Al Qaeda was not from Osama Bin Laden's personal bank account (Roth et al 20). Other experts argue that Bin Laden used his revenue from his personally owned companies in Sudan. Even though it is reported that Bin Laden owned around 35 companies in Sudan when he lived there, these profits may not have been very large or he may never have owned these companies in the first place. If anything, Bin Laden had owned these companies in order to get in with the Sudan government, not to earn a profit. In 1996, this myth was officially proven wrong. When the Sudan government forced Bin Laden out of the country, they proceeded to seize his accounts and his assets which left Bin Laden with nothing, especially not anything substantial enough to create an entire organization. In actuality, the early days of the organization were funded by donors, which was necessary since the CIA estimated that it costs Al Qaeda \$30 million to operate their organization per year. Besides donors, Bin Laden also relied on the Taliban for support while he got back on his feet in Afghanistan. There, he was able to begin fundraising again and reconnect with his Saudi national contacts (Roth et al 20).

Al Qaeda's main source of revenue is through their group of financial facilitators who raise their own money from other donors. These donors are primarily in the Gulf Coast region like Saudi Arabia. The issue with these donors is that part of the time, these donors aren't aware of where their money is going to. Facilitators also fundraise during holidays like Ramadan where people are in good spirits and are feeling charitable. This is why the month of Ramadan is when Al Qaeda raises a bulk of their funds (Roth et al 21). Another way financial facilitators raise their

funds is through imams at mosques who support Al Qaeda's radical ideology. These imams (the person who leads prayer at mosques) take the funds from donations, otherwise known as the zakat, and gives it to the facilitators. Zakat is one of the 5 pillars of Islam and this charitable giving is used for income tax and foreign assistance in Muslim countries. For example, Saudi Arabia zakat includes humanitarian relief and funding schools and mosques. Since Muslims want to follow the 5 pillars and support their communities, it is easy for Al Qaeda to rely on a constant stream of donations as long as they have the necessary means to secure these funds. A second way Al Qaeda raises most of their funds is through charities. Al Qaeda has been able to go into penetrable financial accounts of charities and redirect their funds into their own accounts. Another way Al Qaeda uses charities is that they partner with community-scale charities. When these charities receive funds from large scale charities like those in Saudi Arabia, they direct their proceeds to Al Qaeda. In other cases, Al Qaeda remains in complete control of a corrupt charity and therefore has direct access to their bank accounts (Roth et al 21). Due to arrests of big name facilitators and the charities that have been shown to engage in terrorist funding have been shut down, Al Qaeda has seen a reduction in funds. Luckily, recent operations have cost less and Al Qaeda has been able to continue funding their group without issue. Besides financial facilitators and funding through charities, Al Qaeda has been accused of being involved in the drug trade, trading in conflict diamonds, and being sponsored by local government (Roth et al 24). The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, however, was not able to find substantial proof that any of these three other sources of revenue have been used by Al Qaeda.

Once Al Qaeda secures their revenue, they must find ways to move this money around to affiliates and other members who need it. Before 9/11, Al Qaeda relied on hawala to move their money. Hawala is a way to transfer money, usually in the Muslim world. The money is paid to an agent who then instructs a remote associate to pay the final recipient the money. Hawala was the desired form of money moving Al Qaeda used because hawala does not keep detailed records and has less government oversight. Al Qaeda had a dozen hawaladars to conduct their business, most of them knowing they were dealing with Al Qaeda or did not care who they dealing with anyways. It was difficult for counterterrorism intelligence to rely on formal financial institutions to try and find Al Qaeda's money because Al Qaeda Central rarely used the formal financial system. Otherwise, Al Qaeda used the accounts of the charities they controlled or relied on their financial facilitators to store their funds. It was easy for Al Qaeda to store their money using outside sources because banks were less likely to realize they were dealing with Al Qaeda money. Outside of Al Qaeda's core leadership in Afghanistan, however, the use of formal financial institutions was more common. For example, the Al Qaeda members behind 9/11 had been using ATM cards, had bank accounts, and were wiring money to other banks (Roth et al 24). Couriers were also used to move funds by Al Qaeda and were usually recruited from among Al Qaeda ranks. This meant they knew the courier had the background needed to travel with the money and deliver it where it needed to go, even if they were lesser known members. It also means they were already trusted members of Al Qaeda. Since 9/11, Al Qaeda continues to rely primarily on these couriers, especially since the hawala network has been largely destroyed.

Al Qaeda relies on couriers to move their money from location to location and relies on outside sources like financial facilitators and donors to supply them with their money. Once they

have this money, the last question is, “How does Al Qaeda actually spend their money?” At the beginning stages of Al Qaeda, the focus of funds was on military training, salaries, and training camps. Al Qaeda even had a Finance Committee where finances were closely monitored by Bin Laden and a trained accountant named Sheikh Qari Sa’id. Al Qaeda members/affiliates usually financed the day-to-day expenses while Al Qaeda Central gave out money for large scale operations. While Bin Laden and the rest of Al Qaeda were relying on the Taliban for safe haven, they repaid them in the form of money, weapons, and others goods (Roth et al 28). Since the decentralization of Al Qaeda and the defeat of the Taliban, The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States believes that the Finance Committee may no longer exist and financing may be more personalized instead of closely monitored like before. Al Qaeda no longer has to support the Taliban and they no longer run training camps. Therefore, Intelligence analysts estimate that Al Qaeda’s operating budget may be only a few million dollars per year, although such estimates are only tentative (Roth et al 28).

Following the money trail of Al Qaeda, exploring the means of transporting funds, and determining what Al Qaeda actually spends its’ money on is necessary in order for intelligence experts to track supporters of the group and attempt to disrupt the fundraising process. The way to counter Al Qaeda’s means for raising money is to focus on the middlemen, these financial facilitators and donors who supply Al Qaeda with their funds. By continuing to try and find the financial facilitators, charities and churches that are supplying Al Qaeda with donations, counterterrorist intelligence can force Al Qaeda to figure out new ways to secure funds and deter others from deciding to join Al Qaeda’s money trail. In regards to transporting funds, counterterrorism experts need to focus primarily on couriers, since the hawala network no longer



seems to deal with their major cash transfers. Since couriers move this money physically from destination to destination, it takes longer for the money to get to where it needs to go (Roth et al 27). In order to stop an actual person, local law enforcement needs to be involved, where they can monitor the traveling of suspicious personnel or those already known to be connected with Al Qaeda. Another issue, though, is that Al Qaeda affiliates tend to raise money on their own for day-to-day operations. Therefore, they may not rely on couriers that travel across the Middle East if they can contain their own finances among their own organization. The real conundrum comes into play when experts look at what Al Qaeda spends their money on. If Al Qaeda Central does not have a large budget, it means that the United States may want to focus on other characteristics in their counterterrorist policies. Otherwise, increased focus on affiliates may be the best option since they tend to finance themselves.

### Targets and Tactics

Al Qaeda has been criticized by both foreign enemies and members of the Islamic community for their use of violence. This is especially true when Al Qaeda targets violence against civilians. Muslims, like the non-violent Salafist's, opposed the 9/11 attacks committed by Al Qaeda. They quote numerous hadiths (messages from the Prophet Muhammed), as to why violence against civilians are against Islam and the word of God. This includes the following hadith, "Set out for jihad in the name of Allah and for the sake of Allah. Do not lay hands on the old verging on death, on women, children and babes. Do not steal anything from the booty and collect together all that falls to your lot in the battlefield and do good, for Allah loves the virtuous and the pious" (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 86). This hadith explains that even when

engaging in jihad, no women or children should be hurt, nothing should be stolen from the public, and all Muslims should work on being virtuous members of society. Al Qaeda responds to these criticisms by justifying their targeting of civilians through rules of engagement conditions, in which only one condition must be met in order for their attacks to remain justified. The first condition is the norm of reciprocity. This condition goes along with the following verse from the Quran 2, “And one who attacks you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you.” This means that Al Qaeda justifies attacks because they have been attacked with violence from their targets. Since America, according to Al Qaeda, has targeted Muslim civilians, Al Qaeda can in return target American civilians (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 87). The way America can try and prevent this condition from being fulfilled is simple; military force needs to be directed at Al Qaeda members and extremists only. However, actually being able to follow that plan is quite difficult, as drone strikes (one of the primary military weapons used by the U.S.) aren’t necessarily the most accurate forms of military weapons (Fang).

The second condition that can be met is that a specific site can be attacked if Al Qaeda is unable to distinguish civilians from combatants. This means that if Al Qaeda determines a certain site is a legitimate enemy of Al Qaeda, they can attack regardless of the possibility of civilians being injured. Also, if ‘innocent’ Muslims are killed because they were within the target, they were not actually innocent because they were within a site that threatened Islam (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 87). This condition is hard to counter for the United States. We cannot deny access to buildings within United States to anyone, and Al Qaeda will always find some site that threatens them, regardless if it actually does or not. A third condition is that if civilians assist in deed, word, or mind to the enemy of Islam, they are no longer innocent. Al Qaeda

interprets this not only to mean that combatants and intelligence advisors of the U.S. are targets, but also anyone involved in the media because they publish American propaganda. Even academia researchers can be targets because they provide information to the government that can help in their fight against Muslims (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 88). This is another condition that ties the hands of counterterrorism experts, because if Al Qaeda connects it enough, every single adult in the United States can somehow contribute to the perceived fight against Islam.

The 4<sup>th</sup> condition is that civilians, even Muslim civilians, can be killed if it is necessary in war. If their deaths can contribute to harming their enemy, like the United States, then their deaths are justified. A 5<sup>th</sup> condition relies on the concept of heavy weaponry. If a goal (like bringing down the World Trade Center on 9/11) needs the use of heavy weaponry, then it is obvious that some civilians will have to die because of the methods that need to be used. Al Qaeda has even gone as far to say that if civilians are used as human shields, they can justifiably be killed. This is because if they do not kill them, Al Qaeda risks defeat, which is worse than the killing of women and children. The final condition Al Qaeda uses is if a treaty is broken. Muslims are given permission to kill innocents if they are teaching the people of the broken treaty a lesson (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 90). Besides the 1<sup>st</sup> condition of the norm of reciprocity, all other conditions represent lose-lose situations to the United States. Even if counterterrorism experts understand the conditions Al Qaeda has for targeting civilians, Al Qaeda will almost always find a way to interpret situations in order to justify the killing of innocent people, even Muslims.

Even though the United States will run into difficulties countering the targets of Al Qaeda, since virtually everyone can be interpreted as a targets, the United States can instead

focus on their tactics. The use of the media and technology in general has been a critical tactic Al Qaeda has used, especially after the 9/11 attacks when counterterrorism efforts changed dramatically. The media has been a powerful tool in the promotion of their beliefs, advertisement of their attacks, and recruitment of new fighters. Al Qaeda was able to see early on the importance the media would have in the 21st century and they have been able to use it as a part of their political strategy ever since (M. Lynch 50). Technology and media in particular is rapidly changing, and during the late 20th century, Al Qaeda was able to understand the importance of satellite television and the Internet and adapt through these new media technologies. Once Al Qaeda invested, they were able to create a new type of terrorist cell, one without physical territory or boundaries, one that was able to reach people no matter their location on the globe. This was their media presence.

While on their quest for a media-centered organization, Al Qaeda created a separate media wing, al-Sahab (Ciovacco 853). The message portrayed by the media wing of Al Qaeda Central is vital to the operation of the organization, especially for AQC to remain relevant in this technological age. As discussed in the history section of this case study, Al Qaeda Central has taken over the task of defining ideology, goals, and the vision of the entire organization. In order to rely those messages not only to affiliates but to everyone around the world, Al Qaeda must have adequate media sources, making the media a lifesaving tactic in their plans. Therefore, Al Qaeda has an arsenal of media strategies available to them, both offensively to showcase future attacks or to simply promote their message through propaganda. One strategy Al Qaeda uses the media for is when they try to justify their actions based on history or the Quran. After a certain controversial attack, Al Qaeda lists their justifications in their media releases. “Bin Laden and

Zawahiri utilize verses from the Koran in almost every media release to demonstrate that their movement follows the “true” Islam” (Ciovacco 857). A way that the United States can counter these media releases is to speak directly against them, having high ranking Islamic officials release their own stories about how the violent actions of Al Qaeda go against Islam. It is not helpful to ignore Al Qaeda’s media releases because everyone can and will see them, whether they are plastered on social media or on the television. If America can release statements catering to the moderate Muslim, then these Muslims will more likely remain sympathetic to the United States rather than to Al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda also tries to cater to specific audiences through their media releases. One of those audiences is local Al Qaeda affiliates. Since Al Qaeda Central is still the umbrella organization of the smaller affiliates, they still provide guidance and delegate attacks for the local movements. Through various media releases, Al Qaeda affiliates can gain approval from Al Qaeda Central. This is especially true when that approval comes from previous releases Bin Laden and Zawahiri sent out that sanctioned the proposed attack. This allows the leaders of Al Qaeda affiliates to avoid the process of having to travel to headquarters to speak with central leadership directly and instead continue with their attacks. If counterterrorism experts studied previous sanctioned attacks that were mentioned in media releases from the leaders of Al Qaeda, America could work on defensive measures that would protect themselves from attacks by affiliates. Another audience of Al Qaeda is America itself. Al Qaeda attempts to direct messages at the American public at critical moments in order to influence foreign policy (Ciovacco 862). These critical moments include the 2004 Presidential election and the 2006 Congressional election. Before these moments, Al Qaeda would send messages directed at the American public,

like attacking President Bush and his policies. Bin Laden and Zawahiri's hope was to try and influence Americans to change the leadership and views in America. For example, the Republican Party was more likely to leave American presence in the Middle East. By attacking Republican officials, Al Qaeda could alter certain political processes like elections. In order to counter these directed messages, the best course of action by counterterrorism experts would be to also speak directly to the American public, rather than leave them in the dark. Experts would explain the psychological games these Al Qaeda messages were constructed upon. Regardless of the particular ploy Al Qaeda uses regarding the media, the best course of action is to also use the media to America's advantage. The world needs to know that America acknowledges that these threats exist, these threats are legitimate, and that they plan on addressing the issues apparent in any Al Qaeda media releases.

### **III. ISIS Case Study**

The name ISIS has been circulating the news in the past decade, news combined with messages of violence and hatred against the West. From the Paris bombings in 2015 to the Orlando shooting in 2016, which was the largest mass shooting on United States soil, attacks around the world have been linked to ISIS in some way. Their media presence is just as terrifying, as videos of the beheadings of Americans committed by ISIS members have been aired on nightly news channels (“Islamic State 'beheads US hostage Steven Sotloff”). Compared to Al Qaeda, however, ISIS has just recently entered the arena of terrorism and emerged as an Islamic Fundamentalist groups. This means that in the short time they have been a mainstream terrorist group, they have caused massive amounts of destruction. This is why they are still a necessary group to study. Fighters have been bred right here in the United States (called home-grown terrorists) and attacks have been committed against the U.S. and their allies. The threat ISIS poses is why it is necessary to focus on ISIS as one of the case studies that should influence the decision to implement case-specific counterterrorism policies.

#### History and Ideology

ISIS has not always been its' own standalone organization. Since 2000, ISIS has gone under different names and transformed themselves from a Jordanian focused militant group to an anti-Western jihadist group. In order to understand the characteristics of ISIS that is currently relevant, the history of the group must be explained. Then, the progression of beliefs, goals, and leadership throughout the past 16 years can be seen. This progression will allow counterterrorism

experts to track the processes of this group, how they have evolved, and how they have managed to remain independent from other Islamic Fundamentalist groups. By looking at this, experts may be able to reverse this evolution or stop them from growing stronger.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (also known as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/ISIL), originates with the militant group of Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (JTJ). JMT was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and began in 2000. This group focused on the Jordanian government, specifically the Jordanian monarchy. Prior to this, Al-Zarqawi frequented Afghanistan, where he ran an Islamic militant training camp and fought with the mujahedeen in the jihad against the Soviets who were occupying Afghanistan in the 1980's (Hashim). The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan created the breeding ground for many terrorists, including fundamental leaders of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. When the United States invaded Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11, al-Zarqawi moved his forces to Iraq. However, in 2003, the U.S. proceeded to invade Iraq as well. This invasion led to the downfall of Saddam Hussein and the U.S. became hopeful that this was the beginning of democracy in Iraq. The issue was that the Sunni's in Iraq opposed this democracy. The Sunni's were not keen on the idea of a democratic Iraq, and they responded by starting an insurgency against the new democratic interim government (Hashim). JTJ was one of these Sunni insurgent groups, which shows how Iraq is a major part of the foundation of ISIS and why it still remains an important country to ISIS today. It also shows why Sunni groups are the focus of this thesis.

This insurgency allowed JTJ to develop their first set goals specifically related to Iraq. These goals included forcing a withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq, toppling the Iraqi interim government (the one that was promoting democracy and stability), assassinating the



interim government's collaborators, targeting the Shia population, and establishing an Islamic state under God's law. This is also known as sharia law. Throughout the pursuit of these goals, JTJ was able to separate themselves from the other insurgent groups around them. Instead of relying primary on using guerilla tactics that are typical of terrorist organizations, like ambushes and hit-and-runs, they utilized suicide bombers. They also targeted non-combatants and soft targets, including Shia Muslim civilians (Hashim). This is also when al-Zarqawi began to use the Internet to his advantage. He posted his first statement, or fatwa, in April of 2004. His volunteers also continued to post messages and videos of beheadings on multiple servers. This made it difficult for any propaganda to be taken down and allowed JTJ to recruit members, promote their message, and overall terrorize on a whole new platform. It is one thing to commit physical violent attacks against people, it is another thing to be able to access and view this violence from anywhere in the world. It provides a threat and an unescapable terror that is sitting right on the Internet.

In October 2004, JTJ underwent their first transformation, slowly becoming the ISIS that is around today. Al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda, marking an official entrance into Al Qaeda's vast network. This turned Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad into Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). This alliance provided each party with an incentive to join forces. Al-Zarqawi received prestige, being a part of the leadership, group, and brand that was responsible for 9/11. Through Al Qaeda, he was also able to receive increased recruits and financial support. On the other hand, Al-Qaeda received an affiliate that already had an established base and one that could help in their fight against the United States. By March of 2005, AQI had developed their own unique vision, which defended monotheism, planned to excommunicate and kill

anyone who did not believe in the oneness of God, thought any belief in secularism, nationalism, communism, etc., were violations of Islam, and believed the Prophet Muhammed was God's messenger for the entire human race. Overall, they believed that, "Waging jihad against the enemies of Islam was next in importance to the profession of the shahada (faith)" (Hashim). Through this vision, AQI formed new and improved goals from that of JTJ and shared them to the world through their spokesperson, Abu Maysara al-Iraqi. Their goals were developed from their overall vision and included removing the aggressors from Iraq, affirming tawhid (monotheism), waging jihad, and establishing a caliphate through sharia rule. This caliphate would be reminiscent of the time of Prophet Muhammed (Hashim).

As an Al Qaeda affiliate, AQI and Al-Qaeda Central leaders agreed on their overall ideology and goals. When it came to their methods, however, AQI had a different approach. Their attacks included targeting mass civilian casualties, which worried some AQC leaders. A top leader of Al Qaeda operations in Jordan, Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, went so far as to say that AQI needed to stop targeting Shia Muslims, churches, and civilians, and start focusing on the true enemy, American occupiers. However, al-Zarqawi fought back, saying that Shia Muslims were more important enemies, as they were rejectionists and apostates who claimed to be Muslim but did not share the views of Sunni Muslims (Hashim). Al-Zarqawi blamed the Shia's for bringing misfortune and desolation to the Sunni people, and for that, they must be targeted. Ayman al-Zawahiri, who at the time was second in command for central leadership of Al Qaeda, also wrote to al-Zarqawi. In his letter, Al-Zawahiri wrote that he agreed that the Shia's could not be trusted, but he didn't believe they needed to be slaughtered. He also worried for the public relations that revolved around al-Zarqawi's postings of beheadings and other vicious acts.

He also wrote that in order to succeed in their goals, Al Qaeda needed the support of the entire Sunni population as well as the ulema, which might not happen if AQI continued their tactics and mass propaganda of brutal attacks.

The disagreements that occurred between AQI and central leadership eventually led to the next form of ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq. AQI tried at first to take into account what al-Zawahiri had suggested and tried to recruit Iraqi Sunni's as the face to their cause. However, their violent tactics remained. In June 2006, longtime leader of JTJ and AQI, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was killed. An Al Qaeda top operate Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, became the representative of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Afterwards, AQI announced the establishment of a new group, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), which was headed by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. ISI's main focus was establishing an Islamic state, otherwise known as a caliph (Hashim). This focus was different than the previous two forms of ISIS, al-Qaeda in Iraq and JTJ, as it focused on creating an Islamic state. This was a broader goal than just necessarily fighting American occupiers or liberating Iraq.

Since ISI's establishment, this new group presented an array of problems. With their violent tactics, they were not able to secure enough support, resources or recruits from Sunni tribes or the Iraqi insurgents. This problem exasperated when these same insurgents and Sunni tribes allied with the United States to fight ISI. This alliance formed with the promise that the U.S. would help integrate Sunni fighters into the Iraqi military and help the economy that ISI had contributed in destroying (Hashim). By 2008, this alliance helped weaken ISI into a state of extraordinary crisis.

During this state of crisis for ISI, Iraq was able to stabilize. Therefore, in 2009 the United States began to pull out of Iraq. This allowed the now American-trained Iraqi forces to be in charge of maintaining this new found stability. At the same time, though, ISI began to rebound (most likely due to the American troops leaving). In August and October 2009, ISI was able to, “sabotage government infrastructure and launch terror attacks against civilians, killing hundreds” (Hashim). Luckily for the United States, by 2010 the top leaders of ISI, Abu Ayub al-Masri and Abu Umar Abdullah al-Rashid al-Baghdadi, had been killed. 80% of the top leaders had also been killed. Even with this major loss of leadership, ISI remained intact and allowed for current leader, Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (also known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi), to take control. Not much is known about al-Baghdadi, but one major thing that is known is that in February 2004, he was captured by Americans. By December, however, Baghdadi had been released because he was not a high value target (Arango and Schmitt).

ISI eventually started to reemerge under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Besides a leadership change, this reemergence led to the restructuring of their organization, military, and administration. It also led to the growing dissatisfaction ISI had for Iraq and the Sunni population, their distancing from Al Qaeda, and the Syrian civil war. In March 2011, the Syrian Civil War began in the wake of the Arab Spring. Al-Baghdadi decided to join in the Syrian Civil War against the Assad regime because it threatened Islam and his organization. This war allowed ISI fighters the opportunity to put their military skills to use. Around this time is when al-Baghdadi also transformed ISI into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and into the Islamic State. With the name change came new goals, where the creation of an Islamic caliphate and the overthrow of corrupt governments became ISIS’s number one concerns. “The focus on

creating an Islamic state is the defining element for ISIS” (Hashim). As May of 2014 approached and after a conflict with another Al Qaeda affiliate, Al-Nusra, Al Qaeda decided to cut all ties with ISIS. This allowed ISIS to finally become an independent jihadist organization. Even though the original form of ISIS, Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, only began in 2000, ISIS has a complicated history of alliances, attacks, name changes, and goals. It is important to track the timeline of ISIS’s history, as it shows what events have caused the downfalls/disasters of ISIS as well as the successes. It also shows what policies were effective against ISIS and which were counteractive. Once the downfalls and successes of ISIS are known, the United States can work towards repeating plans that caused those downfalls and preventing situations that created successes.

Although not as complicated or as long as the history of Al Qaeda, the history of ISIS allows for a glimpse into the underworking of this terrorist group. One weakness that was shown in this timeline was the crisis that occurred in 2008 when the United States allied with Sunni tribes and Iraqi insurgents to take down the Islamic State of Iraq. This proved to be a successful counterterrorism plan, and something that can be incorporated by the United States now to battle ISIS. The death of their longtime leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as well as the deaths of 80% of their top leadership also contributed to this state of crisis. This crisis not only has implications for counterterrorism against ISIS, it also represents weaknesses of Al Qaeda. Since AQI was an affiliate of Al Qaeda, the crisis of AQI shows that defeating main leaders of the actual smaller cells/affiliate organizations can cause destruction for the affiliate. If the United States focuses more on the individual affiliates compared to central leadership like Osama Bin Laden, they could dismantle Al Qaeda from the bottom up. Osama Bin Laden was part of Al Qaeda Central,

and when he was killed, al-Zawahiri was able to take over swiftly and rather easily, since he was constantly at the side of Bin Laden. Due to their decentralized organization, al-Zawahiri was able to continue with forming the message of Al Qaeda (which he was doing anyways), and leaders of affiliates continued to carry out attacks uninterrupted.

Focusing back on ISIS, a wrong move by the American government led to the release of one of the most prolific terrorists of all time, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This shows that the US must be extremely careful in who they release from their custody. Without al-Baghdadi, who might be the most successful of ISIS's leaders, ISI might never have rebounded after the loss of 80% of their leaders and never have turned into ISIS. America has made both right and wrong decisions against ISIS in the past, and by learning from these mistakes, America can prevent history from repeating itself.

Throughout ISIS's history, there have been transformations of ISIS's ideology, usually in connection with name or leadership changes. For example, the original JTJ group focused on a specific country's government, the Jordanian monarchy. Once JTJ allied with Al Qaeda and became Al Qaeda in Iraq, their ideology became more detailed and started focusing on the bigger picture of Islam. They believed in monotheism, that anyone who didn't believe in Allah should be excommunicated or killed, that Shia's were enemies of Islam, that Prophet Muhammed was God's messenger for all, and that secularism, nationalism, and communism were violations of Islam. They also believed that besides the 1<sup>st</sup> pillar of Islam Shahadah (professing one's faith to God), waging jihad against the enemies of Islam is top priority (Hashim). Once AQI turned into the Islamic State of Iraq, their ideology turned into an all-encompassing belief to create an Islamic State. This a broader belief than the previous organizations, who were focusing on

American occupiers in the Middle East and liberating Iraq. After Al Qaeda cut ties with ISIS and they became their own separate entity, the defining element of their ideology was to create an Islamic State (Hashim). For counterterrorism experts, it is necessary to know the previous ideological beliefs of the many precursors to ISIS in order to prevent them from returning to these beliefs and to understand how they have developed into a sophisticated and dangerous terrorist organization.

On June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014, ISIS declared their worldwide caliphate, which means they plan on expanding their holy war. With this declaration, ISIS has started to identify themselves as the Islamic State (IS). Under this caliphate, Muslims must pledge their alliance to the leader of IS, al-Baghdadi. They also declared that other jihadist groups like their past leader Al Qaeda must accept that IS has supreme control. This caliphate came after ISIS was able to consolidate their control over territory in Syria and Iraq, which allowed ISIS to have a main area of land to control and reside in (“What Is 'Islamic State’”). Since the Islamic State is the new form of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, it is necessary to decipher the ideological basis for the Islamic State in order to create a counterterrorism plan for the group that is currently a threat.

The ideology of the Islamic State goes hand in hand with the politics and the leadership apparent in this group. The Islamic State follows the strain in Salafism known as jihadism, meaning they are a part of the more violent political thought known as Jihadi-Salafism. This movement is based on extremist beliefs and is rooted in tradition and textual meanings. The Jihadi-Salafism thought combines a Brotherhood and a Salafi dimension. The Brotherhood dimension comes from the Muslim Brotherhood, where they wanted to restore the caliphate as the ideal system of government. The Salafi dimension is concerned with the purity of faith by the

elimination of idolatry (shirk) and affirming God's Oneness (tawhid) as well as remaining anti-Shi'ite (Bunzel 8). These ideological beliefs are not new, as they have been apparent in the previous groups that came before the Islamic State.

ISIS's ideology also plays a role in how they are motivated as a group and why they choose the tactics that they do. This further explains where ISIS's rage manifests from. This rage is what has propelled this group to commit heinous crimes like beheading civilians. The main source of both motivation and rage is that they, along with groups like Al Qaeda, are in a war against infidels. This is a part of their overall belief in an extreme Islamic conception of world order (Saloom). Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, one of the first influential leaders of ISIS when it was still JTI and AQI, was influenced greatly by the fatwas of Osama Bin Laden. Since Osama Bin Laden was the leader of Al Qaeda and al-Zarqawi was the leader of a precursor to ISIS and an affiliate of Al Qaeda (Al Qaeda in Iraq), it is reasonable that Bin Laden influenced the extreme viewpoints of ISIS.

To showcase these viewpoints, many verses (or Suras) from the Qur'an are used to justify beheadings and violent actions in general. These verses are used to try and encourage Muslims to commit violent actions because the holy book told them they could. Historical contexts are also used to draw upon the anger felt by Muslims that came before them. If previous Muslims felt the need to engage in violent jihad, then they must continue their fight. One of the Suras (Sura 8:12) states, "When the Lord inspired the angels (saying) I am with you. So make those who believe stand firm. I will throw fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Then smite the necks and smite of them each finger" (Saloom). Terrorists take messages like this and interpret 'smite the neck' as a direct indication of beheading. Another historical context that is used to justify these



beheadings comes from the Prophet Muhammed himself. The Prophet Muhammed was believed to be a part of the beheadings of a Jewish tribe named Qurayza (Saloom). If the Prophet Muhammed utilized this violent tactic, then Muslims, according to extremists, are permitted to do so. However, there are many Suras that denounce the use of violence and indirectly the act of beheadings. Terrorists, like those in ISIS, choose to only look at verses that correspond with their beliefs. They use these historical contexts to motivate their members and engage in a violent jihad. The motivation of ISIS members and all Islamic Fundamentalists is hard to counter. Since terrorists only choose to interpret the Qur'an in ways that align with their viewpoints, they don't understand the many Suras that condemn the use of violence and preach the importance of peace. Therefore, a diplomatic approach is ineffective because they choose to ignore interpretations different than their own.

Although motivations may be similar, the Islamic State has a different ideological basis within Jihadi-Salafism than other jihadist groups like The Muslim Brotherhood and Al Qaeda. The Muslim Brotherhood focused on creating a radical, revolutionary version of the Brotherhood dimension of Jihadi-Salafism. This was the creation of a caliphate as the system of government. In order to do this, they wanted to overthrow governments and replace it with Islamic states. Al Qaeda, on the other hand, thought that attacking the United States would help create this Islamic state (Bunzel 9). The biggest difference between Al Qaeda and the Islamic State is that the Islamic State is stricter in their adherence to their ideological beliefs. While the Islamic State tends to adhere to the same Jihadi-Salafist beliefs as these other jihadist groups, they focus on a few main beliefs in particular. These beliefs have been extracted from statements released from the Islamic State themselves (Bunzel 38). The first is that they must only associate themselves

with other true Muslims. If this is the case, then it would be difficult for any counterterrorist intelligence to infiltrate IS because they will not associate with outsiders. Therefore, any intelligence must also convincingly adhere to the same belief system. Another belief is that all Shia Muslims deserve death. This makes it challenging to try and protect Shia Muslims, because their death is one of the main beliefs of IS. They also believe that, “failure to rule in accordance with God’s law constitutes unbelief” (Bunzel 10). This adherence to sharia law shows why the Islamic State is against the Western way of governance. It is impossible for the United States to change this governance to try and please a terrorist organization. The Islamic State is also dogmatic in their application of Salafist literature and they justify violence through their waging of a defensive jihad. This means that they believe that most military force they use is actually defensive. They are defending Islam from secularism and the West. They also use offensive jihad to justify their offensive military actions, as they are fighting against idolatry especially in Shia controlled regions (Bunzel 11). The Islamic State adheres to a strict, extremist, and historically based ideology. This presents a problem to counterterrorism experts because it is hard to compromise or communicate with individuals who believe in an all-encompassing ideology that leaves no room for other ideas or beliefs. Therefore, it seems that in regards to battling the Islamic State’s ideology, the United States must rely on options other than compromise in order to dismantle this organization.

### Organization and Leadership Structure

ISIS has created an organizational structure different than other Islamic Fundamentalist groups, like their previous leader Al Qaeda. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s overall organizational

structural changes in 2010 (when ISIS was still ISI) included a disciplined, cohesive, and flexible organization. He wanted direct control over the members of ISIS and focused on the details. Through this, he created a hierarchical and a centralized organization. He also included more Iraqi fighters in leadership roles, which allowed younger Iraqis to aspire towards membership in this well-known organization. During al-Baghdadi's organizational changes he specifically divided ISIS leadership into the al-imara, or the executive. This was made up of al-Baghdadi and his top advisors (Hashim). The al-imara is like the government of a country, as it is composed of the policymakers and the governing body of the Islamic State. Besides the main leadership, ISIS is divided into first and second echelon structures. The first echelon is composed of the Shura, Military, and the Security and Intelligence Councils, which are all supervised by al-Baghdadi. This Shura Council is next in leadership to the al-imara and it is the body that can remove al-Baghdadi if they decided he was unfit to run ISIS. The Military Council oversees the military commanders and the wilayats, which are the provinces or units of the Islamic State. The Security and Intelligence Council focuses on providing security to al-Baghdadi himself, maintaining communication between al-Baghdadi and the provincial governors, making sure these governors follow Baghdadi's orders, overseeing court rulings, making sure penalties are executed, providing counterintelligence to prevent enemy infiltration, and overseeing mail delivery. This council is also in charge of conducting kidnappings, assassinations, and collecting any funds (Hashim). This first echelon is the core of the Islamic State that presents many difficulties for counterterrorism experts, especially the Security and Intelligence Council. This council is in charge of maintaining the security of the organization and preventing breaches in the system. As

long as this council remains intact and reliable, it would be difficult to infiltrate the organization directly.

The second-echelon structure deals with the finances and funding of ISIS. They especially focus on costs related to running and building a state and maintaining their military (Hashim). Other councils in ISIS include the media council, which regulates the media of ISIS, the legal counsel, which makes decisions about executions, and the fighter's assistance council, which gives foreign fighters' aid (Glenn). There is one positive aspect of ISIS's organizational structure in regards to counterterrorism; their direct hierarchal control over their fighters. If one of the top leaders of ISIS, or even a few members of one of the councils, are killed, the lower level fighters may not be able to lead and plan attacks themselves.

Abu Bakr al Baghdadi is the current leader of ISIS, who emerged when he took control of ISIS back when they were still the Islamic State of Iraq. Baghdadi received training in Afghanistan in the late 1990's, which is where he met ISIS's founder and first leader, Abu Musab al Zarqawi. Besides claims that he is from a religious family, he is descended from noble tribes, and has a PhD from the Islamic University in Baghdad, there is not much known about Baghdadi. Baghdadi also only has two known photos of himself and conceals his identity with a bandanna, showing how much he stays out of the spotlight (Glenn). This makes it quite difficult for a direct attack against Baghdadi, seeing that he only shows his identity to his small inner circle. This means that any conversations with ISIS would have to take place with other leaders or to the group in general. His education also presents a counterterrorism issue, because if he does have a PhD, it means it would be hard to undermine his authority or use tricks to get him to cooperate with any policies. It would also be hard for the United States to directly target

Baghdadi. With only a few pictures of him in circulation and the fact that only his small inner circle gets the pleasure of seeing his face, it would be difficult to track his movements or have someone within the ISIS organization be able to inform intelligence of his exact location.

There is more to Abu Bakr al Baghdadi than just a concealed identity. Since he is currently the most influential leader of ISIS, his background is vital to know in order for counterterrorism experts to target al-Baghdadi and understand the origins of this organization. Al-Baghdadi was born in 1971 in Samarra, Iraq. Even as a child, al-Baghdadi was extremely shy, and he spent his childhood either in school or at the mosque, since he was devoted to religion early on. This made sense because his father was also religious and taught at a mosque. Even though he was shy, when he was promoting or teaching Islam to others, he would come alive. “According to one of his brothers, Shamsi, he was quick to admonish anyone who strayed from the strictures of Islamic law” (McCants). His grew up in a lower middle-class family and he claimed that he was a direct descendent of the Prophet himself. Al-Baghdadi’s family is one of the reasons why he was specifically radicalized. Two of his uncles were in Saddam Hussein’s security force and one of his brothers was an officer in the army. Another brother even died in the Iran-Iraq war that the United States was a part of (McCants). His familial background shows that al-Baghdadi was bred to not only defend his country and his beliefs because they were members of the military, but also to be a religious scholar. The combination of his intensive religious beliefs and the influence his family had helped turn al-Baghdadi into the extremist he is today.

Education and prison life are two other factors that radicalized al-Baghdadi early on. In 1996, he graduated from the University of Baghdad. He then proceeded to enroll in a Quranic

recitation program at the Saddam University for Islamic Studies. There, he wrote a thesis on the medieval texts of the Qur'an. He continued the same course of study into his doctorate program at the same university (McCants). His education focused exclusively on Islamic studies, which means his main influence during these years of schooling was the importance and significance of religion. During this time is also when al-Baghdadi was convinced by his Uncle to join the Muslim Brotherhood. Within this organization, al-Baghdadi began to align himself with the violent Jihadi-Salafites, which laid out the ideological foundation of ISIS. Eventually, al-Baghdadi helped form an insurgent group named Jaysh Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamaah, which focused on fighting U.S. troops and their allies in northern and central Iraq. By 2004, al-Baghdadi was arrested as a 'civil detainee', as they were unaware he was actually a violent jihadist (McCants). While in prison, al-Baghdadi was able to network with others who had similar views as himself. He also continued religious practices for his fellow prisoners. The prisoners al-Baghdadi bonded with are the same insurgents who became prominent leaders of ISIS. The fact that al-Baghdadi was previously imprisoned helped him become radicalized because of who he was surrounded by. Not only was he influenced by his family, now he was influenced by his peers. He knew he was no longer alone in his quest for a pure Islamic state. His extensive education background also allowed al-Baghdadi to take on a leadership role and develop a strong organization that is around today. Therefore, al-Baghdadi's religious upbringing, family influence, prison life, and educational background all contributed to the radicalization of ISIS's current leader.

Baghdadi, in relation to the entire organization of ISIS, is the supreme political and religious leader. In other words, he is the caliph. He relies on deputies to oversee and manage

certain areas of ISIS territory in Iraq and Syria. The Shura Council also ensures that the caliph is fit to rule. Otherwise, he has unchecked authority. Baghdadi also appoints members to the Shura Council and relies on advisors and the previously mentioned deputies to compose the upper echelon of ISIS. The current leaders that help compose the upper echelon are Abu Ali al Anbari, ISIS's deputy in Syria, Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, ISIS's official spokesman, Abu Arkan al Ameri, the head of the shura council, and Abd al-Rahman Mustafa al Qaduli, a fellow senior leader (Glenn). Even though counterterrorism intelligence may not be able to target Baghdadi, it may be possible for experts to target these others leaders or at least members of the Shura council. Direct hits against a centralized organization like ISIS may trickle down to create disaster among the entire group.

### Finances

Since ISIS is considered a hermit kingdom, an organization that isolates themselves from the rest of the world, it is difficult to find published official data, balanced sheets, or audits from international organizations. Therefore, researchers must rely on Western media sources, journalists, indirect habitants' testimonies, ISIS propaganda, and few official reports (Stergiou 189). This does not mean there are no options for the United States and their goal to dismantle ISIS using their financial means. This just means that the sources the United States does have must be reliable but be taken with caution. The United States must also continue to edit counterterrorism policies as certain policies succeed and fail and as more reliable information is discovered.

ISIS, the world's richest terrorist organization. With a label like that, it is clear that ISIS has been able to finance their terrorist group properly and with great success. Like any legitimate business or corporation, ISIS has bills to pay, mouths to feed, and payrolls to maintain. The money ISIS raises not only goes towards financing operations and buying weaponry, like would be expected from a terrorist organization, it also goes towards paying its members. In an area where many are poor and need a way to support their family, joining ISIS comes with a steady income, giving opportunities to those who normally wouldn't have them. A member's pay is, "based on a flat monthly rate per person and then additional fixed amounts for each wife, child and dependent unmarried adult woman in the household" (Shatz). For example, in Iraq in 2003 and 2004, the rate was \$491 per year with an additional amount of \$245 per dependent. These payments even continue if the ISIS member is killed or captured. This gives families' life insurance they wouldn't have otherwise (Shatz). This is also why it makes sense that families would support those in their family that join ISIS. Even though there are dangers involved with being a part of this terrorist group, money will continue even if they are killed. The fact that ISIS members are on payroll in turn affects how counterterrorism experts must approach ISIS members. In some cases, this is their family's only source of income. Without it, they would live a much worse life. This means that members are dedicated to ISIS not necessarily because of their beliefs or because they want to commit violent attacks, but because they are supporting their family. This makes members harder to deter. Therefore, the United States can find ways to deal with the underlying financial reasons extremist decide to join terrorist organizations. If some prosperity can be brought to the Iraq and Syria region and to those who are impoverished, they



might be deterred from going from an extremist to a terrorist. Another way intelligence can use ISIS's finances to defeat them is by stopping funds from getting to the group in the first place.

The question is, then, how does ISIS finance their operation? Howard Shatz, a senior economist at RAND Corporation, has looked at documents, ledgers, and manuals from the precursor organizations of ISIS, like Al Qaeda in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq. Through his research, along with scholars from Emory and Princeton, there have been discoveries of what most likely is ISIS's primary source of income. ISIS raises most of their money domestically in Iraq and Syria. Their biggest source of revenue is oil, where they smuggle and sell it to other countries. ISIS is currently in control of about a dozen oil fields in Iraq and Syria as well as refineries. This means they do not have to travel outside their own territory to find oil supplies. They are then able to smuggle oil to other countries in tanker trucks. The issue with these tanker trucks is that they would never be labeled something that could connect that truck with ISIS. This makes it difficult to pinpoint which trucks are actually being controlled by ISIS. Once the oil is smuggled out, they sell it to surrounding countries at a discounted rate. These countries include Syria, Turkey, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Shatz). Due to these discounted rates, countries are more willing to buy oil from a terrorist organization, especially if they already support them.

ISIS's ability to raise funds through oil does offer some counterterrorist options. One secretive option would include following tanker trucks in areas that are known to be in ISIS territory, potentially leading officials to their oil fields. These oil fields, with permission and cooperation from Iraq and Syria, could potentially lead to ISIS members. Another simple solution is to stop the selling of the oil to other countries. If other countries refuse to buy oil from

a known terrorist group like ISIS, then there would be no demand. ISIS could no longer rely on their oil funds to finance their operations. These options rely on cooperation between the United States and other Middle Eastern countries, however, which may be difficult to do. Another issue comes from the fact that the United States cannot destroy the oil infrastructures that ISIS controls. This oil is the primary source of revenue not only for ISIS, but for the general population and the lawful government in the area. This government also needs the oil to remain legitimate and keep oil and gas production up. If the U.S. destroys them, they wipe out this oil for everyone (Stergiou 202).

Other ways ISIS raises funds besides oil is through extortion, taxes, and other criminal activities. Although ISIS's main source of funding is through the control and sale of oil, it is still important to focus on the other options ISIS uses. One of these ways is extortion, typically through, "the banking system, transportation tariffs, daily business activity, salary payments, human trafficking, seizure of property-mostly from Christians, Shiites and formal government officials which is been later auctioned off for cash or simply theft at gunpoint" (Stergiou 192). They have even been able to take control of state-owned banks, take cash deposits from locals, tax goods going in and out of ISIS territory, and organize slave auctions that not only act as a source of revenue, but gives them access to cheap labor. Not only does ISIS have control of oil fields and smuggle out oil, they have control of dams and gas plants. They even smuggle antiquities. Their last source of self-funding is through kidnapping for ransom (Stergiou 195). Kidnapping provides a win-win for ISIS. If the ransom is paid, ISIS has secured an easy source of revenue. If the ransom is not paid, ISIS has no problem going ahead and performing a ritualized killing, which sends a political message and shows that they are merciless. On top of

these self-funding means of raising money, ISIS has also received donations from wealthy private regional donors and have gotten contributions from certain fraudulent foundations that are established based on broad messages like humanitarian relief for refugees (Stergiou 196). These fake foundations lead directly to the banks of ISIS. By having many sources of revenue, both internally and externally, it is easy for ISIS to change their plan around in response to counterterrorism policies like increased military strikes. Therefore, the United States must look at every source of revenue, from their illegal smuggling of oil to their kidnappings, and find ways to cut off each simultaneously.

Overall, the United States must take a new approach when they are dealing with ISIS's finances. First, the United States must focus on internal financial structures rather than their external donors, because only a small portion of ISIS funds comes from these donors and ISIS is considered a self-sufficient organization. The Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, David S. Cohen, has focused on three main ways to threaten ISIS's financial foundations: cutting off ISIS's access to revenue, restricting their access to the international financial system and targeting sanctions against ISIS's leadership and facilitators (Stergiou 202). In order to cut off ISIS's access to revenue, the United States must cooperate with financial intelligence with local governments, like the Iraqi and Iran governments. This means increased coordination and information sharing with each country's financial institutions. This increased sharing can lead to the identification of facilitators working with ISIS. Local institutions can also observe the flow of goods into and out of ISIS territory and keep track of the prices and quantities of goods that are smuggled into their countries. These goods may have been directly smuggled by ISIS (Stergiou 202). Without cooperation by countries around the Middle East, the

United States will not be able to monitor the flow of funds in and out of ISIS and properly cut into this flow.

The second way Cohen planned to threaten ISIS's funding is by restricting their access to the international financial system. There are over 100 financial institutions within ISIS territory. To cut off their access, institutions have been told by the Central Bank of Iraq to stop wire transfers in and out of the banks in ISIS territory. The international financial system has cut their ties with these institutions as well. This is so ISIS does not have the ability to funnel their money through this global system and easily send their money wherever they please (Stergiou 202). The issue with this is that these banks may not follow these global and local mandates and continue their relations to ISIS. If this happens, there is no choice but to close these banks down and hold those who own the bank liable for their actions. Cohen's final part of the plan was to create targeted sanctions against ISIS's leadership and facilitators. This includes travel bans, an arms embargo, and asset freezes of known ISIS associates. This can also be done by having security measures set up for when ISIS oil or illegally traded items enter the financial system. Through buyers, middleman, and carriers, these items are bound to enter into the legal financial system and there it can be stopped and hopefully tracked back to the source (Stergiou 203). With a combination of defensive security measures and mandates, as well as cooperation with other Middle Eastern governments, the United States has multiple options available to them to try and dismantle ISIS's finances and prevent them from accessing millions of dollars.

### Targets and Tactics

In order to keep up with the continuous struggle for global jihad while also battling constant counterterrorism threats, the Islamic State has mastered an array of tactics and methods of violence that they can use to attack their targets, recruit fighters, and spread propaganda. Therefore, with each additional ‘tool’ the Islamic State employs, the United States must have a separate counterterrorism plan in place to counter each tactic. Just the like the history of ISIS, it is easier to split the targets and tactics of the Islamic State into different time periods that correlate to the different names this organization has gone under. At the beginning of ISIS’s creation, when they were referred to as JIJ, the main targets were American forces in Iraq. In order to damage American interests, JIJ, along with the other insurgent groups, attacked oil companies, Iraqi police, the National Guard, Iraqi politicians, and humanitarian aid workers (“The Islamic State”). The reason Iraqi’s were targeted was because Americans were working with the interim Iraqi government at the time of the invasion, meaning they were allied with the United States. This array of people and organizations were also targets in hopes to deter others from aiding the Americans and their plans for the Iraqi government. JIJ began using suicide bombings instead of usual guerilla tactics. They also used assassinations and abducted foreign citizens. These abductions are still one of the well-known tactics of the Islamic State. This is because once they were abducted, JIJ would broadcast their execution, usually beheadings. For example, in 2004 JIJ beheaded an American named Nicholas Berg. This execution is even thought to have been carried out directly by al-Zarqawi (“The Islamic State”). More recently, ISIS was charged in 2014 with beheading another American, Peter Kassig. He, along with several other Syrian soldiers, were executed and the video of their execution was uploaded to the Internet (Hjelmgaard)

Once JTJ transformed into AQI, the targets remained somewhat the same. AQI targeted coalition forces, Shia civilians, religious sites, and the Iraqi government. America continued to occupy Iraq which meant they would remain a target. AQI realized the power that suicide bombers had and continued to utilize this tactic. They also began to use improvised explosive devices, also known as IEDs. A more complicated and high-tech tactic that AQI used was chlorine gas combined with conventional explosives (“The Islamic State”). After Bin Laden’s death and during the creation of ISIS, the new leader Baghdadi wanted to focus on freeing AQI prisoners out of prison. Therefore, a new target of ISIS was Iraqi security forces. ISIS also joined the Syrian Civil War, meaning their targets shifted to the other governments and rebel groups. When ISIS realized they wanted to take over land as well, targets started to include the inhabitants of their wanted territory. For example, ISIS targeted Shia and minorities in the Iraqi and Syrian cities they wanted to control.

In order to secure territory, capturing buildings became a tactic ISIS used. Through this tactic, ISIS was able to control the necessary resources to establish their stakes. Another tactic ISIS used in order to take over towns was the establishment of sleeper cells (“The Islamic State”). This means that there were fighters already established in towns that ISIS wanted to take over. These were smaller units that would be able to rise up and take over when they thought it was the right time. These sleeper cells cause a problem for counterterrorism intelligence because it is hard to detect fighters when no one knows they are there. The United States can defensively wait for the sleeper cell to arise. Then, hopefully the U.S. has allies in those areas to help prevent complete takeover. On top of sleeper cells, ISIS continued to kidnap foreigners and demand ransom money. If the ransom money is not paid, ISIS publicly beheads the captive. There have

been countless beheadings in the past few years, including a few more American civilians (“The Islamic State”). The problem with American captives is that American policy is to never make concessions to terrorists (“FACT SHEET: U.S. Government Hostage Policy”). This means that America cannot pay the ransoms demanded by ISIS. There needs to be another way that America can rescue these hostages. This does not have to necessarily mean paying the ransom, but this could be a technological way to track these videos or shut down the propaganda altogether. If there is no audience, ISIS could potentially put off the beheadings. Since Americans have left the Middle East, especially Iraq, it seems that ISIS has shifted away from targeting America directly. The more America stays out of the Middle East, the more it seems ISIS focuses on other targets and battles.

## **IV. Taliban Case Study**

### History and Ideology

Much like Al Qaeda, the Taliban was formed by members of the mujahedeen that had resisted the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980's. Along with these members, Pashtun students who studied Pakistani madrassas also helped form this organization. In fact, the word Taliban means students in Pashto (Laub). These students are influential in Afghanistan because Pashtuns comprise the majority ethnicity in the country. Any group that is able to compose the majority of any country has major leverage within the government. This group is able to influence the rest of the population and direct potential governmental policies, which is exactly what Pashtuns did in Afghanistan. Pashtuns still compose most of the Taliban. "Accordingly, a significant portion of Taliban members follow Pashtunwali, a strict moral and cultural code of conduct for Pashtun tribesmen" ("The Taliban"). During this time, the budding Taliban was able to rely on the young people of Afghanistan to supply their operation, both with recruits and supplies. Weapons were secured from retreating and abandoned forces or while the military was disarming the population (Marsden 43).

After the Soviets abandoned Afghanistan, the Taliban was able to take control, promising to return the country to the stable country it used to be. They were able to convince others of the sincerity of that promise by going to Kandahar, Afghanistan to help bring peace and take control from the reigning corrupt President, Burhanuddin Rabbani (Laub). The successful overthrow of this President provided the Taliban with the persuasion needed to convince an entire population that they were necessary tools in protecting the interests of the Pashtun people.



The first militarized attack from the Taliban was also when the world realized their existence. In October 1994, the Pakistani government sent a trade convey through Kandahar, Afghanistan. Once the convoy entered Afghanistan, it was attacked by an armed group other than the Taliban. The Taliban actually rescued the convoy and fought the other armed group. This marks the emergence of the Taliban (Marsden 43). After this rescue, the Taliban took root in Kandahar. There, they began acting on the promises they made years prior to the people of Afghanistan to restore the country to stability, which included the removal of Rabbani from Presidency. It didn't take much to secure their reign on Kandahar, and they managed to overtake other leaders who were stationed there and they forced the population to hand over their weapons.

This is the time when the Taliban started implementing their ideological viewpoints on the Kandahar population. Along with their goal of removing the corrupt President Rabbani, the Taliban wanted to create a pure Islamic society. This included forcing men to wear turbans, beards, short hair, and shalwar kameez (traditional dress). For women, they had to wear a burqa to cover their entire body. Women were given the responsibility to raise children and they were not allowed to have any other occupation. Education for women was also put on the backburner. The Taliban also wanted a curriculum drawn up for schools that focused on religion, and the Taliban claimed that this could only happen after they controlled all of Afghanistan. Meanwhile men would travel to mosques to pray 5 times a day in accordance to the 2nd pillar of Islam, Salah (Marsden 44). These extreme rulings by the Taliban over the Kandahar people seemed to be put into place to force obedience to their new leaders and to create a single, powerful, and united population. The women would focus solely on raising more soldiers for their military and the men would focus on their religion. Together, individual diversity would not be tolerated. This

is why they were forced to look as identical as possible. A united Taliban would become more powerful and work towards their common goals. This is the unity that would have to be broken through counterterrorism efforts.

The Taliban continued to do what they did in Kandahar throughout the next few years. As they moved westward, they managed to pick up recruits and weaponry a long they way, as they defeated other armed groups and bandits. By February of 1995, after a long winter of acquisition, the Taliban had overtaken almost half of Afghanistan (Marsden 34). Throughout the years, a cycle would occur regarding the Taliban and their territorial achievements. They would take over a city, receive some push back (and possibly lose the city for a period of time), and eventually overtake the city once more. Some of these cities in Afghanistan included Kabul, Herat, and Mazar. Within these cities and the cities in between, the Taliban encountered other militant groups fighting for similar purposes as them. However, these groups were also fighting for the same land as the Taliban, which created resistance every city they entered. The largest of these groups was Hizb-e Wahdat (Marsden 34). On top of these additional militant groups, the government of Afghanistan, especially the Northern Alliance (United Front) against the Taliban, tried to resist Taliban occupation. One of the most prominent actors of this resistance was Abdul Rashid Dostum, who is the current Vice-President of Afghanistan.

Working alongside Dostum seems like a relatively simple and easy way to enforce American counterterrorism policies in Afghanistan. The issue with Vice-President Dostum is that America is currently opposed to working with him. As of April 2016, Dostum has been unable to receive a visa from the United States so he can visit and discuss the current issues with the Taliban (Rosenberg). The United States continues to have an interest in defeating the Taliban

because Afghanistan is their ally and they still have thousands of troops and dollars invested in the country. Vice-President Dostum has been accused of war crimes, which is the why the United States and the Obama administration is unwilling to work with him, especially on American soil. These war crimes include Dostum putting hundreds of Taliban prisoners in shipping containers without food and water, which resulted in their death. This took place after Dostum, “fought alongside Central Intelligence Agency operatives and Special Operations forces to oust the Taliban (Rosenberg). The issue with this unwillingness is that Dostum provides invaluable information of the current workings of the Taliban. As stated before, Dostum has been working against the Taliban since the 1990’s during his involvement with the Northern Alliance and his resistance of Taliban forces in Mazar. He is now the second-in-command of Afghanistan. This power combined with experience is needed to adequately formulate a plan to defeat the Taliban or prevent their expansion. This is also one reason why discussing the history of the Taliban is necessary when planning counterterrorism options. By diving into the history of the Taliban, previous influential actors in the fight against the Taliban (like Vice-President Dostum) are uncovered. Once uncovered, these actors are able to help current efforts to defeat the Taliban. The option of utilizing older actors is unique to Taliban counterterrorism, because compared to groups like ISIS who have only been around for a few years, the Taliban has been around since the 90’s. History repeats itself, and luckily the U.S. has enough history with this group to use it against them.

Not only does the Taliban have an extensive history, there are also ideological roots embedded into this organization. In order to understand this ideology, the Foreign Policy Research Institute interviewed 78 Afghan Taliban fighters. Through these interviews, the

Institute was able to uncover some of the main motivations Taliban members have for joining the organization. This study found two main motivations for these fighters. The first was opposition to Western presence and influence over Afghanistan. The second was the inherent flaws of the Afghan government (Garfield and Boyd). In order to act on these motivations, fighters want to remove foreign presence and establish a traditional Islamic government. Not only do fighters have these particular goals, they have experienced rage and anger as well because of the American presence in Afghanistan. This rage is because of the imposition of non-Islamic values in Afghanistan, the disgracing of the Qur'an, and the abuse Americans have committed against Afghans, especially Afghan women. The beliefs held by fighters have impacted Taliban ideals and the propaganda they release. However, since these beliefs are constructed based on true experiences of abuse, counterterrorism experts cannot simply speak out against Taliban propaganda. These beliefs are embedded in the hearts of those around Afghanistan because of personal experiences. (Garfield and Boyd). Therefore, because members have been personally victimized or have had family members, friends, or neighbors victimized, they are more motivated to join an insurgent group like the Taliban.

Personal experiences and Western influence aren't the only sources of motivation for the Taliban. There are also religious and political reasons for joining. Members claim that the United States and other Western countries are at war against Islam. They also believed that the Afghanistan government portrays American beliefs, not those of Afghans (Garfield and Boyd). Overall, a combination of political, religious, personal, and anti-Western motivations come together to push Afghans towards joining the Taliban. Their rage culminates because of the perceived injustices caused by the United States, and this rage cannot simply be stopped because

America tries to defend their actions or claim they didn't happen. Instead, Americans must understand these grievances, as this study found that they are held by Afghans and Pashtuns everywhere, not just those a part of the Taliban (Garfield and Boyd). These views must also be considered when dealing with the Afghan government and how that government decides to rule their people.

The United States Institute of Peace has created a timeline of the Taliban's rhetoric development and their ideological beliefs throughout the last two decades in relation to historical events. This combination of history, rhetoric, and ideology allows experts to see the development of the Taliban throughout the years and the best approach to take when trying to stop their next move. It also allows for a simpler explanation of Taliban history, as it is easy to get confused since it is meddled with politics and military battles. The first phase of the Taliban has already been extensively discussed, as it is also the phase they emerged from and officially became a threat. This phase has been labeled the emergent Taliban and took place from 1994-1996 (Semple 6). This is when the Taliban quickly transformed from a band of fighters to a group that had the capability to take over Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. During this time, they began fighting the Islamic State of Afghanistan, which was the government of Afghanistan that was created after the Soviets left. Besides the official government, the Taliban was also fighting various armed groups like Hizb-e Wahdat. The goal of this first phase of the Taliban was to, "Combat the moral corruption of the former mujahedeen commanders in control of Kandahar" (Semple 7). This went on to include trying to dismantle all other factions that were a part of the Afghanistan civil war. The underlying ideology during this phase was that during the battle against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, jihad had been betrayed by members of the

mujahedeen who resorted to illegitimate means of extortion, violence and oppression (Semple 7). Therefore, the Taliban justified any violence during this phase because the former mujahedeen commanders deserved to be removed because they disgraced the jihad.

The second phase of the Taliban took place from 1996-2001 and is known as the ascendant Taliban. This is when the Taliban began rapidly expanding across Afghanistan while continuing to fight the mujahedeen forces that still remained. This expansion turned into the Islamic emirate, which was the Islamic State in Afghanistan that was created and ruled by the Taliban. Emirate is another word for the land ruled by an emir. Up until 2001, the Taliban focused mainly on forces in Afghanistan. The most involved the Taliban was internationally was through the assistance they received from Pakistan (Semple 6). This means that the Taliban was not yet a threat to the United States directly. Ideologically during the phase, the Taliban continued to focus on jihad. They engaged in jihad through their creation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA). Since the Taliban was able to take over vast amounts of Afghanistan, they also believed that every other force should succumb to their rule. Any resistance was against Islam and the Islamic system of Afghanistan the Taliban was trying to create. According to the Taliban, this system was the only legitimate way to rule Afghanistan.

The invasion of Afghanistan by the United States advanced the Taliban into their third phase. This invasion was partially reminiscent of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, as both invasions were by countries with ideologies different than Islam and the Taliban. This phase was from 2002-2006, and was known by the U.S. Institute of Peace as the emergent insurgency. This insurgency was due to the new, post-invasion Afghanistan government that was supported not only by the United States, but internationally (Semple 6). The Taliban army was defeated during

this time by these international forces, including in Kabul. Therefore, the only military accomplishments by the Taliban at this time was small groups of Taliban forces fighting back against these international forces and the new Kabul government. This phase also forced the Taliban to enter the international arena and start dealing with other countries besides those in their immediate geographical area. Once the United States started planning their invasion, the Taliban took this time to preach their case to those who would listen, especially the ulema (the scholars). They claimed there needed to be an armed resistance against these foreign invaders (and soon to be occupiers) because they were challenging the Islamic system that the Taliban had created the past 5 years (Semple 7). The notable thing to come out of this phase was that the local armed forces were no longer the only enemies of the Taliban. Now, there was a foreign enemy identified, the United States and their allies.

From 2007-2014, the Taliban entered their fourth phase, which was considered the national insurgency. Their main goal during this phase was to expand their influence past South and East Afghanistan. Taliban forces were still focused on fighting against international enemies and the new government, but they were overpowered by the Afghan government and their allies. Therefore, the Taliban spread their resources across Afghanistan and created a parallel administration (Semple 7). By spreading out their resources, the Taliban had better opportunities to control the parts of Afghanistan that up until now, were untouched by the Taliban's influence. As the fighting against the U.S. occupiers continued, the Taliban tried to use propaganda to spread their message and rally the Muslim people against the United States. For example, the Taliban claimed that U.S. forces were engaging in cruel, oppressive behavior against Muslim civilians in both Afghanistan and the rest of the Middle East because of the new war on terror

(Semple 8). To the Taliban, if they were able to convince others that the United States was acting against all Muslims, they could convince them that the U.S. was against Islam in general. Then, the Taliban could try and get others to join in their fight to rid the Middle East and Afghanistan of these foreign invaders.

Currently, the Taliban is in their 5th phase. This phase is about balance, a balance between fighting against local and foreign enemies. The Taliban is focusing more on the Kabul government than before, and they have started to use larger groups of fighters to take control of territory all over Afghanistan (Semple 7). Ideologically, the Taliban claim they are fighting not only foreign forces, but the ‘puppet’ regime planted by these forces. This is the regime currently ruling Afghanistan as well as any of their collaborators. They have also claimed that those in the Taliban are the only true members of the mujahedeen and the only true ones engaging in jihad. To enforce this, the Taliban state that any of the other groups or leaders that were around during the Soviet occupation in the 90’s allowed the U.S. occupation in 2001 (Semple 8). This is simply the Taliban claiming that any of their actions as reasonable and justifiable, while disregarding the legitimacy of any other Islamic group who may pose a threat to their rule.

What do these phases mean to the United States? The U.S. has seen that the Taliban was focused purely on Afghanistan soil until the invasion in 2001. It was then that focus shifted towards attacking foreign forces. The more time that has passed since this invasion, the more the Taliban seems to be focusing on the local Kabul government and how to overtake them. Therefore, in relation to the current phase the Taliban is in, U.S. counterterrorism needs to diplomatically work with the Kabul government without physically putting boots on the ground in Afghanistan. If the U.S. can increasingly and covertly work with the Kabul government by



strengthening their control and individual leadership abilities, the Taliban may feel less threatened by the United States because troops aren't physically present. If the lack of American troops triggers the Taliban to directly attack Afghan troops, the U.S. can be ready to deploy forces once the situation calls for defensive measures.

### Organization and Leadership Structure

Since the Taliban arose from the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, the logical choice of their first leader would be a member of the mujahedeen involved in the resistance movement. This leader was Mullah Mohammed Omar, who naturally was also accredited to founding the Taliban. He referred to himself as amir al-mu'minin, which means commander of the faithful (Laub). During his rule, he was the leader who was involved with giving Al Qaeda refuge from Pakistan. This refuge is what first forged a relationship between the Taliban and Al Qaeda, two Islamic Fundamentalist groups with different protocols and belief systems. This refuge was given to Al Qaeda as long as Al Qaeda did not anger the United States. The relationship between the two groups became strained, however, when Bin Laden coordinated the attacks on the U.S. embassies in East Africa. Although this deal was cut short after these 1998 bombings, Omar was still the leader of the Taliban during the 9/11 attacks. The U.S. demanded that Omar tell them information on the whereabouts of Osama Bin Laden after the attacks. Omar refused to cater to the United States wishes. The U.S. proceeded to announce that Omar was wanted by the United States and they placed a bounty of 10 million dollars for his capture. This shows that although Al Qaeda didn't follow the terms of the deal, the Taliban was still willing to protect them, even with the anger of the United States. 14 years later, the Taliban announced that their first leader and

founder had passed away, although there are reports that indicate he actually passed away year's earlier ("The Taliban"). The conflicting reports for his death shows that even announcements directly from the Taliban must be taken with skepticism.

The confliction around Mullah Omar's death shows how difficult it is to culminate accurate information about the previous Emir of Afghanistan. However, there are some sources that provide a look into the early life of Omar and how he came to be the leader of the Taliban. Omar was born around 1959, however the exact year is unknown. He grew up in a poor family and his parents were Pashtun peasants. Since he grew up in less than desirable conditions, he was of low social status and not well-known in his tribe (Rashid 23). This is compared to Osama Bin Laden, who was raised in a notable and wealthy business family. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, he and his family moved to Tarinkot, which is in the Urozgan Province of Afghanistan. Due to this location, it was almost completely untouched by the Soviets and the evolving war. The lack of Soviet presence also also made it a backwards environment. It was there that his father died, which meant he was now in charge of taking care of his family (Rashid 24). The struggles Omar faced early on and the environment he grew up in makes it easy to see why Omar could have started developing more extremist views. The anger he felt because of the conditions he was forced into, especially because of the Soviet invasion, could have contributed to why he joined Hizb-e-Islami. This is an insurgency group in Afghanistan that originally fought against the Soviets. Omar also had a rather untraditional education. At one point, he moved to Singesar village in the Meand district of the Kandahar province. It was there that he headed a madrassa, became the village mullah, and began his own religious studies (Rashid 24). Mullah Omar was born into less than desirable conditions. He was the son of peasants with no

social standing, lacked a proper education, was forced into the role of caretaker for his family, and grew up in a backwards environment. It can be assumed that the combination of these factors plus his religious studies contributed to his decisions to join insurgent groups and eventually lead the Taliban

The relationship between Al Qaeda and the Taliban offers insight into how the United States should approach counterterrorism directed at the Taliban. The most influential thing in counterterrorism policies involving the relationship between these two groups is to be wary and cautious. Even though Bin Laden went against his deal with Mullah Omar and attacked the United States in which he lost his opportunity of refuge, Mullah Omar was still unwilling to cooperate with the United States. Omar was unwilling to share information about Bin Laden's location and he risked his own life knowing he would become a wanted man. The underlying reason for him refusing to cooperate with the United States could be for two reasons. One, he wanted to protect a fellow Islamic Fundamentalist, especially one he had collaborated with in the past. Another, possibly more threatening reason, is that no matter who they are protecting and what their current relationship is, the Taliban is willing to help any organization/individual who is against and willing to attack the U.S. Either way, it would be very difficult to try and put a wedge into Taliban-Al Qaeda relations or try to get the Taliban to cooperate with the U.S. at the expense of another Islamic Fundamentalist group.

However, before Mullah Omar's death, he helped establish the main organizational structure of the Taliban's leadership. After resistance in 2001 from the Northern Alliance and the United States in Northern Africa, which was where the Taliban was originally located, Omar and top leadership fled to Pakistan (Laub). This is where the 'Quetta Shura' was established, which is

still the leadership structure apparent today. The Quetta Shura derives from the capital of the Balochistan province in Pakistan. The capital is named Quetta and is where the Taliban is currently based. The Quetta Shura is comprised of the top leaders of the Taliban and provides central leadership to the entire Taliban organization. (“The Taliban”) The central leadership provided by the Quetta Shura means there is a direct target for attacks, whether it is through detention or drone strikes. It also means there is a direct liaison for the United States to utilize if they want to make contact with the Taliban.

Like much of the information learned about terrorist organizations, much of the information on the organizational and leadership structure of the Taliban is comprised from press reports, discussions with US intelligence, and specific Taliban studies. This is compared to direct information gained from personal experiences or official Taliban sources. The Taliban is secretive in their private activities because they realize there are experts out there trying to dismantle their group from the inside out. The only information that comes directly from the Taliban is information they choose to release. This explains why it took two years to realize that their leader Mullah Omar had died. It was at that time that the Taliban decided it was in their best interest to release the information. Therefore, it is difficult to know exactly how the Taliban is organized. On a positive note, the basic structure of the Quetta Shura is known, and it provides counterterrorism experts a basic understanding of the chain of command of the Taliban.

Besides the main leadership council, the Quetta Shura, the Taliban has 4 regional military councils and 10 committees. The Quetta Shura, as the council that contains the head leaders of the Taliban, controls these military councils and committees. The military councils are split based on the four major geographical areas of the Middle East that the Taliban controls. The

Quetta Regional Military Shura is the military council that controls the area where the Quetta Shura is located, which is southern and Western Afghanistan. The Peshawar Military Shura is in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan and is focused on the eastern and northeastern part of Afghanistan. In North Waziristan, the Miramshah Regional Military Shura focuses on southeastern Afghanistan. The final military shura/council is the Gerdi Jangal Regional Military Shura, which is in Baluchistan, Pakistan. This shura is located in the Helmand Province and is part of the Nimroz province (Roggio). The valuable asset these four military councils provide for the overall Taliban organization is that they split up this group into four separate and different geographical locations. If one of these councils was attacked, the other three would remain intact. This means that counterterrorism must account for the fact that if one area of Pakistan or Afghanistan is attacked, the Taliban still has other options and sources of control. Therefore, all four military councils can work together to prevent attacks or mend themselves after an attack. Therefore, United States counterterrorism must also split their resources towards all four military councils in order to create a solid dent into Taliban's Middle Eastern control.

On top of the Quetta Shura and the four regional military shura's, the Taliban leadership is composed of 10 committees. These committees focus on different issues any other normal organization would concentrate on. These committees are military, Uleme/religious, finance, political affairs, culture and information, interior affairs, prisoners and refugees, education, recruitment, and repatriation (Roggio). All of these committees mirror government organizations (like agencies and cabinets) that are established within the United States. This shows that the Taliban runs itself based on the structure of a legitimate organization. One unique way United States counterterrorism could attack Taliban committees is by utilizing these U.S. government

cabinets and federal agencies and having them come up with ways that their own operations could be disrupted. In other words, the different agencies within the U.S. would be working with the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department to come up with ways to attack the Taliban committees. For example, the U.S. Department of Education would help develop ways to attack the Taliban Education committee, while the U.S. Department of the Interior would focus on the Taliban's Interior Affairs committee. This method would allow government officials who are trained in specific areas of government affairs to offer their input and provide a team effort to counterterrorism.

### Finances

Since the Taliban has been in power since the early 1990's, they have needed consistent and sufficient resources to fund their operation. The original instruments they used to commit violent acts was actually not purchased by themselves. In actuality, the Taliban was able to hold onto weapons that came directly from the United States. More specifically, they obtained weapons from CIA programs that were designed to help the mujahedeen fighters attack the Soviets during their occupation of Afghanistan. As stated before, the mujahedeen are the same fighters that formed the Taliban originally ("The Taliban"). One of these weapons in particular was the shoulder-fired Stinger. Shoulder-fired Stingers are missiles that target low-flying aircrafts. In the 1980's, these Stingers were given to different resistance groups in order to allow local groups to stop the Soviet Union in the Middle East, especially in Afghanistan. Once the Soviet Union retreated and left the Middle East, the United States was unable to retrieve these missiles. This inability allowed the missiles to remain in the hands of a future threat against the

U.S. The Taliban saw the value of these missiles and rejected any monetary offers for their return. They knew that having these missiles in their arsenal was an invaluable asset to any future plans (Fitchett and Intl. Herald Tribune). The increased security after 9/11 has prevented the Taliban from being able to use these missiles in Western airports. However, the pure knowledge that they have deadly weapon capabilities is a threat in itself.

The Stingers incident has counterterrorism implications, since history can and does repeat itself. Learning from this transaction, the United States needs to be cautious in every single arms deal they have with groups from other countries. Even though the United States was working closely with the Inter-Services Intelligence, which is the top intelligence agency of Pakistan, the U.S. government must do their own research on who they are supplying weaponry to (Fitchett and Intl. Herald Tribune). Or, the United States can simply avoid dealing arms with any other individual group, in order to avoid providing weapons to groups that may one day become a threat to the United States. Since the Stingers have not been a threat to the United States recently, especially since the new security measures post 9/11, they should be watched, but they are not a number one concern for counterterrorist experts dealing with the Taliban.

Ignoring the cash reward for the return of the Stingers means that the Taliban has been able to find other methods to secure their finances and buy additional resources. The Taliban's main source of revenue has been the drug trade and the production of poppies for opium. The opium trade thrives in the Afghanistan region, the same region that the Taliban encompasses. The opium trade not only helps the Taliban stay powerful both resourcefully and financially, but it also corrupts the Afghan government and their police. This corruption adds to the destabilization of the state. Taliban leaders perform various roles among the chain of command

in this drug trade. Some simply collect extortion money and charge protection fees. Others, however, have extended their involvement to include running heroin refineries, kidnapping, and smuggling.

The United States Institute of Peace claims that it is “no longer possible to treat the insurgency and the drug trade as separate matters, to be handled by military and law enforcement” (Peters 1). The most obvious way for counterterrorism policies to approach this situation is to attack the drug trade head on. If the drug trade falls apart, the Taliban will lose one of their key sources of income and some stabilization will return to the region. This approach isn’t without issues, unfortunately. Many smuggling rings for opium are run by families that are less likely to open their doors to strangers, making it hard to infiltrate from the inside out. Since involvement in this drug trade is based on a yearning for profit, the United States cannot cater to ones’ religious beliefs to hopefully change their behavior. Afghanistan has not only been torn apart from the United States’ invasion but also by this drug trade. Hopefully, if the United States can combine their resources with Afghanistan’s home forces, the drug trade can be attacked head on and they can undo some damage caused by the 2001 invasion. A coalition force also promotes unity and togetherness, two things that have been lacking between the United States and their Middle Eastern allies. These combined sources also need to turn their attention towards the non-criminal Afghan people living in these drug ridden communities. Their support in defeating the insurgents could mean insider help for counterterrorism. If the Afghan people are turning their backs on the neighboring Taliban members by boycotting opium, the drug trade may diminish and provide less of an incentive for the Taliban to continue production.



The report from the United States Institute of Peace lays out exact counterterrorist options the United States could employ to target the opium trade, even with the problems that already have been addressed. First, NATO can include counternarcotic personnel on their military missions. This would allow them to investigate and collect evidence that could lead to information and potential locations and be used in trials as proof of involvement. Another tactic (which mirrors regular police tactics in the United States) is to set up checkpoints. These checkpoints would allow troops to seize drugs found on the highway. Another way is for the U.S. to specifically target opium convoys. They can be spotted from the air, which means that convoys could be found even if they don't travel on the highway. The U.S. could also target the opium chemists themselves (Peters 34). Although these chemists have a behind the scenes role in the opium drug trade, they still are contributing to the production of opium and engaging in illegal activities. By targeting them, the U.S. can cut off the opium from its point of origin, the drug labs themselves.

All of these drug counterterrorism tactics have ways to be thwarted. That is why the United States and NATO needs to employ a multitude of these tactics and create a comprehensive and exhaustive opium trade counterterrorism plan. That way, if the drug smugglers/Taliban insurgents find a way around one strategy, there are countless other strategies already in place. For example, checkpoints can be avoided by not taking the highway, avoiding manned roadways, or by delivering certain materials on foot. In this instance, the U.S. is already employing tactics to target opium convoys that do not take the main roads through air surveillance. Either way, the opium and the smugglers are stopped. Many of these rely on direct cooperation with counternarcotic personnel. This means that United States counterterrorism

should increase their staffing and training for counternarcotics if they want to increase their chances on ending the opium trade for the Taliban (as well as other drug trades other Islamic Fundamentalist groups are involved in).

Although the main study on the Taliban's involvement in the opium trade was published in 2009, there is still evidence that the Taliban is still highly reliant on opium production. In 2016, the New York Times reported on the opium harvest for the current year. Current harvesters have commented on the increase in production yields in 2016 thus far. For example, Abdul Rahim Mutmain is a farmer in a district called Musa Qala, which is under the control of the Taliban. The opium from his harvests will be controlled by the Taliban as they oversee their own land. Some of the harvesters themselves are also members of the Taliban (Shah and Mashal)

The Taliban's current fighting tactics are also centered on the opium harvest, which provides more of an incentive to directly intervene into their drug trade. The Helmand Province is the area in Afghanistan that the Taliban receives a majority of their opium profits. Helmand Province is also the largest in territory and poppy cultivation, so it provides a backdrop to many Taliban insurgencies and fighting. In the winter, when harvests are at a low point because of weather and field conditions, fighting between the Taliban and Afghan forces is at a high. America even had to send forces during February 2016 in order to offer military support to Afghan forces. Once the weather starts to warm up and the winter season ends, opium harvesting begins. Therefore, in March and early April, fighting slows down in the Helmand Province so the Taliban can focus on poppy seed cultivation. Instead of fighting, Taliban members become day laborers. Therefore, much of the trading process is in the hands of Taliban's own members instead of outsourced farmers. The Taliban also collects an opium tax from the local population

as well as a portion of the ushr which comes from a tax on farm produce. The Taliban also takes this time to recruit men with the lure of these vast poppy fields and the opportunity to make money. The Taliban decides to, “Recruit from the pool of 15,000 laborers, mostly jobless young people, who arrived in Helmand for the harvest season” (Shah and Mashal). These recruited harvesters have now been influenced by the Taliban, not just because of their beliefs, but because of their financial opportunities. These recruited harvesters are now also working in the fields with the Taliban members who have put down their weapons to help with the harvest. This provides an atmosphere to not only field together, but to discuss Taliban ideology and tactics. These conversations could possibly convince these once harvesters to become fighters when the season ends.

This slow season provides the United States and their Afghan allies an opportunity to formulate an attack strategy at a time when Taliban focus is on drug trading and not on fighting. If the U.S. initiates and attacks Taliban headquarters during harvest season, there may be less of a threat for retaliation. Or, if there is retaliation, the United States could focus on dismantling the drug trade because the focus would be back to the military, not narcotics. It would be unwise to first directly attack the poppy fields because the Taliban is focused on the harvest. If an attack on the poppy fields and the drug trade is successful, the Taliban’s finances for the upcoming year may become in danger. This would create a snowball effect, as the Taliban will have less resources for their military and for planning attacks. Another basic plan the United States should take when targeting the opium trade is to attack fields during the winter, when the Taliban’s focus is on fighting and not on their fields. If the fields are attacked any other month, the Taliban may have time to relocate or rebuild any damaged fields.

Besides their revenue from the drug trade, the Taliban also secures money from illegal timber trading, extortion, and mining (“The Taliban”). Like Al Qaeda, the Taliban also gets contributions from Islamic charities in the Persian Gulf region and Pakistan. Even though the Taliban has these other means of acquiring funds, the opium trade is their major source. Therefore, counterterrorism policies should focus on the drug trade and poppy fields in order to do the most damage to the organization. That doesn’t mean that counterterrorism efforts should completely ignore these other sources, they are just lower priorities.

### Targets and Tactics

The Taliban has used both ideological-based and physical tactics in order to promote jihad and attack their enemies. The more ideological-based tactics are employed to get into the minds of their followers. This allowed the Taliban to be able to control their thoughts and actions. Physical tactics were used not only to punish those who broke Sharia law, but to attack their enemies and nonbelievers. This combination of tactics has allowed the Taliban to remain relevant throughout their time as an Islamic Fundamentalist group. They have been able to employ various methods to help them maintain a steady following, recruit members, and initiate violent attacks. The main ideological tactic of the Taliban is their strict imposition of Sharia law, which is the body of Islamic law. These laws state how public and some private life is governed and regulated. The Taliban has taken these laws and turned them into a tool in their war. An example of a law enforced by the Taliban is the banning of all forms of entertainment, like sports, games, and music. Women are also strictly limited in the roles they can perform in Taliban society. Since formal schooling was limited for girls, women are not able to get a proper

education. They are also banned from working, wearing makeup, and are forced to cover up their faces with a hijab (Soherwordi et al 347). This interpretation and implementation of Sharia law allows the Taliban leaders to control their followers, control their women, and overall promote a sense of unity within their organization. The ideological tactics the Taliban uses is aimed at those already involved with the Taliban organization. They are used to keep everyone in line and under the control of Taliban ideology.

Unlike their ideological tactics, the Taliban does not have any distinguishing tactics they utilize against their targets. This is why the focus should be on the mind-games the Taliban plays with their members. The physical tactics the Taliban utilizes is usually when violence comes into play. This violence is oftentimes targeted at their enemies, compared to the ideological-based tactics that are targeted at their existing members. These forms of violence include placing explosives in public and suicide bombing. The Taliban also uses civilians as decoys in order to drive enemy forces into a specific area. Once in that area, the Taliban explodes a certain device or physically attacks them. They have also used improvised explosive devices and have even placed them in schools (“The Taliban”).

## V. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, there has been pieces of counterterrorism policies and implications among the descriptions of each characteristic in an individual case study. Now, the bits and pieces of these counterterrorism suggestions will come together to form three overall, comprehensive counterterrorism policies. These three policies will be individualized according to each case study, meaning there will be a separate policy for Al Qaeda, ISIS, and the Taliban. These policies will also be formed according to the 4 characteristics that were discussed in each case study. These were history and ideology, organizational and leadership structure, finances, and tactics and targets. Since each case study was unique in their characteristics, it is necessary to form different policies, as counterterrorism needs to target certain aspects of each Islamic Fundamentalist group. The following table is a visual representation of the three case studies discussed and the 4 characteristics defined within each case study. Following this table is an explanation of each of these characteristics and how they impact counterterrorism.

Table 1: Table of Characteristics

	History and Ideology	Organizational and Leadership Structure	Finances	Tactics and Targets
Al Qaeda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reevaluation of 9/11 policies</li> <li>• Soviet invasion of Afghanistan</li> <li>• Syrian Civil War</li> <li>• Current focus on Africa</li> <li>• Justifications of Violence b/c of perceived wrongdoings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decentralized organization (AQC and affiliates)</li> <li>• AQC- ideology and strategy</li> <li>• Affiliates- day to day operations</li> <li>• Cell-based structure</li> <li>• Emir Ayman al-Zawahiri and media presence</li> <li>• Bin Laden's death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial facilitators funneling money from donors to Al Qaeda</li> <li>• Corrupt charities and churches</li> <li>• Courier system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting of civilians using radical justifications</li> <li>• Increased media presence</li> </ul>
ISIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• '03 U.S. Invasion of Iraq and the swift implementation of a democratic interim Iraqi government</li> <li>• AQI and their relationship with Al Qaeda</li> <li>• ISI and state of crisis</li> <li>• The Islamic State's extremist ideology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralized organization</li> <li>• First and Second echelon structures</li> <li>• Abu Bark al-Baghdadi and his capture by the U.S. in '04</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment of members</li> <li>• Oil and control of fields and refineries</li> <li>• Tanker trucks and business with other countries</li> <li>• Financial institutions ISIS uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JTJ against American forces</li> <li>• Suicide bombings</li> <li>• AQI- similar targets like coalition forces</li> <li>• IED's</li> <li>• ISIS- Iraqi security forces and Syrian Civil War</li> <li>• Sleeper cells</li> <li>• Kidnapping and ransoms</li> <li>• Videos of beheadings</li> </ul>
The Taliban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pashtun majority</li> <li>• U.S. invasion of Afghanistan</li> <li>• Vice-President Abdul Rashid Dostum</li> <li>• Current focus on Kabul government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of Al Qaeda by leader Mullah Mohammed Omar</li> <li>• Centralized organization and the Quetta Shura</li> <li>• Military councils</li> <li>• 10 committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stingers</li> <li>• Opium trade</li> <li>• Fighting and harvesting patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideological tactics</li> <li>• Strict imposition of Sharia law</li> </ul>

## Al Qaeda Counterterrorism

Al Qaeda is responsible for launching the United States into a War on Terror in the Middle East after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in 2001. While occupying foreign countries abroad and offensively attacking enemies using military force, the United States was also overhauling their entire defensive counterterrorism efforts. This included the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and increased transportation security. Although in relation to the entire history of the United States federal government, 15 years seems like a short time period and it seems plausible that the counterterrorism changes made in 2001 should still be applicable today, that is not the case. Al Qaeda (as well as every other Islamic Fundamentalist group) is constantly changing, developing, and adapting to new counterterrorism tactics. Therefore, it is necessary to reevaluate and improve on policies that were put into place 15 years ago, especially those that were directed at Al Qaeda. New groups like ISIS have also entered the terrorism arena, and the original Homeland Security policies were created before they were even a threat.

Al Qaeda's history offered insight into how the organization has transformed and grown. Their history and development of ideology effects counterterrorism because experts can see what Al Qaeda's reactions have been to certain counterterrorism efforts directed by the United States. The first instance of this was when the United States allied with the Saudi regime in the late 1980's and the early 1990's in the fight against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This alliance angered Al Qaeda, because they believed that the United States was against the ideals of the jihadist movement (Watts). The United States involving themselves in Middle Eastern affairs meant they would be spreading their Westernized beliefs to Islam. This was the time when Al Qaeda first attacked the United States in the attempted bombing of American soldiers in the al



Gidor hotel in Yemen (Watts). This shows that every time an offensive counterterrorism policy is enacted that involves direct contact with Middle Eastern countries, there needs to be defensive counterterrorism efforts against Al Qaeda already in place. This is because history shows that when Al Qaeda feels directly threatened, they will fight back. History also shows that Al Qaeda has been able to survive even the direst conditions because of the refuge surrounding countries have offered them. This includes Afghanistan and Pakistan. The United States needs to work on relations with Middle Eastern governments to help them create effective penalties and deterrence measures to prevent Al Qaeda from being able to take refuge in these countries. If the country successfully implements these policies, the United States can offer certain military or trading/economic incentives in return. Terrorism prevention is not the time to be greedy. If the country doesn't attempt to implement these policies, the United States can restrict these same incentives or take away existing assistance the U.S. currently provides. This is harder to do if the United States has a strained relationship with the country at the time, but if the relationship is positive, this diplomatic approach can work.

Al Qaeda managed to stay intact after the increased security of 9/11 and the loss of several key leaders. One of the main reasons was the development of strong affiliates like AQI and AQAP (Watts). Generally speaking, this means that the United States cannot just focus on Al Qaeda Central and hope that the entire Al Qaeda network will collapse. Any relevant affiliates need to be looked at as their own terrorist organization, an organization that happens to have ties to Al Qaeda. This means that each affiliate must be individually targeted. If another affiliate collapses due to the policies directed at Al Qaeda Central or another affiliate, then two birds were killed with one stone. If this does not happen, the United States must be ready to investigate

the weaknesses of each affiliate that poses a threat to the United States. The rise of affiliates is partially due to their increased ability to raise their own funds. This means that the United States should not focus on the financing of Al Qaeda Central as much as they should focus on the funding of individual affiliates. Financing of AQC is not one of the more important characteristics that counterterrorism policies should focus on currently.

Knowing where Al Qaeda stands in the present day is another reason Al Qaeda's history affects counterterrorism implications. Al Qaeda's future can be determined by the outcome of the ongoing Syrian Civil War. This is why Al Qaeda 3.0 needs to be the main focus of continuous counterterrorism policies. The United States should assist the Middle East and rebel groups like Rojava in ensuring that the Syrian Interim Government is placed into power. The U.S. must stay weary, however, because this direct interference with Middle Eastern policies will cause Al Qaeda to retaliate like they have in the past. Since Al Qaeda's focus is currently on local battles and not entirely on the United States, the U.S. should take this time to build up defensive measures. This is because offensive attacks from Al Qaeda are inevitable the more the U.S. interferes with Syrian politics. This shift in focus also means that the United States can direct their offensive efforts towards other terrorist threats. Al Qaeda 3.0 is also focusing more on spreading their influence to Africa (Watts). This means that the United States should start or continue communicating with African governments on how to prevent further terrorist involvement on African soil. An example could be Africa allowing the United States more bases in certain countries, which would security measures. Another example would be the United States sending more foreign diplomats who are trained in counterterrorism policies over to African countries. There, they can assist with formulating new plans.

Ideological developments also offer counterterrorism options towards Al Qaeda. According to Riedel, Al Qaeda doesn't commit violence against the United States because of their hatred of Western culture. In actuality, Al Qaeda believes violence and hatred is justified because of incidents where America aided in the decline of Islam and the Muslim Community (Riedel 24). This means that the U.S. does not need to focus on limiting Westernized culture in the Middle East if they want to stop Al Qaeda ideologically. Instead, the U.S. needs to address their supposed 'wrongdoings' in the Middle East and try to find ways to respect and honor Islam. An increased effort on America's part to appreciate Muslim culture and show Al Qaeda that they understand and honor Islam is needed. The difficulty with this approach is that Al Qaeda's views on Islam are skewed. Therefore, it will be rather hard to try to convince Al Qaeda that the U.S. aligns with their extremist viewpoints. The major effect ideology has on counterterrorism policies is how it effects traditional and moderate Muslims. Any policy the United States implements cannot be discriminatory towards all Muslims. Jihadists are the minority. If moderate and traditional Muslims feel alienated based of a policy, they may begin to support the rhetoric of terrorist groups like Al Qaeda. Therefore, the United States must focus on the characteristics of Islamic Fundamentalists, not Muslims.

Al Qaeda's extremist views and skewed justifications of violence make it difficult to try and prevent Al Qaeda from committing any type of violent attacks. Since ideological means may not be the most effective way to counter terrorism, looking at Al Qaeda's organizational and leadership structure may be more suitable. The responsibilities of Al Qaeda are split between Al Qaeda Central and Al Qaeda's affiliates (Zimmerman 15). In order to attack Al Qaeda Central, who focuses on ideology and strategy, the U.S. must understand Al Qaeda's underlying

grievances. On the other hand, in order to attack the affiliates, the U.S. must counter the day to day operations of each affiliate. The cell-based structure of Al Qaeda is one of the more unique characteristics of Al Qaeda. Different cells (in this case, affiliates and associates) are independent of one another, but still rely on Al Qaeda Central for direction. Since they are independent, if one cell is destroyed or targeted, another cell is thriving and safe from threats. Therefore, the United States must focus on each and every affiliate of Al Qaeda. Priority can shift depending on recent activity, but no affiliate or associate can be ignored. The cell that is ignored will be the cell that rises up and has the chance to gather resources and support. One way that United States can do this is by creating a few small task forces within the Department of Homeland Security that not only focuses on Al Qaeda, but each affiliate as well.

Leadership wise, the emir of Al Qaeda al Zawahiri continues to embrace the media as a platform for his messages (“Profile: Ayman al-Zawahiri”). A way to prevent homegrown terrorism or American sympathizers is to try and restrict these messages from being viewed in the U.S. There is always a balance between freedom and safety in the United States. Censoring certain messages may fringe on 1st Amendment rights, but it could also prevent future terrorist attacks. The major implication the leadership structure of Al Qaeda has on counterterrorism is how their cell-based structure affects leadership. Al Qaeda Central contains the core leadership and the general emir (currently al Zawahiri). If a leader is killed from AQC, there are still leaders alive in Al Qaeda affiliates. These leaders are still able to smoothly run their operations because they are self-sufficient from Al Qaeda Central. This is why Osama Bin Laden’s death didn’t completely destroy Al Qaeda. The United States must focus on targeting leaders of Al Qaeda affiliates. These leaders are the ones organizing attacks and ensuring Al Qaeda doesn’t fall apart.

A death in central leadership means a short lapse in media presence and weaker ideological messages. These losses are easier to account for than a loss in the logistics of affiliate leadership.

Another strong indicator of counterterrorism is Al Qaeda's finances. This is also another characteristic that separates Al Qaeda from other Islamic Fundamentalist groups. Unlike the Taliban, for example, whose main source of revenue is through the drug trade, Al Qaeda secures their funds through financial facilitators. Therefore, counterterrorism must find a way to take out the 'middle-men' in this funneling of money. If these financial facilitators are removed, Al Qaeda might not be able to get funds directly from donors. The U.S. has already shown that this tactic works, since big name facilitators have been arrested and there seems to have been a decrease in Al Qaeda's funds (Roth et al 21). Besides financial facilitators, corrupt churches and charities need to be identified and shut down, whether they have a direct link to Al Qaeda or not. Another way to stop Al Qaeda from storing money is to inform banks of certain ways to 'flag' or inquire about certain suspicious accounts. If money is being deposited from multiple sources who usually deposit large sums of money at one time, this may be a sign that the money is part of the Al Qaeda network.

The courier system Al Qaeda uses to move funds from place to place is another way to attack Al Qaeda's finances. Couriers are recruited from within the ranks of the organization, meaning they are individuals who have proven worthy of Al Qaeda's trust. If these couriers are captured or killed, it can be difficult for Al Qaeda to replace them. If they are captured, U.S. intelligence may be able to learn the intricate system of moving Al Qaeda's illegal money. The couriers also move money physically from one place to another. This provides the perfect scenario to attack. Local law enforcement needs to be involved with profiling tactics that help

narrow down potential couriers. This would be dependent on their movement patterns and how they engage with others. Overall, the U.S. must focus on following the money trail of Al Qaeda, their means of transporting funds, and what they spend their money on. The U.S. must also remember that affiliates tend to finance themselves, and further research must be done on how each affiliate raises their own funds. This is also another characteristic that separates Al Qaeda from other Islamic Fundamentalist groups. Unlike the Taliban, for example, whose main source of revenue is through the drug trade, Al Qaeda secures their funds through financial facilitators. Therefore, counterterrorism must find a way to take out the 'middle-men' in this funneling of money. If these financial facilitators are removed, Al Qaeda might not be able to get funds directly from donors. The U.S. has already shown that this tactic works, since big name facilitators have been arrested and there seems to have been a decrease in Al Qaeda's funds (Roth et al 21). Besides financial facilitators, corrupt churches and charities need to be identified and shut down, whether they have a direct link to Al Qaeda or not. Another way to stop Al Qaeda from storing money is to inform banks of certain ways to 'flag' or inquire about certain suspicious accounts. If money is being deposited from multiple sources who usually deposit large sums of money at one time, this may be a sign that the money is part of the Al Qaeda network.

The targets and tactics of Al Qaeda is the final characteristic that was researched that should be factored into counterterrorism policies. Al Qaeda targets not only militants, but civilians as well. One of the reasons Al Qaeda justifies targeting civilians is because they believe America has targeted Muslim civilians (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 87). Therefore, America needs to focus their efforts on minimizing the amount of Muslim civilians affected by any intervention

by the United States. This includes drone strikes and any military campaign. According to Fang, drone strikes are not accurate forms of military weapons (Fang). It isn't sensible to risk the lives of Muslim civilians for the remote chance of killing a few Al Qaeda members, especially because this propels Al Qaeda to attack the U.S. further. Besides this justification, it is difficult for the U.S. to counter many of the reasons Al Qaeda has for killing civilians. Al Qaeda can always find a way to accuse an individual of helping their enemies in the fight against Islam. A political science student could be an enemy of Islam because they are an academic student researching counterterrorism. Students, regardless of major, can be enemies of Islam because they are engaging in Westernized education or are practicing other religions. These obscure justifications are why the targets (in this case civilians) of Al Qaeda is not the strongest characteristic that should be utilized when formulating counterterrorism policies.

Instead of focusing on the targets of Al Qaeda, the tactics offer more effective counterterrorism implications. A major tactic utilized by Al Qaeda is the media, and the United States can use Al Qaeda's media presence against them. When Al Qaeda releases a press release after a certain attack or to try and spread a certain message, the United States must release statements in direct response to them. In order to reach Muslim listeners, the U.S. can encourage Islamic officials to speak on their behalf. These officials can both denounce the violent actions of Al Qaeda and promote their relations with the United States. One thing the U.S. cannot do is ignore these press releases. The media holds enough of a threat that any broad communication by Al Qaeda needs to be taken seriously. If messages by Al Qaeda are targeted towards the American public, the U.S. must counteract these messages. The American public must stay educated about the dangerous language Al Qaeda uses to try and manipulate listeners.

Each characteristic discussed provided a piece of what the United States' counterterrorism policy should be for Al Qaeda. This policy must be an entirely separate plan than the ones for ISIS, the Taliban, and any other terrorist organization. The organizational structure of Al Qaeda offers one of the more unique characteristics of this Islamic Fundamentalist group, and there needs to be a renewed focus on the smaller cells associated to Al Qaeda.

### ISIS Counterterrorism

ISIS offers a unique insight into counterterrorism because the group is new, innovative, and merciless. Their violence is portrayed by the media as deadly and their personnel as cunning, which is why counterterrorism efforts must keep the overall image of the group in mind. The history section of this case study is an important characteristic of ISIS because it allows experts to see what previous counterterrorism actions by the United States were effective and which actions were detrimental. The history of ISIS, as far back as the invasion of Iraq by the United States in 2003, offers counterterrorism implications. One of ISIS's first influential leaders, the leader of JTI Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, created forces in Afghanistan. When the U.S. invaded Afghanistan, al-Zarqawi moved his forces to Iraq. It was in Iraq where JTI began to form as a resistance to the U.S. established interim Iraqi government (Hashim). This shows how Iraq was one of the major parts of ISIS's foundation, and why relations with Iraq are priority. However, the resistance originally occurred when the U.S. helped create an interim government in Iraq that was built on democratic values. These values were much different than previous governments. This change was swift and inevitable after the U.S. entered the Middle East. When an entire way



of life is interrupted, whether the change is positive or negative, resistance to change is bound to occur. This resistance was also seen during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980's, where the first pieces of modern Islamic Fundamentalism is apparent. The Soviet's invaded to try and recreate the Afghan way of life. The Afghani's revolted, creating Al Qaeda and the Taliban in the process.

Therefore, in order to learn from the mistakes of the past, if the U.S. wants to directly change the structure of a government, a slow implementation may be the best approach. The U.S. could continuously work with the government to change certain policies and remove corrupt leaders, eventually becoming a democracy. The possible effectiveness of this approach is based on the failure that occurred the first time the U.S. tried to established a new Iraqi government. JTJ (and eventually ISIS) was bred from the resistance of a U.S. established government. If the government had produced gradual change, younger and more impressionable generations of Iraqi's could have accepted a change in government. This is one of the future precautions the U.S. should take when interfering in the affairs of a country, which will hopefully lead to effective preventative counterterrorism. Terrorism is bred from dissonance and struggle. If the population supports the government, there may be no reason to engage in violence in the first place.

The beginning of ISIS isn't the only part of their history that offers counterterrorism ramifications. Another point was in 2008, when the United States allied with Sunni's and other Iraqi insurgents to fight the Islamic State of Iraq. ISI was another one of the predecessor groups of ISIS. When the U.S. created this alliance under the promises of economic stability, they were able to put ISI into a state of crisis. If ISI would have been stopped then and there, it is possible

ISIS would have never existed. However, this did not happen, and ISIS is still a threat to the United States. Therefore, a counterterrorist approach the United States can take is to recreate an alliance within Iraq to defeat ISIS. This alliance can be with Iraqi insurgents, Sunni or Shia tribes, Iraqi police, or other nontraditional forces. During this time is also when 80% of the leadership was killed (including their longtime leader al-Zarqawi). This also contributed to ISI's state of crisis (Hashim). Unlike Al Qaeda, who has a decentralized organization and can survive the death of their leader, this major loss of leadership almost destroyed ISI. Therefore, the U.S. should target the leaders of ISIS as much as possible, as this could lead to the destruction of ISIS. Another note is the fact that Iraq was able to stabilize after ISI was weakened. This is when the United States began to pull out of Iraq and leave the American-trained Iraqi forces to maintain stability. This is another mistake the United States made. Once the U.S. pulled out, ISI was eventually able to rebound. The United States should continuously keep military presence in a country they helped recreate. A newly created military, regardless of how well-trained they were, was no match for the terrorist groups and insurgents that had been around for years. A continued United States presence can help the Iraqi military progressively improve their skills and become established in the delicate system of government.

The current ideology of ISIS, more recently referred to as the Islamic State, is necessary to understand for counterterrorism because ideology lays the foundation for any organization. When the foundation of an organization is targeted, the potential destruction of ISIS is possible. ISIS focuses on few particular beliefs more than other Jihadi-Salafist or Islamic Fundamentalist groups (Hashim). The first is that ISIS must only associate themselves with other true Muslims. This belief effects counterterrorism because it will be very difficult for any intelligence to

infiltrate ISIS. If ISIS will not associate with anybody besides those who proclaim their loyalty to their version of Islam, it will be hard for United States intelligence to convincingly believe in that same belief system. Another ISIS belief is that they must rule in accordance to God's law, otherwise known as sharia law. It will be impossible for the United States to try and please ISIS through this belief, as it would require the United States to change their Western way of governance. Overall, ISIS has a strict, extremist, and historic-based ideology. This means it is difficult for the United States to create counterterrorism policies in accordance to ISIS's ideology because it is hard to compromise with individuals whose loyalty to their ideological beliefs is unwavering. ISIS's ideology is all or nothing. Someone either believes in all of it or none of it. Therefore, any amount of compromise with ISIS will be ineffective, and other counterterrorism measures must be utilized depending on other characteristics.

The organization and leadership structure of ISIS is different from that of other Islamic Fundamentalist groups like Al Qaeda. The vast differences in these structures proves why there needs to be counterterrorism policies per each terrorist organization. Then, the ISIS counterterrorist policy can reflect the uniqueness of the group and their leaders. Besides the al-imara, ISIS is divided into first and second echelon structures. The first echelon structure is not only what al-Baghdadi and central leadership controls, it is also where the valuable councils are located. This includes the Military Council and the Security and Intelligence Council. The significance of these councils makes them a likely target of counterterrorism. The Security and Intelligence Council of ISIS is an especially prominent target because the destruction of this council would make ISIS vulnerable. For example, this council provides security to al-Baghdadi. Without this council, al-Baghdadi would be vulnerable to any attacks. This council also manages

communication between al-Baghdadi and the provinces. Since al-Baghdadi has direct control over his provinces, lack of communication means operations would cease. Most importantly, this council is the part of ISIS that provides counterintelligence to prevent enemy infiltration (Hashim). If this part of ISIS is strong, counterterrorism will be limited. Therefore, a new target of United States counterterrorism must be the leaders of the Security and Intelligence Council. By targeting this council, the United States can disrupt ISIS operations. It also gives the U.S. another target besides al-Baghdadi to eliminate.

Unlike Al Qaeda, ISIS is a centralized and hierarchal organization (Hashim). This means that leaders like al-Baghdadi have direct control over the members of ISIS. This organizational structure presents a significant opportunity for counterterrorism. Since leaders have direct control of their members, if a leader (or members of one of the councils) is killed, regular members may not have the autonomy to plan and execute attacks themselves.

Al-Baghdadi is the central figure of ISIS, as he is the leader of the organization. Al-Baghdadi conceals his identity except to those in his inner circle of trusted leaders. He stays out of the spotlight and leads his group from behind the scenes. The makes any direct attacks against al-Baghdadi almost impossible, because if his identity is hidden, his location will be hidden as well. This also means that if the U.S. was to ever try and communicate with ISIS (which would already be difficult since they don't involve themselves with anyone except believers of true Islam), they would have to converse with other leaders or to the group as a whole. If the U.S. wanted to take a diplomatic approach to eliminating ISIS, they would have to keep al-Baghdadi's lack of presence and cooperation in mind. The fact that al-Baghdadi has a PhD also means that al-Baghdadi is educated (Glenn). Trying to 'trick' him into cooperating or trying to berate his

character will be difficult because he is formally schooled at the highest level. If al-Baghdadi cannot be killed, it is possible that a death in other central leadership can spell disaster for the group. Since ISIS is centralized, any loss of leadership will cause chaos in that area of the group, whether it be military, intelligence, media, or financing.

The history and leadership of ISIS combines into this other counterterrorism policy. In February 2004, before he was the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), al-Baghdadi was captured by the United States. By that December, he was released because he was not a high value target (Arango and Schmitt). The future leader of ISIS was at one point in the U.S.'s custody and they let go of him. This was perhaps the release of one of the most dangerous terrorists to ever threaten the United States. In order to learn from their mistakes, the United States must be hesitant to release anybody even vaguely connected to ISIS. If they are released, they must be closely monitored and there must be conditions of their release, much like parole. ISI may have never overcome their period of crisis in 2008 if it wasn't for al-Baghdadi's leadership and restructuring ideas. This also again proves how vital superior leadership is for ISIS's success.

The finances of ISIS is another characteristic that can be used to develop case-specific counterterrorism policies. One major counterterrorism implication is based on what ISIS uses their finances for. ISIS pays their members through a system that is based on a fixed amount of money a year with additional money given per dependent (Shatz). This income, no matter how small, is sometimes the only income a family may have especially in this part of the Middle East. This payroll affects counterterrorism because members may not necessarily be involved with ISIS because they share the same beliefs or because they want to commit acts of violence. They

may be involved because it is their only way to support their family, which is much harder to deter members away from. One way the United States can prevent this is by addressing the financial issues members of ISIS face. If the U.S. can help stimulate the economies of Iraq and Syria, people may not need to find extreme sources of income like joining a Fundamentalist group.

This counterterrorism policy, however, only stops people from joining an organization they otherwise wouldn't be a part of. This leaves the vast amount of members who are involved because of their extremist beliefs or the power being in ISIS brings. In order to counter this group of people, the United States must stop funds from getting to ISIS in the first place. One of ISIS's primary source of funds is oil, especially their control of a dozen oil fields and refineries (Shatz). With this control, ISIS is able to produce oil themselves and they do not have to rely on any 'middle-men' to run their operation. Once the oil is made, ISIS sells it to other Middle Eastern countries at a rate much lower than legitimate suppliers. The oil business ISIS is a part of creates many counterterrorism options. The first is through the transportation of oil. If the tanker trucks that are linked to ISIS are monitored, they could lead to ISIS members and the oil fields they control. One problem the U.S. faces is that these oil fields must not be destroyed. Even though they are controlled by ISIS, they actually stimulate the economy for everyone, ISIS members or not (Stergiou 202). The fact that the population relies on the oil trade means that the U.S. cannot simply damage ISIS's oil fields. Instead, the U.S. must focus on the distribution of this oil instead. This is why the United States must stop other countries from knowingly purchasing oil from ISIS. Even though the prices of ISIS's oil is discounted, there must be penalties in place for countries caught doing business with a known terrorist organization. These

penalties could include less trade with the United States or decreased involvement with worldwide organizations. If penalties are severe enough, countries will end their involvement with ISIS, which will hopefully decrease the demand for corrupt oil as well as ISIS's revenue. To put this policy into action, there must be cooperation between the United States and the Middle East because these penalties should be agreed upon by all parties. Any policy, whether it is related to finances or not, should encourage a strong joint relationship between the United States and the Middle East.

Oil control isn't the only source of ISIS's revenue. The United States must create policies that attack each avenue ISIS uses. For example, ISIS also has control of dams and gas plants. These infrastructures (as long as they are not vital to the well-being of the general public) should be specifically targeted by military strikes or raids. If they are vital to a few in the general population, the United States can individually help those who would be affected by the destruction of these dams or gas plants. There also needs to be a way to detect fraudulent foundations/charities on the Internet. If it is detected that an organization asking for money is not legitimate, there needs to be a public service announcement to stop any donations from going to that organization. The United States must also focus on the internal means of raising funds instead of external donors. External donors only provide a small portion of ISIS's overall assets (Stergiou 202). Cohen has also formulated a counterterrorism plan to attack ISIS financially. First, he claims that ISIS's access to revenue must be cut off. This means the U.S. must coordinate with Middle Eastern financial institutions (like banks) to try and identify potential facilitators of ISIS. Working with legitimate financial institutions will also make it easier to monitor the flow of resources out of ISIS territory. They can also record the influx of prices on

goods usually controlled by ISIS, like oil. With more reliable information, the U.S. may be able to find the best time to attack ISIS.

Instead of just being monitored, the financial system ISIS uses can also be attacked directly. Over 100 banks and other financial institutions are in ISIS territory. If other international financial institutions, like other Middle Eastern banks, refuse to accept transfers or any type of interaction with these banks, ISIS will have to find other ways to internationally access their finances or move their money around. If banks did not comply and continued to do business with ISIS controlled banks, the U.S. should work with the country these banks are located in and shut them down. Even if they aren't an ISIS bank themselves, they knowingly did business with an ISIS affiliate and need to be held accountable. Cohen also concluded that targeted sanctions must also be created against ISIS leadership and facilitators (Stergiou 202). Things like an arms embargo, account freezes, and economic bans can deter associates from interacting with ISIS. When known ISIS oil or other illegal resources enters the legal financial system, another counterterrorism policy can be to have a security measure that alerts the bank that this item/cash is related to ISIS. Then, it could be investigated. These items could potentially leave a money trail right back to ISIS. If America can create mandates and sanctions against ISIS affiliates, target the oil trade, cooperate with Middle Eastern governments, deal with the underlying economic instability of Iraq and Syria, and try to interfere with the illegal financial systems of ISIS, the U.S. has a good chance in dismantling ISIS through their financial means.

The last characteristic that was studied in this thesis that affects counterterrorism against ISIS is their targets and tactics. One tactic ISIS has used to take over cities in the Middle East is



the creation of sleeper cells (“The Islamic State”). Sleeper cells are groups of ISIS fighters that are already living in the cities that ISIS wants to invade. Once it is the right time to attack, these sleeper cells ‘activate’ and take over the city. These sleeper cells present clear issues for counterterrorism. The point of these sleeper cells is for them to remain undetected. If they are undetected, no one knows they are already established within a city. Therefore, the only way to counter these sleeper cells is to build up the defenses of cities ISIS is most likely to target. This means Iraq and Syrian governments must find a way to predict which cities are likely to be of interest to ISIS. This could be as simple as looking at the cities ISIS controls now and finding cities that have similar resources and structures. Then, these cities can be provided with increased military presence, defensive measures, and strong leaders. If ISIS has less territory of their own, they will have less presence in the Middle East and become less of a threat to the United States. Even though this counterterrorist option focuses on building up Middle Eastern cities, it is still a necessary policy for United States counterterrorism because the U.S. is still targeted by ISIS. If preventing them from taking over more territory in the Middle East lessens their influences and leads to their downfall, the U.S. needs to consider this approach. The U.S. also has the leadership capabilities and resources to assist Middle Eastern countries as they defend their cities against ISIS

Another tactic ISIS uses is the kidnapping of foreigners. The kidnapping follows a simple step by step procedure. Once kidnapped, ISIS demands ransom money. If the ransom is not paid, ISIS publicly executes the captive, usually by beheading. Then, the video of the execution is posted online. Current American counterterrorism policies have established that no concessions be made to terrorists. This means the United States will never pay the ransoms demanded by

terrorists. In 2015, the U.S. government revised their hostage policies in response to the violent executions of American hostages. This shows that a specific characteristic of ISIS, their violent tactics, has already influenced U.S. counterterrorism policies (“FACT SHEET: U.S. Government Hostage Policy”). Overall, these hostage policies need to be reevaluated every so often to see if this is still the best course of action to take against ISIS, especially when beheadings are the outcome.

Besides the revisions of U.S. hostage policy, another option would be to technologically track these videos and shut them down. This censorship would protect Americans from being influenced by these brutal executions and would take away ISIS’s audience. Without an audience, ISIS may find that beheadings are ineffective. The issue with this approach is that it could potentially leave the hostage in the dark. No one will know the hostage’s face, their story, or their struggle. The media coverage of a hostage execution isn’t only focused on the brutal attack; it is on honoring the hostage and their fight. A way to solve this is by remembering the person that was executed through news specials while also trying to prevent the video of the actual execution from circulating the country. Overall, ISIS seems to focus on other targets when the United States stays out of the Middle East. This means that if the United States is not currently involved in Middle Eastern affairs or stationed on Middle Eastern soil, America may have the opportunity to refocus their efforts. ISIS shouldn’t be as big of a direct threat during these times.

### Taliban Counterterrorism

The creation of the Taliban in the late 1990's offers the first implication for counterterrorism. The Taliban was formed by members of the mujahedeen who fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan as well as Pashtun students. As the Taliban was established, the Pashtun's were the majority ethnicity in Afghanistan. By being the majority ethnicity in Afghanistan, it was understandable that they were able to influence government policies and public opinion. It also meant that it was more likely that Pashtun's would comprise Afghan groups like the Taliban. Therefore, as Afghanistan works towards democracy, Pashtun's will have a dominant say in politics. The United States must work with the Pashtun people to create policies that are favorable to them. If the Pashtun's are content with their status in society and how the government is run, they may be more likely to work with the United States on counterterrorism policies. This has historical significance because the Taliban was originally and is still comprised of Pashtun's. Catering to their ethnicity may deter future Fundamentalist ideology or Pashtuns from joining the Taliban. This point is furthered strengthened by the fact that when the Taliban helped overthrow the corrupt Afghan President Rabbani, they proved to the rest of the Pashtun population that they were invested in protecting the wishes of the Pashtun tribes (Laub).

During the 1990's when the Taliban controlled land in over half of Afghanistan, one of the most powerful people against them was Abdul Rashid Dostum, who was part of the Northern Alliance (United Front). Since Dostum has already established that he is against the Taliban and has actively worked towards defeating this group, it seems obvious that he would be willing to work with the United States on counterterrorism efforts in Afghanistan. However, Vice-President Dostum has been accused of war crimes against Taliban prisoners. These accusations have led to

President Obama and other counterterrorism experts to deny Dostum a visa to enter the United States and refuse to work with him, even though he has stated that he wants to work with the United States on current Taliban issues (Rosenberg). Dostum's long history with working against the Taliban means that he has valuable information that could help the United States with their fight against the Taliban. Since he is also the Vice-President of Afghanistan, Dostum has the political power to make influential decisions and create policies for Afghanistan and to the United States' benefit. Although Dostum is accused of war crimes, the United States needs to balance their want for justice and their need for protecting the American population and their allies in the Middle East. If the U.S. can find a way to work with Dostum, it by no means excuses his accused actions. This alliance, however, could potentially be the combination needed to implement effective policies directed at the Taliban. It could also lead to less violence in the long run. Dostum isn't the only actor that may provide the United States the information needed to defeat the Taliban. Compared to recent terrorist groups like ISIS, the Taliban has been an established organization since the 90's. During their rise, they have made many enemies in their violent acquisition of Afghani cities. These enemies may not have the power or title that Dostum has, but they may have the drive needed to assist the United States in their counterterrorism plans.

The U.S. Institute of Peace has labeled five different phases of the Taliban, and these phases have been extensively discussed. These phases show the creation of the Taliban, their emergence into the international arena, their acquisition of land, and their fight against the United States (Semple 6). Although the 1<sup>st</sup> four phases might not necessarily show specific counterterrorism implications, as the past characteristics of the Taliban are not as influential as

present ones, they do allow experts to track to the development of the Taliban as a whole. For example, these phases show that until the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the Taliban was focused almost exclusively on Afghanistan. Once the U.S. invaded, the Taliban's interests and territory was attacked by the West, which is why America became a target. This shows counterterrorism experts that direct threats against Taliban interests will result in potential attacks. The 4<sup>th</sup> phase also showed that the Taliban spread propaganda about the United States in order to gain support. If this happens, the United States needs to create positive (and true) propaganda of their own to counter these false attacks on their character. These 4 phases eventually led to the 5<sup>th</sup> phase the Taliban is currently in.

Currently, the Taliban is focusing on the Kabul government as well as taking over land around Afghanistan (Semple 7). The United States can help the Kabul government resist the advancement of the Taliban once again, by helping build up defensive measures and getting the military ready offensively. This could include training camps specifically created to attack and defend against the Taliban's tactics. The more time that passes since the U.S. invasion, the more the Taliban seems to focus on the geographical locations around them. Therefore, the most appropriate counterterrorism would be to avoid physically deploying military to Afghanistan, as that will turn America into a direct target of the Taliban again. Instead, the United States can utilize covert methods to work with the Kabul government and Afghanistan as a whole. This could include working on individual leadership skills and how to control their territory better. The United States must also be ready to help Afghan troops if the Taliban decides to attack them directly and these attacks cause significant enough damage.

Like the other two Islamic Fundamentalist groups discussed, there should be more that goes into counterterrorism policies than just historical events and ideological beliefs. The creation of the Taliban's organization and leadership structure also affects counterterrorism. When the Taliban's first leader Mullah Mohammed Omar was still alive, he formed a relationship with fellow Islamic Fundamentalist group Al Qaeda. This relationship was cemented with the protection the Taliban provided Al Qaeda. Although this relationship was cut short, the Taliban still protected Bin Laden after the 9/11 attacks. Even though the United States offered 10 million dollars for the capture of leader Mullah Omar because of the protection he provided Al Qaeda around 9/11, he remained uncaptured ("The Taliban"). This shows that even when the United States offers cash rewards to people with information regarding the whereabouts of prominent Taliban leaders, it is possible that this is not enough of an incentive. Or, it is just impossible to accurately know the location of that leader. If this is the case, no amount of money would ever lead to the capture of that leader. The conflicting reports of Omar's death proves that it is difficult to pinpoint the location of high-profile Taliban leaders. The fact that Omar still protected Bin Laden after he broke their deal when he attacked the United States also impacts counterterrorism. Even though Omar has since passed away, this refusal of cooperation means that it will be difficult to break Taliban-Al Qaeda relations. It also means that if Omar was willing to put his own life on the line to protect a fellow Islamic Fundamentalist, it is unlikely the Taliban will ever cooperate with the United States. This is especially true if the cooperation is at the expense of another Islamic Fundamentalist group.

Like ISIS, the Taliban has a centralized organizational structure. The top leadership of the Taliban is known as the Quetta Shura and it is located in Quetta, Pakistan ("The Taliban").

Since the leadership is contained within the Quetta Shura, the United States has a direct target for attacks. This could be through the military like drone strikes or direct captures. The central location of these leaders is also known, since the Quetta Shura is based in Quetta. If Quetta is monitored, by drones or any other technology, the United States can track the comings and goings of known Taliban leaders. This can provide the U.S. with appropriate times to attack the city. The Quetta Shura also acts as a liaison the U.S. can contact if they want to directly speak to this group. The secretive nature of the Taliban's organization structure is another obstacle U.S. counterterrorism faces. The Taliban will only release information if they want to and at the time they believe it is most beneficial to the organization. Besides this, the Taliban remains covert. Therefore, it is difficult for United States counterterrorism experts to learn more about the inner workings of the Taliban network.

Besides the Quetta Shura, the Taliban has four military councils that are split among the different geographical locations of Pakistan and Afghanistan the Taliban controls (Roggio). Since the military aspect of the Taliban is divided into 4 different areas, the Taliban is able to withstand attacks from the United States and other countries. If one military council or geographical location is attacked, there is still 3 other councils intact. These councils would be ready to defend their own territory and continue leading the members of the Taliban that are in their particular region. They could also offer assistance to the assaulted military council. This is similar to Al Qaeda's network of affiliates. In order to offset this organizational structure, the United States must simultaneously attack all 4 geographical locations. That way, it is more likely the Taliban will not be able to withstand all 4 areas of their territory being attacked. Also, a

certain military council wouldn't be able to help other councils since they were attacked themselves.

Along with the military councils and the Quetta Shura, the Taliban has 10 committees (Roggio). Each of these committees typify an agency or cabinet that is in the United States. One policy the U.S. could formulate in response to these committees is to utilize other U.S. government agencies. These agencies could come up with ways to attack their corresponding Taliban committee. One way would be to have U.S. government agencies think of ways their own operation could potentially be destroyed. Then, the United States can utilize these means against the Taliban. Overall, this means other federal agencies and cabinets would work hand in hand with the Department of Homeland Security to come up with ways to attack the Taliban committees. For example, the U.S. Department of Education would focus on the Taliban's Education committee. The Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Prisons would focus on the Taliban's prisoners and refugees' committee. This counterterrorism policy would allow officials in different fields of government provide assistance to counterterrorism experts using their specific expertise.

The financing of the Taliban is another characteristic that affects counterterrorism policies. The first weapon the Taliban was known for using was the shoulder-fired Stinger missile. This relates to financing because the Taliban didn't actually have to create or raise the funds for these missiles themselves. They were actually given them by the United States in their fight against the Soviet Union in the 1980's. Luckily, the counterterrorism policies created after 9/11 has prevented the Taliban from being able to use these missiles against the United States. Just in case, the United States needs to remember that it is plausible that the Taliban still has



possession of these missiles. Therefore, the U.S. must keep security measures in place at airports that prevent the use of these missiles against-low flying aircrafts. The Stingers operation is also a lesson to be learned by the United States. Since the Stingers were acquired by the Taliban because of the U.S., the United States needs to be more cautious in their arms dealings to other countries/groups. The United States also cannot solely rely on the intelligence agencies of other countries. During the Stingers transaction, the U.S. was working closely with the Inter-Services Intelligence agency in Pakistan (Fitchett and Intl. Herald Tribune). Even with this cooperation, the U.S. failed to create a solid relationship with the groups they were supplying their weapons to. In order to prevent this situation altogether, the United States can also choose to stop providing weapons to non-formal groups and only deal with the militaries of legitimate countries. This is not only a potential military policy but a counterterrorism policy. If the U.S. chooses not to supply weapons to a group of people from another country, these weapons cannot later down the road be used to attack America like they did in the Stingers operation. The Taliban also rejected monetary rewards for the return of the Stingers, just like they rejected rewards for the capture of President Omar. This proves again that monetary incentives are not enough for the Taliban to cooperate.

The opium trade is one of the Taliban's main sources of revenue ("The Taliban"). This means that generally speaking, the United States must attack the drug trade head on in order to disrupt the Taliban's finances. This isn't a simple counterterrorism policy. For one, opium rings are oftentimes run by families who are unwilling to open their doors to strangers (Peters 1). This means that the United States would have a difficult time covertly attacking the operation. One way to attack is by combing forces with Afghanistan. Afghanistan has become destabilized due

to the drug trade, which gives them an incentive to try and stop it. The United States and Afghanistan must also create policies that help people not affiliated with the Taliban who are living in the communities that are filled with drugs. This could be economic help or assistance in relocating. Less people may decrease the demand of opium and affect profits. People living in these communities could also potentially work with the United States by giving the U.S. an inside look at the drug trade. The U.S. could even employ informants to lead them to dealers. Economic help and relocation assistance can also be given to those who are forced to work in Taliban controlled opium fields. Farmers aren't necessarily members of the Taliban (Shah and Mashal). If they are given other options, they may be willing to abandon the opium fields and leave the Taliban without workers.

There are many other policies the U.S. can create to attack the opium trade, most of which deal with cooperation from counternarcotic personnel. This means that first, the U.S. should employ more counternarcotic personnel trained on the opium trade. Once there is an increase in this personnel, they can be included on military missions to Afghanistan. There, they could study any apparent aspect of the opium trade. If evidence is found, it can be used to track the trading route and be used as proof in future trials. Another simple policy the United States can work with Afghanistan to employ is the utilization of checkpoints on the highways. These checkpoints would look out for opium conveys. The United States would also need to look out for conveys by air, in case they aren't utilizing the highway. Opium chemists should also be targeted (Peters 34). They won't be as high-profile as Taliban leaders or the directors of the drug trade, so it may be easier to locate them. Without chemists, the opium cannot be made from the poppies. The United States must utilize a combination of these strategies in order to ensure that if

the Taliban was to find their way around one strategy, there would be many others in place. This means that the United States should create a unique opium counterterrorism plan catered to the Taliban.

The drug trade also affects the Taliban's fighting and military patterns. First, the Helmand Province should be targeted by the U.S. because it is an area that produces much of the poppies used for opium. In this province in particular, fighting increases in winter months and slows during the harvesting season, which is around March and April (Shah and Mashal). The United States can use these fighting and harvesting seasons to plan their own attacks. There are a few plans the U.S. can have. One, the U.S. can attack Taliban headquarters (like Quetta) during the slow military season, as they are focused on the drug trade and not on their military. Therefore, there may be less chance of a counter attack. If there is a counter attack and the Taliban switches focus to the military, the U.S. can deploy troops to attack the poppy fields. If the poppy fields are successfully destroyed in this second plan, the Taliban will have less money to fund their military operations throughout the rest of the year. Another plan the U.S. can have is to attack the poppy fields in the winter when the Taliban's focus is on fighting. Therefore, it may be more difficult for the Taliban to rebuild their fields before the next harvest because they are trying to advance their military. If the U.S. decides to attack poppy fields first during the harvest time, this may even result in the deaths of some Taliban members, since they are employed in the fields during harvest. The issue with this is that it is impossible to decipher between who is just a field worker and who is an actual Taliban member. Even though counterterrorism policies should focus on the opium trade and poppy fields because it is one of the biggest sources of Taliban funds, there are other ways the Taliban gains profit. Other ways

include timber trading, extortion, and mining (“The Taliban”). In case counterterrorism efforts against the drug trade are unsuccessful, the United States should create policies that battle the other ways the Taliban finances their operation.

The targets and tactics of the Taliban also provide ramifications for counterterrorism. The category of tactics that was focused on in this thesis in regards to the Taliban was the ideological tactics used against their own members and those who are easily influenced (Soherwordi et al 347). These ideological tactics are difficult to target using counterterrorism, since they are aimed at those already under the influence of the Taliban. Since it is known that the Taliban employs these strict regulations, one thing the United States can do is to spread messages about the importance of education for women, especially women in countries besides the United States. The promotion of education is not only seen as a positive message for every country, it can help counter some of the influence the Taliban has when they try and control their women. Besides education, a lot of the other laws enforced by the Taliban are culturally based. Therefore, if the United States was to share their disagreement with these laws, it could do more harm than good. The United States is a westernized culture who does not follow Islamic based law. Therefore, it could be seen as an attack on Islam if the United States was to criticize the wearing of hijabs or the restriction of entertainment.

The use of case-specific counterterrorism policies shaped according to the unique characteristics displayed by various terrorist groups shouldn’t stop at these three Islamic Fundamentalist groups. Each terrorist threat to the United States and their allies should have their own counterterrorism policy based on characteristics that set them apart from other groups. The

research and findings supplied in this thesis lays as a solid foundation on a topic that otherwise hasn't been studied. This means this thesis provides a starting point to future research. This future research can be expanded to include other Islamic Fundamentalist groups or other religious terrorist groups. These policies should also not be limited to discussing the 4 characteristics discussed in these case studies. Characteristics such as geography, the allies of each terrorist group, and size can also have counterterrorism implications that can impact future policies. Also, since this thesis's purpose was to prove how characteristics in general influence counterterrorism policies, each specific characteristic can continue to be expanded to include more details. This includes other targets and tactics, different sources of finances, or a more in-depth timeline of their history. Regardless of the characteristic or the group, the next step of this research is to conduct evaluative research. This thesis provided descriptive research through the information provided on each characteristic. It also provided explanatory research, as it explained how these characteristics influence counterterrorism. Evaluative research, on the other hand, will show how effective these policies are in real life scenarios and compared to the past generalized policies. Individualized policies create endless opportunities to expand counterterrorism knowledge and effectiveness, as they are able to get down to the specific weaknesses each terrorist group displays. With the growing creativeness and capabilities of terrorist groups, a one-size-fits-all approach to counterterrorism is outdated and ineffective.

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