The "War on Terrorism": Where Do We Stand?

LIGHTING THE PATH TO UNDERSTANDING

The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies

Tufts UNIVERSITY

Occasional Paper No. 3

Third occasional paper of the Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Tufts University, as part of the FCEMS Series on Lighting the Path to Understanding

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A report on the conference *The "War on Terrorism": Where Do We Stand?*
January 25–26, 2007, Tufts University, Medford/Somerville, MA

Sponsored by the Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Tufts University, in conjunction with the Office of the Provost, Tufts University; the Wedge Foundation (Fares Family); the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, Tufts University; The Fletcher School, Tufts University; and the International Relations Program, Tufts University

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The writer also wishes to acknowledge **Emma Aller**, **Julia Bennett**, **Amelia Cook**, **Abeer Mohammad**, and **Sara Ribeiro** for their contributions to this publication.

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The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies

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Preface

The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies was founded in March 2002, not long after the declaration of the War on Terrorism.

Terrorism transcends borders. Yet so do cooperation and scholarly exchange. Dialogue—of the cross-national and cross-regional variety—is a cornerstone of our Center. We seek to promote it in all our activities, which include lecture series, roundtable discussions, conferences, and publications. It is in this spirit of international dialogue that we hosted this year's conference assessing the War on Terrorism—its causes, impacts, and proposed solutions. We invited speakers not just from the United States but also from the Middle East and Europe. We focused our conference discussions not simply on terrorism in the Middle East, but on terrorism worldwide, and on the local and global factors that spawn and sustain it.

The result was a truly international event that engaged voices and ideas from across the globe, all weighing in on one of today's biggest global challenges. It was indeed gratifying for us to hear our conference participants praise the international nature of the event.

This publication, the Center's third occasional paper, seeks to capture the global scope of the conference. It provides summaries of all presentations and commentaries. It also features an introduction that sets the stage, providing context and perspective and highlighting major themes.

We must thank a very special group of people, whose generous support, advice, and assistance made the conference and this paper possible: Mr. Fares I. Fares, trustee and member of the Fares Center executive committee; Provost Jamshed Bharucha and the Office of the Provost at Tufts; Dean Robert Hollister and the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts; Dean Stephen W. Bosworth and The Fletcher School at Tufts; and Dr. Malik Mufti and the International Relations Program at Tufts.

Finally, we recognize Steve Guerra, who retired this year after serving with the Center for much of its existence. We are grateful to Steve for all his work—which included this year's conference—and wish him all the best in retirement.

Dr. Leila Fawaz
Founding Director, The Fares Center
for Eastern Mediterranean Studies
Tufts University

Introduction

On the evening of September 20, 2001, U.S. President George W. Bush appeared before Congress. He announced that "our *war on terror* [italics added] begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated." On this occasion, Bush had uttered for the first time a phrase that would define his presidency.

In a matter of weeks, U.S.-led forces would drive the Taliban out of power in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda was deprived of a sanctuary and much of its leadership was incapacitated. During this early period of the War on Terror, one could argue that the United States was indeed finding, stopping, and defeating terrorism, and that the phrase reflected realities on the ground.

However, in the years that have followed, the War on Terror label has increasingly found itself encased in quotation marks, or prefaced by the qualifier "so-called." Such suspicion about the term has long existed in the Arab and Muslim worlds (in polls over the last several years, for example, around 80 percent of Egyptians and Jordanians have expressed opposition to the War on Terror), yet this sentiment has grown in the West as well (in 2006, less than 50 percent of British, French, and German citizens supported the war).

This festering discontent exploded this past March 2007 in a *Washington Post* opinion piece penned by Zbigniew Brzezinski, the one-time national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter. The article, entitled "Terrorized by 'War on Terror': How a Three-Word Mantra Has Undermined America," is notable for its extraordinarily condemnatory tone. These "three words," Brzezinski thunders, have caused "infinitely greater [damage] than any wild dreams entertained by the fanatical perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks."

Some governments—most recently that of new British Prime Minister Gordon Brown—have now pledged to stop using the phrase altogether. Indeed, the Bush administration itself has now taken to invoking the term "the long war."

Why the growing displeasure toward the phrase "War on Terror"? Brzezinski's article gives voice to those who perceive the "War on Terror" label to be a dangerous political tool. He slams the term's "sponsors" for causing "the emergence of a culture of fear" that in turn "obscures reason" and hastens the ability of "demagogic politicians" to sell their preferred policies to the public. As a result, Brzezinski concludes, the United States has experienced "five years of almost continuous national brainwashing on the subject of terror."

Another reason behind this rising opposition to the term "war on terror" is a conceptual one. Some argue that declaring a general war on terror oversimplifies—and confuses—the world's many manifestations of both terrorism and political conflict. In the recent words of Owais Ahmed Ghani, the governor of Pakistan's Baluchistan province, "my terrorist can be your freedom fighter." The phrase is also criticized for creating the expectation that one can, in fact, wage a war against an intangible phenomenon such as terrorism.

CONTROVERSIAL POLICIES OF THE WAR ON TERROR

These and other conceptual concerns received considerable attention at the Tufts conference "The 'War on Terrorism': Where Do We Stand?" which was held earlier this year. Yet even while the conceptually troubled phrase "War on Terror" may be headed toward extinction, it still perseveres today—and so do the controversial policies it has spawned. Indeed, another reason why the offending three words provoke hostility is that they have become code for these controversial policies. These policies constituted a prime topic of conference discussion.

One such controversial policy associated with the War on Terror is intervention. The war commits the United States to actions in many parts of the world—particularly Islamic regions—that allegedly pose terrorist threats. One voice from the Middle East, in his conference presentation, described how the West now seeks "intrusive engagements" in his region, hoping to change the "software of society."

An important example of intervention-as-counterterrorism-policy has been the U.S. involvement in Iraq. Bush has labeled

Iraq "a central front in the War on Terror." However, conference presenters lambasted the purported linkages between Iraq and terrorism. One speaker charged that the War on Terror was "invented" after the September 11 attacks to justify an invasion of Iraq. Other participants argued that Iraq became a locus of terrorism only after the 2003 invasion; one presenter noted how intelligence experts believe the Iraq war has attracted international terrorists just as the war in Afghanistan did throughout the 1980s.

RESPONDING TO TERRORISM

What is the extent of the terrorist threat? According to calculations made by Ohio State University professor John Mueller in recent years, Americans are as likely to die from an allergic reaction to peanuts as from a terrorist attack, and the annual number of worldwide terrorism-related deaths in recent decades has typically matched the number of Americans who drown in bathtubs each year. Several conference speakers pointed out that the United States has not suffered a terrorist attack on its soil since September 11.

These considerations about the United States aside, few speakers denied that terrorism remains a bonafide global threat. Indeed, this summer witnessed attempted car bombings in London and Glasgow. Investigators worldwide continue to discover possible terrorist plots; around the time of this writing, Italian authorities had arrested three Moroccans, suspected of being linked to al-Qaeda and accused of training terrorists who were then dispatched across the world. Even some of the Iraq war's harshest critics concede that while most U.S. forces should withdraw, some troops should remain in Iraq to fight al-Qaeda. And the latest U.S. National Intelligence Estimate paints an ominous picture of a reconstituted al-Qaeda with growing attack capacities, operating from its new sanctuary in the tribal regions of Pakistan.

How, then, to proceed? The Tufts conference proposed a raft of prescriptions for how to respond to terrorism. Some presenters advised that the United States scale back the intensity of its direct military engagements within other states' borders. It

should decrease its land-based forces on the Arabian Peninsula and instead maintain naval and air power off the peninsula—a strategy one speaker described as "off-shore balancing." The U.S. government should also build the counterterrorism capacities of its overseas allies. Such policies, it was argued, would be cost-efficient and would reduce the perception in the Middle East that the military forces of the United States and its supporters are foreign occupiers.

Other speakers lamented the refusal of War on Terror policies to genuinely examine "root causes" of terrorism—particularly the Palestinian question and the lack of true democracy and sustained human development in the Middle East. Presenters advocated for broad-based policies of economic integration and equitable economic development, as well as for respect for human rights and dignity across the Arab and Muslim worlds. Another recommendation was that policymakers make real efforts to understand the divergent motivations of terror groups and the environments in which they function. Those seeking to root out terror must distinguish between militants simply bent on killing and those who have negotiable grievances—and then calibrate policy responses accordingly. Armed with this understanding of terrorism's complexities, counterterrorism officials will avoid the application of dangerous one-size-fits-all models.

COMMON THEMES

The conference was not simply about singling out the War on Terror's conceptual dilemmas, controversial policies, and ways forward, but also about undertaking a broad appraisal of the war. A truly international slate of panelists—comprised of academics, journalists, and former government officials from across the globe—gauged the state of the war from a variety of angles. The keynote address explored the causes of suicide terrorism. The subsequent conference sessions examined the roots of terrorism; legal, religious, and social issues; political issues; organizational and tactical issues; and implications for U.S. foreign policy. The concluding remarks took stock of how the War on Terror's policies have affected people on personal and moral levels.

Several core themes emerged from the two-day conference:

- *Terrorism is complex, not monolithic.* Presenters often faulted Bush and his supporters for treating terrorism as a uniform phenomenon, and for glomming together terrorists who actually harbor a range of motivations and objectives. Different theories surfaced about terrorism's causes and motives. Some terrorists, nursing political grievances, seek to expel foreign occupiers. Others act on sectarian religious impulses. Decisions to commit terrorism are often informed by calculated, rational considerations. Yet there are also fanatical terrorists who just want blood. And while certain terror groups boast transnational and global aspirations, others remain fixated on local concerns. Questions also arose about what defines, and who truly is, a terrorist. One speaker noted that, in recent public opinion surveys, Muslims typically described as "extremists"—and supposedly most prone to terrorism—actually demonstrated similar views to so-called "moderate" Muslims.
- *Modern communications as an enabler of terrorism.* The revolution in communications technology amplifies the sense of humiliation felt by Muslims, as they have immediate and constant access to the suffering of their coreligionists around the world. Without this communications revolution, one speaker predicted, Osama Bin Laden would be a mere "local man with local grievances," not an international terrorist. Additionally, the violence and horror of terrorism sell—and the media buy. Presenters spoke of how the media sensationalize terror threats: "Hurricane Osama is always about to hit but never goes away." Furthermore, al-Qaeda has used the Internet as a "virtual sanctuary" since being uprooted from Afghanistan. The Internet has consequently become a potent vehicle of recruitment for terrorism.
- *Limits of military approaches to combating terror.* Presenters spoke of the window of opportunity that opened after the 9/11 attacks, with the possibilities of non-military approaches to counterterrorism in the Muslim world. Instead, an overly militarized counterterrorism campaign arguably triggered more terrorism; the presence of U.S. military forces on Muslim land was cited by several speakers as one of the major motivators of ter-

rorism today. Additionally, U.S. military weaponry causes many civilian casualties, bedeviling efforts to win hearts and minds. The War on Terror—a highly asymmetrical war—cannot be won by the military alone; one speaker depicted this mismatch as a formidable football team unexpectedly squaring off with a water polo squad.

* * *

Skepticism often pervaded the conference, with several participants contending that the Bush administration is simply not capable of, nor interested in, implementing the policies necessary to reduce terrorism and to remove the conditions that cause it. One major complaint was that Washington does not consider the Muslim world's concerns about the War on Terror. However, in recent weeks, President Bush announced that the United States, for the first time, would be appointing an envoy to the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference. The envoy, he declared, "will listen to and learn from the representatives from Muslim states." While too early to tell if this appointment will amount to anything beyond a token gesture, it may represent at least a modest start to better understanding between the U.S. government and the Muslim world, both of which find themselves on the frontlines of the War on Terror.

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Note: Conference presenters did not review the summaries in the pages that follow. Therefore, the writer is uniquely responsible for the depiction of speakers' presentations and views as they appear here.

Keynote Address: "What Drives the Threat of Suicide Terrorism?"

Speaker: **Robert Pape**, Professor of Political Science, and Founder and Director, Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism, University of Chicago

Chair: **Jamshed Bharucha**, Provost, Senior Vice President, and Professor of Psychology, Tufts University

Dr. Pape presented his theories about the causes of suicide terrorism. Many presume that Islamic fundamentalism drives suicide attacks, he noted. Yet according to his research—which consists of a database of suicide attacks from 1980 to early 2004—Islamic religious extremism is by no means the single defining reason for suicide terrorism. On the contrary, the most prolific instigator of suicide attacks has been the Tamil Tigers—a secular militant group in Sri Lanka. Many of the attacks archived in Dr. Pape's database were, in fact, launched by secular groups.

Most cases of suicide terrorism, Dr. Pape asserted, can be attributed to a "strategic, secular goal"—forcing democratic states to withdraw their military presence from territory that terrorists consider their own. Suicide terrorists' main goal is "to establish self-determination for territory they prize." Religion, while used as a recruiting tool for would-be suicide attackers, is not the ultimate reason for suicide terrorism.

To support his thesis, Dr. Pape described three consistent patterns of suicide attacks. One is the *timing of attacks*. Rarely do they occur as an isolated, random phenomenon—which one would expect if they were ideological or religious in nature. Rather, 95 percent of the attacks in his database occur in "clusters" that often resemble campaigns designed for political objectives. Another pattern is the *type of goal*. Attacks are meant to gain or hold territory—a "central objective" of every suicide terrorist campaign. Hezbollah, for example, was formed after Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982. The militant group attacked American and Israeli military forces based on

Lebanese territory. Yet once these forces retreated from Lebanon, the suicide attacks ceased. Hezbollah did not follow American forces back to the United States or Israeli ones back to Israel. A third pattern of suicide terrorism is its *target selection*. If suicide terrorism is a calculated as well as a coercive tactic, then one would expect terrorists to focus on targets vulnerable to coercion. Indeed, Dr. Pape argued, suicide terrorists target democracies, which are often regarded as "soft" and vulnerable. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) did not attack the authoritarian Saddam Hussein, who unleashed horrifying levels of violence on Iraq's Kurdish population. Instead, the PKK focused on targets within democratic Turkey—even though Ankara's actions against Kurds were less brutal than Saddam's.

Al-Qaeda reflects these patterns. The terror organization's suicide attackers largely hail from Saudi Arabia—a country that has hosted U.S. combat forces since 1990. Few of its attackers are from Iran, Sudan, or Pakistan—all bastions of Islamic fundamentalism, but none of them host countries for American ground forces. Additionally, Pape argued, since the September 11, 2001 attacks, there has been a "striking consistency" in the profile of victims of al-Qaeda's suicide attacks: Western civilians from nations that deployed combat troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. And Pape noted the recent discovery of an al-Qaeda strategy document, published in September 2003, which advocates the targeting of U.S. allies in such a way that these allies would be prompted to withdraw their troops from Iraq.

Iraq provides a prime case study of suicide terrorism's "strategic logic," Dr. Pape asserted. Suicide terrorism was nonexistent in Iraq prior to the U.S.-led occupation in 2003. Most—60 to 70 percent—of the suicide attacks currently ravaging the country are highly strategic, as they focus on symbols of the Iraqi government: police, government facilities, government officials, and civilians who either work for the Iraqi government or are seeking to do so. The reason for this selective targeting is that the terrorists hope to weaken an Iraqi government seen as largely beholden to and controlled by the United States. All suicide groups in Iraq, Dr. Pape declared, believe the U.S. government is the "power behind the throne." He pointed out

that former al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in a letter written to Osama Bin Laden in 2004, advocated the targeting of Iraqi security forces—because they were the "eyes, ears, and hands" of the American occupiers.

In conclusion, Dr. Pape contended that the United States has waged the War on Terror on a "faulty premise," with Washington often perceiving suicide terrorism to be mainly a product of Islamic fundamentalism. Yet military occupation is clearly what drives suicide attacks. On September 11, 2001, the Arabian Peninsula hosted 12,000 U.S. combat forces. Now, there are more than 150,000. As these numbers have risen, so have cases of suicide terrorism.

What, then, should the United States do? Dr. Pape argued that "cutting and running" from the Middle East is not an option, as Washington has legitimate "obligations" in the region such as upholding stability and ensuring access to oil. Yet neither should U.S. troops remain on Iraqi soil—doing so would simply increase suicide terrorism. Instead, he recommended a policy of "offshore balancing," in which the United States maintains naval and air power off the Arabian Peninsula. Such an approach would allow the United States to intervene militarily if necessary, yet it would largely keep U.S. combat forces off Muslim land in the Middle East and therefore prevent inflaming the region's population.

Session I: "The Roots of Terrorism"

Speakers: **Hisham Melhem**, Washington Correspondent, *An-Nahar*
Micheline Ishay, Professor, and Director, International Human Rights Program, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver
Peter Bergen, Schwartz Senior Fellow, New America Foundation

Discussant: **Feroz Ahmad**, Chair, International Relations and Political Science Department, Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey

Chair: **Jeswald W. Salacuse**, Henry J. Braker Professor of Law, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

This opening session examined the motivations and causes of terrorism. **Mr. Melhem** attested to terrorism's great complexities, arguing that its drastically different manifestations require equally varying responses. While he asserted that there is no consensus on the definition of terrorism, it is generally understood as the unlawful use of violence to achieve objectives. Yet what is often underappreciated about terrorism is the complicity of states. Countries as well as non-state actors wage terror. Nations—such as Stalin's Soviet Union—have incorporated it into their defining ideologies. And countries employ terrorist tactics during wartime.

History, in Mr. Melhem's view, demonstrates that terror succeeds. He cited diverse examples of violent campaigns waged to attain political ends. In the 1940s, Zionists used violence to expel British occupiers from Mandate Palestine. Algerians used "a campaign of terror"—featuring attacks on buses, train stations, and French settlers—as part of their guerrilla warfare against France during Algeria's war for independence. And, more recently, terrorists in Madrid blew up trains in their successful attempt to compel the withdrawal of Spanish forces from Iraq. These examples, Mr. Melhem pointed out, demonstrate how democracies can often be "brittle" in the face of terrorism.

In discussing the motivations and roots of terrorism, Mr. Melhem repeatedly emphasized that terrorism is not monolithic: "not all terrorists are equal." The Ku Klux Klan, Abraham Lincoln's assassin, and the anarchists of nineteenth-century Europe all harbored vastly differing strategies and motivations. He did acknowledge one commonality in many terrorists acts committed since World War II: a recurring motivation to target foreign occupiers. From Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood to Lebanon's Hezbollah, and from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) to Chechnian and Kashmiri separatists, terrorists are often bent on removing foreign military forces.

Yet this type of terrorism—fueled by political, ethnic, or national grievances—is only one side of the story. Mr. Melhem noted as well the prevalence of irrational, fanatical terrorism, motivated purely by the drive to kill. For example, the actions of al-Qaeda, Peru's Shining Path guerrilla organization, and the Japan-based Aum Shinrikyo religious cult differ vastly from the calculated, strategic, and political terrorism of Hamas or Hezbollah. Al-Qaeda identifies the seemingly rational goal of ending the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia. Yet al-Qaeda sees this objective as part of an "existential crusade" against a decadent West—a present-day "Manichean struggle of cosmic proportions." In effect, al-Qaeda's objectives are irrational and "unrealizable."

What implications do these differing terrorist motivations hold for the War on Terror? Mr. Melhem argued that uniform coercive counterterrorism policies are a mistake. It is true, he noted, that blowing up buses in Dublin, Kashmir, or Palestine constitutes terror, "pure and simple." Still, a knee-jerk, coercive response to such attacks loses sight of the "real issue"—the existence of political, national, and historical grievances that can be negotiated toward a settlement. These types of settlements, however, are not possible with al-Qaeda and other similarly irrational terror organizations.

Ultimately, Mr. Melhem concluded, one cannot declare war on terrorism. This is because terror is a tactic, not an ideology (in fact, those subscribing to many different types of ideologies embrace terrorism as a tool to achieve their very different objectives). As a result, terrorism can be undermined, contained, and combated—but never eradicated completely.

Dr. Ishay contended that President George W. Bush's labeling of terrorists as "Islamo-fascists" has produced a "visceral negative reaction among liberals." Nevertheless, she argued, today's radical Islamism does indeed demonstrate "striking similarities" to the fascist movements that emerged in Europe during the interwar period of the twentieth century. The same type of societal conditions that fueled the growth of European fascism are now stoking Islamic extremism today. These conditions include a sense of humiliation; a sense of grievance coupled with an inability of state leaders to address these grievances; lagging or stressed economies; fragmented civil societies; vulnerable state structures; and ineffective ideological alternatives.

Additionally, the ideological beliefs of fascist leaders such as Hitler and Mussolini are reflected in the views of Osama Bin Laden and Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah, among others. Interwar fascists raged against consumerism and decadence, lambasting the "crass materialism" of capitalism. They also harbored deep grievances against corrupt and weak leaders (many of whom colluded with foreign dictators). These fascists implored their followers to glorify violence, and to submit to an "organic" community and to leaders capable of offering true redemption; they declared that only those with "true faith" would triumph over the enemy. The "clerical fascism" that evolved later in the twentieth century is similarly grounded in claims of unjust foreign occupation and disillusionment with incompetent leaders.

Dr. Ishay argued that countering the appeal of violent Islamism will require a "reapplication" of the two-pronged policy approach adopted by the Allies in Europe following World War II. One part of this approach was economic in nature: the use of Keynesian prescriptions—regional and international economic integration, equitable economic development, and the "direct amelioration" of suffering through massive economic development—that had been rejected at the Paris Peace Conference in Versailles following World War I. The other part of this post-World War II strategy deployed against the vanquished fascists was the implementation of a comprehensive vision and conception of human rights—as embodied in particular by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. What was the effect of this policy in the years after its implementation 60 years ago? Dr. Ishay argued that it transformed a ravaged Europe into a prosperous region blessed with a consolidated, strengthened civil society. Yet what is notable, she continued, is that the United States and its allies—despite the universality of the human rights declaration—did not make a concerted effort to extend this set of policies across the globe: there was no "global New Deal" meant to target the Third World. After World War II, the United States did, in fact, implement policies globally, she explained, but they were nothing like those that emphasized economic development and human rights. Instead, Washington supported anti-Soviet insurgencies around the world—a strategy that did not attain economic equality and widespread respect for human rights, but that did allow the United States to work with Osama Bin Laden.

Mr. Bergen sought to identify the causes of the September 11, 2001, attacks. He first dismissed a series of possible explanations:

- *Poverty.* Destitution does not necessarily beget terrorism, he argued, as terrorism has largely been a "bourgeois endeavor." The 9/11 hijackers, he noted, were drawn from the middle and upper classes of the Middle East.
- *Madrasas.* Many argue that these religious schools breed terrorists. On the contrary, Bergen declared: graduates of these institutions rarely undertake major attacks against the West. None of the 9/11 hijackers attended a madrasa; in fact, several had attended college in the West.
- *Weak and failing states.* International relations theory supports the idea that such countries provide attractive bases for terrorists and criminals—and the fact that many of the 9/11 attack plans were hatched in the Sudan and Afghanistan appears to buttress this theory. However, Mr. Bergen pointed out, most of the planning occurred in Hamburg, Germany. And it was in the West where the 9/11 pilots acquired the experience that would enable them to carry out their attacks.
- *Foreign military occupation.* Mr. Bergen argued that suicide terrorism is not driven exclusively by a sense of grievance against the presence of foreigners. This theory might account for why many of the 9/11 hijackers were Saudi, yet it does not explain

why others were from Lebanon, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.

What, then, are the credible explanations for the 9/11 attacks? Mr. Bergen offered several possibilities, in order of ascending importance:

- *Humiliation.* In his first statement following the 9/11 attacks, Bin Laden spoke of the "humiliation" and "degradation" suffered by the Islamic world during the last 80 years. Just as Adolf Hitler sought to "avenge and reverse" the perceived humiliation of the 1919 peace treaty in Versailles, Bin Laden vows revenge against the West for the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, which carved up the former Ottoman Empire among Europe's powers.
- *Exploitation of communications technology.* This sense of humiliation is amplified by the recent revolution in global media. Muslims around the globe can all witness each other's suffering—which has hastened grievances, fueled the spread of al-Qaeda's ideology, and underpinned the rage of the 9/11 attackers. While Mr. Bergen insisted that Al Jazeera and other Arab media were not causes of the terror attacks, he contended that without this global communications revolution Bin Laden "would be a local man with local grievances," instead of the symbol of global terror he has become.
- *Authoritarianism in the Middle East.* Mr. Bergen argued that both Sayyid Qutb—an early inspiration for many Islamic terrorists—and al-Qaeda's top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, were radicalized as they toiled in Egyptian jails. Not surprisingly, many al-Qaeda members have been Egyptian or Saudi. Mr. Bergen judged that if Middle East regimes sanctioned more political space for those with Islamist views, then recourse to extremism would perhaps not be as common.
- *Alienation of Muslim immigrants in Europe.* Living in the West has radicalized many terrorists, including three of the four 9/11 pilots and two key attack planners, Ramzi Bin al-Shibh and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. "Perceived discrimination, alienation, and homesickness" have all conspired to radicalize Muslims in Europe, Mr. Bergen stated.
- *U.S. support for Israel.* Bin Laden's anti-American remarks never center on American culture; they always refer to the U.S. relationship with Israel. In fact, it was American support for Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982 that first triggered Bin Laden's hatred of the United States.
- *The personality of Osama Bin Laden.* Characterizing him as an "astute tactical leader" and a "rational political actor," Mr. Bergen pointed out that Bin Laden made two key decisions to ensure the success of the 9/11 attacks: he appointed the highly efficient Mohammed Atta as the lead assailant, and he rejected Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's highly ambitious initial plan to stage simultaneous attacks in Asia and the United States—a plan that may very well have failed.
- *An internal clash of Islam.* Bin Laden's followers regard pro-American Muslim rulers in the Middle East as a "near enemy" that must be destroyed. Bin Laden perceived the 9/11 attacks as a way of undermining these Muslims, as it is the United States (the "far enemy") that props up the Middle East's ruling regimes.
- *Bin Laden's flawed reasoning.* Recalling American military withdrawals from Lebanon and Somalia, Bin Laden thought of the United States as a "paper tiger" that could be compelled to withdraw from the Middle East—and in so doing expose the United States' "client regimes"—if it were hit hard.

The reality, Mr. Bergen concluded, is that the United States responded to the attacks on its homeland by waging war on the Taliban and by "decimating" al-Qaeda. In a further blow to Bin Laden's reasoning, the so-called "near enemy" is still very much alive; for example, the power of the Hosni Mubarak regime and the House of Saud remains firmly entrenched.

Dr. Ahmad's commentary focused on Islamic terrorism, and in particular on why this phenomenon of religious terror arose only in the mid-twentieth century, and not during earlier times when the Islamic world faced the same types of Western intrusions and occupations it faces today. The answer, he posited, is that until the middle of the twentieth century, the Muslim world fashioned "secular solutions"—particularly constitutionalism and nationalism—to take on the challenges of colonialism.

It was not until the Cold War era, when the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration in the late 1950s identified Islam as a

counterweight to both nationalism and communism, that religion was first identified as a solution to the Muslim world's troubles. In the 1960s and 1970s, the West supported Islamic groups against secular nationalists across the Muslim world. Meanwhile, in Saudi Arabia, a new organization under the name "Union of the World of Islam" began propagating the Wahhabi strain of Sunni Islam. Later, Washington-supported mujahideen defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan. The emboldened victors vowed that after defeating one superpower, they could defeat the other. This reasoning was erroneous, Dr. Ahmad noted, because the Soviets were brought down by Western arms and Pakistan's intelligence services, and not simply by the heroic efforts of the mujahideen. All the same, he concluded, "thus began the phase of Islamist terror we are now living with."

Session II: "Legal, Religious, and Social Issues"

Speakers: **Ayesha Jalal**, Director, Center for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies, and Professor of History, Tufts University
David Kretzmer, Professor of Law, Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster
As'ad Abukhalil, Professor of Political Science, California State University, Stanislaus
Ali Banuazizi, Professor of Cultural Psychology and Codirector of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Program, Boston College

Chair: **Malik Mufti**, Associate Professor of Political Science, and Director, International Relations Program, Tufts University

Dr. Jalal described the shifting interpretations of Islam, terrorism, and jihad. She emphasized the "contested and fluid meanings" of jihad throughout Muslim history, insisting that jihad must continue to be debated now and in the future—and that if it is not properly debated, then political factors are to blame.

Dr. Jalal began her presentation by invoking two very different quotations that celebrate death. "They are different not merely in poetic quality," she observed, "but in what they convey about the religious and ethical sentiments of the two composers." The first quote, uttered by Jalaluddin Rumi, was described by Dr. Jalal as a variant of the Sufi dictum in its beseechment "to die before dying in the struggle." The second quote, attributed to Abdullah Shaban Ali of the Pakistan militant group Lashkar-i Tayyiba, refers to "physical death in armed struggle" against Islam's enemies. The former quote embraces "lesser jihad," while the latter one celebrates "greater jihad." Both types, Dr. Jalal noted, have "animated Muslims" throughout history.

Many South Asian Muslims have traditionally upheld jihad as a

"spiritual and ethical struggle to be human." Dr. Jalal cited Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib, an Urdu poet who lamented that humans have "failed to live up to the standards of humanity" and declared that sacrificing one's life in a jihad "is insufficient recompense for the debt owed to God, the ultimate life-giver."

Unfortunately, however, jihad has now all too often been narrowly interpreted as a violent struggle against infidels. Jihad, Dr. Jalal explained, has become the belief of "certain segments of Muslims" for whom faith is based on external and internal "closures." It is this "constricting of the heart" and a "narrowing of the mind" that has reduced jihad to violent struggle.

Additionally, Dr. Jalal continued, some of today's militant groups (particularly those in South Asia) see today's eagerness for martyrdom as "sanctifying armed warfare against perceived injustices perpetrated by enemies of Islam." This "widespread desire" to become "martyrs of the faith" raises "an extremely troubling question" about "the erosion of an ethics of humanity amid the brutalization of war," said Dr. Jalal.

In conclusion, she likened jihad "to an arrow that has gone off its mark." Only by "retrieving the arrow and straightening its jagged edges" can Muslims hope to attain "those high ethical values which are the embodiment of faith based on submission to God."

Dr. Kretzmer focused on the legal aspects of the War on Terror. He argued that in the period immediately following the September 11 attacks, the "standards and limits" of international human rights law were seemingly disregarded. The United States, after declaring war on terror, "adopted harsh measures" without considering how consistent such measures were with its international human rights obligations. Similarly, UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1373, which was passed on September 28, 2001, obliged states to take the requisite steps to prevent terrorism—and said nothing about remaining true to human rights obligations or international humanitarian law. Dr. Kretzmer conceded that these decisions were both made "in the heat of the moment," but said that it is high time for a more "dispassionate look" at how the law can "prevent and suppress" terrorism.

Dr. Kretzmer first discussed the "serious legal implications" that

arise when efforts to combat terrorism are described as a "war." Under the legal model of war—which differs "radically" from that of law enforcement—a distinction is made between combatants and civilians. Special protection is given to civilians. However, "implicit in the distinction" between these two groups is the "license" to kill enemy combatants without due process of law. The laws of war also allow for a state at war to intern "enemy aliens" without trial. The War on Terrorism employs these "war model measures," and since models of war emphasize groups, the most common targets of these measures are individuals categorized by group affiliations—particularly ethnic, national, or religious ones—rather than individual actions. These people are detained without due process or trial before a court of law. Many believe, Dr. Kretzmer stated, that such results alienate the members of groups whose support is "essential" in "preventing and suppressing" terrorism. While acknowledging that there may be times when struggles between states' armed forces, and organized armed groups that use terror to attain ideological or political aims, may amount to an "armed conflict," he labeled as "both wrong and dangerous" the categorization that all measures against terrorism constitute war.

Dr. Kretzmer also assessed the effectiveness of international law in combating terror. The Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), established by the UN Security Council to monitor implementation of counterterrorism efforts spelled out in the Council's resolutions, concluded in a December 2006 report that over 150 UN member states had complied with efforts to combat money laundering and/or terror financing since the 9/11 attacks. Yet the Committee also determined that less progress had been made on extradition treaties and other areas requiring bilateral action. The CTC also found that some regions have been quicker than others to implement UNSC Resolution 1373. When implemented, what impact have international legal measures had on terrorism? Dr. Kretzmer acknowledged the difficulty of gauging this impact. However, he suggested that if one takes a "minimalist view," and regards the weakening of al-Qaeda as the main aim of these legal measures, then the resiliency of al-Qaeda may indicate that it is "not quite clear" if this aim has been achieved.

Finally, Dr. Kretzmer considered the place and role of international human rights in the War on Terror. The sense of urgency that prevailed in the immediate post-9/11 period spawned some "ugly manifestations." Among these were the Bush administration's "torture memo," which "attempted to unweave" the definition of torture in the International Convention Against Torture, as well as rendition, under which terror suspects are transferred to jurisdictions that "are not known to have qualms" about interrogation methods. Another "ugly manifestation" has been the so-called "black hole" under which legal norms are thought not to apply to some areas of international law and people become "totally at the disposal" of a country's executive branch.

Dr. Kretzmer praised the efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other activists to trumpet the importance of human rights, though he said NGOs sometimes "underplay" the seriousness of the terror threat and the difficult decisions nations must make in order to protect their populations. Nonetheless, he strongly endorsed the view of human rights advocates that respecting international human rights standards hastens long-term security. He cited research indicating that terror-scarred societies (in particular, Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestine) that abandon human rights standards, and that employ "indiscriminate measures" affecting the wide populations from which terrorists are drawn, may increase support for terrorism among "small groups" within these large populations. In sum, such draconian measures meant to "contain" terror may in fact "perpetuate" it.

Dr. Abukhalil identified several "pitfalls" that mar the study of terrorism. One major problem is that the terrorism studies field is "opposed to the notion of specialization." As a result, he argued, the views of Middle East area specialists are marginalized and so-called "terror experts" are often ignorant about the regions that suffer from terror. Dr. Abukhalil also regards as notable—and lamentable—the "rarely questioned infusion of pro-Israel advocates" in the terrorism studies field. Also disturbing, he continued, is the nexus between the "terrorism industry" and governments. He suggested that links may exist between the funders of "terrorism centers" and the outcomes of terrorism studies, and warned about governments

that may want to use the study of terrorism "to rationalize and justify" their practice of violence.

Dr. Abukhalil alleged an "increased politicization" of the term "terrorism," contending that all too often the United States and Israel are setting the bar on what acts do and do not qualify as terrorism. In practice, both countries have taken actions that appear to be terrorism—even though both nations do not admit to committing terrorism. Citing U.S. military statistics, Dr. Abukhalil noted that more than 22,000 American bombs or missiles were dropped on Afghanistan from 2001 to 2003—with hundreds of them missing their targets and killing civilians. Yet the United States boasts of better and more precise military technology in Afghanistan that has reduced the number of "missed targets." Similarly, Israeli fighter jets attack apartment buildings in population-dense Gaza. Dr. Abukhalil questioned if such actions do not constitute acts of terror. Furthermore, not only are there inconsistencies in identifying what acts constitute terrorism, but also in how alleged perpetrators of terrorist acts are prosecuted. Dr. Abukhalil charged that pro-Western groups are investigated less vigorously than anti-American groups—even though both types commit terrorism.

Such double standards also apply to the modifiers employed to describe terror. One would never hear of "Presbyterian" or "Jewish" terrorism, he pointed out, but "Arab" and "Islamic" terror are now staples of the terrorism studies vernacular. The use of these latter two labels implies a "certain Muslim brand of terror." Yet in fact, Dr. Abukhalil argued, there are few unique or original qualities about Muslim violence. On the contrary, the "first bombs" of the Arab-Israeli conflict—which targeted embassies, ambulances, and other sites—were detonated not by Arabs but by Zionist groups operating in the 1930s.

Another pitfall of terrorism studies is the political resistance to "root cause analysis." Americans, Dr. Abukhalil declared, are "afraid" to study terror from this angle. On September 11, 2001, he found himself thinking about what Harry S. Truman's first secretary of defense, James Forrestal, had once said about the importance of considering the consequences of U.S. recognition and support for Israel and how such American decisions would

affect the U.S. standing among Arabs in the future.

Dr. Abukhalil posited that there may simply be too much study of violence, particularly of violence in the Arab and Muslim worlds. More Americans know about the Middle East's terrorists than about its poets and scholars, and while few Americans can name Egypt's Nobel Prize winner, they can identify plenty of criminals from the region. It is time, he said, that we accept that Arabs and Muslims—like all other peoples—have their share of criminals and terrorists, and that we not let the existence of such bad apples malign Arab and Muslim cultures.

Dr. Banuazizi's commentary highlighted two points about studying terrorism. One was that terrorism (and particularly suicide terrorism) is still a relatively rare phenomenon. For this reason, seeking to explain it by describing population characteristics and by examining political circumstances presents major challenges from a methodological standpoint. Similarly, he noted, suicide is also a rare institution. Despite years of study of the topic, "we're still very far away" from developing any compelling explanations for its causes. Explanations that may account for suicide in one cultural setting simply do not account for it in other cultural settings.

His second point focused on the need to study the moral dimension of terrorism—and particularly on the "corrosive impact" terror has on the moral and ethical environment of societies within which terrorism occurs. Dr. Banuazizi urged the panel to consider how such environments can sanction violence and draw lines of moral exclusion, and how such environments can transform martyrdom from a sacrifice for one's faith to "a proactive, warlike" killing operation. Intellectuals—especially those from the Middle East—must "own up" to this dimension of terrorism and consider the impact it has on Islam's global image, and on the conduct of political affairs and political culture.

Session III: "Political Issues"

Speakers: **Mia Bloom**, Assistant Professor of International Affairs, University of Georgia
Fawaz Gerges, Christian A. Johnson Chairholder in International Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies, Sarah Lawrence College
Ian Lustick, Bess W. Heyman Chair in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania

Discussant: **Stephen M. Walt**, Robert and Renee Belfer Professorship in International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Chair: **Robert Hollister**, Dean, Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, Tufts University

Dr. Bloom, delving into her recently gathered empirical data, addressed recent trends in suicide terrorism. She asserted that suicide terror is now in a "fundamental flux." Notably, it is "metamorphasizing" into sectarian conflict and manifesting itself less in secular-nationalist conflicts. Iraq is an obvious example of this new trend, but Dr. Bloom pointed out that sectarian suicide terrorism has also arrived in Pakistan and Afghanistan—countries that had not experienced it until recently. To prove her point, she discussed the result of interviews conducted with 130 potential suicide bombers in Pakistan, all of them based in terror training camps. Fewer than 50 percent had attended madrasas, and most of them had not been recruited for terrorism but had simply volunteered. What was their motivation? According to Dr. Bloom, interviewees would say, "Kill a Shiite, go to paradise."

Dr. Bloom discussed how suicide terrorists exploit both their intended audiences and the media. Terrorists are actors, she explained. Their activities function as "operational drama," while the terrorists' enemies are regarded as the major audience. Yet populations constitute another important audience, and one that

demands results; once populations reject terror groups, then these groups lose their popularity. It is for this reason, she argued, that Hamas and Hezbollah pair their violence with the provision of social services—including basic needs. She cited studies of Hezbollah that reveal that 80 percent of its members are involved with hospitals.

Suicide terrorism awes the media, and, according to Dr. Bloom, a major reason for the appeal of suicide terror is that it makes for such a big news story. Additionally, the Internet provides a virtual recruitment tool, as it widens the scope of potential candidates for suicide terror. The year 2004, for example, saw the establishment of a "webzine" that championed female terrorists.

Yet even as suicide terrorism profits from the Internet's global reach, Dr. Bloom insisted that the motives of today's terrorists are rooted in local grievances. For example, al-Qaeda's rage is directed at the Saudi Arabian monarchy. Even while exhibiting a seemingly global murderous logic—such as when it attacks Americans—al-Qaeda's underlying motives are to undermine the House of Saud. Similarly, in Europe, terrorists are lashing out not only against the war in Iraq, but also in reaction to Europe's policies toward its Muslim minorities.

Dr. Gerges argued that understanding terrorism requires a comprehension of the geopolitical factors that fuel it. He advocated for analyzing jihadists or terrorists as "social actors" driven by "political, religious, and geostrategic concerns."

Dr. Gerges underscored that the "jihadist enterprise" constitutes a very small part of the larger Islamist movement, which has rejected violence and terrorism since the 1970s. From their beginnings in the mid-1970s to the mid-to-late 1990s, jihadists targeted what they deemed the "near enemy"—Arab and Muslim governments. When interviewing Islamists of all stripes during this period, Dr. Gerges noted that there was never any mention of targeting the United States. Jihadists' aims were focused squarely on the Arab and Muslim worlds; as late as 1995, al-Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri declared that "the road to Jerusalem goes through Cairo."

It was only in the late 1990s that a small fraction of the jihadists

cast their gaze toward the "far enemy"—the United States and some of its Western allies. Why, Dr. Gerges asked, did the "far enemy" become a jihadist target? He identified the Gulf War and the subsequent U.S. decision to base troops in Saudi Arabia as catalysts for this shift. "Without a doubt," he contended, geopolitics was "instrumental" in motivating jihadists to attack the American homeland.

For years, this decision to target the "far enemy" was not a popular one; jihadists calling for war on the United States attracted few supporters. He recalled interviewing former jihadists both in the late 1990s and after the September 11 attacks who feared that Bin Laden's actions were "reckless" and "endangered the survival" of the Islamist movement as a whole. Dr. Gerges also observed that very few volunteers signed up to defend the Taliban and al-Qaeda after September 11. In fact, throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds, there was "a widespread [out]pouring of empathy" for American victims of the 9/11 attacks.

Dr. Gerges contended that in this hopeful immediate post-9/11 environment, the United States could have developed a "political vision," one that established alliances with Muslim civil societies and that championed democratic change in the Middle East through non-military means. Yet the Bush administration squandered this "historical opportunity," opting instead for the use of force and a devastating military intervention in Iraq; in general, the Bush administration "has relied excessively on militarism." These policies, instead of eradicating terror and building bridges with Muslims, have "created a new generation of radicals" and "radicalized" mainstream Muslim public opinion. Dr. Gerges spoke of meeting young Muslims—with no terrorist pasts—struggling to scrape together funds to journey to Iraq to fight the United States. He noted that intelligence experts now believe that the Iraq war is affecting global jihad in the same way the war in Afghanistan did in the 1980s and 1990s.

Dr. Gerges concluded that Bush does not understand that "the battle lines are not clearly defined," and that the terror threat is "not as existential" as he would like us to believe. However, Bush, undeterred, "marches on with his bow and arrow, defending the West against the new barbarians."

Dr. Lustick excoriated the United States—its government and institutions—for creating and sustaining a war on terror that has thrived, despite the "virtual absence" of U.S.-based terrorist threats. He argued that the War on Terror was created in order to justify the war in Iraq. Washington's "official mantra" is that Iraq is the "central front in the War on Terror." On the contrary, he declared, we are "trapped" in waging "an unwinnable and even nonsensical" war on terror "*because its* [the War on Terror's] invention was required in order to fight in Iraq."

Before September 11, 2001, the U.S. military and State Department rejected plans initiated by Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld to invade Iraq as the first stage in a "radical transformation" of U.S. foreign policy. However, the 9/11 attacks offered the neoconservative "supremacist cabal" a golden opportunity to impress on President George W. Bush the need to attack Iraq: September 11, the neoconservatives believed, had triggered an "epochal war on terror," ushering in a "with us or against us" mentality that would enable an attack on Iraq to be the next step in a series of neoconservative interventions in nations that supported or harbored terrorists. Bush, a religious man and an admirer of the British World War II hero Winston Churchill, was made to feel that God "made sure Bush was there to play the role of Churchill." The decision was made to plan for the Iraq invasion, and the War on Terror was born, according to Dr. Lustick.

How has the War on Terror taken on a life of its own, and how has it managed to cost $650 billion, when there is—according to Dr. Lustick—no terror threat in the United States? Dr. Lustick's response was that the War on Terror is a great source of financial profit, and that for this reason the country has mobilized around initiatives that claim to be a part of the effort to fight terror. For instance, American interest groups now use the exigencies of the War on Terror to justify the importance of their funding proposals. Meanwhile, members of Congress have scrambled to identify "funding-generating [terrorist] targets in their districts." The result has been both "widening definitions of potential targets" and "mushrooming increases in the number of infrastructure and other assets deemed worthy of protection." In late 2003, the United States had identified 1,849 potential terror targets. By 2006, this figure had ballooned to an estimated 300,000.

This new imperative—"translate your agenda into War on Terror requirements or be starved of funds"—has become ubiquitous across the U.S. government. According to Dr. Lustick, bureaucrats in government unable to describe their activities "in War on Terror terms" have been "virtually disqualified" from budget increases—and most likely "doomed to cuts." This mentality has even affected counterterrorism policies. The government has been unwilling to identify the enemy posing the terrorist threat, because if a specific enemy were named, then "certain scenarios, profitable for some funding competitors, would be disqualified." Therefore, the enemy is vaguely labeled as "the universal adversary." The result: an "irrational and doomed strategic posture [that] treats any bad thing that could happen as a national security imperative."

Dr. Lustick also lambasted the news media for sensationalizing the terrorist threat. He argued that the media will fixate on an impending hurricane only until the storm makes landfall. Yet with the War on Terror, "Hurricane Osama is always about to hit and never goes away." The profit motives of supporting the War on Terror, coupled with this media frenzy, have combined to generate more waves of funding for the War on Terror.

How "embarrassing," Dr. Lustick concluded, that the United States was once able "to adjust" to the "real capacity" of communist Russia, yet now "spins in circles" when faced by Osama Bin Laden's radical Islamism. Until we come to know our present-day enemy as we once knew the USSR, he said, "we'll simply remain trapped in the War on Terror."

Dr. Walt posed questions in response to each presentation. In regards to Dr. Bloom's remarks, he considered whether terrorists are motivated more by local grievances or global concerns. He concluded that Hamas, Hezbollah, Pakistani terrorists, and Iraqi sectarian terrorism are all motivated chiefly by local considerations, yet that at the same time these groups frequently invoke "global symbols"—Pakistani terrorists, for example, often mention the Palestinian issue. He was skeptical, however, about the notion

of a large global, Islamic fundamentalist movement seeking to restore the caliphate.

Responding to Dr. Gerges' presentation, Dr. Walt wondered what the impact on terrorism would be were the West to begin disengaging from lands across the Middle East. He posited that Israel, based on recent events, would argue that withdrawal from Lebanon did not stop terrorism.

In reaction to Dr. Lustick's presentation, Dr. Walt wondered whether the U.S. government has in fact done some things right in its counterterrorism policies; he mentioned as possibilities the removal of the Taliban from power, cutting off terrorist financing, and the more controversial tactic of assassinating "known terrorist leaders."

Concluding with some general observations, he stated that in the immediate post-9/11 period, the American mind "seemingly suffered a concussion"—not unusual, given that "nations get stupid" at times when they need to be smart. Dr. Walt also regretted the complete lack of remorse of Iraq war planners (and their supporters), even with the deaths of more than 34,000 Iraqi civilians last year (according to United Nations figures). He concluded that until policymakers are held to higher degrees of accountability, this situation will not change.

Session IV: "Organization and Tactics"

Speakers: **Richard H. Shultz**, Professor of International Politics; Director, International Security Studies Program; and Adviser, Jebsen Center for Counter-Terrorism Studies, The Fletcher School, Tufts University
Steven Simon, Hasib J. Sabbagh Senior Fellow in Middle Eastern Studies, Council on Foreign Relations
Sumantra Bose, Professor of International and Comparative Politics, London School of Economics and Political Science

Discussant: **Stephen W. Van Evera**, Professor of Political Science, and Associate Director, Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Chair: **The Honorable Stephen W. Bosworth**, Dean, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

The fourth session examined the organizational and tactical elements of terrorism. **Dr. Shultz** chronicled how al-Qaeda has adapted to the post-September 11 era. He first provided context, charting the origins and evolution of al-Qaeda. The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and the resulting flood of international jihadists who poured into Afghanistan in the next decade, enabled al-Qaeda to develop a transnational outlook. These jihadist fighters, Dr. Shultz argued, formed a global "vanguard" of al-Qaeda.

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and following the war's end, a debate played out among the jihadists about the appropriate next target of operations. They considered whether to return home and focus on overthrowing their repressive leaders, or to aid imperiled Islamic minorities in countries like Bosnia. By the mid-1990s, Osama Bin Laden had concluded that, because of its occupation of Muslim lands in the Gulf, the United States would become al-Qaeda's next target. From 1996 to 2001, al-Qaeda, now perceiving itself as the vanguard of a global movement, used

Afghanistan as a sanctuary from which to transform itself into a truly transnational organization.

After the September 11 attacks, al-Qaeda lost this sanctuary—a "strategic setback," Dr. Shultz noted, as it was now deprived of a base from which to launch its operations. He suggested that al-Qaeda adapted in a variety of ways. It began to use "ungoverned territory" as a sanctuary; it exploited ready-made opportunities (particularly Muslim anger spawned by the U.S. invasion of Iraq); and it cultivated relations with its associated movements.

Of particular significance, according to Dr. Shultz, was al-Qaeda's decision to establish a "virtual" sanctuary. By tapping into the myriad benefits of the Internet, the organization was able to reach out to like-minded groups—a "strategic communications" tool never before harnessed by a radical organization. Al-Qaeda has also used this virtual sanctuary to inspire and mobilize individuals and groups and to make these recruitment targets see themselves as a larger movement. Dr. Shultz described the rise of "virtual operational cells," noting that, in effect, al-Qaeda has adapted to the loss of its physical sanctuary in Afghanistan by forming one online and "going virtual."

Dr. Simon, also focusing on al-Qaeda, analyzed the group's organization and tactics. The key organizational issue, he argued, is "who's in charge?" Is it still centralized, with Bin Laden in control, or is it decentralized? He contended that on the one hand, al-Qaeda was "unsettled" after the 9/11 attacks: the major 9/11 planners are dead or incarcerated, and the United States has not been hit since September 11, 2001. Yet on the other hand, there have been major al-Qaeda attacks since 2001 in London, Madrid, and Mombasa. And he cited the existence of an "intifada" in Saudi Arabia from 2002 to 2004 that was linked to al-Qaeda's leadership.

Turning to tactics, Dr. Simon argued that al-Qaeda's preferred targets have not changed since 9/11. Reaching the conclusion that focusing on economic targets—such as New York City's World Trade Center—was a good idea, the organization has continued to train its eyes on the economic infrastructure of its enemies, such as oil facilities (including pipelines in Iraq), aviation, and banking (such as a foiled plot to commit simultaneous suicide attacks on

the New York Stock Exchange; the Prudential Center building in New Jersey; and the headquarters of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Washington). Dr. Simon noted that al-Qaeda has also not given up on the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Dr. Simon highlighted several other defining tactics of al-Qaeda today. One is the desire to break down the West, which al-Qaeda perceives as a "paper tiger." He quoted Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah, who has described the United States as a "spider web society." It is beautiful yet fragile: "Touch it with a finger and it goes away." This view of the West, according to Dr. Simon, is what drove al-Qaeda to launch the Madrid train attacks. Another key al-Qaeda tactic is maintaining relationships with contacts in Pakistan's government. By remaining close to Pakistan—one of the United States' most important allies in the War on Terror—the "terror leadership" of al-Qaeda remains alive and "untouched."

Al-Qaeda, Dr. Simon said, continues to recruit new operatives. Recruitment strategies differ across the board, with, for example, a "bottom-up" approach in Europe and "top-down" methods in Saudi Arabia. Al-Qaeda's always-shifting "market" for new recruits determines whether "you cast a net," "use a funnel," or "deploy a catalyst." Ultimately, he concluded, the difficulty in pinning down al-Qaeda's complex recruitment techniques will create great challenges for counter-recruitment strategies.

Dr. Bose made four points about organization and tactics of terrorism, employing case studies from Sri Lanka and Kashmir. His first point was that many so-called "terrorist" conflicts are, in fact, rooted in "ethno-territorial" disputes. These conflicts are clear-cut, with a state aiming to maintain control over a territory, and an "armed opposition" seeking to "liberate" this territory. There is no "millenarianism" here, Dr. Bose said; motivations for terrorism in these disputes can be attributed to a desire for vengeance.

Dr. Bose's second item of discussion was the increasingly transnational and global dimensions of these ethno-territorial conflicts. Previously, Dr. Bose explained, insurgents in Kashmir had been from Kashmir proper. Now, however, Pakistanis based in Pakistan's Punjab province—incited by "ethno-national

impulses"—have poured into Kashmir to help fight Indian rule. Meanwhile, Tamil Tiger insurgents in Sri Lanka are now deriving high levels of support from the politically active Tamil global diaspora.

Dr. Bose's third point was that states command high numbers of material resources that armed opposition groups cannot match. Since the 1950s, India has worn down Kashmir insurgents with wars of attrition. And even Sri Lanka—a considerably smaller nation than India—has consistently kept a lid on the Tamil Tigers. Yet states also enjoy an advantage with a key non-material resource: legitimacy. The "legitimacy deficit" of armed movements in Kashmir and Sri Lanka (particularly for those who use "suicide-warfare") has become "particularly acute" in the post-9/11 era. The risk with this "reinforced legitimacy advantage" is that it may enable "systematically abusive states" to operate with "virtual impunity."

Finally, Dr. Bose insisted that one cannot understand the tactics and organization of terrorism groups without gaining knowledge of the societies that produce the groups. It is instructive, he noted, to be aware that the "cult of martyrdom" popularized by the Tamil Tigers is rooted in Sri Lankan medieval traditions. And the Tamil Tigers' suicide tactics, according to Dr. Bose, are linked to religion in Sri Lanka. Similarly, it is worth knowing that most Kashmir-based suicide bombers originally hail from other areas; Kashmir's indigenous Islam is, in fact, quite moderate and unreceptive to radical Islam and terror.

At the same time, Dr. Bose concluded, it is important not to attribute innate, or "essential," qualities of violence or pacifism to these populations—simply because these characterizations will often be false. For example, violence has taken root in Sri Lanka's Tamil society, yet decades ago, this same society was understood to champion "bourgeois" ideas about rights and education. And similarly, there is a stereotype that Kashmiris are "docile"—yet the long years of resistance to Indian rule give the lie to this assumption.

Dr. Van Evera posed three groups of questions:

(1) How large is the current threat from al-Qaeda and related jihadist groups? What is the net estimate of this threat—particularly regarding terrorism that uses weapons of mass destruction (WMD)? Could al-Qaeda gain access to WMD, and has the organization fashioned a rationale to support its use?

(2) How should one gauge the quality of the U.S. response to al-Qaeda and its affiliates, particularly in terms of denying al-Qaeda access to WMD? Additionally, Dr. Van Evera noted that al-Qaeda "feeds" on war and uses it for propaganda and recruitment purposes. Why, then, he questioned, does the United States not focus its counterterror response more on peacemaking?

(3) If one gives poor marks to the George W. Bush administration for the War on Terror, then what accounts for this failure in its counterterror response? He noted one recurring conference theme: the administration's "highly militarized" approach to counterterror. The United States, he said, is "aiming a shotgun in all directions," instead of training a rifle on the truly "supreme threat" of al-Qaeda. He also argued that Bush has "thrown in the kitchen sink" when describing the terrorist threat, and he questioned why the administration repeatedly uses such an unfocused approach to terrorism which so many experts believe is a poor one.

Session V: "Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy"

Speakers: **John L. Esposito**, University Professor; Professor of Religion and International Affairs; Professor of Islamic Studies; and Founding Director, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University
The Honorable Cofer Black, Vice Chairman, Blackwater USA
Rami G. Khouri, Director, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut

Discussant: **Sugata Bose**, Gardiner Professor of Oceanic History and Affairs, Harvard University

Chair: **The Honorable William A. Rugh**, Associate, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University

The final session examined how the War on Terror has affected U.S. foreign policy. **Dr. Esposito** declared that the world is much more dangerous now than it was before the War on Terror was launched. The "human cost," he said, "can hardly be justified," and he singled out the violence and lack of government control throughout much of Iraq and Afghanistan. Anti-Americanism has risen dramatically and across the entire world—among moderates as well as extremists, and not simply in Muslim countries—and many view the War on Terror as a war against Islam.

The U.S. military, Dr. Esposito declared, is "not equipped" to wage a war against global terrorism. What is required is a strong public diplomacy that can win hearts and minds. While acknowledging the importance of "public affairs projects" (such as international exchange programs) in public diplomacy, he insisted that public diplomacy also requires a foreign policy component.

As they devise ways to respond to political Islam, U.S. foreign policymakers must be equipped with a better understanding of global Muslim public opinion toward the United States and the world as a whole. An invaluable source of such public sentiment, Dr. Esposito noted, is the Gallup World Poll, which surveys Muslims from North Africa to Southeast Asia. A recently released such poll shatters some of the prevailing assumptions about Muslim "moderates" and "extremists" (Dr. Esposito labels the former as the 93 percent of respondents who believe the 9/11 attacks were not justified, and the latter as the 7 percent that supported the attacks). Particularly striking is the parity of views between the two categories of Muslims. Both groups, for example, give the same top three responses when asked what they most admire about the West: technology, values (such as hard work, the rule of law, and cooperation), and the precepts of Western democracy (human rights, freedom of speech, and gender equality). Moderates and extremists also demonstrate similar levels of religiosity, with each exhibiting similar tendencies to attend religious services. And both are unfavorable toward the United States.

The Gallup poll also paints a surprising picture of the extremists, portraying them as quite liberal and open in their political outlook. They believe—more so than moderates—that "moving toward greater government democracy" will facilitate progress in the Arab and Muslim worlds. And they believe—even more strongly than moderates—that Arab and Muslim nations seek better relations with the West. Extremists, in general, come across as in better economic shape, better educated, and more hopeful about the future than the moderates.

The one major area of divergence between moderates and extremists is in their perceptions of U.S. Mideast policy. In the poll, extremists feel more intensely than moderates that they are under siege; they fear occupation and U.S. dominance, and they resent more so than moderates what they regard as American foreign policy double standards. Given such preoccupations among extremists, Dr. Esposito concluded, the United States must be more "creative" in its foreign policies. Washington must adapt a more even-handed policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict—one that supports both Israeli and Palestinian states and that is equally critical of the violence and terror from both sides. Democratization efforts, instead of "requir[ing] American-stamped approval," must

promote "real self-determination" and build "the culture of democracy" in Mideast autocracies. Dr. Esposito regretted, however, that these policy recommendations are simply not given proper attention in Washington—an unfortunate reality, given that the cause of anti-Americanism is "not who we are but what we do."

Ambassador Black contrasted U.S. counterterrorism policies before and after the 9/11 attacks. Before the attacks, U.S. officials characterized terrorism as a state-sponsored phenomenon, identifying countries such as Iran and Iraq as the major terrorist threats. Terrorism was thought to fall within the domain of criminal law enforcement, and those charged with defending against al-Qaeda enjoyed few military resources. The Y2K millennium threat, Ambassador Black recalled, was regarded as the principle threat. Most terror threats were dismissed as overblown; even the *U.S.S. Cole* attack, he noted, did not raise alarms or generate calls for changes to U.S. counterterror policies.

After the September 11 attacks, resources were poured into counterterrorism, and counterterror efforts "made more progress in three to four months than in the preceding five to ten years." Still, contended Ambassador Black, one of the key realizations of the post-9/11 world is that the U.S. military—despite being the "greatest fighting force known to man"—is not the right tool to effectively combat terror. After all, he noted, al-Qaeda is not fazed by the omnipotence of U.S. military weaponry. What is imperative, he continued, is that the United States strengthen relations with, and communicate well with, its allies. Washington, he declared, must help its friends abroad. After all, it is "so much easier" to depend on Nigerians, rather than on Americans, to chase terrorists in Abuja: leaning on U.S. allies is cost-effective and "it works."

Ambassador Black concluded that the vaunted U.S. military faces a truly asymmetrical threat. The United States boasts "a Super Bowl-quality football team," only to discover that it must face a water polo team featuring players who "wear goofy hats" and who "swim like fish." There will be losses in the War on Terror, he acknowledged, but we must "steel ourselves" and work through the difficult times while collaborating with overseas allies.

Mr. Khouri identified several new trends in the politics of the Middle East, arguing that each one has been "exacerbated or sparked" by the War on Terror and by the responses triggered by the war.

These new trends include the burgeoning number of conflicts bedeviling the region, from Iraq and Lebanon to Sudan, Somalia, and Syria. All these conflicts are linked, offering a "collective lens" through which nationals in the region can watch and assess the policies of foreign powers. These linkages are also operational; Gazans, for example, have learned from Lebanon's Hezbollah that launching Qassam rockets into Israel is an efficacious tactic. These rampant conflicts have spawned orgies of violence throughout the Middle East. This violence is legitimized by "its chronic use" by governments, opposition groups, and foreign powers. Mr. Khouri characterized this multilevel violence as one of the Middle East's "most frightening developments"—and it is catalyzed by the War on Terror.

Amid this violence, weak, smaller groups challenge and attack powerful nation states with both terror and insurgency tactics. As a result, state power—while otherwise still strong—has begun "fraying" and has grown incapable of penetrating certain aspects of society. The state can no longer control national economies, militaries, police, the media, and symbols of religious and personal identity to the extent that it used to. As a result, in many parts of the Middle East, people simply ignore the state.

With state power eroding, national governments are increasingly reckoning with "competing governments." In Palestine, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, and Sudan, competing governments rule the country, creating instability and also inviting foreign interference. Indeed, Mr. Khouri argued that the U.S. and other Western countries harbor desires to alter the "software of society" in the Middle East. Motivated not simply by protecting national interests such as unimpeded oil flow and the stability of Mideast allies, the West seeks an "intrusive engagement" that would target for change systems of religion, governance, education, and gender roles across the region.

Consequently, Mr. Khouri stated, "ordinary people" and "organized political groups" throughout the region have reached "the end

of their docility." They have become seized with a sense of defiance and resistance toward the United States, Israel, and Arab regimes perceived as predatory or threatening. The flames of this resistance have been fanned by the War on Terror, a campaign that brings Western armies into the region, that ignores and perpetuates the Palestinian issue, that strengthens Arab ruling autocrats, that compels world leaders (including those in the Mideast) to ignore the region's public sentiment, and that appears to weaken and demonize Islam.

The Middle East's increasing polarization has shaped the creation of two new hostile camps. This new confrontation pits the United States, other Western powers, Israel, and a few Arab states against the governments of Iran and Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Arab nationalists. Meanwhile, it is increasingly likely that the new evolving security architecture of the Middle East will be defined by four non-Arab powers (a "sure recipe" for "chronic turbulence" in the years ahead): Turkey, Israel, Iran, and the United States. Furthermore, the most powerful Arab political and ideological forces in the region are Islamist: Hezbollah, Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and the Islamic Action Front in Jordan. Mr. Khouri suggested that efforts by these groups to assert themselves will be met with state resistance, triggering even more tension.

What can be done? Mr. Khouri concluded that the best way to respond to these troubling new trends in Mideast politics is to promote a type of statehood and governance that truly recognizes and respects the "values, aspirations, and rights" of the Middle East's people. These include true sovereignty; the free expression of identity, both individual and collective; legitimate governments that are anchored in the rule of law and that are "accountable, pluralistic, and participatory"; stability that allows for the enjoyment of normal life; and "sustained human development" that ushers in long-term prosperity. The War on Terror, Mr. Khouri declared, threatens each of these basic needs and rights. The Middle East's people know this and have responded accordingly, plunging the region into instability and violence. He underscored that better policies must be crafted, and that strong, courageous, and decisive leadership in the United States, Europe, Israel, and the Middle East as a whole must be pooled to solve the region's challenges.

Dr. Bose commented on the idea of terror's legitimacy. In many parts of the world, "terrorism" has traditionally not been a "bad word." Terrorists have often been "lauded and worshipped" in folk songs and in textbooks—particularly in areas under colonial rule. In colonial days, those branded as terrorists would rather have been described as freedom fighters. Yet, according to Dr. Bose, they would have "gladly accepted" the terrorist label nonetheless. He wondered whether the idea of terror as resistance has lost its luster in contemporary times.

In response to Dr. Esposito's presentation, Dr. Bose mused that, given the problems with and misunderstandings about moderate and extremist Muslims, perhaps these very terms should be abandoned. Reacting to Ambassador Black's assertion that the United States must communicate well with friends overseas, Dr. Bose countered that this strategy was not well-served by the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001. In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the United States had the world's "full sympathy." Yet the American actions in Afghanistan constituted the "first step" in losing this sympathy. Finally, he characterized as a "tall order" the finding of "courageous leadership" that Mr. Khouri contended is needed to solve the Middle East's problems.

Dr. Bose enumerated some "big problems" facing U.S. foreign policy and counterterrorism. One of these is how to tackle al-Qaeda. What, he asked, might be done in Waziristan, the Pakistani tribal region suspected by many as the current location of al-Qaeda's top leadership? Another concern is Iran. Some fear "Bush adventurism" leading to military operations in Iran, while others contend that the U.S. president only fights "weak enemies," hence not Iran. At any rate, Dr. Bose noted, Washington cannot depend on European support for an "aggressive" Iran policy—particularly with the expectation that Gordon Brown, Great Britain's new prime minister, will not be as close to the United States as was his predecessor, Tony Blair. And the third problem is Iraq. Dr. Bose rejected any political solution that includes partition. The lessons

of Ireland and India prove that it is better to divide sovereignty (or at least share sovereignty) rather than to divide land. He claimed that no matter how territory is divided, vulnerable minorities will remain.

Concluding Remarks

Speaker: **Seymour M. Hersh**, *The New Yorker*

Chair: **Richard Shultz**, Professor of International Politics; Director, International Security Studies Program; and Adviser, Jebsen Center for Counter-Terrorism Studies, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Mr. Hersh, in highly skeptical remarks, slammed the Bush administration for its unilateralism and disregard for accountability as it implements the controversial policies of its War on Terror. Bush, he ventured, is "probably the most radical president we've had," in terms of his interpretations of presidential power. What makes him dangerous, he added, is his refusal to take in information or to learn from the past.

This imperiousness, according to Mr. Hersh, is discernable in the administration's Iran policy. Tehran, he argued, has been forthcoming about its nuclear program and reported this information to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Yet officials such as Vice President Dick Cheney simply ignore this reality, and speak of "mushroom clouds." Washington believes Iran will have a nuclear bomb, "no matter the facts." Mr. Hersh also hinted that the administration may proceed with its designs on Iran against the views of its military commanders. Essentially, Mr. Hersh said, "you have a bunch of guys in the administration who listen to their own tunes." Bush, he added, "has a view of the world that excludes the world."

The Bush administration simply does not care what others think, he asserted, even while fully aware of its unpopularity. The president, for example, believes several decades must pass before the world will finally appreciate him. So for now, the administration plows on, "inured" to criticism from the U.S. Congress and from the media. Worse, Mr. Hersh judged that the American public is "essentially powerless" to stop the administration's machinations vis-à-vis Iran.

Mr. Hersh also sought to capture the moral dimensions of the War on Terror that the media often miss. He recounted the chain of events leading to the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, which culminated in congressional testimony from then Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in May 2004. In his testimony, Rumsfeld acknowledged that he had received the army's report on the Abu Ghraib abuse allegations and briefed the president back in January 2004. Mr. Hersh recalled being incredulous at how Bush had done "nothing" in the period between the January briefing from Rumsfeld and the defense secretary's congressional testimony in May. There was simply no moral leadership, Mr. Hersh concluded.

Mr. Hersh chronicled as well the wrenching moral dilemmas faced by U.S. soldiers and their families, and how these experiences have mirrored those of American soldiers in Vietnam. Those who were involved in the 1968 My Lai massacre had "lost 20 percent of their buddies," he explained, emphasizing the enormous burden soldiers place on looking after each other. On the day of the massacre, the soldiers "went crazy," turning their guns on women and children. Later, he said, the mother of one of the attack's instigators told Mr. Hersh: "I sent them a good boy. They sent me back a murderer."

Similarly, decades later, some "kids" from West Virginia, simply looking for some additional income, joined the U.S. military reserves and eventually were assigned to Abu Ghraib. Mr. Hersh recounted his conversations with the mother of one of these soldiers, her anguish at discovering photos of the prison abuse, and her decision to tattoo her whole body—"as if she was trying to change her skin."

In sum, Mr. Hersh predicted that the suffering of returning Iraq war veterans will be considerable in the next few years, given their involvement in a "terrible war"—the "wrong war."

Participants

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The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies

The mission of the Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies at Tufts University is to create an academic environment for the promotion of greater understanding of the rich heritage of the Eastern Mediterranean, and of the significant challenges that this region faces at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The center acts as a major focus for cross-regional and cross-cultural analysis, providing a forum for the articulation of a broad diversity of viewpoints in the belief that this will serve as an effective means of conflict resolution.

The main countries concerned are Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, and the neighboring countries of Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Israel, and Turkey, together with any other country or region of the world whose history and politics affect them. The region's history and its pivotal role in world politics have attracted the interest of scholars concerned with fields as diverse as the origins of writing and the beginnings of modern science. In focusing on the Eastern Mediterranean, the center is a rich source of current information and data on the area, encouraging the consideration of policy issues from an international perspective.

In addition to constituting a valuable resource for Middle East majors and graduate students in other fields, the university-wide center's links to the existing curriculum include collaboration with a number of schools, departments, and programs at Tufts. Visiting fellowships are offered annually to prominent and promising scholars from abroad who can make significant contributions to the center's teaching and research and its analysis of public policy issues.

The center sponsors academic symposia, conferences, and seminars that enhance its commitment to cross-regional analysis and to the encouragement of a diversity of voices from within and outside the region. It publishes occasional papers and the proceedings of workshops and conferences on the history, culture, and international relations of the region.

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